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Why Disinformation Works. In America “Truth has no Relevance. Only Agendas are Important”

By Dr. Paul Craig Roberts
May 25, 2013

Have you ever wondered how the government’s misinformation gains traction?

What I have noticed is that whenever a stunning episode occurs, such as 9/11 or the Boston Marathon bombing, most everyone whether on the right or left goes along with the government’s explanation, because they can hook their agenda to the government’s account.

The leftwing likes the official stories of Muslims creating terrorist mayhem in America, because it proves their blowback theory and satisfies them that the dispossessed and oppressed can fight back against imperialism.

The patriotic rightwing likes the official story, because it proves America is attacked for its goodness or because terrorists were allowed in by immigration authorities and nurtured by welfare, or because the government, which can’t do anything right, ignored plentiful warnings.

Whatever the government says, no matter how problematical, the official story gets its traction from its compatibility with existing predispositions and agendas.

In such a country, truth has no relevance. Only agendas are important.

A person can see this everywhere. I could write volumes illustrating how agenda-driven writers across the spectrum will support the most improbable government stories despite the absence of any evidence simply because the government’s line can be used to support their agendas.

For example, a conservative writer in the June issue of *Chronicles* uses the government’s story about the alleged Boston Marathon bombers, Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, to argue against

immigration, amnesty for illegals, and political asylum for Muslims. He writes: “Even the most high-tech security systems imaginable will inevitably fail as they are overwhelmed by a flood of often hostile and dangerous immigrants.”

The writer accepts all of the improbable government statements as proof that the brothers were guilty. The wounded brother who was unable to respond to the boat owner who discovered him and had to be put on life support somehow managed to write a confession on the inside of the boat.

As soon as the authorities have the brother locked up in a hospital on life support, “unnamed officials” and “authorities who remain anonymous” are planting the story in the media that the suspect is signing written confessions of his guilt while on life support. No one has seen any of these written confessions. But we know that they exist, because the government and media say so.

The conservative writer knows that Dzhokhar is guilty because he is Muslim and a Chechen. Therefore, it does not occur to the writer to wonder about the agenda of the unnamed sources who are busy at work creating belief in the brothers’ guilt. This insures that no juror would dare vote for acquittal and have to explain it to family and friends. Innocent until proven guilty in a court has been thrown out the window. This should disturb the conservative writer, but doesn’t.

The conservative writer sees Chechen ethnicity as an indication of guilt even though the brothers grew up in the US as normal Americans, because Chechens are “engaged in anti-Russian jihad.” But Chechens have no reason for hostility against the US. As evidence indicates, Washington supports the Chechens in their conflict with Russia. By supporting Chechen terrorism, Washington violates all of the laws that it ruthlessly applies to compassionate Americans who give donations to Palestinian charities that Washington alleges are run by Hamas, a Washington-declared terrorist organization.

It doesn’t occur to the conservative writer that something is amiss when martial law is established over one of America’s main cities and its metropolitan area, 10,000 heavily armed troops are put on the streets with tanks, and citizens are ordered out of their homes with their hands over their heads, all of this just to search for one wounded 19-year old suspect. Instead the writer blames the “surveillance state” on “the inevitable consequences of suicidal liberalism” which has embraced “the oldest sin in the world: rebellion against authority.” The writer is so pleased to use the government’s story line as a way of indulging the conservative’s romance with authority and striking a blow at liberalism that he does not notice that he has lined up against the Founding Fathers who signed the Declaration of Independence and rebelled against authority.

I could just as easily have used a left-wing writer to illustrate the point that improbable explanations are acceptable if they fit with predispositions and can be employed in behalf of an agenda.

Think about it. Do you not think that it is extraordinary that the only investigations we have of such events as 9/11 and the Boston Marathon bombing are private investigations, such as this investigation of the backpacks: <http://whowhatwhy.com/2013/05/20/official-story-has-odd-wrinkles-a-pack-of-questions-about-the-boston-bombing-backpacks/>^[1]

There was no investigation of 9/11. Indeed, the White House resisted any inquiry at all for one year despite the insistent demands from the 9/11 families. NIST did not investigate anything.

NIST simply constructed a computer model that was consistent with the government's story. The 9/11 Commission simply sat and listened to the government's explanation and wrote it down. These are not investigations.

The only investigations have come from a physicist who proved that WTC 7 came down at free fall and was thus the result of controlled demolition, from a team of scientists who examined dust from the WTC towers and found nano-thermite, from high-rise architects and structural engineers with decades of experience, and from first responders and firefighters who were in the towers and experienced explosions throughout the towers, even in the sub-basements.

We have reached the point where evidence is no longer required. The government's statements suffice. Only conspiracy kooks produce real evidence.

In America, government statements have a unique authority. This authority comes from the white hat that the US wore in World War II and in the subsequent Cold War. It was easy to demonize Nazi Germany, Soviet Communism and Maoist China. Even today when Russian publications interview me about the perilous state of civil liberty in the US and Washington's endless illegal military attacks abroad, I sometimes receive reports that some Russians believe that it was an impostor who was interviewed, not the real Paul Craig Roberts.

There are Russians who believe that it was President Reagan who brought freedom to Russia, and as I served in the Reagan administration these Russians associate me with their vision of America as a light unto the world. Some Russians actually believe that Washington's wars are truly wars of liberation.

The same illusions reign among Chinese dissidents. Chen Guangcheng is the Chinese dissident who sought refuge in the US Embassy in China. Recently he was interviewed by the BBC World Service. Chen Guangcheng believes that the US protects human rights while China suppresses human rights. He complained to the BBC that in China police can arrest citizens and detain them for as long as six months without accounting for their detainment. He thought that the US and UK should publicly protest this violation of due process, a human right. Apparently, Chen Guangcheng is unaware that US citizens are subject to *indefinite* detention without due process and even to assassination without due process.

The Chinese government allowed Chen Guangcheng safe passage to leave China and live in the US. Chen Guangcheng is so dazzled by his illusions of America as a human rights beacon that it has never occurred to him that the oppressive, human rights-violating Chinese government gave him safe passage, but that Julian Assange, after being given political asylum by Ecuador is still confined to the Ecuadoran embassy in London, because Washington will not allow its UK puppet state to permit his safe passage to Ecuador.

Perhaps Chen Guangcheng and the Chinese and Russian dissidents who are so enamored of the US could gain some needed perspective if they were to read US soldier Terry Holdbrooks' book about the treatment given to the Guantanamo prisoners. Holdbrooks was there on the scene, part of the process, and this is what he told RT: "The torture and information extraction methods that we used certainly created a great deal of doubt and questions in my mind to whether or not this was my America. But when I thought about what we were doing there and how we go about doing it, it did not seem like the America I signed up to defend. It did not seem like the America I grew up in. And that in itself was a very disillusioning experience." <http://rt.com/news/guantanamo-guard-islam-torture-608/> ^[2]

In a May 17 Wall Street Journal.com article, Peggy Noonan wrote that President Obama has lost his patina of high-mindedness. What did Obama do that brought this loss upon himself? Is it because he sits in the Oval Office approving lists of US citizens to be assassinated without due process of law? Is it because he detains US citizens indefinitely in violation of habeas corpus? Is it because he has kept open the torture prison at Guantanamo? Is it because he continued the war that the neoconservatives started, despite his promise to end it, and started new wars?

Is it because he attacks with drones people in their homes, medical centers, and work places in countries with which the US is not at war? Is it because his corrupt administration spies on American citizens without warrants and without cause?

No. It is none of these reasons. In Noonan's view these are not offenses for which presidents, even Democratic ones, lose their high-minded patina. Obama can no longer be trusted, because the IRS hassled some conservative political activists.

Noonan is a Republican, and what Obama did wrong was to use the IRS against some Republicans. Apparently, it has not occurred to Noonan that if Obama—or any president—can use the IRS against opponents, he can use Homeland Security and the police state against them. He can use indefinite detention against them. He can use drones against them.

All of these are much more drastic measures. Why isn't Peggy Noonan concerned?

Because she thinks these measures will only be used against terrorists, just as the IRS is only supposed to be used against tax evaders.

When a public and the commentators who inform it accept the collapse of the Constitution's authority and the demise of their civil liberties, to complain about the IRS is pointless.