

How the Washington Post Became the US Military-Industrial Complex's Chief Propagandist

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

Global Research, January 08, 2018

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 7 January
2018

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

It used to be that the New York Times and the Washington Post competed against each other to be the chief propagandist for the hundred or so top firms who sell to the US federal government — the 100 top “federal contractors,” almost all of which are Pentagon contractors — mainly these are weapons-manufacturing firms, such as the biggest, Lockheed Martin. The federal government is a large part of these firms’ essential market; so, invasions by the US against other countries require lots of their goods and services; and, also, America’s foreign allies additionally buy these weapons; and, right now, US President Trump is demanding that they increase their ‘defense’ budgets to buy more of them.

Wars produce corporate profits if (like in the United States) the military suppliers are private corporations instead of government-owned (socialized). **Selling wars is crucial to such firms’ bottom lines.** And, since there is no law against owning a ‘defense’ contractor and owning or donating to newsmedia (especially newsmedia such as the *Times* and *Post*, which publish lots of international news and so can encourage lots of invasions), a sensible business strategy for investors in ‘defense’ stocks is to also own or donate to some international-‘news’ media, in order to generate additional business for the arms-maker or other ‘defense’ firm. Not only does this business-plan relate to such newspapers as the *NYT* and *WP*, but they’ll be the focus here, because they are the most important of America’s international-news media.

Serious periodicals, such as *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic*, and *Mother Jones*, have also been steady propagandists for ‘defense’ companies, but magazines don’t reverberate through the rest of the mass-media to the extent that the serious national (NYC & DC) newspapers do. TV and radio pick up on, and transmit, their news (and even CNN and others rely upon them more than these newspapers rely upon the broadcast media); and, in America, a lion’s share of the national political news, and especially of international news, is originated in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. This megaphone-effect forms the public’s opinions about whether we should invade or not. The owners of those two powerful newspapers, via their boards of directors and appointed editorial boards, make the key decisions regarding hiring, firing, promotions, and demotions, which determine news-slants from their employees (both from the reporters and especially from the editors who select what stories to publish and whether on page-one or inside the paper), and this power that these owners have, reverberates immensely (especially in regards to international relations) and thus largely shapes the results in the national polls (sampling the public, who view the world through the newsmedia); and, thus, every US President and every member of Congress becomes heavily impacted by that ‘news’, that ‘world’ the voting public see. And this coloring of the ‘news’ especially concerns international-news reporting, and the opinions

that Americans have of foreign countries — such as of Iran.

Back in 2002, when [the US Government was lying through its teeth about what it knew for certain and didn't know about "Saddam's weapons of mass destruction \(WMD\),"](#) the *New York Times* (NYT) was then the leading neoconservative (i.e., pro-imperialistic, pro-invasion, pro military-industrial-complex or "MIC") propaganda-organ, stenographically transmitting to the public this Government's [provably false allegations](#), and the *Washington Post* (WP) was only #2 in this regard. But that order has now switched, and now the WP is even worse.

The latest MIC-promoted top story-line concerns the protests in Iran — a country the US long controlled via America's agent, the brutal Shah, by and after a 1953 CIA coup there, and which country thus very reasonably loathes and fears the US Government. What caused these protests, and what they mean, are much in the news; and, the news-reporting and editorials and op-eds in the NYT have been significantly more honest and varied than in the WP. Here's a sampling of that:

As of the time of this writing (January 5th), there has not yet been an editorial from the NYT regarding the protests in Iran. (Similarly, many other newspapers, such as Britain's *Guardian*, haven't yet ventured official editorial opinions regarding this matter.) However, one opinion-piece that has been published regarding it, has become an especially prominent target of attack by the more overtly pro-MIC propagandists: the NYT's ["How Can Trump Help Iran's Protesters? Be Quiet."](#) It's by "a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He was an assistant secretary of state and White House coordinator for the Middle East during the Obama administration." That writer closes by saying:

"If Mr. Trump blows up the [Iran nuclear] deal and reimposes sanctions, he will not be doing the opposition a favor but instead giving Iranians a reason to rally to — rather than work against — the government they might otherwise despise. The protests taking place in Iran today are perhaps a sign that, in the long run, the Iranian people want to be accepted as free, responsible members of the international community and that in time they might demand and achieve real change. The best way for Mr. Trump to help test that proposition and increase the chance of its success is to do nothing."

That's a rare example of an anti-MIC (military-sales-suppressing) opinion-piece in a major American 'news' medium.

Less 'controversial' (more clearly mainstream) than that has been another NYT opinion-piece, ["The Worst Thing for Iran's Protesters? US Silence."](#) It's by "a former Iranian-targets officer in the Central Intelligence Agency, ... a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies." The FDD is an Israeli front US think-tank, funded by many MIC-invested billionaires in both countries. The author concludes:

"The Trump administration can do better [than did the Obama Administration]. The president's tweets in support of the protesters were a good start. Washington should also let loose a tsunami of sanctions against the Revolutionary Guards, the linchpin of Iran's dictatorship. Policy-wise, that would be a good place to start. Contrary to received wisdom, the absolute worst thing that the United States can do for the Iranian people is to stay silent and do nothing."

Another *NYT* op-ed is [“Why Iran Is Protesting”](#) and it’s by “an Iranian novelist and journalist.” He concludes that in Iran,

“something has fundamentally changed: The unquestioning support of the rural people they relied on against the discontent of the metropolitan elite is no more. Now everyone seems unhappy.”

That too is mainstream — it implies that the people of Iran have a bad Government, which should be removed.

The closest thing yet to being a *NYT* editorial on the subject of these protests is a column by the *Times’s* Roger Cohen, [“Trump Is Right, This Time, About Iran.”](#) It closes by advising the Administration:

“It should not, whatever happens, impose new sanctions: They only benefit the Revolutionary Guards. And it should learn, finally, that Iran is not, as **Steve Bannon** told **Joshua Green**, ‘like the fifth century — completely primeval’ — but rather a sophisticated society of deep culture full of unrealized promise better served by engagement than estrangement.”

That is a remarkably sympathetic (to the Iranian people) statement, but it nonetheless argues the exact opposite: “Trump Is Right, This Time, About Iran.” Its conclusion is the opposite of its title, but the main part of the article’s text is irrelevant to both the title and the conclusion. People such as this become columnists at top ‘news’ media.

Those are the relevant opinions selected by the owner of the *NYT* for publication. They’re pro-MIC, but not fanatically so.

The *WP* published on January 1st their editorial on the subject, [“The Post’s View: The West should support the protesters in Iran.”](#) It’s like Roger Cohen’s column in the *NYT*. It closes:

“Mr. Trump should avoid acts that would undercut the protests and empower the regime’s hard-liners. Foremost among these would be a renunciation of the 2015 nuclear accord. That would divide the United States from European governments when they should be coordinating their response to the uprising, and it would give the regime an external threat against which to rally. Reform of the nuclear accord can wait. Now is the time for Mr. Trump to focus on supporting the people of Iran.”

Both Roger Cohen and the *WP* favor “supporting the people of Iran” while opposing and hoping for an overthrow of the President who was chosen by those people in the 2017 Iranian Presidential election, which was at least as democratic as was America’s 2016 US Presidential election. The Iranian polls right before the 19 May 2017 Presidential election showed the top three candidates as being [Rouhani 35%, Raisi 18%, and Ghalibaf 2%](#). (20% “Won’t say.”) Ghalibaf and some of the other and even smaller candidates withdrew just days before the election. The final election result was [Rouhani 57.14%, Raisi 38.28%](#). Raisi campaigned on a platform emphasizing that [“Preventing the mixing of men and women in the office environment means that men and women can serve the people better”](#) and advocating [“Islamization of universities, revision of the Internet and censorship of Western culture.”](#) Probably many of the recent protesters had voted for him. Perhaps if Iran becomes

ruled by a “regime” instead of by an at least marginally democratic Government, then they’ll get a President like Raisi, after the US coup — which would be America’s second one in Iran. But, instead, Iranians chose Rouhani — and the U.S Government and its media call it a “regime” and say that the US Government wants to “support the people of Iran” by overthrowing the Government that Iranians voted for and support — support more than Americans support ours. (But whereas America’s CIA stirs protest-groups to overthrow Iran’s leaders, Iran has no equivalent operating in America, to overthrow our aristocracy’s choice of our leader.)

On January 3rd, the *WP* issued an opinion-piece by US V.P. **Mike Pence**, whose views are much closer to Raisi’s than to Rouhani’s. It was titled, [“This time, we will not be silent on Iran.”](#)

Another opinion-piece from the *WP* was the [far-right Israeli Natan Sharansky’s “The West should stop dithering and show its support for the protesters in Iran”](#), which attacked the *Times*’s “How Can Trump Help Iran’s Protesters? Be Quiet.” Sharansky said:

“As an opinion piece in the New York Times recently put it, the best way for the US government to help the Iranian protesters is to ‘Keep quiet and do nothing.’ Fortunately, President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have already shown themselves unwilling to follow this advice.”

Yet another opinion-piece that the *WP*’s editors selected for publication on this topic was [“Europe’s best chance on Iran could soon evaporate.”](#) It criticized the Iran nuclear deal, and urged the Trump Administration to work with the EU “to sculpt a bipartisan policy that can save us from the next crisis, which is quickly coming our way.” This string of clichés ignored the fact that the only two actual available options for the US are to commit to the deal or else to depart from the deal; because Iran won’t leave it unless the US does, but it might leave it if the US does. And then, everything would be worse than it was previously. For the US to leave it while some of its allies don’t, would turn those allies to opposing the US Government and supporting Iran’s Government. And for the US to ‘renegotiate’ it would be impossible. Any European Government that would join with the US in order to attempt to force Iran to renegotiate it, would become embarrassed amongst its EU colleagues, and amongst its public. And yet, still, Iran would promptly resume its prior nuclear program, not renegotiate. To force Iran isn’t going to be so easy as such commentators presume it will. The article didn’t say how anything that it proposed to be achieved, could be achieved. It was simply trash.

Another *WP* opinion-piece was [“The protesters in Iran need real help from Washington”](#) and it was written by a top official of a think tank, WINEP, about which, as one knowledgeable person [has said](#),

“WINEP was to be AIPAC’s cutout. It was funded by AIPAC donors, staffed by AIPAC employees, and located one door away, down the hall, from AIPAC Headquarters (no more. It has its own digs). It would also hire all kinds of people not identified with Israel as a cover.”

None of this information was revealed by *WP* about the piece’s author. It can only be called blatant Israeli propaganda, surreptitiously fed to readers as if it weren’t.

The *WP* columnist **David Ignatius** bannered [“Trump is right to tell Iran the world is watching.”](#) He closed by saying, about the “surprise explosion” of these protests:

“Khamenei will want to crush it. The best gift the United States can give the Iranian people is a digital lifeline, so humanity can witness their brave struggle and encourage them to prevail.”

The US regime already gave the Iranian people its ‘best gift’ in 1953 when it destroyed their democracy and instituted a 26-year-long dictatorship — and, Iranians can see through the US propaganda-media’s hypocrisies, even if the US public have been too deceived by those media, for too long, to be able to see through those lies.

So, the *WP* has become even more neoconservative (i.e, more in favor of invading countries that haven’t invaded us) now than it was back in 2002 when it cheered on George W. Bush’s lies about Iraq, after 9/11. How did this change happen?

In 2013, [Jeff Bezos and Donald Graham met at the Bilderberg conference](#), and [two months later, Bezos agreed](#) to buy the *Washington Post* from Graham. Less than a year after that, Bezos’s Amazon won [the CIA-NSA cloud computing contract](#), vital to the US military. Bezos’s most profitable operation has been that military contract — it is allegedly responsible for changing Amazon from a money-losing to a profit-making corporation. The money-losing *Washington Post* already had been, under Graham and before, a longstanding supporter of US armed invasions, which now require lots of cloud computing (and not only of the types of weaponry that Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, etc., supply). For example: the *WP* was gung-ho for regime-change in Iraq in 2002, as well as, more recently, for bombing Libya, Syria, and the bombing in Ukraine’s civil war after the coup. The main topic at the next year’s, 2014, meeting of the Bilderberg group was the war in Ukraine, but other wars were also on the agenda, such as Syria, and so were President Obama’s ‘trade’ treaties: TPP, TTIP, and TISA. Luminaries present at that year’s secret discussions were **Timothy Geithner, Eric Schmidt, Robert Rubin, Lawrence Summers, Charles Murray**, etc., and Europeans such as **Christine Lagarde** and **Anders Fogh Rasmussen**. Perhaps some sales were made there, too.

Meanwhile, the *NYT* became the most-frequently-cited mis-reporter of such things as “Saddam’s WMD” during the years after the 2003 invasion on the basis of lies; and its publisher, **Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr.**, was forced quietly to fire his close friend and star White House stenographer (oops, ‘reporter’ — and she was even a Pulitzer-winning one!), Judith Miller, on account of the fraud-based Iraq War that she had so prominently and exceptionally helped to promote in her ‘news’-stories. Probably, Sulzberger’s successor, Arthur G. Sulzberger, is happy that when [on 14 December 2017](#) his father handed the corporation’s controls over to him (effective on January 1st), the *NYT*’s position as the nation’s #1 PR-agent for US invasions has now been taken over by Jeff Bezos’s *WP*.

But, of course, Sulzberger’s profits don’t depend nearly as much on America’s MIC as Bezos’s do. The *WP*’s business plan is even more dependent upon war-promotion than the rest of America’s major ‘news’-media’s are. However, if, say, a firm such as General Dynamics were to buy out the Sulzbergers, then perhaps the *NYT* would become #1 in the neoconservative league, once again. But, even when a major ‘news’-medium, such as [Mother Jones](#), isn’t owned (like the *WP* now is) by someone who also largely owns (via Amazon) a major military contractor, it still promotes invasions, and has [deep connections to America’s](#)

[Deep State](#). You can count on the fingers of a fingerless hand the number of major American newsmen — online, print, or broadcast — that are *not* neoconservative. There are none — right, left, or center. Today's 'respectable' American purveyors of alleged news have some ideological diversity, but all exist within the framework of being neoliberal and neoconservative.

*

Eric Zuesse is an American writer and investigative historian.

Featured image is from the author.

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)
Copyright © [Eric Zuesse](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2018

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Eric Zuesse](#)

About the author:

Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of *They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010*, and of *CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity*.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca