



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 6, 2011

Clinton on Propaganda Budget: U.S. Losing “Information War”

The top diplomat’s comments prompted a range of reactions including [gloating](#) by media outlets abroad, as well as [ridicule](#) and [anger](#) by critics in America. [Accusations](#) that Clinton was just seeking ever-greater sums of tax money to promote more fraudulent propaganda abroad were common, too.



“We are in an information war, and we are losing that war,” Clinton told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee while defending her department’s budget of almost \$50 billion. “Al Jazeera is winning, the Chinese have opened a global English-language and multi-language television network, the Russians have opened up an English-language network. I’ve seen it in a few countries, and it is quite instructive.”

Praising the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera’s coverage of recent turmoil in the Middle East, Clinton said the broadcaster’s influence in the United States was rising “because it’s real news.” And no matter what one thinks, “it is really effective,” she noted. During the height of Egypt’s recent turmoil, Americans tuned into Al-Jazeera in droves through the Internet.

The positive remarks about the Arab broadcaster prompted Fox News personality Glenn Beck to [lash out](#) on his radio program on March 4. “You have the Secretary of State of the United States of America saying you cannot get real news here in America. You can only get it from Al Jazeera and everybody knows it,” he told listeners, calling the TV station the “propaganda arm” of Islamic extremism. “This is insanity.”

Clinton also took the opportunity during questioning to attack the American media on several fronts, complaining about “a million commercials” and “arguments between talking heads.” There is also a lack of useful information even for Americans, let alone for foreigners, she said.

In terms of winning the so-called information war around the world, the Secretary of State told Senators that private-sector American news sources were not up to the task. “Our private media cannot fill that gap. Our private media, particularly cultural programming, often works at counter purposes to what we truly are as Americans,” she said, citing a conversation with an Afghan general who told her he thought all American men wrestled as women walked around in bikinis. Apparently he had seen only *Baywatch* and *World Wide Wrestling*, according to Clinton.

And to make up for the lack of quality and credibility as well as the rapidly diminishing influence of U.S.-based media outlets — many have become notorious in recent years for simply parroting the government narrative on everything from wars to the economy — Clinton wants a bigger propaganda budget. One particular area of focus would be the “new-media” sphere consisting largely of social-



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networking services such as Twitter and interactive web-based sources.

“During the Cold War, we did a great job in getting America’s message out,” she claimed. “After the Berlin Wall fell we said ‘OK, fine, enough of that — you know, we’ve done it, we’re done.’ And unfortunately we are paying a big price for it.”

The U.S. government does acknowledge that it maintains a [vast, unconstitutional propaganda apparatus](#) that includes the broadcasting of pro-regime information across the globe. Various “news” services such as Voice of America and other operations such as Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe are among the openly admitted organs. They are managed by what’s known as the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG); the federal government oversees other propaganda outfits, too, including the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Radio Free Asia, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, and more.

And just last year, BBG boss Walter Isaacson was demanding even more money for his propaganda operation, which already costs taxpayers close to a billion dollars per year. Behind the scenes there is undoubtedly much more “information warfare” going on, too — the Central Intelligence Agency, for example, has [already been caught](#) using deceptive propaganda, even against Americans. *The New American* [reported](#) several days ago that the U.S. military may have even used “psy-ops” against American Senators visiting Afghanistan.

Analysts suggested the Secretary of State may have been hinting at taking the propaganda war to a whole new level. “Clinton seems to be calling for a government news network to compete with other government news networks (Russian and Chinese),” [wrote](#) media commentator Bruce McQuain in a piece for the conservative HotAir blog. “Sounds like someone really, really, really wants a government propaganda channel set up so we can present what we ‘truly are as Americans.’”

When contacted by the Associated Press, spokespeople for most major U.S. TV stations refused to comment on Clinton’s statements lambasting their operations. A representative for Fox News, however, said he was “surprised and kind of curious,” according to the wire service.

And though CNN declined to opine, a former bigwig with the station did have some comments — and he agreed with Clinton. “Cable news has become cable noise,” Frank Sesno, currently the director of the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, told the AP. “It was intended to be an opportunity to inform people, and instead it has become an opportunity to inflame people.”

A recent poll [revealed](#) that barely more than 20 percent of Americans trust the television news. Newspapers weren’t far behind, either.

Rather than focusing on an “information war” and using American taxpayer money to promote the government’s propaganda around the world with even more ferocity, the United States should concentrate on obeying the Constitution. Foreigners would be far more likely to have positive opinions about a peaceful, freedom-loving country than, say, a global empire that has thousands of military bases around the world; engages in torture, spying and undeclared wars; spreads propaganda across the globe; and doesn’t even live up to its laws or founding principles.

Congress could take this perfect opportunity — America is in more debt than any country in the history of the world — to eliminate the unconstitutional propaganda budget entirely. But, judging by how things are going in Congress so far, it almost certainly won’t.

Photo of Sec. of State Hillary Clinton: AP Images



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