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## The Difficulty Of Being An Informed American

By [Paul Craig Roberts](#)

The American print and TV media has never been very good. These days it is horrible. If a person intends to be informed, he must turn to foreign news broadcasts, to Internet sites, to foreign newspapers available on the Internet, or to alternative newspapers that are springing up in various cities. A person who sits in front of Murdoch's Fox "News" or CNN or who reads the *New York Times* is simply being brainwashed with propaganda.

Before conservatives nod their heads in agreement, I'm not referring to "**the liberal media.**" I mean the propagandist that issues from the US government and the Israel Lobby.

It was [neoconservative](#) Bush regime propaganda fed to America through Judith Miller and the *New York Times* and through Murdoch's Fox "News" that convinced Americans that they were in danger from a small secular Arab country half way around the globe called Iraq. It was the American media that convinced Americans that getting rid of dangerous "**weapons of mass destruction,**" weapons that did not exist in Iraq, would be a cakewalk paid for by Iraqi oil revenues.

It is the same propagandist American print and TV media that has rationalized Bush's illegal invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan based on seven years of lies and deception.

It is the same media that today provides only Israeli propaganda as "**coverage**" of the Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

It was the *New York Times* that spiked for one year the leaked information from the National Security Agency that the Bush regime, in violation of US law, was illegally spying on Americans without warrants. The "**liberal**" *New York Times* agreed to suppress the story so that Bush would not face reelection under the cloud of his outlaw behavior.

Conservatives think the *Washington Post* is "**liberal media**" despite the fact that the editorial and commentary pages are controlled by neocons and their sympathizers.

During the run-up to wars and during wars, the American media has always been a propagandist for the government. The only exceptions occurred during the Vietnam war and the Contra-Sandinista conflict in Central America. Karen de Young and some others tried to honestly cover the Contras and Sandinistas and were demonized by "**patriots**" taken in by the government's lies.

Conservatives still blame the "**liberal**" media for losing the Vietnam War, when in fact all the media did was to provide some truthful reports that opened some American eyes.

When the truth cuts against the position of the US government, conservatives see it as "**liberal.**"

When propaganda supports the government's lies, conservatives see it as "**patriotic.**"

However, any resemblance to independent reporting disappeared from the American media when the Democratic regime of President Clinton allowed Murdoch and a small handful of moguls to concentrate the American media in a few corporate hands. That was the end of American reporting.

Journalists disappeared from media management and were replaced by corporate advertising executives with an eye not to offend any source of advertising revenue, and certainly not to offend the government, which controls the broadcast licenses that comprise the value of the mega-companies. Today reporters write the stories that their masters want to hear, or they are out. The function of editors is to make certain that no uncomfortable information reaches the public.

The public is slowly catching on, and the print media is slowly dying. The *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Los Angeles Times* are all on the ropes to one extent or the other.

Americans are still subjected to Fox "**News**" and CNN propaganda piped into airport waiting rooms, doctors' offices, and exercise centers. It is very much the situation that George Orwell describes in *1984*.

People ask me where they can get reliable information. I tell them that their goal cannot be reached without their commitment of time.

People who have access to television services that provide English language foreign broadcasts, such as Iran's Press TV, Russia Today, or Al Jazeera, can get news and insights from those parts of the world demonized by the US media.

The BBC World Service still reports facts while covering itself by providing the views of the US, UK, and Israeli governments.

Both the *Asia Times* and Israeli newspapers, such as *Haaretz* can be read online in English. There are other such newspapers, and all of them provide information that Americans will never see in their own media. Any American newspaper that was as truthful about the Israeli government as *Haaretz* would be closed down.

The only US print media with which I am familiar in which some honest reporting can be found on a regular basis is the McClatchy papers.

Americans addicted to print media must turn to alternative newspapers, which tend to be weekly or bi-weekly. However, the news and commentary provided are often superb.

I have made no study of alternative newspapers and know very few. The [Rock Creek Free Press](#) is terrific. After reading one issue, you will waste no more time on the "**mainstream media.**" The *Rock Creek Free Press* is likely to rescue even the dullest mind from its brainwashed state.

Other alternative newspapers, such as [The Liberty Voice](#), lift your spirit as well as inform.

Alternative newspapers are often the children of people motivated by a sense of justice and the love of truth. Such people have become an endangered species in the American "**mainstream media.**" The free press Americans have today is online and in the alternative media.

The function of the "**mainstream media**" is to sell products and to brainwash the audience for the government and interest groups. By subscribing to it, Americans support their own brainwashing.

*Paul Craig Roberts* [[email him](#)] was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury during President Reagan's first term. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal. He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He was awarded the Legion of Honor by French President Francois Mitterrand. He is the author of [Supply-Side](#)


[Revolution : An Insider's Account of Policymaking in Washington](#); [Alienation and the Soviet Economy and Meltdown: Inside the Soviet Economy](#), and is the co-author with Lawrence M. Stratton of [The Tyranny of Good Intentions : How Prosecutors and Bureaucrats Are Trampling the Constitution in the Name of Justice](#). [Click here for Peter Brimelow's Forbes Magazine interview with Roberts about the recent epidemic of prosecutorial misconduct.](#)

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