

The Age of Propaganda

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In the 1970's scholars dubbed it the Information Age , a future in which computers would increase all levels of communication between humans. It was widely believed then that such an increase in access to knowledge would transform our world for the better. Where isolationism and illiteracy were once common, there would be a trans-formative shift towards education, democracy, and prosperity.

What was not predicted was how the marvel of high speed communication would still be subject to the the same nefarious creativity that has dwelled in human nature for time immemorial. A creativity that is motivated by greed, control of government, and immoral ideologies.

Welcome to the Age of Propaganda. In its simplest form, all that is needed for a participant to engage in this trade is a computer with a connection to the internet. A teenager in Macedonia can thus actually make a living selling made-up stories for American consumption to Facebook, Twitter, and others. A grander level of mischief can be achieved with the creation of a tax-free 501(3)(c) organization that is given the title of Think Tank . Thus, billionaires can become bigger billionaires by affecting the outcome of elections that promote their profit-motivated ideologies to millions of voters. Even more malicious, national spy agencies can plant cyber bombs into the economies and governments of their adversaries.

This is not only possible but already a done deal..

Just about everyone knows that money can corrupt government. What is less understood is the degree to which is also corrupts the media. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Citizens United unleashed a torrent of money into the political process of the United States. Most of this money flows through the media in all of its forms. Television, radio, newspapers, and internet. Political advertising and 24-7 talking heads repeating propaganda that poses as news. The news media and its newer cousins, Facebook and Twitter, have become the Cliff Notes of a culture that would rather be entertained or have its narrow opinions reinforced than know real facts.

The real facts are increasingly hard to find, because the news agencies have found it is more profitable to publish and broadcast the findings of a think tank like the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, or the Patriot New Agency (based in Russia) or even Islamic State, than to actually do any investigative reporting.

The profit potential from this systematic propaganda is staggering. The United States federal budget is bigger than the entire economies of all but a few countries. For a munitions maker like Olin Corp (aka the Heritage foundation) to get just a small fraction of it translates into billions of dollars. Some of the wealth that is up for grabs is in the private sector that is controlled and hence protected by government, such as the behemoth United States health care industry. This industry is also bigger in terms of market capital than most entire economies of the developed world. American citizens and taxpayers foot the bill for these enormous expenditures while people in other countries do not.

And so it came to pass that forty percent of the American people were duped into voting for a President that knows nothing about government. A president that gets into a Twitter rage at two in the morning with a teenager in Lithuania posing as a news anchor. A President who has many hunches about wiretaps in his home, or how the military spending must be increased and walls must be built to protect us from certain ethnic classes. Hunches that have no basis in real knowledge or fact but which are now becoming part of our public policies.