

# 1984 All Over Again. The Snowden NSA Revelations in Perspective

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## **Abstract**

In the discussion concerning the Snowden NSA revelations many have referred to Orwell's 1984. This paper highlights that Orwell identified two components--total surveillance and permanent war. The paper then looks at the actual year 1984 and argues that in that year was significant after all because both elements of today's War on Terror (surveillance and war) were being prepared. One was the Washington conference on the War on Terror, the third in a series initiated from Israel; the other, the preparation of a Continuity of Government (COG) programme by the Reagan administration, which foresaw mass surveillance, detention and repression in case of an attack on the US. The paper gives details on these events, linking the COG programme to Carl Schmitt's claim that true sovereignty resides in whoever can decide on the state of emergency. After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, NSA surveillance was restructured to cover all of Europe and Asia. In Europe this led to a detailed report on NSA spying in Europe for the European Parliament in 1998, but the NeoCons in the US were ratcheting up the COG/WarOnTerror programme and after 9/11, obtained universal consent for it. The paper raises the question whether in light of the detailed preparations and the endless war and mass surveillance that have now gone on for a decade, we can afford to continue to dismiss all critique of the official reading of 9/11 as conspiracy theory.

The revelations by Edward Snowden about the global surveillance infrastructure run by the United States National Security Agency (NSA), coming on the heels of the epochal disclosure of US war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq by Private First Class Bradley Manning, have led many to repeat the slogan of the ruling party of Oceania in *1984*, 'Big Brother Is Watching You'. In Orwell's nightmarish dystopia, 'the watching is done through ubiquitous telescreens... through which the Party simultaneously broadcasts lying propaganda and has everybody watched all the time for possible heresy.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fyvel, 1982, p. 197.

Yet universal submission to the all-pervading state by what his biographer calls Orwell's 'single mechanical invention for the future' was not just a matter of surveillance. It was more fundamentally ensured by a perennial state of war. Modelled, like *Animal Farm* four years earlier, on the political corruption of Soviet communism and the rise of Stalin, *1984* actually contains a learned analysis of the connection between war and repressive surveillance. Extensively quoted in the novel, its supposed author is Emmanuel Goldstein, the alter ego of Trotsky, the Enemy of the People and target of the daily Two Minutes' Hate. Bronstein/Goldstein's fictional *Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* gives Winston Smith, Orwell's tormented protagonist, relief from the oppressive reality in which he finds himself. 'The blissful feeling of being alone with the forbidden book, in a room with no telescreen, had not worn off... The book fascinated him, or more exactly, it reassured him. ... It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful, more systematic, less fear-ridden.'

So what does Goldstein have to say of the mechanisms by which fear is kept alive and turned into submission? Contemporary war, the not-so-fictional Marxist explains, 'if we judge it by the standards of previous wars, is merely an imposture.... It is now a purely internal affair.'

In the past, the ruling groups of all countries, although they might recognize their common interest and therefore limit the destructiveness of war, did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. The very word "war" therefore, has become misleading. It would probably be accurate to say that by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist.<sup>2</sup>

By inverting the year of writing, 1948, into 1984, Orwell expected to make a huge leap into the future, projecting what otherwise were very much the concerns of the early Cold War (and his own recollections of wartime London with its food

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<sup>2</sup> Orwell, 1954, pp. 160-1.

rationing and Nazi bombing raids). Europe had been absorbed by Russia into 'Eurasia', the British Empire by the United States into 'Oceania'. But actual 1984 arrived sooner than Orwell had estimated would be needed to turn all three (the third being 'Eastasia') into ultra-Stalinist dictatorships.

As to 'Eurasia', 1984 was the year of Yuri Andropov's death and his succession as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Konstantin Chernenko, with Mikhail Gorbachev on standby. The latter's investiture to supreme political office a year later demolished not only the remnants of Brezhnevite neo-Stalinism. It also entailed signing the act of capitulation in the arms race and the liquidation of the USSR itself, after the Soviet bloc had already melted away in 1989. That in turn was the year in which China, the candidate for Orwellian totalitarianism in East Asia, clamped down on the Tiananmen uprising. There were in fact telescreens on the square, supplied by Siemens Plessey as 'traffic control systems', and a Scoot surveillance system with US-made Pelco cameras that the Chinese authorities used to track down participants in the demonstrations afterwards.<sup>3</sup> But the ensuing repression served in the end to consolidate a trend similar to what happened in the decomposing Soviet Union—the controlled opening up to capitalist practices, not the restoration of the all-powerful state.<sup>4</sup>

By 1984, then, the two projected non-Anglo totalitarianisms were mutating away from their former selves. Oceania's own 1984 political event, the Reagan landslide against Walter Mondale in the November presidential election, would not exactly fit the bill of Big Brother's rule either. Only today, thanks to Snowden's revelations about the NSA's PRISM and XKeyscore programmes and the publication by WikiLeaks of Manning's exposure of US misdeeds in the War on Terror, are we confronted in real time with something approximating Orwell's nightmare—including, at Guantánamo and elsewhere, the torture practices by which Winston Smith is finally compelled to declare his love of Big Brother.

Clearly Julian Assange, holed up in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, or Manning, who held his own under US government maltreatment and whose verdict, in line with President Obama's on-camera, pre-trial judgement, was a harsh prison sentence—are not isolated Winston Smiths. Neither are Snowden, granted a

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<sup>3</sup> Wright, 1998, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Wang, 2009, p. 31.

temporary visa by the Russian authorities after five weeks in limbo in the Sheremetyevo Airport transit zone, and other whistleblowers. Their principled stance has aroused a world-wide, supportive audience, and the ongoing stream of revelations on aspects of the War on Terror thanks to the tireless work of investigative researchers, some of whom appear to have paid for it with their lives<sup>5</sup>, is no doubt keeping the rulers of 'Oceania' on edge.

The current world configuration of forces, then, differs fundamentally from Orwell's geopolitical chimera. The United States and its NATO clients find themselves increasingly unable to enforce global governance over a world of submissive nation-states, ranged against social revolution and open for business—a project for which Woodrow Wilson's response to the Russian Revolution provided the blueprint. Certainly in Europe, this submission is still operational, as testified by the shameful episode of the forced landing of the Bolivian president's plane last July. This act of embarrassing servility occurred on the suspicion that the presidential plane was carrying not just Evo Morales but also Edward Snowden, to whom Bolivia along with Venezuela and Nicaragua had offered asylum. Latin America indeed offers a more dignified spectacle as it resists US bullying, and Russia, Iran and China clearly feel no need to follow Washington's orders either.

Yet with the benefit of hindsight, the calendar year 1984 was a signal date in the process towards a real *1984*. It was in that year that the third and concluding conference was held in which the blueprint for a War on Terror, combined with suspension of civil rights, was discussed at the highest level in Washington D.C. Also, the period saw the beginning of exercises intended to prepare the establishment of an operational command structure under a state of emergency, a shadow government that James Mann characterises as 'the permanent, though hidden, national security apparatus of the United States, inhabitants of a world in which presidents may come and go, but America always keeps on fighting.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Rolling Stone* journalist Michael Hastings, apparently judged too close to confidential information on the war in Afghanistan, was assassinated by a suspected hacking of the controls of his Mercedes in June; former airline pilot Philip Marshall, the author of the *Big Bamboozle* (about 9/11), who likewise made the mistake of announcing new, spectacular disclosures, was found killed with his two teenage children in his apartment in March of this year.

<sup>6</sup> Mann, 2004, p. 145.

I will first briefly summarise the conversation culminating in the 1984 Washington conference on terrorism, before reminding the reader of how Carl Schmitt's argument about the state of emergency as the last line of defence of the existing order. This reasoning travelled across the Atlantic to be articulated again, albeit from a different angle, by Schmitt's admirer, Hans Morgenthau, the dean of Cold War realism in International Relations. Although the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 also removed the threat by which previous emergencies had been legitimated, the execution of the twin components of the US '1984' project, the War on Terror and the comprehensive National Security regime, only then began in earnest. It is this project, through which the Atlantic ruling class hopes to enforce social discipline in a climate of fear and pre-empt resistance to its failing economic order at home and abroad, which is being exposed today.

#### Blueprints for a War on Terror

The programme for a global war on terror was drafted in a series of conferences under the auspices of the Jonathan Institute (named after Benjamin Netanyahu's brother killed in the Entebbe raid on a hijacked Israeli passenger jet), the first of which was held in Jerusalem in July 1979. Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, whose Likud Party had come to power two years earlier, gave the opening address. The ascent of Begin, a former operative of the rightwing Zionist Irgun terror gang himself, consolidated the transformation of the Israeli state/society complex after the wars of 1967 and '73. In this, the second stage of its occupation of Palestine, the expulsion of the indigenous majority as in 1948 was no longer an option. It was one thing to label resistance, as all occupying powers in modern history have done, as terrorism, but quite another to actually pacify the West Bank and the other territories brought under Israeli control. Neither was it enough to gain Washington's consent for the occupation per se. Its geopolitical vulnerability and the depth of the neighbouring societies from which the Palestinian resistance could operate made some sort of 'forward defence' necessary, and given its much greater dependence on the United States after 1973 it was mandatory for the Likud government to ensure that it would be covered by the United States. Begin and the Likud bloc therefore sought to establish a common platform with the critics of the Nixon-Kissinger détente policies. The support of the military-industrial complex in

the US, including the Protestant fundamentalists and Christian Zionists, would allow the Israeli right to keep its society in the state of tension that ever since Ben Gurion's days had been judged necessary to maintain it as a distinct entity.<sup>7</sup>

The Jerusalem conference was attended by two US delegations, one led by Henry Jackson, the 'Senator for Boeing' and his entourage, the other by George H.W. Bush, former CIA director and then still a Republican presidential hopeful looking for a cause. Bush was accompanied among others by his friend Ray Cline, another old CIA hand. The conference's key theses were that a 'war on terror' had to be waged through pre-emptive attacks on states supporting terrorism; that a dedicated intelligence infrastructure be established; and that civil liberties be rolled back for those suspected of terrorism, and possibilities for preventive detention without charge as well as torture, widened. Simultaneously the 'terrorists' should be dehumanized in the eyes of the public.<sup>8</sup>

Identifying 'Moscow' as the hub of 'international terrorism' combined the plausible thesis of Soviet support for national liberation with two less obvious propaganda manoeuvres—creating a continuity between Cold War assumptions of nuclear surprise attack (itself constructed around the Pearl Harbour metaphor) and armed liberation movements; and substituting the actions of a political organisation's violent fringe for its usually less adventurous main body. This of course applies to the Palestinians as much as to, say, the Italian Left in the 1970s.

A follow-up anti-terrorism conference in Washington in April 1980 'under expanded auspices' also featured Henry Kissinger, Richard Pipes, and a host of neoconservatives from the US.<sup>9</sup> By that time, Reagan's first Secretary of State, Vietnam veteran and former NATO commander Alexander Haig, Jr, in a State Department Current Policy document gave the emerging narrative the official stamp of approval when he characterised terrorism as the greatest threat to world peace on account of its reliance on Moscow, the global nerve-centre. Basing himself on the proofs of Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network*, supposedly exposing a world-wide terror operation managed by the KGB but in fact based on previous CIA

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<sup>7</sup> Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> Ralph, 2008, p. 265.

<sup>9</sup> Callahan, 1990, p. 5. Garthoff, 1994, p. 23, does not mention Bush as a participant in the Jerusalem conference but the others do and his speech is in the conference proceedings, cf. Ralph, 2008 p. 285.

disinformation, Haig not only sought to de-legitimise national liberation movements but also expressly dismissed the concept of a 'Third World'.<sup>10</sup>

In 1981 Israel demonstrated how the strategy of 'going after terrorists' would work when it attacked Palestinian targets in Lebanon. It did so in retaliation for an assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador in London by the Palestinian Abu Nidal group, a terrorist cell penetrated by Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, but which actually had no presence in Lebanon. When PLO forces shelled Israeli West Bank settlements to retaliate for the attack on the Palestinians in Lebanon, Israel had the pretext to invade Lebanon with regular land forces, initiating an occupation of South Lebanon that would last until 2000. Ray Cline and another participant of the 1979 Jerusalem conference, SUNY terrorism expert Yonah Alexander, in fact based their 1984 book, *Terrorism: The Soviet Connection*, on PLO materials captured by the Israeli army in its incursion into Lebanon to support the claim that Palestinian resistance to occupation was directed from Moscow. In a study for the US Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, *State-Sponsored Terrorism*, they documented that the term 'national liberation' was Soviet propaganda, not a difficult task of course.<sup>11</sup>

This then was the background of the 1984 Jonathan Institute conference in Washington that again called for 'a broad-based, vigorous campaign against the terrorists and their sponsors'. Its participants this time included George W. Schultz, US Secretary of State after Haig's ouster; US Attorney General Ed Meese; FBI Director William Webster; Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin; journalists Claire Sterling, Arnaud de Borchgrave, George Will and Bob Woodward, and scholars Bernard Lewis of Princeton, Michael Ledeen of Georgetown, Eugene Rostow of Yale, and many others. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's UN ambassador at the time, convener of the conference and editor of the papers, defined the 'two main antagonists of democracy in the postwar world', communist totalitarianism and Islamic radicalism, as together constituting a 'worldwide network of terror'. What was needed in the West was a 'realignment of attitudes'. Marxism and Islam according to Netanyahu had combined in giving terrorism its impetus, and the

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<sup>10</sup> Roth and Ender, 1984, pp. 14-5, 37-8.

<sup>11</sup> Cline and Alexander, 1986.

United Nations had justified it by calling terrorism a struggle for national liberation.<sup>12</sup>

The collected papers, published a year after Gorbachev had taken over to preside over the demise of the Evil Empire, are almost surrealistic in their glowing depiction of imminent enslavement at the hands of the USSR. Today we may read with amazement the assessment by Benzion Netanyahu, Benjamin's father (and one-time secretary to the founder of revisionist Zionism, Zeev Jabotinski), that 'there can be no doubt about the Soviets' motive. Terrorism is the first general attack upon a free society which the enemies of freedom plan to take over'; or George Will's warning against 'denying the undeniable—the fact that we are under assault from the Soviet Union'. Yet the statements are relevant because they document how a conscious effort was made to carry over the rollback strategy against the USSR to a new age of preventive counterrevolution and global control.

The three main lines of the strategy formulated at the 1984 conference were, first, the idea of a forward defence against terrorism; secondly, getting the media to avoid any investigation into the possible motives of terrorists; and finally, the need for a Pearl Harbour-like event to shock people out of their complacency.

As to the first issue, renegade British Labourite Paul Johnson and NeoCon stalwart Eugene Rostow both praised Israel's 1982 Lebanon adventure as setting an example for terrorists worldwide. It sent a message to 'the master killers of Tehran and Tripoli', whilst Rostow claimed that intervention should be recognised as a right. George Shultz actually identified a 'League of Terror' composed of Libya, Syria, Iran, and North Korea, recommending that if intelligence warrants it, pre-emptive attack must always be an option. For as Republican senator Paul Laxalt put it, 'if we learned that Libya or Iran had obtained ... a nuclear weapon, would we really be obliged to wait until that weapon was used?'

As to the media strategy, John O'Sullivan, deputy editor of the *Times*, favourably compared the way the tabloids publicise only the horrors of an outrage, with the tendency of the quality press to try and explain the causes of terror (which he claimed works *for* the terrorists). Rallying the population in a terror emergency, as Italian analysts of the 1970s strategy of tension already noted, requires depicting 'terror' as *absolute evil*; approaching it analytically, in its true proportions, is best

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<sup>12</sup> Netanyahu, 1986, pp. 3, xi, 12.

avoided.<sup>13</sup> At the Washington conference however, TV moderator Ted Koppel expressed confidence that once war had been declared (which Johnson had failed to do in Vietnam), ‘then all kinds of societal pressures, and indeed legal pressures, [would] come to bear on the media to play a different role from the one they play right now’. Invoking a security emergency indeed reduces the space for democratic deliberation, or even suspends it altogether.<sup>14</sup> So what sort of emergency can achieve this?

This was the third theme covered at the 1984 conference, outlined by Netanyahu himself. Violence, he argued, was already so endemic in the international system that people’s sensibilities had been numbed. However,

Terrorism follows an inexorable, built-in escalation. To be effective, it must continually horrify and stupefy. Yet once we have become accustomed to a particular level of violence, *a new outrage is required to shock our sensibilities*. It used to be enough for terrorists to hijack a plane to attract international attention; next it became necessary to kill a few hostages; in the future, more violence will be required.<sup>15</sup>

Only if there would be one mighty blow, and then ‘a successful war on terrorism... not just erratic responses to individual terrorist acts’, the United States would be able to build ‘an anti-terrorist alliance ... with two or three or possibly more countries.’ This committed group of states would be in a position to ‘credibly threaten the offenders, and [it] alone can impel the neutrals to shed their neutrality’.<sup>16</sup>

At the Jerusalem conference in 1979, George H.W. Bush too had pleaded for ‘drastic surgery as the only reasonable course—[i.e.] determined action, firmness under the duress of blackmail, and swift and effective retribution’. However he had still expressed concern that even in a terror emergency, ‘the legitimate exercise of state power’ might be frustrated by the liberal conscience of ‘the open society’.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Sanguinetti, 1982, pp. 53-5.

<sup>14</sup> Elbe, 2009, p. 91.

<sup>15</sup> in Netanyahu, 1986., p. 218, emphasis added.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-6

<sup>17</sup> quoted in Ralph, 2008, p. 265.

Netanyahu in 1984 cut this short by stressing that if only the blow would be big enough, that could be solved. Then the ‘citizens in a democracy’, united in fear and seeing themselves as ‘soldiers in a common battle’, would be ‘prepared to endure sacrifice and even... immeasurable pain’.<sup>18</sup>

This takes us to the second leg of the War on Terror project, the Orwellian surveillance state.

### The Sovereign and the State of Emergency

The Reagan administration, building on Nixon-era emergency plans for dealing with the domestic repercussions of Vietnam and the black emancipation movement, also ratcheted up homeland security. In its new version, this became the Continuity of Government (COG) project, an ultra-secret enterprise to impose surveillance and mass detention of political dissenters, as well as emergency appointment of military commanders ruling under martial law. As James Mann records, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney were recruited as team leaders in exercises preparing for nuclear war management, as were James Woolsey, later CIA director, and others.

Supervised by CIA director William Casey and Vice-President Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney became ‘principal figures in one of the most highly classified programs of the Reagan administration’, although neither of them held any public office at the time.<sup>19</sup>

In the hearings on the Iran-Contra scandal in 1987, Oliver North, who had handled covert money, weapons and drugs transfers from the White House basement, was asked by Congressman Jack Brooks whether he had also worked on ‘a contingency plan... that would suspend the American constitution’, ‘plans for continuity of government in the event of a major disaster’. North declined to answer, after which Brooks accused him of being part of a secret government structure. However, the committee chair, Senator Daniel Inouye, ruled that this was a ‘highly sensitive and classified’ matter and closed the discussion, which according to Peter Dale Scott was ignored in the media anyway.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Netanyahu, 1986, p. 226.

<sup>19</sup> Mann, 2006, pp. 138-9.

<sup>20</sup> Scott, 2007, pp. 9, 184.

The assumption that there exists a ‘permanent, though hidden, national security apparatus of the United States’, to cite Mann again, which operates in ‘a world in which presidents may come and go’, reminds us of Carl Schmitt’s concept of the sovereign as ‘he who decides on the exception’, a thesis first formulated in his *Political Theology* of 1922.<sup>21</sup> At that point, the German ruling and governing classes were in disarray following the country’s defeat in World War One. Faced with mutiny in the army and socialist stirrings in Bavaria and Berlin, concern over the maintenance of order acquired a new urgency. For conservatives, imposing the state of emergency looked like the last line of defence of the existing property regime. To understand the state of exception that was called into being in response to ‘9/11’, it is worthwhile looking at Schmitt’s arguments again.

A year before *Political Theology*, Schmitt already defended the use of deadly force against insurrection. One cannot wait, he argued, for the real emergency to have materialised; martial law with summary execution, *Standrecht*, should therefore be applicable to revolutionaries who suspend their civilian status and exemption from military law by taking up arms.<sup>22</sup> True, after the Dawes Plan of 1924 stabilised the German situation, talk of shooting down workers in the street became less fashionable. Yet in his definition of politics of 1927, Schmitt still does not exclude that the enemy, conceived as ‘just the other, the foreigner [*der Fremde*], [who] is in a particularly intensive sense, existentially, something other and foreign’, could also be a class enemy at home. ‘If the determining friend-foe formations arise in domestic instead of international politics civil war will result.’<sup>23</sup>

As a member of the inner circle of General Kurt von Schleicher, one of the several rightwing contestants for power prior to 1933, Schmitt supported his patron’s idea of a strong state. Such a state would rely directly on the people, without a party system; to overcome the Depression, Schleicher even considered a Keynesian public works programme, which in turn enabled a rapprochement with the workers’ wing of the Nazi party.<sup>24</sup> After the emergency clause of the Weimar constitution had been activated in 1930, however, Schmitt queried whether a constitutionally grounded emergency would not in the end fall short breaking the

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<sup>21</sup> Schmitt 2005, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Schmitt, 2006, pp. 175, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Schmitt, 1963, p. 27.

<sup>24</sup> Abraham, 1981, pp. 113-4.

deadlock between the classes. In *The Guardian of the Constitution* he asks how the integrity of society will be maintained in a situation in which none of the classes can prevail, and in which not just legality, but the constitution itself becomes unstable. In such an existential crisis, the president of the republic, on account of his popular mandate, must 'assert the unity of the people as a political totality against the plurality of social and economic power groups and articulate [its] political will directly.'<sup>25</sup>

This had been the Schleicher programme all along, but Schmitt now argued that such a decision may override the constitution, which only codifies an existing balance of forces. Therefore it cannot provide the decisive power necessary to break a stalemate, just as it cannot prescribe that those entrusted with leading the country, are strong and effective politicians. Hence when the SS in the 'night of the long knives' in 1934, a year after Hitler's investiture as Chancellor by President Hindenburg, massacred the leadership of the SA brown-shirts to neutralise the working class wing of the Nazi movement, and Schleicher too was assassinated, Schmitt's endorsement of the new terror regime was no mere opportunism. 'Justice flows from the institution of the *Führer*', he declared. Both derive from the people's 'survival instinct'. 'In the supreme emergency, the supreme law is vindicated and manifests itself as the highest degree of judicially vengeful realisation of this law. All law originates in the right to life of a people'.<sup>26</sup>

Schmitt thus theorises the need of having a safety valve available to protect the existing order from social revolution. From martial law and summary execution via the state of emergency, he comes full circle to martial law and summary execution again; from reflections on constitutional law and its limits, to law residing entirely in the executive, entitled to political assassination. Nazism would turn this understanding of a pure politics, defined as a life-and-death struggle for existence, into a systematic doctrine of conquest and mass annihilation. Schmitt incidentally gave support to this programme too, by taking part in a prestigious study group on the Nazi *Grossraum* in the east, alongside SS intellectuals such as Reinhard Höhn and Gestapo lawyer Werner Best.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Schmitt, 1996 , pp. 13, 159.

<sup>26</sup> Schmitt, 1989, p. 329.

<sup>27</sup> Opitz, 1977, pp. 931-2. Whilst there is no doubt that as a Schleicher ally, Schmitt was suspect in the aftermath of the Night of the Long Knives, the fact that he was back in such a prestigious role

With the War on Terror launched in response to 9/11, and evolved meanwhile into the Obama programme of targeted assassinations including US citizens and NSA-GCHQ mass surveillance, Schmitt's thinking has acquired new relevance. Both rest, to cite Benno Teschke, on transmuting 'the politics of the exception ... into the politics of fear as a socially integrative device'.<sup>28</sup> The German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, in its coverage of the Snowden revelations has indeed raised the question whether the United States under Obama should not be characterised as a 'soft totalitarianism'. Of course we are still looking at a basically liberal society, which by Schmitt's standard is de-politicised, its public life hostage to economic calculation. But then, the Lockean calculus too includes a royal prerogative to deal with an emergency, something Schmitt already noted in his *Dictatorship*; no social order other than a radical democratic one can do without a safety valve to defend privilege. Even so, from a general liberal perspective, this is a threat, not a reassuring emergency brake.

German exile Hans Morgenthau in the 1950s was the first mainstream thinker to raise the alarm concerning this danger. During the war, the anti-statist concerns of James Burnham's *Managerial Revolution*, or Harold Lasswell's reflections on a society in which the national security apparatus rises to become the dominant force (the 'garrison state') had gone a long way in projecting a Spartan future of total regimentation—as had Orwell. But Morgenthau based his concerns straight on Schmitt, a key formative influence on his own thinking. Both men, Scheuerman writes, grounded their 'arguably bleak visions of political life in pessimistic versions of political anthropology'.<sup>29</sup>

As Morgenthau himself confirmed later, the idea of the irrationality of the real, expressed in the tension between juridical norms and actual power relations (nowhere more so than in the international sphere) was borrowed from Schmitt, with whom he had a meeting before leaving Germany in 1934—a charged encounter for sure, given Schmitt's obsessive anti-Semitism. Morgenthau nevertheless used Schmitt's title, *The Concept of the Political*, for a book of his own published in Paris in 1933, with the added subtitle 'and the theory of

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again in 1941-42, and a state councillor (*Staatsrat*) at that, belies the idea of a permanent disgrace, as suggested by some of his postmodern apologists.

<sup>28</sup> Teschke, 2011, pp. 72-3.

<sup>29</sup> Scheuerman, 2008, p. 47.

international disputes'.<sup>30</sup> This then became the basis for his 1948 *Politics among Nations*, the classic statement of International Relations realism to this day.

However, in a collection of essays published in 1962, Morgenthau began to deploy his familiarity with the Schmittian legacy to scrutinise the operation of what he called the 'dual state'. Like Schmitt, he considers a pure politics, irreducible to other aspects of social life, the basis of proper understanding. 'When the experience of totalitarianism seemed to have proved conclusively that politics is not a derivation of economics but has an autonomous realm of its own,' he writes, 'the Second World War and its aftermath raised the issue of the autonomy of politics again.' Schmitt might not have fully understood the phrase that '*this time, it was the military which infringed upon it,*' because that is logically not the same as a determinism, economic or otherwise.<sup>31</sup> It is clear though that Morgenthau shares the concern about the growing role of the national security infrastructure voiced later by President Eisenhower in his farewell address on the military-industrial complex.

In an essay originally of 1955, dealing with the internal security regime imposed on the State Department, Morgenthau criticised the fact that its officers no longer reported to the president and the secretary of state, but to Senator McCarthy. This then led him to unearth Schmitt's concept of the sovereign, who can override the formal government by imposing the state of emergency—but Morgenthau interprets this as a threat to democracy. The *dual state*, as he calls it, is not a safety valve; rather in such a state,

the power of making decisions remains with the authorities charged by law with making them while, as a matter of fact, by virtue of their power over life and death, the agents of the secret policy—co-ordinated to, but independent from, the official makers of decisions—at the very least exert an effective veto over the decisions.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Giesen 1992, p. 53 note.

<sup>31</sup> Morgenthau, 1962, p. 328, emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400, cf. 390-1 and Tunander, 2009.

This dual state, which Morgenthau saw as a spill-over from totalitarian practice that in the US might still be contained, has in fact remained at the heart of the Western power structure and today is being exposed by the WikiLeaks disclosures and by Edward Snowden's revelations on NSA and GCHQ mass surveillance.

Yet the two components of the dual state still held each other in the balance for much of the post-war period. The compromises forced on the ruling class by the middle and working classes and the readiness of the media to expose government misdeeds limited the extent to which the 'agents of the secret policy', or by a term coined in Turkey, the deep state, could force the hand of the 'authorities charged by law'. This came to a head in the 1970s in the case of the Nixon-Kissinger détente policy with the USSR and the president's spectacular visit to China, which won Nixon his re-election in 1972. These demarches profoundly antagonised the military-industrial complex and assorted conservative forces, who wanted to win the wars in Southeast Asia and up the ante in the arms race with the Soviet Union. But on the 'left' the president simultaneously faced the East Coast establishment whom he had alienated by his unilateral monetary and trade policy of 1971, just as he was the hate figure of the US anti-war movement, including Daniel Ellsberg who found an outlet for the leaked Pentagon Papers in the mainstream liberal house organ, *The New York Times*. It was this coalition of strange bed-fellows that would unseat the president. As Kissinger puts it in his memoirs, 'conservatives who hated Communists and liberals who hated Nixon came together in a rare convergence, like an eclipse of the sun.'<sup>33</sup>

The example illustrates a moment in postwar US history when the forces of class compromise and the deep state still held each other in a sort of balance, upholding the idea of the state of law and parliamentary democracy. Today it would seem that a left-liberal force of consequence no longer has the clout to oppose powerful conservative forces associated with the deep state—in that light the fate of Manning, Assange, or Snowden no longer compares to Daniel Ellsberg's and neither will the mainstream media give voice to liberal concern as it did in the 1970s. From a perspective of the overall balance of class forces, the underlying trend would seem to be away from the space for the assertion of democratic rights,

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<sup>33</sup> Kissinger, 2000, p. 983. The full story is in Colodny and Gettlin, 1992.

as the labour and progressive movements so far have not recovered from the blows they were dealt from the 1980s on.

The US national security state, which since the mid-1970s Team B episode, when President Ford was prevailed upon to institute a review of the CIA's 'Team A' assessment of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, clearly had the upper hand, was able to hold its own also under Carter. Yet disaster loomed when in 1991 the USSR collapsed and president G.H.W. Bush upon the victorious conclusion of the Gulf War declared the advent of a New World Order. Who was there to fight any longer?

### The Outrage to Shock Our Sensibilities

With the demise of the Soviet threat and with it, the mirage of a worldwide network of terror directed from Moscow, US militarism risked appearing as an atavism in the sense used by Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter in his essay of 1919 traces imperialism to the continued military predilections of aristocratic warrior elites, whose economic role had expired. In his zeal to exculpate capitalism, the Austrian economist hence declared imperialism an 'objectless disposition'—a meaningless, pathological feature carried over from the past.<sup>34</sup>

Concerned that ideas such as Senator Edward Kennedy's proposals to reduce defence spending and use two hundred billion dollars over a number of years to invest in health, education and jobs programmes, Paul Wolfowitz, then Under Secretary of Defence under Dick Cheney, right in 1991 commissioned a Defence Planning Guidance for 1994-1999 that made the case for continued military outlays. The DPG recommended that Washington ensure that its allies would not feel inclined to develop a military capacity outside US command structures. It also echoed the recommendations of the 1984 Netanyahu papers that pre-emption and punishment were legitimate forms of dealing with the threat, real or imagined, of weapons of mass destruction. Western supremacy was articulated in the recommendation that the United States should remain a generation ahead of all others in the decisive technologies of the future; NATO should be expanded into Eastern Europe whilst Russia should be prevailed on to unilaterally reduce its forces

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<sup>34</sup> Schumpeter, 1951.

and presence. All to deter ‘potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role’.

However, as Jeremy Scahill writes, the final version of the DPG was considerably toned down under the influence of more moderate Republicans, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, Secretary of State James Baker, and National Security adviser Brent Scowcroft, representatives of the wing of the party that considered the Rumsfeld-Cheney crowd ‘extremists’.<sup>35</sup> The more fundamental problem with any DPG strategy, moderate or militant, was of course that there might be no credible enemy any longer. Here Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilizations’ argument fits in, first in a *Foreign Affairs* piece in 1993 and subsequently in the book of 1998.

Huntington replaces the End of History thesis by which Francis Fukuyama had celebrated the supposedly conclusive victory of the liberal West over its Cold War contender, with the notion of an era of existential struggles. Fukuyama’s argument was still too ambivalent about whether full-scale military mobilisation should continue; Huntington’s thesis on the other hand identifies China and Islamic terrorism as the twin challenges facing the West. This claim, rather more tenuous of course than the USSR/national liberation connection, is corroborated by the designation of Islam and Confucianism as inherently foreign civilisations, in the sense of Schmitt’s ‘existentially, something other and foreign’—the enemy. Huntington also takes a leaf from Oswald Spengler’s argument on the possible demise of the West, removing any suggestion that the projected confrontation could be one of choice. China, the new contender state after 1991, by then no longer had a transnational revolutionary network like the Soviet bloc before it. So the Middle East and the Muslim diaspora must fill the void. Islamic terrorism according to Huntington has its roots in a ‘demographic explosion in Muslim societies’, which turned ‘large numbers of often unemployed males’ into a ‘natural source of instability and violence’.<sup>36</sup>

Huntington wrote his article as director of the John M. Olin Centre for Strategic Studies at Harvard. His book (like Fukuyama’s incidentally), also acknowledges the support of the Olin Foundation, spun off from the eponymous chemicals and

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<sup>35</sup> Scahill, 2013, pp. 8-9.

<sup>36</sup> Huntington, 1998, p. 265.

munitions maker to ‘funnel desperately needed funds to scholars, social scientists, writers, and journalists who understand the relationship between political and economic liberty’.<sup>37</sup>

With respect to post-1991 Europe such an understanding could not be taken for granted. The reunification of Germany, discussed e.g. in a book by Condoleezza Rice and Philip Zelikow of 1995, raised the prospect of European self-assertion now that the Soviet menace had evaporated, and President Clinton’s envoy to Yugoslavia, Richard Holbrooke, in the same year argued that NATO intervention should serve to ensure US presence in Europe.<sup>38</sup> One area in which the North Atlantic bond appeared to be unravelling was intelligence. As Peter Schweizer recounts, in December 1991, the NSA division which had spied on the Soviet bloc, Group A, was abolished and its personnel and ‘its massive electronic intelligence systems—including listening posts, satellites, and ships—were added to another group, to bolster the collection of intelligence on all of Europe, including Eastern Europe and traditional U.S. allies in Western Europe’.<sup>39</sup> A comparable reorganisation was conducted in the CIA and (for counterespionage) in the FBI. It did not take long before European concern about this surveillance (partly condoned, partly paid back in kind, notably by France) began to stir. In 1998, the consultation version of a report commissioned by the European Parliament’s Directorate General for Research and written by Steve Wright of the Omega Foundation in Manchester, for the first time gave a full review of the communication interception by the NSA among many other instances of foreign operations of doubtful legality.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed the feigned indignation of EU politicians today over the Snowden revelations can be put in perspective when we read (already in this report) that ‘within Europe, all email, telephone and fax communications are routinely intercepted by the United States National Security Agency, transferring all target

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<sup>37</sup> Statement by former Republican statesman William P. Simon, president of the Foundation, cited in Ferguson and Rogers, 1986, p. 87. Olin, formerly Olin Mathieson, is still a munitions and explosives maker. Its Winchester subsidiary website has an electronic targeting device to improve one’s shooting.

<sup>38</sup> Rice and Zelikow, 1995; Holbrooke, 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Schweizer 1993, p. 304. Group B, which had spied on Communist Asia, was likewise revamped to cover all of Asia.

<sup>40</sup> Wright, 1998, p. 19 & passim.

information from the European mainland ... by satellite to Fort Meade in Maryland via the crucial hub at Menwith Hill in the North York moors of the UK'. As Wright notes, this was uncovered already in the 1970s by British researchers, but they were promptly arrested. Their 'ABC trial' however triggered further research, which eventually led to the uncovering of the Echelon programme, a world-embracing interception programme by the NSA of 'most of the world's satellite phone calls, internet, email, faxes and telexes'.<sup>41</sup>

The Anglo-American connection here dates back to the UKUSA agreement of 1947-48, under which the US and Britain (which had intelligence cooperation with the former Dominions, Canada, Australia and New Zealand going back to the beginning of the twentieth century) formally agreed to continue wartime signals intelligence sharing ('SIGINT', decoded military communication) and exchange intelligence gained otherwise through communication interception ('COMINT'). The organizations involved in the UKUSA agreement (in fact a whole series of agreements, exchanges of letters, and memoranda of understanding) were the currently so-named NSA, GCHQ, and similar organizations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Whilst the countries of the English-speaking West, Orwell's 'Oceania', constitute the central hub, intelligence cooperation in the Cold War already extended to a number of non-UKUSA, 'third party' NATO countries such as West Germany, Denmark and Norway, and outside NATO, to Israel, Japan, and many others.<sup>42</sup>

Clandestine surveillance has been a permanent accompaniment of the collaboration between Anglophone intelligence services and their partners outside the Lockean heartland; breaking the law was routine well before the War on Terror. Author Nicky Hager cites a senior operative in Britain's GCHQ who expressed impatience with 'the gross malpractice and negligence within the establishment in which we operate', such as the snooping on Amnesty International and Christian Aid.<sup>43</sup> This had been routine throughout the Cold War. In Britain, the trade unions were under permanent surveillance on the orders of the Attlee government, and in the US, electronic surveillance was already well-developed to keep a close watch on

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Richelson and Ball 1990, pp. 135-44, 168-73.

<sup>43</sup> Cited in Wright, 1998, p. 20.

the Communist Party, Martin Luther King, the American Civil Liberties Union, and many other personalities and organisations. With computer storage of information, this gave rise to growing databases on dissident organisations. In the early 1980s, the UK already had some 20 million files on their Mayfair-based computer system, which was ‘connected to a growing number of other government data banks.’<sup>44</sup> Clearly Morgenthau’s concern with the covert arm of the dual state was not a mirage.

A decade later, the Echelon programme had expanded exponentially into a global surveillance infrastructure targeting all electronic communication, ‘primarily non-military targets: governments, organisations and businesses in virtually every country.’

The ECHELON system works by indiscriminately intercepting very large quantities of communications and then siphoning out what is valuable using artificial intelligence like Memex, to find key words. Five nations share the results with the US as the senior partner under the UKUSA agreements of 1948. Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia are very much acting as subordinate information servicers.<sup>45</sup>

The Wright report further documents how ISDN protocols allow listening to conversations around a phone without it being taken off the hook, devices to track users of mobile phones, and so on. Its sections on torture practices make for chilling reading, as does detailed information on torture instruments supplied by British and US companies under ‘crowd control’ and other licences. In its recommendations, the report urges that the ‘European Parliament should reject proposals from the United States for making private messages via the [internet] accessible to US intelligence agencies’, and that ‘a more detailed report [be commissioned] on the constitutional issues raised by the National Security Agency (NSA) facility to intercept all European telecommunications’.

These revelations, even from the relatively toothless European Parliament, obviously caused concern across the Atlantic, but the US was in no mood to relax

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<sup>44</sup> Richelson and Ball, 1990, p. 287.

<sup>45</sup> Wright, 1998, p. 19.

its surveillance regime. In the same year 1998 that the Wright report was presented for consultation, John Deutch, then CIA director, warned that the US was the potential victim of terrorist cyber-warfare, prompting Senator Sam Nunn to evoke an ‘electronic Pearl Harbour’.<sup>46</sup> Not long afterwards Deutch in an article in *Foreign Affairs*, co-authored with Zelikow and former Assistant Secretary of Defence Ashton B. Carter, outlined how a big blow against the US homeland might unleash military force abroad and repression at home, and remove any objections to either. This was the clearest statement up till then of how a War on Terror combined with Continuity of Government provisions might be triggered by ‘catastrophic terrorism’—which the authors claimed was not far away.

The article speculates on an impending ‘transforming event’ that would, ‘like Pearl Harbour, ... divide our past and future into a before and after’. Thus, had the World Trade Centre bombing attempt of 1993 (which the authors take as their reference) succeeded, they claim,

The resulting horror and chaos would have exceeded our ability to describe it. Such an act of catastrophic terrorism would be a watershed event in American history. It could involve loss of life and property unprecedented in peacetime and undermine America’s fundamental sense of security... The United States might respond with draconian measures, *scaling back civil liberties, allowing wider surveillance of citizens, detention of suspects, and use of deadly force.*<sup>47</sup>

Whilst not the first time that the idea of a catastrophic attack on the US homeland was raised in *Foreign Affairs*,<sup>48</sup> the Carter-Deutch-Zelikow piece is especially important in light of its authors’ key policy roles prior to and post-9/11, including Zelikow’s. In 1999 he produced a paper for the University of Virginia’s Miller Centre in which he analyses how the thrust of politics is directed by ‘public myths’, which rest on a ‘moulding event’, of which Pearl Harbour would be an example. Such events create ‘generational public presumptions ... that become etched in the

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<sup>46</sup> Lipschutz, 1999, pp. 427, 420.

<sup>47</sup> Carter, Deutch, and Zelikow 1998, p. 81, emphasis added.

<sup>48</sup> Earlier in 1998 Richard Betts of Princeton had warned that a ‘radical Islamic group’ might launch a biological attack, or that otherwise ‘enemies’ ‘might attempt to punish the United States by triggering catastrophes in American cities’. Cited in Lipschutz, 1999, p. 423.

minds of those who live through them.’ Not that they need not be ‘true’; what matters are beliefs ‘*thought to be true* (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty)’. However, they must be ‘shared in common within the relevant political community’, hence it is mandatory that consensus is secured by discrediting all dissent.<sup>49</sup>

Carter, Deutch and Zelikow were also participants in the high-level Aspen Strategy Group directed by Robert Zoellick (Zelikow took over after Zoellick accepted a government post). It volunteered advice for the incoming president, laid down in a series of edited collections. Among the dangers facing the US, Ashton Carter in one Aspen document speaks of ‘catastrophic terrorism of unprecedented scope and intensity ... on U.S. territory,’ in addition to the rise of China and other threats. Future opponents would avoid symmetrical confrontations with the US and rather bring ‘destruction to the U.S. homeland through catastrophic terrorism.’<sup>50</sup>

In 1997, veterans of the anti-détente, terrorism, and the DPG/Clash of Civilizations campaigns (Cheney, Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Richard Armitage, and others) and the NeoCon alumni of the Continuity of Government project (Cheney again, Rumsfeld, James Woolsey) had joined in the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). In its study, *Rebuilding America’s Defences*, likewise published on eve of the presidential election, PNAC rehearsed the themes of the Defence Planning Guidance again. Repeating the DPG mantra that ‘America’s grand strategy should aim to preserve and extend [its current] advantageous position as far into the future as possible,’ the report contains the much-cited phrase that the necessary revolution in military affairs (from Cold-War era air-land battles to rapid intervention) would most likely be a protracted transformation, ‘absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbour’.

Bush Jr had meanwhile assumed the presidency. Zelikow was on the transition team; Zoellick was chief of staff to James Baker in the Florida recount that secured the White House for the Republicans. As the PNAC team joined the Bush Jr. administration in key positions (Cheney as vice-president, Rumsfeld at Defence with Wolfowitz as his deputy), the Pearl Harbour motif was not laid to rest, on the contrary. Right in January 2001 Rumsfeld, chair of a commission to study the

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<sup>49</sup> Cited in Sacks, 2008, p. 223.

<sup>50</sup> Ashton Carter in Zelikow, 2001, pp. 37-8, 41.

institution of a US Space Command, predicted a ‘Space Pearl Harbour’.<sup>51</sup> Plans to invade Iraq were discussed right from the start of the Bush Jr. presidency—but not just Iraq. Cheney, Rumsfeld and their NeoCon deputies according to Jeremy Scahill were busily engaged in planning a global war that ‘would extent to the home front with warrantless wiretapping, mass arrests of Arabs, Pakistanis, and Muslim immigrants and a prodigious rollback of the civil liberties of American citizens.’<sup>52</sup>

In May, Cheney was appointed to head a task force on domestic terrorism to prevent the possibility of an attack on the US, although the task force had still not been activated in September. Meanwhile in June, Wolfowitz delivered a commencement address at West Point in which he told cadets that it was sixty years since the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbour, stressing the many intelligence failures that had allowed that event to take place and warning against a sense of complacency. Given the permeability of the country’s defences he recommended that ‘America’ prepare for ‘the unfamiliar and the unlikely’.<sup>53</sup>

9/11 then finally did bring the new Pearl Harbour. ‘Cheney and Rumsfeld may not have been able to see 9/11 coming’, writes Scahill, ‘but they proved masters at exploiting the attacks’.<sup>54</sup> Everything that followed fits into prior projections of what such a disaster would entail by way of US response. Zelikow became executive director of the 9/11 Commission that was to provide the official explanation for what certainly was a ‘moulding event’, determining the course of policy for the ensuing decades. As noted, in Zelikow’s own reading, for the narrative to be effective, it is enough that it is ‘*thought to be true* (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty)’, as long as it is ‘shared in common within the relevant political community’. To discredit any dissent, labelling it a ‘conspiracy theory’ has proven particularly effective. The ingrained liberal tenet that what people do is necessarily based on their informed choice, makes any claim that social action would be determined by anything other than free will born of honest conviction, suspect from the start. The idea of a dual state likewise is usually met with scorn or ridicule; but then, even Morgenthau did not further pursue it.

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Scott, 2007, p. 24.

<sup>52</sup> Scahill, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> Mann, 2006, p. 291.

<sup>54</sup> Scahill, 2013, p. 19.

On 9/11 itself, before the last plane had crashed, Continuity of Government provisions were introduced. The Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Department's Project Endgame, with its ten-year plan to build and expand detention camps, followed. A state of emergency was proclaimed on 14 September, investing the authority to renew it in the presidency.<sup>55</sup> On the day of the attacks, Vice-President Cheney temporarily assumed overall command under COG provisions, whilst billionaire investor Warren Buffett and Brent Scowcroft were among those spending the day at the headquarters of the US Strategic Command, at Offutt airbase in Nebraska. From there the COG exercise 'Global Guardian', one of *fifteen* major military exercises conducted that day, was being directed.<sup>56</sup> Buffett was supposedly hosting a business leaders' charity event, what would seem an odd location for such a purpose; Scowcroft was on board one of the so-called 'Doomsday' planes meant to serve as nuclear war-fighting command centres. The exercises allowed the shadow government to become operational even whilst the real attacks were going on.

These are details, one would think, that would have set many on the trail of wanting to find out more about the historical context of the horrifying events of 9/11. However, Zelikow's claim that it is enough that the official narrative concerning a 'moulding event' (which he would in fact write himself) is 'thought to be true although not necessarily known to be true with certainty' was upheld fairly easily by dismissing any doubt about it as 'conspiracy theory', a verdict from which the media and academia have allowed no dissent. Instead we are expected to believe that this vast operation, including the complete paralysis of the US air defence system, was organized from a cave in Afghanistan by Osama Bin Laden. This is not the place to raise questions about massive futures speculation against the two airlines affected one day before the event, the collapse of the Twin Towers and WTC 7, or about what hit the Pentagon. That the most absurd nonsense has been peddled too is no excuse not to follow the leads offered by whistleblowers from

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<sup>55</sup> Scott, 2010, pp. 204-5.

<sup>56</sup> 9/11 timeline: [http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=brent\\_scowcroft](http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=brent_scowcroft). (accessed 12 August 2013; Tarpley, 2008, pp. xi-xii.

inside the intelligence community and scholarly analysis that is slowly becoming available amidst much background noise.<sup>57</sup>

9/11 made it possible to push through any policy simply by invoking ‘terrorism’, ‘a political technique of framing policy questions in logics of survival with a capacity to mobilize politics of fear.’<sup>58</sup> The disciplining effect of the War on Terror and the state of emergency, which still obtain at the time of writing, has proven even stronger than McCarthy-era anti-communism. The percentage of respondents affirming that ‘people feel as free to say what they think as they used to’ in 2005 was 42.4 per cent against 55.6 in 1954 (and 52.6 in 1987); the control question inquiring about ‘not feeling as free’, got 45.7 percent of affirmative answers against 30.7 in 1954 (and 39.4 in 1987).<sup>59</sup> This is one more reason why the taboo on investigating the events of 9/11 and the run-up to it, remains firmly in place. No serious academic or journalist can afford to be seen in the company of the Flying Saucer community that is loudly present in the debate. Yet any opposition to the War on Terror and the police state that have been the response to the attacks will remain toothless if the prudish fear of conspiracy theory is allowed to continue to paralyse discussion of these matters.

If we properly focus on the political implications of a collective taboo like the one surrounding the origins of the War on Terror, it in fact becomes almost a secondary matter who knew what on 9/11—something that David Ray Griffin in his tenth book on the topic has tried out by declaring the details of the Pentagon attack irrelevant, even though from video and other evidence this is among the most untenable parts of the official reading. For Griffin, ‘exposing the truth about 9/11 is also necessary for the sake of preventing further crimes against democracy’.<sup>60</sup> This was not only a concern of outsiders either. Indeed in 2007, when Vice-President Cheney, as was later revealed, was pushing hard for air strikes against Iran,<sup>61</sup> former National Security adviser (and David Rockefeller’s right-hand man in the

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<sup>57</sup> Instead of a list of titles I just mention two outstanding figures and the volume they edited together, Griffin and Scott, eds 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Elbe, 2009, pp. 90-1, citing Jef Huysmans.

<sup>59</sup> Gibson, 2008, p. 99.

<sup>60</sup> Griffin, 2011, p. 296.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, 2010, p. 208.

establishment of the Trilateral Commission) Zbigniew Brzezinski warned against such a course before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

For Brzezinski, whose lifelong mission has been to roll back Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and who after 1991 advocated further breaking up the Russian federation, the preoccupation with the Middle East was a fatal distraction. Calling the invasion of Iraq four years earlier ‘a historic, strategic, and moral calamity, undertaken under false assumptions... driven by Manichean impulses and imperial hubris’, Brzezinski warned against an even more disastrous involvement in Iran and the use of ‘false flag’ operations to kick-start ‘wars of choice’. He specifically alerted the Committee to ‘some provocation in Iraq *or a terrorist act in the U.S. blamed on Iran*’.<sup>62</sup>

Asked by a journalist whether he really meant to say that provocation including a false flag operation could in principle be the work of US officials, the following exchange ensued.

Q: Dr. Brzezinski, who do you think would be carrying out this possible provocation?

A: I have no idea. As I said, these things can never be predicted. It can be spontaneous.

Q: Are you suggesting there is a possibility it could originate within the US government itself?

A: I’m saying the whole situation can get out of hand and all sorts of calculations can produce a circumstance that would be very difficult to trace.<sup>63</sup>

Such statements by somebody who has certainly been privy to the workings of the deep state in his time, should encourage us not to join in howling down those who want this murky piece of history, from which more than a decade of war, torture, and human misery have followed, cleared up.

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<sup>62</sup> ‘SFRC Testimony—Zbigniew Brzezinski, February 1, 2007’.

<http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/BrzezinskiTestimony070201.pdf> (accessed 18 November 2011), emphasis added.

<sup>63</sup> Grey, 2007.

## Goldstein Wars

The invasion of Afghanistan, air operations in Somalia and Yemen, the NATO war against Libya, and the current support for the rebellion against the Assad regime in Syria, not counting the covert war and sanctions against Iran, are projecting what one US newspaper comment calls ‘the American era of endless war’.<sup>64</sup> Reporting from a military base in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, its author notes how the idea, inherited from the wars against Japan and Nazi Germany, that at some point war would be over, has been abandoned.

In previous decades, the military and the American public viewed war as an aberration and peace as the norm. Today, radical religious ideologies, new technologies and cheap, powerful weapons have catapulted the world into “a period of persistent conflict,” according to the Pentagon’s last major assessment of global security. “No one should harbour the illusion that the developed world can win this conflict in the near future.”

Highlighting how the military as a result of endless war are beginning to lose touch with civilian society, the author notes how ‘The endless conflict... has triggered major changes in the way Americans view war and peace.’ ‘Peace... has faded from any debate in Washington surrounding the wars... [It] has become something of a dirty word in Washington foreign-policy circles.’ It is as if we are reading the conclusions from the 1984 Netanyahu papers all over again when the article continues, ‘In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Americans were willing to bear almost any price for their security. One lesson of today’s endless war seems to be that Americans will have to learn to live with a certain amount of insecurity and fear.’<sup>65</sup>

Well before Edward Snowden sprung the first details of the NSA surveillance programmes, the Obama administration gave insight into how it was planning to ensure that the human consequences of its wars would remain off the radar. In December 2009, two weeks after the president had received that year’s Nobel Peace

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<sup>64</sup> Jaffe, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Jaffe, 2011.

Prize, forty people, including fourteen women and twenty-one children, were killed in the course of the secret US war in Yemen by an American air attack in the remote village of al Majalah, a spot identified by US intelligence as an ‘al-Qaeda training centre’. Unexploded cluster bombs littering the place killed four more in the days that followed. In mid-2010, Yemeni reporter Abdulelah Shaye, who was pursuing the story, was arrested, apparently at the request of the US authorities. Convicted of ‘terrorism-related activities’ and condemned to a five years’ prison term on concocted charges, Shaye’s tribal leaders pressured president Saleh for a pardon in February 2011, but president Obama personally intervened with his colleague in Sanaa to rescind it.<sup>66</sup>

The ongoing bloodbath in Somalia, Yemen and (meanwhile self-sustaining) in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, Mali and the Central African Republic, has become increasingly dependent on secrecy and hence, on surveillance to prevent leaks. In a time-honoured manner recognised already by ‘Goldstein’ in his fictional study, the permanent war in turn allows maintaining domestic discipline. Within weeks of the vote in the US House of Representatives to stop funding warrantless wiretapping by the NSA, defeated by a mere 217 against 202, ‘very specific’ intelligence emerged as to a planned al-Qaeda attack somewhere, well, in Africa *or* Asia. Both US regional military commands, Africom and Centcom, were put on high alert. Even in the endlessly gullible mainstream media, an occasional footnote was inserted wondering how the supposed ‘conference call’ over the telephone between al-Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri and his fellow ‘commanders’ as far as Uzbekistan, had handled the complex mosaic of languages of the supposed callers, why he used the phone in the first place, and so on. But the United States, and its most faithful allies, Britain and France, had already announced the closure, for one week only, of a series of embassies in the region, allowing the US to respond with a series of ‘pre-emptive’ attacks in Yemen in the second week of August.

As reported by the McClatchy website,<sup>67</sup> the eight drone strikes at Yemeni targets in the span of 13 days ‘ignited widespread outrage in the country’. In their

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<sup>66</sup> Scahill, 2013, op. cit., pp. 305-6, 398-9. Scahill ends his disturbing account of the War on Terror with a call to free Shaye—which actually happened in July 2013 by the current Yemeni government, to the express dismay of Washington.

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2013/08/09/198991/yemenis-call-us-drone-strikes.html#.UgicCm1N5Ng> (accessed 12 August 2013).+

aftermath, the State Department announced it would reopen all its diplomatic missions except for the embassy in Sanaa and the consulate in Lahore, Pakistan. Western news media dutifully reported the victims of the strikes as militants, but locals said that along with some known al-Qaeda figures, civilians unrelated to the network, including children, had been killed. Keeping the embassy in Sanaa closed was certainly one way of preventing popular fury over to be vented against US representatives. ‘Outrage over the strikes has spread to the capital, where the dismay over their frequency was heightened by their timing, during the final days of Ramadan and the start of the Eid al Fitr holiday, one of the holiest and most festive times of the Islamic year. The anger built on tensions caused by two days of unprecedented flyovers of the capital by one or more manned, American-made spy planes.’

With again more than forty dead, the ‘threat’ was neutralised, even though Yemeni officials declared that the al-Qaeda operatives in the area did not remotely have the manpower to carry out the supposed attacks on cities. But the threat will certainly pop up again. For as the CIA deputy director, Michael Morell, put it also in August, the greatest victory of al Qaeda has been its spread—and for that, the United States alone is responsible.

In 1984, Winston Smith could still enjoy a moment reading the Goldstein book, without being watched via a telescreen. Those wanting to communicate today without the Obama administration looking in, no longer have that respite. Whilst operations in Yemen were going on in early August 2013, Lavabit, the internet provider used among others by Edward Snowden because of its advanced encryption technology, was closed down by its own accord. The alternative was to give up the encryption, a step deemed unacceptable by the owner, who was moreover forbidden to speak out on the matter under anti-terror legislation. One aspect of the Patriot Act is that the FBI can issue secret ‘national security letters’ to force an internet provider to make available all private information related to a particular user. Since the letters are secret, one cannot defend itself against them by legal means.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> <http://rt.com/usa/lavabit-email-snowden-statement-247/> (accessed 9 August 2013)

On the same day this news was made public, the head of the NSA spoke out in favour of replacing all human staff by computers so that no element of conscience can enter into data retrieval and elaboration. Ideally, a true *1984* would entail the replacement of all human activity, including surveillance, by robots; but that would also imply that humanity no longer has any bearing on events. We owe it to the Mannings, Assanges and Snowdens of this world that human conscience and courageous civic action today appear more powerful than ever in the face of the seemingly boundless cruelty and vindictiveness of the US and its allies.

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