

1ac UIL Version

Plan Text

The United States federal government should curtail Executive Order 13587 section 6

Advantage 1 Intel-

Case officers are overwhelmed. It places international counterintelligence cooperation at risk

Rottman 13 - Legislative counsel/policy adviser @ ACLU's Washington Legislative Office [Gabe Rottman, "Obama's Whistleblower Witchunt Won't Work at DOD," *Defense One*, July 29, 2013, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/pf3nwws>

For two decades during the Cold War, an ultra-secret "mole" hunting squad at the Central Intelligence Agency, led by James Jesus Angleton, investigated hundreds of loyal government workers, primarily Eastern Europeans, in an obsessive search for Soviet spies based on tips from a questionable source. When all was said and done, many careers were ruined, no mole found and Angleton had lent his name to a new word for things conspiratorial and paranoid: Angletonian.

The Obama administration is now on an Angletonian path, but on a meta scale throughout the government. Two years ago, the White House implemented the Insider Threat Program, an initiative created by executive order following the WikiLeaks affair. Not surprisingly, civil liberties groups fear the initiative will open the door to inappropriate and biased reporting based on racial and ethnic profiling, whistleblower retaliation and personal and political vendettas that will overload the system with bad information. These critics are joined, however, by career counter-intelligence experts, many of whom argue that non-professionals are simply ill-equipped to accurately identify potential threats.

The program requires any government agency with network access to classified information to design and implement an insider threat plan to better identify both spies and leakers (including whistleblowers seeking to reveal government fraud, waste, or illegality). The plans address both network and information security, but much of the focus has been on personnel security.

Implementing agencies must train all of their cleared workers on how to identify "high-risk" behavior by their colleagues like "stress," sudden financial problems or "exploitable behavior traits," as one Defense Department publication puts it. In certain circumstances and agencies, failure to report such behavior could leave employees open to disciplinary action or even, reportedly, criminal penalties. Some agencies have extended the program to all workers, not just those with clearances, and in many cases the training is far from comprehensive. It's also unclear who will run these programs. McClatchy, which broke the story, only notes that the Pentagon is training managers and security officials at the Defense Department and contractors to set up "insider threat offices."

Interestingly, of those looking at the program, few have noted the particularly acute problems posed by the program at the Defense Department, which will face special challenges for two related reasons.

The first is simply size. DOD is one of the largest employers in the world and — because of its size and mission — has the largest pool of security clearances in the government. In a total population of almost 5 million cleared government workers, the Defense Department has more than half, which include civilian employees, contractors and military personnel.

Additionally, one of the more important government-wide counterintelligence services is the Defense Security Service, which is responsible for counterintelligence training and reporting for the entire defense industry. It also administers the federal industrial security program, which grants facility

security clearances and provides security monitoring for more than 13,500 cleared, contractor facilities at DOD as well as 26 other government agencies. As a result, any insider threat guidance from DOD administered through DSS would apply very broadly.

By dragooning every cleared defense employee as a potential tipster (and potentially punishing them if they do not report), **the Insider Threat Program will vastly inflate the universe of potential leads.** The sheer volume of data generated by a program that not only invites, but requires, Defense Department workers to report “suspicious” behavior by colleagues will overwhelm the smaller number of investigators actually working on legitimate insider threats.

The same “big data” issues have bedeviled the wider counterterrorism enterprise in the years following 9/11. Legislative and administrative initiatives have prompted unprecedented information gathering by the government without the requisite resources or technical ability to digest the data. **False positives are**, tragically, a frequent occurrence and are all too often the result of **profiling** based on a person’s **race or ethnicity.**

Equally tragic are the investigative failures in the overworked system, which was unable to detect in advance, for instance, the Boston bombers or the Detroit underwear bomber despite earlier tips to the government. In the case of Fort Hood shooter Army Maj. Nidal Hasan, the FBI’s Webster Commission Report specifically said that the post-9/11 “data explosion” contributed to the failure to properly assess emails between Hasan and Anwar al-Awlaki. Similarly here, by turning the entire DOD workforce into a tips factory, the number of leads generated by the Insider Threat Program will **only increase the static on the line.**

The second problem arises from the government’s purported “indicators” of high-risk behavior. It is true that some traditional indicators of espionage like sudden and unexplained wealth, attempts to conceal foreign travel or the mishandling of classified information may provide leads for counterintelligence agents to initiate investigations. But opening the floodgates by requiring cleared workers to report every perceived instance of such behavior will only **stress the investigators** and increase the risk of **system failure.**

The current initiative, however, goes beyond these traditional indicators and expands potential red flags, including things like stress, divorce, financial distress or other life conflicts that are commonplace. And the program gives agencies the ability to experiment more freely. As reported by McClatchy, for instance, FBI insider threat guidance warns security personnel to be on the lookout for “James Bond Wannabe[s]” and people with sympathy for the “underdog” or for a “particular cause.”

The **fatal flaw** in the “insider threat” detection system is that it is attempting to systematize something that is highly subjective. It asks individuals without extensive and proper training in counterintelligence to determine whether an individual is “acting suspicious.” Some individuals are going to see a spy or leaker around every corner, and unfortunately many also harbor biases that make them more likely to suspect certain individuals more than others. **Racial and ethnic profiling**, especially against Arabs, Muslims and South Asians, is an unfortunate fact of life, and government employees are as vulnerable to those biases as everyone else. Requiring workers to report everything they think is suspicious means a **larger haystack of bad information.** It also makes the needles look smaller because the data surplus strains investigators and makes it easier for the bad guy to hide his tracks.

It's worth remembering that the Angleton program was eventually dismantled not just for principled reasons but because, pragmatically, the omnipresent suspicion and lack of independent checks on Angleton and his staff had hamstrung the CIA in its mission. **Case officers couldn't recruit sources or collaborate with friendly intelligence agencies.** That **operational risk**, coupled with both the threat to government employees' **civil liberties** and the danger that this will **overwhelm counter-intelligence investigators**, counsel strongly against this Angletonian initiative.

AND, The rash of unnecessary counterintelligence investigations makes the ITP an unmitigated disaster.

Lange 13 – Degree in counterintelligence studies @ American Military University [Kit Lange, “The Dangers of the Insider Threat Program, Part 4,” *Victory Girl*, August 5, 2013, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/ozv33mp>

Conclusions

The **ultimate test** of any program such as Insider Threat Program **is two-fold: is it Constitutional, and does it work?** In this case, the answer to both of these questions is an unequivocal “no.” It is understood that those who volunteer to work in the intelligence field, or who are entrusted with classified information need to be screened, and in order to do that they give up certain privacy rights that other citizens enjoy. **The level of intrusion that is present in ITP**, however, is a **recipe for disaster**. The penalization of employees who are not overzealous in reporting their co-workers for any real or imagined infraction, combined with techniques they are not fully trained on and inconsistent standards between agencies, can and will continue to result in innocent **people being caught up in the web of an unnecessary counterintelligence investigation**. In addition, the environment that **ITP cultivates leads to overall **added vulnerability for the US****, as employees who may have been loyal for many years are now treated as though they are threats by co-workers. Meanwhile, the Pollards and Ames will continue to go undetected, and leaks on the scale of Manning and Snowden will continue to occur.

AND, US intel sharing prevent Sunni returnees from destabilizing their home countries. Multiple countries are at risk

Byman 15 - Director of research & Senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy @ Brookings Institution [Daniel L. Byman, “What happens when Arab foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria go home?,” *Brookings Institution*, May 7, 2015 10:38am, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/njdv9zd>

Although much of the attention on foreign fighters has focused on Europeans and Americans going to fight in **Iraq and Syria, the conflict has** particularly **inspired Sunni Muslims in the Arab world**. Exact figures are elusive, but in February 2015, **the head of the National Counterterrorism Center testified that over 20,000 foreign fighters from at least 90 countries had gone to Iraq and Syria**. **Only 3,400 from the United States and Western Europe—the rest came from Muslim countries, particularly those in the Arab**

world. Few countries are spared: longstanding jihadist hotbed **Saudi Arabia** is again a reliable supplier of fighters, but so too are countries far from Syria and Iraq like **Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco**.

But what happens when these fighters return home?

Foreign fighters who gain combat experience in Iraq and Syria pose a double danger. Many of **those who go to war will come back as hardened veterans, steady in the face of danger and skilled in the use of weapons and explosives—ideal terrorist recruiting material.** More important, **their worldview may change.** While in the conflict zone, **they will form networks with other radicals, embrace techniques like suicide bombings and beheadings, and establish ties to jihadists around the world, making them prone to further radicalization and giving them access to training and weapons they might otherwise lack.**

Several countries in the Arab world, notably **Libya and Lebanon**, face considerable risk of bleedout from returning fighters and several more face more modest dangers, particularly **Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen**. However, there is no simple model of bleedout, in part because the groups in Syria and Iraq, and the global jihadist movement in general, are divided as to focus and strategy.

In addition, different countries have different mitigating factors. In particular, the presence or absence of strong and focused security services will have a profound impact on the risk of bleedout. Although many countries are at risk of violence, the strategic impact of returning fighters is likely to be more limited. Militarily and tactically they can create new groups or strengthen existing ones; however, their ambition, regional focus, lack of discipline, and brutality often mean they create more enemies than they vanquish and anger local populations, strengthening the government's hand.

While it is likely that they will use terrorism, it will primarily be locally and regionally focused, with international terrorism probably less of a priority. **Terrorism against Western targets in the region is also likely to grow.** Those who fight with the Islamic State imbibe its hostility to the West, both as a military enemy but also as a presence that ideologically is opposed to "true" Islam. Kidnapping of Westerners for ransom is also likely, largely for financial reasons but also because of the publicity such actions bring.

Arab states can reduce the risk of bleedout by hindering the travel of volunteers and constraining their ability to organize, countering the narrative more effectively by stressing the internecine nature of the violence in the Sunni Muslim community, and developing effective deradicalization programs. Regional and international **cooperation to monitor and disrupt travel is also valuable.** On the other hand, these regimes are likely to take advantage of the jihadists' presence to gain more support from the United States, delay democratic reforms, and crackdown on non-jihadist opposition.

Returning foreign fighters offer new opportunities to gather intelligence that regional services may be slow to collect and process. In particular, the heavy use of social media like Facebook and Twitter by today's foreign fighters **is a source of vulnerability, allowing for easy collection and knowledge of broader networks as well as real-time information about the movements and activities of fighters.** Improving intelligence sharing and offensive counterintelligence is therefore **critical to mitigating the terrorism threat.** **This is where the United States can play an important facilitating role by bringing the different intelligence services together and facilitating the flow of information,** particularly in cases where suspicions (or just politics) limit cooperation.

AND, Their return will fuel Saudi-Iranian proxy wars throughout the Mideast- dilemma increases probability & severity of each conflict Escalation is likely

Levitt 14 - Directs the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence @ The Washington Institute for Near East Policy [Dr. Matthew Levitt (Former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis @ U.S. Department of the Treasury & Former FBI counterterrorism analyst, "Regional Implications of the War in Syria," *American Foreign Policy Council Defense Dossier*, Issue 11, July 2014 pg. 14-19

WHEN THE BOYS COME HOME

A rereading of a declassified August 1993 report, "The Wandering Mujahidin: Armed and Dangerous," written by the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) foreshadows that,

some two decades hence, we might find ourselves dealing with a laundry list of difficult problems stemming from actions taken, or not taken, today.² The report's subject was the possible spillover effect of Afghan mujahedin fighters and support networks moving on to fight in other jihad conflicts, alongside other militant Islamic groups worldwide. Much of the report could be applied equally well to the themes we find ourselves facing today.

Consider how fighters are traveling from around the world to go fight on either side of the increasingly sectarian war in Syria. Much of the discussion about foreign fighters traveling to Syria has focused on radicalized Muslim youth coming from Western countries, but the greatest numbers of foreign fighters, on both the Sunni and Shi'ite sides of the equation, have come from the Middle East. Indeed, it must be noted that while most people focus on the Sunni foreign fighter phenomenon, there are at least as many Shi'ite foreign fighters in Syria today. Most are from Iraq, but others have come from as far afield as Yemen, Afghanistan, and even Australia.

This spring, DNI Clapper estimated that more than 7,000 fighters have traveled to Syria from more than fifty countries.³ In an independent study conducted in December 2013, Aaron Zelin of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy estimated the numbers to be some 8,500 foreign fighters from seventy-four different countries. His estimates of the range of foreign fighters from across the region who have come to fight on the Sunni side of the war in Syria are equally telling:⁴

The number has since increased to about 12,000 total fighters, exceeding the high-end estimates from the end of last year even amongst rebel in-fighting. While much of the focus on increasing numbers has been on western fighters, Arab fighters have increased as well. Some Middle Eastern security officials have even released official numbers: Algeria now estimates about 200 of its citizens have traveled to Syria, Morocco 1,500, Saudi Arabia 2,500, and Tunisia about 3,000.

On the Shi'ite side of the equation, Lebanese Hezbollah and Iraqi Shi'ite militants from groups like Asaib Ahl al-Haqq and Kataib Hezbollah make up a majority of those fighting in support of the Bashar al-Assad regime. Some estimate that as many as five thousand members of Lebanese Hezbollah have been active in Syria, on a rotational basis.⁵ Iraqi Shi'ites fighting in Syria are also estimated to number as high as five thousand.⁶ Iranians are present as well in smaller support and advising roles. Shi'ites from Saudi Arabia, Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan, and Yemeni Houthi fighters have also gone to Syria to fight on behalf of the regime.

In Syria, these foreign fighters are learning new and more dangerous tools of the trade in a very hands-on way, and those who do not die on the battlefield will ultimately disperse to all corners of the world, better trained and still more radicalized than they were before. The majority of radicalized fighters are likely to return home and attack their own homelands even before they seek to strike the United States, in large part because the events that have followed the Arab Spring have created conditions favorable for militant Islamist revival.

Consider just a few regional reverberations of the Syrian jihad already being felt today:

For many in the region and beyond, going to fight in Syria is a natural and unremarkable decision; the fight in Syria is a defensive jihad to protect fellow Sunni Muslims—women and children—from the Assad regime’s indiscriminate attacks on civilian population centers. And so it is that Ahmed Abdullah al-Shaya, the poster boy for Saudi Arabia’s deradicalization program—which boasts a tiny 1.5 percent recidivism rate from among its 2,400 graduates—has now turned up on the battlefield in Syria.⁷

“Tunisia’s revolution and those in Syria, Egypt and Yemen, and Libya gave us a chance to set up an Islamic state and sharia law, and in the Maghreb first,” explained a young Tunisian Salafist in Tunis, Abu Salah. “We want nothing

less than an Islamic state in Tunisia, and across the region. The first step must be Syria. I am proud of our brothers in Syria, and I will go there myself in a few weeks.”⁸

Another young Tunisian, Ayman Saadi, who was raised in a middle-class family with a secular tradition, was stopped from going to fight in Syria several times by his parents before he finally snuck out of the country to Benghazi. He trained there for a short time, but instead of going on to Syria, he was instructed to go back to Tunisia to carry out a suicide attack at a presidential mausoleum; when he proceeded to do so, Saadi was tackled by guards before he could trigger his explosives.⁹

In August 2013, a new, fully Moroccan jihadist organization called Harakat Sham al-Islam was created in Syria. The group reportedly aims not only to recruit fighters for the Syrian war but also to establish a jihadist organization within Morocco itself: “Although the [group’s] name refers to Syria and its theater is Syria, the majority of group members are Moroccans. The group’s creation was also announced in the Rif Latakia, where most Moroccan jihadists who go to Syria are based.”¹⁰

In Egypt, the government is facing high levels of violence largely in reaction to the ouster of former president Muhammad Morsi. The Sinai militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis attracts many returnees and has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in recent months. In September 2013, following his return from Syria, Walid Badr, a former Egyptian army officer, conducted a suicide attack that narrowly missed Egyptian interior minister Muhammad Ibrahim, instead injuring nineteen others.¹¹

In February 2014, an Israeli court convicted an Israeli Arab citizen of joining Jabhat al-Nusra. The presiding judge expressed concern over the danger posed by Israeli citizens who join the war in Syria and return home, where “they could use the military training and ideological indoctrination acquired in Syria to commit terror attacks, indoctrinate others or gather intelligence for use in attacks by anti- Israel organizations.”¹²

Also in February, an Iraqi newspaper ceased publishing after receiving death threats from the Iranian-backed Shiite militia Asaib Ahl al- Haqq. Two bombs were placed in its office in Baghdad, and protestors

carrying photographs of Asaib Ahl al-Haqq's leader demanded the paper be shut down. Members openly admit to "ramp[ing] up targeted killings."¹³ The militia has been active in Iraq since the American-led war, in which it carried out thousands of attacks on U.S. soldiers, and currently has forces in Syria.¹⁴

None of this should surprise. Twenty-one years ago, INR's study of Afghanistan's **spillover** similarly reported that "the support network that funneled money, supplies, and manpower to supplement the Afghan Mujahidin is now contributing experienced fighters to militant Islamic groups worldwide." When these veteran fighters dispersed, the report presciently predicted, "their knowledge of communications equipment and experiences in logistics planning will enhance the organizational and offensive capabilities of the militant groups to which they are returning." A section of the 1993 report, entitled "When the Boys Come Home," noted that these veteran volunteer fighters "are welcomed as victorious Muslim fighters of a successful jihad against a superpower" and "have won the respect of many Muslims—Arab and non-Arab—who venerate the jihad."¹⁵

A SECTARIAN PROXY WAR IN THE LEVANT

The Syrian war is also a classic case of a **proxy war**, in this case between Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Gulf states on the one hand, and Iran on the other—with the additional, especially dangerous overlay of sectarianism. The sectarian vocabulary used to dehumanize the "other" in the Syrian war is deeply disturbing, and suggests both sides view the war as a **long-term battle in an existential, religious struggle between Sunnis and Shiites**.¹⁶

Furthermore, the war in Syria is now being fought on two parallel planes: one focused on the Assad regime and the Syrian opposition, and the other on the existential threats the Sunni and Shi'ite communities each perceive from one another. The former might theoretically be negotiable, but the latter almost certainly is not. The ramifications for regional instability are enormous, and go well beyond the Levant. But they are felt more immediately and more powerfully in Lebanon to the west and Iraq to the east than anywhere else.

TRENDING TOWARD INSTABILITY

The humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war is a catastrophe that grows worse by the day. In a region long known for its instability and sparse resources, Syria's neighbors are simply not equipped to handle 2.4 million registered refugees. Lebanon has taken in Syrians equal to at least one fifth of the country's population, a refugee camp is now Jordan's fourth-largest city, and on average 13,000 new refugees are registered with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) every day. Within Syria itself, more than 6.5 million have been displaced and more than nine million need humanitarian assistance.

Such numbers are more than just a depressing snapshot of the situation on the ground; they suggest a long-term outlook that is no less dire. Taken together, the Syrian crisis and its secondary and tertiary effects create a set of "looming disequilibria," to borrow a phrase from the National Intelligence Council's (NIC's) excellent study entitled Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds.¹⁷ Consider, for example, the combined impact on the region of a years-long conflict, exacerbated by sectarianism and fueled by funds and weapons from the backers of respective proxies. From education, health, poverty, and migration patterns to humanitarian assistance needs and the economic impact on fragile

economies, the consequences of the Syrian war for the region would be massive even if the war itself ended tomorrow.

Refugee **migrations** have long been noted as factors that **increase the likelihood of militant disputes**.¹⁸ In today's migration displacements, the vast majority of refugees are Sunni Muslims, posing a serious threat to the sectarian balance of the region, especially in Lebanon. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have moved into Jordan's cities and put a heavy strain on local economies. Neither country can sustain for long the added burden to public services, from water and electricity to health care and education. This stress can open doors for externally financed terrorist organizations to take the place of the state, as was the case with Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s. Without considerably more international aid, the entire region could well be facing increased instability and opportunities for extremists for the foreseeable future. Indeed, according to one study, "hosting refugees from neighboring states significantly increases the risk of armed conflict."¹⁹ Refugee camps provide militant groups with recruits and supplies, and refugee flows include within them fighters, weapons, and radical ideologies. In the case of Syria, these researchers found, refugee influxes to Lebanon raise its risk of civil war by 53.88 percent, and raise Jordan's conflict risk by 53.51 percent.²⁰

DOWNWARD SPIRAL

There is no question that the ongoing, deeply sectarian proxy war in Syria will undermine regional stability, and do so in ways that are both predictable and unexpected. But even before the current conflict became as severe as it is today, it was possible to envision the general—negative—direction of regional trends. As the NIC put it:

Chronic instability will be a feature of the region because of the growing weakness of the state and the rise of sectarianism, Islam, and tribalism. The challenge will be particularly acute in states such as Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Syria where sectarian tensions were often simmering below the surface as autocratic regimes co-opted minority groups and imposed harsh measures to keep ethnic rivalries in check. In [the event of a more fragmented Iraq or Syria, a Kurdistan would not be inconceivable. Having split up before, Yemen is likely to be a security concern with weak central government, poverty, unemployment [and] with a young population that will go from 28 million today to 50 million in 2025. Bahrain could also become a cockpit for growing Sunni-Shia rivalry, which could be destabilizing for the Gulf region.²¹ pg. 14-18

And, each additional proxy war makes a Saudi-Iran nuclear war more likely

Murray 14 - Associate director @ Henry Jackson Society [Douglas Murray (Founded the Centre for Social Cohesion, a think tank studying extremism and terrorism in the UK) "Why the great Sunni-Shia conflict is getting ever closer to the surface," *Yemen Times*, Published on 28 January 2014, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/okrhwas>]

The Middle East is not simply falling apart. It is taking a different shape, along very clear lines—far older ones than those the Western powers rudely imposed on the region nearly a century ago. Across the whole continent those borders are in the process of cracking and breaking. But while that happens the

region's two most ambitious centers of power—the house of Saud and the Ayatollahs in Iran—find themselves fighting each other not just for influence but even, perhaps, for survival.

The way in which what is going on in the Middle East has become a religious war has long been obvious. Just take this radio exchange, caught at the ground level earlier this month, between two foreign fighters in Syria, the first from Al-Qaeda's Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the second from the Free Syrian army (FSA). "You apostate infidels," says the first. "We've declared you to be 'apostates,' you heretics. You don't know Allah or his prophet, you creature. What kind of Islam do you follow?" To which the FSA fighter responds, "Why did you come here? Go fight Israel, brother." Only to be told, "Fighting apostates like you people takes precedence over fighting the Jews and the Christians. All imams concur on that."

The religious propulsion of many of the fighters who have flooded into Syria in the three years of its civil war—400 or more from Britain alone—is beyond doubt. From the outset this has been a confrontation inflamed by religious sectarianism. In the first stages of the Syrian conflict the Shia militia of Hezbollah were sent by their masters in Iran to fight on the side of Iran's ally Bashar Al-Assad. But those of a different political and religious orientation made their own moves against this. Across Britain and Europe, not to mention the wider Middle East, many thousands of young men listened to the call of religious leaders like the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz Al-Asheik and Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, who last year declared that Hezbollah is in fact not the "army of God," as its name almost suggests, but rather the "army of Satan." Sheikh Qaradawi declared that "every Muslim trained to fight and capable of doing that [must] make himself available" for jihad in Syria.

It is perhaps inevitable that with the amount of regional influence at stake, and the quantity of natural resources, there would be numerous powers involved in trying to dictate the Syrian endgame. But as the country's civil war has ground on and the region as a whole has started to fall into a maelstrom, there is not a party or country that has not been shocked by one particular new reality. That is the fact that what has hitherto been the most important global player has decided to take a back seat. When two major Iraqi cities fell to Al-Qaeda forces last week, the American secretary of state, John Kerry, expressed concern but stressed that for the Iraqi government this was now "their fight."

One of the cities was Fallujah, the site of the bloodiest battle of the Iraq war, where 10,000 British and American troops fought to depose the Islamists. It is now back under jihadi control, with the black flag of Al-Qaeda proudly flying—and the West does not want to know. Although there are Syrian cities also now under Al-Qaeda control, the U.S. and its allies remain unmoved over acting in that country either. To an extent, what is happening in the Middle East is what happens when America and the West suddenly lose interest. But for the U.S., the reasons for that new lack of interest are obvious. With America soon predicted to attain energy independence, why should the country continue to involve itself deeply in a region which has cost it so much in blood, treasure and international reputation? Why should the U.S. Fifth Fleet continue to attempt to maintain regional security in a continent whose regional resources are increasingly rewarding nobody so much as the Communist Party of China? For the U.K. and other lesser western powers, declining involvement in the region is neither a moral nor an interest-based decision. It is simply a decision based on the fact—as the last decade has proved—that we no longer have either the cash or the commitment to effect any decent outcome in the region. If this remains a reality which is too rarely admitted here at home, it was long ago scented in the winds of the region. And as the new reality dawned, it was inevitable that the various factions in Syria's civil war would reach out to anybody in the region who shared their broadest goals. Vice versa, the regional powers ended up looking for anybody who could plausibly assist them with the means and methods to

reach their own ends. And so it is that a Middle Eastern proxy-war which had already reached as far as Washington, D.C. has found its way right back to the very doorsteps of the countries that were propelling it. And how a war of religion also become a war of good old-fashioned statecraft. From the outset of the Syrian uprising, it was inevitable that Iran would weigh in on the side of its client in Damascus. Indeed, so desperate were the mullahs in Tehran to do everything they could to protect their own interests that they even put up with protests at home from people starved of basic supplies complaining about their own government pouring millions into Syria's civil war.

But the next step was just as predictable. Saudi Arabia, which fears Iranian influence spreading any further than it has already throughout the region, began to back the opposition. Starting cautiously, in recent months that caution has retreated and Saudi is now supporting groups as close to Al-Qaeda-linked forces as to make little difference. Desperate measures, certainly. But for the Saudi leadership these are desperate times. Though it is a battle that has been brewing for decades.

There has always been the ongoing tension of Bahrain, which is under Saudi domination but which Iran seeks for itself. But then there is the quieter battle for influence in the Gulf states, which, while interventionist at times, quiver before the clashing of these bigger beasts. It was only as Syria fell apart and the regional powers were pulled inexorably into a more open battle, that the cold war between Iran and Saudi found its hot battleground.

There are those who think that the region as a whole may be starting to go through something similar to what Europe went through in the early 17th century during the 30 Years' War, when Protestant and Catholic states battled it out. This is a conflict which is not only bigger than Al-Qaeda and similar groups, but far bigger than any of us. It is one which will re-align not only the Middle East, but the religion of Islam.

There is a significant likelihood—as intra-Muslim sectarian tension has had fallout even in Britain and Europe—that this could be the case. Or perhaps the region is going to descend into a complex miasma of slaughter as surely as Europe did a century ago. Either way there will be a need for a Treaty of Westphalia-style solution—a redrawing of boundaries in a region where boundaries have been bursting for decades.

But for the time being, a distinct and timeless standoff between two regional powers, with religious excuses and religiously affiliated proxies will in all probability remain the main driver of this conflict. Certainly the sides remain fundamentally irreconcilable. As one of Saudi Arabia's most important figures, Prince Turki Al-Faisal, said on a recent visit to London, "Saudi Arabia is the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the birthplace of Islam. As such, it is the eminent leader of the wider Muslim world. Iran portrays itself as the leader of not just the minority Shiite world, but of all Muslim revolutionaries interested in standing up to the West."

Prince Turki decried Iran's "meddling" and its "destabilizing efforts in the countries with Shia majorities—Iraq and Bahrain—as well as in those countries with significant minority Shia communities such as Kuwait, Lebanon and Yemen." As he said, "Saudi Arabia will oppose any and all of Iran's actions in other countries, because it is Saudi Arabia's position that Iran has no right to meddle in other nations' internal affairs, especially those of Arab states."

Saudi officials more recently called for the Iranian leadership to be summoned to the International Criminal Court in The Hague for war crimes. Then, just the month before last, as the P5+1 countries eased sanctions on Iran after arriving at an interim deal in Geneva, Saudi saw its greatest fear—a nuclear Iran—grow more likely. And in the immediate aftermath of the Geneva deal, Saudi sources darkly warned of the country now taking Iranian matters "into their own hands." There are rumors that the

Saudis would buy nuclear bombs "off the shelf" from their friends in Pakistan if Iran ever reaches anything like the nuclear threshold. In that case, this Westphalian solution could be prefaced with a mushroom cloud.

AND, That triggers nuclear civil wars throughout the Mideast

Ynet News 15 ["An ethnic war in Iran is only a matter of time," May 29, 2015, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/p6xpc02>

On Independence Day, I received a message on Facebook from a man who lives in Iraq and wanted to congratulate the State of Israel on its independence and thank it for destroying Saddam Hussein's nuclear reactor in 1981.

If it were not for that, he wrote, Iraq would have been filled with nuclear facilities, and imagine what would happen now, with the all-out war taking place there, where there are no rules and no limits and everything is permitted. Israel saved the Iraqi people, he wrote and thanked us.

Indeed, Saddam Hussein's Osirak reactor, had it remained, would now be in the area occupied by the Islamic State in the al-Anbar province. What would the world do then?

His messages raises a lot of interest not just about what happened and what was prevented, but also about what will happen. Iran is an ethnically, religiously and tribally torn country, just like Iraq and Syria, and maybe even more. It has no majority ethnic group, and the Persians, because of the negative birthrate, have already become a minority, although they are the largest minority among all other minorities, 24%. The others are Azeris, Balochs (Sunnis), Tajiks (Sunni), Lurs, Turkmens (Sunnis), Kurds (mostly Sunnis), Arabs (Sunnis) and others.

Some of these minorities want to **split from Iran** and connect their territory to other countries. The Azeris want to join Azerbaijan; the Balochs want to join Pakistan; the Kurds want to establish the "Great Kurdistan," which will extend over parts of Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran; and the Arabs want to establish their own independent state which will be called Ahwaz in Arabic or Khuzestan in Persian.

In other words, a breakup and a **Sunni-Shiite ethnic war** and a war between different ethnic minorities is only a matter of time in Iran. The ground is already on fire, and there are constant conflicts between the Balochs and Ahwazi Arabs and the regime, which is oppressing them with an iron fist.

The only thing that is still keeping this huge disintegrating country together is the fear of the void that may be created instead of the hated regime. They are afraid to become Syria, but when the ethnic and religious impulses rage, that **can no longer be stopped**. That's why it's important for Iran to **divert the attention to Israel** – in order to hide this destructive internal hostility.

Imagine Iran falling apart like Syria, Iraq, Libya or Yemen in a civil war with armed militias and nuclear facilities all over the area – **what a danger of mass destruction** that will be. It doesn't have to be ready bombs. With radioactive materials one can prepare "dirty nuclear bombs" or other means of horror, and we already know that there is no mercy between the Sunnis and the Shiites – they just don't have a nuclear weapon yet.

The American administration is naively assuming that the Iranian regime will continue to rule the area, but the Bashar Assad or Muammar Gaddafi regimes were as strong, and so were the regimes in Egypt and Yemen. In addition, Iran is a sort of **transit** country with representatives from all the nations in the region – from **Afghanistan to Pakistan, from the Persian Gulf to Turkey** – and if it falls apart, dark terroristic forces will penetrate and infiltrate it.

The Persians are actually a relatively weak force among the regional forces, and it will spark a competition over who will take over the nuclear facilities faster and who will also **use them** – because forces like ISIS have **no responsibility or limits**.

Advantage 2 Groupthink-

ITP is government-mandated surveillance and snitching that promotes groupthink.

Kuvach 13 – Researcher for the Bill of Rights Defense Committee [Kyla Kuvach, ""Insider Threat" program promotes spying on colleagues," *Defending Dissent* Foundation, July 2, 2013, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/ph5elyb>

On October 7, 2011 President **Obama released Executive order 13587**, presenting a program that was ignored by major media coverage until recently.

The Executive Order purports to address "Structural Reforms to Improve the Security of Classified Networks and the Responsible Sharing and Safeguarding of Classified Information," embedded in which was his introduction of **the Insider Threat Task Force**. Until a recent article by McClatchy, however, it had gone largely unacknowledged by those concerned with the safety of whistleblowers in the post-Bradley Manning era.

Even now, with the "Where in the world is Edward Snowden?" conversation, **the Insider Threat Program remains largely outside the realm of discussion despite its enormous implications for government transparency and the rights of whistleblowers.**

The Insider Threat Program relies largely on one modus operandi: **government-mandated snitching**. Federal agency employees and their supervisors are instructed to be on the look-out for and report "high-risk persons or behaviors." Though this may seem vague, the program kindly clarifies that some specific instances that would prompt the categorization of individuals as "high-risk" would be stress, divorce or financial problems.

The program is a psychological "If you see something, say something," which potentially criminalizes anyone in the workplace who may be in an emotional slump. An individual going through a tough divorce, suffering the loss of a loved one, or struggling to make ends meet then has become the vaguely dangerous INSIDER THREAT.

I offer no exaggeration in this language: **the program turns federal agencies** like the Peace Corps, the Social Security Administration and the Educational and Agricultural Departments **into noir-like environments**, where each individual is potentially more paranoid and more guilty than the next. Though the "indicators" that may potentially signify threats are vague and, one might argue, not an employer's business (let alone the government's), the Program renders such individual behavior in the workplace a matter of national security.

Officials stated that Bradley Manning, for example, "exhibited behavior that could have forewarned his superiors that he posed a security risk" - perhaps they would argue the same for Edward Snowden, who had been a "trusted insider" before his leak. The general consensus seems to be that concerning oneself with co-workers' personal lives is necessary to the safety of our country.

Let's assume that some co-workers had suspected that Manning and Snowden might be "up to no good." If these co-workers did not snitch under the Insider Threat Program, they are now required to turn themselves or others in for failing to report breaches in security.

The danger here, as the news-breaking McClatchy article pointed out, is that a tendency towards dangerous "**group think**" develops, "the kind that was blamed for the CIA's erroneous assessment that **Iraq** was hiding weapons of mass destruction, a judgment that underpinned the 2003 U.S. **invasion**."

In the midst of "**group think**" danger and general paranoia, the Insider Threat Program **continues to be fairly ineffective**. Edward **Snowden's success in leaking NSA secrets stands as a prime example** of this: the Insider Threat Program was fully operational, but Snowden still managed to release sensitive government information.

Snowden's successful release of information may lead to an even more aggressive mutation of the Insider Threat Program, perhaps involving some material reward for snitches. The McClatchy article quotes Kel McClanahan, a Washington lawyer who specializes in national security law, as saying, "The only thing they haven't done here is reward [snitching]...I'm waiting for the time when you turn in a friend and you get a \$50 reward."

Though the Insider Threat Program seems almost a caricature, **it cannot be taken lightly**. It stands as yet another breach of privacy under the Obama presidency, and one that will **likely become more aggressive** in days to come. **In addition to requiring snitching, the program equates leaking information to journalists (whether classified or not) with espionage.**

AND, The toxic work environment will force people to toe the party line.

Taylor & Landay 13 – Investigative reporter @ McClatchy & National security and intelligence reporter @ McClatchy [Marisa Taylor & Jonathan S. Landay, "Obama's crackdown views leaks as aiding enemies of US," *McClatchy Washington Bureau*, June 20, 2013, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/lgfc4h>

President Barack Obama's unprecedented initiative, known as **the Insider Threat Program, is sweeping in its reach**. It has received scant public attention even though it **extends beyond the U.S. national security bureaucracies to most federal departments and agencies nationwide**, including the Peace Corps, the Social Security Administration and the Education and Agriculture departments. It emphasizes leaks of classified material, but **catchall definitions of "insider threat" give agencies latitude to pursue and penalize a range of other conduct.**

Government documents reviewed by McClatchy illustrate how some agencies are using that latitude to pursue unauthorized disclosures of **any information, not just classified material**. They also show how millions of federal employees and contractors must watch for "high-risk persons or behaviors" among co-workers and could face penalties, including criminal charges, for failing to report them. **Leaks to the media are equated with espionage.**

"Hammer this fact home . . . leaking is tantamount to aiding the enemies of the United States," says a June 1, 2012, Defense Department strategy for the program that was obtained by McClatchy.

The Obama administration is expected to hasten the program's implementation as the government grapples with the fallout from the leaks of top secret documents by Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor who revealed the agency's secret telephone data collection program. The case is only the latest in a series of what the government condemns as betrayals by "trusted insiders" who have harmed national security.

“Leaks related to national security can put people at risk,” Obama said on May 16 in defending criminal investigations into leaks. “They can put men and women in uniform that I’ve sent into the battlefield at risk. They can put some of our intelligence officers, who are in various, dangerous situations that are easily compromised, at risk. . . . So I make no apologies, and I don’t think the American people would expect me as commander in chief not to be concerned about information that might compromise their missions or might get them killed.”

As part of the initiative, Obama ordered greater protection for whistleblowers who use the proper internal channels to report official waste, fraud and abuse, but that’s hardly comforting to some national security experts and current and former U.S. officials. They worry that the Insider Threat Program won’t just discourage whistleblowing but will have other grave consequences for the public’s right to know and national security.

The program could make it easier for the government to stifle the flow of unclassified and potentially vital information to the public, while creating **toxic work environments poisoned by unfounded suspicions and spurious investigations of loyal Americans**, according to these current and former officials and experts. Some **non-intelligence agencies already are urging employees to watch their co-workers for “indicators” that include stress, divorce and financial problems.**

“It was just a matter of time before the Department of Agriculture or the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) started implementing, ‘Hey, let’s get people to snitch on their friends.’ The only thing they haven’t done here is reward it,” said Kel McClanahan, a Washington lawyer who specializes in national security law. “I’m waiting for the time when you turn in a friend and you get a \$50 reward.”

The Defense Department anti-leak strategy obtained by McClatchy spells out a zero-tolerance policy. Security managers, it says, “must” reprimand or revoke the security clearances – a career-killing penalty – of workers who commit a single severe infraction or multiple lesser breaches “as an unavoidable negative personnel action.”

Employees must turn themselves and others in for failing to report breaches. “Penalize clearly identifiable failures to report security infractions and violations, including any lack of self-reporting,” the strategic plan says.

The Obama administration already was pursuing an unprecedented number of leak prosecutions, and some in Congress – long one of the most prolific spillers of secrets – favor tightening restrictions on reporters’ access to federal agencies, making many U.S. officials reluctant to even disclose unclassified matters to the public.

The policy, which partly **relies on behavior profiles**, also **could discourage creative thinking and fuel conformist “group think”** of the kind that was blamed for the CIA’s erroneous assessment that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction, a judgment that underpinned the 2003 U.S. invasion.

“The real danger is that you get a **bland common denominator** working in the government,” warned Ilana Greenstein, a former CIA case officer who says she quit the agency after being falsely accused of being a security risk. “You don’t get people speaking up when there’s wrongdoing. You **don’t get people who look at things in a different way and who are willing to stand up for things.** What you get are people who **toe the party line**, and that’s really dangerous for national security.”

AND, Groupthink undermines foreign policy decision making. Active checks will force the administration to find alternatives

Kennedy 12 – JD from University of Southern California [Brandon Kennedy (MA in Middle East Regional Studies from Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Science), “The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post-9/11 World,” *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal*, 21 S. Cal. Interdis. L.J. 633, (Spring 2012)

VIII. CONCLUSION

This Note has highlighted the danger of **groupthink** syndrome in **presidential foreign-policy decision making**. As the examples of groupthink fiascos in presidential administrations have demonstrated, **groupthink can severely deteriorate decision-making processes**, thereby **reducing the likelihood that an efficient outcome will result**. In the post-9/11 world, **an increased likelihood that this danger will manifest, particularly during "wartime," has resulted from a continuing expansion of presidential powers**.ⁿ²⁶⁹ While President Obama and his decision-making team seem to have successfully prevented groupthink in the decision-making process that led to the increase in troops in the War in Afghanistan, it is important that current and future administration members remain alert to the dangers of groupthink to avoid the **foreign policy fiascos** of past administrations.

Nevertheless, it is equally important that external actors such as Congress, the public, and the press **actively check** and engage with the president and his or her advisers to prevent the excesses of executive-branch power that contribute to the antecedent conditions for groupthink syndrome. The inquiry does not end here. Further studies should, for example, explore the applicability of successful anti-groupthink decision-making procedures employed in other institutions, such as the military, in which political influence is low at the lower and middle levels of command.

While this Note does not attempt to provide a panacea, the recommendations contained herein can do much to reduce the likelihood of future executive-branch groupthink. This **reduction in groupthink would go** [^{*680}] **a long way toward improving the quality of presidential decision-making processes regarding foreign policy and, as a result, would increase the likelihood that decision makers explore and ultimately implement the most efficient course of action.**//AT: CP

AND, Groupthink is laying the groundwork for confrontation with Russia. A lack of original thought and skepticism will make it a replay of Iraq.

Parry 15 - Investigative reporter and founder of the Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ), a non-profit US-based independent news service. [Robert Parry (Broke the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s.), “Enforcing the Ukraine ‘Group Think’” *Consortiumnews.com*, May 9, 2015, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/nkff5zu>

So, **as the United States rushes into a new Cold War with Russia, we are seeing the makings of a new McCarthyism**, challenging the patriotism of anyone who doesn't **get in line**. But this conformity presents a serious threat to U.S. national security and even the future of the planet. We saw a similar pattern

with the rush to war in Iraq, but a military clash with nuclear-armed Russia is a crisis of a much greater magnitude.

One of Professor Cohen's key points has been that Official Washington's "**group think**" about post-Soviet Russia has been **misguided** from the start, **laying the groundwork for** today's **confrontation**. In Cohen's view, to understand why Russians are so alarmed by U.S. and NATO meddling in Ukraine, you have to go back to those days after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Instead of working with the Russians to transition carefully from a communist system to a pluralistic, capitalist one, the U.S. prescription was "shock therapy."

As American "free market" experts descended on Moscow during the pliant regime of Boris Yeltsin, well-connected Russian thieves and their U.S. compatriots plundered the country's wealth, creating a handful of billionaire "oligarchs" and leaving millions upon millions of Russians in a state of near starvation, with a collapse in life expectancy rarely seen in a country not at war.

Yet, despite the desperation of the masses, American journalists and pundits hailed the "democratic reform" underway in Russia with glowing accounts of how glittering life could be in the shiny new hotels, restaurants and bars of Moscow. Complaints about the suffering of average Russians were dismissed as the grumblings of losers who failed to appreciate the economic wonders that lay ahead.

As recounted in his 2001 book, *Failed Crusade*, Cohen correctly describes this fantastical reporting as journalistic "malpractice" that left the American people misinformed about the on-the-ground reality in Russia. **The widespread suffering led Putin**, who succeeded Yeltsin, to pull back on the wholesale privatization, **to punish some oligarchs and to restore some of the social safety net.**

Though the U.S. mainstream media portrays Putin as essentially a tyrant, his elections and approval numbers indicate that he commands broad popular support, in part, because he stood up to some oligarchs (though he still worked with others). Yet, Official Washington continues to portray oligarchs whom Putin jailed as innocent victims of a tyrant's revenge.

After Putin pardoned jailed oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the neocon Freedom House sponsored a Washington dinner in Khodorkovsky's honor, hailing him as one of Russia's political heroes. "I have to say I'm impressed by him," declared Freedom House President David Kramer. "But he's still figuring out how he can make a difference."

New York Times writer Peter Baker fairly swooned at Khodorkovsky's presence. "If anything, he seemed stronger and deeper than before" prison, Baker wrote. "The notion of prison as cleansing the soul and ennobling the spirit is a powerful motif in Russian literature."

Yet, even Khodorkovsky, who is now in his early 50s, acknowledged that he "grew up in Russia's emerging Wild West capitalism to take advantage of what he now says was a corrupt privatization system," Baker reported. In other words, Khodorkovsky was admitting that he obtained his vast wealth through a corrupt process, though by referring to it as the "Wild West" Baker made the adventure seem quite dashing and even admirable when, in reality, Khodorkovsky was a key figure in the plunder of Russia that impoverished millions of his countrymen and sent many to early graves.

In the 1990s, Professor Cohen was one of the few scholars with the courage to challenge the prevailing boosterism for Russia's "shock therapy." He noted even then the danger of mistaken "conventional wisdom" and how it strangles original thought and necessary skepticism.

"Much as Russia scholars prefer consensus, even orthodoxy, to dissent, most journalists, one of them tells us, are 'devoted to group-think' and 'see the world through a set of standard templates,'" wrote Cohen. "For them to break with 'standard templates' requires not only introspection but retrospection, which also is not a characteristic of either profession."

AND, Current politics make US uniquely vulnerable to groupthink triggering a nuclear war over Ukraine

Parry 15 - Investigative reporter and founder of the Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ), a non-profit US-based independent news service. [Robert Parry (Broke the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s.), "Ready for Nuclear War over Ukraine?" *Consortiumnews.com*, February 23, 2015, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/qbp5pr7>

A senior Ukrainian official is urging the West to risk a nuclear conflagration in support of a "full-scale war" with Russia that he says authorities in Kiev are now seeking, another sign of the extremism that pervades the year-old, U.S.-backed regime in Kiev.

In a recent interview with Canada's CBC Radio, Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said, "Everybody is afraid of fighting with a nuclear state. We are not anymore, in Ukraine — we've lost so many people of ours, we've lost so much of our territory."

Prystaiko added, "However dangerous it sounds, we have to stop [Russian President Vladimir Putin] somehow. For the sake of the Russian nation as well, not just for the Ukrainians and Europe." The deputy foreign minister announced that Kiev is preparing for "full-scale war" against Russia and wants the West to supply lethal weapons and training so the fight can be taken to Russia.

"What we expect from the world is that the world will stiffen up in the spine a little," Prystaiko said.

Yet, what is perhaps most remarkable about Prystaiko's "Dr. Strangelove" moment is that it produced almost no reaction in the West. You have a senior Ukrainian official saying that the world should risk nuclear war over a civil conflict in Ukraine between its west, which favors closer ties to Europe, and its east, which wants to maintain its historic relationship with Russia.

Why should such a pedestrian dispute justify the possibility of vaporizing millions of human beings and conceivably ending life on the planet? Yet, instead of working out a plan for a federalized structure in Ukraine or even allowing people in the east to vote on whether they want to remain under the control of the Kiev regime, the world is supposed to risk nuclear annihilation.

But therein lies one of the under-reported stories of the Ukraine crisis: There is a madness to the Kiev regime that the West doesn't want to recognize because to do so would upend the dominant narrative of "our" good guys vs. Russia's bad guys. If we begin to notice that the right-wing regime in Kiev is crazy and brutal, we might also start questioning the "Russian aggression" mantra.

According to the Western “**group think**,” the post-coup Ukrainian government “shares our values” by favoring democracy and modernity, while the rebellious ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine are “Moscow’s minions” representing dark forces of backwardness and violence, personified by Russia’s “irrational” President Putin. In this view, the conflict is a clash between the forces of good and evil where there is no space for compromise.

Yet, there is a craziness to this “group think” that is highlighted by Prystaiko’s comments. Not only does the Kiev regime display a cavalier attitude about dragging the world into a nuclear catastrophe but it also has deployed armed neo-Nazis and other right-wing extremists to wage a dirty war in the east that has involved torture and death-squad activities.

Not Since Adolf Hitler

No European government, since Adolf Hitler’s Germany, has seen fit to dispatch Nazi storm troopers to wage war on a domestic population, but the Kiev regime has and has done so knowingly. Yet, across the West’s media/political spectrum, there has been a studious effort to cover up this reality, even to the point of ignoring facts that have been well established.

The New York Times and the Washington Post have spearheaded this journalistic malfeasance by putting on blinders so as not to see Ukraine’s neo-Nazis, such as when describing the key role played by the Azov battalion in the war against ethnic Russians in the east.

On Feb. 20, in a report from Mariupol, the Post cited the Azov battalion’s importance in defending the port city against a possible rebel offensive. Correspondent Karoun Demirjian wrote:

“Petro Guk, the commander of the Azov battalion’s reinforcement operations in Mariupol, said in an interview that the battalion is ‘getting ready for’ street-to-street combat in the city. The Azov battalion, now a regiment in the Ukrainian army, is known as one of the fiercest fighting forces in the pro-Kiev operation.

“But ... it has pulled away from the front lines on a scheduled rest-and-retraining rotation, Guk said, leaving the Ukrainian army — a less capable force, in his opinion — in its place. His advice to residents of Mariupol is to get ready for the worst.

“‘If it is your home, you should be ready to fight for it, and accept that if the fight is for your home, you must defend it,’ he said, when asked whether residents should prepare to leave. Some are ready to heed that call, as a matter of patriotic duty.”

The Post’s stirring words fit with the Western media’s insistent narrative and its refusal to include meaningful background about the Azov battalion, which is known for marching under Nazi banners, displaying the Swastika and painting SS symbols on its helmets.

The New York Times filed a similarly disingenuous article from Mariupol on Feb. 11, depicting the ethnic Russian rebels as barbarians at the gate with the Azov battalion defending civilization. Though providing much color and detail – and quoting an Azov leader prominently – the Times left out the salient and well-known fact that the Azov battalion is composed of neo-Nazis.

But this inconvenient truth – that neo-Nazis have been central to Kiev’s “self-defense forces” from last February’s coup to the present – would disrupt the desired propaganda message to American readers. So the New York Times just ignores the Nazism and refers to Azov as a “volunteer unit.”

Yet, this glaring omission is prima facie proof of journalistic bias. There’s no way that the editors of the Post and Times don’t know that the presence of neo-Nazis is newsworthy. Indeed, there’s a powerful irony in this portrayal of Nazis as the bulwark of Western civilization against the Russian hordes from the East. It was, after all, the Russians who broke the back of Nazism in World War II as Hitler sought to subjugate Europe and destroy Western civilization as we know it.

That the Nazis are now being depicted as defenders of Western ideals has to be the ultimate man-bites-dog story. But it goes essentially unreported in the New York Times and Washington Post as does the inconvenient presence of other Nazis holding prominent positions in the post-coup regime, including Andriy Parubiy, who was the military commander of the Maidan protests and served as the first national security chief of the Kiev regime. [See Consortiumnews.com’s “Ukraine, Through the US Looking Glass.”]

The Nazi Reality

Regarding the Azov battalion, the Post and Times have sought to bury the Nazi reality, but both have also acknowledged it in passing. For instance, on Aug. 10, 2014, a Times’ article mentioned the neo-Nazi nature of the Azov battalion in the last three paragraphs of a lengthy story on another topic.

“The fighting for Donetsk has taken on a lethal pattern: The regular army bombards separatist positions from afar, followed by chaotic, violent assaults by some of the half-dozen or so paramilitary groups surrounding Donetsk who are willing to plunge into urban combat,” the Times reported.

“Officials in Kiev say the militias and the army coordinate their actions, but the militias, which count about 7,000 fighters, are angry and, at times, uncontrollable. One known as Azov, which took over the village of Marinka, flies a neo-Nazi symbol resembling a Swastika as its flag.” [See Consortiumnews.com’s “NYT Whites Out Ukraine’s Brownshirts.”]

Similarly, the Post published a lead story last Sept. 12 describing the Azov battalion in flattering terms, saving for the last three paragraphs the problematic reality that the fighters are fond of displaying the Swastika:

“In one room, a recruit had emblazoned a swastika above his bed. But Kirt [a platoon leader] ... dismissed questions of ideology, saying that the volunteers — many of them still teenagers — embrace symbols and espouse extremist notions as part of some kind of ‘romantic’ idea.”

Other news organizations have been more forthright about this Nazi reality. For instance, the conservative London Telegraph published an article by correspondent Tom Parfitt, who wrote: “Kiev’s use of volunteer paramilitaries to stamp out the Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk ‘people’s republics’ ... should send a shiver down Europe’s spine.

“Recently formed battalions such as Donbas, Dnipro and Azov, with several thousand men under their command, are officially under the control of the interior ministry but their financing is murky, their training inadequate and their ideology often alarming. The Azov men use the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf’s Hook) symbol on their banner and members of the battalion are openly white supremacists, or anti-Semites.”

Based on interviews with militia members, the Telegraph reported that some of the fighters doubted the Holocaust, expressed admiration for Hitler and acknowledged that they are indeed Nazis.

Andriy Biletsky, the Azov commander, “is also head of an extremist Ukrainian group called the Social National Assembly,” according to the Telegraph article which quoted a commentary by Biletsky as declaring: “The historic mission of our nation in this critical moment is to lead the White Races of the world in a final crusade for their survival. A crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen.”

The Telegraph questioned Ukrainian authorities in Kiev who acknowledged that they were aware of the extremist ideologies of some militias but insisted that the higher priority was having troops who were strongly motivated to fight.

Azov fighters even emblazon the Swastika and the SS insignia on their helmets. NBC News reported: “Germans were confronted with images of their country’s dark past ... when German public broadcaster ZDF showed video of Ukrainian soldiers with Nazi symbols on their helmets in its evening newscast.”

But it’s now clear that far-right extremism is not limited to the militias sent to kill ethnic Russians in the east or to the presence of a few neo-Nazi officials who were rewarded for their roles in last February’s coup. The fanaticism is present at the center of the Kiev regime, including its deputy foreign minister who speaks casually about a “full-scale war” with nuclear-armed Russia.

An Orwellian World

In a “normal world,” U.S. and European journalists would explain to their readers how insane all this is; how a dispute over the pace for implementing a European association agreement while also maintaining some economic ties with Russia could have been worked out within the Ukrainian political system, that it was not grounds for a U.S.-backed “regime change” last February, let alone a civil war, and surely not nuclear war.

But these are clearly not normal times. To a degree that I have not seen in my 37 years covering Washington, there is a totalitarian quality to the West’s current “group think” about Ukraine with virtually no one who “matters” deviating from the black-and-white depiction of good guys in Kiev vs. bad guys in Donetsk and Moscow.

And, if you want to see how the “objective” New York Times dealt with demonstrations in Moscow and other Russian cities protesting last year’s coup against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, read Sunday’s dispatch by the Times’ neocon national security correspondent Michael R. Gordon, best known as the lead writer with Judith Miller on the infamous “aluminum tube” story in 2002, helping to set the stage for the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Here’s how Gordon explained the weekend’s anti-coup protests: “The official narrative as reported by state-run television in Russia, and thus accepted by most Russians, is that the uprising in Ukraine last year was an American-engineered coup, aided by Ukrainian Nazis, and fomented to overthrow Mr. Yanukovich, a pro-Russian president.”

In other words, the Russians are being brainwashed while the readers of the New York Times are getting their information from an independent news source that would never be caught uncritically distributing government propaganda, another example of the upside-down Orwellian world that Americans now live in. [See, for example, “NYT Retracts Russian Photo Scoop.”]

In our land of the free, there is no “official narrative” and the U.S. government would never stoop to propaganda. Everyone just happily marches in lockstep behind the conventional wisdom of a faultless Kiev regime that “shares our values” and can do no wrong — while ignoring the brutality and madness of coup leaders who deploy Nazis and **invite a nuclear holocaust for the world.**

AND, Only our Ukraine scenario risks human extinction. Other scenarios will have a far more “limited” impact

Baum 14 - Executive Director @ Global Catastrophic Risk Institute [Seth Baum (Ph.D. in Geography @ Pennsylvania State University and a Post-Doctoral Fellowship @ Columbia University Center for Research on Environmental Decisions), “Best And Worst Case Scenarios for Ukraine Crisis: World Peace And Nuclear War,” *Huffington Post*, Updated: 05/07/2014 5:59 am EDT, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/lxx49og>

Here's the short version: The best case scenario has the Ukraine crisis being resolved diplomatically through increased Russia-Europe cooperation, which would be a big step towards world peace. The worst case scenario has the crisis escalating into nuclear war between the United States and Russia, causing human extinction.

Let's start with the worst case scenario, nuclear war involving the American and Russian arsenals. How bad would that be? Put it this way: Recent analysis finds that a "limited" India-Pakistan nuclear war could kill two billion people via agricultural declines from nuclear winter. This "limited" war involves just 100 nuclear weapons. The U.S. and Russia combine to possess about 16,700 nuclear weapons. Humanity may not survive the aftermath of a U.S.-Russia nuclear war.

It seems rather unlikely that the U.S. and Russia would end up in nuclear war over Ukraine. Sure, they have opposing positions, but neither side has anywhere near enough at stake to justify such extraordinary measures. Instead, it seems a lot more likely that the whole crisis will get resolved with a minimum of deaths. However, the story has already taken some surprising plot twists. **We cannot rule out the possibility of it ending in direct nuclear war.**

A nuclear war could also occur inadvertently, i.e. when a false alarm is misinterpreted as real, and nuclear weapons are launched in what is believed to be a counterattack. There have been several alarmingly close calls of inadvertent U.S.-Russia nuclear war over the years. Perhaps the most relevant is the 1995 Norwegian rocket incident. A rocket carrying scientific equipment was launched off northern Norway. Russia detected the rocket on its radar and interpreted it as a nuclear attack. Its own nuclear forces were put on alert and Boris Yeltsin was presented the question of whether to launch Russia's nuclear weapons in response. Fortunately, Yeltsin and the Russian General Staff apparently sensed it was a false alarm and declined to launch. Still, the disturbing lesson from this incident is that nuclear war could begin even during periods of calm.

AND, We shouldn't ignore the secondary effects – It will undermine the credibility of US security guarantees

Allison 14 - Director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs [Graham Allison, "Could the Ukraine Crisis Spark a World War?," *The National Interest*, May 7, 2014, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/l4yqyol>]

Some hard-headed realists have argued that even if Ukraine shrinks with the loss of several autonomous republics (as Georgia did in 2008 when Abkhazia and South Ossetia seceded), the impact on American interests would be limited. They also argue that since it is now clear that no one (other than Russia) is prepared to fight for Ukraine, what is happening is unfortunate but not that important. What this complacency overlooks are potential secondary effects. Two deserve attention.

First, on the current track, the combination of Putin's actions and Western reactions will poison relations between Putin and Obama for the remainder of his two-and-a-half years in office. This is the critical period for what has been a promising prospect of a negotiated agreement that stops Iran verifiably (and interruptibly) short of a nuclear bomb. If an isolated Russian spoiler undermines the sanctions regime that has motivated Iranian interest in a negotiated solution, and Iran resumes or accelerates the nuclear program it was pursuing before the current pause, the United States and Israel will rapidly come to a crossroad. They will be forced to choose between seeing Iran acquire a nuclear bomb or bombing it to prevent that happening, igniting what is likely to become a wider war in the Middle East.

Second, think about the Baltics. Imagine a scenario in which we see a replay of Crimea or Donetsk in Latvia where one quarter of the population are ethnic Russians or Russian speakers. With or without Putin's encouragement, several hundred of them occupy government buildings in Riga; Latvian police and security services evict them in an operation that turns violent and leaves as many corpses as last week's fire in Odessa; the occupiers call on Putin to honor his pledge to "defend the rights of compatriots." If the principles and precedent established by the Putin Doctrine lead to Russia's little green men without insignia entering Latvia in what threatens to become another creeping annexation, who will fight for Latvia?

The brute fact that Latvia is a member of the NATO alliance is hard to ignore. The United States and other members have solemnly pledged themselves to regard "an attack upon one as an attack upon all." But will German troops come to Latvia's rescue? And if they did, would a majority of Germans support that action? Would the French, or British? Would Americans?

If we do, we will cross a bright redline Republican and Democratic presidents assiduously avoided over four decades of Cold War: American and Russian troops would be killing each other. Any such conflict would raise risks of escalation in which each nuclear superpower remains capable of erasing the other from the map. But if we don't, we will see a precipitous collapse of the credibility of U.S. security guarantees that have been the central pillar of the international security architecture the United States has constructed since World War II. Not only European allies, but Japan, South Korea, and others who have staked their survival on a U.S. security umbrella will look to their own defense. //AT:
Withdrawal/No intervention CP

AND, Diminished US credibility risks miscalculated nuclear wars

Chertoff 14 – Former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security [Michael Chertoff, “The U.S. must stand behind its security obligations,” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2014, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/odtdxyq>

Of course, diminished U.S. credibility is a result of more than administration policy. Some neo-isolationist Republican lawmakers and advocacy groups have repeatedly disparaged the value of standing with our allies or been dismissive of aggression on the other side of the globe. They have supported budget cuts that seriously diminish U.S. military capabilities and contradict our promises of support for allies.

Make no mistake: A world that doubts whether the United States will stand with its allies is a much more dangerous world. If nations in the Middle East and Asia believe that we are irresolute in our security commitments, they will make their own arrangements. The risk of miscalculation leading to conflict will increase. Some nations will take the lesson that securing themselves requires obtaining nuclear capability. And when countries believe our red lines are revocable or mere bluffs, the danger that they will provoke a war increases, as did Saddam Hussein’s misreading of U.S. intentions in 1990, which led to the invasion of Kuwait.

AND, Ending the ITP is the only check on a rogue and adventurist executive branch

Goodman 13 - Senior fellow @ Center for International Policy. [Melvin A. Goodman (Former CIA analyst and a professor of international relations @ National War College), “The Need for National Security Leaks,” *Consortium News.com*, June 19, 2013, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/naftchn>

A major problem in the United States is not there are too many whistleblowers ... there are too few. Where were the whistleblowers when the Central Intelligence Agency was operating secret prisons; conducting torture and abuse; and kidnapping individuals off the streets in Europe and the Middle East and turning them over to foreign intelligence agencies that conducted torture and abuse?

Where were the whistleblowers when the National Security Agency violated the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution against “unreasonable searches and seizures” and conducted widespread warrantless eavesdropping? Where were the whistleblowers when the State Department permitted the use of a consulate to serve as a cover for an inadequately protected intelligence platform in Benghazi?

Where were the whistleblowers when the Pentagon was building secret facilities in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula in order to conduct military strikes in countries where the United States was not at war?

President Barack Obama, a Harvard-trained lawyer and former professor of constitutional law, has made it particularly difficult for whistleblowers and has displayed a stunning disregard for the balance of power and the need for oversight of foreign policy decision-making. He has pursued more leak investigations than all previous presidents combined since the passage of the Espionage Act in 1919.

Several press disclosures have been referred to the Justice Department for investigation, and in May 2013 the department subpoenaed two months of records for 20 telephone lines used by Associated Post

reporters and editors. This was the most aggressive federal seizure of media records since the Nixon administration.

Attorney General Eric Holder even departed from First Amendment norms by approving an affidavit for a search warrant that named a Fox News reporter as a possible co-conspirator in violations of the Espionage Act, because the reporter might have received classified information while doing his job.

President Obama has also inexplicably contributed to the need for whistleblowers by weakening the traditional institutions for oversight in the national security process, the Office of the Inspector General. Inspectors General are not popular institutions within the federal government, but they are essential for keeping the government honest by unearthing fraud, abuse and other illegal activities.

The Obama administration from the outset focused on weakening the OIG at the CIA by taking more than a year and a half to replace an outstanding IG, John Helgerson, whose staff had exposed the improprieties linked to extraordinary renditions as well as torture and abuse.

The most outrageous pursuit of a whistleblower was conducted against Thomas Drake, who determined that NSA eavesdroppers were squandering hundreds of millions of dollars on failed programs while ignoring privacy issues. Drake took his issues to the IG at NSA, the IG at the Pentagon, and to the congressional intelligence committees. (I am aware of individuals who have contacted congressional staffers with issues that required congressional scrutiny, but were warned that they would not receive a friendly reception from key members of the committee.)

After failing in these efforts, Drake turned to a reporter from the Baltimore Sun. As a result, Drake faced ten felony charges involving mishandling of classified information and obstruction of justice, which a judge wisely dismissed.

The case of Bradley Manning also demonstrates the mindset of the Obama administration and the mainstream media. Although Manning has entered a plea of guilty to charges that would give him a 20-year prison sentence, the government is pursuing a charge of aiding the enemy, which would mean a life sentence. The government has also ignored the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of a "speedy and public trial," with Manning's trial beginning on June 3, nearly three years after his arrest.

The military handling of Manning, particularly its imposition of unconscionable solitary confinement, has amounted to abuse and is in violation of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment." The scant coverage of the trial in the press is another example of the marginalization of a whistleblower.

The absence of checks and balances in the national security system over the past ten years has virtually assured the abuse of power that has taken place. In general, Congress has acquiesced in the questionable actions of both the Bush and Obama administrations since 2001, permitting foreign policy to be the sole preserve of the Executive Branch and not the shared responsibility of the President and the Congress.

Congressional intelligence committees have become advocates for the intelligence community, particularly the CIA, instead of rigorous watchdogs. Similarly, the Armed Services committees have been advocates for the Pentagon and have not monitored the abuses of weapon's acquisitions programs.

Since the Vietnam War, we have observed a system of judicial tolerance, with the Supreme Court only intervening on foreign policy matters to endorse the policies and powers of the President. This deferential attitude toward the White House has resulted in an absence of judicial scrutiny of illegalities, including warrantless eavesdropping and the destruction of the torture tapes at the CIA that documented torture going beyond methods authorized by the Justice Department.

Ironically, the destroyer of the 92 videotapes of interrogations, Jose Rodriguez, who ignored a White House order not to destroy the tapes and should have faced at least obstruction of justice charges, has published a book sanctioned by the CIA that maligns the OIG for a “holier-than-thou attitude and the prosecutorial ways they routinely treated fellow CIA employees.”

In addition to the failure of Congress and the courts to provide necessary regulation and oversight of the national security process, the mainstream media has been complacent about its watchdog role regarding secret agencies in a democratic arena. The media require the efforts of contrarians and whistleblowers in order to penetrate the secrecy of the policy and intelligence communities, but typically ignore the reprisals taken against whistleblowers.

Often, they disdain the information provided by whistleblowers that is critical of senior officials and government agencies – preferring to protect their access to these officials. David Ignatius of the Washington Post falsely claimed that journalists “instinctively side with leakers,” but he was quick to ridicule Edward Snowden who has exposed NSA’s spying on millions of Americans’ phone records and the Internet activity of hundreds of millions of foreigners.

Ignatius, moreover, has been an apologist for the CIA and has relied on clandestine operatives to present a one-sided picture of the CIA’s National Clandestine Service. His novel (Agents of Innocence) provided a laudatory account of CIA tradecraft, relying on sensitive leaks from a senior operations officer.

My own experience with the mainstream media as a whistleblower is revelatory. During my congressional testimony in 1991 against the nomination of Robert M. Gates as director of CIA, I provided background information to Elaine Sciolino of the New York Times in order to counter malicious rumors emanating from the White House that was designed to compromise my credibility.

Sciolino initially reported this information accurately, but then tilted to support Gates’s confirmation. In a conversation several weeks after the confirmation hearings, Sciolino explained that it was becoming obvious that Gates would be confirmed and would be an important source to her as a CIA director. She added that, as I would return to the National War College as a professor of international relations, I would be of little further use.

Sciolino noted that whistleblowers make good sources only in the short run, while journalists must rely on policymakers for long-term access and should not gratuitously offend them. This explains the conventional analysis offered by the press corps and its reluctance to challenge official sources.

As a result of the imbalance in the process of foreign policy decision-making, we have come full circle from President Woodrow Wilson, who wanted to make the “world safe for democracy,” to Presidents George W. Bush and Obama, who find the world too dangerous to honoring constitutional democracy.

The excesses of the Vietnam War; Watergate; Iran-Contra; and the Global War on Terror have contributed to the creation of a dangerous national security state and a culture of secrecy. Whistleblowers can help all of us decide whether the ends justify the means regarding these excesses.

Meanwhile, secrecy itself has fostered dangerous ignorance in the United States. The overuse of secrecy limits necessary debate and dialogue on foreign policy and deprives citizens of information on which to make policy and political judgments. Only a counter-culture of openness and a respect for the balance of power in the conduct of foreign policy can reverse the damage of the past decade.

As long as Congress defers to the President in the conduct of foreign policy; the courts intervene to prevent any challenge to the power of the President in the making of foreign policy; and the media defer to authorized sources, **we will need courageous whistleblowers.**

AND, It will go nuclear

Beres 15 - Professor of international law @ Purdue University [Louis Renee Beres, "Avoiding nuclear war: Israel's strategic options," The Jerusalem Post, 06/15/2015 21:34, pg. <http://tinyurl.com/npbq85s>

It is time to call things by their correct name. A **nuclear war in the Middle East is no longer inconceivable**. This is the case, moreover, even if Israel were somehow to remain the only nuclear weapons state in the chaotic region.

How is this possible? Significantly, a bellum atomicum could arrive in Israel not only as a "bolt from the blue" enemy nuclear missile attack, but also as a result, intended or unwitting, of escalation.

If, for example, certain Arab/**Islamic states were to begin hostilities with** conventional attacks upon Israel, Jerusalem could decide to respond, sooner or later, with thoughtfully calculated and correspondingly graduated **nuclear reprisals**. Alternatively, if these enemy states were to commence conflict by launching large-scale conventional attacks upon Israel, Jerusalem's conventional reprisals could then be met, sometime in the not-too-distant future, with certain enemy nuclear counter-strikes.