

How Five American Companies Control What You Think

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Heavy distortions and suppressions of information regarding current Ukrainian events are appearing in US media.

You might wonder how so many different news sources could all completely avoid mentioning that the US government is consciously supporting two radical far-right parties, Svoboda and Right Sector, which are in control of key positions in the coup-installed new 'government' of the Ukraine. You might also wonder why almost all the US mass media news sources could conceal - with vague phrases like "*the sequence of events is not clear*" and similar techniques - the role of these extremist organization in murdering dozens of unarmed civilians in the past few days in southeastern Ukraine.

The explanation is surprisingly simple: There aren't numerous US mass media news sources at all; there are just five. Five giant corporations control 90 percent of US mass media. And direct links connect all five of these media conglomerates to the political establishment and the economic and political power-elites of the United States.

These five conglomerates are Time Warner, Disney, Murdochs' News Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany, and Viacom (formerly CBS). Their control spans most of the newspapers, magazines, books, radio and TV stations, movie studios, and much of the web news content of the United States. These conglomerates are in large measure responsible for inculcating the social, political, economic, and moral values of both adults and children in the United States.

It was not always like this. Immediately after World War II three out of four US newspapers were independently owned. But the media-control numbers have been shrinking ever since then due to mergers, acquisitions, and other processes. By 1983, 50 corporations controlled 90 percent of US media. But today just five giant conglomerates control 90 percent of what most Americans read, watch, and listen to.

It is notable and should be emphasized that all the five major media conglomerates are corporate members of the Council on Foreign relations. This organization is a US think-tank whose members have been instrumental in formulating US government policies resulting in sanctions, destabilization efforts, and outright military attacks on nations which have never attacked the US.

The Council's members' activities helped to promote the Iraq war, the bombings of Serbia and Libya, and the recent overthrow of the elected government of the Ukraine. The promotion of these policies by the media conglomerates which belong to the Council has

been key to preparing the American public to accept these policies.

The media conglomerates' fellow members of the Council on Foreign relations include a large number of large corporations, powerful CEO's, and present and former government officials. One prominent member is former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose doctrine calling for US control of the Eurasian landmass, which includes Russia and China, is one of the guiding elements in US foreign policy.



Mario Tama/Getty Images/AFP

It should also be noted that the conglomerates themselves are giant corporations. They are among the largest companies in the world. They contribute to both of America's big parties, the Republicans and Democrats, while supporting their policies. US media companies have also received from the Reagan, Clinton, and Bush administrations progressively greater media deregulation, which permitted ever greater media ownership concentration, culminating for the first time in allowing all the media in a community or city to be owned by one company.

Pages would be needed to list the thousands of information outlets now controlled by the five conglomerates. A few examples will have to suffice. News Corp owns Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, Barrons weekly, the London times, far Eastern Economic review, the New York Post, and hundreds of other large and small city and community newspapers, magazines, and internet properties.

Time-warner owns Time Magazine, Fortune Magazine, People Magazine, Sports Illustrated, CNN news group, Turner networks and movies, Warner brothers films, DC Comics, Times online systems, and much more.

And Disney is not just about Mickey Mouse Cartoons these days, as it owns ABC Television, magazine publishing business, Disney Films, Lucas Films, and a huge number of other media

and entertainment enterprises.

Following the Government Wherever it goes

Now let us perform a thought experiment to see how far the conglomerates can go to support government foreign policies. Imagine that US policy-makers decide a few years from now that the current US-supported and unelected Ukrainian 'government' no longer serves their interests.

They might then announce that this government is '*undemocratic*', '*is a human rights violator*' or that it is a '*failed state*' and that '*there must be regime change*' to '*protect the Ukrainian people.*'

Following suit, the media conglomerates would then '*sound the alarm.*' They would '*discover*' the reality - which has existed all along - that "*fascist or extreme-right forces are part of the coup-imposed Ukrainian 'government,'*" that there is a "*history of anti-Semitism,*" "*murders of ethnic-minorities,*" and conclude that the US government is right and a humanitarian intervention to remove the government is required.

Is this scenario an impossible one? Not at all. It is precisely how the repressive and brutal government of Saddam Hussein, to cite just one example, was dealt with. For many years he was praised by US officials as a "*stalwart ally*" and sent billions of dollars' worth of military aid - and the media conglomerates went along for the ride.



Reuters/Jonathan Alcorn

Then, in the twinkling of an eye he was converted by the US government - and by the media - into a "*tyrant,*" a "*ruthless killer,*" a possessor of "*weapons of mass destruction*" aimed at the US; and a man whose country must be invaded.

Or consider Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan. For years the US government supported them with weapons and training and portrayed them as 'freedom fighters' against their secular 'socialist government' and the 'Russian occupation'. The media for the most part went along with this narrative.

But then, after 9/11, in the twinkling of an eye, the fundamentalists became (in the eyes of the government and the conglomerates) '*medievalists*,' '*oppressors of women*,' and harborers of 'terrorism' who must be eliminated via a US invasion.

Recently, the US government, unable after ten years of military occupation to eliminate the Taliban resistance, has again changed course, and is seeking negotiations with the Taliban to include them in the Afghani government. And again the five conglomerates have also changed course to follow the government.

The best advice for anyone seeking to understand current events is to look at the history and realities behind them, and to look at media not controlled by the five conglomerates. Media – including print, television, and internet – is available in multiple languages including English from Russia, China, India, Pakistan, South Africa, the Middle East, Brazil, and other countries. You can easily find this media by internet search. No doubt all media contains bias; but at least your mind will not be shaped solely by the US narrative.

Eric Sommer for RT

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