

# The Covert News Network

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# LIED TO

disinformation

Edited by Russ Kick: Howard Bloom Noam Chomsky William Corliss Riane Eisler Jim Hogshire James Loewen Jim Marrs Richard Metzger Patrick Moore Michael Parenti James Ridgeway Douglas Rushkoff Peter Russell Sydney Schanberg R.U. Sirius Tristan Taormino Kenn Thomas Jonathan Vankin Gary Webb Howard Zinn and over 30 more! Edited by Russ Kick: Howard Bloom Noam Chomsky William Corliss Riane Eisler Jim Hogshire James Loewen Jim Marrs Richard Metzger Patrick Moore Michael Parenti James Ridgeway Douglas Rushkoff Peter Russell Sydney Schanberg R.U. Sirius Tristan Taormino Kenn Thomas Jonathan Vankin Gary Webb Howard Zinn and over 30 more! Edited by Russ Kick: Howard Bloom Noam Chomsky William Corliss Riane Eisler Jim Hogshire

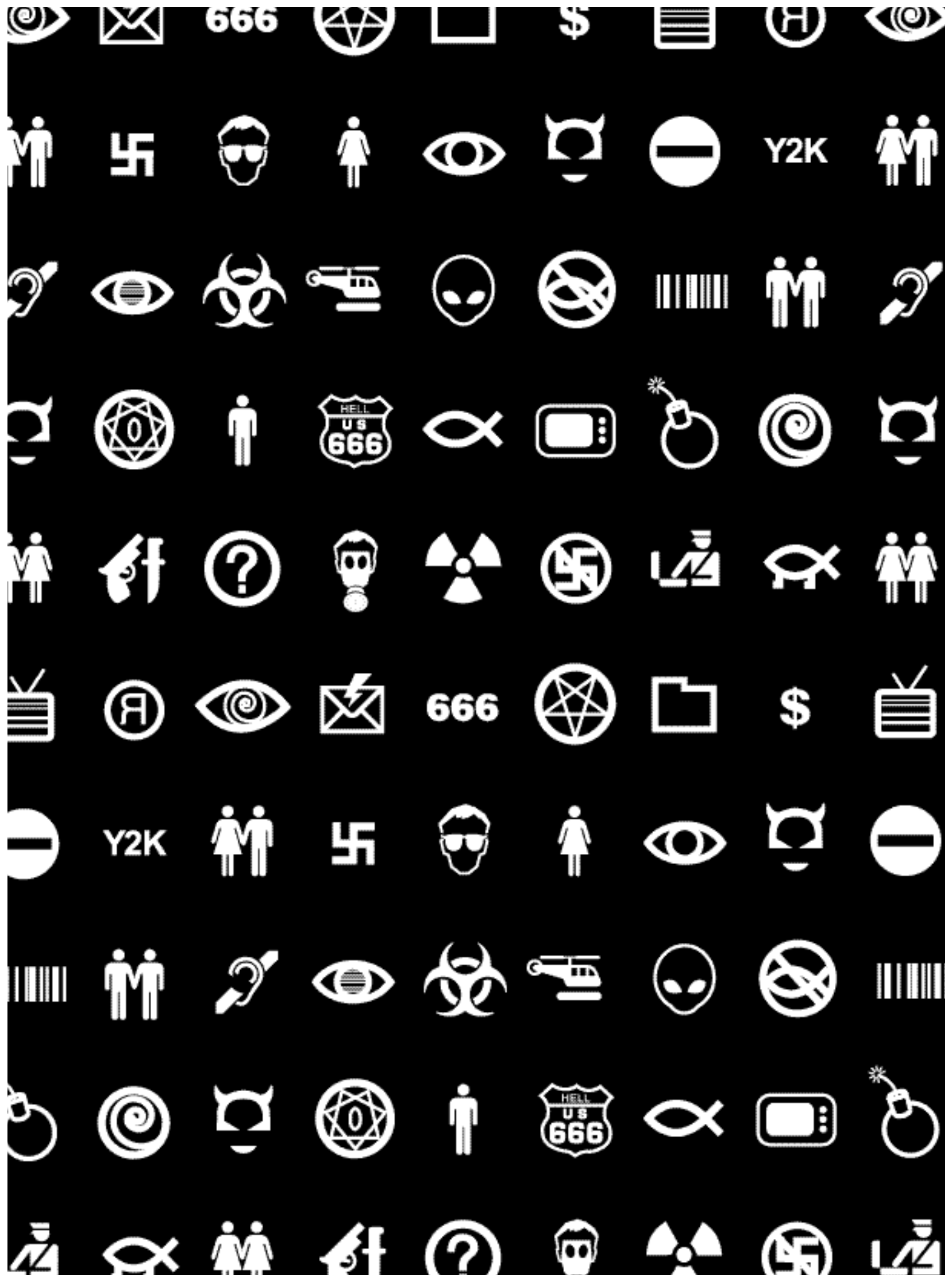


# YOU ARE BEING LIED TO

Russ Kick | editor

**The Disinformation Guide to Media Distortion, Historical Whitewashes and Cultural Myths**

disinformation



All warfare is based on deception.

—General Sun Tzu, ca. 400BC

If you're not careful the media will have you hating  
the people who are being oppressed,  
and loving the people who are doing  
the oppressing.

—Malcolm X

## The Covert News Network

Greg Bishop

As one can imagine, the history of the US intelligence community's relationship to the news media is a long and sordid one. In the halls of the CIA's headquarters in Langley, the corridors of the Pentagon, and the sub-basement strongholds of the National Security Agency, a war of deception is the *raison d'être*, since the existence of valuable information doesn't depend on whether a war is hot, cold, or even declared. "National Security," in one guise or another, has been used as a cover and excuse for both legitimate intelligence-gathering operations, as well as countless instances of meddling in the internal affairs of sovereign nations and of sovereign citizens at home.

Machiavelli is alive and well in the intel world. In this climate, the end always justifies the means, and ideas like democracy, due process, accountability, and the US Constitution are just recent annoyances in the ancient war of propaganda. Although the last few years and the two generations after the Vietnam war have seen an exponential growth in mistrust of the government, the spin doctors and outright liars who serve as mouthpieces of the covert community plod along. Over 50 years of practice has made them good at their jobs, and they have been able to adapt well to the times. Mention the Branch Davidians in mixed company to see how well the "just a bunch of wackos who deserved what they got" idea has spread.

In April 1967, not even four years after the JFK assassination, the CIA had sent out a memo to their media assets advising them on how to counter any criticism of the magic bullet theory and attendant conspiracy rumors. Headquarters sagely advised that the best methods to attack wacky conspiracy theories were through news features and book reviews. These published pieces would suggest that anyone who questioned the Warren Report was "financially interested," or, "hasty and inaccurate in their research," and that, "No new evidence has emerged." This sort of thing sounds oddly familiar, especially if you've read Gerald Posner's

defense of the official line, *Case Closed*. Perhaps this is because the public has been handed so much info-dung for so long that we don't realize the reality that has been manufactured for us over the last 50 years.

JFK, for his part, had a lot of buddies in the press corps, and when wind of the Bay of Pigs invasion reached the staff of the liberal mouthpiece *New Republic*, its editor, Gilbert Harrison, went to his friend Jack Kennedy to ask permission to publish the scoop. He was well aware of the security risks associated with doing so, and Kennedy asked him to scrap the story, which he did. The *New York Times*, long a CIA asset through the cooperation of its publishers like Arthur Hays Sulzberger, was also convinced to severely alter the story from a front-page, four-column banner headliner to a single column that mentioned neither the CIA nor an "imminent" invasion. Kennedy was not, however, a hard-liner on all sensitive operations issues. About a month after this most visible of clandestine policy failures, the President was holding another meeting urging top news editors not to report on security issues, but told a *Times* staffer: "If you had printed more about the [Bay of Pigs] operation, you would have saved us from a colossal mistake." It is not surprising that Kennedy valued a free press as essential to a functioning democracy. Maybe he felt a little better after he branded Allen Dulles the fall guy and fired him for screwing things up.

Dulles was the spymaster extraordinaire who had run the CIA with an iron fist for almost ten years. His experience in covert operations stretched back to at least World War II when he was the Office of Strategic Services station chief in Switzerland. The OSS was the breeding ground for many future movers and shakers in the CIA. After the war, the Machiavellian spirit took over the OSS as the organization arranged for the wholesale US importation of and legal immunity for hundreds of German scientists under Project Paperclip.

With the end of the war came the beginnings of the Central Intelligence Agency. After his appointment as director in 1952, Dulles occasionally contributed articles to the pages of the staid *Reader's Digest*. The *Digest* was such an arm of conservatism and fascist sentiment that in 1942 it was cited by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels as a "voice in the wilderness" urging the US to stay out of the growing European conflict. During the war, Hitler's 805th Tank Destroyer battalion shot canisters full of reprints from *Reader's Digest* at advancing American troops as a form of low-tech psychological warfare. The *Digest* maintains well-staffed offices in Hong Kong and, before Castro, had another branch in Havana. The owners once distributed American flag stickers to all employees.

Dulles recruited OSS alum Edward Hunt to run a worldwide program of pro-capitalist, pro-American propaganda that would eventually be code-named "MOCKINGBIRD." Hunt conceived the program as mind control on the largest scale ever. This project contained the seeds of the "Propaganda Assets Inventory," as it later became known within the Agency. This department's influence became so great that the CIA's first Covert Action Chief, Frank Wisner, egomaniacally christened it "Wisner's Wurlitzer," boasting that the Agency was able to play and sway public opinion anywhere in the world.

Watergate muckraker Carl Bernstein uncovered a list of over 400 reporters and a coterie of publishers and media moguls who had basically been rubber-stamping CIA propaganda since the 1950s.

One of MOCKINGBIRD's most extensive projects was directed through a front called the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The CCF, founded in 1950, funneled millions of dollars to US- and CIA-friendly publications in Britain, South Africa, and Latin America, among others. One magazine, *Encounter*, was so successful that it put most of its competition out of business. This is not surprising, since the competition didn't have Uncle Sam's largesse to fall back on when advertising or subscriptions dwindled. *Encounter* steamrolled over the intellectual life of English-speaking Europeans for 32 years until its dirty secret was discovered by a reporter for *The Observer* newspaper of London, who called the situation a "literary Bay of Pigs." Many reporters and editors working during the Cold War were generally cowed by Red Scare propaganda anyway, which made Dulles and Hunt's job easier.

In Finland, CIA asset Clay Felker edited a publication called *The Helsinki Youth News*. This ostensibly radical, socialist rag attempted

to bend the minds of impressionable young leftists toward the cool and benevolent US government. Felker's assistant was none other than former *Playboy* piece of bunnytail Gloria Steinem. After this field training, she returned to the US to found the supposed bastion of modern feminism: *Ms.* magazine. When publisher Random House was about to release a book authored by a feminist group called the Redstockings, charging Felker and Steinem with

co-opting the women's movement and steering it on an elitist course, while neutralizing its radical aspects, the two CIA assets—as well as *Washington Post* editor Katherine Graham—protested, and Random caved, deleting the segment from the book. Graham also held a large financial interest in *Ms.* Graham's late husband Philip had been a tested and true friend of the CIA within the pages of the *Post*.

In a 1977 *Rolling Stone* article, Watergate muckraker Carl Bernstein uncovered a list of over 400 reporters and a coterie of publishers and media moguls who had basically been rubber-stamping CIA propaganda since the 1950s. The group included *Life* and *Time* magazines' Henry Luce (the same *Life* magazine that published out-of-sequence stills from the Zapruder film), CBS's William Paley, and the aforementioned Arthur Sulzberger, as well as James Copley of Copley News Service, which owned and supplied reportage to a coven of newspapers like the *San Diego Union* and five major dailies in the Chicago metropolitan area. Bernstein said "at least 23" reporters and editors with Copley were certifiably on the CIA's payroll.

Bernstein interviewed one anonymous Agency official who told him: "One journalist is worth 20 agents." At least one instance of intentional rubber-stamping at the *New York Times* was uncovered by Bernstein: Sulzberger's nephew, C.L. Sulzberger, apparently put his byline on an Agency briefing document and submitted it as one of his daily columns. In *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, authors Victor Marchetti and John Marks described the kowtowing of syndicated columnist Charles Bartlett. In 1970, in the midst of the CIA's campaign to undermine the election of Chilean leftist Carlos Allende, Bartlett received an internal memo from the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation (ITT) which described efforts "to move in the name of President Nixon...[with] maximum authority to do all possible...to keep Allende from taking power." The American military had pledged its "material and financial assistance," and ITT, for its part, had also promised to forward the funds needed to carry out the operation, which would protect ITT's interests in Chile. Bartlett, instead of breaking the story and launching an investigation, later admitted to

"One journalist is worth 20 agents."

basing his entire column of September 28, 1970, on the ITT memo, "to the point of paraphrase."

He apparently never checked out the information with any other independent source before blindly shoveling a heap of bullshit onto his readers.

The CIA debriefed foreign news correspondents as they returned, gathering information on diverse ephemera such as railroad and airport traffic, the number of smokestacks on factories, and the personalities of dignitaries and heads of state. In a silent war, every little bit counts. After Bernstein's article was published, the CIA under its director, George Herbert Walker Bush, moved quickly to counter the accusations of the congressionally-appointed Church Committee, stonewalling investigators while promising not to jack around with the media in the future. Bush also later said, "Read my lips: No new taxes."

Once in a while, the hands of other intelligence organizations are caught up Miss Liberty's dress, too. When George Bush became president, he pushed the cover-up program into high gear by drafting a set of press-relations rules for the Department of Defense and its contractor-bitches. The National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual contained a supplement especially designed to handle nosy questions about "black" projects: operations so secret that they don't even appear on any official government budgets. The document, stamped "DRAFT," is dated May 29, 1992, and states:

Cover stories may be established for unacknowledged programs in order to protect the integrity of the program from individuals who do not have a need to know. Cover stories must be believable and cannot reveal any information regarding the true nature of the contract. Cover stories for Special Access Programs must have the approval of the PSO (Program Security Officer) prior to dissemination.

In an article entitled "Lying by the Book," reporter John Horgan quotes Pentagon spokesperson Sue Hansen's reply to his question about this document: "Whoever sent it to you was unauthorized," and the document was an unapproved draft version that did not "represent the policy of the federal government." Horgan was moved to ask if this reply itself represented a cover story.

During the Kosovo conflict, the Cable News Network (CNN) hired five staffers it referred to as "interns." These interns were working for no pay to learn the intricacies of the daily operations of CNN, presumably to be put to use in their later career paths. The problem is that they had already settled into another career: They were employees of US Army Intelligence. Liberal bastion radio network National Public Radio (NPR) also admitted to hiring interns from Army Intel during the same time period.

"Psyops personnel, soldiers and officers, have been working in CNN's headquarters in Atlanta, through our program 'Training with Industry.'"

The CNN debacle was uncovered by a Dutch newspaper, *Trouw*. A spokesman from the US Army was quoted: "Psyops personnel, soldiers and officers, have been working in CNN's headquarters in Atlanta through our program 'Training with Industry.'" Major Thomas Collins of the US Army Information Service continued: "They worked as regular employees of CNN. Conceivably, they would have worked on stories during the Kosovo war. They helped in the production of news." The military CNN-personnel belonged to the Fourth Psychological Operations Group, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of the main tasks of this group of almost 1200 soldiers and officers is to spread "selected information." When CNN found out about the Dutch newspaper story and a later commentary on the episode by columnist Alexander Cockburn, they dropped the program like a hot potato. Perhaps taking a cue from the Security Program Operating Manual, Susan Binford, the head of CNN public relations, later said: "Is the whole thing embarrassing? Yes. Did it compromise us journalistically? No." What else *could* she say?

The author of the original story, Abe DeVries, also reported on a military symposium on Special Operations that was held behind closed doors in Arlington, Virginia, in February, 1999. A Colonel Christopher St. John said that the cooperation with CNN was a textbook example of the kind of ties the American Army wants to have with the media. Not only do the psychological operations people want to spread hand-picked "information" and keep other news quiet, the Army also wants to control the Internet, to wage electronic warfare against disobedient media, and to control commercial satellites.

Many sources point to a "major media asset" anchor-level news personality who has been a long-time cooperative member of the CIA's stable. Although no one mentions the asset by name, author Alex Constantine writes that Walter Cronkite said, in an unreferenced quote, "My lips have been kind of buttoned for almost 20 years." Herein may lie the plight of the journalist who at least attempts to remain objective on sensitive security issues, and still keep his job.

Despite these leaked revelations and a steady stream of minor scandals, the Agency keeps up its never-ending battle against truth, justice, and the American Way. Dated "20 December, 1991," an internal memo from the "Task Force on Greater CIA Openness" was leaked (or retrieved through an FOIA request—accounts vary) soon after its completion. The report was in response to a request by then-CIA Director Robert Gates for a "Task Force" on suggestions for making the Agency appear more cuddly and user-friendly to the general population. Christic Institute lawyer Daniel Sheehan has a copy of the document and cryptically refers to it in interviews. UFO researcher Robert Dean brought it up in a press conference in Roswell during the fiftieth anniversary festivities. One of the humorous (?) aspects of this

document is that a memo on “greater openness” was classified and clamped down upon by CIA censors when they realized what had happened. Perhaps an employee at the Public Affairs Office (PAO) was canned for it, or handed a transfer to Tierra del Fuego.

The text reveals both a self-congratulatory smugness and a paradoxical desire to evolve the image of the CIA as a “visible and understandable” organization. There was obviously a sense that the American public has just about had it with an agency that seems to serve no important purpose in a post-Cold War world.

Reacting to this in an early attempt at spin control, rather than outright stonewalling or lying, the Task Force recommended some changes in the methods that the PAO utilizes to deal with their infor-

Particularly revealing is a passage that describes CIA “contacts with every major wire service, newspaper, news weekly, and television network in the nation.”

mation conduits (news media, academia, and private sector business). Throughout the document, the Task Force members revealed that they wanted it both ways, as evidenced by this statement: “[T]here was substantial agreement that we generally need to make the institution and the process more visible and understandable rather than strive for openness on specific substantive issues.” Viewed in this light, the study recommended no real change in attitude, only in the way that the Agency presents itself to a hostile or at least an indifferent public.

Particularly revealing is a passage that describes CIA “contacts with every major wire service, newspaper, news weekly, and television network in the nation.” The memo author goes on to boast that the PAO has been able to change or even scrap stories that were not to the Agency’s liking. They had also apparently been able to “turn ‘intelligence failure’ stories into ‘intelligence success stories’” more than once. This appears to indicate that the CIA still controls a portion of the news media through a “carrot-and-stick” relationship with reporters, who boast of their “secret sources” and secretly fear the loss of same if they happen to piss off “Mr. Deep Throat.” The document also mentions Oliver Stone’s *JFK* by name and reveals that the CIA knew “for some time” that this film was in the works, which may merely indicate that some CIA staffers read *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*.

The best way to affect opinion is to make the public and policy-makers believe that their conclusions were reached by a fair and balanced judgment of facts. If the “facts” are controlled, the ham-handed coercion practiced in other areas of the world that is feared in a free society never rears its head. The effectiveness of a free press is castrated when the press is compromised, and psychological warfare specialists will always exploit this fact. The CIA long ago overstepped its boundaries as envisioned by Harry Truman, who created the

organization by executive order in 1947. The Agency became unsatisfied with merely gathering information, and has obscenely enlarged a loophole in their charter to wage almost continuous covert war for over 50 years. Our friend Sun Tzu said: “When one treats people with benevolence, justice, and righteousness, *and reposes confidence in them*, the army will be united in mind and will be happy to serve their leaders.” (Emphasis added.) This time-honored wisdom that allowed a civilization to flourish for over 2,000 years seems to have been forgotten in a country that hasn’t passed its third century, and may not see that birthday intact if democracy is continually subverted by a cabal of black-suited control freaks.

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