

Gregg Palast: Cowardice In Journalism Award For Newsweek

Forwarding.

Louise's spam has stopped!

There is also a saecret war going on between the international intelligence services, which might expain this. They are co-operating less, and are holding increasing national priorities.

Just in Canada, the RCMP and CSIS now report directly to PMO (Prime Minister's Office.

Thanks, Louise.

Steve

Louise Mclean <louise@zeusinfoservice.com> wrote:

Subject: Gregg Palast: Cowardice In Journalism Award For Newsweek

Date: Fri, 20 May 2005 23:50:48 +0100

The louise@zeusinfoservice.com email is still working and the spam has mysteriously stopped as soon as I sent out the email informing everyone! This is a really good article on journalism.

Cowardice In Journalism Award For Newsweek

Goebbels Award for Condi

by Greg Palast

05/18/05 "ICH : <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/> " - -

"It's appalling that this story got out there," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on her way back from Iraq.

What's NOT appalling to Condi is that the US is holding prisoners at Guantanamo under conditions termed "torture" by the Red Cross. What's not appalling to Condi is that prisoners of the Afghan war are held in violation of international law after that conflict has supposedly ended. What is NOT appalling to Condi is that prisoner witnesses have reported several instances of the Koran's desecration.

What is appalling to her is that these things were REPORTED. So to Condi goes to the Joseph Goebbels Ministry of Propaganda Iron Cross.

But I don't want to leave out our President. His aides report that George Bush is "angry" about the report -- not the desecration of the Koran, but the REPORTING of it.

And so long as George is angry and Condi appalled, Newsweek knows what to do: swiftly grab its corporate ankles and ask the White House for mercy.

But there was no mercy. Donald Rumsfeld pointed the finger at Newsweek and said, "People lost their lives. People are dead." Maybe Rumsfeld was upset that Newsweek was taking away his job. After all, it's hard to beat Rummy when it comes to making people dead.

And just for the record: Newsweek, unlike Rumsfeld, did not kill anyone -- nor did its report cause killings. Afghans protested when they heard the Koran desecration story (as Christians have protested crucifix desecrations). The Muslim demonstrators were gunned down by the Afghan military police - who operate under Rumsfeld's command.

Our Secretary of Defense, in his darkest Big Brother voice, added a warning for journalists and citizens alike, "People need to be very careful about what they say."

And Newsweek has now promised to be very, very good, and very, very careful not to offend Rumsfeld, appall Condi or anger George.

For their good behavior, I'm giving Newsweek and its owner, the Washington Post, this week's Yellow Streak Award for Craven Cowardice in Journalism.

As always, the competition is fierce, but Newsweek takes the honors by backing down on Mike Isakoff's expose of cruelty, racism and just plain bone-headed incompetence by the US military at the Guantanamo prison camp.

Isakoff cited a reliable source that among the neat little "interrogation" techniques used to break down Muslim prisoners was putting a copy of the Koran into a toilet.

In the old days, Isakoff's discovery would have led to Congressional investigations of the perpetrators of such official offence. The Koran-flushers would have been flushed from the military, panels would have been impeached and Isakoff would have collected his Pulitzer.

No more. Instead of nailing the wrong-doers, the Bush Administration went after the guy who REPORTED the crime, Isakoff.

Was there a problem with the story? Certainly. If you want to split hairs, the inside-government source of the Koran desecration story now says he can't confirm which military report it appeared in. But he saw it in one report and a witnesses has confirmed that the Koran was defiled.

Of course, there's an easy way to get at the truth. RELEASE THE REPORTS NOW. Hand them over, Mr. Rumsfeld, and let's see for ourselves what's in

them.

But Newsweek and the Post are too polite to ask Rumsfeld to make the investigative reports public. Rather, the corporate babysitter for Newsweek, editor Mark Whitaker, said, "Top administration officials have promised to continue looking into the charges and so will we." In other words, we'll take the Bush Administration's word that there is no evidence of Koran-dunking in the draft reports on Guantanamo.

It used to be that the Washington Post permitted journalism in its newsrooms. No more. But, frankly, that's an old story.

Every time I say investigative reporting is dead or barely breathing in the USA, some little smartass will challenge me, "What about Watergate? Huh?" Hey, buddy, the Watergate investigation was 32 years ago -- that means it's been nearly a third of a century since the Washington Post has printed a big investigative scoop.

The Post today would never run the Watergate story: a hidden source versus official denial. Let's face it, Bob Woodward, now managing editor at the Post, has gone from "All the President's Men" to becoming the President's Man -- "Bush at War." Ugh!

And now the Post company is considering further restrictions on the use of confidential sources -- no more "Deep Throats."

Despite its supposed new concern for hidden sources, let's note that Newsweek and the Post have no trouble providing, even in the midst of this story, cover for secret Administration sources that are FAVORABLE to Bush. Editor Whitaker's retraction relies on "Administration officials" whose names he kindly withholds.

In other words, unnamed sources are OK if they defend Bush, unacceptable if they expose the Administration's mendacity or evil.

A lot of my readers don't like the Koran-story reporter Mike Isakoff because of his goofy fixation with Monica Lewinsky and Mr. Clinton's cigar. Have some sympathy for Isakoff: Mike's one darn good reporter, but as an inmate at the Post/Newsweek facilities, his ability to send out serious communications to the rest of the world are limited.

A few years ago, while I was tracking the influence of the power industry on Washington, Isakoff gave me some hard, hot stuff on Bill Clinton -- not the cheap intern-under-the-desk gossip -- but an FBI report for me to publish in The Guardian of Britain.

I asked Isakoff why he didn't put it in Newsweek or in the Post.

He said, when it comes to issues of substance, "No one gives a sh--," not the readers, and especially not the editors who assume that their US target audience is small-minded, ignorant and wants to stay that way.

That doesn't leave a lot of time, money or courage for real reporting. And

woe to those who practice investigative journalism. As with CBS's retraction of Dan Rather's report on Bush's draft-dodging, Newsweek's diving to the mat on Guantanamo acts as a warning to all journalists who step out of line.

Newsweek has now publicly committed to having its reports vetted by Rumsfeld's Defense Department before publication. Why not just print Rumsfeld's press releases and eliminate the middleman, the reporter?

However, not all of us poor scribblers will adhere to this New News Order. In the meantime, however, for my future security and comfort, I'm having myself measured for a custom-made orange suit.

Greg Palast was awarded the 2005 George Orwell Prize for Courage in Journalism at the Sundance Film Festival for his investigative reports produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation. See those reports for BBC, Harper's, The Nation and others at www.GregPalast.com

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