

NEOCONSERVATISM AND THE CIA

GREG PAVLIK

Not long after the Central Intelligence Agency was founded in 1947, the American public and the world were subjected to an unprecedented level of propaganda in the service of U.S. foreign policy objectives in the Cold War. The propaganda offensive of the government centered around its obsession with securing the emerging U.S.-dominated world order in the wake of the Second World War. It was a time when Europe lay in ruins and when subservience to U.S. planners, in government and business, was the order of the day.

Although it is now widely conceded that there was never any serious threat of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, let alone of the United States, the menace of the Soviet Union was the pretext underlying discussion of foreign policy. To pay for the Cold War, Harry Truman set out, as Arthur Vandenberg advised, to "Scare the Hell out of the American people." A daunting task, considering the years of pro-Soviet accolades that had previously flowed from the executive branch.

Nonetheless, the Soviet threat served as a useful chimera to keep the masses in line. What were the targets singled out for demonization in the Cold War propaganda campaign? One of the chief aims of the government was to discredit dangerously parochial attitudes about the desirability of peace. It was also thought necessary to inoculate the

public, particularly in Europe, against the virus of "neutralism."

Further, since the American government had successfully entrenched the military industrial complex as a permanent feature of American life, U.S. planners were eager to discredit the idea of "disarmament," which meant not only a rejection of the techniques of mass murder developed and perfected by the Allied powers in the Second World War, but also a return to the pre-war days when the union of government and business was more tenuous, government-connected profits were fleeting, and market discipline provided a check on consolidation.

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The degree to which the press participated as a partner in the rhetoric of the Cold War was no accident. Media penetration was a major facet of CIA activities in both the foreign and domestic context. At its peak, the CIA allocated 29 percent of its budget to "media and propaganda." The extent of its efforts are difficult to measure, but some information has slipped through the shroud of secrecy.

One report notes that the media organizations funded by the CIA in Europe included: the West German News agency DENA (later the DPA), the writers association PEN in Paris,

a number of French newspapers, the International Forum of Journalists, and Forum World Features. The London-based Forum World Features provided stories to "140 newspapers around the world, including about 30 in the United States, amongst which were the *Washington Post* and four other major dailies."

The U.S. Senate's Church committee reported that the *Post* was aware that the service was "CIA-controlled." German media tycoon Axel Springer had received the then-substantial sum of more than \$7 million from the Agency to build his press empire. His relationship with the CIA was reported to have extended through the 1970s. The *New York Times* reported that the CIA owned or subsidized more than 50 newspapers, news services, radio stations, and periodicals. The paper reported that at least another dozen were infiltrated by the CIA; more than 1,000 books either written directly or subsidized by the Agency were published during this period.

The penetration of CIA propaganda into the American press was far more extensive than an occasional distorted report from Europe. By the early 70s, it had been revealed that the head of the Hearst bureau in London was a CIA agent. Some suspicion was aroused among those editors not on the Company payroll, and inquiring minds among them wanted to know if CIA men were currently in their employ. Soon thereafter the *Washington Star-News* published a report claiming that some three dozen journalists were on the payroll of the Agency. One agent was identified in the story as a member of the *Star-News's* own staff. When the paper went belly-up in 1981, the "journalist" in question went directly to work for the Reagan

administration. Later, he joined the staff of the *Washington Times*.

Though pressured, the CIA refused for some time to release information on its tentacles in the "free press." There's little wonder why. When George Bush assumed the role of CIA director, he agreed to a single paragraph summary of each of its journalists for the Church committee. When it submitted the last of its data, the CIA had provided information on more than 400 journalists. The final Church report was a disappointment having been audited by the CIA. A subsequent House investigation was suppressed, though a leak was published in the *Village Voice*. The House report indicated that Reuters news service was frequently used for CIA disinformation, and that media manipulation may have been the "largest single category of covert action projects taken by the CIA." According to the watchdog group Public Information Resource, propaganda expenses in the 70s may have exceeded \$285 million a year. This was more than "the combined budgets of Reuters, United Press International, and the Associated Press."

By the late seventies, reports emerged that the publishing house Copley Press had for three decades served as a CIA front. Its subsidiary, Copley News Service, provided the CIA a mouthpiece in Latin America. Propaganda in Latin America was more or less constant, as the CIA influenced elections, organized the torture and murder of dissidents, including priests, and backed brutal, but pro-American patsies throughout the region.

The efforts in manipulation of opinion in Latin America were reflected in similar campaigns at

home. For instance: pro-contra public relations specialist Edgar Chamorro served as a conduit of disinformation from 1982 to 1984, manipulating journalists and Congressmen at the behest of the CIA. Though domestic propaganda is a violation of the law, it was a standard Agency tactic.

The Carter administration, in an effort to soften public interest in the CIA's involvement with the press, issued an executive order touted in the media as a ban on the manipulation of the American media. Belatedly, as another PIR report

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notes, the Society of Professional Journalists had this to say—"An executive order during the Carter administration was thought to have banned the practice [of recruitment of journalists by the CIA]. After a Council on Foreign Relations task force recommended that the ban be reconsidered, it was revealed that a "loophole" existed allowing the CIA director or his deputy to grant a waiver." As a follow-up, the Reagan administration signed a law banning media disclosure of covert operations as a felony.

If reporters were often led to compromise their integrity at the behest of the warfare state, it was an example set at the highest levels of power in the American media. Press ownership, already concentrated to a ludicrous degree, shared a cozy relationship with the CIA from its start. Those chummy with the Company included *Time-Life* magnate Henry Luce, former *Post* owner Philip Graham and assorted *New York Times* owners in the Sulzberger family. Top editors of the *Post* and *Newsweek* have also served as agents, while the *Post's* intelligence reporter was on the take from the CIA in the 60s. Katherine Graham, for decades owner of the *Washington Post*, had this to say to top CIA officials as the Berlin Wall was starting to crack. "There are some things the general public does not need to know and shouldn't. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows."

The conservative movement that culminated in the elevation of Ronald Reagan to the presidency was a product of those turbulent Cold War years, and perhaps more so a product of domestic intervention by the security state than many of its participants would care to admit. The armchair warriors in the neoconservative camp and the inveterate interventionists at *National Review* can both trace their roots straight back to the propaganda efforts of the CIA.

After the Hitler-Stalin pact, the neoconservatives moved from cafeteria Leninists to apologists for the U.S. warfare state without missing a beat, as Justin Raimondo shows in his 1993 *Reclaiming the American Right*. The CIA's role in establishing

the influence of the neocons came out in the late 60s, though the revelations were obscured by the primary actors' denials of knowledge of the covert funding. The premiere organization of the anti-Stalinist left, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, provided a base of operations to launch a left-intellectual crusade against the Soviet Union. The revelation that the Congress was a CIA front destroyed the organization's credibility, and it went belly-up despite the best efforts of the Ford Foundation to keep it afloat. The Congress disappeared, but as Raimondo notes, "the core group later came to be known as the neoconservatives."

The Congress for Cultural Freedom was perhaps the Agency's most ambitious attempt at control and influence of intellectual life throughout Europe and the world. Affiliates were established in America, Europe, Australia, Japan, Latin America, India, and Africa, although its appeal was limited in the Third World for obvious reasons. It combined concerts, conferences, and publishing efforts, promoting the State Department line on the Cold War. Magazines affiliated with the Congress included, among others, the *China Quarterly*, the *New Leader* and, of course, *Encounter*.

The funding of the Congress and similar fronts was organized through dozens of charitable trusts and nonprofit foundations, some of which were invented by the CIA. The money was made available through seemingly legitimate means to the Congress, as well as to political parties (including the German Social Democrats), unions and labor organizations, journalists' unions, student groups, and any number of other organizations that

could be counted on to support U.S. hegemony in Europe and the world.

The most complete story of the CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom is found in Peter Coleman's apologetic book, *The Liberal Conspiracy*. Coleman, a former Australian barrister and editor of the Congress magazine, the *Quadrant*, lets slip quite a bit of revelatory information in his analysis of the Congress's activities and its rela-

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tionship to the CIA. The common targets of Congress literature, as Coleman notes, are familiar: the literature was anti-Communist, social democratic, and anti-neutralist. Other aims promoted by the Congress were cataloged by William Blum: "a strong, well-armed, and united Western Europe, allied to the United States....support for the Common Market and NATO and...skepticism of disarmament [and] pacifism. Criticism of U.S. foreign policy took place within the framework of cold war assumptions; for example that a particular American intervention was not the

most effective way of combating communism, not that there was anything wrong with intervention per se...." F.A. Hayek commented that the Congress's strategic agenda was "not to plan the future of freedom, but to write its obituary."

Among those involved with the Congress where James Burnham, Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Daniel Bell, Arthur Schlesinger, Lionel Trilling, and the self-described "life-long Menshevik" Sidney Hook. After World War Two, Kristol worked as the editor for the American Jewish Committee's *Commentary* magazine, then served as editor of *Encounter* from 1953 to 1958.

The Congress was organized by Kristol's boss and CIA man Michael Josselson, who maintained a tight grip on the activities of the Congress as well as the content of its publications. According to Coleman, Josselson's criteria for his editors was simple: they had to be reliable on the State Department line. Later, Kristol was to deny he knew the organization was a front. This seems unlikely for several reasons. For one, Sidney Hook stated that "like almost everyone else," he had heard that "the CIA was making some contribution to the financing of the Congress". More to the point, as Tom Braden, then head of the CIA's International Organizations division, wrote in a *Saturday Evening Post* article, a CIA agent always served as editor of *Encounter*. Today, Kristol is a kind of svengali in the modern conservative world.

Neoconservative prominence and influence owes quite a bit to the covert activities of this government, something they forget only rarely, as with the case of neocon Richard Perle who was caught spying for one of our "reliable allies" while in the Reagan administration.

While waging the CIA's battle, the neocons were not yet billing themselves as conservatives. But the *National Review* was another matter, a journal aimed specifically at the American right-wing. The official line holds that *National Review* was founded in an intellectual vacuum, and, for all intents and purposes, created conservatism in America. But events, as are most often the case, were not that simple. The idea for *National Review* originated with Willi Schlamm, a hard-line interventionist and feature editor with the *Old Right Freeman*. At odds with the isolationism of the right, Schlamm was well-known for his belligerence, having demanded that the United States go to war over Formosa.

One person in a position to know more details about the founding of NR was the late classicist and right-winger Revilo Oliver. Although late in life Oliver was associated most closely with extremist racialism, in the 50s, he was an influential member of the Buckley inner circle, a regular contributor to *National Review* and a member of Bill Buckley's wedding party. Later, he went on to serve as a founding board member of the John Birch Society, until his break with the Society's founder Robert Welch.

In his autobiography, Oliver explains that the *National Review* was conceived as a way to put the isolationist *Freeman* out of business. A surreptitious deal was cut with one of the *Freeman* editors (presumably Schlamm) to turn the magazine over to Buckley; a last-ditch effort saved the magazine, and control was assumed by Leonard E. Read, president of the Foundation for Economic Education. Unfortunately, Read balked at "politics," i.e., analyzing and criticizing government

actions, and the magazine quickly slipped into irrelevance.

It's hard to blame the editors of the *Freeman* for failing to see Buckley's treachery coming. As late as 1954, Buckley was denouncing the U.S. military as incompatible with a free society. Soldiers emerging from the armed forces, Buckley argued, were brainwashed with militaristic platitudes. In his essay, Buckley proposed a debriefing regime for all military men "solely based on the great libertarian documents of our civilization" and study

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of the lives of the world's "great individualists." But, as they say, the times, they were a changin'.

Buckley's decision to launch the *National Review* was a watershed event on the right by any measure. As Buckley's admiring social-democratic biographer John Judis notes, "Except for Chodorov, who was a Buckley family friend, none of the right-wing isolationists were included on *National Review*'s masthead. While this point of view had been welcome in the *Freeman*, it would not be welcome, even as a dissenting view, in *National Review*."

As Judis notes, Schlamm, who envisioned himself as the guiding light behind NR, was not even a conservative. He "had more in common with Dwight MacDonald or

Daniel Bell than with Robert McCormick; Buckley was turning his back on much of the isolationist...Old Right that had applauded his earlier books and that his father had been politically close to."

Buckley, by 1955, had already been in deep cover for the CIA. While there is some confusion as to the actual duration of Buckley's service as an agent, Judis notes that he served under E. Howard Hunt of Watergate fame in Mexico City in 1951. Buckley was directed to the CIA by Yale Professor Wilmoore Kendall, who passed Buckley along to James Burnham, then a consultant to the Office Of Policy Coordination, the CIA's covert-action wing.

Buckley apparently had a knack for spying: before his stint with the Agency, he had served as an on-campus informant for the FBI, feeding God only knows what to Hoover's political police. In any case, it is known that Buckley continued to participate at least indirectly in CIA covert activities through the 60s.

The founding circle of *National Review* was composed largely of former agents or men otherwise in the pay of the CIA, including Buckley, Kendall, and Burnham. Wall Street lawyer William Casey, rooted in OSS activities and later to be named director of the CIA, drew up the legal documents for the new magazine. (He also helped transfer *Human Events* from isolationist to interventionist hands.)

NR required nearly half a million to get off the ground; the only substantial contribution known was from Will Buckley, Senior: \$100,000. It's long been rumored that CIA black funds were used to start the magazine, but no hard evidence exists to establish it. It may also be relevant

that the *National Review* was organized as a nonprofit venture, as covert funding was typically channeled through foundations.

By the 70s, it was known that Buckley had been an agent. More imaginative right-wingers accused Buckley of complicity in everything from the assassination of JFK to the Watergate break-in, undoubtedly owing to his relationship with the mysterious Hunt.

But sober minds also believed that something was suspicious about the *National Review*. In a syndicated column, Gary Wills wondered, "Was *National Review*, with four ex-agents of the CIA on its staff, a CIA operation? If so, the CIA was stingy, and I doubt it—but even some on the editorial board raised the question. And the magazine supported Buckley's old CIA boss, Howard Hunt, and publicized a fund drive for him." In reply, Buckley denounced Wills for being a classicist. But others close to the founding circle of *National Review* nurtured similar suspicions. Libertarian "fusionist" Frank Meyer, for example, confided privately that he believed that the *National Review* was a CIA front.

If it was, then it was the federal government that finally broke the back of the populist and isolationist right, the mass-based movement with its roots in the America First anti-war movement. What FDR tried and failed to do when he sought to shut down the *Chicago Tribune*, when his attorney general held mass sedition trials of his critics on the right, and when he orchestrated one of the worst smear campaigns in U.S. history against his conservative opponents, the CIA accomplished. That in itself ought to lead conservatives to oppose the existence of executive

agencies engaged in covert operations.

Today, the war-mongering right is self-sustaining. Money flows like milk and honey to neoconservative activists from the major conservative foundations. Irving's son Bill Kristol has his sugar daddy in the form of media tycoon and alien Ru-

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pert Murdoch. *National Review* is boring, but in no danger of going under financially.

But the cozy relationship with the federal government is the same. Neocons Bill Kristol and Robert Kagan now insist on massive extensions of the warfare state. The *Weekly Standard* demands a ground war to topple the head of a foreign government unfriendly to Israel, while denouncing right-wing isolationism, libertarianism, and Murray Rothbard.

This time, the right-wing War Hawks face a potentially insurmountable challenge. The pro-war propaganda directed at the domestic

population is failing badly. It is ineffective for two principal reasons: mounting intellectual opposition to the warfare state and the return of grassroots isolationism. Both trends have come to the fore. And not only with the collapse of communism. Widespread public disillusionment exists over the Gulf War of 1991. Sold to the public as a high tech "virtual" war, the consequences have been harder to hide than the execution of the attack. With over a million Iraqis dead, Hussein still in power, U.S. soldiers apparently poisoned by their own government and a not so farfetched feeling that the public was duped into supporting an unjust slaughter, people are starting to regard the Gulf War as an outrage. And they are right.

At the height of the Cold War, opposition to interventionism was largely isolated to the anti-war Left. While marshaling an impressive analytic literature on the evils of U.S. imperialism, particularly in the context of Vietnam, the Left was suspect for its support of socialism and its sometimes overt sympathies for totalitarian regimes. On the right, things were different. Except for a noble band of libertarians lead by Murray Rothbard, conservatives and many libertarians were front and center in support of the security state and its nefarious activities. Now, virtually the entire right is opposed to interventionism. Traditionalists and even nationalist right-wingers are generally opposed to foreign military actions. The dominant anti-war force on the right is the growing number of explicitly isolationist libertarians, who want no truck with the warfare state on principle. The *Weekly Standard* acknowledged as much and identified Murray Rothbard as the guiding spirit behind

today's antistatist, antiwar movement. And the nonliberal left, lead by longtime noninterventionists like Noam Chomsky, remains opposed to U.S. global hegemony. The neocons and their corporate liberal cronies are the only spokesmen for militarism.

The grassroots are hated by the neocons for precisely that reason. The man on the street, the movement conservative, the Perot voter, the Libertarian Party man—they all want the troops brought home and the tyranny of the U.S. empire brought to a halt. When the leaders of the empire try to talk down to normal people, they are jeered off the stage. The RRR position—no more war—is more and more the position of the American people. That's a strike for peace, and a strike for liberty. **RRR**

THE ORIGIN OF TERRORISM

ERIC MARGOLIS

The terror bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania horrified Americans, and left them feeling they were once again innocent victims of evil terrorism that was as mindless as it was abominable.

While certainly abominable, the attacks were hardly mindless: they were clearly designed to punish the U.S., though innocent Africans mostly paid the price.

Most Americans simply don't understand how deeply their nation is involved in the turmoils of Asia and Africa. Nor that the United States has fully inherited the role of world imperial power played by

Great Britain last century. As the British discovered with notorious Victorian malefactors, like Sudan's Mahdi, Somalia's "Mad Mullah," or China's Boxers, the restless natives occasionally bite back.

Imperialism bites back in Africa.

The U.S. hardly lacks enemies abroad, thus suspects in the bombing. At present, the U.S. openly admits to seeking to overthrow the governments of four nations: Libya, Iraq, Sudan, and Iran—the last democratically elected. The U.S. has repeatedly tried to assassinate the leaders of Libya and Iraq for impudently challenging U.S.-British hegemony in the Mideast.

Israel, with enemies galore, is seen in the Mideast as either an extension of the United States, or the United States an extension of Israel. By the warped logic of the region, attacking the U.S. equals attacking Israel. The embassy bombings were very similar to an earlier—and still unsolved—terror attack on the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires.

U.S. agents are conducting a secret war, including abduction or assassination, against numerous Palestinian and Arab groups, such as Hamas, the PFLP, and Saudi mujahidin. CIA, FBI, and U.S. military intelligence are extremely active in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Gulf in protecting the undemocratic rulers of these nations from being overthrown by their own citizens.

Defending the status quo brings the U.S. into head-on collision with underground groups across the Mideast—like the shadowy

Saudi, Osama Bin Laden—whose aim is to replace the region's oil kings and sheiks by popular Islamic and/or even democratic governments.

Radical underground groups in North Africa, Egypt, Jordan, "Holy" Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf claim their nations have been turned into virtual American colonies, under U.S. military occupation. They say Arab "puppet" rulers give away their oil to the U.S. and Britain in exchange for protection. American 'occupiers' are thus fair game, such as the bombing two years ago, of U.S. military garrison at El-Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

Other somewhat less likely suspects:

✦ U.S.-trained Afghans who fought the Soviet Union, were later branded "terrorists" by Washington, and are now hunted by U.S. and Pakistani agents.

✦ Marxist Kurds of the PKK, who see the U.S. as the main support of their blood enemy, Turkey.

✦ Serbs, to distract Washington from their ethnic cleansing in Kosova.

✦ Chechens, to punish the Clinton Administration for financing Russia's destruction of their tiny nation, and slaughter of 100,000 people.

✦ Colombian, Mexican or Peruvian drug lords—angry over the U.S.-led war against their business.

✦ Congolese, for revenge against the U.S.-orchestrated overthrow of their late leader President Mobutu. Angola's UNITA movement—an old ally ditched and lately besieged by the U.S., which now backs Angola's communist regime for reasons of petropolitics.

The embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam suffered damage roughly equivalent to a hit by a 2,000-lb bomb or 16-in naval shell—