

In Case You Missed...

Some of our special stories in September examined the risk of nuclear war over North Korea, the shifting power balance in the Middle East and the escalating hysteria over Russia-gate.

["Seymour Hersh Honored for Integrity"](#) by Ray McGovern, Sep. 1, 2017

["Galveston Bio-Lab Declared Safe"](#) by Joe Lauria, Sep. 1, 2017

["The Reasons for Netanyahu's Panic"](#) by Alastair Crooke, Sep. 1, 2017

["Russia-gate's Totalitarian Style"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 2, 2017

["The Risk of NATO's H-Bombs in Turkey"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Sep. 3, 2017

["How 'Regime Change' Wars Led to Korea Crisis"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 4, 2017

["On the Brink of Nuclear War"](#) by William R. Polk, Sep. 5, 2017

["A New Hole in Syria-Sarin Certainty"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 7, 2017

["Trump's Confused Embrace of Egypt's Sisi"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Sep. 8, 2017

["Syria's Survival Is Blow to Jihadists"](#) by Alastair Crooke, Sep. 8, 2017

["U.N. Enablers of 'Aggressive War'"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 8, 2017

["The Dangerous Decline of U.S. Hegemony"](#) by Daniel Lazare, Sep. 9, 2017

["Echoes of Iraq-WMD Fraud in Syria"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 10, 2017

["The Military's Warning on Global Warming"](#) by Daniel C. Maguire, Sep. 11, 2017

["Has the NYT Gone Collectively Mad?"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 11, 2017

["Reagan Documents Shed Light on U.S. 'Meddling'"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 13, 2017

["America's Fragile Future"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Sep. 14, 2017

["How North Korea Outmaneuvered U.S."](#) by Daniel Lazare, Sep. 14, 2017

["The NYT's Yellow Journalism on Russia"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 15, 2017

["The Right's Made-up Constitution"](#) by Jada Thacker, Sep. 17, 2017

["Harvard's Cowardice on Chelsea Manning"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 17, 2017

["Trump Falls in Line with Interventionism"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 19, 2017

["PBS' 'Vietnam War' Tells Some Truths"](#) by Don North, Sep. 20, 2017

["More Holes in Russia-gate Narrative"](#) by William Binney and Ray McGovern, Sep. 20, 2017

["How Merkel's Win May Hide Rising Discontent"](#) by Andrew Spannaus, Sep. 21, 2017

["Civil Society Rises to Confront Disasters"](#) by Dennis J. Bernstein, Sep. 21, 2017

["The Killing of History"](#) by John Pilger, Sep. 21, 2017

["The Crazy Imbalance of Russia-gate"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 22, 2017

["Trump Threatens a Genocide"](#) by David Marks, Sep. 23, 2017

["Vote by Iraqi Kurds Adds to Tensions"](#) by Joe Lauria, Sep. 24, 2017

["WPost Pushes More Dubious Russia-bashing"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 25, 2017

["North Korea's Rational Nuclear Strategy"](#) by Ted Snider, Sep. 26, 2017

["The Rise of the New McCarthyism"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 26, 2017

["Trump's Generals Fatten the Pentagon"](#) by J.P. Sottile, Sep. 27, 2017

["The MSM's Anti-Russia Bias"](#) by William Blum, Sep. 27, 2017

["The Slimy Business of Russia-gate"](#) by Robert Parry, Sep. 28, 2017

["Russia-gate's Shaky Foundation"](#) by Daniel Herman, Sep. 29, 2017

["How Syria's Victory Reshapes Mideast"](#) by Alastair Crooke, Sep. 30, 2017

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The Military's Warning on Global Warming

The U.S. military, which gets called on to cope with unrest tied to global

warming, is taking the climate threat seriously as opposed to civilian politicians who are pandering to special interests, says ethicist Daniel C. Maguire.

By Daniel C. Maguire

It wasn't supposed to be this way. The really neat American idea was that the military's zest for battle would be restrained by the measured judgment of a civilian-led government. But the spreading perception internationally is that President Trump's generals are the last-ditch guarantors of common sense in a deranged White House.

Let's admit it. The military can be right. Secretary of State Colin Powell, a retired general, warned President George W. Bush privately against the crazy invasion of Iraq though he later betrayed his own good sense and joined the criminal conspiracy.

What the military recognizes and the civilian government does not, is that the biggest security threat, the biggest security threat our species has faced in 10,000 years, is global warming. The military doesn't call it a hoax. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review calls climate change "an accelerant of instability" and a "threat multiplier."

In October 2015 a diverse group of experts, including three former Defense Secretaries, said that climate change is "shaping a world that is more unstable, resource-constrained, violent, and disaster-prone."

Africa is a case in point. Andrew Holland writing in *Scientific American* writes: "In northern Nigeria deforestation, overgrazing and increased heat from global warming have turned what was once productive farmland and savanna into an extension of the Sahara Desert. Lake Chad has lost more than 90 percent of its original size from drought, mismanagement and waste."

The population of already overcrowded Africa is likely to double by 2050 leading to explosive conditions already in evidence.

It is precisely from the chaos of this toxic mix that radical groups like Boko Haram have sprouted. The military knows this. The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA said that climate change fueled Syria's civil war. Deep and long droughts, influenced by climate change, drove hundreds of thousands of people from their farms into cities like Aleppo and Raqqa making fertile breeding ground for ISIS, Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups.

The New York Times reports that as pasture land has dried up in places like

Kenya violent and murderous battles are being fought just to get grass for the animals. Climate change is a driving factor in all of this. It is a “threat multiplier” and the threats do not stay within the borders of the poorest most affected nations. Despair also goes global and explodes in our streets and in the streets of Europe and elsewhere.

A Primer for Denialists

President Trump calls anthropogenic global warming “a hoax,” drops out of the historic Paris climate accord and guts the Environmental Protection Agency. Maybe his generals could don their uniforms, sit Trump down and give him a little primer on this epochal threat to planetary security. Here is the primer.

We have had 378 months of above average temperatures. That’s no hoax. Scientists say Arctic ice is in “a death spiral.” That’s no hoax. People fish off Bangladesh in what was once a busy market before rising seas claimed it. That’s no hoax.

Temperatures rose in Iraq and Kuwait to 129 F in July 2016 and to 112 F in parts of France and Italy in August 2017. That’s no hoax.

“For every degree Celsius that temperature rises, agricultural scientists calculate, wheat yields drop 10 percent in the Earth’s hotter midriff,” as Alan Weisman reports in his tellingly entitled book *Countdown*. That’s no hoax.

Environmental refugees no longer come only from Island states like the Maldives and Tuvalu and from Bangladesh. They come from Houston and Florida and will be coming from inundated cities on our coasts.

On top of all that we are awakening the sleeping giant in the earth. As volcanologist Bill McGuire says changing climate triggers earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes, unleashing forces that make our destructive power seem puny. And that is coming and that is no hoax. Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, energized by the heated waters of the sea, are portents of a “new normal.” The records they are breaking are not a hoax.

Climate scientist Clive Hamilton reports that “the reluctant conclusion of the most eminent climate scientist is that the world is now on a path to a very unpleasant future and it is too late to stop it.” He describes the scientists’ mood as one of “barely suppressed panic.” He says this in his book ominously entitled *Requiem for a Species*.

Stephen Hawking has so little hope for humanity on this planet that he says our long-term future must be in space. (One can question his idea that we should take our failures and export them into space!) The root of the problem he says

is humanity's "selfish and aggressive instinct."

In other words, according to Hawking, it is not a scientific problem: it's a moral problem. An ethical problem for an ethically skewed species. These expressions of near despair are not uttered as a hoax.

Any Hope Anywhere?

Fear is our greatest need: denial our most ingrained and fearsome talent. Acute fear can stoke action. We got scared of small pox and an international effort ended it. We got really scared with the shrinkage of the ozone over Antarctica and we responded internationally. In World War II, the United States transformed its entire economy and its industrial production in a matter of months. The problem is we are not afraid of an incipient apocalypse even as our TV's blaringly report on it.

We have nothing to fear but the absence of fear. We need fear. Green fear. In a kind of homeopathic medicine, we should add green greed to the mix. Creative experiments in many countries are showing that there is money to be made by harnessing renewable natural energy.

Job one for generals is detecting danger and sounding needed alarms. Maybe the generals can be our ecological Paul Revere's. Maybe.

Daniel C. Maguire is a Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of *A Moral Creed for All Christians* and *The Horrors We Bless: Rethinking the Just-War Legacy* [Fortress Press]). He can be reached at daniel.maguire@marquette.edu .

In Case You Missed...

Some of our special stories in April focused on the continuing Russia-gate imbroglio, President Trump's missile strike on Syria, and the danger of the mainstream media mediating "truth."

"Democrats' Blind Obsession on Russia-gate" by Daniel Lazare, Apr. 1, 2017

"Trump's Foreign Policy Incoherence" by Robert Parry, Apr. 3, 2017

"MLK's Warning of America's Spiritual Death" by Gary G. Kohls, Apr. 4, 2017

["Mainstream Media as Arbiters of Truth"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 4, 2017

["Team Trump Ponders Climate 'Engineering'"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Apr. 5, 2017

["Another Dangerous Rush to Judgment in Syria"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 5, 2017

["The Ugly Underbelly of Russia-gate"](#) by James W Carden, Apr. 6, 2017

["NYT Retreats on 2013 Syria-Sarin Claims"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 6, 2017

["Dashed Hopes for Trump's Foreign Policy"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Apr. 7, 2017

["Trump's 'Wag the Dog' Moment"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 7, 2017

["Trampling the US Constitution for War"](#) by Daniel C Maguire, Apr. 8, 2017

["Trump's 59-Tomahawk 'Tweet'"](#) by Alastair Crooke, Apr. 8, 2017

["Luring Trump into Mideast Wars"](#) by Daniel Lazare, Apr. 8, 2017

["Where Was CIA's Pompeo on Syria?"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 8, 2017

["Bill Maher's Muddled Attacks on Islam"](#) by JP Sottile, Apr. 9, 2017

["Trump Plunges Toward World War III"](#) by Norman Solomon, Apr. 10, 2017

["How Media Bias Fuels Syrian Escalation"](#) by Rick Sterling, Apr. 10, 2017

["Neocons Have Trump on His Knees"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 10, 2017

["Trump Should Rethink Syria Escalation"](#) by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Apr. 11, 2017

["Trump's Syria Attack Trampled Many Laws"](#) by Marjorie Cohn, Apr. 11, 2017

["Russia's Disdain for Tillerson and Trump"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Apr. 11, 2017

["To Russia with More Russia-Bashing"](#) by Nat Parry, Apr. 12, 2017

["Trump Withholds Syria-Sarin Evidence"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 12, 2017

["Trump Finds His Groove with Warmaking"](#) by Dennis J Bernstein, Apr. 12, 2017

["Pushing Australia into War with China"](#) by John Pilger, Apr. 12, 2017

["Tillerson's Bad Hand in Kremlin Showdown"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Apr. 13, 2017

["Trump Lurches into Chaos and Conflict"](#) by Alastair Crooke, Apr. 14, 2017

["Did Al Qaeda Fool the White House Again?"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 14, 2017

["Handing Killer Drones to Donald Trump"](#) by Jesselyn Radack, Apr. 15, 2017

["Neocons Point Housebroken Trump at Iran"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Apr. 15, 2017

["Obama/Trump: Contrasting Deceivers"](#) by Sam Hussein, Apr. 16, 2017

["Trump Uses Tiny Nation to Insult Russia"](#) by Ted Snider, Apr. 16, 2017

["What Russia-gate Has Wrought"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 16, 2017

["A Personal Look Inside Modern Islam"](#) by Arnold R. Isaacs, Apr. 17, 2017

["Through the 'War on Terror' Looking Glass"](#) by Nicolas JS Davies, Apr. 17, 2017

["Dropping the \(Non-Nuclear\) Big One"](#) by Dennis J Bernstein, Apr. 18, 2017

["NYT Mocks Skepticism on Syria-Sarin Claims"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 18, 2017

["Erdogan's Neo-Fascist Turkish Allies"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Apr. 19 2017

["Why Hillary Clinton Really Lost"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 19, 2017

["Russia-Bashing Helps Wall Street Democrats"](#) by Norman Solomon, Apr. 20, 2017

["Why Not a Probe of 'Israel-gate'?"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 20, 2017

["Populism v. Elites in French Election"](#) by Andrew Spannaus, Apr. 21, 2017

["How US Race Laws Inspired Nazism"](#) by David Swanson, Apr. 22, 2017

["Coal Miners' Futures in Renewable Energy"](#) by Jonathan Marshall, Apr. 22, 2017

["The Pro-War Twist of the 'Resistance'"](#) by James W Carden, Apr. 24, 2017

["The Risk of Brushing Aside Intelligence"](#) by Lawrence Davidson, Apr. 25, 2017

["Donald Trump's Failing Presidency"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 25, 2017

["France Circles Back to Status Quo"](#) by Gilbert Doctorow, Apr. 26, 2017

["Intel Vets Voice Doubts on Syrian Crisis"](#) by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Apr. 26, 2017

["More NYT 'Spin' on the Syria-Sarin Case"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 28, 2017

["The Existential Question of Whom to Trust"](#) by Robert Parry, Apr. 30, 2017

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Trampling the US Constitution for War

Donald Trump’s unilateral decision to attack Syria under a preposterous claim of protecting a “vital national security interest” of the U.S. was another case of a President violating the U.S. Constitution, as Daniel C. Maguire explains.

By Daniel C. Maguire

I am old enough to remember the last time the United States declared war in accord with Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. The date was Dec. 8, 1941, and I was ten-years-old. I remember hearing on the radio all the Yay votes and I was jarred to hear one female vote saying Nay. That was Rep. Jeannette Rankin of Montana.

War, by definition, is state sponsored violence. It kills people and animals and savages the natural environment. It is “development” in full reverse, a dreadfully serious undertaking, a power that kings once wielded arbitrarily on their own impulse and authority. But the Founders would have none of that.

So, the U.S. Constitution gave the war power to the Congress, “the immediate representatives of the people.” Congress also received the crucial power of the purse to continue or discontinue war after it starts.

James Madison, the Constitution’s principal architect, wrote: “In no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war and peace to the legislature and not to the executive department.”

Yet, in recent decades, the United States has repeatedly trashed that wisdom and done so as recently as April 6, 2017, as President Trump displayed his bully virility and his need to use kill-power to bolster his sagging ratings.

As military analyst Robert Previdi writes: “We have distorted the Constitution by allowing all Presidents since Harry S. Truman to use military power on their own authority. ... For more than 160 years, from Washington to Roosevelt, no President claimed that he had the power to move the country from peace to war

without first getting authority to do so from Congress.”

But a servile Congress has whittled away its signal prerogative to make war. In the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in 1964, Congress gave President Lyndon Johnson a blank check signed by a responsibility-shedding Congress.

In 1973, with the War Powers Resolution, it allowed the President to commit troops anywhere in the world for up to 60 days without congressional involvement. By that time in modern warfare, the die would be cast with Congress left holding the President’s coat as he uses the power abandoned by congressional defection.

The Iraq Resolution in October of 2002 transferred war-making authority to President George W. Bush for him to use or not use at his whim and discretion. And so it came to pass that another George in American history was given kingly power with predictably disastrous results, much as the arrogance of King George III precipitated Great Britain’s break with its American colonies.

Barack Obama, after winning the Nobel Peace prize, went on to make war in places such as Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iraq Afghanistan, and Pakistan without a congressional declaration of war. The sort of abuse of executive power has become “second nature” to us now.

But at least Obama asked Congress to authorize war on Syria, a move that contributed to the decision to avoid a full-scale U.S. military intervention in another Mideast war. There were other moments of sanity when constitutional restraint peeked through. On April 5, 1954, when President Eisenhower was under pressure to do an air strike in Indochina, he replied to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles: “Such a move is impossible” and would be “completely unconstitutional and indefensible.” (Remember when Republicans could say such things!)

Commander-in-Chief?

The term “Commander-in-Chief” is perverted to justify Congressional surrender of its constitutional war-declaring power to the royal president. The term runs like a greased pig through political discourse these days.

As Robert Previdi notes: “The President’s power as Commander-in-Chief in time of war takes over only *after* authority to deploy our forces has been received from Congress.” The key word there is *after*.

And here is another irony in this story of serially rampaging bombs-away presidents. Richard Falk writes that World War II ended with an historic understanding that recourse to war by individual nations could no longer be

treated as “a matter of national discretion.”

The legal framework embodied in the United Nations Charter, largely shaped by American jurists, was “to entrust the Security Council with administering a prohibition of recourse to international force (Article 2, Section 4) by states except in circumstances of self-defense, which itself was restricted to response to a prior ‘armed attack’ (Article 51) and only then until the Security Council had the chance to review the claim.”

This is known in the literature as “the policing paradigm.” It means that state-sponsored violence can only be justified in a community context with legal and internationally enforceable restrictions comparable to the restraints we put upon our police. This civilizing understanding lies amid the smoking rubble of a world of endless war.

A president can become the despotic shepherd only when the people become his sheep. In recent decades, the *vox populi* has only bleated when it should have been screaming. Teddy Roosevelt said: “To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American People.”

Yes, members of Congress, with a few noble exceptions, are groveling wimps and aliens to the lost art of diplomacy, but it’s also true that an ill-informed, lazy and indolent citizenry is neck high in treasonous negligence. In the end, the buck stops with us.

Daniel C. Maguire is a Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of *A Moral Creed for ALL Christians* and *The Horrors We Bless: Rethinking the Just-War Legacy [Fortress Press]*. He can be reached at daniel.maguire@marquette.edu .

In Case You Missed...

Some of our notable stories in January, focusing on the U.S. presidential transfer of power, the issue of alleged Russian interference in the election and the furor over “fake news.”

[“The War Against Alternative Information”](#) by Rick Sterling, Jan. 1, 2017

"Crosses Marking Chicago Death Toll" by Kathy Kelly, Jan. 2, 2017

"Israel's Above-the-Law Behavior" by Lawrence Davidson, Jan. 2, 2017

"WPost's New 'Fake News' on Russian 'Hack'" by Annie Machon, Jan. 2 2017

"Requiem for a UN 'Yes Man'" by Joe Lauria, Jan. 3, 2017

"Obama's Deadly Afghan Acquiescence" by Ray McGovern, Jan. 3, 2017

"Anti-Trump Coalition Shows Cracks" by Nat Parry, Jan. 4, 2017

"Donald Trump's Debt to Willie Horton" by JP Sottile, Jan. 5, 2017

"The Dubious Case on Russian 'Hacking'" by William Binney & Ray McGovern, Jan. 6 2017

"US Report Still Lacks Proof on Russia 'Hack'" by Robert Parry, Jan. 7, 2017

"Europe's Mixed Feelings About Trump" by Andrew Spannaus, Jan. 9, 2017

"The 'Post-Truth' Mainstream Media" by Nicolas JS Davies, Jan. 9, 2017

"The Democrats' Russia-Did-It Dodge" by Norman Solomon, Jan. 10, 2017

"Wall Street's Win-Win with Trump" by Mike Lofgren, Jan. 10, 2017

"Obama Belatedly Says No to Israel" by Marjorie Cohn, Jan. 10, 2017

"What DeVos Might Do to Public Schools" by Dennis J Bernstein, Jan. 11, 2017

"Obama's Unkept Promise on Nuclear War" by Jonathan Marshall, Jan. 11, 2017

"How Obama Spread the Mideast Fires" by Daniel Lazare, Jan. 11, 2017

"Did Trump Kill 'Liberal Democracy'?" by Mike Lofgren, Jan. 12, 2017

"Pulling a J. Edgar Hoover on Trump" by Robert Parry, Jan. 12, 2017

"Who's the Real Manipulator of Elections?" by Jonathan Marshall, Jan. 13, 2017

"Mainstream Media's Russian Bogeymen" by Gareth Porter, Jan. 13, 2017

"The Scheme to Take Down Trump" by Daniel Lazare, Jan. 14, 2017

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"Russia's Leery Reaction to President Trump" by Gilbert Doctorow, Jan. 24, 2017

"Obama Bequeaths a More Dangerous World" by Robert Parry, Jan. 24, 2017

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"Getting Better Results Than Law-and-Order" by Don Ediger, Jan. 25, 2017

"Death of the Syrian 'Moderate' Fantasy" by Jonathan Marshall, Jan. 26, 2017

"Donald Trump and His 'Magic Mirror'" by Robert Parry, Jan. 27, 2017

"Deep State vs. Donald Trump" by Alastair Crooke, Jan. 28, 2017

"Calling a Lie a Lie in the Age of Trump" by Daniel C Maguire, Jan. 29, 2016

"Trump Lets Saudis Off His 'Muslim Ban'" by Robert Parry, Jan. 29, 2017

"Rachel Maddow Plays Glenn Beck" by Norman Solomon, Jan. 30, 2017

"Rising Resistance to Trump on Immigration" by Dennis J Bernstein, Jan. 31, 2017

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Calling a Lie a Lie in the Age of Trump

The U.S. mainstream media bends over backward not to call the President a liar even when it's deserved, but Donald Trump's falsehoods are so glaring that the L word should apply, says ethicist Daniel C. Maguire.

By Daniel C. Maguire

The *L word* is suddenly center stage as Trump's presidency begins. No surprise there, given the river of falsehoods flowing from the administration and his devious cabinet misfits. Journalists scruple about the propriety of calling a lie a lie, especially when the liar is the President of the United States. The New York Times made news by calling one of Trump's manifest falsehoods a lie. National Public Radio, perhaps wary about federal funding, shies from the word.

Underlying all this is broad public confusion as to just what a lie is. The Oxford English Dictionary oversimplifies it by saying that a lie is "a false statement made with intent to deceive." Let ethics come to the rescue. Telling the Gestapo that the Frank family had left Amsterdam (even though you were actually bringing them food on a daily basis) would not earn you the moral stigma of "a liar."

And that is the point. "Lie" and "liar" are not neutral words. Sometimes you have a moral obligation to deceive as when someone intent on murder asks if you know the location of his intended victim. Truth-telling in that case would be lethal; intentional deception is mandatory.

*Lying is when you speak falsely intending to deceive someone **who has a right to the truth**.* The specific evil that makes an intentional deception evil is in the denial of the truth to someone who has a right to it. An engaged woman is secretly pregnant from another man. If she says no when her suspecting fiancé asks her directly, then she is in this instance, a liar. He has a right to know the truth.

So face it: "lie" and "liar" have a nasty denotation. It would not be a compliment if you said of someone that he was "very pleasant, quite talented, and an outstanding liar." Like the word "murder," "lie" and "liar" denote evil. They signify an unjustifiable deception.

It is not hard to understand the skittishness of the press regarding the *L word*. When you say the President lied, you are accusing him of immoral activity. You are saying that he is speaking falsely *in the face of abundant evidence to the contrary* and is trying to deceive the public on a matter where they have a right

to the truth.

But why should the President be spared the appropriate ethical term for his actions? The sacred calling of the press, well understood by the founders of this republic, is to speak the truth especially to those in power. Why would they betray that noble mission by shrinking from calling a powerful liar on his lies?

The lies of President Trump and those of his mendacity agents like Kellyanne Conway are more insulting than has been generally noted. They are despicably cynical because they insinuate that the American public and the press have no right to the truth. Fictional “alternative facts” are all they deserve.

Lying as the Tool of Despots

Truth is the natural enemy of despotism. Crushing the press and citizen protests is the instinctive reaction of despots. We are seeing this in full play today as the press is characterized as public enemy number one and as states form plans to suppress public protests and criminalize citizen protesters.

Truth is the life blood of a democracy. The Hebrew prophets saw how labile – or liable to change – it is and worried about its loss in a society. “Truth stumbles in the market-place and honesty is kept out of court, so truth is lost to sight.” (Isa. 59:14) The people are too susceptible to “smooth words and seductive visions.” (Isa. 30:10) The tragedy, complained Hosea, comes when eventually “There is no truth ... in the land.” (Hosea 4:1)

The antidote for despotic lies is not a polite silence or cowardly politeness and acquiescence. In the spirit of the prophets, it is thoroughly moral and right to call liars by their name. The prophets of Israel, who would make modern pundits seem timid and bland, would not shy from a word like “liar.”

The kings, said Jeremiah, are “stupid brutes.” (Jer 10;21). Isaiah went further saying Israel’s leaders were “blind ... dumb dogs who cannot bark ... lovers of sleep ... greedy dogs that can never have enough ... who understand nothing.” (Isa. 56:10-11)

And Jesus was no softer. He called the powerful religious and political leaders of his day “roaring lions ... wolves of the plain, hypocrites, blind guides, ... blind fools ... snakes, vipers ... who spill innocent blood.” (Matt. 23). He said they were best compared to painted sepulchers, beautified on the outside but inside filled with the stench of death.

That is precisely the blunt, blustery spirit needed today by citizen groups, the press, and the all too pusillanimous Democratic Party. Trump, ignoring the

structures of constitutional governance, is bending democracy toward autocracy and he uses lies to grease the skids of this subversion. The lies of this liar must be cited and he must be called by the name his deeds merit.

Daniel C. Maguire is a Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of *A Moral Creed for All Christians* and *The Horrors We Bless: Rethinking the Just-War Legacy* [Fortress Press]). He can be reached at daniel.maguire@marquette.edu .

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"The Orwellian War on Skepticism" by Robert Parry, Dec. 1, 2016

***"A Bare-Knuckle Fight Over Recounts"** by Joe Lauria, Dec. 2, 2016

"Clinton's 'Russia Did It' Cop-out" by Robert Parry, Dec. 3, 2016

***"Picking a War with China"** by John Pilger, Dec. 4 2016

***"The Remarkable Story of Fidel Castro"** by Marjorie Cohn, Dec. 4, 2016

"New Navy Ship Leaking Tax Dollars" by Jonathan Marshall, Dec. 5, 2016

***"WPost Won't Retract McCarthyistic Smear"** by Norman Solomon, Dec. 5, 2016

"Italy's Voters Slap Down the Elites" by Andrew Spannaus, Dec. 6, 2016

***"Extracting Castro from the Demonization"** by Lawrence Davidson, Dec. 6 2016

***"A Protest Victory at Standing Rock"** by Dennis J Bernstein, Dec. 6, 2016

"How War Propaganda Keeps on Killing" by Robert Parry, Dec. 7, 2016

***"Democrats Launch New McCarthyism"** by Norman Solomon, Dec. 8, 2016

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How Israel Misuses the Bible

By fuming over a U.N. resolution against Israel’s settlements on Palestinian land, Israeli leaders reveal their final solution for the Palestinians – to deny them property rights and displace them, says moral theologian Daniel C. Maguire.

By Daniel C. Maguire

Danny Danon, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, let the theological cat out of the bag. When the Security Council rebuked Israel for their land thefts (euphemized as “settlements,”) Mr. Danon replied with pious indignation: “Would you ban the French from building in Paris?”

There, in all of its effrontery, is the imperial theology that birthed Zionism. David Ben Gurion said of Palestine “God promised it to us.” Yitzhak Baer wrote in 1947: “God gave to every nation its place, and to the Jews he gave Palestine.”

So in this hallucinatory theology, just as God gave Paris to France the Zionist deity gave Palestine to Jews including the right to build whatever they want wherever they want it. If the Zionist god posted a “Jews only” sign on Palestine, the presence of non-Jews is a sacrilege and their land claims are specious. If nothing is intelligible outside its history, as the Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin put it, Ambassador Danon’s French allusion can only be understood against this theological backdrop.

Yigal Allon, a commander of the Palmach, the elite fighting force of the Haganah, the paramilitary force that fought to drive the British from Palestine,

did not eschew the language of “cleansing,” a term now used to describe a “crime against humanity.” He boasted that the Zionists were “cleansing” Palestine of Arabs.

The religious goal of Zionism Ben Gurion said is to “secure ... that the whole of Palestine will be Jewish, and not only a part of it.” Joseph Weitz, the administrator responsible for the colonization of Palestine, stated the creed bluntly: “Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both people together in this country. ... The only solution is a Palestine ... without Arabs.”

In 1919, a fact-finding mission appointed by President Woodrow Wilson reported that in meetings with Zionists it was clear that the Zionists looked forward to a “complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine.”

Zionist ersatz theology imagines a capricious god who is into real estate distribution, a god who hands out eternal deeds to people of his choosing. It is the will of the Creator that all others be cleansed and their property rights be negated.

Misunderstanding the Bible

Zionist theology depends on a fallacious exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. The two key words for properly understanding the Bible are *descriptive* and *prescriptive*. Many of the texts of the Bible *describe* the horrors of a barbaric time. They are not normative or in any sense admirable. The Bible is revered for its *prescriptive* texts which imagined with classical excellence a whole new social order where “there shall be no poor among you,” (Deut 15::4) and where swords will gradually be melted down into plowshares as violent power is subdued. In the prescriptive texts we see the beauty of Judaism which Zionism violates.

The Zionists don’t know the distinction between descriptive and prescriptive. They take ugly biblical descriptive texts and use them to make imperial policy. Texts such as this from Deuteronomy: “When Yahweh your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you – the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canannites, the Perizzites, the Hivites ... and when Yahweh your God gives them over to you ... you must utterly destroy them. ... Show them no mercy.” (7:1-11, 9:1-5, 11:8-9)

Following the “logic” of such texts, the Palestinians are now the new Hittites, Girgashites and Canaanites to whom no mercy is to be shown or property rights to be honored. Zionist theology dishonors Judaism.

The worst of mad men, said the poet Alexander Pope, is a saint gone mad. Ironically Jews should know the horrors that religiously motivated people can

wreak. Nothing so animates the will for good or for ill like the tincture of the sacred. Christian animus against Jews unleashed slaughters, pogroms, segregation and influenced the anti-Jewish venom that Nazism mechanized with genocidal force.

The survival of Israel living in accord with international law, alongside a Palestinian state, is the goal that has no need of obstructive faux theology. Mr. Netanyahu like the High Priest is rending his garments in outrage, threatening to smite all nations that would challenge Israel's manifest destiny to build in Palestine like the French can build in Paris. A bit of curative theology is needed to correct this brutal and ignorant madness. The Security Council gave the cure a jump start.

Daniel C. Maguire is a Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of *A Moral Creed for All Christians* and *The Horrors We Bless: Rethinking the Just-War Legacy [Fortress Press]*. He can be reached at daniel.maguire@marquette.edu

A Victory for 'White' America

The narrow split in the U.S. electorate revealed by Donald Trump's election as President ended with a victory of "white" America over "diverse" America with long-lasting consequences, says moral theologian Daniel C. Maguire.

By Daniel C. Maguire

My reaction four days out from the moral tragedy of Donald Trump's election as President is this: we are two nations, not one nation. On Nov. 8, 2016, one nation, a very white, very gerrymandered nation, braced by feeble voter turnout, conquered the other.

The conquest will continue for at least a generation since it includes control of the U.S. Supreme Court. Mid-term elections may bring minor relief (or possibly not because Senate Democrats have far more seats to defend than Republicans) but the conquering nation knows that the Supreme Court and other judges pipe the tune to which all must dance.

In this new regime, the environment loses, true democracy loses, unions lose, education loses, women lose, especially those with problem pregnancies, a free press loses, peace-makers lose, people of color lose, "illegal" immigrants lose, international alliances lose, the goal of basic health care for all loses, the

regulations of corporate greed lose, occupied people like the Palestinians lose, sexual minorities lose, real religious freedom loses, the splintered Democratic party loses, and voter turnout continues to lose. And in all losses, the poor are the greatest losers.

There is nothing new in this. The Exodus story in the Bible (when not misunderstood as history) is a metaphor for human societies. Properly interpreted, Exodus was saying that human social organization teeters between the Egyptian pyramidal model of one percent rule and the alternative Sinai model based on appropriate sharing where “there will be no poor among you” (Deut. 15:4) and where swords will gradually be beaten into plowshares.

In the brief period after the Second World War, ending in the early 1970s, the United States was getting closer to the Sinai sharing model. Even under Republican Dwight Eisenhower, the top marginal income tax rate was 90 percent. “Justice consists in sharing,” said Thomas Aquinas.

During that brief moral interlude, there was sharing and a healthy middle class, along with the best-educated young in the world. We receded from that in subsequent decades, and on Nov. 8, 2016, we solemnly broke faith with humanity’s best hopes.

The tragedy is terminal only if hope, the most revolutionary of emotions, also dies. The Deuteronomist said that we can choose life or we can choose death and then begged us, choose life for your children’s sake. That salient challenge remains in the wake of this debacle.

Daniel C. Maguire is a Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University, a Catholic, Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of *A Moral Creed for ALL Christians* and *The Horrors We Bless: Rethinking the Just-War Legacy [Fortress Press]*. He can be reached at daniel.maguire@marquette.edu

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