

Congress Aims “Honest Ads” at the Alternative Media

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Lee E. Goodman, the former chairman of the Federal Election Commission, completely misses the point in an op-ed posted at The Hill.

Goodman says a bill working its way through Congress, the Honest Ads Act, will fail to target the real danger to democracy, Russia, the off-and-on perennial evildoer since the establishment of the national security state in 1947.

“When Congress returns to business next week, it will take up legislative responses to foreign meddling in American elections. Front and center will be the Honest Ads Act, a bill severely restricting the First Amendment rights of American citizens and media companies but barely impacting foreign meddlers,” [Goodman writes](#).

Using what is historically known as “active measures,” Russians have attempted to influence American public opinion and election outcomes over many decades. So foreign meddling is not new.

What is new are the technological tools—the internet and social media—that facilitate the dissemination of foreign propaganda. Foreign meddlers no longer need to spread their political propaganda on American soil; they can communicate directly to Americans from computers as far away as, say, St. Petersburg, Russia.

No word about meddlers working for the US government. Back in 2013, the Smith-Mundt Act was amended and the State Department began using its foreign propaganda—Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, (both CIA ops) and other networks—to influence US audiences.

The US is notorious for its meddling in foreign elections and cranking out propaganda to effectuate neoliberal political and economic objectives around the world.

The US initiated numerous propaganda efforts, including the Pentagon Military Analyst Program, the Bush administration’s Video News Release program, America’s Army video game series, the Cuban Twitter ZunZuneo and, of course, the constant deluge of propaganda churned out by the corporate media and transmitted around the world.

The bill suffers from several inescapable flaws. It would apply only to paid ads—but, in 2016, most Russian propaganda was posted on free social media platforms. It would apply only to the largest media platforms—those with more than 50 million unique monthly visitors, which covers Twitter, Facebook and the New York Times but leaves thousands of other platforms viewed by

hundreds of millions of Americans open to foreign propaganda. It would be only a matter of time before other highly visited advertising platforms are swept into the law.

So, watch out, Drudge: Congress will come for you next.

Mr. Goodman, unfortunately, can't see the forest for the trees (and considering he's an establishment Republican, he isn't allowed to).

The push to circumvent constitutionally protected speech on the internet has little to do with Russia or any other foreign adversary. It's about a diverse and popular alternative media daily providing counter-arguments and dispelling lies and fabrications put out by the state and its corporate stenographers. This cannot be allowed to continue.

I predict far more draconian efforts to squelch the opposition.

The Alex Jones Precedent. This is an ongoing show trial designed to send the message that exposing the true nature of false flag operations will not be tolerated by the state.

Jones is locked in a legal battle with the families of the victims at Sandy Hook. They say his Sandy Hook commentary resulted in harassment and death threats.

This case has zero legal standing. Jones didn't threaten the plaintiffs or their families. The First Amendment protects—or did when it was functional—his right to say whatever he wants about Sandy Hook or anything else. Calling someone a “crisis actor” is not defamation. It's part of a tactic to take down a head high up on the alternative media totem.

However, we now live in a fact-free culture. Millions of Americans believe the entirely preposterous Russia-gate election collusion fairy tale simply because the government said without evidence it existed and is responsible for Donald Trump in the White House.

The Mueller investigation went nowhere. It didn't find evidence of collusion. All it found was a predatory social media ad company in Russia using the same marketing tactics as hundreds of American companies.

Now the government tells us conspiracy theorists and white nationalists are terrorists or wanna-be terrorists.

The feds tried to float this narrative during the Obama years. It recycled a Bush administration Homeland Security report on white supremacy and the threat of radicalized veterans. Janet Napolitano, then secretary, took a lot of flak after the government document was leaked.

The SPLC and other fear-mongering outfits kept up the heat over the ensuing years and with several suspiciously timed mass shooting events we are now in a position where the government may actually confiscate firearms from law-abiding American citizens categorized by the psychiatry business in partnership with the state as mentally defective. Trump is falling for this ruse.

The FBI's COINTELPRO 2.0 may entrap a handful of “white nationalist” patsies using similar

techniques used since 9/11 on gullible and mentally ill Muslims. The state's political police force, the FBI, will deliver. It will provide the fodder required for a propaganda campaign initially rolled out some months ago.

"Honest Ads" is not about providing transparency for consumers. It's another step in the ongoing construction of a technological police and surveillance state.

The Honest Ads Act would conscript the resources of media companies and foist upon them law enforcement responsibilities that the FBI and other national intelligence agencies failed at in 2016. But here's the catch: If media companies fail to detect foreigners disguised with false American identities, they will be punished as lawbreakers. They are drafted to be both law enforcers and criminals in one bill.

Faced with going to prison, Mark Zuckerberg and all the other CEO darlings of social media corporations will understandably work overtime to memory-hole those responsible for even modest criticism of the government.

It doesn't matter if that criticism is based in Russia, the US, or the North Pole. The platforms will be sanitized of all contrary narratives. Nothing less is acceptable if our rulers plan to once again monopolize narratives and steer civic discussion.

Since 9/11, we have witnessed the full contour of an authoritarian state in our midst. In the past, the state and the corporate media—the latter subverted soon after the establishment of the national security state—was remarkably capable of passing off lies and false flags for the purpose of shaping public perception and strengthening belief in official fairy tales.

Now they're in trouble. Huge numbers of people no longer take government propaganda at face value. Less than 20 percent of Americans trust the government. Millions voted for Trump because he promised MAGA. The state lost control of its rigged election farce. It now spends our tax money on social media covert ops run by the Pentagon, as we discovered the other day. The coming battleground is the 2020 election.

I realize this has become an obsession at the expense of other equally important topics. If the state is successful, there may soon no longer be a place for discussion and counter-narratives.

If telling the truth is criminal—for instance, the entire Russia-gate farce was cooked up by an outraged and entitled Hillary Clinton, DNC gangsters, and the CIA with tools such as Fusion GPS—then it is entirely possible many of us will be attacked in COINTELPRO fashion.

Not with big headlines like Alex Jones and a cast of "New Right" others, but subtly behind the scenes, be it by strangling monetary sources or blacklisting individuals from social media participation and possibly the inability to host a website.

Mostly, it will be the fear factor. When the hammer is about to come down, a lot of people change their behavior.

The plan is to whittle the alternative media down to a manageable size and disrupt what is left with COINTELPRO subversion operations.

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