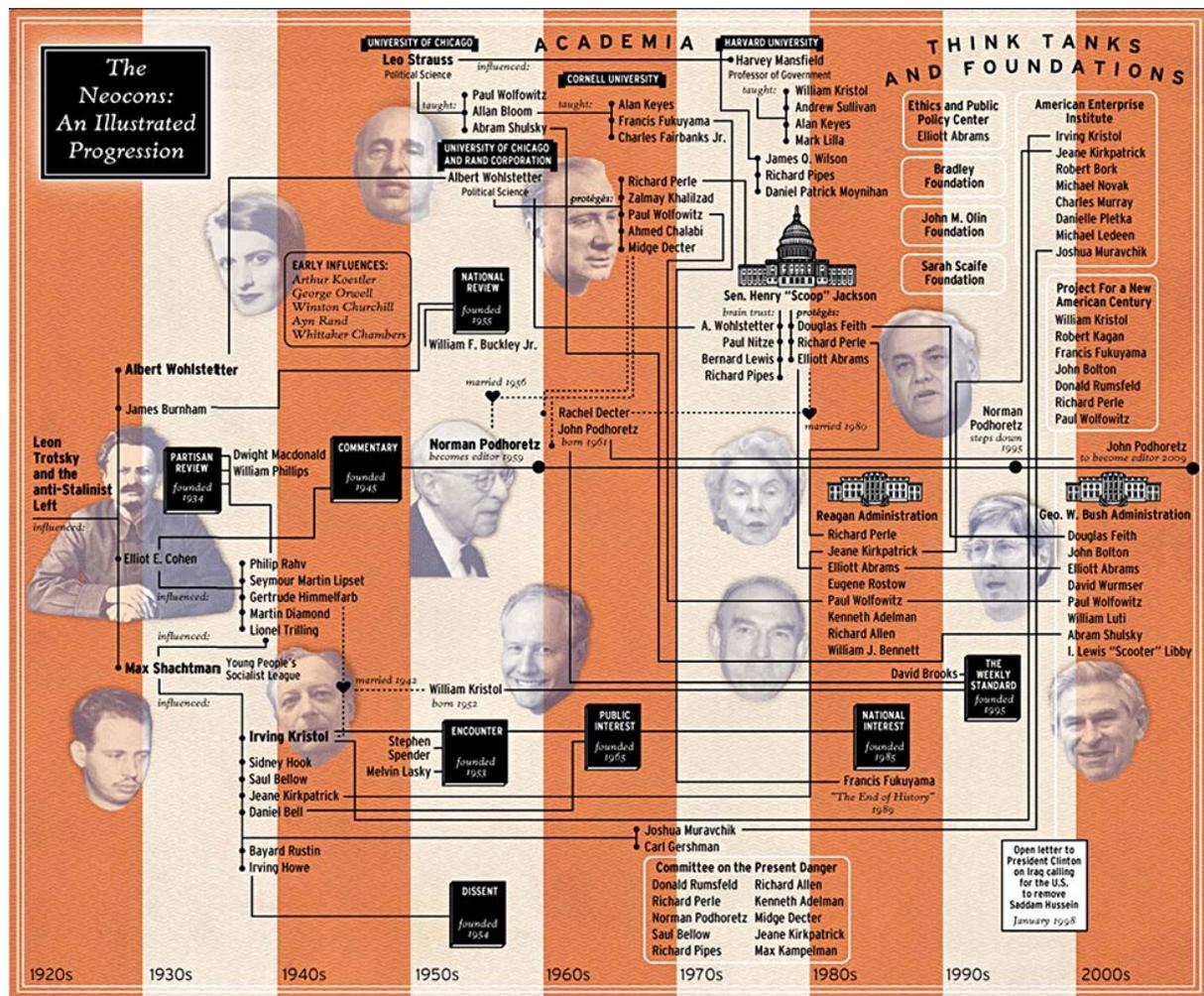


The American Neo-conservatives: Who They Are, Their History, and Their Global Impact



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Defining Characteristics

In discussing the Neo-Conservative movement [the adherents of which are commonly referred to as 'Neo-cons', which term will be used throughout this Paper to refer to them], it is useful and even necessary to identify its defining characteristics. This movement might also be referred to as a set of beliefs. Many believe that the Neo-cons have done untold damage to other countries and also to the US itself, bringing upon it the reputation of a country that destabilizes other countries not only through war, but by other means as well. These critics would perhaps prefer to describe the movement as one which, at its heart, has a destructive agenda inimical to the interests of the majority of the world's population. A description of this movement and an identification of its objectives are especially necessary because as we will see in the next section, in course of time, changes have occurred in the focus and main beliefs among essentially three generations of Neo-cons. Unless otherwise stated, the focus of this Section will be on the beliefs and objectives of the second and third [the last including the current] generations of Neo-cons.

Anthropologist and author Wade Davis in an article titled "Unravelling of America" [August 2020] has provided the following chilling facts regarding the USA's propensity to promote wars and destabilize countries. The quotation below is explicable only by reference to the subject matter of my essay which makes clear why the USA has been persistently engaged in military adventures. Davis states:

The United States, virtually a demilitarized nation on the eve of the Second World War, never stood down in the wake of victory. To this day, American troops are deployed in 150 countries. Since the 1970s, China has not once gone to war; the US has not spent a day at peace. President Jimmy Carter recently noted that in its 242 year history, America has enjoyed only 16 years of peace, making it, as he wrote, 'the most war-like nation in the history of the world'. Since 2001, the US has spent over \$6 trillion on military operations and war, money that might have been invested in the infrastructure at home. China, meanwhile, built its nation pouring more cement every three years than America did in the entire twentieth century."

The basic beliefs and objectives of the Neo-cons could be said to consist of the following:

1. Since the Neo-con movement was originally initiated by a group of intellectuals mainly from the Jewish community in New York, the protection of Israel against its enemies represents a fundamental objective, even though at its inception the focus was on domestic issues. This objective has remained paramount to this day. The overwhelming majority of Neo-cons continues to be from the Jewish community, although everyone who has been influenced to give effect to the objectives of this movement has not necessarily been a Neo-con. Considering that the Jews are an amazingly gifted and intellectually brilliant people, it is not surprising that this small community has been able to exert such enormous influence in the US and to re-adapt their agenda from time to time to suit their objectives.
- A unipolar world in which the US is supreme and there is no question of a balance of power. Therefore the rise of any rival power must be checked. The Neo-cons claim that unipolarity ensures world peace, and that the US does not seek to conquer and oppress, but rather to liberate and democratize."

- A policy of ensuring the supremacy of the USA as the world's only super power. Destabilizing and ensuring a regime change even through military intervention, in a country which is perceived as posing a threat to the interests of the USA, or to the interests of Israel, has become a hallmark of the Neo-con movement. The Neo-cons believe in a convergence of the interests of the USA and Israel.
- From about the 1980s [and especially in the 1990s] its main focus shifted from domestic issues almost exclusively to a foreign policy intended to shape the international order to be consistent with American global interests. Prior to 1990 the threat to these interests was identified as emanating from the Soviet Union – hence the opposition of the Neo-cons to isolationism and their advocacy of an American presence in different parts of the world to counter threats to American interests. While promoting democracy as a means of destabilizing the Soviet Union, the USA supported and had cozy relationships with countries that were right wing dictatorships as a counter to communism, and in some cases even helped to set up such regimes.
- Flowing from the above, Neo-cons have a low tolerance of diplomacy and consensus-building. Instead, they believe in the use of military force, the emphasis being on unilateral action by the USA. Their foreign policy has been described by a critic as bellicosity cloaked in the Utopian rhetoric of freedom and democracy.” They have a disdain for multilateral institutions/organizations such as the United Nations, which are deemed a constraint on such unilateral action. Such organizations are viewed as being undemocratic – for instance the Security Council includes ‘dictatorships’ [China and Russia]. Since at present the Neo-cons have to live with such organizations, they have sought to bend these organizations to their will to the extent possible, as they have done in the case of offshoots of the UN. Condemnation of other countries, often-times poor and weak ones for alleged war crimes, are considered to be in order, but the US is exempt from them. The Neo-cons do not believe in Treaties and even in International Law [of which Treaties are an important component], as they too are seen as constraints on the USA's right to unilateral [military] action or fomenting opposition and discord in particular countries. The Neo-cons do not have much interest in forging an international consensus to achieve foreign policy objectives. Instead, they are more interested in confronting their enemies” than in cultivating friends”. The Neo-cons also pursue their objectives through international non-governmental organizations [INGOs] which are funded to varying degrees by the USA. A number of these INGOs have gained a foothold in developing countries.
- Since the protection of Israel is an overarching aim, it is natural that the main, though not the only focus of the Neo-cons, had been the Middle East, particularly countries considered a threat to Israel. This focus may well have been modified today with the changed relationship between Israel and some of the countries in the Middle East.
- After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Neo-cons saw an opportunity to create a uni-polar world in place of the bi-polar one that had hitherto existed with the USA and the Soviet Union holding the balance of power. However, since then the ability of the US to pursue a militaristic foreign policy has been reduced due to the rise of China and the assertiveness of Russia. As such, containing China is also one of the foreign policy objectives of the Neo-cons. The US has established a relationship with India which had not existed during the years of the Cold War . Through India, the US

hopes to exercise influence over South Asia, and keep it and the surrounding seas free of Chinese control or influence.

- It has even been claimed that the ultimate goal of the Neo-cons is to build an American Empire, though not necessarily modelled on the British Empire since physical occupation of countries as in the British and other Empires would be impossible in the modern world. Instead, the Neo-cons opt for influence over the governments of other countries or setting up proxy regimes which the US could control. Positioning American forces in strategic locations around the world to enable their rapid deployment is a part of this strategy.

A Historical Perspective of the Neoconservative Movement and its Agenda

Justin Vaisse in his Paper for the Brookings Institution titled *Why Neo-conservatism Still Matters* [Policy Paper No. 20, May 2010] has pointed out that the original Neo-cons focused on opposition to the direction that social movements in the USA had taken in the 1960s and 1970s [such as student protests, counter-culture, radical feminism, environmentalism], and their dislike of President Johnson's social programmes:

What these intellectuals reacted against was a mix of social movements... While in no way defenders of the free marketthey stressed the limits of social engineering [through transfers of wealth or affirmative action programmes] and pointed out the dangers that the boundless egalitarian dreams of the New Left had created for stability, meritocracy and democracy These original Neoconservatives were New York-based intellectuals, primarily interested in domestic issues, and they still regarded themselves as liberals. That is why the disconnect could not seem more complete between them and the latter-day neo-cons, who are Washington-based political operatives identified with the right, interests exclusively in foreign policy, and who have a solid, if not excessive confidence in the ability of the American government to enact social change – at least in Iraq or Afghanistan.”

Originally the Neo-cons had been supporters of the Democratic Party. Since many of them were Jewish from a minority community, they supported the Civil Rights movement and desegregation which the Black people were fighting for. The split in the Neo-con support for the Democratic Party commenced in the 1960s when the Vietnam War led to a polarization of American society into those who favoured the war [which the Neo-cons did], and those who opposed it. This, and the direction of the social programmes earlier referred to, as well as the emergence of the second generation of Neo-cons who propagated relatively extreme views, led the movement to support the Republican Party under Ronald Reagan. Therefore it could reasonably be said that there is not a great deal of common ground between the first generation Neo-cons and the second and third generations other than on the issue of Israel and the furtherance of American interests.

To some extent Neo-conservatism suffered a loss of a part of its agenda when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990. However, in the mid 1990s the third generation of Neo-cons emerged around figures such as Irving Kristol's son William, Robert Kagan, Gary Schmitt, Max Boot and Doug Feith. Their shared values include:

- Not being liberals as many early Neo-cons had been; they allied themselves with the Republican Party.

- A foreign policy based on unrestrained use of American power to shape the world, especially the Middle East, in their own image.

Understanding the history of the Neoconservative movement requires a knowledge of some of its key figures. Irrespective of some of their extreme views, in many cases they were individuals with outstanding intellectual capabilities.

Arguably the most extreme spiritual leader of the movement was a German Jewish immigrant, Leo Strauss. [See Shadia B. Drury *Saving America: Leo Strauss and the Neoconservatives*.] She has been acclaimed as one of the foremost scholars on the history, philosophy and politics of neo-conservatism. Strauss propounded the theory that the inferiority of the masses required them to be ruled by an intelligent elite. He did not believe in the modern concepts of the natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, or that since human beings are born free they could only legitimately be ruled with their consent. As elaborated in his book *Natural Rights and History*, Strauss denied that the natural human condition was one of freedom, claiming instead that it was one of subordination to the ruler. To him the only natural right was the right of the superior to rule the inferior masses. Hitler had contempt for the masses; ironically, so did Strauss. In her article referred to earlier, Shadia Drury states:

So, what is neo-conservatism? And how does it propose to change the world in accordance with Straussian political philosophy? 'Neo' comes from the Greek word neos, which means new. And, what's new about neo-conservatism? Well, for one thing, the old conservatism relied on tradition and history; it was cautious, slow and moderate; it went with the flow. But under the influence of Leo Strauss, the new conservatism..... is not slow or cautious, but active, aggressive and reactionary in the literal sense of the term. Inspired by Strauss' hatred for liberal modernity, its goal is to turn back the clock on the liberal revolution and its achievements."

Many of Strauss' best known followers such as Allan Bloom and Irving Kristol rejected the liberal achievements of the 1960s such as civil rights, greater equality, and freedom for women which supposedly became the root of all evil. Irving Kristol has been regarded by many as the father of neo-conservatism. In 1979 Esquire Magazine dubbed him the godfather of the most powerful new political force in America – Neo-conservatism." He advocated the dismantling of the safeguards institutionalized by the Founding Fathers to protect individual liberty and minority rights.

The third and successor generation of Neo-cons included Irving Kristol's son William, and John the son of Norman Podhoretz. Despite obvious continuities, there are four differences in priorities and positions between the first and subsequent generations of Neo-cons. The new generation

- Has never been 'left of centre', so to speak;
- Has supported the Republican party, but are now wooing the Democrats as well;
- Lacks the relative caution of the first, and to an extent of the second generation. For example, Irving Kristol was skeptical about seeking regime change as an American foreign policy objective, whereas it is a key objective of the second and the present generation of Neo-cons.

In essence, the modern Neo-cons' support of a political party is conditioned by the party's foreign policy.

William Kristol and Robert Kagan founded a 'Think Tank' in 1997 to promote the idea that American leadership is good for the world and morally desirable as well. In the 1990s the Neo-cons opposed President Bush Snr. and Bill Clinton because they did not pursue America's strategic interests on the world stage. The refusal by Bush Snr. to pursue Saddam Hussein after he was driven out of Kuwait alienated the Neo-cons. They had expected Bush to pursue him through extending support to dissident groups such as the Kurds and Shiites in their resistance to Saddam Hussein, and they deeply resented Bush's failure to do so which they regarded as a betrayal and a lost opportunity.

The September 2001 attacks on the US strengthened the Neo-con agenda when Bush Jnr. committed to invading Iraq together with Tony Blair [who misled the House of Commons and who, according to a poll in the UK, is regarded as a war criminal by about half the British population]. This put the Neo-cons on centre stage. Critics considered the episode as being based on a unified ideology supportive of torture, adventurism, and Israel. Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, though probably not Neo-cons themselves were very much influenced by their agenda. The change in the policy of Bush Jnr. in 2001 with Iraq, Iran and North Korea being referred to as the 'axis of evil' requiring pre-emptive war, naturally reflected the objectives of the Neo-cons. Bush Snr. in a recent biography has roundly criticized Rumsfeld and Cheney as having misled his son by their crazy views. Rumsfeld and Cheney, with the Neo-cons using them as their instruments, have to bear a part of the responsibility for the mess they created in the Middle East. The administration of Bush Jnr. greatly exaggerated the scale and immensity of the danger posed by Saddam Hussein. It dramatically underestimated the costs and burdens of the post-war occupation of Iraq. Terrorism proved minimal, and weapons of mass destruction were found to be non-existent.

The Iraq War was a defining moment for the Neo-cons as well as for their critics, and for the country that they destroyed. It caused/provided an impetus for the radicalization and spread of militant Islamist movements which have plagued the world and the Middle East to this day. The War raised a chorus of criticisms. As Alan Wolf has stated in his book *The Future of Liberalism* [2009, page 105]:

Iraq proved to be the neoconservatives' great test case.... Iraq's history was ignored. Its rivalries with other states in the Middle East were downplayed. The consequences of removing Saddam Hussein from power, spelled out with realistic foresight by George W. Bush's father in his memoirs, were downplayed. A....distrust of the sober caution of professional military officers and diplomats guided the strategic thinking of the neoconservatives, as well as a determination to bend other countries to America's will. Planning for postwar reconstruction was guided by the fantasy that a reliance on free markets could restore the Iraqi economy in miraculous ways. This is not the world according to Machiavelli or Clausewitz. It is the world according todreamy enthusiasts for Empire....."

The Iraq War also led to Francis Fukuyama, an internationally renowned political scientist and neoconservative, to leave the movement. A blistering critique of the War by Fukuyama resulted in an acrimonious debate between him and the Neo-con Charles Krauthammer.

This was the first time that a Neo-con openly and publicly sought to so stridently expose the hollowness of the Neo-con agenda of military intervention. It is the fact that he was one of them” that upset the Neo-cons as much as it did. His critique was published in the 2004 Summer issue of *The National Interest*, which is a flagship conservative foreign policy journal [See also Danny Postel Fukuyama’s Moment: A Neo-con Schism Opens” in 27 October 2004: *Open Democracy*.]Fukuyama’s criticisms related mainly to the following:

- The unreality of the Neo-con claim that the USA could transform Iraq into a Western style democracy, which form of government could be extended to the rest of the Middle East.
- America had intervened in 18 countries since 1900, and has a very poor record of ‘reconstruction’ and nation-building after intervention. It has not been able to successfully engage in reconstruction after regime change. The US has consistently displayed its inability or unwillingness to pursue its purported mission of establishing democracy, which involves a complex process of reconstruction taking account of culture, traditions, religion and history; the creation of necessary institutions and the revival of the economy – even assuming that democracy can be militarily imposed. The Bush Jr. administration had believed that the US could go into Iraq and leave within a year with its mission accomplished, thus displaying even before the invasion, its lack of commitment to its declared objective of ensuring the setting up of a democratic system of government in place of an autocratic regime. The policy makers drew a wrong analogy between what happened in Eastern Europe [quick collapse of the Soviet Union] and what would happen in the Middle East once the coercive regimes are removed.
- The push by the Neo-cons for an uni-polar world which has increased the antagonism for the USA among other countries, was challenged by him, as well as
- The unreality of bringing about democracy through military force.

Since the 1950s Professor Bernard Lewis of Princeton University had advocated the US taking a hard line against all Arab states. In the mid-1990s, influenced by him, Richard Perle and other Neo-cons advocated the “Lebanization” of countries such as Iraq and Syria – referred to in *A Clean Break* [a Policy Document of 1996 by a group led by Richard Perle for the Prime Minister of Israel]. There are many who do not believe that the objective of the Neo-cons was to establish democracy in Iraq but to flatten it to remove it as a threat to Israel”. In 1996 the Neo-cons believed that the removal of Saddam Hussein would destabilize the entire Middle East, facilitating governments in Syria, Iran, Lebanon and others, as well as Arafat, to be replaced. In this way, re-drawing the map of the Middle East and reshaping it would benefit Israel [see D. Wurmser *Tyranny’s Ally*: 1996].

In 1997 the Neo-cons advocated a forcible and bloody re-taking of Palestinian land by Israel. They believed that a country’s leader is justified in committing evil in the defence of his country [M. Ledeen]. Ledeen was a Neo-con and Foreign Policy analyst who chaired the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. According to the Washington Post, he was the only full time international affairs analyst regularly consulted by Karl Rove, the closest advisor of George W. Bush [Jnr.]. Following a speech in the 1990s where he stated that every 10 years or so the US should pick up some small country and throw it against the wall just to demonstrate to the world that America means business, his colleagues at the National

Review dubbed it the Ledeen Doctrine. In November 2000 D. Wurmser advocated that the US and Israel should strike fatally against Arab radicalizations.

In the current century the Neo-con agenda continues to be dominated by their vision of the US as the unchallenged super-power in a uni-polar world, immune from threats from other countries, and acting as a benevolent global hegemony". In this vision the US would replace failed states or oppressive regimes which are deemed threats to US interests. The "democratization" [read regime change"] of the Middle East would eliminate the breeding ground for terrorists. The reality of course has been different, as we shall see. The Neo-cons claim that this approach, achieved through strong US leadership backed by force, is best for world peace, and not treaties which are ignored by tyrants, and a US not shackled by international organizations.

One of the most influential Neo-cons in the present century is Robert Kagan. He viewed the possible successful liberation of the Ukraine as a prelude to its incorporation into NATO and the European Union, thus expanding the West's hegemony and increasing the number of its allies. In 2004 the Neo-cons concluded that

- The fundamental determinant of the relationship between States rests on military power and the willingness to use it;
- The primary focus should be on the Middle East and global Islam as the main threat to American interests.

To operationalize these ideas, the Neo-cons

- continue to focus on and emphasize the unipolar" power of the US which enables global unilateralism", and view the use of military force as the main option in foreign policy – not diplomacy and negotiation; and
- therefore, they are contemptuous of America's conventional diplomatic organs such as its State Department and its Divisions [unless of course they control these organs as well].

Robert Kagan found Hilary Clinton receptive to a shift to the right and towards a tougher line being espoused by powerful Democrats on foreign policy issues. Kagan sought to create a coalition of Democrats and Republicans who would support Clinton's national security positions if she won the Presidency. Kagan's engagement with Clinton was reciprocated by her. It is said that Clinton extended one hand to the Neo-cons, while she clutched issues such as women's rights, democracy and climate change in the other. When she was Secretary of State she appointed Kagan to her bi-partisan State Department advisory group, and his wife, Victoria Nuland as her spokeswoman. Clinton's position on Syria [wanted early military aid to the rebels], Iraq [extending the date for the US troops pull-out], and Afghanistan [wanted longer US military presence] made the Neo-cons hopeful that they could 'do business with her' on the matters that concern them most. Eric Margolis in *The Irrelevance of Susan Rice*" in the *American Conservative* [4 December 2012] said that the war on terror had doubled US military and intelligence budgets, that brawn had replaced brains in foreign affairs, and that the next Secretary of State should restore non-military diplomacy indicating that Susan Rice should not be the person to fill this post. Rice is said to have been particularly anti-Arab and anti-Islam, and was scathing and sneering at the Palestinians in the UN General Assembly when the UN granted Palestine observer status.

Kagan, and more stridently and forcefully Charles Krauthammer [another leading hard school Neo-con], viewed Europe's opposition to military intervention as advocated by the Neo-cons as being naïve about the dangers facing the world. Since only the US understands power, Kagan sees no reason to listen to anyone else. Kagan's focus has been threats from and within smaller countries. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the pre-occupation of the Neo-cons with Great Power politics declined. They did not see China as a threat, or that neither China nor Russia is docile. Kagan was earlier not particularly concerned by China because militarily China trailed the US by a wide margin; neither was he impressed with China's economic gains. He believed that China can become a super power only when there are no other powers in Asia. He shifted his attention to 'misbehaving' minor states, threats from Islamic terrorists, and to dictators seeking to possess nuclear weapons. He is a leading proponent of regime change believing that Iran must be brought to heel with military intervention if sanctions do not work.

Despite the utter chaos caused by US interventions in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, the Neo-con agenda remains US global domination, emasculating the United Nations and bending it to its will. The BBC concurred with this view of the Neo-con agenda. The power of the Neo-cons to influence the directions of US foreign policy may be substantial irrespective of who the next President will be. Robert Kagan's relationship with Hillary Clinton, and the fact that President Obama had in his administration three committed female Neo-cons, underscored this probability. The three ladies were Samantha Power [a brilliant lawyer and orator], Susan Rice and Victoria Nuland, the wife of Robert Kagan.

In these circumstances the following statement by Peter Just in his article *Unconventional Allies Reunited: Liberal Hawks and Neoconservatives at the Turn of the Century* in *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies* 2010 Vol.11, may turn out to be quite prescient:

...it is fair to speculate that the Democratic Party might once again become the home of the neoconservatives. Second generation neoconservatives like the publicist Max Boot see themselves disconnected from their ideological fathers, reflecting a development that could trigger various responses: will neo-conservatism eventually really blend in with conservatism in general, as predicted in the early 1990s by Irving Kristol, or will it even return to its roots in the Democratic Party and join forces there with the liberal internationalists? One thing is certain – the United States will not stop promoting American values and ideals. But the debate over the specific ways and means to achieve that goal is far from over."

Notwithstanding the loathing the Neo-con foreign policies have attracted in many parts of the world, it would be a mistake to think that their influence is on the wane. Justin Vaisse's *Why Neo-conservatism Still Matters* is not an apology or a defence of neo-conservatism. Rather, as the title suggests, it is an analytical explanation of why neo-conservatism is still influential. However, events in the latter part of 2015 which will be referred to in the next section of this Paper, may have had the potential to either diminish its legitimacy, influence and importance or else enhance it. Historically many Neoconservatives have been leading figures with exceptional intellectual powers, irrespective of whether one accepts their views or not. Neo-cons have institutions which research and churn out influential publications. Their institutions and projects attract huge funding from conservative donors and foundations, and there is an unabating flow of such support. Max Boot, another leading Neo-con, has stated

that Neo-cons are well placed due to the institutions that support them and publications that disseminate their views and shape public debate. Young Neo-cons read and contribute to these publications. Sending public letters on issues in the name of both Neo-cons and non-Neo-cons is a part of their *modus operandi*. [See Max Boot Think Again Neo-cons” in *Council on Foreign Relations*, January-February 2004].

Global Impact of Neo-conservatism and the Ravages of War

In assessing the consequences and impact of the Neo-con movement, attention will not be paid to consequences within the USA except to the extent relevant to US foreign policy and to its implementation. The first generation of Neo-cons influenced opinions about the direction of social programmes within the USA. This focus changed with the second and third generations of Neo-cons whose agenda impacted overwhelmingly on US foreign policy, and therefore on other countries around the world.

Irrespective of which side one is on in regard to the question of Israel, it is beyond doubt that the Neo-cons have been largely responsible for the protection and survival of Israel in a hostile environment. The analysis and assessment of the impact of Neo-conservatism in this section will therefore address issues other than the protection of Israel. In that respect, other than the humanitarian considerations which could justify the intervention in Bosnia, one can see little, if any, positive consequences of the Neo-con movement. The consequences and impact of the Neo-cons in the foreign policy field relative to other countries are the focus of this Section.

First, the example of Iraq, invaded, decimated and destabilized after disseminating false information about its possession of weapons of mass destruction, and after using the attacks of September 2011 by terrorists as a basis for the invasion though these had no connection to Iraq, is one of the best examples of the decimation of a country through the Neo-con foreign policy of waging war. Such action is all the more inexcusable when one considers that there was no ‘reconstruction’ of the country after the demise of Saddam Hussein, either deliberately or due to the ineptitude of the US at ‘creating’ and ‘building’ as opposed to destruction. When one adds the similar fate that Libya and Afghanistan have been subjected to, the enormity of the disastrous consequences of Neo-con policy is obvious. It is principally the European countries that have to bear the consequences and fallout of jihadist reprisals and the burden of mass migration of refugees to Europe in the second half of 2015. Among these refugees have been jihadists responsible for chaos and death in Europe such as the events in Paris in November 2015.

On 13 July 2015 columnist Robert Parry [a prize-winning investigative Reporter] wrote that in early 2014 Victoria Nuland, Robert Kagan’s wife, a member of Obama’s administration, engineered a regime change in the Ukraine without weighing the consequences, thereby diminishing the standards of living of the people, causing starvation of pensioners, the destruction of infrastructure, and a complete severance of economic ties to Russia which had been its major economic partner and market for Ukrainian goods. Wayne Madsen, in the online journal *Strategic Culture Foundation* [18 December 2013] said that she even handpicked Ukraine’s new Prime Minister, thereby setting up an anti-Russian administration on Russia’s border. She promoted neo-Nazi militias and even Islamist militants to wage an anti-terror war against ethnic Russian Ukrainians who resisted regime change [See also

Robert Parry in Consortiumnews.com]. She ignored the practical realities – the existing ethnic and religious fissures. She ignored the mess and ugliness thus created by the Neo-cons and simply sought someone else to blame. However, Nuland's blunder of conducting a telephone conversation two weeks prior to the coup in the Ukraine with the American ambassador which was taped and intercepted, reveals an agreement to 'nurse' the anticipated coup. This is incontrovertible evidence that the US Government supported the uprising at the highest levels. The US intervention in the Ukraine resulted in a closer alliance between Russia and China. The Ukraine is yet another example of Neo-con influence creating chaos rather than stable democratic governments. Control of the Ukraine by NATO has long been an aim of Neo-cons such as McCain and Nuland.

After the Bush administration Nuland ensured that the Neo-cons continued to have an influence on the new President's foreign policy. As Hillary Clinton's Press Spokeswoman, she ensured that the Neo-con slant would be prominent in the State Department. Examples of such influence include the CIA's coup against President Zalaya of the Honduras, the overthrow of Gaddafi and US support for uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia. Nuland was criticized

[as was Clinton]

for the attack on the US diplomatic mission/CIA facility in Benghazi which killed the US Ambassador. But influential friends in the Neocon hierarchy ensured the scotching of such criticism, enabling the confirmation of Nuland's appointment as the new Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs without opposition from the Republican Party. This provided her with the opportunity to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Ukraine and other countries. Nuland is a strong supporter of George Soros, who is a major source of funding for the Neo-con movement.

It is worthwhile noting some of the evidence, which is overwhelming, that military intervention and the promotion of coups and the like are key methods advocated by the American Neo-cons to achieve their objectives. The following are only a sample of such promotion:

- The Iraq War, based on disinformation and false premises.
- The intervention in the Ukraine already referred to, which led to the Ukraine descending into civil war in 2014.
- The military interventions in Libya and Afghanistan. The 2011 regime change in Libya followed Gaddafi's actions against groups in Eastern Libya which were identified as Islamic terrorists. The US and allied bombing destroyed Gaddafi's army, and led to Gaddafi's torture and murder. The Libyan adventure turned sour when the very Islamic terrorists Gaddafi had warned the US about seized territory, turning it into another Iraq-like badlands. Reality hit home with the murder of the US Ambassador and the attack on the US embassy/CIA facility in Benghazi in September 2012. Terrorism was so out of control that the US and European countries abandoned their embassies in Tripoli, and the ISIS decapitated Coptic Christians and slaughtered heretics" resulting in migration of Libyans to Europe. What the West, goaded on by the Neo-cons did, was to destroy a country which was a buffer against Islamic terrorists, and instead create another haven for such terrorists. At the time of the intervention, Libya was a country without a national debt and her people were

socially and economically much better off than people under similar regimes in the region.

- In the 1980s President Reagan gave the Neo-cons a major role in activities in Central America, but kept them out of the Middle East and European politics. In Central America the Neo-cons unleashed death squads, and even engaged in genocide in a broad, rather than a legal or technical, sense against peasants, students and workers. This led to a flood of refugees to the US especially from El Salvador and Guatemala. The Neo-cons crushed progressive social movements, reinforced oligarchic control of countries, thus leaving most countries in Central America in the grip of corrupt regimes and crime syndicates, driving more refugees to the US through Mexico.

Second, it is beyond a shadow of a doubt that the most unforgivable consequence of Neo-con policies and actions is the impetus they gave to the creation of militant Islamist groups, and its reflection in the various movements such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda and ISIS. The freedom” fighters that the US armed and trained in Afghanistan decades ago to fight the Russian forces there were the very people who transformed themselves into the Taliban.

One does not have to rely only on the anti-Neo-cons and the research into the strengthening of al-Qaeda and the creation of ISIS as a result of the Iraq War, to be convinced of this consequence. President Obama acknowledged in an interview in March 2015 that the power of the IS which was established in Iraq and Syria in 2014 was an unintended consequence of the Iraq War in 2003. Even Tony Blair, who allied with the Neo-cons on the invasion of Iraq, earning the wrath of the British people, acknowledged that the invasion of Iraq helped towards the creation of ISIS. The militarism of the Neo-cons, regardless of the consequences to other countries, is reflected in a revelation made by the retired US Army General Wesley Clark. He said that after the attack on the twin towers in 2001 a unit called the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans had been created by the Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld for the benefit of the influential Neo-cons Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith. These two Neo-cons propounded a strategy to overthrow the regimes in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran by 2006. Paul Bremen was placed in charge of activities in Iraq after the invasion. The policies he carried out created the opportunity for Al-Qaeda, and later ISIS, to entrench themselves in Iraq. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom!! [See Kamal Wickremasinghe France Needs the Wisdom of Enlightenment” in *The Island* [Sri Lanka] of 20 November 2015].

The Paris bombings on 13 November 2015 can to some extent be linked to the success of the US in obtaining active French involvement to attack other countries. The former French President Jacques Chirac had predicted that the Iraq War would destabilize the Middle East and strengthen terrorism. French opposition to the Iraq War led the US to even threaten France, and to puerile and small-minded conduct such as banning the sale of French wine in Pennsylvania. The US and the Neo-cons ultimately had their way by ‘controlling’ France in regard to their agenda in the Middle East through the subsequent French Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande. France led the joint British and US forces against Libya, and supported the Syrian rebels in their attempt to oust President Assad. French participation in the US bombing raids in Syria could have contributed in part to the Paris bombings.

The security issues and loss of life in Western countries resulting from the activities of these groups are in fact the result of the Neo-cons being outsmarted and falling into the trap conceived by militant, radical Islamist movements. Al-Qaeda had originally been unable to overthrow governments in the Arab states because it had not been able to secure substantial support in those countries. Therefore the movement switched to a strategy of provoking the US to invade such countries, which would in turn radicalize a mass of people not only in those countries but in other Middle Eastern countries as well. Hence the 9/11 attacks on the US had the very effect desired, since it resulted in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. This in turn led to further numbers of Islamists joining the radical movement. Gwynne Dyer in the article "Paris Attacks: The Terrorist Strategy" published in *The Island* newspaper [Sri Lanka] of Thursday, 19 November 2015 at page 8 pointed out that the organization known as "Al-Qaeda in Iraq" changed to "Islamic State in Iraq" in 2006, thereafter to "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" [ISIS] in 2013, and thence to "Islamic State" in 2014. The ISIS was able to conquer much territory in both Iraq and Syria

[see Dyer for the split between al-Qaeda and the ISIS]

. The three month war which the ISIS fought in 2014 with what is called the Nusra Front of al-Qaeda which had split from ISIS, was followed by the Nusra Front gaining control of most of Eastern Syria, while the ISIS conquered most of Western Iraq, renaming it the Islamic State.

Third, there is a considerable body of opinion that is, to say the least, highly sceptical of the Neo-cons' claim that their foreign policy objectives have been to promote democracy and freedom. There is no evidence which establishes that this claim is genuine and *bona fide*. The devastation their policies created in countries in which the US intervened has not led to any change of heart, so to speak, about the appropriateness of the means they advocate to achieve their supposedly noble objectives for the sake of the people of those countries. Besides, it is common sense – and requires little education or learning – to understand that democracy cannot be imposed by force or war. Neo-cons are unable or not prepared to understand or recognize the deep-rooted religious and cultural factors that can impede the flowering of democracy – especially in a form that is a replication of the American model.

What makes the Neo-con agenda so dangerous is that being a group of people with exceptional intellectual capabilities, their agenda is **not** the result of ignorance of the consequences of their policies and actions. Their objectives are anything but freedom and democracy.

Fourth, the implementation of Neo-con foreign policy has created considerable upheavals in people's lives which had been relatively safe and peaceful, poverty where relatively little of it had existed, or else enhanced existing levels of poverty. Libya was not a country with levels of poverty found in several other countries. The Neo-cons, by their actions, came close to creating havoc in Europe, short of destabilizing it. This is a matter of supreme indifference to the Neo-cons, some of whose attitudes towards Europe border on contempt. The words used by a neo-con official of the US administration relative to the European Union in a recorded telephone conversation with an American ambassador is unprintable, indicating the Neo-cons' desire to show Europe its proper place. The ravages of war so to speak, are creating havoc not only in some developing countries but in developed economies as well. A

further chain reaction is the impact that American interventions have had on major economies, not to speak of poor countries.

Fifth, the Neo-cons' foreign policy objectives have undermined state sovereignty when hegemonic objectives are opposed.

Sixth, for the Neo-cons, ideas are everything and pragmatism is shunned in favour of a Utopian vision of an American benevolent hegemony. The inspiration one of the godfathers of the movement [Leo Strauss] drew from the ancient Greek philosopher Plato and the historian Thucydides is a measure of the unreal and dangerous views they hold about the modern world. In other words, to be inspired by a civilization of 2,000 to 2,500 years ago to justify not only unilateral militarism, but also the belief that a few elite should rule the masses, is a reflection of the danger the Neo-cons pose to the world. The Neo-con agenda, instead of promoting democracy, advocates at least indirectly, a form of dictatorship within the country, and a form of imperialism/colonialism abroad. As Shadia Drury [referred to earlier] aptly concluded: "It is ironic that American neoconservatives have decided to conquer the world in the name of liberty and democracy, when they have so little regard for either."

Seventh, the policy of the Neo-cons in pursuing unipolarity in the world has increased hatred for the United States in the broader fight for hearts and minds" [Francis Fukuyama]. An underlying [non-transparent] theme of the Neo-cons is that America does not belong to a world community because it is the super power to which everyone else must pay homage. There is no need to have close relationships with countries to address problems in other countries. There is only the ruler and the ruled. The world view of the Neo-cons is myopic and their ideology accounts for their disinterest in even understanding the world. Robert Parry, in Consortiumnews.com of 15 September 2015, contends that the Neo-cons have arguably damaged American national interests more than any other group in modern history. Their policies have plunged the US into ill-considered wars wasting money and resources, destroying millions of lives including of Americans, and destabilizing large sections of the planet. He states that the US foreign policy is deformed and no longer capable of formulating coherent strategies. Yet despite their record of unprecedented errors, American Neo-cons remain the dominant foreign policy force demanding more regime change as well as a Cold War. Neo-cons have been immune from suffering the consequences of the catastrophes they have caused, continuing to dominate Washington's think tanks and the news media, and to hold key positions in the administration. Neo-cons are skilled operatives; they know how to obtain steady funding and are adept at writing articles that twist any set of facts to suit their ideological cause; supply just the right quote/information to the public, and host policy conferences that attract powerful politicians.

Eighth, the Neo-cons have largely, or at least partly, been responsible for undermining respect and credibility in many countries for the United Nations, and resentment against it for its lack of impartiality and selectivity. The whole agenda of intervening in countries through Resolutions relating to human rights violations is a case in point. What is particularly critical in this regard is the creation of organs within the UN system to do the bidding of the US in particular, primarily to open doors for Western or US intervention in other countries even if not militarily. There is little doubt that the UN has been to an undesirable extent literally reduced to being a servant of Western interests, and the US in particular.

The proof of the 'control' of several organs of the UN is the experience of countries targeted by some of the Western countries – in particular the USA – using the UN system as the instrument to 'punish' them. A very good account is contained in "How US Pressure Bends UN Agencies" by Robert Parry [see Consortiumnews.com, 16 October 2013]. Among the examples analyzed by him are the following [in summary]:

- A key UN Agency which the US has targeted to control is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons [OPCW] – important to the controversy of the alleged [unproven] use of Sarin gas by the Syrian government – thought by many to have been used instead by the rebels fighting to oust Assad to frame the Syrian government. Jose Bustani was ousted as Director-General in 2002 because he was deemed to be an obstacle to the invasion of Iraq [See Parry, *op. cit.*]
- Mary Robinson, a former Prime Minister of Ireland, was prevented by the Bush administration from being re-appointed as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights due to her criticism of human rights abuses by Israel and the Bush administration's war on terror", though officially she announced that she was retiring of her own accord.
- The Bush administration got rid of Robert Watson, the Chairman of the UN-Sponsored Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, due to the pressure exerted on it by ExxonMobil, whose Memo to the White House is referred to by Parry. The reason for the ouster was the Panel's consensus that human activities such as burning fossil fuels contribute to global warming.
- The Obama administration engineered the appointment of a Japanese diplomat, Amano, to the leadership of the UN's international Atomic Energy Agency, which was a key player in the dispute over Iran's nuclear programme. While Amano was portrayed as being independent-minded and resisting US-Israeli propaganda about Iran's nuclear programme, this claim was shattered when, among the hundreds of thousands of pages of US diplomatic cables leaked by Private Bradley Manning, were reports on Amano's secret collaboration with US and Israeli officials on the subject. The cables exposing Amano were published in The Guardian newspaper in the UK in 2011. [See also "Did Manning Help Avert War with Iran?" in Consortiumnews.com].
- The attempts to distort the OPCW's Report on the alleged use of chemical weapons by Syria are detailed by Parry and cannot be summarized here. Obama's participation in this whole scheme against Iran is also analyzed by Parry. However, the following quote by an NGO cited by Parry is worth recording: As one Western NGO put it..... 'If Assad really wanted to use Sarin gas, why for God's sake did he wait for two years and then when the UN was actually on the ground to investigate?'

Another example particularly relevant to developing countries is the United Nations Human Rights Council [UNHRC] and the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances [UNWGEID]. The latter group has been admirably analyzed by Dr. Kamal Wickremasinghe in relation to Sri Lanka in his article titled UNWGEID is Here to Gradually Get Us" published in the Midweek Review of *The Island* newspaper [Sri Lanka] on 18 November 2015. While space does not permit a detailed analysis of this article, it is useful to note his comment based on the lack of attention by people in Sri Lanka to what the Group is doing:

Such indifference is the food that nourishes the global strategy of those seeking to rule the world using the UN as a cat's paw."

According to the above-mentioned organization, they came across a secret detention facility within the Trincomalee naval base used during Eelam War IV. This was described as a torture chamber. The former Chief Admiral of the Navy, Wasantha Karannagoda, strongly rebutted this allegation

[see *The Island* [Sri Lanka] of 21

November 2015]

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In regard to the allegations that the UN often does the bidding of the USA, Christopher Black, a Lawyer specializing in International Law who has appeared for individuals brought before UN tribunals

[such as on Rwanda]

, in his presentation on 'The Criminalization of International Justice' at the Rhodes Forum 2014 on 26 September 2014

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8NHawXaOPc>]

exposed the criminal nature of UN tribunals set up at the behest of the US and its NATO allies to create their New World Order through the revelation of the way in which these tribunals have conducted the inquiries. According to him these tribunals are propagandist in nature. Stories are circulated about targeted countries, demonizing regimes and covering up the role of the US and its allies in their interventions. Many individuals brought before these tribunals had been falsely accused. He says that it has been revealed that the US was responsible for what happened in Rwanda and that America's falsehoods were exposed at the trials. A respected Rwandan General who had saved many Rwandan lives was arrested in 2000. Eleven years later the trial judges concluded that the arrest had been illegal and politically motivated because he had testified that the US and the UN forces had been directly involved in the violence unleashed in that country.

Black has further revealed that these tribunals use criminal methods against those the powerful countries want punished such as first throwing them in prison with no indictments shown or prior appearance before a court. Tribunals pressurize the accused to use lawyers either in their pay or whom they could bend to their will to do their bidding, or those in the pay of the West, and certainly not those deemed to be effective. Indictments/charge sheets are often false and propagandist and often have parts blackened so that the defence lawyers cannot understand that whole charge. Documents and relevant disclosures are withheld from these lawyers. Prisoners suddenly disappear, isolation being a method used to exert psychological pressure on them. Lawyers are subject to harassment, intimidation, are followed, their hotel rooms are broken into and rumours are spread about them to discourage their appearing for the accused. In 1997 Louise Arbor, investigating the killing of all passengers on board a Rwandan presidential aeroplane when it was shot down, covered

up the results when it was revealed that it had not been the Hutu extremists but the Ugandan-RPF and US forces [the CIA was also implicated] who had shot down the plane. Arbor was thus an accomplice to a war crime and obstructed justice for which she was rewarded with a number of lucrative positions.

In his presentation titled "Non-Interventionism: The Forgotten Doctrine" also at the Rhodes Forum 2014 on 26 September 2014

[rhodesforum.org/politics/540-non-interventionism-the-forgotten-doctrine]

John Laughland, Director of Studies at the Institute of Democracy and Cooperation [France], stated that a growing phenomenon in world politics in recent times is that instances of regime change have been followed by criminal prosecutions of the old regimes. This is dangerous as it destroys the concept of the national sovereignty of states. He mentioned that between 21 November 2013 and 22 February 2014 the International Criminal Court had been given jurisdiction in the Ukraine thus enabling it to prosecute the old regime for war crimes though there had been no war at all under it, but not over the new regime installed by the US. Such irregularities were also seen in the NATO attack in 2011 of the Ivory Coast, the ouster of Gaddafi, in the cases of Saddam Hussein and Milosovic and in Rwanda. These examples illustrate the use of the "punishment ethic" which is now the dominant characteristic of US and Western foreign policy. The idea of ending impunity", with a state having the right to punish another even though that other may not have attacked or harmed the first state, has been adopted. Many NGOs, lobby and pressure groups, governments and international organizations such as the UN and the EU considering themselves to be at the cutting edge of modern politics, intervene in both internal and external affairs of states. This has destroyed the concept of the sovereign equality of states.

"The terms of the UN Charter have been totally perverted" so that the organization is hardly recognizable today. The UN considers itself a "supranational authority" with the right and power to punish heads of states, resulting in it setting up, or helping to set up, tribunals to try targeted countries and regimes. It has also asserted the right to get such countries to abide by treaties they have not ratified/signed which is a flagrant demonstration of how the punishment ethic is based on the concept of the hierarchy of states which has deformed the international system. These are serious abuses and illustrates that the UN is not the solution but a part of the problem, encouraging wars and interventions instead of preventing aggression. Most countries have come to believe that the UN is not impartial. There is also the need to recognize, as Edward Gibbons realized, that a world power is a universal tyranny."

Jurgen Todenhofer, a well-known German journalist and publicist, spent 10 days in the so-called IS caliphate in Mosul, Syria in December 2014. His impressions were revealed in a CNN Programme called *Blindsided: How ISIS Shook the World* on 20 November 2015 [in Sri Lanka]. [The interview is also available on www.independent.co.uk/News/World/ME of 22 December 2014]. The following are his key impressions of the ISIS.

- The West underestimated the threat from ISIS. It was more intelligent and dangerous than the West realized. It was much stronger and was supported by an almost ecstatic enthusiasm". Each day 100s of new recruits arrived from around the world. Within months ISIS had conquered an extent of territory larger than Great Britain and

dwarfed Al-Qaeda. Its fighters were spread so widely around Mosul that the West would have had to flatten the city to get at all its 5,000 members. With every bomb that is dropped and hits a civilian, the number of terrorists increases.”

- The rapid increase of new fighters did not consist only of young men who were failures in their own countries. There were many successful professional and enthusiastic individuals from the UK, US, France, Canada, Germany, Trinidad, Sweden and Russia, some of whom were not Muslim/Islamists.
- ISIS also aimed to carry out the largest religious cleansing in the history of mankind. It is not only territorial conquest of the Middle East and other parts of the world that would result, but also millions of deaths.
- In 2015 it appeared as if the ISIS could not be defeated with bombs or missiles. Only the moderate Sunnis could stop ISIS as they had done in 2007 when they chased ISIS [the ‘IS in Iraq’] away. But then the movement was much weaker. The defeat of ISIS was difficult to achieve at that time because the Americans and the Shiites in Iraq had excluded the Sunnis after the 2003 invasion by the US. There were 3,500 US military intelligence officers in Iraq at that time, but the Iraqi state was very weak. Although the US had spent over USD 25 billion on training and arming the army it was useless against an IS assault – the army ran away. This was because Iraq’s Prime Minister, Maliki had failed to heal the rift between the Sunnis and Shiites. Iraqi Sunnis refused to fight against the IS because to them IS was the lesser of the two evils. They preferred it to the discrimination and oppression suffered under the government of Prime Minister Maliki.
- ISIS became the largest threat to world peace since the Cold War. The world had to pay the price for Bush’s act of near un-paralleled folly”. The West hardly knew how to address this threat.
- A main aim of the ISIS was to provoke the US to send ground troops. ISIS especially liked Fox News in the US because it kept on urging for US troops on the ground in Syria [which was also what the Neocons agitated for].

Graeme Wood has stated in “What ISIS Really Wants” in *The Atlantic* [March 2015] that the Americans have not figured out the appeal that ISIS has. Unfortunately it is of significance and quite telling that there were many people from various nationalities in the West, other than Islamists, who were attracted to this movement. It follows that if there is no proper understanding of the ISIS, including the fact that it was almost enthusiastic about attacks from the West, strategic decisions against them would be anything but strategic and would fail to solve the problem at hand. This is a sad commentary on American [and to an extent western] foreign policy and their lack of understanding of the strategies of the ISIS, resulting in faulty strategies of their own.

Any view that ISIS cannot be defeated by military action such as air raids, bearing in mind that most countries are against the use of ground troops, required to be reviewed in the context of the events that unfolded in November 2015 of Russian intervention. The Russians are believed to have been more effective in their air raids in a few days than the US had been in the past.

Finally, who has been largely responsible for creating terror groups in various countries in the latter half of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first century? The following summary, at the risk of some repetition, seeks to answer this question. In essence

these terror groups have been created by the United States and/or its allies. In many instances they have created a power vacuum through one form of intervention or another, enabling terror groups to move in to fill the vacuum [See Bruce Fein, Washington Times 9 June 2015]:

- Israel gave birth to Hamas by crippling the PLO and Arafat's dominant Fatah faction.
- Hezbollah emerged from the power vacuum in Lebanon.
- Al-Qaeda and Taliban moved into the breach created in Afghanistan. The US armed the freedom fighters who, after the ouster of the Russians, transformed into the Taliban.
- After the ouster of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003 there was an unstable central government and strife amongst the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. This enabled a splinter group of al-Qaeda to entrench itself in Iraq. Al-Qaeda was itself originally armed and trained by the US.
- The power vacuum that was created in Syria as a result of the Neo-cons urging the overthrow of President Assad, and the training and arming of Sunni rebels enabled the ISIS and al-Qaeda to establish themselves and set up the Islamic State.
- The Neo-cons/US administration supported the Islamic radicals in the overthrow and assassination of Gaddafi of Libya. Thereafter Islamic radicals plundered Gaddafi's huge conventional arsenal. The power vacuum created by the US and their allies enabled ISIS to establish a menacing foothold in Libya.

It is imperative that there should be a clear understanding of who helped ISIS to grow as it did. In this connection Ben Swann, a prize-winning journalist who heads the Truth in Media Project, has pointed out that much of the US media has avoided and suppressed the facts in regard to this question. He has been seeking to make people in the US aware of the answer to this question. [See <https://www.facebook.com/BenSwannRealityCheck/videos/882104321854519/?fref=nf>].

According to Swann ISIS was created as a result of the conduct of the US Government in Iraq. Angela Keaton, the founder of Antiwar.com believes that the ISIS is entirely the creation of the United States' behavior in Iraq" and that The US government completely destabilized and wrecked Iraq..... caused it to fail miserably and that is entirely the fault of the US Government. There is no one else to blame." Daniel McAdams of the Ron Paul Institute has stated that the media in the US will not mention that the impact of US actions in Iraq and Syria resulted in the emergence of the ISIS.

Swann has also pointed out that ISIS was born in 2006 – a weak and small group of insurgents in Iraq which could not gain a foothold there. In 2009 it shifted its focus to the Syrian civil war. In June 2013 there was a pivotal moment when a Syrian General fighting against Assad, pleaded on television [al Jazeera] for weapons from the international community if the rebels were to be able to overthrow the regime of Assad. The US was already covertly providing arms through the CIA. In less than one year, weapons given by the US and allies were found in the hands of the ISIS because the Free Syrian Army [FSA] sent these weapons as well as recruits to the ISIS. In June 2012 the ISIS emerged heavily armed and trained by the US and Coalition Special Forces in Iraq. When the US forces left Iraq, they had left behind arms, vehicles and other equipment which were now in the hands of the ISIS, which the US knew would happen. The US media continues to suppress the

reason ISIS was able to grow and become powerful so fast, and that when the US Government became aware of this, it did nothing although ISIS was becoming a threat to world security and peace.

How was it that the US with all its intelligence capabilities did not see the threat coming? Swann believes that the US knew who and what ISIS was, but that the so-called Islamic State was doing just what the US administration wanted it to do against the Syrian regime. However, by about 2015 the government acted like it had never heard of ISIS and suddenly, with the help of the media, it turned the IS into the new focus of the war on terror.

Around 2015 or earlier, Daniel McAdams pointed out that the ISIS was earning over USD 2 million a day selling oil [mostly to US' allies]. Bombing Syrian oilfields instead of stopping those buying oil, made no sense. The response of the US to this was that by bombing the oilfields, it was undercutting competition". McAdams pointed out that the US is known to slap sanctions on anything that moves which annoys it, and queried as to why no sanctions were imposed on either the banks or the oil companies involved in these transactions.

Swann also stated that Americans should have been inquiring as to why the US was sending USD 500 million to the Free Syrian Army to fight ISIS, when the FSA was one of the biggest suppliers of fighters and weapons to the ISIS, and also why the US was sending the FSA new and more powerful weapons such as anti-aircraft missiles, knowing they would soon be in the hands of the ISIS.

McAdams described the US as a victim of its own insane policies because the US is very good at blowing things up but really bad at putting them back together."

Swann has pointed out that (a) the US armed both Bin Laden and the Muhajideen in Afghanistan – thus creating al-Qaeda; (b) the US put Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq and helped supply and create weapons for him to use against Iran in 1980 and then overthrew him in 2003; (c) the US government armed and trained rebel fighters in Syria who became the formidable ISIS.

Swann states: We have watched them [ISIS] commit every violent atrocity you can imagine...in Iraq and Syria, and now we want American taxpayers to fund a thirty-year war with them." Leon Panetta, the former Defense Secretary, told the magazine *USA Today* that he believes that to defeat ISIS the US is looking at a thirty year war." Swann concluded that it was not the US government but the American people who are being held hostage by the policies of their government: It is time we reject the destruction of people and groups around the world for the sake of foreign policy that makes so-called defense contractors rich, and perpetuate violence, death, and the destruction of entire people groups. This is the central issue of our time because humanity is greater than politics."

An Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, attention is drawn to the view expressed by John Laughland that we live in a world in which any country can be punished for being an enemy even if that country has not harmed any other country. The adoption of this punishment ethic means that the time would come when there will not be a legal system known as International Law. Even national laws would increasingly be subject to change through threats exerted by a powerful country,

which has already happened in some states. Attempts have been made to replicate this in Sri Lanka. If International Law and national laws are so undermined, the world may return to a sort of pre-historic state – a state of nature referred to by Hobbes which was described by him as being nasty, brutish and short” – in which the basic principle of survival would be obedience to one single power. That is why there is little that is worse than a unipolar world in which the Rule of Law, Supremacy of the Law, Natural Justice, Judicial Independence including at the international level, etc. would become utterly irrelevant and be destroyed by one or more countries. A part of European civilization is founded on a 2500 year history during which the ancient Greeks and Romans developed concepts which underline the above-mentioned values. One can only hope this region will preserve those values, because they are being undermined by those who have no history or a sense of one.

Sriyan de Silva

<http://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2020/10/08/the-american-neo-conservatives-who-they-are-their-history-and-their-global-impact/>