The Nuremberg precedent never face such charges. There are, however, historical parallels and well-appointed boardrooms, the media moguls may believe they will crimes carried out in Iraq and future crimes against other peoples in the This makes the US media an accessory before and after the fact to the White House and Pentagon.

The obvious aim was to misinform and manipulate public opinion, and convince the tens of millions within the US who were opposed to the administration’s war policy that they constituted a small and helpless minority.

Now, as if on cue, the US media has obediently turned its attention to Syria, evidently the next target of the US military. If the focus of the White House and Pentagon should shift to North Korea or Iran, the appropriate items will begin to appear about the dire threat represented by those regimes to the security of the American people.

In the American media there is barely a trace of serious analysis concerning the political and social realities of the Middle East. It long ago abandoned any sense of responsibility for educating and informing the public or carrying out the critical democratic function traditionally assigned to the “Fourth Estate,” i.e., serving as a watchdog and check on government abuses and falsifications. Instead it slavishly carries out the function assigned it by the ruling elite: to confuse, terrorize and intimidate the American public, rendering it less able to resist the reactionary program of the right-wing clique in Washington.

The television networks and leading newspapers are the prime source of news and information for tens of millions in the US. However, these public resources are in the hands of giant firms, controlled by fabulously wealthy individuals who will stop at nothing to defend their profits and property. The corpses of thousands, or, if necessary, millions of Iraqis, Syrians, Iranians and others are a small price to pay, as far as the media billionaires are concerned, for achieving American military and economic domination of the globe.

This makes the US media an accessory before and after the fact to crimes carried out in Iraq and future crimes against other peoples in the region and around the world. Sitting far from the ravaged Iraqi cities, in well-appointed boardrooms, the media moguls may believe they will never face such charges. There are, however, historical parallels and precedents to the contrary.

The Nuremberg precedent never face such charges. There are, however, historical parallels and well-appointed boardrooms, the media moguls may believe they will crimes carried out in Iraq and future crimes against other peoples in the This makes the US media an accessory before and after the fact to the White House and Pentagon.

The obvious aim was to misinform and manipulate public opinion, and convince the tens of millions within the US who were opposed to the administration’s war policy that they constituted a small and helpless minority.

Now, as if on cue, the US media has obediently turned its attention to Syria, evidently the next target of the US military. If the focus of the White House and Pentagon should shift to North Korea or Iran, the appropriate items will begin to appear about the dire threat represented by those regimes to the security of the American people.

In the American media there is barely a trace of serious analysis concerning the political and social realities of the Middle East. It long ago abandoned any sense of responsibility for educating and informing the public or carrying out the critical democratic function traditionally assigned to the “Fourth Estate,” i.e., serving as a watchdog and check on government abuses and falsifications. Instead it slavishly carries out the function assigned it by the ruling elite: to confuse, terrorize and intimidate the American public, rendering it less able to resist the reactionary program of the right-wing clique in Washington.

The television networks and leading newspapers are the prime source of news and information for tens of millions in the US. However, these public resources are in the hands of giant firms, controlled by fabulously wealthy individuals who will stop at nothing to defend their profits and property. The corpses of thousands, or, if necessary, millions of Iraqis, Syrians, Iranians and others are a small price to pay, as far as the media billionaires are concerned, for achieving American military and economic domination of the globe.

This makes the US media an accessory before and after the fact to crimes carried out in Iraq and future crimes against other peoples in the region and around the world. Sitting far from the ravaged Iraqi cities, in well-appointed boardrooms, the media moguls may believe they will never face such charges. There are, however, historical parallels and precedents to the contrary.
invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941: “[Foreign Minister Joachim Fritzsche describes how he received instructions on the eve of the
In regard to the Nazi propaganda surrounding the Yugoslav events, the prosecutor noted the “customary definitions, lies, incitement and threats,
Fritzsche describes how he received instructions on the eve of the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941: “[Foreign Minister Joachim

The prosecution case: propaganda as an instrument of aggression

The prosecution case, argued by Drexl Sprecher, an American, placed considerable stress on the role of media propaganda in enabling the Hitler
regime to prepare and carry out aggressive wars. “The use made by the Nazi conspirators of psychological warfare is well known. Before each
major aggression, with some few exceptions based on expediency, they initiated a press campaign calculated to weaken their victims and to
prepare the German people psychologically for the attack. They used the press, after their earlier conquests, as a means for further influencing
foreign politics and in maneuvering for the following aggression.”

Fritzsche was named head of the German Press Division in 1938 after the “primitive military-like” methods of his predecessor, Alfred Ingemar
Berndt, created “a noticeable crisis in confidence of the German people in the trustworthiness of its press,” in Fritzsche’s words.

The Nuremberg prosecutor detailed the propaganda campaigns taken up by the German media, under Fritzsche’s immediate supervision, in
relation to various acts of foreign aggression, including the incorporation of Bohemia and Moravia (1939) and the invasions of Poland (1939) and
Yugoslavia and the USSR (1941).

The Nazi press propaganda campaign preceding the invasion of Poland involved manufacturing or manipulating complaints of the German
minority in that country. Fritzsche explains: “Concerning this the leading German newspapers, upon the basis of directions given out in the so-called ‘daily parole,’ brought out the following publicity with great emphasis: (1) cruelty and terror against Germans and the extermination of Germans in Poland; (2) forced labor of thousands of German men and women in Poland; (3) Poland, land of servitude and disorder; the desertion of Polish soldiers; the increased inflation in Poland; (4) provocation of frontier clashes upon direction of the Polish Government; the Polish lust to conquer; (5) persecution of Czechs and Ukrainians by Poland.”

While it is outside the scope of this article to expound on this, all three claims have been proven to be lies by the events of the war itself and will be
further exposed by future developments. If many Americans, however, believe these arguments, with all the tragic consequences for the Iraqi and
other peoples, how is that to be accounted for? Clearly, by “the constant and corrosive propaganda” of the US media over the course of months
and even years, dating back to the first Gulf war. The media’s very success in manipulating public opinion is one of the strongest proofs of its
culpability in the commission of war crimes.

It is worth quoting extensively from the Fritzsche prosecutor’s conclusion, for it sheds considerable light on the role of the media in the modern
age, as well as the democratic sensibilities of those pursuing the Nazi war criminals, sensibilities that no longer carry any weight within
US ruling circles.

Fritzsche was not the type of conspirator who signed decrees, or who sat in the inner councils planning the overall grand strategy. The function
of propaganda is, for the most part, apart from the field of such planning.
The function of a propaganda agency is somewhat more analogous to an advertising agency or public relations department, the job of which is to sell the product and to win the market for the enterprise in question. Here the enterprise was the Nazi conspiracy. In a conspiracy which depends upon fraud as a means, the salesmen of the conspiratorial group are quite as essential and culpable as the master planners, even though they may not have contributed substantially to the formulation of all the basic strategy, but rather concentrated on making the execution of this strategy possible. In this case, propaganda was a weapon of tremendous importance to this conspiracy. Furthermore, the leading propagandists were major accomplices in this conspiracy, and Fritzsche was one of them...

“Fritzsche learned a lesson from his predecessor, Berndt, who fell from the leadership of the German Press Division partly because he over-played his hand by blunt and excessive manipulation of the Sudetenland propaganda. Fritzsche stepped into the gap caused by the loss of confidence of both the editors and the German people, and did his job with more skill and subtlety. His shrewdness and ability to be more assuring and ‘to find,’ as Goebbels said, ‘willing ears of the whole nation,’—these things made him the more useful accomplice of the conspirators...

“Fritzsche is not in the dock as a free journalist but as a propagandist who helped substantially to tighten the Nazi stranglehold over the German people, who made the excesses of the conspirators palatable to the German people, who goaded the German nation to fury and crime against people they were told by him were subhuman.

“Without the propaganda apparatus of the Nazi State, the world would not have suffered the catastrophe of these years, and it is because of Fritzsche’s role in behalf of the Nazi conspirators, and their deceitful and barbarous practices, that he is called to account before the International Military Tribunal.”

The tribunal found Fritzsche not guilty on the dubious grounds that he had not had sufficient stature to formulate or originate the propaganda campaigns undertaken by the Nazi regime. It also asserted that the prosecution had not proven that Fritzsche was aware of the extermination of the Jews or had spread news he knew to be false. (Fritzsche was immediately rearrested and charged by German courts with various crimes. He was sentenced to nine years at hard labor, left prison in 1950 and died of cancer three years later.)

The prosecution, in its reply to the “Unfounded Acquittal of Defendant Fritzsche,” returned insistently and pointedly to its arguments. It noted that the verdict failed to take into account that Fritzsche was until 1942 “the Director de facto of the Reich Press and that, according to himself, subsequent to 1942, he became the ‘Commander-in-Chief of the German radio.’”

The prosecution went on: “For the correct definition of the role of defendant Hans Fritzsche it is necessary, firstly, to keep clearly in mind the importance attached by Hitler and his closest associates (as Goering, for example) to propaganda in general and to radio propaganda in particular. This was considered one of the most important and essential factors in the success of conducting an aggressive war.”

In Hitler’s Germany, the reply to the verdict continues, “propaganda was invariably a factor in preparing and conducting acts of aggression and in training the German populace to accept obediently the criminal enterprises of German fascism....

“The basic method of the Nazi propagandistic activity lay in the false presentation of facts. ... The dissemination of provocative lies and the systematic deception of public opinion were as necessary to the Hitlerites for the realization of their plans as were the production of armaments and the drafting of military plans. Without propaganda, founded on the total eclipse of the freedom of press and of speech, it would not have been possible for German Fascism to realize its aggressive intentions, to lay the groundwork and then to put to practice the war crimes and the crimes against humanity. In the propaganda system of the Hitler State it was the daily press and the radio that were the most important weapons.”

There is little to be added to this condemnation. While all historical analogies have their limits, the indictment of the German media chief for war crimes speaks with great force to the role of the US media barons in contemporary world affairs.