

The Wuhan lab lie and US war propaganda

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On Saturday, the *Washington Post* published an editorial promoting the conspiracy theory that COVID-19 was released from the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

But the *Post*'s latest editorial, entitled "There's new light—and lingering questions—in the mystery of Wuhan," goes a step further than its previous statements, in that it has completely detached its litany of unfounded accusations from any examination of the origins of COVID-19 as a scientific question.

In previous editorials, the *Post*'s editorial board felt compelled to at least address the fact that the overwhelming scientific consensus rejects the "lab leak" conspiracy theory. But the *Post*'s task of swimming against the current of scientific consensus has become more difficult as the weight of scientific evidence has accumulated in favor of natural origins.

In the past month, scientists have discovered the direct means by which animals transferred Sars-CoV-2 to humans through zoonosis, the process that gave rise to every other human pandemic in history. The most recent study, by Dr. Florence Débarre, an evolutionary biologist at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, revealed that samples containing Sars-CoV-2 from the Wuhan wet market also contained the DNA of susceptible animals, such as raccoon dogs.

The *Post* editorial deals with the growing body of scientific evidence refuting its claims by simply ignoring it.

The editorial was vocally condemned by scientists. "One thing is clear: if indeed 'there's new light' on this topic it's not coming from the WashPost," wrote vaccinologist Peter Hotez. "All reckless speculation that ignores the preponderance of scientific evidence published in major journals."

Hotez continued,

Was there a single link to a scientific paper supporting this Ed Board statement? I couldn't find one. And you know why? Because there are none.

This is the 3rd or 4th time Wash Post has done this on this particular issue. So it's not a rookie mistake or accident. There's an agenda here. It's starting to border on old school Hearst-Pulitzer yellow or tabloid journalism and it's starting to smell...

This is a reference to the role played by William Randolph Hearst, owner of the *New York Journal*, who systematically agitated for US entry into the Spanish-American War of 1898 by means of demagogic and sensationalist reporting.

Hearst's role was exemplified by his alleged telegram to artist Frederic Remington, stating: "You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." A week after the United States declared war on Spain, Hearst ran "How do you like the Journal's war?" on the front page.

Like Hearst's propaganda, the effort to blame China for the COVID-19 pandemic is a media-orchestrated hate campaign, designed to promote anti-Chinese xenophobia, with the aim of justifying war.

As Hotez states correctly, this is not a mistake, but a deliberate policy. But the *Washington Post* is not merely speaking for itself or its owner, billionaire Jeff Bezos. It is speaking for the American state.

In February, Christopher Wray, the director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, publicly asserted that "the origins of the pandemic are most likely a potential lab incident in Wuhan."

Wray made this statement as the United States was deliberately seeking to instigate a conflict with China over Taiwan. In the past three months, the US has moved to quadruple the number of US troops stationed on Taiwan, end the "One-China policy," and directly arm Taiwan in an effort to goad China into invading the island, which the US would use to paint China as having fired the "first shot" in a Sino-American war.

Wray's accusation is, in fact, a deliberate lie, in keeping with the lies by the Bush administration to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

The *Post*'s renewed promotion of the Wuhan Lab lie comes against the backdrop of the open embrace by the entire US and Western media of the principle that the government has the right to lie to the public.

Earlier this month, a series of leaked documents revealed that the US government has been systematically misleading the American public about US involvement in the Ukraine war. The documents have shown that over 150 NATO troops are deployed to Ukraine, and that NATO sees the operations of the Ukrainian armed forces as essentially interoperable with its own.

In response, the *New York Times* publicly identified about the “leaks” and “state secrets,” the media is simply defending the principle that the population should not know what is happening.

At the same time, the media is seeking to spin its own reporting on the leaks to justify a further escalation of the war. In an article on the leaks published Saturday, the *New York Times* wrote that “some in Ukraine welcomed the disclosures as confirming what they have been saying for months — that its forces desperately need more weapons and munitions.”

But perhaps the most egregious defense of government lies came from the British *Guardian* newspaper, which declared in an editorial that true information exposing government lies “puts lives at risk” and “should never have been seen.”

This brings us back to the Wuhan lab lie. If the lining up of the media against the leak of true information about the war in Ukraine is aimed at bolstering the conflict with Russia, the Wuhan Lab lie is aimed at promoting a war with China.

In a particularly serious case, or at a particularly serious time, such as during a war, a leak can help an enemy, dismay allies, weaken morale and, at least potentially, change the military balance and put lives at risk.

In this, it is fundamentally no different than Biden’s lie that “I will not send American servicemen to fight in Ukraine,” or the White House’s lie that “NATO is not involved” in the Ukraine war.

The declaration by the *Guardian*, which worked with Edward Snowden in 2013 to reveal the massive warrantless domestic spying program created by the Bush administration under the cover of the “war on terror,” that the revelation of true information would “weaken morale” testifies to the degree to which the media has simply become an appendage of the state.

Ultimately, however, the efforts by the US government and media to systematically lie to the public founder on the internet and social media, on which true statements, information, and documents that contradict the government’s propaganda narrative remain accessible.

The qualification that it should be impermissible to publish true information “during a war” is meaningless, because the United States has been perpetually at war for decades. Indeed, the United States was at war when the *Guardian* reported Snowden’s revelations. By this logic, the *Guardian*’s revelations in 2013 “should never have been seen” because they, too, would have weakened “morale.”

This reality explains the systematic efforts by the US government and major media outlets to censor the internet and persecute those who expose US war crimes. Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange has been imprisoned for four years and faces extradition and prosecution in the US under the Espionage Act. And left-wing opponents of war have been subject to a relentless censorship campaign.

The *Guardian* concludes the editorial by stating:

There is a well-known saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests, attempts would be made to refute them. Now, the interests of the state in provoking a war with China require the promotion of the Wuhan lab conspiracy theory in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus to the contrary.

The most important aspect from a European perspective are the doubts documented over Ukraine’s ability to defend itself against Russian air power. That information should never have been seen in public in this way. It could suggest that Ukraine’s low stocks of arms mean its expected spring offensive will be difficult to carry through, leaving Kyiv highly vulnerable to Russian counterattacks. This may mean a less decisive offensive and, instead, a protracted lower intensity conflict. If that is the result, then these leaks have altered the course of history too.

The war drive by the US ruling class is the means by which all of social life is being subordinated to the state, and increasingly dictatorial principles are being proclaimed by the US media. Where the interests of the ruling class and science conflict, the US media has made clear that scientific truth must be sacrificed on the altar of war.

In other words, by showing the nonexistent prospect of a military solution to the war, the leaks will “weaken morale” by encouraging the public to support a peaceful solution of the war.

This is nothing but the glorification of the lie. Behind all the



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