RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EPISODE 106 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader radio hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. How are you doing, David?

David Feldman: Very good, great to be here.

Steve Skrovan: And welcome to the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much Steve.

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. I always say we have a great show for you today but I'm really not kidding this time. In the second half of the show, we're going to talk about the Supreme Court with Ralph and we're also going to wade into more of your listener questions as well as check in with our good friend Russell Mokhiber, the Easy Rawlins of the corporate crime beat. But first, we're going to talk about foreign policy and the role the US Intelligence Services has in our decisions to go to war, which these days seem like a first resort rather than a last resort. And to do that, with us today is our first guest. David?

David Feldman: Dr. Paul Pillar is a leading expert on intelligence and counter terrorism, having spent 28 years serving in a number of managerial and analytic positions in the Intelligence community, including National Intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia, has been executive assistant to CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence and Executive Assistant to Director of Central Intelligence, William Webster, who was head of the CIA under President's Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Dr. Pillar has a PhD from Princeton as well as several other degrees from Dartmouth and Oxford. He's the author of two books, Intelligence and US Foreign Policy and Terrorism and US Foreign Policy. He currently teaches at Georgetown University in the Security Studies program. Welcome to the Ralph Nader radio hour, Dr. Paul Pillar.

Paul Pillar: Thank you. Good to be with you.

Ralph Nader: And thank you for coming on to the show, Dr. Pillar. In order to provide some sort of framework for our listeners on radio and podcast, let me ask you a number of questions before we get into your new article, which is entitled “The American Bias for War.” The listeners should know there are a very few people like Dr. Pillar, a man of expertise but also a man of conscience. And while a lot of the mass media put on the proud neoconservative warmongers on the networks and cable and give them op-ed space in the New York Times and Post, the views you're going to hear today are not very widely disseminated. Needless to say even though they reflect historical wisdom and a higher degree of accuracy about where policies went right and where they went wrong by the federal government. It was traditional to keep the budgets of the Intelligence Agencies secret, Dr. Pillar. But in recent years, the government has put out a macro figure for the budgets. There are of course the well-known CIA, the National Security Agency, the NSA, but there's also a lot of other intelligence departments in the Department of State, Department of Defense. What is roughly the macro budget that the taxpayers are devoting to all these intelligent agencies?

Paul Pillar: Well even with the macro figure you refer to--and I think for the Foreign Intelligence program, it's roughly around 50 Billion, something like that. But it's still an iffy figure because there are a lot of intelligence related activities that the military does that do not come under that

particular budget heading. I don’t think your listeners would be interested in all the bureaucratic legerdemain that goes on in terms of how things are divided. But why don’t we just leave it at--in tens of billions?

Ralph Nader: Right. And then the second, of course, goes to what we all pay fealty to, which is the rule of law. And when the CIA, for example, was started in 1947 by President Truman, they were instructed not to be operational, as I had recall, but to be an intelligence agency and other intelligence agencies were told, "Don’t interfere in domestic affairs." Give us your broad view of the extent to which these agencies adhere to constitutional standards, federal statutory standards and international treaties or the extent that they really think they're above the law, because they engage in clandestine activities and judgments about what is an imminent threat and where they can go anywhere in the world regardless of the standards of the rule of law. Can you give us some broad picture about that?

Paul Pillar: Well, there's not a belief about being above the law. In the history here, I think the critical dividing period is the 1970s when there was a set of revelations, which led to some congressional investigations that became very prominent, the Church Committee and the Pike Committee. And really the governing legislation was regard to activities of the intelligence agencies date back to that period. I mean, there obviously had been amendments of various sorts since then. But things are since that period have been strictly controlled by law and this includes what we know of as Covert Action which is activities that are not intelligence activates per se but intelligence agencies like the CIA tend to be used for that purpose. They aren’t the only ones that have to be used for that purpose, if there is some kind of clandestine nature involved in what's going on overseas. But there--for those, there are carefully prescribed procedures under law that involve the President signing a so called “finding” with briefings being provided to key members of Congress and so on and so forth. So we're not talking about rogue organizations that are operating outside the law. The one exception almost by definition to that is that the collection of human intelligence, espionage, by definition is breaking somebody else's law. The people who are engaged in those sorts of operations are trying to recruit people to become traitors, to be quite blunt about it. And those people, sources, human sources, would be violating the law of their own country. So there's no mistake about that; but as far as US law is concerned and that’s supreme over everyone, including intelligence officers.

Ralph Nader: Do you think that the 6,000 pages of the report that was not released under the Senator Feinstein's senate committee a couple years ago should be released? They put out a 400-page report, but there were 6,000 other pages heavily redacted that we understand. Do you think they should have been released as well by the senate committee?

Paul Pillar: I don’t know what purpose it would serve. I think most of the issues with regard to the so called enhanced interrogation techniques or torture which is what this report that you're referring to is all about are out there in all their ugly detail. The issues that are really important in terms of what sort of principals and standards ought to be followed, even when it comes handling bad people like terrorists or alleged terrorists are already matters of public debate as they should be. We and the public and members of Congress already know what we need to know to debate these things and to establish the rules that we want our government departments and agencies to abide by. So a couple more hundred pages or even a couple more thousand pages of detail, I don’t think is going to inform that debate at all. When you have an investigation that goes on -

well you gave the page counts, then the summary is about 500 pages - I don't think that detail is going to help anything.

Ralph Nader: What came out of the Senator Feinstein's exhaustive investigation in terms of legislative proposals or enactments? Could you tell our listeners that?

Paul Pillar: Well, that's a good question, because I would have to question why the taxpayers' money was spent on this exhaustive investigation in the way it was precisely for the reason that I mentioned, because the issues were already out there. And going back to the earlier question that you asked about rule of law and whether US Intelligence Agencies are observing that, the whole question of torture and treatment of prisoners was again not something that was a question of this or that agency going off and behaving as a rogue, but rather the temper of the times, and we're talking about in the wake of 9/11 with all the fears and the militancy that was amped up across the American political spectrum and as reflected by members in Congress. We had techniques used - and what I personally would say and I think many people would say - were violations of principals that Americans have said we stood for quite some time that came in the heat of the moment and that members of Congress, who were briefed on these things did not object to. As time goes by--and this--we've had cycles like this again and again. As time goes by and something like 9/11 recedes into the past and now it's been a decade and a half since that event happened, the standards changed and the mood changes and the political conditions changed. So now we have some of the same members of Congress who did not object to these things at the time, and I'm generalizing because you have to deal with different members with regard to different histories on this issue. Now when the mood is different, then the effort is to say, "Well, we've got a rogue bureaucracy here and that was the problem." Well, it wasn't the problem. It was a matter of not just certain parts of the bureaucracy, but a larger part of a rogue body politic, changing the standards as the American mood changed, depending on how recent in the past was some horrifying terrorist event.

Ralph Nader: Let's get to your brand new article, which should generate a real discussion around the country. We can only hope that the presidential campaigns would focus on what you're pointing out. Your article is called "The American Bias for War." We're talking with Dr. Paul Pillar, a former lead analyst for the CIA and other intelligence agencies, who teaches at Georgetown and other universities over the years. Can you give us the thesis of your article entitled "The American Bias for War," which goes back into history, which of course is a necessity if we're going to see the future more clearly?

Paul Pillar: Well, the starting point is to note that if we look at the use of US military force, especially since World War II, which we all agree was a great victory. And we had a real winning streak going as far as wars were concerned up through World War II. Since then, the record's been not very good at all. But the only thing in terms of a major military effort that could be considered a real victory was Operation Desert Storm, which was the expulsion of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. But since then, we've had sort of some ties - like the Korean War. We've had what can only be considered failures - Vietnam being the biggest one of course. The Iraq War being another not quite so big, but still one with the consequences of which - the negatives consequences of which - we're still wrestling with. And then to lesser degrees, there are other efforts that have been at best, a mixed record. So the question arises, why is it that our country continues again and again to not only apply military force to a large extent; but in the debates today over things like Iraq and Syria and ISIS and so on - the weight of the criticism on

the current administration - that the sort of "rhetorical weight" as you listen to presidential candidates' debate and so on is to do more, more, more with military force despite this record? So the question is: how do we get in this situation where we use military force to an extent that goes beyond what would have been a prudent pursuit of American interest? And I site a number of reasons, some of which, as you say, go back into history. We had this earlier phase actually - which comprised much of our history throughout the 19th century and then up to the first half of the 20th, up until World War II - in which we thought of foreign wars as relatively rare things that a peace loving American people would embark on only now and then, when a particular threat - be it the Nazis or someone like that - reared their head. And then we would go back and return to our homeland and do peaceful things. But now, once we got out of the Cold War, post World War II, the United State's superpower became globally involved in many ways. And we Americans had already been conditioned to think of being this globally involved as being associated with "at war." So we started to think of ourselves as being at war all the time. And now, especially in these last couple of decades - particularly since 9/11 - we are in perpetual war. And it's a merging of the metaphor - things like "war on terror" - the metaphor leading to the reality - the idea that we are in perpetual war leading to the reality of being in perpetual war. And then I note a number of other things in the way that discourse and debate in this country about such issues tends to go. For example - just to site a couple of things - we have a tendency always to think of sunk cost - the cost we sustained in the past - as an investment, as something that we need to build on, even though sunk costs are really sunk costs. And this is a long-standing American tradition, too. You remember Lincoln in the Gettysburg address talked about "These lives shall not have been lost in vain." Well, we continue to apply that concept to - say Iraq - where we hear about our service men and women, who have made the sacrifices, and we can't have those sacrifices be seen in vain. So we think of the past cost that have already been sunk in Iraq as an investment, when in fact they aren't. There's no way in which we can bring the more than 4,000 lives that we lost of our own lives back from the dead. It's just not going to happen. They're instead just ways to get into still more trouble and losing still more lives. And one final thing I mentioned - just as a matter of the rhetorical rhythm when we had debates of this sort - there is always more rhetorical resonance and more political points to be gained by saying things like, "We need to do more to stand up to the bad guys. We need to use our power to get rid of this terrorist group or get rid of that dictator." It is much less appealing and politicians are less able to win votes and to win points and opinion polls by saying, "Wait a minute, let's talk about specifics. And let's examine in detail exactly how this particular use of force may or may not work." That's not the kind of thing that gets people to notice on Sunday talk shows or campaign speeches or anything. So it's a whole set of psychological and historical and rhetorical patterns that have gotten us into this situation of using military force more than would be in line with prudent pursuit of American interest.

Ralph Nader: Before we get to the flipside of "waging war," which is "waging peace" and strong diplomacy in conflict prevention. Reading your article, "The American Bias for War, you mentioned Libya. Libya seems to be the most extreme example of what you're talking about. It was in coordination with some European countries, a US aerial attack on the Libyan regime headed by Gaddafi, who was already disarming and making deals with oil companies. As a lawyer, I was appalled by the way that kept going. It was Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State, overriding the opposition of Secretary Robert Gates who said, "Watch out. When you topple a dictator, you don't know what's going to happen afterwards, especially in a tribal society that can be pushed into sectarian violence and chaos." He had that right. But here was a clear military

attack on another country that did not threaten us. It did not proceed from a declaration of war, which is the constitutional obligation of the Congress. The funds were not authorized. They were not appropriated by congress. They were taken from the Department of Defense budget. And the rest, of course, is the full prediction of Secretary Gates: total chaos in Libya spilling over with weapons and fighters into large areas of Africa and Mali and in other places in the Middle East. How would something like that have been stopped if there was time? There was no fealty to the separation of powers and the role of Congress, obviously, by the White House. But when something like that can occur, it can occur again and again and again. And there's no accountability. Congress abandoned its constitutional role. How would you suggest future preventions can be stimulated by the citizenry, by retired diplomatic National Security and military officers, who don't have an ax to grind in the military industrial complex and often see things quite clearly, based on their own experience in what's best for the country?

Paul Pillar: Well first of all, I'd say that the first line of defense are still within the government. And I would consider the Libyan intervention to be one of the biggest mistakes that President Obama has made in the foreign policy and national security area. And I think if he were really to let his hair down - and more so than he did even to Jeffrey Goldberg - he might acknowledge this. I give the President pretty high marks overall for the diligence with which he has had a deliberative process inside his administration in which all the various views could be aired and the considerations of what comes after could be aired. And I think that is a major reason he has resisted - to the extent that he has - all of the substantial political pressures - and certainly more of the pressures are coming from this direction than the non-office direction - to do more militarily in places like Syria, in Iraq. In the case of Libya, you had in particular within his own administration what are generally described as "liberal interventionist sentiment forces," in this case personified in particular by Secretary of State Clinton and Samantha Power with the argument being that intervention had to be done to avert a supposed genocidal blood bath that would have occurred in Benghazi, if that hadn't been done. I think that was--not just think, I'm certain - that that was a very invalid view. There are—and Micah Zenko at the Council of Foreign Relations has a good article just out showing that the regime change was really what people had in mind from the very beginning. It wasn't just a humanitarian intervention. And the idea that there was going to be some kind of blood bath in Benghazi, there simply wasn't the evidence for it. Gaddafi had already retaken a number of cities from the rebels in the previous month or so and there weren't any blood baths. Sure, he was a loathsome dictator. He had plenty of opportunity to commit blood baths and genocide in the over four decades he was in power, let alone at the earlier phases of the civil war. So, I think what we were seeing in action was delayed angst over things like the Rwandan Genocide of the 1990s on the part of people like Ms. Power. And in this case, the President went along with it even though there were other voices in his administration, as you mentioned Secretary Gates and others, who thought otherwise. In terms of what outsiders can do, I think the main thing I would recommend is challenge on the specific rationales of an intervention. In this case, it was this idea that a blood bath was impending. Well, if I were one of those people on the outside that you referred to, I'd say, "Well, show us the evidence. And why - if that's the case then - why didn't Gaddafi do similar things in these other cities he had already recaptured." The logic simply wasn't there. And I think there was enough for even outsiders not privy to the classified information and the inside discussions to be able to challenge it.

Ralph Nader: To what extent would these outsiders who'd been more successful in challenging the lack of evidence if Congress performed its role? It seems here that inside government should include Congress. And it doesn't have the hearings, it doesn't perform its role to educate the public, to see what the executive branche's rational is. What's your view of Congress' abdication here? I don't think that's too strong a word over time. It seems to want to hand over the power to make war to the White House and escape its own responsibility under the Constitution.

Paul Pillar: I agree with you entirely. I think abdication is not too strong a word. And we see it not only with regard to critical review of decisions like this, like Libya. I've seen it firsthand - when I was earlier in my career why I had - throughout my government career a lot of interactions with the intelligence oversight committees and their effectiveness and the seriousness with which they've done their jobs although they have still some individuals on some of those committees that I admire in taking their job seriously. Overall, the performance has gone downhill. And it's become - like a lot of other things on Capitol Hill - far more divided by partisanship, and both of those committees have become far less effective as overseers. We saw some of this in the aftermath of the Iraq War, in which we still have not had the kind of real accounting of what went on with regard to intelligence and the policy decisions by the Bush administration and so on, because those committees were so terribly split on partisan lines. In addition to this, there's an overall effort just to buck responsibility to the administration, people in both parties doing this. And I think we see this in particular on the issue of whether there should be a new authorization for the use of military force to replace the now really outdated ones on which the administration is relying as legal grounds - according to them - for much of the military activity that's done overseas, especially against the alleged terrorist groups whether it's in Yemen or Syria or some place else. The administration that's, as you know, has called on congress to pass an update resolution if in fact members of Congress want us to use military force overseas for this purpose, and it hasn't gone anywhere. And I think I would explain that mainly by members of cCongress especially on the Republican side just being happy to see the buck stop oval office and not to assume any of the responsibility themselves for what comes after the use of military force.

Ralph Nader: We've been talking with Dr. Paul Pillar, who has just authored an article entitled "The American Bias for War." Before we get into the flipside of your title, which is if we should not have a bias for war, we should have a bias for waging peace and conflict prevention. How do the Intelligence Agencies react to your many writings and statements? Are they upset by what you're saying? Or do they like the way you articulate the national interest of United States as to your experience?

Paul Pillar: Well, I mean, there isn't - agencies as agencies don't have any reaction. And I've been a private citizen for over 10 years, and so I speak and write what I believe. I do have certain pre-publication review requirements as any former employee who had security clearances do. But that's solely to make sure there's no classified information getting out, and that's an issue. I occasionally get the odd email from an old colleague or--that says, "Attaboy," or whatever. But I think what people ought to understand is for intelligence officers, they have an apolitical non-policy role that's in their blood, that's in the nature of the work they do. If that weren't in their blood, they will quickly realize they're working in one of the wrong agencies and they need to get a job someplace else. I've always told my students who say they "want to have an influence on US foreign policy" - and I tell them, "Well, if you want that, then don't go to work for something like one of those intelligence agencies. What you need to do is sign on to someone's

presidential campaign and hope that your candidate is the one who wins and then you could angle for some deputy assistant secretary job some place, and you can help policy." That's the way it really works. But these people who work in those agencies, they're not intellectual eunuchs. They have their own view of many things. They will shake their head in dismay over policies they don't like. They will silently applaud, so to speak ones they do. This cannot and should not affect their official work, but it does lead to the odd "attaboy" type note that I would sometimes get.

Ralph Nader: What's interesting is that in the context of whether the taxpayers are getting their money's worth for 50 billion dollars or more a year: the number of times that the CIA has got it wrong - at least reports indicate they got the pending collapse of Soviet Union - they didn't see that coming. And they've got a number of things around the world that they got terribly wrong. On the other hand, where they got it right, they didn't seem to affect President Bush and Vice President Cheney's deceptions and prevarications about going to war in Iraq, the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam Hussein didn't have, the ability to send aerial threats to the US which he didn't have, the connection with Al-Qaeda which he didn't have. They were mortal enemies. All these Bush and Cheney paraded on the mass media to justify their pending invasion of Iraq without a declaration of war. Now it seems quite clear that the intelligence agencies knew that that was false, deceptive and so forth. What do you think happened that they couldn't basically breakthrough and say to the White House, "Look, you're not telling the truth here. Here's what we know?"

Paul Pillar: The most extraordinary thing in my view about the whole Iraq War experience with regard to the decision to go to war was that there was no policy process that led up to that decision. I'm not saying that there was just a bad process, or a biased one, or a truncated one. There was *no* process. That is to say - despite all of the work that has been done by the Bob Woodwards and the Ron Suskinds and the other enterprising investigative journalists who write the first draft of history of these things - no one has ever uncovered - and I certainly was not aware of any in my experience - any options paper, any meeting in the White House Situation Room in which the question was on the table: "Should we launch this war?" It just never was. And I think for a move this major - launching a major offensive war - that is absolutely extraordinary. And so there was no opportunity for the bureaucracy, whether it's the intelligence agencies or the diplomatic service or the professional military to weigh in on that decision. The meetings were all about either selling the decision to the public or trying to implement it. And obviously military was--were being given all kinds of orders to plan this, plan that. So there just wasn't the opportunity.

Ralph Nader: You described a very dangerous situation I might add. I mean, basically the White House repudiated the doubt in the Department of Defense, a lot of high-ranking people in the Army were against this decision, because they knew what they were getting into. And I'm sure there was attempts by the intelligence agency to say, "This just isn't true, President Bush." And this is a remarkable internal repudiation of the major agencies that are supposed to be levelheaded and keep us out of quagmires and wars abroad.

Paul Pillar: Well, you're absolutely right. And as far as the intelligence people are concerned - people in positions like mine and those I work with - part of our responsibility is not just to sit back and wait for requests from the policy maker for assessing this or assessing that. And in the case of Iraq, there just weren't any, at least not until we were about a year into the war. But we

do have the responsibility to anticipate the needs of policy makers and to anticipate problems and to write about those and to offer assessments. And indeed we did this. There were--before the Iraq War and during this time, I was the National Intelligence officer for the region responsible for coordinating and managing what's called “community wide analysis” that is ones in which it's not just the CIA or not just the Defense Intelligence agency but the whole set of agencies known as “the intelligence community” in which they get together and collectively offer judgments and assessment on issues. Although we were not asked by the White House for anything like this, we initiated a couple of assessments of this nature. One on what the principal challenges would be in Iraq after Saddam Hussein was overthrown, and another about what the principal regional repercussions would be with regard to terrorism and other topics. These were not popular papers for those who were making the war. But we did them. They were not well received. They were pretty much ignored. You can read redacted copies of these two assessments in one of the Senate Intelligence Committee’s much belated and partisan-divided reports that came out a few years later. So they are accessible and people can form their own judgments about these. And unfortunately, the assessments turned out to be - I wish for the sake of the national interest we were wrong, more wrong - but they turned out to be painfully correct in terms of especially that first paper I mentioned, talking about things like very dim prospects of having anything approaching a stable democracy about the likelihood that the various communities, Sunni, Shia and Kurds would be at each other's throats, the prospect of large flows of refugees, the prospect that even despite having all that oil wealth that something comparable to a Marshall Plan would be needed to try to get the Iraqi economy on its feet and so on and so forth. It was a really grim picture. But the people who had already decided to go to war didn’t want to listen to that sort of…

Ralph Nader: Well, the Iraqi invasion is like the ultimate expression of “blowback,” a CIA word. It's spreading in all directions, into Europe. It's spreading into Syria and to Turkey, threatening Gulf nations with the chaos. So let's talk about waging peace. And let me ask you a number of quick questions in the time remaining. One way to wage peace is to submit with other nations to the rule of International Law. Should United States submit to the rule of the International Criminal Court, which the vast majority of nations have done, but United States along with North Korea and some others basically said, "We are not going to recognize the jurisdiction of International Criminal Court, which might judge whether our government officials have engaged in war crimes or other violations meriting resort to that court?” What's your view on that?

Paul Pillar: I think it would be appropriate for the Unite States to become a formal party to the ICC. This is one of the number of international conventions that have come - to the statute of the court - that have come into effect without US participation in which the United States Senate seems to have become incapable of giving consent to ratifying any major treaties. There are others like the Law of the Sea Convention, which should become pretty firmly established as the basis for international law in that area. And we're still not a party to that. So yes, the ICC has--the International Criminal Court - has its critics. There are firm bases for us to question exactly how the statute was drawn up and so on. But it's already proven itself that it can operate. And I think it would be a good thing if the US were to ratify the statute and become a formal party to it.

Ralph Nader: The next aspect of waging peace, how would you change if you would any aspect of the US relationship with Israel, diplomatic, political, military relationship with Israel as part of the conflict in that region of the Palestinian people - two-state solution and all that?

Paul Pillar: I would like to see a normal, cordial relationship between the United States and Israel. That means besides the usual trade and friendly diplomatic ties, not having the extraordinary measures that have really turned this relationship around such that we have the Israeli tail wagging the United States dog, if I can put it in those terms. That would mean no more providing cover in the United Nations with vetoes in which they're overwhelming majorities of the world community, which have critical things to say about settlement policy and the occupation of Palestinian territory. And no more billions upon billions - more than 3 billion a year in recent years - of subsidy from the United States to Israel when Israel is already one of the couple dozen richest countries in the world and already overwhelmingly the strongest military force in the country. And I would add that for any friend of Israel, who is concerned about Israeli security and wants to see a prosperous, happy, secure Jewish and democratic state, the United States has been doing Israel no favors by basically providing political cover for the policies that the governments of that country have pursued in recent years. And it's a very hard core and unyielding Right-wing government that we're talking about in which Mr. Netanyahu is actually one of the more moderate members. We are doing no favors to the cause of a free, secure, happy, democratic Israeli state by providing that kind of cover.

Ralph Nader: And I take it for a two-state solution?

Paul Pillar: Yes. Unfortunately, the policy of colonization in the territories has gone so far that if each year goes by, the two-state solution becomes less and less viable. But I'm not in a position to give it up yet. If there were the will in an Israeli government of a different political coloration than the ones we've had in recent years, it could still be done. I don't see any alternative to two-state solution in terms of realizing a legitimate national aspirations both of Jewish Israelis and of Arab Palestinians. Those are two very powerful sentiments; and I don't see how either one can be fully realized in anything other than the two-state solution.

Ralph Nader: What's your view of the recent presidential candidate's speeches at the AIPAC Convention in Washington DC?

Paul Pillar: The best speech was the one that was not given at AIPAC. It was by Bernie Sanders. I don't know exactly where he gave that. I saw the text in which he said, "Well this is what I would have said if I had been there." He was off campaigning in the West someplace. And it was an excellent speech, which echoed some of the things that you and I had just said in the last two minutes and did call for US policies that would be much more supportive of a two-state solution. I am very, very disappointed with everything that actually was said before the crowd at AIPAC at the Convention Center. It was little more than what can be described as the usual pandering to what is mistakenly often described as a pro Israel set of interests. It's not. It's basically a pro-Likud set of interests and…

Ralph Nader: Likud, meaning the party in power?

Paul Pillar: The dominant right-wing party in power, yes, yes.

Ralph Nader: Uh-hmm. Let me ask you this, one thing that distinguishes you is you're able to look at the history in the Middle East from the point of view of people *in* the Middle East and you did some work on why these suicide bombers actually do what they do, what their motivation is. But looking at it from the people in the Middle East, they see after World War I, the British and the French with the American support carved up all these areas into artificial

states, disregarding tribal positions, et cetera. And then they begin to dominate these areas, propping up dictatorships, toppling dictatorships, oil politics pervading the policies there, overthrowing the elected Prime Minister of Iran in 1953, Mossedegh, which ushered in 27 years of the tyrannical Shah's regime. And all of it is in the memory of these people. And then they see the invasion of Iraq. And they see the weaponries that's given to all these other dictators. They see no holds barred of Israeli military incursions and attacks. And their desperation toward the United States is turning, of course, violent. And the lack of any Air Force and Navy by the fighters make them resort to suicide bombers as a tactic. What did you find out in your studies, in other studies about what actually motivates these suicide bombers, which are now starting appear in Western Europe?

Paul Pillar: Well, each one has a different individual story with regard to the life history, with regard to the psychology that involves a person's families and friends and personal circumstances and so on. But I think the best way to summarize it is it's a combination of those personal circumstances, which in the case of some of the, say the minority of Muslim populations in places like France and Belgium have to do with bleak economic prospects, a lot of social discrimination but basically not very happy circumstances with regard to their life prospects, compared to what they see around them. And that combined with the larger grievances and perceptions of what's going on with regard to great power policies and US policies, including all of the historical record that you've mentioned. And this shows up again and again in opinion polls of Middle Eastern populations where the United States - our numbers are routinely far lower in that part of the world than they are in many other parts of the world and lower than those of many other leaders and governments that we would wish those people had a lower opinion of. So it's both. It's personal, close at hand things, but it's also the more distant grievances and issues that get people angered and motivated.

Ralph Nader: Do you think that the desperation level - no one really more dangerous than a young man who has nothing to lose and who sees both his own personal circumstances dire and the larger picture of resisting the invaders, resisting the colonizers, resisting US military and dictatorial policies, what's your projection on that? The frustration gets bigger, the penetration begins to spread and starts out in Northeast Afghanistan, now it's all over 20, 30 countries. The government in Washington can hardly keep fact of how many groups and subgroups there are that they call terrorists. What do you think the projection is? Is it going to come here to United States? Is it going to spread in Western Europe? What do you think is going to happen, unless we have a muscular policy of waging peace and conflict prevention?

Paul Pillar: Well, these things go in cycles and particularly in the Middle East, we've had this whole set of upheavals begun little over five years ago that have come under the heading of Arab Spring or Arab Awakening. And a lot of the contagion effect of the more radical violent forms of opposition as distinct from the more peaceful forms has a lot to do with that as well as these grievances that have been around for quite some time. There will be no shortage - I see - in the next several years of the sorts of issues that will continue to provide these kinds of motivations. But certainly outside powers including the United States can do an awful lot to their own policies - changing them - to affect the degree and intensity of the problem as we see it. We were just talking a moment ago about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I think the Palestinian violence that we have seen in recent months is one of the clearest examples of what you were referring to when you talked about "young men who have nothing to lose." Well, we have seen there is not - it's not organized violence. It's not some terrorist group or a group organization that is putting

these people up to it. Instead it's young men - kids often - who seeing they have nothing to lose and seeing nothing but bleak future in front of them, grab a knife out of their mother's kitchen and go out and try to stab the first Israeli they see. I don't see any real end to that. Some people project - and I would not be surprised to see that particular unrest actually escalate farther such that people would agree - it's a third intifada. Well that's just one example. But there's potential for other things to break out in places like some of the Gulf Arab States, in Saudi Arabia in particular, where we have the anachronism of a basically medieval family-run regime that has now become harder pressed to keep the population happy with oil prices down and so on. Their finances are harder pressed than they used to be. And the potential for even worse of an upheaval, some of the effects of which we would feel in the West because of our relations with regimes such as the one in Ryhad that we would feel those. In some respects, things could get worse before they get better.

Ralph Nader: Well, we're out of time but to read more about Dr. Pillar's views in the article that just came out, "American Bias for War," his views on ISIS, his views on dealing with the Syrian situation overall. How would they get this article? Could you give a reference on the Internet where they could read it?

Paul Pillar: Well, it will be published actually in a future--I think the issue after next--I mean the coming issue of the National Interest. And people can read a lot of my other things on the website of the National Interest. I have a regular space there. But the particular article that you've been discussing will be a forthcoming hard copy issue of The National Interest.

Ralph Nader: Can you give slowly the website so that our listeners can get in contact?

Paul Pillar: Nationalinterest.org.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much Dr. Pillar, we could have gone on and on, but it's very important for people to hear a clear-eyed view of US foreign policy, US military policy. Let's see, we just scratched the surface but I want to ask your own media and your own locality why there aren't more discussions like this because there's no escaping further quagmires, further wars, further blowbacks, further priorities subdued in terms of our own domestic necessities in favor of bloated military budgets. This is not theoretical, my friends. This is something which we all got to get engaged in and focus on our members of Congress to assert their own Congressional obligations which includes holding public hearing and reviewing evidence in order to make the executive branch accountable. Thank you very much, Dr. Pillar.

Paul Pillar: It's been my pleasure.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Dr. Paul Pillar, former CIA Intelligence Analyst and now professor at Georgetown University in their Security Studies program. We will link to his contact information and his books and articles on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website. Now we're going to take a short break and find out what mischief is going on in the corporate boardroom from our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber. Russell?

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press building in Washington DC, this is your corporate crime reporter morning minute for Thursday, March 24th, 2016. I'm Russell Mokhiber. Every year, thousands of workers across the United States are killed on the job, 4,679 in 2014 alone. Thousands more are seriously injured. Many of these deaths injuries are entirely preventable when employers put in place basic safety measures. Some even result from company policies and

practices that encourage and reward behavior that creates unacceptably risky conditions. Ignoring workplace safety requirements is against the law. A new manual from The Center for Progressive Reform urges action at the state and local level to prosecute worker death and injury cases under a state's general criminal laws such as from manslaughter, assault and battery, and reckless endangerment. For the corporate crime reporter, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you Russell. Before we do anything else in the show Ralph, I wanted to ask you a question - an obvious question - based on the conversation we just heard with Dr. Pillar. And do we need a CIA at all? If you were advising President Truman back in 1945, knowing what you know now of all the unintended consequences, all the blowback, would you say, "President Truman, don't do it. It's not worth it?"

Ralph Nader: Well the CIA's operations and covert operations overseas which is not part of their 1947 charter when they were established by President Truman so upset Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan when he was in the Senate that he called for its abolition. That doesn't mean the government should not have the source of information about what's going on around the world. But you don't want a clandestine agency also operating to engage in violent attacks, overthrows such as the Iranian overthrow 1953. That is not only a violation of the original charter, but it leads to rogue operations. It leads to what senator Inouye once said, "A government within a government." So yes, we need an intelligence advisory, information gathering agency but we don't need another civilian agency engaging in military operations abroad and getting it all mix ups with the Department of Defense.

Steve Skrovan: It seems like a White House's own private army.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. I mean, what they don't want the US military to do or what the US military doesn't want to get into in terms of quagmire, they go to the CIA, which has its own drones, its own special operations all over the world illegally, violently, unaccountably. And that has to be reformed. So I think Daniel Patrick Moynihan was right but his recommendation didn't go very far in the US Congress.

Steve Skrovan: Let's turn to the Supreme Court. This has been happening now. President Obama finally came up with a nominee, Merrick Garland. What are your thoughts on that Ralph?

Ralph Nader: The nomination of Judge Garland, who raises a obvious but very infrequent question that I want to put to you and David. Judge Garland is a moderate, but he defers to Presidential authority. He has not supported the rights of the prisoners in Guantanamo. He very often sides with the police behavior in these touchy cases. So clearly, he is not Justice Brennan or a Justice Douglas or a Justice Warren. But the larger question is the following: that huge numbers of people in this country have been pressing for years for diversity on the Supreme Court, because for over a hundred and twenty years, they were all Protestants, white male Protestants. And then there was a Catholic seat and a Jewish seat, the Jewish seat being held by Justice Brandeis for a number of decades. But now, we have just the reverse with Judge Garland. Should he be confirmed, there would be five Catholics, four Jews and no Protestant. The denomination known as the Protestant part of Christianity is about 45% of the population. And Protestants are the only ones that can be referred to with an acronym and get away with it - WASPS. I mean, imagine if you had that same acronym to Catholics and Jews and Muslims, the people would be offended. So the question is almost never discussed is: if there should be women as well as men on the Supreme Court, should you be Black, Hispanic, as well as

Christians of white male origin, should there be one seat held by a Protestant regardless of gender or race on the Supreme Court given the penchant for diversity? As of now, it's zero. Tens of millions of people who are Protestants have no Justice of the Supreme Court from their denomination. What do you think, David, Steve?

David Feldman: It's hard to sell Protestants as a protected class. I don't know.

Steve Skrovan: Isn't the standard supposed to be qualifications and not ethnicity or religious creed or anything like that and that this is just a pendulum swinging away from the dominant class?

Ralph Nader: Well it is supposed to be qualifications, but it's obviously more than that, isn't it? Because it's gender and race and ethnic background have now been rolled into the qualification variable as well so…

David Feldman: It's like the Bakke Decision with the Supreme Court. Like you're not—"No quotas, but we can take your ethnicity into account."

Ralph Nader: Let's look at it from the point of view of Protestants. They haven't really raised the banner, they're not marching and demonstrating. But inside their minds, they're starting to think, "What's going on here? Has it gone too far?" Has the word diversity been twisted against them, since they are the majority?

Steve Skrovan: I think that's--I'm sorry, Ralph - I think that's indicative of what's going on in general and why the Republican party, which has represented essentially white Protestant dominance is going crazy, because they see that slipping away from them. They see the demographics going away from old white men. And I think you--it's reflected on the Supreme Court.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's certainly something that should be discussed. And I don't think people should use the word WASP do you? White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. What do you think of that?

Steve Skrovan: I don't see that as much derogatory especially since it's hard to--like David just referred to. When you are the dominant culture, it is not as injurious to be--there's nothing in that--what you're saying, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant that is objectively derogatory. It's descriptive.

David Feldman: I'll push back on that. I think it is injurious. I think the idea--if I were a WAS-White Anglo-Saxon Protestant and I was struggling economically, I would object to people assuming that I was part of the power structure. I think that's where so much of Trump's appeal comes from.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, I think that's underlying a lot of white male, blue-collar workers - there's a simmering resentment. It's not just with this issue but many other issues often fueled by Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity and right-wing radio.

David Feldman: Ralph, I like to know what you think. I mean, how do you placate White Protestant males, who are constantly hearing, "Well, we're looking for a diversity hire, so you're not included in this?"

Ralph Nader: Well, diversity has it's own boomerang. When it's much needed because of the repressed minorities and gender, it's much needed. But then it keeps succeeding and succeeding

and then it turns into what it shouldn't turn into. It turns into a collateral discriminatory force. We always have to be careful of that and treat all people equally.

David Feldman: Affirmative action is an ongoing discussion. It's something that we have to keep reexamining every decade, right? It's fluid.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. I mean, we had over a hundred and fifty years of white male affirmative action that nobody challenged. So it gets redefined, David, from time to time.

Steve Skrovan: All right. Let's just take time to do one question here. We have a little bit more time and this comes from Jayne Katherine Berry. And she says, "I would like to hear Mr. Nader speak about the department of the interior Bureau of Land Management and the granting of licenses to extract mineral resources from public lands as well as leasing lands to ranchers and farmer." And she says, "I heard it said that land rights can only belong to states. Could you address this?"

Ralph Nader: Well no. Land rights belongs to whoever owns them and the federal government of course owns, in trust to the American people, one-third of the American land mass. Those are the many areas in Alaska and the Western States plus of course all the huge offshore lands that are under federal jurisdiction. So, we are the owners of the public lands and the policy has been to give all kinds of licenses and lease holds to mineral companies, timber companies, grazing firms at bargain basement prices on our land. And the most egregious example comes from the 1872 Mining Act, where any foreign and domestic corporation could find gold on our land, federal land, and no matter how many billions of dollars of a gold mine. And go to Washington and under the 1872 Mining Act, the Department of Interior hands are tied. They can charge that company no more than $5 an acre over the gold. And so a Canadian company got 9 billion dollars – with B - of gold on our land, federal land in Nevada a number of years ago for about $20,000 with no royalties back on the profits to Uncle Sam. So I think there's some grievances out there in terms of how the land is managed. There's charges of vast overgrazing and soil erosion coming from farmers or ranchers who have lease holds to graze on public land. There's also charges that royalties have not been paid when they're due. And then there's a counter chargers by groups that think that federal land should be sold off - except for maybe a number of national florists and parks - sold off to private owners and exploited under a free market system. So we're going to see more and more conflict here but there is a no bar for the federal government owning land directly.

Steve Skrovan: Well, thank you for that question Jane. That's our show. Keep those questions coming, either on Ralph's Facebook page or on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website. I want to thank once again our guest today, former Intelligence Analyst, Dr. Paul Pillar, author of Intelligence and US Foreign Policy and Terrorism US Foreign Policy. Again, we'll link to all this on the website. Go there if you have any inclination to explore that more.

David Feldman: If you want to read this show, a transcript of this episode will be posted on Ralphnaderradiohour.com.

Steve Skrovan: For Ralph's weekly blog, go to nader.org. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

David Feldman: Remember to visit the country's only law museum, the American Museum of Tort Law in Winsted, Connecticut. Ralph, I understand there's a grand reawakening on April 2nd?

Ralph Nader: Yes. We invite everybody to visit the only law museum of any kind in the world, the American Museum of Tort Law. You can go to tortmuseum.org. April 2, Saturday is the spring reawakening event.

Steve Skrovan: The producers of the Ralph Nader radio hour, Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran,

Davis Feldman: Our executive producer is Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music, "Stand up, Rise up" was written and performed by Kemp Harris.

David Feldman: Join us next for more informative and provocative discussion when we will be talking to Professor Jonathan H. Martin, author of Empowering Progressive Third Parties in the United States. Talk to you then, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much David and Steve. And to our listeners, spread the word and become active or be more active if you're already are active. Those are the pillars of our democracy.