

'The Official Truth': The End of Free Speech That Will End America

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- [M]edia polling from Harvard-Harris showing that Americans hold almost diametrically opposing viewpoints from those that news corporations predominantly broadcast as the official "truth."
- Americans have correctly concluded that [with the "Russia Hoax" and suppressing reported influence peddling in Hunter Biden's laptop] journalists and spies advanced a "fraud" on voters as part of an effort to censor a damaging story and "help Biden win." Nevertheless, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have yet to return the Pulitzer Prizes they received for reporting totally discredited "fake news."
- "Under the current approach to journalism, it is the *New York Times* that receives a Pulitzer for a now debunked Russian collusion story rather than the *New York Post* for a now proven Hunter Biden laptop story." — Professor Jonathan Turley, George Washington University Law School, Twitter, May 15, 2023.
- The government apparently took the public's censorship concerns so seriously that it quietly moved on from the collapse of its plans for a "disinformation governance board" within the DHS and proceeded within the space of a month to create a new "disinformation" office known as the Foreign Malign Influence Center, which now operates from within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Although ostensibly geared toward countering information warfare arising from "foreign" threats, one of its principal objectives is to monitor and control "public opinion and behaviors."
- As independent journalist Matt Taibbi concludes of the government's resurrected Ministry of Truth: "It's the basic rhetorical trick of the censorship age: raise a fuss about a foreign threat, using it as a battering ram to get everyone from Congress to the tech companies to submit to increased regulation and surveillance. Then, slowly, adjust your aim to domestic targets."

- Democrat Senator Michael Bennet has already proposed a bill that would create a Federal Digital Platform Commission with "the authority to promulgate rules, impose civil penalties, hold hearings, conduct investigations, and support research."
- Effectively, a small number of unelected commissioners would have *de facto* power to monitor and police online communication. Should any particular website or platform run afoul of the government's First Amendment Star Chamber, it would immediately place itself within the commission's crosshairs for greater oversight, regulation, and punishment.
- Will this new creation become an American KGB, Stasi or CCP — empowered to target half the population for disagreeing with current government policies, promoting "wrongthink," or merely going to church? Will a small secretive body decide which Americans are actually "domestic terrorists" in the making? US Attorney General Merrick Garland has gone after traditional Catholics who attend Latin mass, but why would government suspicions end with the Latin language? When small commissions exist to decide which Americans are the "enemy," there is no telling who will be designated as a "threat" and punished next.
- It is not difficult to see the dangers that lie ahead. Now that the government has fully inserted itself into the news and information industry, the criminalization of free speech is a very real threat. This has always been a chief complaint against international institutions such as the World Economic Forum that spend a great deal of time, power, and money promoting the thoughts and opinions of an insular cabal of global leaders, while showing negligible respect for the personal rights and liberties of the billions of ordinary citizens they claim to represent.
- If Schwab's online army were not execrable enough, advocates for free speech must also gird themselves for the repercussions of Elon Musk's appointment of Linda Yaccarino, reportedly a "neo-liberal wokeist" with strong WEF affiliations, as the new CEO of Twitter.
- In an America now plagued with the stench of official "snitch lines," censorship of certain presidential candidates, widespread online surveillance, a resurrected "disinformation governance board," and increasingly frequent criminal prosecutions targeting Americans who exercise their free speech, the question is not whether what we inaudibly

think or say in our sleep will someday be used against us, but rather how soon that day will come unless we stop it.



Now that the government has fully inserted itself into the news and information industry, the criminalization of free speech is a very real threat. (Image source: iStock)

If legacy news corporations fail to report that large majorities of the American public now view their journalistic product as straight-up propaganda, does that make it any less true?

According to a **survey** by Rasmussen Reports, 59% of likely voters in the United States view the corporate news media as "truly the enemy of the people." This is a **majority view**, held regardless of race: "58% of whites, 51% of black voters, and 68% of other minorities" — all agree that the mainstream media has become their "enemy."

This scorching indictment of the Fourth Estate piggybacks similar **polling** from Harvard-Harris showing that Americans hold almost **diametrically opposing viewpoints** from those that news corporations predominantly broadcast as the official "truth."

Drawing attention to the divergence between the public's perceived reality and the news media's prevailing "narratives," independent journalist Glenn

Greenwald **dissected** the Harvard-Harris poll to highlight just how differently some of the most important issues of the last few years have been understood. While corporate news fixated on purported Trump-Russia collusion since 2016, majorities of Americans now **see** this story "as a hoax and a fraud."

While the news media hid behind the Intelligence Community's claims that Hunter Biden's potentially incriminating laptop (allegedly containing evidence of his family's influence-peddling) was a product of "**Russian disinformation**" and consequently enforced an information blackout on the explosive story during the final weeks of the 2020 presidential election, strong majorities of Americans currently believe the laptop's contents are "real." In other words, Americans have correctly concluded that journalists and spies advanced a "fraud" on voters as part of an effort to censor a damaging story and "**help Biden win.**" Nevertheless, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* have yet to return the Pulitzer Prizes they received for reporting totally discredited "fake news."

Similarly, majorities of Americans suspect that President Joe Biden has used the powers of his various offices to profit from **influence-peddling schemes** and that the FBI has intentionally refrained from investigating any possible Biden crimes. Huge majorities of Americans, in fact, seem not at all surprised to learn that the FBI has been caught **abusing** its own powers to influence elections, and are strongly convinced that "sweeping reform" is needed. Likewise, large majorities of Americans **have** "serious doubts about Biden's mental fitness to be president" and suspect that others behind the scenes are "**puppeteers**" running the nation.

Few, if any, of these poll results have been widely reported. In a seemingly-authoritarian disconnect with the American people, corporate news media continue to **ignore** the public's majority opinion and instead "relentlessly advocate" those viewpoints that Americans "reject." When journalists fail to investigate facts and deliberately distort stories so that they fit snugly within preconceived worldviews, reporters act as propagandists.

Constitutional law scholar **Jonathan Turley** recently asked, "Do we have a *de factostate* media?" In answering his own question, he notes that the news blackout surrounding congressional investigations into Biden family members who have allegedly received more than **ten million dollars** in suspicious payments from foreign entities "fits the past standards used to denounce **Russian propaganda** patterns and

practices." After Republican members of Congress traced funds to nine Biden family members "from corrupt figures in Romania, China, and other countries," Turley writes, "The New Republic quickly ran a story **headlined** 'Republicans Finally Admit They Have No Incriminating Evidence on Joe Biden.'"

Excoriating the news media's penchant for mindlessly embracing stories that hurt former President Donald Trump while simultaneously ignoring stories that might damage President Biden, Turley **concludes**:

"Under the current approach to journalism, it is the *New York Times* that receives a Pulitzer for a now debunked Russian collusion story rather than the *New York Post* for a now proven Hunter Biden laptop story."

Americans now evidently view the major sources for their news and information as part of a larger political machine *pushing* particular points of view, unconstrained by any ethical obligation to report facts objectively or dispassionately seek truth. That Americans now see the news media in their country as serving a similar role as *Pravda* for the Soviet Union's Communist Party is a significant departure from the country's historic embrace of free speech and traditional fondness for a skeptical, adversarial press.

Rather than taking a step back to consider the implications such a shift in public perception will have for America's future stability, some officials appear even more committed to expanding government control over what can be said and debated online. After the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in the wake of public backlash over First Amendment concerns, halted its efforts to construct an official "**disinformation governance board**" last year, the question remained whether other government attempts to silence or shape online information would rear their head. The wait for that answer did not take long.

The government apparently took the public's censorship concerns so seriously that it quietly moved on from the collapse of its plans for a "disinformation governance board" within the DHS and proceeded **within the space of a month** to create a new "**disinformation**" office known as the Foreign Malign Influence Center, which now operates from within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Although ostensibly geared toward countering information warfare arising from "foreign" threats, one of its principal objectives is to monitor and control "**public opinion and behaviors**."

As independent journalist Matt Taibbi **concludes** of the government's resurrected Ministry of Truth:

"It's the basic rhetorical trick of the censorship age: raise a fuss about a foreign threat, using it as a battering ram to get everyone from Congress to the tech companies to submit to increased regulation and surveillance. Then, slowly, adjust your aim to domestic targets."

If it were not jarring enough to learn that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has picked up the government's speech police baton right where the DHS set it down, there is ample evidence to suggest that officials are eager to go much further in the near future. Democrat Senator Michael Bennet has already **proposed a bill** that would create a **Federal Digital Platform Commission** with "the authority to promulgate rules, impose civil penalties, hold hearings, conduct investigations, and support research."

Filled with "disinformation" specialists empowered to create "enforceable behavioral codes" for online communication — and generously **paid for** by the Biden Administration with taxpayers' money — the **special commission** would also "designate 'systemically important digital platforms' subject to extra oversight, reporting, and regulation" requirements. Effectively, a small number of unelected commissioners would have *de facto* power to monitor and police online communication. Should any particular website or platform run afoul of the government's First Amendment Star Chamber, it would immediately place itself within the commission's crosshairs for greater oversight, regulation, and punishment.

Will this new creation become an American KGB, Stasi or CCP — empowered to target half the population for disagreeing with current government policies, promoting "wrongthink," or merely **going to church**? Will a small secretive body decide which Americans are actually "domestic terrorists" in the making? US Attorney General Merrick Garland has gone after traditional Catholics who attend Latin mass, but why would government suspicions end with the Latin language? When small commissions exist to decide which Americans are the "enemy," there is no telling who will be designated as a "threat" and punished next.

It is not difficult to see the dangers that lie ahead. Now that the government has fully inserted itself into the news and information industry, the criminalization of free speech is a very real threat. This has always been a chief complaint against

international institutions such as the **World Economic Forum** that spend a great deal of time, power, and money promoting the thoughts and opinions of an insular cabal of global leaders, while showing negligible respect for the personal rights and liberties of the billions of ordinary citizens they claim to represent.

WEF Chairman Klaus Schwab has gone so far as to hire hundreds of thousands of "**information warriors**" whose mission is to "control the Internet" by "policing social media," eliminating dissent, disrupting the public square, and "covertly seed[ing] support" for the WEF's "Great Reset." If Schwab's online army were not execrable enough, advocates for free speech must also gird themselves for the repercussions of Elon Musk's appointment of Linda Yaccarino, reportedly a "**neo-liberal wokeist**" with strong WEF affiliations, as the new CEO of Twitter.

Throughout much of the West, unfortunately, free speech has been only weakly protected when those with power find its defense inconvenient or messages a nuisance. It is therefore of little surprise to learn that French authorities are now prosecuting government protesters for "**flipping-off**" President Emmanuel Macron. It does not seem particularly astonishing that a German man has been sentenced to three years in prison for engaging in "pro-Russian" **political speech** regarding the war in Ukraine. It also no longer appears shocking to read that UK Technology and Science Secretary Michelle Donelan reportedly seeks to imprison social media executives who **fail to censor online speech** that the government might subjectively adjudge "harmful." Sadly, as Ireland continues to find new ways to punish citizens for expressing certain points of view, its movement toward criminalizing not just speech but also "**hateful**" **thoughts** should have been predictable.

From an American's perspective, these overseas encroachments against free speech — especially within the borders of closely-allied lands — have seemed sinister yet entirely foreign. Now, however, what was once observed from some distance has made its way home; it feels as if a faraway communist enemy has finally stormed America's beaches and come ashore in force.

Not a day seems to go by without some new battlefield opening up in the war on free speech and free thought. The Richard Stengel of the Council on Foreign Relations has been increasingly **vocal** about the importance of journalists and think tanks to act as "primary provocateurs" and "propagandists" who "**have to**" manipulate the American population and shape the public's perception of world events. Senator Rand Paul has

alleged that the DHS uses at least **12 separate programs** to "track what Americans say online," as well as to engage in social media censorship.

As part of its efforts to silence dissenting arguments, the Biden administration is pursuing a policy that would make it **unlawful to use data** and datasets that reflect accurate information yet lead to "discriminatory outcomes" for "protected classes." In other words, if the data is perceived to be "racist," it must be expunged. At the same time, the Department of Justice has indicted four radical black leftists for having somehow "**weaponized**" their free speech rights in support of Russian "disinformation." So, objective *datasets* can be deemed "discriminatory" against minorities, while *actual discrimination* against minorities' free speech is excused when that speech contradicts official government policy.

Meanwhile, the DHS has been **exposed** for paying tens of millions of dollars to third-party "anti-terrorism" programs that have not so coincidentally equated Christians, Republicans, and philosophical conservatives to Germany's **Nazi Party**. Similarly, California Governor Gavin Newsom has set up a Soviet-style "**snitch line**" that encourages neighbors to report on each other's public or private displays of "hate."

Finally, ABC News proudly **admits** that it has censored parts of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s interviews because some of his answers include "false claims about the COVID-19 vaccines." Essentially, the corporate news media have deemed Kennedy's viewpoints unworthy of being transmitted and heard, even though the 2024 presidential candidate is running a strong second behind Joe Biden in the Democrat primary, with around 20% support from the electorate.

Taken all together, it is clear that not only has the war on free speech come to America, but also that it is clobbering Americans in a relentless campaign of "shock and awe." And why not? In a **litigation** battle presently being waged over the federal government's extensive censorship programs, the Biden administration has **defended** its inherent authority to control Americans' thoughts as an instrumental component of "government infrastructure." What Americans think and believe is openly referred to as part of the nation's "cognitive infrastructure" — as if the *Matrix* movies were simply reflecting real life.

Today, America's mainstream news corporations are already viewed as processing plants that manufacture political propaganda. That is an unbelievably searing indictment of a once-vibrant free press in the United States. It is also, unfortunately,

only the first heavy shoe to drop in the war against free speech. Many Chinese-Americans who survived the Cultural Revolution look around the country today and **see similarities** everywhere. During that totalitarian "reign of terror," everything a person did was monitored, including what was **said while asleep**.

In an America now plagued with the stench of official "snitch lines," censorship of certain **presidential candidates**, widespread online surveillance, a resurrected "disinformation governance board," and increasingly frequent criminal prosecutions targeting Americans who exercise their free speech, the question is not whether what we inaudibly think or say in our sleep will someday be used against us, but rather how soon that day will come unless we stop it. After all, with smartphones, smart TVs, "smart" appliances, video-recording doorbells, and the rise of artificial intelligence, somebody, somewhere is always listening.

JB Shurk writes about politics and society.