

War Propaganda: Supposed ISIS Beheading Of American Journalist - Pretext for Military Intervention in Syria?

Stoking popular outrage and setting the stage for Syrian intervention

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The corporate media is employing adverbs - purportedly, seemingly, apparently - to describe the reported beheading of American freelance journalist James Wright Foley.

Foley was reportedly abducted in Syria. Soon after his disappearance the [Columbia Journalism Review](#) said he was "almost certainly being held by the Syrian government in a detention center near the capital city of Damascus." It was later said he was taken by ISIS, now known as IS, or the Islamic State.

Fox News: "We need to go into Syria."

On Tuesday a video was posted to Youtube allegedly showing Foley's beheading. The video is titled "A message to America" and shows a man said to be Foley on his knees, dressed in an orange jumpsuit, next to a black-clad man British authorities believe is a Briton.

Photos and videos also appeared on Twitter accounts linked to IS groups.

"I call on my friends, family, and loved ones to rise up against my real killers, the US government, for what will happen to me is only a result of their complacency and criminality," the man said to be Foley declares.

"My message to my beloved parents — save me some dignity and don't accept any meagre compensation for my death from the same people who effectively hit the last nail in my coffin from their recent aerial campaign in Iraq," a reference to the Obama administration's token bombing campaign directed at IS in Iraq.

"I call on my brother John, who's a member of the US Air Force, think about what you are doing."

"I died that day, John. When your colleagues dropped that bomb on those people, they signed my death certificate.

"I guess all in all, I wish I wasn't American."

British Foreign Secretary [Philip Hammond](#) said the executioner in the video is probably a British citizen.

“On the face of it, it appears to have been a British person. We’ll have to do some more analysis to make quite certain that that is the case,” Hammond said.

The British Prime Minister [David Cameron](#) “cut short his summer vacation to return to London and chair urgent meetings on the threat posed by ISIS in Iraq and Syria,” according to NBC News.

Precisely Timed War Propaganda

The alleged beheading is now dominating the establishment news cycle, overshadowing events in Ferguson, Missouri. The media invariably engages in wall-to-wall coverage when a journalist is killed, especially in such a sensational and grotesque manner.

The alleged murder will undoubtedly be exploited by the state as it ramps up re-intervention in Iraq under the humanitarian banner. In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the corporate media to produce public outrage and further demonize IS, a paramilitary group created by the U.S. and its Gulf Emirate associates and trained by the United States military in Jordan.

“The extremists’ immediate goal was to use the shocking images to intimidate the Obama administration into halting U.S. airstrikes on ISIS strongholds in Iraq,” reports the [International Business Times](#).

In fact, as ISIS undoubtedly knows, the exact opposite will occur – the United States and its partners will step up their bombing campaign, using the video as a convenient propaganda tool and capitalizing on popular outrage over the group.

[The New York Post](#), owned by News Corp. magnate Rupert Murdoch, mustered its editorial board this morning and declared the “time for games is over” and the “horrific wake-up call” of Foley’s alleged murder demands military retaliation. “With American lives now being taken and even more at risk, America is now directly involved. No more playing footsie with butchers.”

[Johan Galtung](#), a Norwegian sociologist and the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, has described how the establishment media exploits violence to propagandize the foreign policy objectives of the state.

Manicheanism, the art of portraying one side as brutal and evil while the other is viewed as a chaste and innocent victim, plays a dominant role in war propaganda. This is the process we are now witnessing in regard to the alleged murder of James Foley.

The establishment media will continue to employ this tactic, along with decontextualizing the violence – dwelling on irrational emotional responses while ignoring the underlying reasons for violence and, in the case of ISIS, omitting the fact the group and its mercurial leader are largely a creation of U.S. intelligence and its partners.

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