

Pre-amble:

No institution or corporation should be an arbiter of truth or disinformation. ACMA absolutely should not have these powers to compel corporations to supposedly combat misinformation on their own sites, because these powers will inevitably be used to silence dissent.

And you should all really think about the reason why ACMA was given advice to target digital platforms, when media giants like News Corp, Nine, Seven, Ten and others constantly spew the most useless corporate and elite propaganda and rubbish EVERY SINGLE DAY, designed to nullify the masses into submission to the elites. Did you ever see News Corp having to pay any amount of its revenue, for not enforcing rules against disinformation in its own papers? Could you even imagine such a thing? Even ABC Media Watch in all its blandness treats ACMA like a toothless tiger. Admit it, you hate digital platforms because you cannot control them how you want yet.

Digital platforms are the few ways we can reach mass audiences without corporate giants deciding what can or cannot be disseminated. We should not impede this ability further, and I strongly disagree with this Bill and implore you not to pass it.

Introduction:

I watch anti-war dissidents, many of whom have been under crackdown by Western state governments, their deep states and their networks. And for some reason didn't think that this kind of state-assisted censorship would be consolidating itself in that way here in Australia yet – that was my bad.

If I had 6 months to write a submission, I'd come up with my own fresh one, but since I don't, I'm going to liberally cite journalist and former lawyer Glenn Greenwald. I will include two of his articles on this matter, and begin with a subheading quote of another.

Glenn Greenwald:

The Neoliberal War on Dissent in the West

Those who most flamboyantly proclaim that they are fighting fascists continue to embrace and wield the defining weapons of despotism.

<https://greenwald.locals.com/post/2983422/the-neoliberal-war-on-dissent-in-the-west>

Covid Origins: After Years of Crushing Dissent, Government Backtracks on Lab Leak Hypothesis

A blockbuster story from Sunday's Wall Street Journal reveals that at least two major agencies inside the U.S. government – the Department of Energy and the FBI – now believe that COVID originated not because it leaped from an animal to humans at a Chinese wet market - that theory, the U.S. government and its media leaps allies, from the start of the pandemic, insisted was indisputably and inarguably true. Instead, they believe the COVID

pandemic was the result of a leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a theory that was deemed by the U.S. government and Dr. Anthony Fauci to be not only false but such a ransom and deranged conspiracy theory that no debate should even be permitted over this question on the Internet.

For more than a full year, the U.S. government succeeded in having banned from social media anyone who challenged their always dubious claim that they had immediately determined with absolute proof the genesis of the COVID virus. Only for the truth, the real truth, to now emerge from inside the U.S. government that this question, far from being the settled matter they claimed it was back in February 2020, is nowhere near resolved, and more importantly, that the lab leak theory, which was maligned and mocked by all the employees of the corporate media as an idiotic belief that only deranged conspiracy theories theorists would believe is, at least according to two key government agencies, the more likely explanation for how COVID consumed the world.

We believe these revelations are so important not only for the question of Covid's origins, a truly monumental question for history but even more so for how the U.S. government bans debate by demanding that any dissent from its core orthodoxies and its claims be dangerous and impermissible. So, we'll spend the full hour of our show examining all of these implications. This is a particular urgency now that Brazil and other countries, as we reported over the weekend, are attempting to implement laws to empower the government to decree truth and falsity – much like our own Homeland Security Department tried to do last year with its disinformation czar – but also to order that all false ideas be banished from the Internet and have its authors punished either with fines or even imprisonment. There are laws now pending in many countries that provide that, and Brazil is poised, with the encouragement of the EU and the U.S., that also want similar laws to be implemented. If these new revelations that we're about to show you don't demonstrate the grave danger of the West's growing censorship regime, I believe that nothing will.

For now, welcome to a new episode of System Update, starting right now.

Monologue

The classic tactic used by governments to secure authoritarian rule is by promising citizens that they will enjoy extreme safety or even various forms of Nirvana if they simply acquiesce to government demands to wield what were once unthinkable powers. It is for that reason that security threats, whether real or perceived, are in the legal framework for ushering in tyrannical frameworks when a population is at its most heightened state of fear – such as Americans after Pearl Harbor or the 9/11 attack – that is when they are most ripe to be persuaded to give up more and more liberty in exchange for often illusory guarantees of security.

As we reported just this weekend in my new article on our Locals platform, that is exactly what is happening in Brazil right now. And I really urge you to pay attention and care about this – even if Brazil, understandably, does not appear in your top 20 concerns – because this new law, by design, is likely to result in a new and very draconian series of state powers

that will threaten core free speech rights and the viability of our free and open Internet, not only in that South American country but throughout the democratic world [...]

As a result of those reactions, Lula's key allies in Brazil are very close to assembling a congressional majority to enshrine this judicial censorship regime into a congressionally enacted legal framework. Though the detailed provisions of the law have not yet been unveiled, its core powers have been disclosed. Namely, any citizen, including journalists who write or publish content containing ideas that the government and courts consider false, that they deem false or subject not only to have their writings barred and removed and deleted by force of law, but those citizens who wrote that false ideas will face punishment, including fines under certain circumstances and even imprisonment. It is, in other words, yet another return to the dark times of the pre-Enlightenment era, before the 17th century, when many of the world's greatest and most innovative thinkers – Socrates, Copernicus, Galileo, Voltaire, Descartes, and so many others – were constantly persecuted, forced to write in virtual code to conceal their attacks on establishment pieties and often imprisoned, all because of the claim that they defended ideas that were deemed false.

And while all of those cases happened to different countries over the centuries, they must contain important differences, there is one fundamental thread that connects them. Society was ruled by a centralized institution of authority – a monarch, a church, clerics, an emperor – which had convinced itself that it was no longer plagued by the human condition of fallibility, that instead, it had managed to acquire and embrace absolute truth. Absolute truths, by their very nature, are permanent and universal. They are also, above all else, unchallengeable. Once an institution of power decrees that it has discovered the kind of truth which only deities are capable of acquiring, it becomes almost rational – and certainly inevitable – that they would use the force of law to prohibit debates about those beliefs. After all, what is the point of entertaining debates and allowing dissent and questioning? They include a truth that is definitively and universally proven, that had the qualities of being, despite divinely inspired and endorsed, the belief of such institutions as that debates and dissent over their views that have been decreed true are not merely futile. Why bother discussing whether two plus two equals four? But such debates are outright dangerous and subversive. These absolute truths these authorities have acquired and bestowed on the world have gifted humans with stability and harmony and the comfort of knowing that falsity has been banished. As a result, anyone wishing to question such treasures is obviously either malicious or destructive or both. And so, there is no reason to allow such debates and no reason to permit those who attempt to disturb the comfort of absolute truths to remain free, at liberty to continue their threatening work that has the potential to incite mass discontent and even instability and violence.

Once one adopts that classically tyrannical mentality, based more than anything on overwhelming hubris - the belief that a human being and their views are so self-evidently correct that nobody and nothing should be permitted to question them - then it is only a matter of time before all meaningful debates on the most important matters of the day become prohibited, simply by decreeing any deviations to be false or dangerous, or likely to usher instability and dangerous attacks on the ruling class. Such utter repression is the clear, continuous, and seemingly inevitable outcome of every era in every country in which

a regime is able to seize the power to decree truth and falsity and then use the power of the law to ban what is deemed by them to be false.

First, in my Substack space and now here on this show, we have spent the last couple of years warning with increasing fervor of the dangers of this rapidly escalating censorship regime in the West, one that it is quickly migrating from the most despotic regimes of the world – where laws have been in place for years that allow the government to decree what is and is not fake news and disinformation and then ban any dissent from it and punish those who do dissent – places like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Singapore and Turkey – all have the kinds of anti-fake news and anti-disinformation law that Brazil is poised to implement – it's now migrating into the democratic world, including most of the West and now the United States, which is why they are cheering on Brazil's law and studying it and feeding them in the capitals of Europe because they intend to use that model that Brazil is about to implement as a model to impose in the United States and in the rest of Europe.

This weekend, we were able to report that story and now the same weekend we are presented with one of the most vivid and potent examples yet of how readily such laws will inevitably be abused and of the grave dangers of allowing the government to proclaim the power to determine truth and falsity and for allowing these laws to continue to take hold.

As you certainly remember, ever since the pandemic began, with remarkable speed but basically at the same time that we heard of what was called a novel coronavirus –novel, because it was unlike science, anything scientists had seen, it was of great complexity. They were going to need a great deal of time and have a great deal of difficulty, we were told, analyzing what this virus was, how to treat it. And nonetheless, somehow, within the very first week or two, Dr. Fauci created a universal consensus of scientists who had announced to the world that there was no debate possible about one component of this novel coronavirus, its origin. They were absolutely certain and made everyone who was able to hear have it known that the way in which the coronavirus was created and ended up infecting humans was that it made a species leap from animals to humans, whether at a wet market in China or in some other way. That was the truth. They had discovered it and proven it with remarkable speed and absolute definitiveness to the point where nobody rational could even question that claim, developed in a heartbeat.

And yet we learn, this week, from the Wall Street Journal, now almost three years into the pandemic, something quite remarkable. There you see the Wall Street Journal article and its headline on the screen, the title of which is [“Lab Leak Most Likely Origin of COVID-19 Pandemic, Energy Department Now Says. The U.S. agency's revised assessment is based on new intelligence.”](#)

To be clear, the U.S. Department of Energy is not merely saying that we should remain open to the possibility that the way the coronavirus entered humanity was through a leak at the Wuhan lab. They're saying that their assessment is that that is the more likely explanation for how it happened and not zoonotic, not actually from animals to humans. They're not saying they know for certain. There's a humility that they have that Dr. Fauci lacked in the first week of the pandemic. But they're saying it's possible that there's another explanation,

but that the most likely one is one that we were told for two years only lunatics believed, and that was so blatantly unhinged that it shouldn't even be allowed to be heard on the Internet. And it wasn't allowed on the Internet. That's how oppressive the debate was as a result of what Dr. Fauci did in the very first week or two of the pandemic, with the very vigorous assistance of the corporate media.

The Wall Street Journal article reports,

The U.S. Energy Department has concluded that the COVID pandemic most likely arose from a laboratory leak, according to a classified intelligence report recently provided to the White House and key members of Congress. A new report highlights how different parts of the intelligence community have arrived at disparate judgments about the pandemic's origin. The Energy Department now joins the FBI in saying the virus likely spread via a mishap at a Chinese laboratory. Four other agencies, along with a national intelligence panel still judge that it was likely the result of a natural transmission and two are undecided.

U.S. officials declined to give details on the fresh intelligence and analysis that led the Energy Department to change its position. They added that while the Energy Department and the FBI each say an unintended lab leak is most likely, they arrived at those conclusions for different reasons. A senior U.S. intelligence official confirmed that the intelligence community had conducted the update, whose existence hasn't previously been reported. This official added that it was done in light of new intelligence, further study of academic literature and consultation with experts outside the government (The Wall Street Journal, Feb. 26, 2023).

Note here that we cannot conclude, at least from this, that the U.S. government has discovered the actual origin. All of this would lead a rational person to conclude that that is still very much debatable. No rational person would want to prevent a debate on this question from being conducted on the Internet or anywhere else, based on the argument that the answer has already been definitively ascertained. Everybody should want this debate to continue. We should want to know the answer – and clearly we don't, because experts who are tasked with studying the relevant data are reaching different conclusions.

So, the point here is not that when the U.S. government opines on something we all uncritically nod our heads and start repeating it – that's what the media does and that's what the media did as we're about to show you. That's what idiots and propagandists do. What rational people do is before they believe that a definitive answer to one of the world's most important and pressing historical questions has been discovered, they want to see proof that it's true and that was never provided – even though our major institutions, starting with the U.S. government, followed by the corporate media and then ultimately by Big Tech, all did just mindlessly nod their head soon as Dr. Fauci announced, very early in

the pandemic, that he not only knew the answer but knew it with such certainty that no dissent should be allowed.

Just to remind you of how repressive the climate was as a result of that judgment that he issued, let's look at the fact that – here is a [Politico article](#) from May 26, 2021, so, well, more than a year into the pandemic, at least a year in three or four months – the headline of which reveals, “Facebook no longer treating, ‘man-made’ COVID as a crackpot idea. Facebook's policy tweak arrives as support surges in Washington for a fuller investigation into the origins of COVID-19.”

Facebook announced in February it had expanded the list that had expanded the list of misleading health claims that it would remove from its platforms to include those asserting that “COVID-19 is a man-made or manufactured”. The tech giant has updated its policy against false and misleading coronavirus information, including its running list of debunked claims, over the course of the pandemic in consultation with global health officials. “In light of ongoing investigations into the origin of COVID-19 and in consultation with public health experts, we will no longer remove the claim that COVID-19 “is man-made” from our apps”, the spokesperson said in an emailed statement. “We're continuing to work with health experts to keep pace with the evolving nature of the pandemic and regularly update our policies as new facts and trends emerge” (Politico. May 26, 2021).

Because there's so many corporate T's in this article, let's just stop for a second. Let's just pause and reflect on what actually happened here, as this article reflects. From the start of the pandemic, Facebook created a list of ideas, views, arguments, of beliefs that it had declared banned and off-limits. Just like every pre-enlightenment institution of authority had a list of banned ideas that they would not tolerate anyone airing as well. That was the model Facebook had adopted. You have this novel coronavirus pandemic. It's causing the shutdown of all of society. Massive infringement on our civil liberties. One of the most important things that will happen in our lifetime. And instead of encouraging debate about the various components of what happened, the exact opposite was true. The monopoly power of Big Tech was weaponized by the U.S. government to say, “These are a list of arguments we will not allow you to express” and they perfectly aligned with all of the beliefs that Dr. Fauci and the U.S. government had described as false. So once the U.S. government describes a claim as false, you become banned – at least on the biggest technology platforms where we all communicate – from questioning, deviating from, or challenging what the government has claimed is true and what has told you to believe.

And one of the claims that Facebook had banned from the very start was the argument that the evidence seemed more convincing that COVID was a virus that leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where, by a huge coincidence, exactly the kind of research on coronaviruses was being done, including making them more dangerous for humans, so-called “gain of function research”. And it just so happened that Wuhan was the exact place where this virus was first discovered and from which it spread to the rest of the world. Nonetheless, despite that amazing and massive and extremely improbable coincidence, we

were all banned upon threat of being permanently banished from the Internet, from expressing the view that perhaps this option should still be considered as a possible viable theory. And the only reason we were banned from that was because the U.S. government and Dr. Fauci instructed Big Tech that should not be allowed because he was very eager, from the start of the pandemic, for reasons we're about to discover, to ensure that the lab leak was immediately placed off limit as something only people who are barely sane would even consider saying.

It was only once the Biden administration itself, a year and a half into the pandemic, finally acknowledged what was clear all along, that, in fact, there was no definitive ever evidence ever in the possession of the U.S. government that proved one way or the other what the origins of the COVID pandemic was – only once the U.S. government admitted that a legitimate debate should be had, only then did Facebook permit you to go on to its platform and say, “You know what? I actually think that what's more likely is that this leak from the Wuhan lab and did not, in fact, jump from another species to human beings.”

Do you see what the Internet has turned into? The Internet, whose promise in the 1990s was it would be the most revolutionary and potent instrument of liberation and individual empowerment to allow all human beings to exchange ideas intellectually without mediation, much less the regulation of corporate and state power. Instead, it has become a tool for allowing information to be disseminated to the extent – and only to the extent – it aligns with what the U.S. government wants people to believe. And any information that meaningfully challenges the U.S. government gets banned. And that was why Facebook decided it would allow this idea to be heard, only once, even the Biden administration gave them the green light by saying, You know what? We don't actually know where the COVID virus came from and we actually are going to investigate.

What happened to all of the definitive, mathematically certain proof that Dr. Fauci and his associates claim they had going all the way back to that notorious Lancet letter right at the beginning of February that told the world that we should not tolerate deranged and hateful conspiracy theorists who want to suggest that this might have leaked from a lab in China. Where did all that evidence go? You know what the answer is. It was never there, to begin with in the first place. And that's because the U.S. government, like virtually every institution of authority and power in history, abused its power and trust to decree what is true and false, to place off limits as false a theory not that they thought was false, but that they perceived as contrary to their own interests.

And that is why it's madness to watch people in Brazil and the rest of the Western world be willing to give their governments the power to do exactly this, that from now on it will be the government, or other institutions of authority, that decree truth and falsity and not human debate and human reason. Remember, that was the whole point of the Enlightenment. For a thousand years, this is how human beings lived. This. This way. You had institutions of authority and they issued decrees, literal decrees and said, “these are truths and these are falsehoods”. And anyone who expressed an idea in the falsehood category – just like Facebook maintains falsehood categories – was not just mocked but punished. Such as Copernicus said, you know what, I don't actually agree that the universe revolves around the Earth, I think the Earth actually revolves around the sun. And then

Galileo joined in that, and they were both persecuted, as were the list of people that I named earlier, like Socrates and like Voltaire and Rousseau and René Descartes, and so many people who ended up being incredibly prescient and contributing so much to our understanding as human beings of intellectual truth. And yet, because the government had proclaimed those ideas false and off limits, they were punished because no one wanted those ideas to be heard. The idea that we're now going to replicate this system of pre-Enlightenment, blind faith in an institution as a power, is remarkable – and these revelations demonstrate why that is.

It wasn't just the government. Remember that, as I said, journalists were some of the worst culprits. Here is the lead New York Times reporter on COVID – she replaced the long-time and very well-regarded COVID reporter Don McNeil, who was fired because he apparently said things on a trip to Peru, which The New York Times sponsored very wealthy families to allow their teenagers to go on. When they asked him about controversial issues, he responded in a way that offended them and The New York Times fired their lead COVID Reporter right at their top peak of the pandemic and replaced him with this person, Apoorva Mandavilli. On the question of whether or not COVID came from a leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, this is [what she said in May of 2021](#), “Someday we will stop talking about the lab leak theory and maybe even admit its racist roots. But alas, that day is not here yet”. The lead reporter of the New York Times said not only should we not talk about the possibility of the lab leak theory because it's false, as the government told us, but it's also racist for you to even consider.

This is a very common view among the left, internationally and here in the United States, that you will hear today, even in response to this Wall Street Journal story, that somehow it's racist to consider the possibility that a leak from a lab in China – I've never understood that claim. If anything's racist and playing on long-standing anti-Chinese tropes, it's the view that Dr. Fauci promulgated – that the left and the media mindlessly adopted – that the reason this virus emerged was because of the filthy, primitive and unsanitary habits of the Chinese at their wet markets. That seems a lot more racist to me than the idea that there was an accidental leak of a very sophisticated lab on which both Chinese and American scientists work that caused the COVID release.

But at the end of the day, who cares what theory is racist and what is – the only thing that matters, especially if you're the lead New York Times reporter on COVID is what is actually true, what actually happened. But she made clear here – in a remarkable way –that she has no interest in that question of what actually happened. Her only interest was in further stigmatizing and banning debate by calling everyone questioning these things racists.

This idea that the COVID virus unquestionably came from the zoonotic Genesis, rather than a lab leak did not appear out of anywhere. It's really important to go back and look at the ways in which that consensus didn't just emerge but was engineered by Dr. Fauci and several others because there was a corruption embedded within it that has never generated the kind of accountability it deserves.

So, the very first article that was ever really published that widely influenced this question was this [article in Lancet](#), in early March of 2020, so just at the very start of the pandemic, as the virus was starting to enter the consciousness of the United States. The date is March 7, 2020, but the date of the letter itself was February 19, 2020 – so very early in the pandemic, and the title of it was “Statement in support of the scientists, public health professionals and medical professionals of China combating COVID-19”. So, you'll notice it was framed as not a scientific argument, but an argument that would play on liberal sensibilities by saying “We as scientists are here to defend our colleagues in China from the defamation and attacks that they're enduring over the possibility that they might have been the ones that inadvertently caused this virus to leak”. And the statement read,

The rapid, open and transparent sharing of data on this outbreak is now being threatened by rumors and misinformation about its origins. We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin. Scientists from multiple countries have published and analyzed genomes of the causative agent, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2, (SARS- CoV-2), and they overwhelmingly conclude that this coronavirus originated in wildlife, as have so many other emerging pathogens. Conspiracy theories do nothing but create fear, rumors and prejudice that jeopardize our global cooperation in the fight against this virus. We support the call from the director general of WHO to promote scientific evidence and unity over misinformation and conjecture (The Wall Street Journal. Feb. 19, 2020).

Note here that this letter presented no scientific evidence of any kind. It did two things: it asserted that the coronavirus emerged from natural life, from a non-human species, and then, it accused anyone who doubted that or who questioned it being a racist conspiracy theory. And that is what set the tone from the very beginning that nobody could question the official explanation presented without scientific evidence that the construct that the coronavirus came from an animal species, not that lab in Wuhan.

Behind the scenes, as we're about to show you, there was a lot of concern about this Lancet letter, including the fact that it was organized by a scientist, Peter Daszak, who had all sorts of conflicts of interest in debunking the claim that it came from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, in particular, the undisclosed fact that he himself and his company had received funding from Dr. Fauci and provided some of that funding to do some of this work with the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It is shameful that Lancet published such an influential article on such an important matter without disclosing that the main scientist who organized the entire letter had a direct financial and reputational interest in maligning and denigrating the explanation for its origins that that letter so successfully set out to do.

And that was why another letter signed by different scientists was organized roughly a month later, on March 17, 2020, in Nature magazine, and it made claims slightly more subtle, but that was designed to achieve the same thing, to convince people that the answer was already known. It says,

Here we review what can be deduced about the origin of SARS-CoV-2 from a comparative analysis of genomic data. We offer a perspective on the notable features of the SARS-CoV-2 genome and discuss scenarios by which they could have arisen. Our analysis clearly shows that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposely manipulated virus (Nature Medicine. March 17, 2020).

So, it doesn't get much more definitive than that. They are absolutely emphatic that the coronavirus, like the Lancet letter suggested, was not a laboratory construct or a purposely manipulated virus, They say, "Our analysis clearly shows that."

What you didn't see during this time and what you didn't see until many months later was that many of the scientists, including those who ended up signing these letters behind the scenes, were telling Dr. Fauci and other leading officials in the health field, including those who control, like Dr. Fauci, most of the research budget, that a [very, very different view about what they thought the origin of this virus was](#).

Here, for example, is an email from Kristian Anderson, on January 31, and this person became a signer of the Nature paper and you can see here, it's an email to Dr. Fauci. So, it's about three weeks before the Lancet letter, about six weeks before the Nature letter, and in this email, Dr. Anderson says the following:

The unusual features of the virus make up a really small part of the genome, less than 0.1%. So, one has to look really closely at all the sequences to see that some of the features (potentially) look engineered.

Anderson goes on to say that after that discussion, he and other prominent virologists, "found the genome inconsistent with expectations from evolutionary theory".

So that was at least one letter Fauci got right around the same time from exactly one of the people who signed the Nature letter saying, "My analysis shows that this seems to be engineered and inconsistent with the explanation that came from Nature". He then refers to this discussion that he had with other scientists.

Here's another email. A lot of this was FOIA, and this is from Jeremy Farrar. and it's dated February 1, so right around the same time, and the relevant passage says the following:

I really can't think of a plausible natural scenario where you get from the bat virus or one very similar to nCoV where you insert exactly four amino acids, 12 nucleotides that all have

to be added at the exact same time to gain this function – that and you don't change any other amino acid in S2? I just can't figure out how this gets accomplished in nature (Dr. Robert Garry, Notes from Feb. 1 Conference Call. Source: House Oversight Committee).

So, another scientist, right at the same time, very emphatically asserting that this was something that seemed very implausible. This is from Robert Garry and the House Oversight Committee ultimately obtained it.

So, you can see that already he felt he knows that there's, at the very least, a very active and vibrant debate on this question, far from this conclusive knowledge that three weeks later got asserted in that Lancet letter by people who had an interest in doing so, and in fact some of these people were being extremely emphatic about the fact that it seemed extremely unlikely, in fact, almost impossible, to understand how it could have come from this specie jumping.

Here is another email from Dr. Jeremy Farr, on February 1. Farrar says, “Being very careful in the morning wording. “Engineered”, probably not. Remains very real possibility of accidental lab passage in animals to give glycans. Eddie”, referring to virologist Eddie Holmes, of Nature, “would be at 60:40 lab side. I remain 50:50.”

So again, what is at least emerging from all of these messages to Dr. Fauci from the most respected virologists in the world is that either the evidence is pointing to a lab leak or there's a very interesting, complex and difficult-to-resolve debate about where it came from. So, the last thing you would think you would do is to say: we know for certain where it came from, it came from a zoonotic source, and only deranged conspiracy theories would even consider that it came from a lab leak – when you have all of the most prestigious virologists in the world, or many of them, telling Fauci they believe that's actually where it came from.

Peter Daszak, who was, as I said, the organizer of that Lancet letter and one of the signatories on it, who had that very significant conflict of interest that was undisclosed, wrote an email to the fellow people with whom he was organizing this letter, and he said

I have not seen the final version yet, but the draft version that we and an expert group that met last week added it has the following sentence, “The initial views of the experts is that the available genomic data are consistent with natural evolution and that there is currently no evidence that the virus was engineered to spread more quickly among humans”. I think this is a bit too specific because there are other conspiracy theories out there. Our current statement neatly refutes most of them by saying that “We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that 2019-nCoV does not have a natural origin. Scientific evidence overwhelmingly suggests that this virus originated in wildlife, as have so many other emerging diseases. Let me know if you would want to change specific wording using track changes above... Please note that this statement will not have the EcoHealth Alliance logo on it [That's the company of his that received the

funding from biology and then gave it to the Wuhan Institute of Virology] and will not be identifiable as coming from any one organization or person, the idea is to have this as a community supporting our colleagues” (Peter Daszak in email to Lancet letter signatories. Feb. 6, 2020).

Whether that was intentional or not, the effect of this hiding of the EcoHealth Alliance was to prevent the public from detecting the fact that at least one of the main signers and, in fact, the organizer of the letter, had a very personal interest in ensuring the world did not conclude that it came from that lab, the lab in which he had a very significant role.

Here is a [Guardian article from June 9](#), that was also by Peter Daszak, he's returning now and has the lead role in trying to debunk the idea that this came from the lab in which he had any specific interest, something that was never disclosed. And there you see the headline on it which is “Ignore The Conspiracy Theories. Scientists Know COVID-19 Wasn't Created In A Lab.”

Something he was extremely emphatic about. He's saying: ‘Ignore the conspiracy theories” - who are the conspiracy theorists? Anyone who believes that it came from a lab leak, which now includes major parts of the U.S. government. He says scientists know COVID-19 wasn't created in the lab.

Let me show you as well these documents that came from The Intercept as a result of a FOIA request in September of 2021. The Intercept knew that there were a lot of right-wing allegations against Dr. Fauci, specifically that he had funded gain-of-function research in the Wuhan lab that takes naturally occurring viruses and deliberately makes them more dangerous. And Dr. Fauci had always vehemently denied that he or his agencies had funded this kind of experimentation, either through EcoHealth and Peter Daszak or directly to the Wuhan Institute.

So, Dr. Fauci also had, because of his connections to the Wuhan Institute, a very personal interest in ensuring that this got written off as false. And I don't know – my belief is that The Intercept FOIAed these documents with the intention of debunking what they were calling right-wing conspiracy theories. Instead, when they got the documents, they got a big surprise. The documents confirmed the main arguments being made by the right wing conspiracy theorists that the media was claiming were deranged and were out to get Dr. Fauci. And to its credit, I guess The Intercept did what they should have done, which is they published these documents, which up to that point had been some of the most convincing, proving that, in fact, Dr. Fauci had been funding exactly this sort of research.

The headline of the article is “NIH Documents Provide New Evidence of U.S. Funded Gain-of-Function Research in Wuhan. U.S.-funded experimentation in China posed biosafety risks, but did not cause COVID-19 pandemic, scientists say”. So, there you see The Intercept, trying to caveat what they found a little bit for the left that it didn't cause COVID-19, according to scientists but, nonetheless, the documents proved that these

agencies were funding gain-of-function research in this institute that faculty had forever, vehemently and angrily denied. Here's the article,

The Intercept obtained new evidence that the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the nearby Wuhan University Center for Animal Experiment, along with their collaborator, the U.S.-based, nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance, have engaged in what the U.S. government defines as “gain-of-function research of concern”, intentionally making viruses more pathogenic or transmissible in order to study them, despite stipulations from a U.S. funding agency that the money may not be used for that purpose. Grant money for the controversial experiment came from the National Institute of Health’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which is headed by Anthony Fauci. The award to EcoHealth Alliance, a research organization which studies the spread of viruses from animals to humans, included subawards to Wuhan Institute of Virology and East China Normal University. The principal investigator on the grant is EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak, who has been a key voice in the search for COVID-19’s origins.

In a 2005 paper, Peter Daszak’s team showed that the first SARS virus originated in bats. Middle East Respiratory System, or MERS, is caused by a coronavirus that emerged in 2012 and also was believed to come from bats, which are now a prime target for virologists trying to understand and combat emerging diseases. Daszak has long maintained that his research is critical to preventing outbreaks, but the research on the BAT viruses in Wuhan showed that infecting live animals with altered viruses can have unpredictable consequences. A report to NIH on the project's progress in the year ending in May 2018 described scientists creating new coronaviruses by changing parts of WIV1 and exposing genetically engineered mice to the new chimeric viruses.

Inside the lungs of the humanized mice, however, the novel viruses appear to have reproduced far more quickly than the original virus that was used to create them, according to a bar graph shown in the documents. The viral load in the lung tissue of the mice was, at certain points, up to 10,000 times higher in the mice infected with the altered viruses than in those infected with WIV1 (The Intercept. Sept. 9, 2021).

This shows three really critical points. Number one, the two primary and most important organizers of the view that the lab leak was a crazy conspiracy theory – that theory that nobody should believe it, that the COVID origin was already proven, that it was zoonotic – the two primary people who did that were Anthony Fauci and Peter Daszak, and both had extremely significant personal interests in making the world believe that the lab leak was out of the question – and here was the evidence presented by The Intercept of exactly what that personal interest was, and it was never disclosed. Number two was that the research that they were conducting was extremely dangerous because it made the virus far more transmissible, or, namely, it could explain why a novel virus that appeared out of nowhere suddenly started spreading all over the world at extremely rapid speed. And number three, it proved that the exact kind of research on bat coronaviruses that could easily cause a leak and then an infection of humans just so happened to be taking place in the same city in

China where the virus first appeared. And yet nobody was allowed to connect the dots on any of this because everybody who did was immediately castigated as some crazy lunatic.

And I want to show you just a couple of examples of how the people who always lead the propaganda, namely the U.S. media, are the ones who did that. So, let's just look at a couple of examples of how people who questioned the government's theory as propounded by Dr. Fauci and suggested that perhaps it was a lab leak. Look at how they were talked about.

(Video 00:57:18)

Nicole Wallace, MSNBC News: Traditionally driven by science, not presidential politics and the scientists aren't the only ones rankled today by Trump's effort at reputational repair. The New York Times also advances recent reporting on U.S. intelligence agencies, which we learned this week provided intel in the President's PDB as early as January about the lethal spread of COVID. Those same agencies now have been tapped with investigating one of Trump world's most favorite conspiracy theories. New York Times reports this, "Senior Trump administration officials have pushed American spy agencies to hunt for evidence to support an unsubstantiated theory that a government lab in Wuhan, China, was the origin of the coronavirus outbreak. That's according to current and former American officials. The effort comes as President Trump escalates a campaign to blame China for the pandemic. Some intel analysts are concerned that the pressure from the administration officials will distort assessments about the virus and that they could be used as a political weapon in an intensifying battle with China over a disease that has infected more than 3 million."

These people have no idea what they're talking about. All they know is the following – government officials told them to believe two things: that the origin of the COVID virus was definitively proven as zoonotic and, number two, anyone who questioned the alternative, or who dared to challenge the government's claims, was a crazy conspiracy theorist and a lunatic.

Let's look at a couple more examples.

(Video 00:58:57)

Joy Ann Reid, MSNBC News: ... in a lab in Wuhan, China. And yet this week, Donald Trump is still pushing the debunked bunkum, despite his own intelligence community's findings that that is simply not true.

Okay, according to her, who gets to go on NBC News and say this, all while they lecture you about the need to combat disinformation, according to her, the lab leak theory is debunked. It's debunked. It's been proven false – after everything, I've just shown you. And not only has it been proven false, but the reason we all know it's false and should never question it is because the intelligence community told us the truth. And once they tell us the truth, our job as citizens and journalists is to bow our heads and nod mindlessly. This is really what goes on every day in the media, in media discourse. This is how propaganda is so easily concocted and disseminated as it comes from government officials who make completely self-interested and unproven claims and they issue it to these subservient media outlets who repeated it over and over and over again, and any dissident or anyone who questions it is either maligned and excluded, ostracized or when that doesn't work – when they get to become too influential – they get banned by the major means of communication, which is Big Tech. And we know that the government has a very direct hand in doing that as a result of a lot of reporting, including the Twitter files.

(Video 01:00:34)

Joy Ann Reid, MSNBC News: On Thursday, the intelligence community released a rare statement saying they agree with the scientific consensus that the virus was not not not man-made. But it's not like Trump has a history of going against the words of his own intelligence community or anything.

I mean, that's how not just her brain functions, but how the brain of most people who work in journalism in the United States function. The intelligence community said this, and that's the end of the story. That's why for three weeks, before the 2020 election, they just said over and over that we should ignore the reporting about Joe Biden's activities in China and Ukraine because the documents on which they were based were fraudulent, they were Russian disinformation. How do we know that? The CIA told us that. That's the only simple-minded cognitive process of which their brains are capable.

And I know some of you are going to say, no, no, actually, they're capable of more. They're doing this with malice because they're deliberate liars. Maybe that's true for some of them. But do not underestimate the fact that these corporations purposely hire people who are incapable of critical thinking because that's the last thing that they want. They don't want anyone going on their airwaves and saying, 'wait a minute, how do we know this? And aren't there a lot of people who have interest in having us believe that the answer has been discovered and that the lab leak isn't how it happened?' And they pick people on purpose. I just showed you, Nicolle Wallace, and Joy Reid. These are people who are incapable of that kind of thinking, and that's why they succeed there. Let me show you another example.

(Video 01:02:10)

Kasie Hunt, MSNBC: Ken, the other thing I wanted to ask you about is this question about the Wuhan lab. We know that it's been debunked that this virus...

We know that it's been debunked. Kasie Hunt is talking to Ken Dilanian, the national security reporter for NBC News, [who before getting hired at NBC, got caught submitting all of his stories to the CIA for approval](#). There's a FOIA request that The Intercept did in 2015, when I was there, in which that was all discovered when he was at the L.A. Times. He then got promoted to AP and then got promoted to NBC after having got caught being a CIA spokesman. But just listen to, again, these people tell you that the biggest danger to democracy is disinformation and listen to what she just said, in the middle of this coronavirus pandemic.

(Video 01:03:00)

Kasie Hunt, MSNBC: To the 24th. Can the other thing I wanted to ask you about is this question about the Wuhan lab. We know that it's been debunked that this virus was man made or modified or anything...

That's what she claims. She knows that it's been debunked, that it was not man-made or anything like that.

Kasie Hunt, MSNBC: ...but, as you've reported, the Intelligence Committee has been sort of paying attention to the question of whether it was an accident at a Chinese lab...

And now let me just show you not that this is a person who is remotely a journalist, but it's certainly somebody who has some degree of cultural cachet. And this was the sort of thing being said constantly on late-night TV for people who don't watch cable news, which is the vast majority of American people. The vast majority of American people also don't watch late-night cable TV, late-night comedy shows anymore because it contains things like this. But here's what Jimmy Kimmel told the world.

(Video 01:03:52)

Jimmy Kimmel: ... also pushing U.S. intelligence to find evidence for this theory that the virus was accidentally released from a lab in Wuhan. That's his new angle to feed the wingnuts – to treat this virus like it was a conspiracy of some kind.

D. Trump: It should have never happened. This plague should never have happened. It could have been stopped. But people chose not to stop it.

Jimmy Kimmel: What people? Tomorrow he'll blame the Spanish flu on Antonio Banderas. Trump has also reportedly been upset with...

And like, look at the arrogance and smugness of these people. You know, like they think they're such experts on everything. They follow science. They don't know. Their brains are completely broken. They do nothing. They're incapable of reading even a simple sentence and analyzing whether any evidence accompanies it. And so, for a year and a half, they just walked around with that smug, smug look on their face, mocking anybody who said that they think we should remain open to the possibility of not lean toward the possibility that it came from this lab, a claim that we now know many people inside the U.S. government believe is the most likely explanation. And I'd be willing literally to bet every single one of my worldly possessions that not one of these people – and there are, you know, obviously countless more examples who did exactly the same thing. They always speak from the same script. I could spend the rest of the night showing you people doing these same things. I have a lot of them here -- not one of them will go back and say, 'Hey, remember a year ago when I mocked the idea that this could have come from the Wuhan Institute? Because I was told by my government that I should say that. Well, it turns out I was wrong. There's ample evidence to believe that it actually might have come from there. And we should have had that debate. And I am sorry for being one of the people who used my TV platform to foreclose the debate by saying only idiots and conspiracy theorists believe that or using my journalistic credentials to tell you falsely that that theory had been debunked definitively."

Not one of these people will even acknowledge any of this, let alone apologize for or account for their role in what they did because this is actually their job. Their job is not ever to tell you their truth. Their job is to spread government propaganda to the extent that it advances the liberal cause and because they did that in this case – when they told you Hunter Biden's laptop was Russian disinformation; when they told you the Trump Organization had a secret bank or secret connection with a bank, that Putin was controlling the United States through secret blackmail control of Trump, all things that were classic

disinformation – they were doing their jobs. Spreading disinformation for this hidden agenda is their job.

Just to kind of conclude the circle here about what actually happened, I really think it's worth looking at all of this because it's a complex series of events. Some of it has taken place a while ago. I think it's really worth revisiting it to remind ourselves what happened in light of the findings from The Wall Street Journal.

Let's look at this Lancet letter that the journal was forced to release in July of 2021, a year and a half into the pandemic, in which they radically backtracked and compensated for a grievous error they committed in that first Lancet article without acknowledging they did so. This time they weren't here to say, 'We know for sure what the answer is', the way they did somehow, right at the start of the pandemic, they did the opposite.

The article was entitled "Science not speculation is essential to determine how SARS-CoV-2 reached humans" and it was signed by several of the same people, including Peter Daszak. The article reads,

Recently, many of us have individually received inquiries asking whether we still support what we said in early 2020. Opinions are neither data nor conclusions. Evidence obtained using the scientific method must inform our understanding and be the basis for the interpretation of the available information.

The critical question we must address is How did SARS-CoV-2 reach the human population? This is important because at such insights that will drive what the world must urgently do to prevent another tragedy like COVID-19 (The Lancet. July 5, 2021).

That sounds radically different – does it not? – than that first letter in which they asserted they knew the answer for sure – that set what the entire world thought for the next year and a half, that we knew the answer and it was lunatic. Now they're back to say we can't use speculation, we can't use opinion, only evidence. And it's urgent that we find out the answer, implicitly admitting they didn't know the answer, even though they implied previously that they did.

What also happened here is that they included an addendum and it was entitled "Addendum: competing Interests and the origins of SARS-CoV-2", which was designed to do what they should have done back with that original letter – which was to acknowledge that Peter Daszak has a direct personal and financial interest in the outcome of the debate on which he's so emphatically opining, given his involvement in the Wuhan lab, something that they just neglected to do and never went back and apologized for either, they just kind of tacked it on to this much more benign letter a year and a half into that pandemic.

As I said, it's the people who are constantly holding themselves out as the guardians of disinformation, who are the ones who most aggressively and casually spread disinformation. Just to show you an example, here's Anne Applebaum, who is constantly on boards about the dangers of disinformation and how we stop it. Here's a tweet of hers from September 9, 2021, commenting on an appearance on Fox News by Tom Cotton, who reiterated his suggestion that coronavirus originated at a super lab in Wuhan.

So, Tom Cotton went on Fox News and reiterated his suggestion that much of the government now shares that the coronavirus did not come from another species but originated in a super lab. And Anne Applebaum said, the writer at the Atlantic: "Wow. Just like the Soviet propagandists who tried to convince the world that the CIA invented AIDS".

Who's the conspiracy theorist here? Tom Cotton or Anne Applebaum? Who's the purveyor of disinformation? The one who's saying we should be open to the lab leak or the one who's saying that it's clearly a lie?

Remember, there were a lot of other claims that were similar in nature where things that were either uncertain or untrue were deemed false. Remember that Rand Paul had a hearing on whether cloth masks are actually effective in preventing the transmission and contracting of the coronavirus and he was suspended for a week because, even though he's a senator and a physician, he called into question the effectiveness of cloth mask and for that, he got banned by YouTube. That was one of the prohibited views.

If it were true that cloth masks were ineffective in preventing the spread of the coronavirus, you would think that would be something the public ought to know. Given that a lot of people who might be endangered by COVID, such as old people, or people with diseases, might be misled into thinking that a cloth mask is effective in keeping them safe when in fact it isn't. That's a debate we would want to have. And yet, Google decided that debate was also off limits because Dr. Fauci and others had said cloth masks are what you should wear. And the senator from Kentucky got banned from YouTube over trying to have that debate. That happened even though the same month a very senior medical expert inside the Biden administration said that he was ashamed of his profession for misleading the public on the efficacy of cloth masks. This is Michael Osterholm, who was on with Christiane Amanpour. Listen to what he's saying about cloth masks. Again, this is not a member of the Trump administration, but the Biden administration.

(Video 01:12:53)

Michael Osterholm: I have had concerns that dates back to April of 2020 about the concept of masking. Needless to say, it is a political hot button beyond anything I've ever

seen in public health. And yet, at the same time, I think we've all done a disservice to the public. When you actually look at face cloth coverings, those cloth pieces of hanging over your face. They actually only have very limited impact in reducing the amount of virus that you inhale in or exhale out. And in fact, in studies that have been done show that if an individual might get infected within 15 minutes in a room like time in concentration of the virus in the room, if you had a face cloth covered on, you only get about five more minutes of protection. And so, I've been really, unfortunately, really disappointed with my colleagues in public health for not being more clear about what can mask and do or not do.

In case you're wondering about his credentials, he's the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. He had been a senior member of President Biden's medical expertise team to advise him on COVID, and he's clearly saying something very similar to what Senator Paul was trying to warn people about, which is that you're being misled on the efficacy of cloth masks – and Google had declared that off-limits because Dr. Fauci told them to.

Over and over and over, we see the same type of regime of censorship, which is not the individuals inside these Big Tech companies making decisions about what is and is not permissible but, instead, what the government tells them they should and should not allow, to the point that the public is being repeatedly deceived.

This is one last example. I'm certain that you recall the debate about the efficacy of natural immunity, meaning the inability of a human to get COVID, even if they're not vaccinated once they get the COVID vaccine. We were told over and over that that shouldn't even be discussed – that the only solution for everybody was to go and get the vaccine.

We all know that major media figures lied continuously to the public or misled them about the efficacy of the vaccine. The famous Rachel Maddow clip where she explains to everybody like they're idiots what she knows, as an expert, that if you get the vaccine, the virus will try and enter your body but there's a brick wall there because of the vaccine that will stop it from entering your body. And that means that you can no longer transmit it to anybody else so everybody is vaccinated there's nowhere for the virus to go any longer.

That's what the queen of anti-disinformation told everybody. That was the common perception and message being disseminated by the media to coerce people who didn't want the virus into getting it. Of course, all of that proved to be untrue, as we know that millions and millions and millions of people – who have been not only vaccinated but boosted constantly – get the COVID virus and transmit it to other people. But one of the things that was a major source of close debate was the efficacy of natural immunity. And yet, as you see here from the Wall Street Journal, “Three years late, the Lancet recognizes natural immunity”. Again, The Lancet, which had a lot of antipathy to the idea of natural immunity because they were playing politics instead of following science.

The public health clerisy rediscovers a principle of immunology it derided throughout the pandemic. The Lancet medical journal this month published a review of 65 studies that concluded prior infection with COVID – i.e. natural immunity – is at least as protective as two doses of many vaccines. The most surprising news is that the study made the mainstream press, quote, Immunity acquired from a COVID infection is as protective as two doses of mRNA vaccines. “Immunity acquired from a COVID infection is as protective as vaccination against severe illness and death, study finds”, NBC reported on February 16.

The study found that prior infection offered 78.6% protection against reinfection from the original Wuhan Alpha or Delta variants at 40 weeks, which slipped to 36.1% against Omicron. Protection against severe illness remained around 90% across all variants after 40 weeks. These results exceed what other studies have found for two and even three mRNA doses. This comes after nearly three years of public health officials’ dismissing the same hypothesis. But now that experts at the University of Washington have confirmed it in a leading – and left-leaning – journal, it’s fit to print (The Wall Street Journal. Feb. 26, 2023)

That was from The Wall Street editorial page.

What I want to take away from all this, and the reason I think it's so important to have reviewed this from the start, the way we did, to take the time to show you the documents, is because it's very easy when you're being bombarded with a flurry of propaganda to forget what has been debunked, because so often the debunking comes long after it matters any longer, and you forget just how effective the original lies were. And in the case of Dr. Fauci and the way in which that Lancet letter was organized, and then the Nature Magazine letter was organized right after it, we know not only that it was done with a lot of personal interest, but it was done knowing that at the highest levels of epidemiology, the claim that they were making, namely, there was no debate on this question of where this virus came from was completely untrue. They disseminated a very significant claim knowing it was false, by which I don't mean they knew that it actually came from the lab as opposed to a non-animal and non-human animal. But what I mean is that by claiming that there was no reasonable debate to be had about this and that only crazy conspiracies believe it came from a lab leak that they knew was false because they were hearing from major epidemiologists that having studied this very carefully, they found it extremely hard to believe that it could have come from natural evolution or natural progression.

But I think the most important thing to take away from all of this is not the epidemiological or scientific questions. Those we can leave to other people for another day. For now, what we know for certain is that a major part of the U.S. government believes it's more likely than not that it leaked from the Wuhan lab and that by itself means that the last three years – the propaganda that told us over and over and over and over again that we knew where the virus came from, and the government's all but official declaration that any alternative theories were false – what we know is the lie was that they claim that they knew when they did it.

But the reason this matters so much right now is not just because, again, you should, of course, have enormous amounts of skepticism about the government telling you things. It's

much more severe than that. There is clearly a global movement underway, not within the tyrannical part of the world that has already had laws that criminalize fake news and allow the imprisonment of people who spread them but there's a movement in the democratic world to start adopting identical laws that empower the government to do what they did here, which is decree, official truth and official falsity, and then render off limits the ability to challenge their truths, to question their truth, to dissent from their truth, even to the point where you can risk prison for doing so.

And that is why I keep emphasizing the importance of this Brazilian law and to follow it as Brazil, as the Brazilians have developed this law. What has happened is that the leading advocates for it, people who are pro-government lawyers, long-time loyalists to Lula or YouTube stars – with absolutely no credentials, anything, who like most online influencers change their views with the wind. PT used to be very unpopular five years ago. They all hated it. Now PT, Lula's party, is popular. Now they're all on board with it – so, it's YouTube influencers and pro-lawyers and even journalists at major corporations who believe they're the owners of the truth.

All of these people in Brazil who are behind this law to criminalize fake news that will be determined by the government or courts are all now being celebrated and treated like royalty in European capitals because the EU wants to copy what Brazil is about to do, and Brazil is the perfect place for it to work because on January 8 they had their own January 6 – that they treat like 9/11 – Brazilians on the left talk about it like it was a terrorist attack and, as Americans, we all learned that when you put the population in fear and convince them that they're under attack from terrorists, they will give up any right the government asks for and they'll be persuaded – “It's only temporary” – but of course, it's not temporary. The Patriot Act was supposed to be temporary. It's here with us 23 years later.

But what Brazil is being used as is a lab, to see that once that law is implemented and then, the Brazilian government, or the Brazilian courts, have the power to order tech companies to remove posts that they consider false – such as the virus came from the Wuhan lab – and even punished where fines and imprisonment of those who said it. The EU will then say, ‘Oh, look, Brazil has already implemented this law that's implemented here’ – there may be more problems in doing so in the U.S. because of the First Amendment but Homeland Security, the FBI, the CIA have shown over and over that they have no qualms about working around the First Amendment and attempting to influence what the Internet will and will not allow.

Remember, Facebook didn't come up on its own with this prohibited list. It came right from Dr. Fauci. I don't think there's a more important issue at the moment than this one. There may be ones as important, and I will always concede that but if we're about to embark on a world in which the Internet is now officially controlled by a legislative framework that allows the government to formally and officially adopt these powers that we haven't really seen since the Enlightenment – to have their views of what is true and falls binding on the citizenry to the point that it's illegal to question it – I don't think those dangers can be overestimated.

And so, we definitely intend to continue to follow a very dangerous law that is advancing rapidly in Brazil, watch how European countries intend to copy it very, very quickly and the more stories like this that we can dissect and analyze that prove how readily these authorities lie and how easy it is to get the media to become their complicit partners. Hopefully, at least there will be more and more people angry about these laws, who object to them, who are concerned about them, and who are watching out for the propagandistic purposes that they serve.

So that will conclude our show for the evening. We really appreciate you indulging us and taking the time when we feel it's necessary to delve into what we regard as complex and important topics in ways that require more time than most shows allow. That was what we wanted to do with this show from the beginning – avoid the cable format of having to treat everything within six and seven-minute segments in between commercial breaks, or have you had this carousel of ever-changing guests and topics based on the belief that you don't have a significant enough attention span to pay close attention to complicated matters.

<https://greenwald.locals.com/post/3605860/covid-origins-after-years-of-crushing-dissent-government-backtracks-on-lab-leak-hypothesis>

Western Dissent from US/NATO Policy on Ukraine is Small, Yet the Censorship Campaign is Extreme

Preventing populations from asking who benefits from a protracted proxy war, and who pays the price, is paramount. A closed propaganda system achieves that.

"If one wishes to be exposed to news, information or perspective that contravenes the prevailing US/NATO view on the war in Ukraine, a rigorous search is required. And there is no guarantee that search will succeed. That is because the state/corporate censorship regime that has been imposed in the West with regard to this war is stunningly aggressive, rapid and comprehensive.

On a virtually daily basis, any off-key news agency, independent platform or individual citizen is liable to be banished from the internet. In early March, barely a week after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the twenty-seven nation European Union — citing "disinformation" and "public order and security" — **officially banned** the Russian state-news outlets RT and Sputnik from being heard anywhere in Europe. In what Reuters called "an unprecedented move," all television and online platforms were barred by force of law from airing content from those two outlets. Even prior to that censorship order from the state, Facebook and Google were already banning those outlets, and Twitter immediately announced they would as well, in compliance with the new EU law.

But what was “unprecedented” just six weeks ago has now become commonplace, even normalized. Any platform devoted to offering inconvenient-to-NATO news or alternative perspectives is guaranteed a very short lifespan. Less than two weeks after the EU's decree, Google [announced](#) that it was voluntarily banning all Russian-affiliated media worldwide, meaning Americans and all other non-Europeans were now blocked from viewing those channels on YouTube if they wished to. As so often happens with Big Tech censorship, much of the pressure on Google to more aggressively censor content about the war in Ukraine came from its own workforce: “Workers across Google had been urging YouTube to take additional punitive measures against Russian channels.”

So prolific and fast-moving is this censorship regime that it is virtually impossible to count how many platforms, agencies and individuals have been banished for the crime of expressing views deemed “pro-Russian.” On Tuesday, Twitter, with no explanation as usual, suddenly banned one of the most informative, reliable and careful dissident accounts, named “Russians With Attitude.” Created in late 2020 by two English-speaking Russians, the account [exploded in popularity](#) since the start of the war, from roughly 20,000 followers before the invasion to more than 125,000 followers at the time Twitter banned it. An accompanying podcast with the same name also exploded in popularity and, at least as of now, can [still be heard on Patreon](#).

What makes this outburst of Western censorship so notable — and what is at least partially driving it — is that there is a clear, demonstrable hunger in the West for news and information that is banished by Western news sources, ones which loyally and unquestioningly mimic claims from the U.S. government, NATO, and Ukrainian officials. As *The Washington Post* [acknowledged](#) when reporting Big Tech's “unprecedented” banning of RT, Sputnik and other Russian sources of news: “In the first four days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, viewership of more than a dozen Russian state-backed propaganda channels on YouTube spiked to unusually high levels.”

Note that this censorship regime is completely one-sided and, as usual, entirely aligned with U.S. foreign policy. Western news outlets and social media platforms have been [flooded with pro-Ukrainian propaganda and outright lies](#) from the start of the war. A *New York Times* [article from early March](#) put it very delicately in its headline: “Fact and Mythmaking Blend in Ukraine’s Information War.” Axios was similarly understated in [recognizing this fact](#): “Ukraine misinformation is spreading — and not just from Russia.” Members of [the U.S. Congress](#) have [gleefully spread](#) fabrications that went viral to millions of people, with no action from censorship-happy Silicon Valley corporations. That is not a surprise: all participants in war use disinformation and propaganda to manipulate public opinion in their favor, and that certainly includes all direct and proxy-war belligerents in the war in Ukraine.

Yet there is little to no censorship — either by Western states or by Silicon Valley monopolies — of pro-Ukrainian disinformation, propaganda and lies. The censorship goes only in one direction: to silence any voices deemed “pro-Russian,” *regardless of whether they spread disinformation*. The “Russians With Attitude” Twitter account became popular in part because they sometimes criticized Russia, in part because they were more careful with facts and viral claims that most U.S. corporate media outlets, and in part because there is such a

paucity of outlets that are willing to offer any information that undercuts what the U.S. Government and NATO want you to believe about the war.

Their crime, like the crime of so many other banished accounts, was not disinformation but *skepticism about the US/NATO propaganda campaign*. Put another way, it is not “disinformation” but rather viewpoint-error that is targeted for silencing. One can spread as many lies and as much disinformation as one wants provided that it is designed to advance the NATO agenda in Ukraine (just as one is [free to spread disinformation provided](#) that its purpose is to strengthen the Democratic Party, which wields its [majoritarian power in Washington to demand greater censorship](#) and [commands the support of most of Silicon Valley](#)). But what one cannot do is question the NATO/Ukrainian propaganda framework without running a very substantial risk of banishment.

It is unsurprising that Silicon Valley monopolies exercise their censorship power in full alignment with the foreign policy interests of the U.S. Government. Many of the key tech monopolies — such as Google and Amazon — routinely seek and obtain [highly lucrative contracts](#) with [the U.S. security state](#), including both the CIA and NSA. Their top executives enjoy [very close relationships](#) with top Democratic Party officials. And Congressional Democrats have repeatedly hauled tech executives before their various Committees to [explicitly threaten them](#) with legal and regulatory reprisals if they do not censor more in accordance with the policy goals and political interests of that party.

But one question lingers: why is there so much urgency about silencing the small pockets of dissenting voices about the war in Ukraine? This war has united the establishment wings of both parties and virtually the entire corporate media with a lockstep consensus not seen since the days and weeks after the 9/11 attack. One can count on both hands the number of prominent political and media figures who have been willing to dissent even minimally from that bipartisan Washington consensus — dissent that instantly provokes vilification in the form of [attacks on one's patriotism and loyalties](#). Why is there such fear of allowing these isolated and demonized voices to be heard at all?

The answer seems clear. The benefits from this war for multiple key Washington power centers cannot be overstated. The billions of dollars in aid and weapons being sent by the U.S. to Ukraine are flying so fast and with such seeming randomness that it is difficult to track. “Biden approves \$350 million in military aid for Ukraine,” Reuters [said](#) on February 26; “Biden announces \$800 million in military aid for Ukraine,” [announced](#) *The New York Times* on March 16; on March 30, [NBC's headline](#) read: “Ukraine to receive additional \$500 million in aid from U.S., Biden announces”; on Tuesday, Reuters [announced](#): “U.S. to announce \$750 million more in weapons for Ukraine, officials say.” By design, these gigantic numbers have long ago lost any meaning and provoke barely a peep of questioning let alone objection.

It is not a mystery who is benefiting from this orgy of military spending. On Tuesday, Reuters [reported that](#) “the Pentagon will host leaders from the top eight U.S. weapons manufacturers on Wednesday to discuss the industry's capacity to meet Ukraine's weapons needs if the war with Russia lasts years.” Among those participating in this meeting about

the need to increase weapons manufacturing to feed the proxy war in Ukraine is Raytheon, which is fortunate to have retired General Lloyd Austin as Defense Secretary, a position to which he [ascended from the Raytheon Board of Directors](#). It is virtually impossible to imagine an event more favorable to the weapons manufacturer industry than this war in Ukraine:

Demand for weapons has shot up after Russia's invasion on Feb. 24 spurred U.S. and allied weapons transfers to Ukraine. Resupplying as well as planning for a longer war is expected to be discussed at the meeting, the sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity. . .

Resupplying as well as planning for a longer war is expected to be discussed at the meeting. . . . The White House said last week that it has provided more than \$1.7 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the invasion, including over 5,000 Javelins and more than 1,400 Stingers.

This permanent power faction is far from the only one to be reaping benefits from the war in Ukraine and to have its fortunes depend upon prolonging the war as long as possible. The union of the U.S. security state, Democratic Party neocons, and their media allies has not been riding this high since the glory days of 2002. One of MSNBC's most vocal DNC boosters, Chris Hayes, gushed that the war in Ukraine has revitalized faith and trust in the CIA and intelligence community more than any event in recent memory — deservedly so, [he said](#): “The last few weeks have been like the Iraq War in reverse for US intelligence.” One can barely read a mainstream newspaper or watch a corporate news outlet without seeing the nation's most bloodthirsty warmongering band of neocons — David Frum, Bill Kristol, Liz Cheney, Wesley Clark, Anne Applebaum, Adam Kinzinger — being celebrated as wise experts and heroic warriors for freedom.

This war has been very good indeed for the permanent Washington political and media class. And although it was taboo for weeks to say so, it is now beyond clear that the [only goal that the U.S. and its allies have](#) when it comes to the war in Ukraine is to keep it dragging on for as long as possible. Not only are there no serious American diplomatic efforts to end the war, but the goal is to ensure that does not happen. They are now saying that explicitly, and it is not hard to understand why.

The benefits from endless quagmire in Ukraine are as immense as they are obvious. The military budget skyrockets. Punishment is imposed on the arch-nemesis of the Democratic Party — Russia and Putin — while they are bogged down in a war from which Ukrainians suffer most. The citizenry unites behind their leaders and is distracted from their collective deprivations. The emotions provoked by the horrors of this war — unprecedentedly shown to the public by the Western media which typically ignores carnage and victims of wars waged by Western countries and their allies — is a very potent tool to maintain unity and demonize domestic adversaries. The pundit class finds strength, purpose and resolve, able to feign a Churchillian posture without any of the risks. Prior sins and crimes of American elites are absolved and forgotten at the altar of maximalist claims about Putin's unprecedented evils — just as they were absolved and forgotten through the script which maintained that the U.S. had never encountered a threat as grave or malignant as Trump.

After all, if Putin and Trump are Hitler or even worse, then anyone who opposes them is heroic and noble regardless of all their prior malignant acts.

And that is why even small pockets of dissent cannot be tolerated. It is vital that Americans and Europeans remain entrapped inside a completely closed system of propaganda about the war, just as Russians are kept entrapped inside their own. Keeping these populations united in support of fighting a proxy war against Russia is far too valuable on too many levels to permit any questioning or alternative perspectives. Preventing people from asking who this war benefits, and who is paying the price for it, is paramount.

Big Tech has long proven to be a reliable instrument of censorship and dissent-quashing for the U.S. Government (much to the [chagrin of corporate media employees](#), Russian outlets [still remain available on free speech alternatives](#) such as Rumble and Telegram, which is why so much ire is now directed at them). A rapid series of ostensible "crises" — Russiagate, 1/6, the COVID pandemic — were all exploited to condition Westerners to believe that censorship was not only justified but necessary for their own good. In the West, censorship now provokes not anger but gratitude. All of that laid the perfect foundation for this new escalation of a censorship regime in which dissent, on a virtually daily basis, is increasingly more difficult to locate.

No matter one's views on Russia, Ukraine, the U.S. and the war, it should be deeply alarming to watch such a concerted, united campaign on the part of the most powerful public and private entities to stomp out any and all dissent, while so aggressively demonizing what little manages to slip by. No matter how smart or critically minded or sophisticated we fancy ourselves to be, none of us is immune to official propaganda campaigns, studied and perfected over decades. Nor is any of us immune to the pressures of group-think and herd behavior and hive minds: these are embedded in our psyches and thus easily exploitable.

That is precisely the objective of restricting and closing the information system available to us. It makes it extremely difficult to remain skeptical or critical of the bombardment of approved messaging we receive every day from every direction in every form. And that is precisely the reason to oppose such censorship regimes. An opinion or belief adopted due to propaganda and reflex rather than autonomy and critical evaluation has no value.

<https://greenwald.locals.com/post/2984149/western-dissent-from-us-nato-policy-on-ukraine-is-small-yet-the-censorship-campaign-is-extreme>