

# Help Us Rewrite Recent US History

**From Editor Robert Parry:** The other day, I was on a West Coast radio show and a caller accused me of “trying to rewrite history” a charge to which I must plead guilty.

For the past 16 years, a core purpose of Consortiumnews.com has been to “rewrite” history when we dig up new evidence that shows that the old version was wrong or incomplete. In doing so, we don’t care that the Widely Believed Story has many Esteemed Defenders. We simply present the facts in context.

For instance, the caller to the radio show was protesting my article about Richard Nixon sabotaging the Vietnam peace talks right before the 1968 election. The caller didn’t want to believe that a Republican politician would do such a thing to win an election.

And the caller is not alone in wanting to avoid painful truths. We have seen many cases when major news organizations, such as The New York Times and The Washington Post, resist new information when it shows that they bungled or missed the original story. It’s easier for them to ignore the latest evidence than to admit they misled the American people.

So, that is where we step in, “to rewrite the history.” It’s where you come in, too.

Without your support since we started Consortiumnews.com in late November 1995, large swaths of recent American history would have been left in its old misleading form, from Nixon’s “treason” in 1968, to Ronald Reagan’s treachery with Iran in 1980, to the CIA’s cover-up of cocaine smuggling by Nicaraguan Contra rebels, to many more recent events.

We have “rewritten” this important history as well as providing groundbreaking coverage of current events while operating on a shoestring budget, only about \$10,000 a month. So, please donate what you can to our end-of-year fundraiser. We have set a modest goal of \$45,000 and we make every dollar count. (We are a 501-c-3 non-profit, so your donation may be tax-deductible.)

Plus, we offer premium gifts. For donations of \$100 or more, you can get *The Killing Game*, a selection of investigative news stories by the late Gary Webb, with an afterword from me describing Webb’s persecution at the hands of the major U.S. news media for his courageous work reviving the Contra cocaine scandal and forcing key admissions from the CIA.

For donations of \$75 or more, you can get as a premium gift an autographed copy of any one of my last three books: *Lost History*, *Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep*.

For donations of \$60 or more, you can get a DVD of the 1991 PBS “Frontline” documentary “The Election Held Hostage,” which I co-wrote. It explores Republican skullduggery with Iran prior to the pivotal 1980 election.

Once you make your donation – and if you want one of the premium gifts – simply e-mail us your selection at [consortnew@aol.com](mailto:consortnew@aol.com).

Here are four easy ways to contribute:

**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”).

**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).)

**Third option:** If you can’t afford a donation right now, you can also help us reach our fundraising goal by taking advantage of our deep discount for the three-book set of Robert Parry’s *Lost History*, *Secrecy & Privilege* and *Neck Deep* (co-authored with Sam and Nat Parry). The sale price for the set is only \$29, postage included. For details, click here.

**Fourth:** You can help us close out some warehouse space by buying full boxes of *Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep* for only \$56. Each carton contains 28 paperbacks, or you can ask that we give you a mix of half and half, 14 of each. At \$56 for a carton, each book only costs you \$2. And for U.S. orders, we’ll pay for shipping, too.

You can give the books away as holiday gifts or resell them for your own fundraiser. For details about this bulk book order, click here.

As always, thanks for your support and thanks for making it possible for us to go on “rewriting” history.

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.

---

## Ivan Eland Disputes War-for-Oil Dogma

At least since the oil shocks of the 1970s, it has been Official Washington's dogma that the United States must stand ready to fight wars over access to Middle East oil, but the Independent Institute's Ivan Eland questions that certainty in a new book, writes Carl Close.

By Carl Close

Ivan Eland's new book, *No War for Oil: U.S. Dependency and the Middle East*, challenges a long-standing pillar of U.S. foreign policy, the belief that U.S. national and economic security require that American taxpayers fund the military protection of oil-rich foreign lands, especially in the Persian Gulf.

According to Eland, senior fellow at the Independent Institute and director of the Center on Peace & Liberty, the choice is not between preparing to fight wars for oil or risking the loss of energy resources that power the American economy, that's a false alternative.

Rather, the choice is whether or not to continue to spend increasingly costly resources on military and diplomatic policies that are unnecessary and detrimental to the economic and political interests of the American people.

The issue is monumental and merits far greater public discussion and debate than it has received. It's certainly more fundamental than many of the questions asked of the presidential hopefuls.

Here are highlights from the [book summary](#):

**–The United States devotes more resources to the defense of oil in the Persian Gulf than most people realize, a total of more than \$334 billion per year (in 2009 dollars).**

To ensure the free flow of oil from the Middle East, the United States maintains military facilities in Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq, as well as in nearby Egypt, Djibouti, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Diego Garcia. Despite the large amount of U.S. expenditures to defend the

Persian Gulf, the United States gets only about 18 percent of its imported oil from Saudi Arabia.

**–“Cheap” foreign oil comes with huge hidden costs that American leaders and the public need to keep in mind when thinking about U.S. foreign policy.**

According to one estimate, gasoline would cost U.S. consumers \$5 more per gallon if federal spending for the defense of Persian Gulf oil were incorporated into gas prices. The U.S. military subsidy for oil means lower prices at the gas pump, but consumers ultimately pay a steep price for that fake discount (and more) in the form of higher taxes and inflationary deficit financing to help fund a large U.S. military presence abroad.

The king’s ransom that the United States spends to defend Persian Gulf oil is more than ten times the value of its annual imports from the Gulf.

**–U.S. military protection of the Persian Gulf is unnecessary to ensure access to oil from that region.**

Without Uncle Sam’s generous help, Persian Gulf oil producers, shippers and consumers (that latter residing mostly in Europe and East Asia) would have strong incentives to protect the free flow of oil. If the U.S. government eliminated its military subsidy for oil in the Persian Gulf, it could decommission approximately five army divisions, five active air wings of the Air Force, five Marine Expeditionary Brigades, and 144 ships, including six aircraft carriers, roughly half of the U.S. armed forces.

**–Because only 10 percent of the oil consumed by the United States comes from the Persian Gulf, U.S. military protection of that region is even more irrational than Nineteenth Century European imperialism.**

American taxpayers would enjoy significant savings if the United States were to rely exclusively on markets to obtain oil, just as Europeans became better off as their governments reduced their use of armed forces and protectionist trade policies and relied more on free markets to obtain goods from other countries. Unfortunately, the U.S. government has taken the opposite approach in recent years and has extended its security umbrella over oil-producing regions in West Africa, Latin America, the Caspian Sea region, and Central Asia.

**–Several popular myths about oil undermine clear thinking about America’s energy needs and U.S. foreign policy.**

One long-standing myth is that oil possesses “special” or “strategic” characteristics. Yet, there are many critical products that the market is allowed to supply in abundance at efficient prices, and oil should be no

different. Furthermore, more than enough oil is produced in the United States to meet the needs of the U.S. military in time of war, and this supply can be augmented with oil purchased from Canada and Mexico. Thus, oil is not strategic.

**–Becoming “energy independent”, a goal promoted by many Democratic and Republican politicians, is not in America’s best interest.**

In reality, consumers are better off when they are free to buy goods from companies and regions that have a comparative advantage in the production of those goods. Energy independence would serve only special interests such as less-efficient domestic oil suppliers or alternative energy producers that can’t yet thrive without government subsidies or protection from foreign competition.

---