



PART II:

Sustainability concepts, practices and planning





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Redefining sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To explore the current state of political policies, media coverage and military events initiated by western countries against key African and Middle Eastern countries that have now created an environment of instability.

Design: The substance underpinning this paper will be newspaper articles, news reports, several documentaries and book research. It shall be compiled to clearly present a logical sequence of events.

Methodology: A study of western political policies and media coverage will be studied, examined in an effort to ascertain cause and effect, and its ultimate impact in shaping the present atmosphere of insecurity that is emerging across the West.

Approach: A thesis predicated on the promulgated notion of 'sustainability' and how it has traditionally connoted impoverished, third world countries will be established. How war-like events occurring in key African and Middle Eastern countries have bred a climate of insecurity and fear, resulting in Western countries now being concerned about whether they can maintain their quality of life will then be examined.

Keywords: sustainability; maintenance; security; insecurity; Islam; media; politics; western.





INTRODUCTION

When we think of 'sustainability' what generally comes to mind are images of the environment, resources and systems. Key systems such as medicine, education and law converge in shaping the economy of local, regional and national governing systems.

In a healthy system, people have adequate housing, electricity, potable running water, schools are equipped with the essentials tools for learning, roads are paved and the legal system is fair to both rich and poor.

In an unhealthy system there are rusted tin and corrugated cardboard homes, wooden shacks with little to no electricity or clean running water, precious few books for schools, dusty roads, dirt and debris surrounds: and the legal system rarely, if ever, serves the needs of the poor.

In modern western societies, such as Europe and America, that have concrete jungles and soaring, glistening skyscrapers, basic concerns about daily essentials of food, clothing and shelter are taken for granted. With fast cars, high speed technological gadgets and instant food, life is good.

Seldom, if ever, do we pause to consider that the essential building blocks of modern western society might be built upon the decimation, if not whole destruction of other people and their society in foreign lands; that these people and their way of life have all but vanished in the wake of western societies plundering their resources to build its own. More importantly, the leaders of western societies could never imagine that the terror they inflicted on the people of foreign nations might ever be visited upon them.

Western intervention in disrupting the lives of millions of people in foreign lands for the sake of capturing its resources has taken a toll. With Iraqi and Syrian refugees clamouring to get into Europe and America, coupled with violent events in New York, Madrid, London and most recently Paris, 'sustainability' has taken on a whole new meaning. In light of terrorist events visited on those living in major cities in the west, we are less concerned about sustaining essentials such as food, clothing and shelter; we are now shrouded with fear as to whether we can maintain life as we know it.

When we talk about sustainability in Europe and America today it is with great fear and trepidation. Emerging concerns for many rests on such questions as:

- Will I get to work via the tube/train without a planted bomb explosion?
- Will my kids' school bus make it to and from school without it being hijacked and them kidnapped?





- Will I make it into the office and discover an aeroplane has crashed into it and I am caught on the 55th floor?
- Will I have to sit in traffic for hours on end because a marauding group of dissidents are burning tyres on the road several cars ahead?

All such thoughts are driven by a growing collective fear. For those living in the West, it appears that the solid life style that we thought we were building somehow seems as little more than a house of cards resting on ever shifting sands.

HOW WE GOT HERE?

There are a myriad of factors that play a role in shaping the current climate of collective fear. There are social, political, economic, military and media coverage that all converge to shape the cognitive discourse. However, for the sake of this paper, I shall restrict my focus to the role American media plays in setting the social stage.

But first a little historical context. In 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell, so did the Union of Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR). Everyone across the globe saw this as a watershed moment. It was to mark the end of the cold war. It was seen as the end of potential nuclear attacks by either of the two giant world powers against each other and thus eliminated the threat of World War III.

When Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan met shortly after the fall of the wall, it was Gorbachev who suggested that both countries engage in nuclear disarmament. This proposal made great sense as the whole nuclear build-up on both sides was to be prepared to strike back if one initiated a pre-emptive attack. With the demise of his arch enemy, Captain America no longer had a formidable enemy to fear. This was a crucial moment that might have altered the course of world history for the good. Good in that great funds previously injected into military build-up could now be redirected to support crucial domestic issues such as better housing, better schools, better healthcare, refurbishing roads and old bridges, and more focused medical research. However, President Reagan declined, and America's leaders, being the hawks that they were, went in search of a new boogiemán.

THE NEW BOOGIEMAN

George Herbert Walker Bush's years in the White House went pretty much unnoticed. That was until August 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Six months later, US troops were sent off to the region to liberate the Kuwaiti people from the clutches of Saddam. He and his forces escaped to Iraq, but Bush did not pursue. Instead America





A. Jones levelled sanctions on the Iraqi government that, over time, nearly crippled his people.

THE CLINTON YEARS

The Clinton years were marked by a few notable events. America, together with NATO, intervened to stop the ethnic cleansing occurring in Yugoslavia (Bosnian War, 1992–1995). Although a bit late, America got involved just in time to prevent the total elimination of the Bosnian Muslims. Then there was the Rwanda genocide (1994), where over 800,000 people died in less than a month. America did nothing to prevent or stop this atrocity.

The term 'terrorism' first became popular in American press in 1993 when the World Trade Center was bombed. Then the Murrah Federal building was bombed in Oklahoma City in 1994. The media was in a frenzy over this, and everyone knew for certain that this was an act of war committed by Middle Eastern Muslims. However, we got faked out and disappointed when it was discovered that two white, Christian Americans named Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were the culprits.

America's economy grew rapidly during the Clinton years. The growth of the Internet, dot coms and global trade all helped put Americans to work. However, underneath all this was an eerie air of despair. For non-supervising workers, their after tax wages stagnated and in most cases declined. One fifth of the poorest American's wages fell by 12%, and one fifth of the middle class wages fell by 3%. Among those making \$250,000 or more, their income increased by 37% (Eric Foner's report).

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

In 2000, Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense revised his 1992 report for PNAC (Project for a New American Century). His report entitled, 'Rebuilding American's Defenses' laid out a plan for American world dominance. The key thrust of this document made a call for:

- the [military] budget to be raised to US\$100 billion (the military war budget in 2000 was US\$68 billion);
- Deny other countries the use of outer space;
- boldly and purposefully promote American principles abroad (promote capitalism);
- shape circumstances before they arise (pre-emptive invasions of foreign lands) and
- [Eliminate] States such as Iraq.





This report concluded that the “process of revolutionary change is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event, like a new Pearl Harbor”. Then on 11 September 2001 Mr. Wolfowitz and his band of neo-cons got their wish.

THE NEW PEARL HARBOUR

On the morning of 11 September 2001, mainstream news media reported that two aeroplanes had crashed into the World Trade Center. A third one crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and a fourth one crashed in an open field in Shanksville, PA.

Five hours after 9/11, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered his aid to draw up plans to invade Iraq. Among the notes taken were:

- best info fast;
- judge whether good enough hit SH (Saddam Hussein);
- go massive;
- sweep it all up and
- things related and not.

He set up a small intelligence office in the Pentagon to brainstorm and devise the rationale for convincing Americans to come on board with what they had already planned. The plan was to accuse Saddam of developing weapons of mass destruction, connect him to al-Qaeda, and 9/11.

Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski, Staff officer in Pentagon, 2000–2003, witnessed officials developing talking points. Among them were:

- Saddam Hussein had harboured al-Qaeda operatives, and offered and probably provided them training facilities.
- Saddam Hussein gassed his neighbours, abused his people, and is continuing in that manner.
- Saddam Hussein is a threat to his neighbours and to us. Saddam Hussein tried to shoot at our aircraft when they enforced the no-fly zone.
- One of Saddam’s intelligence operatives met with Mohamed Atta (the supposed mastermind of 9/11) in Prague – proof that Saddam is in part responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

Once their strategy to go to war was in place, the conspiracy of the willing only had to get the media to lock ranks behind them.

DECEPTION AND SECRECY

George Bush, Dick Chaney, Paul Wolfowitz, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld were consistent with their message that Saddam Hussein was





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harbouring weapons of mass destruction, and the media was there to trumpet the call and beat the drums of war. The collaboration was most successful. So much, so that by early 2003, 70% of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein was involved with the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. The build up to the war involved:

- arrest and detention of over 1200 men, mostly Muslims;
- the USA Patriot Act was quickly passed by an unthinking congress;
- White House deliberations were held in secret;
- unwarranted wiretapping was sanctioned on unsuspecting Americans;
- the Bush administration buffeted the public with a constant barrage of a colour-coded five tier system of messages to indicate the daily levels of national threat and
- terror targets increased from 160 in 2003 to 300,000 by 2007.

Less than a month after 9/11, America invaded Afghanistan: not one Afghan was involved with 9/11. There were, however, 15 Saudis, but not a word was mentioned about this.

As the drama played out in the media whenever any of the neo-cons were on TV the words 'terror' 'terrorist' and 'terrorist attacks' were repeatedly on their lips: 'terror' was the catch word of the day. With this a whole new vocabulary of fear was devised as well. Terms such as:

- axis of evil;
- war against terror;
- regime change;
- simulated drowning;
- preventive war;
- collateral damage;
- extraordinary renditions and
- homeland.

*Those who can make you believe
absurdities can make you commit atrocities*
-Voltaire, 1694–1778

The media impact was astounding. TV shows like *Survivor* grew in popularity. CNN, Fox and MSNBC interviewed numerous retired generals and military officers already prepped with talking points to build a case against Saddam. CNN's Wolf Blitzer had a special show called the War Room. Major newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, advanced the message for the build up to war. Phil Donahue's show was cancelled due to his having liberal leanings and his anti-war rhetoric.

70 France, Germany and Russia did not support the Bush position either and were vilified. French fries in the congressional cafeteria became





'Freedom Fries'. Sauerkraut likewise became 'Liberty Cabbage' in Germany during World War I (WWI) (1918).

Bush invoked religion to surround himself in a cloak of 'divine destiny'. He convinced American evangelicals that he was doing God's work.

Then Bush sent Colin Powell, the most respected member of his administration, to the United Nations (UN). Powell spoke for 75 min to convince UN members that Saddam was a threat. Although foreign nationals were unmoved, American support for the war jumped from 50% to 63%.

JUST THE BEGINNING

With all systems converging in support of a launch to war, it was later discovered that invading Iraq was only the first phase of a programme for American empire expansion. Once Iraq fell, America would go after Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon and ultimately Iran. This was a five year plan that, unfortunately for the neo-cons, got bogged down through strong resistance in Iraq.

Bush would serve two terms as president, wage war against two sovereign nations, and mismanage both. Domestically, he horribly mismanaged events in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He also did an abysmal job on the American economy. All previous wars have been managed by Americans tightening their belts and paying a little more in taxes. Bush had given tax cuts to the richest 1%, and told average Americans to 'go out shopping'.

THE FALLOUT

The long term effect of having the leader of your country lie to you becomes manifest through a mounting atmosphere of paranoia and mistrust. As every child wishes to believe that decisions their parents make are in the end for their own good, we as citizens of our nation attach the very same belief about our leaders. We want to believe that the decisions of our political leaders are made for our benefit and the benefit of our nation.

Thanks to a little thing known as the Internet, people now have access to a wide range of information that was once in the control of a precious few. Now that it is abundantly clear that the American government, during both the Bush and Obama administrations, lied to and misled the populace, a strong wave of resentment has emerged. Along with this is a sense of loss and aloneness. Not knowing who to trust we withdraw, pull back, look suspiciously at practically everything, and anyone who smiles. We now wonder what may be behind it.





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The nearly 3000 people who died at the crumbling of the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001, are surely a tragedy. However, for the American government to launch an invasion on a sovereign nation whose leadership had absolutely nothing to do with 9/11 and destroy the lives of nearly 30 million Iraqis is a tragedy of massive proportions.

America is now engaged in the longest standing military conflict and occupation ever in its history. Conducting wars on two fronts for more than a decade has ushered in an age where being in a state of war almost seems normal. From the founding of the American nation in 1776 to the year 2016 amounts to 240 years: America has been at war for 218 years of that time. The United States of America (USA), a country that is nearly two and a half centuries old, has known less than one quarter of a century (22 years) of peace.

The great negative fall-out is that the foreign policies of this nation do not just impact on America or Americans. The awful train bombings in Madrid, Spain in 2004, the tube bombings in London in 2005, up to the most recent bombing in Paris of 2015, are not merely isolated events. In all three cases the single culprit presented through western media are Muslims. Many of the Middle East and North African foreigners residing in northern European countries are those who have been displaced and rendered homeless following the unwarranted invasion of Iraq and other oil rich nations since 2003.

There is little to wonder why. With decisions made following the end of World War II (WWII), America and her allied powers staked out the Middle East as theirs for the taking: it was only the USSR that stood in their way. However, as Russia is no longer a threat, oil rich countries in North Africa and other countries in the Middle East are just there for the picking. As President Woodrow Wilson had used the Lusitania sinking during WWI, FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt) had Pearl Harbor during WWII, and Lyndon Johnson had the fake attack on the naval destroyer USS Maddox harboured in the Gulf of Tonkin to escalate the Vietnam War, George Bush latched onto the World Trade Center to breed fear, deny citizens human rights, and beat the drums of war in the new century.

FULL CIRCLE

The current state of affairs with American and European leaders pulling the bait and switch, misinformation, and outright lying to its people to rally support for inhumane and illegal invasions of sovereign nations has to end. Even the notion of racial superiority is just another tool to keep the masses of poor whites, making practically no money, believe that they are better than blacks because they can eat at a given restaurant or drink at a water fountain 'specially designated for them'.

As in the Wizard of Oz, there are a growing number of young people who, like Dorothy, are peering behind their nation's political curtain.





They are no longer blindly accepting what those in power try to sell as the rationale for taking the life of a fellow human and plundering his land afterwards. They also realise that the maintenance and sustainability of their own lives are now, more than ever, at stake if we do not change course.

A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

What happens in America reverberates in Europe and across the globe. The people of America and other countries are more literate than those who govern tend to give them credit for. The fall of the USSR should have led to a diminishing of any new acts of war.

The *war on terror* is a bad hoax and a terrible facade to embrace as a pretext to send young men and women off to war. Terrorism is a tactic, not an ideology. It has no clear face, no religion, nor a geographical location where its people reside. However, it has served as a wonderful tool to invoke fear by governments to strike fear in the hearts of its own people. When this despicable tactic is launched in America, it will most certainly spread across the globe.

America is the world's number one leader, and as such one would think that those who govern would be more mindful as to demonstrate what genuine leadership looks like. It is not bullying those who may disagree with you or aggressively snatching away the land and resources of those who might not be as strong as you.

As parents we demonstrate to our children that real intelligence and leadership is not borne through violence. It is not the result of taking away from someone things that are not yours. Leadership is about communication, compromise and understanding. Real leadership is being able to see things from someone else's point of view. It is having the ability to step into another person's shoes. If such a mindset was embraced among our political leaders then perhaps we will see a halt to the plundering of foreign nations, and a subsequent halt to terrorism. With this renewed state of global affairs would be the diminishing of fear, and an increase of peace and harmony.

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TV

- Survivor, grew in popularity
 - Phil Donahue was cancelled due to too liberal leanings anti-war
 - CNN, Fox, MSMBBC interviewed numerous generals and officers
 - Wold Blitzer had show call the War Room
 - Manor newspapers and magazines advanced the message for the build up to war.
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Art Jones came to the production field as a talented artist turned photojournalist who covered the streets of New York City for three years, capturing a wide range of news events. During his time he freelanced for the *Daily News*, the *New York Times* and the *Amsterdam News*. As director, writer and producer with Dream Factory, Art has spearheaded the production of several thought provoking documentary films. The groundbreaking film, *Models of Success*, followed the career path of three dynamic Arab women from Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain, led to an invitation to build Ahlia University's HD Media Production Center, Bahrain and the design of a degree granting curriculum in Visual Communications.

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