

The Lie of the 21st Century: How Mainstream Media “Fake News” Led to the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

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The mainstream media (MSM) has declared war on alternative media websites labeling them “Fake News” ever since Hillary Clinton lost the election to Donald Trump. The New York Times editorial board expressed their frustration in an article calling for the censorship of alternative and social media ‘Facebook and the Digital Virus Called Fake News’ which claimed both social media platforms (Facebook and Google) has not been aggressive enough in blocking fake news sites:

Most of the fake news stories are produced by scammers looking to make a quick buck. The vast majority of them take far-right positions. But a big part of the responsibility for this scourge rests with internet companies like Facebook and Google, which have made it possible for fake news to be shared nearly instantly with millions of users and have been slow to block it from their sites

Some of the websites named in a fake news list by Melissa “Mish” Zimdars, an assistant professor of communication at Merrimack College in Massachusetts including 21st Century Wire, Activistpost.com, Globalresearch.ca, Lewrockwell.com, Naturalnews.com and Project Veritas (who released undercover videos of the DNC attempting to rig the elections) and others have exposed the lies by MSM propaganda. The MSM has lost its credibility and at the same time lost viewers at unprecedented levels. on April 17, 2016, the Associated Press reported on how the U.S. population viewed the MSM ‘Poll: Getting facts right key to Americans’ trust in media’ said that “Just 6 percent of people say they have a lot of confidence in the media, putting the news industry about equal to Congress and well below the public’s view of other institutions.” Now they want to stop the alternative media from becoming a credible source for news. The New York Times is calling for the censorship of the alternative and social media by blocking “misinformation”:

Blocking misinformation will help protect the company’s brand and credibility. Some platforms have suffered when they have failed to address users’ concerns. Twitter users, for instance, have backed away from that platform because of abusive trolling, threatening posts and hate speech, which the company hasn’t been able to control.

Mr. Zuckerberg himself has spoken at length about how social media can help improve society. In a 2012 letter to investors, he said it could “bring a more

honest and transparent dialogue around government that could lead to more direct empowerment of people, more accountability for officials and better solutions to some of the biggest problems of our time.” None of that will happen if he continues to let liars and con artists hijack his platform

Just to be clear, there are a number of websites that do spread misinformation including those in the alternative media, but it is fair to say that they never have caused the deaths of millions of people like The New York Times when it comes to U.S. foreign policy. A recent example is the U.S. led war against Iraq in 2003. After the September 11th attacks, the George W. Bush administration made a false accusation that the Iraq government had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) which led to a U.S. invasion eventually toppling Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The U.S. led war turned out to be a calculated plan by The Project for the New American Century (PNAC), a neo-conservative think-tank who wrote the secretive blueprint called ‘Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces And Resources For A New Century’ to remove Saddam Hussein and the Ba’ath party from power. The blueprint was originally written for the neocon lunatics who served under then-President George W. Bush including Vice-President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to establish an “international Security order” dominated by the United States. According to the document:

In broad terms, we saw the project as building upon the defense strategy outlined by the Cheney Defense Department in the waning days of the Bush Administration. The Defense Policy Guidance (DPG) drafted in the early months of 1992 provided a blueprint for maintaining U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests

PNAC was founded by neoconservatives William Kristol, a political analyst, media commentator (Fox News, ABC News) and the founder and editor of The Weekly Standard and Robert Kagan, an author, columnist, and foreign-policy commentator who is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and a fellow at the Brookings Institution. Kagan is also the husband of Victoria Nuland, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs appointed by President Obama who helped orchestrate a coup against the Ukrainian government of the democratically elected President Viktor Yanukovich. The blueprint for regime change in Iraq was planned way before George W. Bush became President in 2001:

Indeed, the United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein

However, Judith Miller (who is currently an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute) and The New York Times played a crucial role for the Bush administration. Miller wrote one of the main articles on Iraq’s “WMDs” that justified the Bush administration’s agenda to topple Saddam Hussein and the Ba’ath party. The article was not just “fake” news telling a lie that deceived the public, it destroyed a sovereign nation. The U.S. war against Iraq killed more than 1.4 million Iraqis (according to www.justforeignpolicy.org estimates) and more than 4,400 U.S. troops and tens of thousands permanently injured. The Iraq War also displaced millions of Iraqis thus creating a refugee crisis in neighboring countries including

Syria. The destabilization of Iraq has also created a terrorist recruiting base that has spread throughout the Middle East including Syria.

The New York Times published Miller's article on April 21st, 2003 'AFTER EFFECTS: PROHIBITED WEAPONS; Illicit Arms Kept Till Eve of War, An Iraqi Scientist Is Said to Assert' which claimed that an Iraqi scientist confirmed that the Iraqi government had WMDs:

They said the scientist led Americans to a supply of material that proved to be the building blocks of illegal weapons, which he claimed to have buried as evidence of Iraq's illicit weapons programs. The scientist also told American weapons experts that Iraq had secretly sent unconventional weapons and technology to Syria, starting in the mid-1990's, and that more recently Iraq was cooperating with Al Qaeda, the military officials said.

The Americans said the scientist told them that President Saddam Hussein's government had destroyed some stockpiles of deadly agents as early as the mid-1990's, transferred others to Syria, and had recently focused its efforts instead on research and development projects that are virtually impervious to detection by international inspectors, and even American forces on the ground combing through Iraq's giant weapons plants

On April, 22, 2003, Miller appeared on the PBS News hour and spoke about her evidence on what she described as a "Silver Bullet" from an Iraqi scientist who allegedly worked on Saddam's weapons program:

RAY SUAREZ: The task of finding that definitive proof falls in part to specialized teams within the U.S. Military. New York times" correspondent Judith Miller is reporting on the search conducted by units of the 75th exploitation task force. And she joins us now by phone south of Baghdad. Judith Miller, welcome back to the program. Has the unit you've been traveling with found any proof of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

JUDITH MILLER: Well, I think they found something more than a "smoking gun." What they've found is what is being called here by the members of MET Alpha- that's Mobile Exploitation Team Alpha- what they found is a silver bullet in the form of a person, an Iraqi individual, a scientist, as we've called him, who really worked on the programs, who knows them firsthand, and who has led MET Team Alpha people to some pretty startling conclusions that have kind of challenged the American intelligence community's under... previous understanding of, you know, what we thought the Iraqis were doing.

RAY SUAREZ: Does this confirm in a way the insistence coming from the U.S. government that after the war, various Iraqi tongues would loosen, and there might be people who would be willing to help?

JUDITH MILLER: Yes, it clearly does. I mean, it's become pretty clear to those of us on the ground that the international inspectors, without actually controlling the territory and changing the political environment, would never have been able to get these people to step forward. I mean, you can only do that when you know there is not going to be a secret policeman at your door the next day, and that your family isn't going to suffer because you're talking. And that's what the Bush administration has finally done. They have changed the political environment, and they've enabled people like the scientists that MET Alpha has found to come forth. Now, what initially the weapons hunters thought they were going to find were stockpiles of kind of chemical and

biological agents. That's what they anticipated finding. We now know from the scientist that, in fact, that probably isn't what we're going to find. What they will find, and what they have found so far, are kind of precursors; that is, building blocks of what you would need to put together a chemical or a biological weapon.

But those stockpiles that we've heard about, well, those have either been destroyed by Saddam Hussein, according to the scientists, or they have been shipped to Syria for safekeeping. And what I think the interpretation of the MET Alpha people is, is why he did this. They believe that Saddam Hussein wanted to destroy the evidence of his unconventional weapons programs, and that's what he has done- not only since 1995, but also in the weeks and months that led up to the war itself. There was mass destruction. And the scientist who has been cooperating with MET Alpha has actually said that he participated in... he kind of watched, you know, a warehouse being burned that contained potentially incriminating biological equipment. So clearly what Saddam Hussein wanted to do was cover his weapons of mass destruction tracks. And that means that the whole shape of the hunt here on the ground for unconventional weapons is changing

The problem with Miller's assertion that Iraq had WMDs is that it relied on an Iraqi exile named Ahmed Chalabi who wanted "regime change" against Saddam Hussein's government. James Moore of The Guardian wrote 'How Chalabi and the White House held the front page: The New York Times has burned its reputation on a pyre of lies about Iraq' described Chalabi as a convicted criminal who embezzled millions from his Petra Bank in Amman, Jordan. Moore said the following:

Judith Miller, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and authority on the Middle East for the NYT, appears to have been the most reliant on Chalabi. In an email exchange with the NYT's Baghdad bureau chief John Burns, Miller said Chalabi "had provided most of the front page exclusives for our paper". She later said that this was an exaggeration, but in an earlier interview with me, Miller did not discount the value of Chalabi's insight. "Of course, I talked with Chalabi," she said. "But he was just one of many sources I used."

Miller refused to say who those other sources were but, at Chalabi's behest, she interviewed various defectors from Saddam Hussein's regime, who claimed without substantiation that there was still a clandestine WMD programme operating inside Iraq. US investigators now believe that Chalabi sent these same Iraqi expatriates to at least eight Western spy agencies as part of a scheme to convince them to overthrow Saddam

Mr. Moore mentioned Miller's article which was co-written with Michael R. Gordon and published by The New York Times on September 8th, 2002 titled 'THREATS AND RESPONSES: THE IRAQIS; U.S. SAYS HUSSEIN INTENSIFIES QUEST FOR A-BOMB PARTS' claiming that Saddam was "building a uranium gas separator to develop nuclear material":

If spies wanted a trophy to show what happens when their craft is perfectly executed, it would be a story written by Judith Miller on the front page of the New York Times on a Sunday morning in September 2002. She wrote that an intercepted shipment of aluminum tubes, to be used for centrifuges, was evidence that Saddam was building a uranium gas separator to develop nuclear material.

The story had an enormous impact, one amplified when national security adviser

Condoleezza Rice, secretary of state Colin Powell and vice-president Dick Cheney all did appearances on the Sunday-morning talk shows, citing the first-rate journalism of the liberal NYT. No single story did more to advance the neoconservative cause

Here is the original excerpt from Miller's original September 8th 2002 New York Times article:

More than a decade after Saddam Hussein agreed to give up weapons of mass destruction, Iraq has stepped up its quest for nuclear weapons and has embarked on a worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said today.

In the last 14 months, Iraq has sought to buy thousands of specially designed aluminum tubes, which American officials believe were intended as components of centrifuges to enrich uranium. American officials said several efforts to arrange the shipment of the aluminum tubes were blocked or intercepted but declined to say, citing the sensitivity of the intelligence, where they came from or how they were stopped

According to Moore (and many other journalists, researchers and alternative media outlets), Judith Miller's story was completely false and that the "the aluminum tubes were covered with an anodised coating, which rendered them useless for a centrifuge, according to a number of scientists who spoke publicly after Miller's story." Moore continued "the tubes, in fact, were almost certainly intended for use as rocket bodies." Lastly, Moore quoted what Miller had told him about her sources which lead to the WMD hoax:

"I had no reason to believe what I reported was inaccurate," Miller told me. "I believed the intelligence I had. We tried really hard to get more information and we vetted information very, very carefully." A few months after the aluminum tubes story, a former CIA analyst explained to me how simple it had been to manipulate the correspondent and her newspaper.

"The White House had a perfect deal with Miller," he said. "Chalabi is providing the Bush people with the information they need to support their political objectives, and he is supplying the same material to Judy Miller. Chalabi tips her on something and then she goes to the White House, which has already heard the same thing from Chalabi, and she gets it corroborated. She also got the Pentagon to confirm things for her, which made sense, since they were working so closely with Chalabi. Too bad Judy didn't spend a little more time talking to those of us who had information that contradicted almost everything Chalabi said."

The New York Times was clearly embarrassed by Miller's articles after the fact that Miller was wrong all along about the WMDs that led up to the invasion of Iraq. Nothing was ever found. On May 26th, 2004, the editorial board admitted their wrongdoing. The article 'FROM THE EDITORS; The Times and Iraq' stated that "We have examined the failings of American and allied intelligence, especially on the issue of Iraq's weapons and possible Iraqi connections to international terrorists" which blames U.S. and other intelligence agencies (which do share the blame to an extent). The editorial piece continued "We have studied the allegations of official gullibility and hype. It is past time we turned the same light on ourselves." Well, they do turn the light on themselves, sort of:

But we have found a number of instances of coverage that was not as rigorous as it should have been. In some cases, information that was controversial then, and seems questionable

now, was insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged. Looking back, we wish we had been more aggressive in re-examining the claims as new evidence emerged — or failed to emerge.

The problematic articles varied in authorship and subject matter, but many shared a common feature. They depended at least in part on information from a circle of Iraqi informants, defectors and exiles bent on “regime change” in Iraq, people whose credibility has come under increasing public debate in recent weeks. (The most prominent of the anti-Saddam campaigners, Ahmad Chalabi, has been named as an occasional source in Times articles since at least 1991, and has introduced reporters to other exiles. He became a favorite of hard-liners within the Bush administration and a paid broker of information from Iraqi exiles, until his payments were cut off last week.)

Complicating matters for journalists, the accounts of these exiles were often eagerly confirmed by United States officials convinced of the need to intervene in Iraq. Administration officials now acknowledge that they sometimes fell for misinformation from these exile sources. So did many news organizations – in particular, this one

The New York Times admittance that their journalistic principals had failed was too little and too late. The MSM in particular The New York Times relied on “fake” evidence from Ahmad Chalabi for years (since 1991 to be exact). The MSM failed the Iraqi people who suffered enormously under a pack of lies that destroyed their country. When Washington uses “propaganda” or fake news reports against a sovereign nation, the outcome is always “regime change” that sometimes leads to an all-out war. The MSM has time and time again been guilty of perpetrating fake news stories to assist in Washington’s Imperial agenda. The Iraq War was the biggest lie of the 21st century. What other fake news stories will appear on the MSM websites and newspapers in the future regarding Syria, Russia, China, Iran, the Palestinians, Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and even the U.S. President-elect, Donald Trump? To answer that, we just don’t know, but it is up to the alternative media to decipher the “fake” stories and bring out the truth. It is just a matter of time that the MSM will falsify another story; let’s just hope it won’t lead to another war in the process.

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