

Cold War II to McCarthyism II

Exclusive: With Cold War II in full swing, the New York Times is dusting off what might be called McCarthyism II, the suggestion that anyone who doesn't get in line with U.S. propaganda must be working for Moscow, reports Robert Parry.

By Robert Parry

Perhaps it's no surprise that the U.S. government's plunge into Cold War II would bring back the one-sided propaganda themes that dominated Cold War I, but it's still unsettling to see how quickly the major U.S. news media has returned to the old ways, especially the New York Times, which has emerged as Official Washington's propaganda vehicle of choice.

What has been most striking in the behavior of the Times and most other U.S. mainstream media outlets is their utter lack of self-awareness, for instance, accusing Russia of engaging in propaganda and alliance-building that are a pale shadow of what the U.S. government routinely does. Yet, the Times and the rest of the MSM act as if these actions are unique to Moscow.

A case in point is Monday's front-page story in the Times entitled "Russia Wields Aid and Ideology Against West to Fight Sanctions," which warns: "Moscow has brought to bear different kinds of weapons, according to American and European officials: money, ideology and disinformation."

The [article](#) by Peter Baker and Steven Erlanger portrays the U.S. government as largely defenseless in the face of this unprincipled Russian onslaught: "Even as the Obama administration and its European allies try to counter Russia's military intervention across its border, they have found themselves struggling at home against what they see as a concerted drive by Moscow to leverage its economic power, finance European political parties and movements, and spread alternative accounts of the conflict."

Like many of the Times' [recent articles](#), this one relies on one-sided accusations from U.S. and European officials and is short on both hard evidence of actual Russian payments and a response from the Russian government to the charges. At the end of the long story, the writers do include one comment from Brookings Institution scholar, Fiona Hill, a former U.S. national intelligence officer on Russia, noting the shortage of proof.

"The question is how much hard evidence does anyone have?" she asked. But that's about all a Times' reader will get if he or she is looking for some balanced reporting.

Missing the Obvious

Still, the more remarkable aspect of the article is how it ignores the much more substantial evidence of the U.S. government and its allies themselves financing propaganda operations and supporting “non-governmental organizations” that promote the favored U.S. policies in countries around the world.

Plus, there’s the failure to recognize that many of Official Washington’s own accounts of global problems have been riddled with propaganda and outright disinformation.

For instance, much of the State Department’s account of the Aug. 21, 2013 sarin attack in Syria turned out to be false or misleading. United Nations inspectors discovered only one rocket carrying sarin not the barrage that U.S. officials had originally alleged and the rocket had a much shorter range than the U.S. government (and the New York Times) claimed. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“NYT Backs Off Its Syria-Sarin Analysis.”](#)]

Then, after the Feb. 22, 2014 U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine, the U.S. government and the Times became veritable founts of propaganda and disinformation. Beyond refusing to acknowledge the key role played by neo-Nazi and other right-wing militias in the coup and subsequent violence, the State Department disseminated information to the Times that later was acknowledged to be false.

In April 2014, the Times published a lead story based on photographs of purported Russian soldiers in Ukraine but had to retract it two days later because it turned out that the State Department had misrepresented where a key photo was taken, destroying the premise of the article. [See Consortiumnews.com’s [“NYT Retracts Ukraine Photo Scoop.”](#)]

And sometimes the propaganda came directly from senior U.S. government officials. For instance, on April 29, 2014, Richard Stengel, under secretary of state for public diplomacy, issued a [“Dipnote”](#) that leveled accusations that the Russian network RT was painting “a dangerous and false picture of Ukraine’s legitimate government,” i.e., the post-coup regime that took power after elected President Viktor Yanukovich was driven from office. In this context, Stengel denounced RT as “a distortion machine, not a news organization.”

Though he offered no specific dates and times for the offending RT programs, Stengel did complain about “the unquestioning repetition of the ludicrous assertion that the United States has invested \$5 billion in regime change in Ukraine. These are not facts, and they are not opinions. They are false claims, and when propaganda poses as news it creates real dangers and gives a green light to violence.”

However, RT's "ludicrous assertion" about the U.S. investing \$5 billion was a clear reference to a public speech by Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Victoria Nuland to U.S. and Ukrainian business leaders on Dec. 13, 2013, in which she told them that "we have invested more than \$5 billion" in what was needed for Ukraine to achieve its "European aspirations." [See Consortiumnews.com's "Who's the Propagandist: US or RT?"]

One could go on and on about the U.S. government making false or misleading claims about these and other international crises. But it should be clear that Official Washington doesn't have clean hands when it comes to propaganda mud-slinging, though you wouldn't know that from the Times' article on Monday.

Funding Cut-outs

And, beyond the U.S. government's direct dissemination of disinformation, the U.S. government also has spread around hundreds of millions of dollars to finance "journalism" organizations, political activists and "non-governmental organizations" that promote U.S. policy goals inside targeted countries. Before the Feb. 22, 2014 coup in Ukraine, there were scores of such operations in the country financed by the National Endowment for Democracy. NED's budget from Congress exceeds \$100 million a year.

But NED, which has been run by neocon Carl Gershman since its founding in 1983, is only part of the picture. You have many other propaganda fronts operating under the umbrella of the U.S. State Department and its U.S. Agency for International Development. Last May 1, USAID issued a fact sheet summarizing its work financing friendly journalists around the world, including "journalism education, media business development, capacity building for supportive institutions, and strengthening legal-regulatory environments for free media."

USAID estimated its budget for "media strengthening programs in over 30 countries" at \$40 million annually, including aiding "independent media organizations and bloggers in over a dozen countries," In Ukraine before the coup, USAID offered training in "mobile phone and website security."

USAID, working with billionaire George Soros's Open Society, also funds the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, which engages in "investigative journalism" that usually goes after governments that have fallen into disfavor with the United States and then are singled out for accusations of corruption. The USAID-funded OCCRP also collaborates with Bellingcat, an online investigative website founded by blogger Eliot Higgins.

Higgins has spread misinformation on the Internet, including discredited claims implicating the Syrian government in the sarin attack in 2013 and directing an

Australian TV news crew to what appeared to be the wrong location for a video of a BUK anti-aircraft battery as it supposedly made its getaway to Russia after the shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014.

Despite his dubious record of accuracy, Higgins has gained mainstream acclaim, in part, because his “findings” always match up with the propaganda theme that the U.S. government and its Western allies are peddling. Though most genuinely independent bloggers are ignored by the mainstream media, Higgins has found his work touted.

In other words, whatever Russia is doing to promote its side of the story in Europe and elsewhere is more than matched by the U.S. government through its direct and indirect agents of influence. Indeed, during the original Cold War, the CIA and the old U.S. Information Agency refined the art of “information warfare,” including pioneering some of its current features like having ostensibly “independent” entities and cut-outs present the propaganda to a cynical public that rejects much of what it hears from government but may trust “citizen journalists” and “bloggers.”

To top off this modern propaganda structure, we now have the paper-of-record New York Times coming along to suggest that anyone who isn’t disseminating U.S. propaganda must be in Moscow’s pocket. The implication is that now that we have Cold War II, we can expect to have McCarthyism II as well.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, *America’s Stolen Narrative*, either in print here or as an e-book (from Amazon and barnesandnoble.com). You also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes *America’s Stolen Narrative*. For details on this offer, click here.

Israel’s ‘Legitimacy’ War

There are legitimate questions about the legitimacy of Israel’s endless repression of the Palestinian people, but Israel and its backers have now declared such questions illegitimate as they mount a new propaganda war against Israel’s “delegitimization,” says John V. Whitbeck.

By John V. Whitbeck

June 5 marked the 48th anniversary of the “preemptive” attack on Egypt with

which Israel launched the fateful “Six-Day War” that permitted the Zionist movement to complete its conquest of historical Palestine.

As the “State of Palestine” (the legal designation for the 22 percent of historical Palestine conquered in 1967, which is now recognized as a state by 136 other states and the United Nations) enters its 49th year of an apparently perpetual occupation by the State of Israel, the Israeli government and its friends in the United States are mobilizing to fight a new war a “Legitimacy War” against the “delegitimization” of “Israel.”

The quotation marks around “Israel” are intended to emphasize a fundamental point: When Israelis and their friends speak of the “delegitimization” of Israel or of Israel’s “right to exist,” they are not referring to the legitimacy or continued existence of any physical territory or of any group of people. They are referring to the legitimacy or continued existence of the particular ethno-religious-supremacist political system established in 1948 on the territory previously named Palestine, a territory in which the current population is roughly 50 percent Jewish and 50 percent Palestinian.

Why has “delegitimization” suddenly become such an existential threat to “Israel”?

Until relatively recently, very few people seriously questioned the continued existence of “Israel” either because they considered the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the dispossession and dispersal of the Palestinian people to make room for a “Jewish State” to be a good thing or because they considered it, like the genocide of the indigenous peoples of North America to make room for European colonists and their African slaves, to be an irreversible injustice, not worth thinking about any more.

Until relatively recently, the world’s attention has been focused on ending the occupation of the portion of Palestine conquered in 1967, in large part because that more recent injustice was assumed to be reversible through a “two-state solution.”

However, as Israeli leaders have become more honest and explicit about the perpetual nature of their occupation of the State of Palestine and about their deeply held belief that there is no difference between the portion of Palestine conquered in 1948 and the portion of Palestine conquered in 1967, both being their god’s gift to them and to them alone, the world’s attention has begun to broaden, both regarding the possibilities of the future and regarding the realities of the past.

In the face of the clear Israeli intention to maintain the current undemocratic

and discriminatory system of “one state with two systems,” many people have started to look again at the seminal injustice, the original sin, of 1948 and at the inherent nature of political Zionism and to think seriously about the desirability of reforming and transforming ethno-religious-supremacist “Israel” into a fully democratic state with equal rights and human dignity for all who live there the same political system which Western governments profess and proclaim to be the ideal form of government for all other states.

Of course, nothing would be more likely to make Israelis question the sustainability of their very comfortable status quo and become seriously interested in actually achieving a decent “two-state solution” than a realization that both Western public opinion and Western governments are starting to question both the “rightness” of how “Israel” came into existence and the legitimacy in the 21st century of an ethno-religious-supremacist regime, whether it calls itself “the Jewish State” or “the Islamic State.”

Hence the sudden rise of the existential threat of the “delegitimization” of “Israel.” Yet, no one has done more to delegitimize “Israel” in the eyes of the world than Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Perhaps those who seek equal rights, equal human dignity and some measure of justice, whether in two states or in one, should hope that Mr. Netanyahu keeps up his good work in the “Legitimacy War.”

John V. Whitbeck is an international lawyer who as advised the Palestinian negotiating team in negotiations with Israel.

Right-Wing Assault on the Constitution

The right-wing majority on the U.S. Supreme Court claims to believe in “originalism,” what the Constitution’s Framers intended. Yet, partisanship often trumps this supposed principle, including a case that could redefine “representation” to apply only to “voters,” as William John Cox explains.

By William John Cox

The U.S. Supreme Court’s acceptance of a case about the allocation of voting districts will have consequences far beyond the millions of U.S. taxpayers its ruling may deprive of representation. A decision that only counts voters, rather than all persons, will undermine the very foundation of the Republic.

The American Revolution was fought over “taxation without representation,” and

those who wrote the Constitution carefully apportioned taxation and representation among the states “according to their respective Numbers . . . of free Persons . . . and . . . three-fifths of all other Persons.” The authors clearly equated “We, the People” with all Persons, even those who could not vote.

The Constitution goes on to provide that apportionment shall be based on an “Enumeration” (census) conducted every ten years. Along with slaves, free women were counted in the census; however, neither were allowed to vote. Initially, only a small percentage of all persons, white men who owned sufficient property, elected representatives, but Jacksonian democracy extended the franchise to all white men.

The Fourteenth Amendment changed the definition of persons when the slaves were freed: “Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state.” The Fifteenth Amendment prohibited voting discrimination against former slaves, but women were yet to be mentioned.

In 1903, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution provided equal protection to all persons, including “an alien, who has entered the country, and has become subject in all respects to its jurisdiction, and a part of its population, although alleged to be illegally here.” Taxpaying illegal immigrants cannot vote, but they are counted for representation.

The Nineteenth Amendment precluded states from discriminating against women in voting, and the Twenty-sixth Amendment extended voting protection to all persons “who are eighteen years of age or older.” These amendments targeted discrimination; however, *the underlying right of all persons to vote has never been included in the Constitution.*

This startling fact was acknowledged by the Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore*, when it appointed George W. Bush as president in 2000 stating, “The individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote for electors for the President of the United States” The political nature of *Bush* was proved by the Court’s statement that it was a one-time decision which could not be relied on as law in the future.

Members of the majority had ties to the conservative Federalist Society, the goal of which is “to place a premium on individual liberty, traditional values, and the rule of law.” Current Justice Antonin Scalia was a founder of the Society, and Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas and Chief Justice John Roberts are members.

These conservative justices purport to be *originalists* in deciding what the actual words of the Constitution meant to those who originally ratified it; however, their decisions prove otherwise. *Bush* was pure politics, as was *Citizens United v. FEC*, which granted constitutional personhood to corporations.

If political ideology, rather than original intent, motivates a decision that only counts voters, political power will shift from larger, multi-cultural, and diverse districts to smaller, whiter, wealthier, and conservative districts, and millions of persons will once again be taxed without representation.

The American Legislative Exchange Council, another conservative organization that shares financial supporters with the Federalist Society, is responsible for most state photo ID laws that target vulnerable voting populations.

In 2014, a Federal District Court held that the Texas voter ID law had been adopted “with an unconstitutional discriminatory purpose” and that it placed “an unconstitutional burden on the right to vote.” The Federalist majority of the Supreme Court reversed the lower court’s decision and blocked 600,000 registered voters in Texas from voting.

Persons purged from registration lists because of voter ID and other suppression tactics would no longer count, should the Court decide that representational apportionment can be narrowly based on those who vote, instead of all persons.

A majority of Americans no longer have faith in their government. The job approval rate of Congress is a dismal 16 percent, while only one quarter of the people agree with the Supreme Court’s ideology, and more than half believe it has a political agenda.

Although the struggle to overcome voting discrimination took 200 years, less than half of all eligible persons bother to vote. But, just because people choose not to vote doesn’t mean they surrender their constitutional right to be represented.

The justices have repeatedly shown they are without shame in making unconscionable political decisions that are not in the best interests of the people. Let us hope there is sufficient collective wisdom remaining for them to correctly decide the true meaning of “person”, the most important word in the Constitution.

William John Cox is a retired public interest lawyer who drafted the United States Voters’ Rights Amendment (USVRA.us). His memoir, *The Holocaust Case: Defeat of Denial* will be published in July.
