

# Robert Parry's July Fourth Appeal

For several decades now, the American Republic has been under a new form of assault, one that takes aim at what the Founders recognized as both the great strength and the great vulnerability of democracy, an informed electorate.

By Robert Parry

July 4, 2011

In a modern age of mass communication, it has turned out that sophisticated propaganda and false narratives can be a more lethal threat to meaningful self-rule in America than all the armies of the world combined.

If enough Americans can be deluded by clever talking points and endless spin while many others are rendered confused and immobile then the "consent of the governed" is made meaningless.

This was the profound but cynical lesson taught by Richard Nixon more than four decades ago when he set the Republican Party on a course for using almost any means necessary to break the back of what were then a more independent U.S. news media and an increasingly well-informed public.

Furious with the critical reporting on the Vietnam War and the surging opposition to his war policies, Nixon awoke at Camp David on the morning of Sept. 12, 1970, and began barking orders to his staff.

He "has several plots he wants hatched," wrote his chief of staff H.R. Haldeman in *The Haldeman Diaries*. "One to infiltrate the John Gardner 'Common Cause' deal and needle them and try to push them to left. Next, a front group that sounds like SDS to support the Democratic candidates and praise their liberal records, etc., publicize their 'bad' quotes in guise of praise."

Then, Nixon turned to his pet plan. Nixon was "pushing again on [his] project of building OUR establishment in [the] press, business, education, etc.," Haldeman wrote.

This concept of creating a right-wing propaganda machine of think tanks, lobbying groups and ideological media was never far from Nixon's thoughts. He also understood the need to bully honest journalists into line.

Nixon believed "the press and TV don't change their attitude and approach unless you hurt them," Haldeman recounted on April 21, 1972. "The only way we can fight the whole press problem, [Nixon] feels, is through the [Charles] Colson operation, the nutcutters, forcing our news and in a brutal vicious attack on

the opposition.”

Though Nixon himself ran afoul of his own nasty strategy in the Watergate scandal, the Republicans and the Right did not change course. Over the past four decades, they have continued to build Nixon’s vision and it is now the bristling “establishment” that Nixon dreamt of.

Through endless repetition of propaganda often cloaked in “populist” disguise the Right has mastered the skill of convincing millions of average Americans that up is down on a wide variety of important topics.

For instance, many Americans have come to believe that the only way to prosperity is to concentrate wealth at the very top of society (though that economic approach led to the Great Depression of the 1930s and was a factor in the Financial Crash of 2008). They have been told, too, that any attempt to protect the middle class is “socialism” (though such policies were followed by the likes of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower).

The right-wing propagandists have even rewritten the narrative of the nation’s origins. According to this spin, the Founders viewed nearly all forms of taxation as “tyranny.” The slogan “no taxation without representation” has been shortened to simply “no taxation.”

Further, the U.S. Constitution is portrayed as an effort by the Founders to constrain federal power, presumably from the over-reaching central authority of the Articles of Confederation. In fact, the opposite was the case: the Constitution dramatically expanded federal authority because the Articles had proved unworkable.

The Founders also believed in a government that could advance the country’s “general welfare” and build a “more perfect union.” They understood the need for a common national effort in these goals. They wouldn’t have shared the hostility toward government propounded by the likes of Ayn Rand and Grover Norquist.

Yet, today’s powerful right-wing propaganda machine has the capacity to re-write the national narrative as it sees fit, from the earliest days of the Revolution through the recent political history of Ronald Reagan and the Bush Family.

One of the core purposes of Consortiumnews.com, from its founding in 1995, has been to counter these false narratives and to do so through quality journalism, hard evidence and reasoned analysis. Our stories stand the test of time because they are set on a solid foundation of fact.

Granted, we have not been among the flashiest, the trendiest and certainly not the best-funded Web sites. It’s true that other sites have higher profile

leaders, ironically often coming from right-wing stardom and personal wealth, like Arianna Huffington (HuffingtonPost) and David Brock (MediaMatters).

But Consortiumnews.com has pressed ahead, working for over 15 years to build a truthful national narrative and challenging foreign-policy myths that continue to lead the United States into costly and often unnecessary wars.

Our original articles on these life-or-death topics like those written by ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern and our other freelance writers have reached many millions of readers, in part, because they are re-posted at thousands of other Web sites and blogs.

However, we now find ourselves at a critical juncture in our effort to correct the national record. Important new avenues of investigation have opened up regarding key parts of the Right's false narratives, but we lack the money to explore them.

I also hope to write what could be my last book, a final attempt to present a truthful "counter-narrative" from the late 1960s until today. My goal is to publish by the middle of next year to help inform American voters before they go to the polls again.

But that project, too, is in jeopardy because of a lack of resources.

So, on this 235th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I appeal to you for help in confronting this latest and possibly gravest threat to the Republic, the Right's attempt to neutralize American democracy through well-organized and well-funded propaganda.

At Consortiumnews.com, we are trying to raise a minimum of \$25,000 for our mid-year fund drive. It is a distinctly modest sum, but so far we have brought in less than \$1,000. So, please help if you can. Here are four easy ways:

**First option:** You can make a donation by credit card at the Web site or by check to Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd.; Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201. Or you can use PayPal (our account is named after our e-mail address "consortnew@aol.com").

(Our parent organization, Consortium for Independent Journalism, is a 501-c-3 non-profit, so your contributions can be tax-deductible.)

**For donations of \$50 or more, we are also offering, as thank-you gifts, DVDs not available anywhere else.**

For donations of \$50 or more, you can select either a DVD of Robert Parry's FRONTLINE documentary, "The Election Held Hostage," or a two-DVD set of the closed-door congressional debriefing of Israeli intelligence officer Ari Ben-Menashe (never before seen publicly).

The DVDs date back two decades, to 1991 when there was a brief opportunity to pry loose important secrets about the Reagan-Bush era. Just e-mail us your choice at [consortnew@aol.com](mailto:consortnew@aol.com).

For a donation of \$100 or more, you can get both gifts. (For more on the historical significance of these DVDs, see "[A Two-Decade Detour into Empire](#).")

Or you can ask for an autographed copy of one of my last three books *Lost History*, *Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep*. Just follow up your donation with an e-mail expressing your choice.

**Second:** if you'd rather spread out your support in smaller amounts, you can sign up for a monthly donation. With contributions of \$10 or more a month, you can qualify for war correspondent Don North's DVD, "Yesterday's Enemies" about the lives of former Salvadoran guerrillas. For details, [click here](#).

(If you sign up for a monthly donation and want to get Don's DVD, remember to contact us at [consortnew@aol.com](mailto:consortnew@aol.com). If you prefer, we can substitute Robert Parry's "The Election Held Hostage," also on DVD. Just ask.)

**Third option:** you can take advantage of our deep discount for the two-book set of Robert Parry's *Secrecy & Privilege* and *Neck Deep* (co-authored with Sam and Nat Parry). The sale price for the set is only \$19, postage included. For details, [click here](#).

**Fourth:** you can help us close out our warehouse space by buying full boxes of *Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep* for only \$59. Each carton contains 28 paperbacks, or you can ask that we give you a mix of half and half, 14 of each.

You can give the books away as gifts or resell them for your own fundraiser. (One reader placed an order for her book club, a great idea since each book costs only about \$2.)

For details about this bulk book order, [click here](#) and scroll down to the \$59 offer.

(If we can move just 15 more cartons, we can put the remainder in my basement and save nearly \$200 a month on warehouse space.)

As always, thanks for your support. And Happy Fourth of July!

Robert Parry, Editor

**Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 as the Internet's first investigative magazine. He saw it as a way to combine modern technology and old-fashioned journalism to counter the increasing triviality of the mainstream U.S. news media.**

---