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THE TRUTH UNDERNEATH THE LIES
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AMERICA TODAY
Forget the millennium, the year is 1984. The majority of Americans either live in a sadly ignorantly blissful state of emptiness that is washed over with feelings of patriotism and sitcom love for others or live quietly dissident to the majority as an oddball out with only one voice and powerless to change. Media control is strangling the perceptions of who we are and how we exist and function with one another. It justifies the patriotic with reasons for trust and justifies the dissidents that they’re alone. It justifies the outright lies that claim truth and in effect, misinforms the population as it takes advantage of the blind trust given to it by modern tradition alone.

The problem with today is the lack of knowledge of American corruption, which then leads to the lack of desire to change. In a compliant society, the government does as it pleases without risks of persecution because the laws are in their hands and the citizens do not react. We’re at a point in our lives where corporations control the government. The old patriotic American ideals have faded from a quest for the “good of the people” through a running democracy to a military fascist state in which the top 1% of the population has control.

The millions of innocent people that die in the name of freedom have to stop. The loosening of environmental laws for the benefit of the corporations has to stop. The Walmartization of franchises where workers cannot form unions or get healthcare has to stop. The new media pop culture in which obsession for material possessions and over consumption has to stop. Where do we draw the line? In the past fifty years, the formation of power through business and government has lost sight of common logic. The problem is the incessant capitalistic nature of America in which maximum profit governs action. It is time for our own action towards a real progressive democracy that caters to every citizen and erases the fragments of our blanket democracy covering our true plutocracy. To pursue change, one must have knowledge first.
Chapter 1

CH 01 UNDER THE INFLUENCE
The question on the mind of every responsible journalist as of late (indeed, on the mind of every responsible individual, period) is:

Has the media officially become the public relations arm of the United States government? And: Have we lost freedom of the press?

Why does our daily news come from some Pentagon briefing room or from some White House spokesperson—fully spun, packaged and pre-interpreted? And more importantly, why does no one care, either professional journalists or average citizens, or worse yet, even notice?

Has it been going on too long? Have Americans become incredibly gullible and apathetic, paralyzed by luxury and convenience to the point of self-destruction? Have we lost the capacity for individual thought accompanied by the awe we feel towards “experts,” who treat us like children incapable of analysis? Have we grown to distrust ourselves and lost confidence in our own intellectual capacity? These are all reasons.

When the “war on terrorism” began in early October, the U.S. government severely restricted journalists from entering Afghanistan to cover first-hand the events taking place there in the field. Instead they opted for frequent, well-organized press conferences, only to be attended by journalists of choice, where people like General Tommy Franks, Rear Admiral John Stufflebeam, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld made sure that the reporters got it right.

This was euphemized as being a service to the press, a manifestation of an informationally advanced and enlightened world, or, the next generation in war reporting. No more reporters nervously whispering into their dicta-phones about the horrors of war, or its thrills, while being led around on the front lines.
The apparent reason for this tyrannical information control is really that of public opinion control. Information that makes the U.S. look bad or reveals mistakes (civilian deaths, bombing of Red Cross facilities, oratory blunders, conflicting reports, etc.), whether by the president himself or that of a lone bombing mission, is transformed so as not to resemble its former self or is, quite simply, omitted.

Information that makes the U.S. look good (supports their efforts) is magnified and overemphasized. Statistical information is etched in stone and written in blood if released by the Pentagon, but not “independently verified” if released by a non-Pentagon source and hence thrown out as hysterical anti-American propaganda contrived by people who hate freedom.

Whatever happened to on-the-spot reporting and investigative journalism whose primary aims were to serve the public interest by providing “the story”? Whatever happened to tough questions? Now all we have are staged Q&A sessions designed to provide zero information about anything actually relevant. More ass kissing goes on than questioning.

A reporter might even get thrown out of a press conference or fired for asking “inappropriate” questions—as happened to a reporter who happened to ask George H.W. Bush a tough question several years back.

One only has to turn to their daily newspaper to see the painful truth. A recent article in the Boston Globe (2/20/02) highlights this ever-popular phenomenon quite well. In an article entitled “A tattered al-Qaeda
with new tentacles” by Anthony Shadid, almost all of the fifteen paragraphs are direct quotes from, or paraphrases of, some government official, usually “speaking on condition of anonymity.”

In fact, only three paragraphs aren’t directly attributed to government sources and only once is an actual, traceable, human being named with regard to this information—Peter Chalk, terrorism analyst, in paragraph fifteen. In addition, the article contains the sketchiest of information, bordering on being comical at points, and completely fails to convey any kind of new, interesting, or valuable information to a knowledgeable reader beyond the speculation of anonymous “officials.”

In the first paragraph we’re told: “Al-Qaeda...will probably fracture into far-flung networks that operate on their own and blend into murky underworlds that make them more difficult to track…” Obviously, al-Qaeda is now fractured (or could become fractured) following the massive bombardment of Afghanistan.

“[F]ar flung networks” is resoundingly vague. “[M]urky underworlds” is straight out of a bad Hollywood script. (Where exactly are the non-murky underworlds?) And we can assume that al-Qaeda is “difficult to track” based upon the success of September 11 and that they will become “more difficult to track” since they are now the focus of the world’s most extensive man hunt ever by the United States. One might imagine they’d lay low for a while. To top it all off, this non-insightful vagueness is preceded by “probably,” as if to emphasize the statement’s complete meaninglessness. We then learn in paragraph two that: “...they [al-Qaeda] will still pose a danger, a U.S. defense official said on condition of anonymity.” Wow! This person really goes out on a limb here. I hope they don’t get fired for that comment. It was probably a good idea that they kept their identity a secret. Scandalous! In paragraph three, more cute obscurities: “It’s going to be more of a franchise-type thing.”

Paragraph four reads, “Already, there are signs that networks are still viable...and possess the logical know-how for attacks, the official added.” Why wouldn’t networks still be viable—that would imply that they were completely destroyed or destroyed to the point of being inoperative or no longer dangerous? Not all “cells” were in Afghanistan anyway. And why would these long-time, extensively trained groups fueled by religious and nationalist zealotry no longer “possess the logical know-how for attacks” just because some of their members were killed or captured in Afghanistan and a few other places? Maybe they’ve forgotten what a bomb is or how to use it?

In the next paragraph, though the source is an Arabic-language news agency, the information is still hilariously simple. We read: “...groups within the al-Qaeda network...are trying to reconstitute themselves after the Afghanistan campaign.” That’s funny, I thought al-Qaeda was just going to give up, roll over and die. Have they suddenly stopped hating America? Again, individuals risking it all with their bold predictions.

The article concludes with more speculation: “The trails [al-Qaeda’s] may prove more difficult for law enforcement to track, as well, he said—a point echoed by other analysts.” So we have anonymous analysts echoing another anonymous analyst about the fact that a “terrorist mastermind” and his “cells,” who have eluded police, military, and intelligence agencies from multiple countries for decades, while pulling off intricate terrorist attacks all over the planet, are difficult to track and may become even more difficult to track. I thought they were easy to track. I thought that’s why the U.S. government and its various intelligence agencies thwarted the
September 11 attacks so easily. What’s worse is that this is the second time in the article this empty and obvious statement is made.

Upon finishing the article one realizes that the entire text was a string of completely obvious and meaningless statements, attributed almost exclusively to anonymous government officials and analysts that make no attempt whatsoever to actually relay valuable information concerning a certain subject. There’s no real flow or chronology to the article, as it seems more accurately like a collection of “safe” generalizations about al-Qaeda and the likelihood of their continued existence.

In another Globe article, from March 4th, entitled “Six Nations join U.S. in fierce offensive,” fourteen out of the nineteen paragraphs are quotes or paraphrased quotes from military officials. In this case several of the sources are Afghan—albeit friendly forces fighting alongside coalition troops.

This article also affords us the luxury of actually citing individuals or agencies attributed to the various information. [This I thought was standard procedure in journalism.]

Among “U.S. and Afghan officials,” “U.S. Central Command,” “officials,” “Afghan officials,” and “Afghan commanders” we actually hear from real people in the form of Central Command spokesman Major Ralph Mills, Abdul Matin (an Afghan commander), Wazir Khan (spokesman for an Afghan commander), and Raza Khan (an Afghan fighter). So this article is a little better. Less direct quoting from Pentagon sources along with greater diversity of sources.

At this point it must be emphasized that these two examples are on the highly inexcusable end of the scale of bad journalism (in terms of percentage of paragraphs that are direct quotes and identification of sources).
However, they do represent trends in the corporate media with regard to war reporting. This said, most articles do approach these bleak statistics—reflecting the media’s servitude to government. If one begins studying the news with this amount of scrutiny, similar statistics will be found almost across the board, whether it be in the Globe, the New York Times, or the Washington Post.

This kind of reporting raises many obvious concerns: who are our sources and what is their relationship to the reported event (Will they benefit from what is/isn’t included? Are they financially affected by what’s reported?); how many different sources are used or called upon to create both a thorough and objective report (Are all sides being represented?); does the diversity of sources reflect the availability of sources or simply what the reporter has chosen to include or omit; how speculative is the article (one need not turn to national news agencies for vague and obvious predictions); and is the information being provided, and subsequently reported, actually information, in the sense of new, detailed or semi-detailed data, that could not be accessed elsewhere being presented for the first time?

Said questions when combined with the above analysis should be cause for alarm considering that the very agency who is so often the source of our information is potentially a conglomerate of professional liars. Please consider the following information as provided by the New York Times (“Pentagon Readies Efforts To Sway Sentiment Abroad” 2/19/02):

The Pentagon is developing plans to provide news items, possibly even false ones, to foreign media organizations as part of a new effort to influence public sentiment and policy makers in both friendly and unfriendly countries, military officials said.

The plans, which have not received final approval from the Bush administration, have stirred opposition among some Pentagon officials who say they might undermine the credibility of information that is openly distributed by the Defense Department’s public affairs officers.

The military has long engaged in information warfare against hostile nations—for instance, by dropping leaflets and broadcasting messages into Afghanistan when it was still under Taliban rule. But it recently created the Office of Strategic Influence, which is proposing to broaden that mission into allied nations in the Middle East, Asia and even Western Europe.

This indicates that the Pentagon is in the process of creating the so-called Office of Strategic Influence (OSI), whose job it will be to, as the headline puts it, “sway sentiment abroad” through an information campaign possibly including false news (disinformation), otherwise known as lies. This campaign would not only be carried out in enemy countries, but also in friendly ones. Perhaps even as friendly as Western Europe. The article goes on to say that, little information is available about the Office of Strategic Influence, and even many senior Pentagon officials and Congressional military aides say they know almost nothing about its purpose and plans. Its multimillion dollar budget, drawn from a $10 billion emergency supplement to the Pentagon budget authorized by Congress in October, has not been disclosed.

One of the office’s proposals calls for planting news items with foreign media organizations through outside concerns that might not have obvious ties to the Pentagon, officials familiar with the proposals said. “While it’s not surprising to read that “little information is available about the [OSI],” it’s somewhat comforting to know that even “senior Pentagon officials... know almost nothing...” considering that the taxpayers know nothing. Or is it? Maybe that’s a sign as to its super secrecy? Or are they lying? Or what the hell is really going on? One would not necessarily expect...
While it’s not surprising to read that “little information is available about the [OSI],” it’s somewhat comforting to know that even “senior Pentagon officials...know almost nothing...” considering that the taxpayers know nothing. Or is it? Maybe that’s a sign as to its super secrecy? Or are they lying? Or what the hell is really going on? One would not necessarily expect Joe American to know the details about the OSI, but one would surely expect top military people to know.

The article concludes on this note: “O.S.I. still thinks the way to go is start [sic] a Defense Department Voice of America,” a senior military official said. “When I get their briefings, it’s scary.” Luckily, amidst a wave of criticism from all angles the Pentagon decided to scrap the idea, evidently to remain credible. But what’s to say the plan has been scrapped at all? What if that’s just the first piece of disinformation?

What’s “scary” about this near unbelievable report is the fact that the government agency that has complete control over all information as relevant to any aspect of the war, as well as being the only source of such information for the domestic corporate press, was/is attempting to create an office whose main purpose will be to convince foreigners that America’s way is the right way (even at times when it’s obviously the wrong way) through extensive propaganda and disinformation.

Many obvious and legitimate questions instantly arise. Although the report only mentions foreign sentiment, surely domestic sentiment is just as important for the continued support of U.S. imperialist efforts? (Though thankfully the American press and public still have enough decency left to make the idea of publicly announcing the intent to “sway domestic sentiment” wholly unacceptable.) Has the Pentagon lied in the past?
OJ SIMPSON COMMITS A CRIME, AND SUDDENLY, IT BECOMES NEWS OF THE CENTURY. WHILE TWO PEOPLE'S EXPLOITED DEATHS ARE IN THE MINDS OF EVERY AMERICAN, FORGOTTEN ARE THE NEWS OF THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE EXPLOITED FOR THEIR RESOURCES.

CLINTON COMMITS ADULTERY WITH A YOUNG INTERN, AND THE MASS MEDIA EXPLOITS IT TO THE POINT OF IMPEACHMENT. FORGOTTEN IS THE NEWS OF THE REAL IMPEACHABLE OFFENSE OF ACCEPTING LARGE AMOUNTS OF CAMPAIGN MONEY FROM A PRIVATE FOREIGN INVESTOR.

AMERICAN NEWS IS DEPRESSING.
AFTER SPENDING BIG BUCKS CONTRIBUTED FROM SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS, ARNOLD, OUR LAST ACTION HERO, WINS BY AIRING CHEESY COMMERCIALS, AVOIDING DEBATES, FLASHING CATCHY SLOGANS, AND MASSIVE PUBLICITY THROUGHOUT THE MASS MEDIA.

MONEY CAN BUY A CALIFORNIAN GOVERNORSHIP
Around the country, many folks are shaking their heads, or laughing, or crying, about the California recall election. They are wondering: How did a state with an overwhelming Democratic population elect a Republican—a sexual predator who says he admires Adolph Hitler—to the governor’s seat in Sacramento?

To some, the election outcome justifies the warnings by some Founding Fathers (some of whom were sexual predators themselves) that there’s such a thing as too much direct democracy—especially when it crosses the line into mob rule, the so-called “tyranny of the majority.” But to others, the California recall was the epitome of its direct opposite—the domination of politics by big money.

Whatever the merits of these fancy political science theories, the basic reality is this: Put a charismatic celebrity next to a dull technocrat and you have the formula for Arnold Schwarzenegger beating Gray Davis to become the governor of the nation’s largest state and the world’s sixth largest economy. This was not an ideological election about issues. It was a referendum on Davis. And it was yet another example of the increasing overlap between politics and show biz.

At the same time, it is important not to overstate the exceptional character of this election, as if California were some kind of bizarre political anomaly. After all, are the election and qualifications of Arnold Schwarzenegger so much more outlandish than those of George W. Bush, a man whose entire life in college, business, and politics was made possible by his family’s
money and connections, and whose drunk driving, drug use, and military 
[i.e. AWOL] experiences were no less character-revealing than Arnold’s 
own behavior? So before labeling California voters as particularly quirky, 
recall that in 2000, while the rest of the nation gave Bush 48.5 percent of 
the popular vote, only 41.7 percent of Californians voted for our current 
president. The recall [along with the initiative] was originally adopted 
in California in 1911, sponsored by California’s Progressive movement, 
to give ordinary citizens a stronger voice in a government dominated by 
big business—particularly the Southern Pacific RR—and urban political 
machines—particularly in San Francisco. At the time, women didn’t have 
the vote, Senators weren’t elected directly by voters, and candidates were 
elected not in primaries but by political party insiders. So the initiative and 
recall were ways to bring “direct democracy” to a system where average 
California’s had no institutional voice in statewide politics.

The initiative is no longer a “progressive” tactic. Since the 1960s, interest 
groups with lots of money have dominated direct initiatives in California. 
The most infamous is Proposition 13, the tax-cutting initiative passed in 
1978. In general, initiatives are proposed by conservative forces—business-
backed economic conservatives [who sponsored the anti-labor Proposition 
226 to limit the use of union dues for political campaigns] or social 
conservative causes [such as the anti-immigrant Prop 187 and the anti-
affirmative action Prop 209]. These initiatives put liberal and progressive 
forces on the defensive, having to mobilize money and people to defeat 
them, a real diversion of their resources. Liberals have been able to win 
a few statewide initiatives (housing and park bonds, raising cigarette taxes 
to fund pre-school programs and anti-smoking education), but generally, 
initiatives sponsored by liberal groups—such as single-payer health care or 
same-day voter registration—have lost significantly. It takes an enormous 
amount of money to win a statewide initiative in California, with its many 
media markets. Liberals are always at a disadvantage in such battles.

The recall would not have been logistically possible without the $1.5+ 
million contributed by Cong. Darrell Issa, a right-wing Republican who had 
hoped to be on the recall ballot himself but later bowed out when it was 
clear that Schwarzenegger and McClintock were stronger GOP candidates. 
His money paid for the signature gathering process to put the recall on 
the ballot. Although the recall tapped popular dissatisfaction with Davis, 
it was not a grassroots bottom-up campaign. It was a top-down campaign, 
initiated by right-wing Republicans a few weeks after last November’s 
election, and funded by Issa and a handful of others.

The threshold for getting a recall on the ballot is very low in three ways. 
First, it does not require any evidence of malfeasance or corruption. 
Eighteen states allow the recall of state officials. In most of these states, 
there must be some evidence that the elected official has violated the 
public trust, been corrupt, or broken a law. Not so in California. Second, 
the number of signatures needed to get a recall on the ballot in California 
is very low. Third, the second stage of the two-stage election—the first 
recalling the governor, the second electing his/her alternative—has 
a very low threshold for getting a candidate on the ballot in terms of 
signatures (65) and fees ($3,500). This accounts for the 135 candidates, 
including strippers, pornographers, has-been actors like Gary Coleman, 
and various egomaniacs, making the election look like, as many media 
called it, a “circus.”
Californians’ dislike of Gray Davis was balanced by the popularity of actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. He is one of the most well known celebrities in the world as a result of his films. His movie characters are somewhat cartoon-like figures. His films appeal across the demographic spectrum. They are violent and mindless, but full of action. Arnold was thus viewed as a popular, easygoing, man-of-action, an actor who didn’t take his acting career too seriously, an immigrant who came to American penniless and lived the “American Dream,” even marrying a woman (Maria Shriver) who is a Kennedy, a Democrat, and a TV celebrity herself. The contrast to Gray Davis was clear.

Arnold clearly harbored political ambitions for a long time. In 1977, six years before he became a US citizen, he told a German magazine: “When one has money, one day it becomes less interesting. And when one is also the best in film, what can be more interesting? Perhaps power. Then one moves into politics and becomes governor or president or something.” He realized that one day his movie-making days were numbered and began thinking about a career in politics. He spent considerable time developing political (primarily Republican) connections. He joined the Regency Club, a conservative business group, whose members later contributed to his campaign. As early as 1984 he gave a speech at the Republican National convention in support of Reagan’s re-election. He campaigned for George H.W. Bush, who appointed him chairman of the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, a ceremonial job that Arnold milked for publicity and connections.

Arnold carefully began donating money to political candidates and to charitable causes that could both soften his movie image and make him appear to be a serious person. After 9/11 hurt the LA economy, Arnold went on a “trade mission” to Japan with Mayor James Hahn and other public officials to encourage Japanese tourism in LA. According to an account by one of his traveling companions, Arnold was a brilliant salesman, schmoozing with Japanese officials and tourism industry officials and, in the process, making important political connections. To deal with the potential fall-out of his father being a member of the Nazi party (and his own comments that he admired Hitler for his mesmerizing powers), Arnold donated money to the LA Museum of Tolerance (the local Holocaust museum), whose founder, a rabbi, said nice things about him.

To humanize his image to show that he cared about children, his political advisors smartly persuaded him to serve as the front-man for a statewide initiative (Proposition 49) last year to fund after-school programs. This gave him the opportunity to travel across the state, to speak to various constituencies, and to build his reputation as a caring, humane person. This effort to jump-start Arnold’s political career was modeled on movie director Rob Reiner’s successful efforts to increase funding for pre-school programs through Prop 10, which the voters passed a few years earlier. The difference is that Prop 10 imposed a tax on tobacco, which has generated over $600 million for new programs. In contract, Arnold’s Prop 49 was a terrible idea because it didn’t add any new revenues and, since its passage (yes, the voters bought it) has not put one penny into after-school programs. But as a political ploy for Arnold, it worked.

Arnold clearly anticipated that stories about his personal life—harassment of women and drug use, among them could undermine his political ambition. For several years he has been very aggressive at buying up old videotapes that could damage his career, allegedly paying “hush money” to people who have damaging stories to tell about his private life, and—as noted above—giving money to various charities, including his own charity, “inner city games.” In other words, Arnold has carefully improved and cleansed his image, and forged the right business and fundraising connections, in anticipation of a political career.
CH 02 THE WAR IS NOT OVER
WAR PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SALIM HIJAZI
The truth ad campaigns use a guerilla style marketing strategy to reveal the harmful effects of cigarettes. Why is there money spent on a campaign to inform the public what they already know? Why not spread the information that could affect millions of people’s lives? If people knew the real truth about their country, social and economic changes for the better of the common man would be in effect. Common citizens with truth by their side can hope to achieve a true democracy. The **real truth** is a way of spreading the truth about the war.
Ten Appalling Lies We Were Told About Iraq

By Christopher Scheer

LIE #1: "The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program. Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons." —President Bush, Oct. 7, 2002, in Cincinnati.

FACT: This story, leaked to and breathlessly reported by Judith Miller in the New York Times, has turned out to be a complete fabrication. Department of Energy officials, who monitor nuclear plants, say the tubes could not be used for enriching uranium. One intelligence analyst, who was part of the tubes investigation, angrily told The New Republic: "You had senior American officials like Condoleezza Rice saying the only use of this aluminum really is uranium centrifuges. She said that on television. And that's just a lie."

LIE #2: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." —President Bush, Jan. 28, 2003, in the State of the Union address.

FACT: This whopper was based on a document that the White House already knew to be a forgery thanks to the CIA. Sold to Italian intelligence by some hustler, the document carried the signature of an official who had been out of office for 10 years and referenced a constitution that was no longer in effect. The ex-ambassador who the CIA sent to check out the story is pissed: "They knew the Niger story was a flat-out lie," he told The New Republic. "They [the White House] were unpersuasive about aluminum tubes and added this to make their case more strongly."

LIE #3: "We believe [Saddam] has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." —Vice President Cheney on March 16, 2003 or "Meet the Press."

FACT: There was and is absolutely zero basis for this claim. CIA reports through 2002 showed no evidence of an Iraqi weapons program.

These are actual lies presented to the American public in support of the war in Iraq. After reading the first three lies, we think you might want to consider the fact that there isn’t even one real reason or threat to lead America into war. Controlling Iraqi oil fields does not equate to instilling democracy.

THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW. IMAGINE WHAT WE DON'T.

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More Appalling Lies We Were Told About Iraq
By Christopher Scheer

LIE #4: "[The CIA possessed] solid reporting of senior-level contacts between Iraq and al-Qaeda going back a decade." — CIA Director George Tenet in a written statement released Oct. 7, 2002 and echoed in that evening's speech by President Bush.

FACT: Intelligence agencies knew of tentative contacts between Saddam and al-Qaeda in the early '90s, but found no proof of a continuing relationship. In other words, by tweaking language, Tenet and Bush spun the intelligence 180 degrees to say exactly the opposite of what it suggested.

LIE #5: "We've learned that Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases ... Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints." — President Bush, Oct. 7.

FACT: No evidence of this has ever been leaked or produced. Colin Powell told the U.N. this alleged training took place in a camp in northern Iraq. To his great embarrassment, the area he indicated was later revealed to be outside Iraq's control and patrolled by Allied war planes.

LIE #6: "We have also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We are concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] for missions targeting the United States." — President Bush, Oct. 7.

FACT: Said drones can't fly more than 300 miles, and Iraq is 6,000 miles from the U.S. coastline. Furthermore, Iraq's drone-building program wasn't much more advanced than your average model plane enthusiast. And isn't a "manned aerial vehicle" just a scary way to say "plane"?

These are actual lies presented to the American public in support of the war in Iraq. After reading even more lies, we think you might want to consider the fact that there isn't even one real reason or threat to lead America into war. Controlling Iraqi oil fields does not equate to instilling democracy.

THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW. IMAGINE WHAT WE DON'T. The real truth

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It is 10 months since 11 September, and still the great charade plays on. Having appropriated our shocked response to that momentous day, the rulers of the world have since ground our language into a paean of cliches and lies about the “war on terrorism”—when the most enduring menace, and source of terror, is them.

The fanatics who attacked America came from Saudi Arabia and Egypt. No bombs fell on these American protectorates. Instead, more than 5,000 civilians have been bombed to death in stricken Afghanistan, the latest a wedding party of 40 people, mostly women and children. Not a single al-Qaeda leader of importance has been caught. Following this “stunning victory”, hundreds of prisoners were shipped to an American concentration camp in Cuba, where they have been held against all the conventions of war and international law. No evidence of their alleged crimes has been produced, and the FBI confirms only one is a genuine suspect. In the United States, more than 1,000 people of Muslim background have “disappeared”; none has been charged. Under the draconian Patriot Act, the FBI’s new powers include the authority to go into libraries and ask who is reading what.

Meanwhile, the Blair government has made fools of the British Army by insisting they pursue warring tribesmen: exactly what squaddies in putties and pith helmets did over a century ago when Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, described Afghanistan as one of the pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a great game for the domination of the world. There is no war on terrorism; it is the great game speeded up. The difference is the rampant nature of the superpower, ensuring infinite dangers for us all.

Having swept the Palestinians into the arms of the supreme terrorist Ariel Sharon, the Christian Right fundamentalists running the plutocracy in Washington, now replenish their arsenal in preparation for an attack on the 22 million suffering people of Iraq. Should anyone need reminding, Iraq is a nation held hostage to an American-led embargo every bit as barbaric as the dictatorship over which Iraqis have no control. Contrary to propaganda orchestrated from Washington and London, the coming attack has nothing to do with Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction”, if these exist at all. The reason is that America wants a more compliant thug to run the world’s second greatest source of oil.

The drum-beaters rarely mention this truth, and the people of Iraq. Everyone is Saddam Hussein, the demon of demons. Four years ago, the Pentagon warned President Clinton that an all-out attack on Iraq might kill “at least” 10,000 civilians: that, too, is unmentionable. In a sustained propaganda campaign to justify this outrage, journalists on both sides of the Atlantic have been used as channels, “conduits”, for a stream of rumours and lies. These have ranged from false claims about an Iraqi connection with the anthrax attacks in America to a discredited link between the leader of the 11 September hijacks and Iraqi intelligence. When the attack comes, these consorting journalists will share responsibility for the crime.

It was Tony Blair who served notice that imperialism’s return journey to respectability was under way. Hark, the Christian gentleman-bomber’s vision of a better world for “the starving, the wretched, the dispossessed, the ignorant, those living in want and squalor from the deserts of northern Africa to the slums of Gaza to the mountain ranges of Afghanistan.” Hark, his “abiding” concern for the “human rights of the suffering women of Afghanistan” as he colluded with Bush who, as the New York Times reported, “demanded the elimination of truck convoys that provide much of the food and other supplies to Afghanistan’s civilian population”. Hark his compassion for the “dispossessed” in the “slums of Gaza”, where
Israeli gunships, manufactured with vital British parts, fire their missiles into crowded civilian areas. As Frank Furedi reminds us in The New Ideology of Imperialism, it is not long ago “that the moral claims of imperialism were seldom questioned in the West. Imperialism and the global expansion of the western powers were represented in unambiguously positive terms as a major contributor to human civilisation.” The quest went wrong when it was clear that fascism was imperialism, too, and the word vanished from academic discourse. In the best Stalinist tradition, imperialism no longer existed. Today, the preferred euphemism is “civilisation”; or if an adjective is required, “cultural”. From Italy’s Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, an ally of crypto-fascists, to impeccably liberal commentators, the new imperialists share a concept whose true meaning relies on a xenophobic or racist comparison with those who are deemed uncivilised, culturally inferior and might challenge the “values” of the West.

Watch the “debates” on Newsnight. The question is how best “we” can deal with the problem of ‘them’. For much of the western media, especially those commentators in thrall to and neutered by the supercult of America, the most salient truths remain taboos. Professor Richard Falk, of Cornell university, put it succinctly some years ago. Western foreign policy, he wrote, is propagated in the media ‘through a self righteous, one-way moral/legal screen [with] positive images of western values and innocence portrayed as threatened, validating a campaign of unrestricted violence’.

Perhaps the most important taboo is the longevity of the United States as both a terrorist state and a haven for terrorists. That the US is the only state on record to have been condemned by the World Court for international terrorism (in Nicaragua) and has vetoed a UN Security Council resolution calling on governments to observe international law, is unmentionable.
“In the war against terrorism,” said Bush from his bunker following 11 September, “we’re going to hunt down these evil-doers wherever they are, no matter how long it takes.”

Strictly speaking, it should not take long, as more terrorists are given training and sanctuary in the United States than anywhere on earth. They include mass murderers, torturers, former and future tyrants and assorted international criminals. This is virtually unknown to the American public, thanks to the freest media on earth.

There is no terrorist sanctuary to compare with Florida, currently governed by the President’s brother, Jeb Bush. In his book Rogue State, former senior State Department official Bill Blum describes a typical Florida trial of three anti-Castro terrorists, who hijacked a plane to Miami at knifepoint. “Even though the kidnapped pilot was brought back from Cuba to testify against the men,” he wrote, “the defence simply told the jurors the man was lying, and the jury deliberated for less than an hour before acquitting the defendants.” General Jose Guillermo Garcia has lived comfortably in Florida since the 1990s. He was head of El Salvador’s military during the 1980s when death squads with ties to the army murdered thousands of people. General Prosper Avril, the Haitian dictator, liked to display the bloodied victims of his torture on television. When he was overthrown, he was flown to Florida by the US Government. Thiounn Prasith, Pol Pot’s henchman and apologist at the United Nations, lives in New York. General Mansour Moharari, who ran the Shah of Iran’s notorious prisons, is wanted in Iran, but untroubled in the United States.

Al-Qaeda’s training camps in Afghanistan were kindergartens compared with the world’s leading university of terrorism at Fort Benning in Georgia. Known until recently as the School of the Americas, it trained tyrants and some 60,000 Latin American special forces, paramilitaries and intelligence agents in the black arts of terrorism.

In 1993, the UN Truth Commission on El Salvador named the army officers who had committed the worst atrocities of the civil war; two-thirds of them had been trained at Fort Benning. In Chile, the school’s graduates ran Pinochet’s secret police and three principal concentration camps. In 1996, the US government was forced to release copies of the school’s training manuals, which recommended blackmail, torture, execution and the arrest of witnesses’ relatives.

In recent months, the Bush regime has torn up the Kyoto treaty, which would ease global warming, to which the United States is the greatest contributor. It has threatened the use of nuclear weapons in “pre-emptive” strikes (a threat echoed by Defence Minister Geoffrey Hoon). It has tried to abort the birth of an international criminal court. It has further undermined the United Nations by blocking a UN investigation of the Israeli assault on a Palestinian refugee camp; and it has ordered the Palestinians to replace their elected leader with an American stooge. At summit conferences in Canada and Indonesia, Bush’s people have blocked hundreds of millions of dollars going to the most deprived people on earth, those without clean water and electricity.

These facts will no doubt beckon the inane slur of “anti-Americanism.” This is the imperial prerogative: the last refuge of those whose contortion of intellect and morality demands a loyalty oath. As Noam Chomsky has pointed out, the Nazis silenced argument and criticism with “anti-German” slurs. Of course, the United States is not Germany; it is the home of some of history’s greatest civil rights movements, such as the epic movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

I was in the U.S. last week and glimpsed that other America, the one rarely seen among the media and Hollywood stereotypes, and what was clear was that it was stirring again. The other day, in an open letter to their compatriots and the world, almost 100 of America’s most distinguished
names in art, literature and education wrote this:

“Let it not be said that people in the United States did nothing when their
government declared a war without limit and instituted stark new measures
of repression. We believe that questioning, criticism and dissent must be
valued and protected. Such rights are always contested and must be fought
for. We, too, watched with shock the horrific events of September 11.
But the mourning had barely begun when our leaders launched a spirit
of revenge. The government now openly prepares to wage war on Iraq—a
country that has no connection with September 11.

“We say this to the world. Too many times in history people have waited
until it was too late to resist. We draw on the inspiration of those who fought
slavery and all those other great causes of freedom that began with dissent.
We call on all like-minded people around the world to join us.”
FROM THE HALLS OF DIWANIYA TO THE SHORES OF EUPHRATES

GOD BLESS

AMERICA.
SHOCK & AWE

-ING

-FUL