

The Lies of America's Corporate Media and the "Global War on Terrorism"

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ACORN is shutting down because of a fraudulent video pimped by the corporate media. U.S. forces in Afghanistan have heroically laid siege to and conquered a fictional city, helping build the case for further escalation. A cable news channel has created a right-wing mass movement by pretending it already existed. Congressman Dennis Kucinich voted for a health insurance bill he believed would deprive more people of healthcare (and wealth and homes), because fraudulent reports had convinced his constituents of the opposite. The peace movement was defunded in November 2008, because of a fraudulent presidential election campaign. 71% of Americans believe Iran has nuclear weapons. 41% of Americans think the quality of the environment is improving. Has the power of the corporate media to overwhelm all before it begun to sink in yet?

ACORN's funders didn't have to run and hide because of a bunch of laughably bad lies, but they were afraid. The most common excuse of progressive congress members for anything they do is fear of the media. The peace movement didn't have to shut down, but its funders had used war as a criticism of Republicans; opposing war for its own sake was secondary, and their televisions told them peace had arrived. Kucinich could have stuck to his No vote on healthcare, but he probably wouldn't have lasted long in Congress. We don't have to be suckered by comically manipulative war news, but all the big media outlets want war — and the Democratic-party outlets especially favor war now. Fox News could not have created the Teabaggers on its own, but MSNBC and the Democratic blogosphere spend a majority of their time focused on Teabaggers and Republicans because it unites their viewers/readers against something uglier than elected Democrats, never mind that in Washington the Democrats technically have all the power.

We need independent media. Is that not yet crystal clear? The strongest grassroots community organization in the country, ACORN, has been swatted away like a fly through the endless airing of fraudulent, badly edited, and irrelevant, but salacious video clips. Elected officials or electoral candidates succeed or fail at the whim of the media cartel. And the biggest lies of all are buried so deeply beneath the hot news stories that they're almost impossible to see. Does or does not Iran possess nuclear weapons? That question hides the insidious assumption that if a nation possesses nuclear weapons, then our nation can and should launch an illegal war of aggression against it. Or at least our nation should have a debate over how best to take action against our "enemy," a debate that will represent us all because it will include two political parties.

This is the biggest lie of them all: the system works. Vote for this corporatist war party or that warmongering corporate party, and you will have played your role well. The system

works. The president makes the laws. The Congress gets in the way. The two parties are significantly different from each other and represent our views. News stories that include the views of both parties are complete and admirable journalism. The journalism itself has no viewpoint at all. The role of a citizen is to support politicians and parties.

Imagine if Bush wanted to try alleged terrorists in court (as in fact he did). All the Republicanites would have cheered (as in fact they did). Imagine if Bush had pushed a health insurance bill written by the industry and had cut deals with the insurance and drug companies. Imagine if Republicans had called a private program for 3% of Americans a "public option". All the Democratites in the country would have denounced the whole thing as a scam. The problem with "balanced" reporting is that those who consume it pick one of the two partisan positions presented and follow it as if they'd thought of it themselves. This mindless obedience is going to destroy us all.

We need independent media, meaning sources of news that are independent of either political party. We could easily find the money to create it right now if we chose to make that a priority. We will do so or we, and this republic, and the world as we know it will perish . . . in horrible pain, with a grin on our face.

David Swanson is the author of the new book "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union" by Seven Stories Press. You can order it and find out when tour will be in your town: <http://davidswanson.org/book>.

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