

Tell Me Lies: European Satellites Ordered To Drop Iranian Channels In Disregard of Free Speech

By [Danny Schechter](#)

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Back in the 1960's, A British poet, Adrian Mitchell, one of the great bards of that era, wrote a poem that went on to become a stage show in the West End of London. It was called Tell Me Lies about Vietnam and represented one voice among millions in the world then opposing that War

It was addressed, "To Whom It May Concern" and began with words that became its refrain:

*"I was run over by the truth one day
Ever since the accident I've walked this way
So stick my legs in plaster
Tell me lies about Vietnam"*

Years later, before his death, (and I was at the memorial service in London) he kept rewriting the last paragraph into what he called a remix. The poem took on a more global statement

*That verse was a play on a children's song:
"You put your bombers in, you put your conscience out
You take the human being, and you twist it all about "
And then this line:
"Tell me lies about -
Iraq Burma Afghanistan BAE Systems Israel Iran"*

He understood well that Iran was one of the countries his country and others in the West (and their sycophantic media) are telling lies about.

This poem came to mind in the days after the Nobel Prize Committee, for reasons best only known to themselves, decided to sully their Peace Prize by giving it to The European Union, an entity that is very much cheering on the pre-war against Iran with its own draconian sanctions.

These were the same people who, for equally incomprehensible reasons, gave the prize to Barack Obama in the hope it would put him on the path of the peaceful.

It didn't!

A day later, as more thoughtful minds puzzled over the choice of a bloc of nations that has inspired region-wide protests for its brutal austerity programs, the EU took its first act as a peace maker with media censorship.

It blocked Iran's ability to communicate with Europeans, even as any one knows anything about how peace is made knows that two- way communications is essential. All parties to a conflict need to know what the other is thinking, need to know how they view the world.

Despite the fact that western media is available in Iran, and western journalists frequently report, or as many Iranians believe, 'distort' the news from there, the West now wants to seal off more than Iranian oil.

They want to sanction Iranian ideas and keep their own people from hearing and seeing what Iranian TV channels consider important. In short, they just want to hear their own voices. This is the very essence of a propaganda system posing as a commitment to free press,

Iran's PressTV had earlier been kicked off British Television where it had built a audience, on the barest of pretences, and now with the connivance, no doubt of Her Majesty's government, is being barred, along with 18 other Iranian channels, from access to European satellites

Here's the edict:

"European satellite company Eutelsat says it's pulled the plug on several Iranian satellite channels following an order by the European Commission.

Eutelsat told Press TV that it asked media services company- Arqiva, to take Iranian satellite channels off one of its Hot-Bird frequencies on Monday. Arqiva said in a separate statement emailed to Press TV that the decision was made by the E-U Council. The channels include Press TV, Al-Alam, Jaam-e-Jam One and Two, Sahar One and Two, Islamic Republic of Iran News Network, Qur'an TV, and al-Kawthar. European satellite firms had been jamming the Iranian channels for months before the decision was announced. Iran's Arabic-language news channel, Al-Alam, has been jammed on a daily basis while airing a program on Bahrain. Technical experts say the jamming was carried out by British technicians. Observers are saying the jammings and now the ban show the European Union does not respect freedom of speech and is trying to silence the voice of alternative media."

So when jamming is not enough by countries who are the first to yell the loudest when their signals are blocked, they resort to outright suppression by, in effect, using their power over the "switch" to turn it off, and not let their own people see it.

Thinking about this affront to many sided global communications, one is reminded of the war Adrian Mitchell first wrote about. In those days, it was Radio Hanoi that was blocked.

When I was in Vietnam, in 1974, I interviewed a radio broadcaster there who was constantly being denounced for calling on American soldiers to resist the war—perhaps because so many did. She was ridiculed as "Hanoi Hannah."

She, in turn, interviewed me. American spy satellites monitored the broadcast which was about cultural issues. I was later summoned into the American Embassy in what was then Saigon and roundly denounced for talking to the “enemy.”

Years later, it was the American government that was talking to the enemy and suing for peace. The Nobel Peace Prize people then gave their treasured token to US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and Vietnam’s negotiator in chief, Le Duc Tho for their role in the Paris Peace Talk.

Le Duc Tho was outraged at this attempt at “balance” between the victim and the victimizer and turned the award down! He stood by his truths. (I met him too!)

Today the US and Vietnam are uneasy allies and trading partners.

Banning PressTv is an act of war against ideas, a misplaced maneuver that will not resolve any conflicts, will not promote peace or lead to more respect for Western ideas of “free speech and press.”

Quite the contrary, it will foster more polarization and tension and charges of hypocrisy. It is also happening on the eve of new talks between Iran and other nations, no doubt to punish Iran further.

The question is: will journalists in the West join me in denouncing this latest “sanction” against values that the West says it upholds. In its Article 19, the Declaration of Human Rights upholds the right to receive and impart information. This black out may violate other laws and agreements as well.

The is also the week that Ben Affleck’s hostage thriller *Argo* opened in movie theaters accross America. While the movie does criticize the Shah’s brutality, and the overthrow of the nationalist Mosadegh government by the US and Britain, it also glamorizes the role the CIA played in freeing six hostages who fled the US embassy and sought refugee in the Canadian Ambassador’s home.

The movie is about an off the wall plot to make an imaginary science fiction epic in Iran as a pretext for the escape. It’s very entertaining in putting down Hollywood more than imperialism, but, at the same time, reinforces every stereotype about brutal and robotic Iranian revolutionaries that still mobilize support for US intervention today.

The CIA must love it, just as it wants us to dismiss the allegations of CIA spying in Iran in those years. I visited the former US Embassy in Tehran and can confirm it was an espionage center supporting the despotic Shah. The Iranians didn’t hate Americans for who we are, but for what our government did. You won’t find that story in any detail in *Argo*.

Lets’ give the last word to the late Adrian Mitchell whose passion was to wake us all up.

“Where were you at the time of the crime?”

Down by the Cenotaph, drinking slime

So chain my tongue with whisky

Stuff my nose with garlic

Coat my eyes with butter

Fill my ears with silver

Stick my legs in plaster

Tell me lies about Vietnam”

And, then, may we add, *‘Tell Me Lies About Iran and ourselves?’*

*News Dissector **Danny Schechter** blogs at Newsdissector.net. His latest books are *Occupy: Dissecting Occupy Wall Street and Blogothan*. He hosts a show on Progressive Radio Network (PRN.fm), Comments to dissector@mediachannel.org*

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Articles by: [Danny Schechter](#)

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