

On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV - How to Explain Hare Hunting To A Dead German Artist - Maarten Luther Kerk - Amsterdam



On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV - How to Explain Hare Hunting to a Dead German Artist

[The usefulness of continuous measurement of the distance between Nostalgia and Melancholia] (september 2021 - december 2022)

A critical project concerning post-war artist Joseph Beuys created by Joseph

Sassoon Semah, curator Linda Bouws

Maarten Luther Kerk, Dintelstraat 134, Amsterdam

15 mei 2022, aanvang 15.30 uur, Opening Tentoonstelling, Performance en Bijeenkomst

15 mei t/m 15 juli Tentoonstelling, bezoek op afspraak

Programma 15 mei:

15.30 uur: Welkom Dr. A.H. Wöhle, President Evangelisch-Lutherse Synode in de Protestantse Kerk

15.45 uur: Performance Joseph Sassoon Semah en zijn vrienden en tentoonstelling bezichtigen



16.15 uur: Meeting met o.a. Andreas Wöhle en Joseph Sassoon Semah: Joseph Beuys en Christus impuls



17.15 uur: Afsluitende borrel



In het werk van kunstenaar Joseph Beuys is de christelijke iconografie een van de belangrijkste thema's, met name de Christus impuls.

Hij gebruikt objecten die staan voor het geestelijke zoeken, de moderne devotie: de crucifix, een wandelstok, een vogel, een haas.

Door te lijden ontstaat het vermogen tot scheppingskracht "kunst is een geestelijke act die telkens opnieuw moet gebeuren."

Beuys werd sterk beïnvloed door de antroposoof Rudolf Steiner, "Christus-ich Kraft". Voor Steiner was de fysieke incarnatie van Jezus aan het begin van

de tijdrekening een eenmalige gebeurtenis.

Steiner noemt dit de 'Christus impuls' en 'het mysterie van Golgotha'.

Welk Christusbeeld had Beuys voor ogen? Hoe verhoudt zijn Christusbeeld zich tot zijn kunst?

Welke invloed had Steiner op zijn werk?

Hoe reflecteert Joseph Sassoon Semah in zijn kunstwerken op Joseph Beuys?

Hoe kijkt Andres Wöhle naar Beuys, Steiner en Joseph Sassoon Semah?

Er wordt samengewerkt met o.a. Maarten Lutherkerk, Gerhard-Marcks-Haus Bremen, Goethe-Institut Amsterdam, Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam/UvA, Lumen Travo Gallery, Deutsche Bank, Landgoed Nardinclant-Amsterdamgarden, Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten, Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg AmacuraThe Maastricht Institute for Arts.

Na afloop van de manifestatie wordt een complementaire publicatie samengesteld.

Het project is mede mogelijk gemaakt door het Mondriaan Fonds, het publieke stimuleringsfonds voor beeldende kunst en cultureel erfgoed en Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten.



*A land flowing with milk and honey -
2022*

Noam Chomsky: Propaganda Wars Are Raging As Russia's War On Ukraine Expands



Noam Chomsky

Since World War I, propaganda has played a crucial role in warfare. Propaganda is used to increase support for the war among citizens of the nation that is waging it. National governments also use targeted propaganda campaigns in an attempt to influence public opinion and behavior in the countries they are at war with, as well as to influence international opinion. Essentially, propaganda, whether circulated through state-controlled or private media, refers to techniques of public opinion manipulation based on incomplete or misleading information, lies and deception. During World War II, both the Nazis and the Allies invested heavily in propaganda operations as part of each side's overall effort to win the war.

The war in Ukraine is no different. Both Russian and Ukrainian leaders have undertaken a campaign of systematic dissemination of warfare information that can easily be designated as propaganda. Other parties with a stake in the conflict, such as the United States and China, are also engaged in propaganda operations, which work in tandem with their apparent lack of interest in diplomatic undertakings to end the war.

In the interview that follows, leading scholar and dissident Noam Chomsky, who, along with Edward Herman, constructed the concept of the "[propaganda model](#)," looks at the question of who is winning the propaganda war in Ukraine. Additionally, he discusses how social media shape political reality today, analyzes whether the "propaganda model" still works, and dissects the role of the use of "whataboutism." Lastly, he shares his thoughts on the case of Julian Assange and what his now almost certain extradition to the United States for having committed the "crime" of releasing public information about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq says about U.S. democratic principles.

Chomsky is internationally recognized as one of the most important intellectuals

alive. His intellectual stature has been compared to that of Galileo, Newton and Descartes, as his work has had tremendous influence on a variety of areas of scholarly and scientific inquiry, including linguistics, logic and mathematics, computer science, psychology, media studies, philosophy, politics and international affairs. He is the author of some 150 books and the recipient of scores of highly prestigious awards, including the Sydney Peace Prize and the Kyoto Prize (Japan's equivalent of the Nobel Prize), and of dozens of honorary doctorate degrees from the world's most renowned universities. Chomsky is Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT and currently Laureate Professor at the University of Arizona.

C.J. Polychroniou: Wartime propaganda has become in the modern world a powerful weapon in garnering public support for war and providing a moral justification for it, usually by highlighting the "evil" nature of the enemy. It's also used in order to break down the will of the enemy forces to fight. In the case of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kremlin propaganda seems so far to be working inside Russia and dominating Chinese social media, but it looks like Ukraine is winning the information war in the global arena, especially in the West. Do you agree with this assessment? Any significant lies or war-myths around the Russia-Ukraine conflict worth pointing out?

Noam Chomsky: Wartime propaganda has been a powerful weapon for a long time, I suspect as far back as we can trace the historical record. And often a weapon with long-term consequences, which merit attention and thought.

Just to keep to modern times, in 1898, the U.S. battleship *Maine* sank in Havana harbor, probably from an internal explosion. The Hearst press succeeded in arousing a wave of popular hysteria about the evil nature of Spain. That provided the needed background for an invasion of Cuba that is called here "the liberation of Cuba." Or, as it should be called, the prevention of Cuba's self-liberation from Spain, turning Cuba into a virtual U.S. colony. So it remained until 1959, when Cuba was indeed liberated, and the U.S., almost at once, undertook a vicious campaign of terror and sanctions to end Cuba's "successful defiance" of the 150-year-old U.S. policy of dominating the hemisphere, as the State Department explained 50 years ago.

Whipping up war myths can have long-term consequences.

A few years later, in 1916, Woodrow Wilson was elected president with the slogan “Peace without Victory.” That was quickly transmuted to Victory without Peace. A flood of war myths quickly turned a pacifist population to one consumed with hatred for all things German. The propaganda at first emanated from the British Ministry of Information; we know what that means. American intellectuals of the liberal Dewey circle lapped it up enthusiastically, declaring themselves to be the leaders of the campaign to liberate the world. For the first time in history, they soberly explained, war was not initiated by military or political elites, but by the thoughtful intellectuals — them — who had carefully studied the situation and after careful deliberation, rationally determined the right course of action: to enter the war, to bring liberty and freedom to the world, and to end the Hun atrocities concocted by the British Ministry of Information.

One consequence of the very effective Hate Germany campaigns was imposition of a victor’s peace, with harsh treatment of defeated Germany. Some strongly objected, notably John Maynard Keynes. They were ignored. That gave us Hitler.

In a [previous interview](#), we discussed how Ambassador Chas Freeman compared the postwar Hate Germany settlement with a triumph of statesmanship (not by nice people): The Congress of Vienna, 1815. The Congress sought to establish a European order after Napoleon’s attempt to conquer Europe had been overcome. Judiciously, the Congress incorporated defeated France. That led to a century of relative peace in Europe.

There are some lessons.

Not to be outdone by the British, President Wilson established his own propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information (Creel Commission), which performed its own services.

These exercises also had a long-term effect. Among the members of the Commission were Walter Lippmann, who went on to become the leading public intellectual of the 20th century, and Edward Bernays, who became a prime founder of the modern public relations industry, the world’s major propaganda agency, dedicated to undermining markets by creating uninformed consumers making irrational choices — the opposite of what one learns about markets in Econ 101. By stimulating rampant consumerism, the industry is also driving the world to disaster, another topic.

Both Lippmann and Bernays credited the Creel Commission for demonstrating the power of propaganda in “manufacturing consent” (Lippmann) and “engineering of consent” (Bernays). This “new art in the practice of democracy,” Lippmann explained, could be used to keep the “ignorant and meddlesome outsiders” — the general public — passive and obedient while the self-designated “responsible men” will attend to important matters, free from the “trampling and roar of a bewildered herd.” Bernays expressed similar views. They were not alone.

Lippmann and Bernays were Wilson-Roosevelt-Kennedy liberals. The conception of democracy they elaborated was quite in accord with dominant liberal conceptions, then and since.

The ideas extend broadly to the more free societies, where “unpopular ideas can be suppressed without the use of force,” as George Orwell put the matter in his (unpublished) introduction to *Animal Farm* on “literary censorship” in England.

So it continues. Particularly in the more free societies, where means of state violence have been constrained by popular activism, it is of great importance to devise methods of manufacturing consent, and to ensure that they are internalized, becoming as invisible as the air we breathe, particularly in articulate educated circles. Imposing war-myths is a regular feature of these enterprises.

It often works, quite spectacularly. In today’s Russia, according to reports, a large majority accept the doctrine that in Ukraine, Russia is defending itself against a Nazi onslaught reminiscent of World War II, when Ukraine was, in fact, collaborating in the aggression that came close to destroying Russia while exacting a horrific toll.

The propaganda is as nonsensical as war myths generally, but like others, it relies on shreds of truth, and has, it seems, been effective domestically in manufacturing consent.

We cannot really be sure because of the rigid censorship now in force, a hallmark of U.S. political culture from far back: the “bewildered herd” must be protected from the “wrong ideas.” Accordingly, Americans must be “protected” from propaganda which, we are told, is so ludicrous that only the most fully brainwashed could possibly keep from laughing.

According to this view, to punish Vladimir Putin, all material emanating from

Russia must be rigorously barred from American ears. That includes the work of outstanding U.S. journalists and political commentators, like Chris Hedges, whose long record of courageous journalism includes his service as *The New York Times* Middle East and Balkans bureau chief, and astute and perceptive commentary since. Americans must be protected from his evil influence, because his reports appear on *RT*. They have now been expunged. Americans are “saved” from reading them.

Take that, Mr. Putin.

As we would expect in a free society, it is possible, with some effort, to learn something about Russia’s official position on the war — or as Russia calls it, “special military operation.” For example, via India, where Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had a [long interview](#) with *India Today TV* on April 19.

We constantly witness instructive effects of this rigid indoctrination. One is that it is *de rigueur* to refer to Putin’s criminal aggression in Ukraine as his “unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.” A Google search for this phrase finds “About 2,430,000 results” (in 0.42 seconds).

Out of curiosity, we might search for “unprovoked invasion of Iraq.” The search yields “About 11,700 results” (in 0.35 seconds) — apparently from antiwar sources, a brief search suggests.

The example is interesting not only in itself, but because of its sharp reversal of the facts. The Iraq War was totally unprovoked: Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld had to struggle hard, even to resort to torture, to try to find some particle of evidence to tie Saddam Hussein to al-Qaeda. The famous disappearing weapons of mass destruction wouldn’t have been a provocation for aggression even if there had been some reason to believe that they existed.

In contrast, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was most definitely provoked — though in today’s climate, it is necessary to add the truism that provocation provides no justification for the invasion.

A host of high-level U.S. diplomats and policy analysts have been warning Washington for 30 years that it was reckless and needlessly provocative to ignore Russia’s security concerns, particularly its red lines: No NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine, in Russia’s geostrategic heartland.

In full understanding of what it was doing, since 2014, NATO (meaning basically the U.S.), has “provided significant support [to Ukraine] with equipment, with training, 10s of 1000s of Ukrainian soldiers have been trained, and then when we saw the intelligence indicating a highly likely invasion Allies stepped up last autumn and this winter,” before the invasion, [according to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#).

The U.S. commitment to integrate Ukraine within the NATO command was also stepped up in fall 2021 with the official policy statements we have already discussed — kept from the bewildered herd by the “free press,” but surely read carefully by Russian intelligence. Russian intelligence did not have to be informed that “prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the United States made no effort to address one of Vladimir Putin’s most often stated top security concerns — the possibility of Ukraine’s membership into NATO,” as the State Department conceded, with little notice here.

Without going into any further details, Putin’s invasion of Ukraine was clearly provoked while the U.S. invasion of Iraq was clearly unprovoked. That is exactly the opposite of standard commentary and reporting. But it is also exactly the norm of wartime propaganda, not just in the U.S., though it is more instructive to observe the process in free societies.

Many feel that it is wrong to bring up such matters, even a form of pro-Putin propaganda: we should, rather, focus laser-like on Russia’s ongoing crimes. Contrary to their beliefs, that stand does not help Ukrainians. It harms them. If we are barred, by dictate, from learning about ourselves, we will not be able to develop policies that will benefit others, Ukrainians among them. That seems elementary.

Further analysis yields many other instructive examples. We [discussed](#) Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Tribe’s praise for President George W. Bush’s decision in 2003 to “aid the Iraqi people” by seizing “Iraqi funds sitting in American banks” — and, incidentally, invading and destroying the country, too unimportant to mention. More fully, the funds were seized “to aid the Iraqi people and to compensate victims of terrorism,” for which the Iraqi people bore no responsibility.

We didn’t go on to ask how the Iraqi people were to be aided. It is a fair guess

that it is not compensation for U.S. pre-invasion “genocide” in Iraq.

“Genocide” is not my term. Rather, it is the term used by the distinguished international diplomats who administered the “Oil-for-Food program,” the soft side of President Bill Clinton’s sanctions (technically, via the UN). The first, Denis Halliday, resigned in protest because he regarded the sanctions as “genocidal.” He was replaced by Hans von Sponeck, who not only resigned in protest with the same charge, but also wrote a very important book providing extensive details of the shocking torture of Iraqis by Clinton’s sanctions, *A Different Kind of War*.

Americans are not entirely protected from such unpleasant revelations. Though von Sponeck’s book was never reviewed, as far as I can determine, it can be purchased from Amazon (for \$95) by anyone who has happened to hear about it. And the small publisher that released the English edition was even able to collect two blurbs: from John Pilger and me, suitably remote from the mainstream.

There is, of course, a flood of commentary about “genocide.” By the standards used, the U.S. and its allies are guilty of the charge over and over, but voluntary censorship prevents any acknowledgment of this, just as it protects Americans from international Gallup polls showing that the U.S. is regarded as by far the greatest threat to world peace, or that world public opinion overwhelmingly opposed the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan (also “unprovoked,” if we pay attention), and other improper information.

I don’t think there are “significant lies” in war reporting. The U.S. media are generally doing a highly creditable job in reporting Russian crimes in Ukraine. That’s valuable, just as it’s valuable that international investigations are underway in preparation for possible war crimes trials.

That pattern is also normal. We are very scrupulous in unearthing details about crimes of others. There are, to be sure, sometimes fabrications, sometimes reaching the level of comedy, matters that the late Edward Herman and I documented in extensive detail. But when enemy crimes can be observed directly, on the ground, journalists typically do a fine job reporting and exposing them. And they are explored further in scholarship and extensive investigations.

As we’ve discussed, on the very rare occasions when U.S. crimes are so blatant that they can’t be dismissed or ignored, they may also be reported, but in such a way as to conceal the far greater crimes to which they are a small footnote. The

My Lai massacre, for example.

On Ukraine winning the information war, the qualification “in the West” is accurate. The U.S. has always been enthusiastic and rigorous in exposing crimes of its enemies, and in the current case, Europe is going along. But outside of U.S.-Europe, the picture is more ambiguous. In the Global South, the home of most of the world’s population, the invasion is denounced but the U.S. propaganda framework is not uncritically adopted, a fact that has led to considerable puzzlement here as to why they are “out of step.”

That’s quite normal too. The traditional victims of brutal violence and repression often see the world rather differently from those who are used to holding the whip.

Even in Australia, there’s a measure of insubordination. In the international affairs journal *Arena*, editor Simon Cooper reviews and deplores the rigid censorship and intolerance of even mild dissent in U.S. liberal media. He concludes, reasonably enough, that, “This means it is almost impossible within mainstream opinion to simultaneously acknowledge Putin’s insupportable actions *and* forge a path out of the war that does not involve escalation, and the further destruction of Ukraine.”

No help to suffering Ukrainians, of course.

That’s also nothing new. That has been a dominant pattern for a long time, notably during World War I. There were a few who didn’t simply conform to the orthodoxy established after Wilson joined the war. The country’s leading labor leader, Eugene Debs, was jailed for daring to suggest to workers that they should think for themselves. He was so detested by the liberal Wilson administration that he was excluded from Wilson’s postwar amnesty. In the liberal Deweyite intellectual circles, there were also some who were disobedient. The most famous was Randolph Bourne. He was not imprisoned but was barred from liberal journals so that he could not spread his subversive message that “war is the health of the state.”

I should mention that a few years later, much to his credit, Dewey himself sharply reversed his stand.

It is understandable that liberals should be particularly excited when there is an

opportunity to condemn enemy crimes. For once, they are on the side of power. The crimes are real, and they can march in the parade that is rightly condemning them and be praised for their (quite proper) conformity. That is very tempting for those who sometimes, even if timidly, condemn crimes for which we share responsibility and are therefore castigated for adherence to elementary moral principles.

Has the spread of social media made it more or less difficult to get an accurate picture of political reality?

Hard to say. Particularly hard for me to say because I avoid social media and only have limited information. My impression is that it is a mixed story.

Social media provide opportunities to hear a variety of perspectives and analyses, and to find information that is often unavailable in the mainstream. On the other hand, it is not clear how well these opportunities are exploited. There has been a good deal of commentary — confirmed by my own limited experience — arguing that many tend to gravitate to self-reinforcing bubbles, hearing little beyond their own beliefs and attitudes, and worse, entrenching these more firmly and in more intense and extreme forms.

That aside, the basic news sources remain pretty much as they were: the mainstream press, which has reporters and bureaus on the ground. The internet offers opportunities to sample a much wider range of such media, but my impression, again, is that these opportunities are little used.

One harmful consequence of the rapid proliferation of social media is the sharp decline of mainstream media. Not long ago, there were many fine local media in the U.S. Mostly gone. Few even have Washington bureaus, let alone elsewhere, as many did not long ago. During Ronald Reagan's Central America wars, which reached extremes of sadism, some of the finest reporting was done by reporters of the *Boston Globe*, some close personal friends. That has all virtually disappeared.

The basic reason is advertiser reliance, one of the curses of the capitalist system. The founding fathers had a different vision. They favored a truly independent press and fostered it. The Post Office was largely established for this purpose, providing cheap access to an independent press.

In keeping with the fact that it is to an unusual extent a business-run society, the U.S. is also unusual in that it has virtually no public media: nothing like the *BBC*, for example. Efforts to develop public service media — first in radio, later in TV — were beaten back by intense business lobbying.

There's excellent scholarly work on this topic, which extends also to serious activist initiatives to overcome these serious infringements on democracy, particularly by Robert McChesney and Victor Pickard.

Nearly 35 years ago, you and Edward Herman published Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. The book introduced the "propaganda model" of communication which operates through five filters: ownership, advertising, the media elite, flak and the common enemy. Has the digital age changed the "propaganda" model? Does it still work?

Unfortunately, Edward — the prime author — is no longer with us. Sorely missed. I think he would agree with me that the digital age hasn't changed much, beyond what I just described. What survives of mainstream media in a largely business-run society still remains the main source of information and is subject to the same kinds of pressures as before.

There have been important changes apart from what I briefly mentioned. Much like other institutions, even including the corporate sector, the media have been influenced by the civilizing effects of the popular movements of the '60s and their aftermath. It is quite illuminating to see what passed for appropriate commentary and reporting in earlier years. Many journalists have themselves gone through these liberating experiences.

Naturally, there is a huge backlash, including passionate denunciations of "woke" culture that recognizes that there are human beings with rights apart from white Christian males. Since Nixon's "Southern strategy," the GOP leadership has understood that since they cannot possibly win votes on their economic policies of service to great wealth and corporate power, they must try to direct attention to "cultural issues": the false idea of a "[Great Replacement](#)," or guns, or indeed anything to obscure the fact that we're working hard to stab you in the back. Donald Trump was a master of this technique, sometimes called the "thief, thief" technique: when you're caught with your hand in someone's pocket, shout "thief, thief" and point somewhere else.

Despite these efforts, the media have improved in this regard, reflecting changes in the general society. That's by no means unimportant.

What do you make of "whataboutism," which is stirring up quite a controversy these days on account of the ongoing war in Ukraine?

Here again there's a long history. In the early postwar period [World War II], independent thought could be silenced by charges of [comsymp](#): you're an apologist for Stalin's crimes. It's sometimes condemned as McCarthyism, but that was only the vulgar tip of the iceberg. What is now denounced as "cancel culture" was rampant and remained so.

That technique lost some of its power as the country began to awaken from dogmatic slumber in the '60s. In the early '80s, Jeane Kirkpatrick, a major Reaganite foreign policy intellectual, devised another technique: moral equivalence. If you reveal and criticize the atrocities that she was supporting in the Reagan administration, you're guilty of "moral equivalence." You're claiming that Reagan is no different than Stalin or Hitler. That served for a time to subdue dissent from the party line.

Whataboutism is a new variant, hardly different from its predecessors.

For the true totalitarian mentality, none of this is enough. GOP leaders are working hard to cleanse the schools of anything that is "divisive" or that causes "discomfort." That includes virtually all of history apart from patriotic slogans approved by Trump's 1776 Commission, or whatever will be devised by GOP leaders when they take command and are in a position to impose stricter discipline. We see many signs of it today, and there's every reason to expect more to come.

It's important to remember how rigid doctrinal controls have been in the U.S. — perhaps a reflection of the fact that it is a very free society by comparative standards, hence posing problems to the doctrinal managers, who must be ever alert to signs of deviation.

By now, after many years, it's possible to utter the word "socialist," meaning moderately social democrat. In that respect, the U.S. has finally broken out of the company of totalitarian dictatorships. Go back 60 years and even the words "capitalism" and "imperialism" were too radical to voice. Students for a

Democratic Society President Paul Potter, in 1965, summoned the courage to “name the system” in his presidential address, but couldn’t manage to produce the words.

There were some breakthroughs in the ‘60s, a matter of deep concern to American liberals, who warned of a “crisis of democracy” as too many sectors of the population tried to enter the political arena to defend their rights. They counseled more “moderation in democracy,” a return to passivity and obedience, and they condemned the institutions responsible for “indoctrination of the young” for failing to perform their duties.

The doors have been opened more widely since, which only calls for more urgent measures to impose discipline.

If GOP authoritarians are able to destroy democracy sufficiently to establish permanent rule by a white supremacist Christian nationalist caste subservient to extreme wealth and private power, we are likely to enjoy the antics of such figures as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who [banned](#) 40 percent of children’s math texts in Florida because of “references to Critical Race Theory (CRT), inclusions of Common Core, and the unsolicited addition of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in mathematics,” according to the official directive. Under pressure, the State released some terrifying examples, such as an educational objective that, “Students build proficiency with social awareness as they practice with empathizing with classmates.”

If the country as a whole ascends to the heights of GOP aspirations, it will be unnecessary to resort to such devices as “moral equivalence” and “whataboutism” to stifle independent thought.

One final question. A U.K. judge has formally approved Julian Assange’s extradition to the U.S. despite deep concerns that such a move would put him at risk of “serious human rights violations,” as Agnès Callamard, former UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, had warned a couple of years ago. In the event that Assange is indeed extradited to the U.S., which is pretty close to certain now, he faces up to 175 years in prison for releasing public information about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Can you comment on the case of Julian Assange, the law used to prosecute him, what his persecution says about freedom of speech and the state of U.S. democracy?

Assange has been held for years under conditions that amount to torture. That's fairly evident to anyone who was able to visit him (I was, once) and was [confirmed](#) by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture [and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment] Nils Melzer in May 2019.

A few days later, Assange was [indicted](#) by the Trump administration under the Espionage Act of 1917, the same act that President Wilson employed to imprison Eugene Debs (among other state crimes committed using the Act).

Legalistic shenanigans aside, the basic reasons for the torture and indictment of Assange are that he committed a cardinal sin: he released to the public information about U.S. crimes that the government, of course, would prefer to see concealed. That is particularly offensive to authoritarian extremists like Trump and Mike Pompeo, who initiated the proceedings under the Espionage Act.

Their concerns are understandable. They were explained years ago by the Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard, Samuel Huntington. He observed that, "Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate."

That is a crucial principle of statecraft. It extends to private power as well. That is why manufacture/engineering of consent is a prime concern of systems of power, state and private.

This is no novel insight. In one of the first works in what is now called political science, 350 years ago, his "First Principles of Government," David Hume wrote that,

Nothing appears more surprising to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular.

Force is indeed on the side of the governed, particularly in the more free societies. And they'd better not realize it, or the structures of illegitimate authority will crumble, state and private.

These ideas have been developed over the years, importantly by Antonio Gramsci. The Mussolini dictatorship understood well the threat he posed. When he was imprisoned, the prosecutor announced that, "We must prevent this brain from functioning for 20 years."

We have advanced considerably since fascist Italy. The Trump-Pompeo indictment seeks to silence Assange for 175 years, and the U.S. and U.K. governments have already imposed years of torture on the criminal who dared to expose power to the sunlight.

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C.J. Polychroniou is a political scientist/political economist, author, and journalist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. Currently, his main research interests are in U.S. politics and the political economy of the United States, European economic integration, globalization, climate change and environmental economics, and the deconstruction of neoliberalism's politico-economic project. He is a regular contributor to *Truthout* as well as a member of *Truthout's* Public Intellectual Project. He has published scores of books and over 1,000 articles which have appeared in a variety of journals, magazines, newspapers and popular news websites. Many of his publications have been translated into a multitude of different languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. His latest books are *Optimism Over Despair: Noam Chomsky On Capitalism, Empire, and Social Change* (2017); *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet* (with Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin as primary authors, 2020); *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic, and the Urgent Need for Radical Change* (an anthology of interviews with Noam Chomsky, 2021); and *Economics and the Left: Interviews with Progressive Economists* (2021).

Beeldvorming in Berichtgeving; Joden toen en Moslims nu



Inleiding

“Heb ik, *in strijd met uw verwijt*, de Nederlandsche gastvrijheid *in het verleden* dankbaar herdacht. Thans echter is van gastvrijheid geene sprake meer, want gij en ik zijn beide staatsburgers met gelijke rechten en plichten. Ik ben *niet* uw gast en gij zijt *niet* mijn gastheer – maar gesteld eens, gij waart het, dan neemt gij de honneurs al vrij gebrekkig waar” (Open brief van A.C. Wertheim aan L.W.C. Keuchenius. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 24 januari, 1891).

“Ik vraag me af of we pas acceptabel zijn voor de VVD als we ons geloof vaarwelzeggen. Moeten we eerst vrijzinnig worden. Wij zijn geen gastarbeiders en al helemaal geen gast. Wij zijn Nederlanders” (Karacaer, 2004).

Met het “Ik ben niet uw gast en gij zijt niet mijn gastheer” reageert het liberale Eerste Kamerlid Wertheim (1832-1897) via een open brief vol zelfvertrouwen op de verwijten van het antirevolutionaire Tweede Kamerlid Keuchenius (1822-1893). Subtiel laat Wertheim weten dat hij niet gediend is van de door Keuchenius toebedachte positie van joden, aan het einde van de 19de eeuw, als gasten en tweederangsburgers in de Nederlandse samenleving. Zij zijn staatsburgers met gelijke rechten en plichten. Een vergelijkbaar citaat “Wij zijn geen gastarbeiders en al helemaal geen gast.” verschijnt ruim een eeuw later in het dagblad *Trouw* over de positie van moslims in de Nederlandse samenleving. Dit citaat van de toenmalig Milli Görüş directeur Haci Karacaer, is een reactie op het liberale VVD Kamerlid Hirsi Ali. Karacaer maakt door het stellen van de (retorische) vraag of moslims pas acceptabel zijn als ze het geloof vaarwelzeggen, de ervaring van ondergeschiktheid nog zichtbaarder dan Wertheim destijds deed.

Beiden reageren op de positie die zij krijgen toegewezen als gast in de samenleving. Hebben zij dan geen gelijke rechten, zoals Wertheim stelt, of

hebben zij wel gelijke rechten, maar moeten zij zich toch eerst aanpassen voordat zij echt gelijk zijn zoals Karacaer vermoedt. Er zijn verschillen tussen beide reacties. Wertheim en Karacaer maken deel uit van twee verschillende religieus etnische gemeenschappen en tussen beide reacties bestaat een tijdsverschil van ruim een eeuw. Toch zijn er ook grote overeenkomsten in hun reacties. Zij reageren op de ondergeschikte positie die anderen (Keuchenius en Hirsi Ali) hen, als joden respectievelijk moslims, in de Nederlandse samenleving toewijzen en zij gebruiken nieuwsbladen [De omschrijving '*nieuwsbladen*' wordt gebruikt, in plaats van de gebruikelijkere omschrijvingen 'dagbladen' of 'kranten', omdat één van de onderzochte bladen een weekblad is] als platform om hun reacties te uiten, terwijl zij geen van beiden journalist zijn.

Het lijkt oude wijn in nieuwe zakken. Natuurlijk, de Nederlandse samenleving aan het eind van de 19e eeuw is niet de huidige Nederlandse samenleving, en joden en moslims behoren niet tot dezelfde religieus etnische gemeenschap. Maar vervang in een 19e-eeuws nieuwsbericht over joden de woorden joden en synagoge door moslims en moskee, pas het woordgebruik aan het huidige Nederlands aan en honderd jaar oud nieuws kan opnieuw als een 21e-eeuwse actualiteit worden uitgevent.

Waarom onderzoek ik de berichtgeving over juist deze groepen, joden en moslims en waarom ben ik geïnteresseerd in de beeldvorming over hen in nieuwsbladen? Wat beide groepen, ondanks grote verschillen, gemeen hebben is dat ze zich een plaats wilden en willen verwerven binnen de Nederlandse samenleving.

Er bestaan op het eerste gezicht veel overeenkomsten tussen de huidige berichtgeving over moslims en de toenmalige berichtgeving over joden, onder meer in de vaak negatieve en problematische boodschap die in de berichten doorklinkt. In hoeverre zijn deze overeenkomsten nog steeds zichtbaar als de berichtgeving systematisch over een langere periode wordt onderzocht? En in hoeverre bestaan er binnen beide perioden verschillen tussen nieuwsbladen in hun berichtgeving? Deze vragen vormden de aanleiding voor mijn onderzoek waarbij ik de berichtgeving over moslims tussen 1990 en 2013 en de berichtgeving over joden tussen 1890 en 1910 systematisch analyseer en vergelijk.

De manier waarop nieuwsbladen over moslims en over joden schrijven, wordt medebepaald door bewuste en onbewuste keuzes die gemaakt worden bij de productie van nieuws door o.a. journalisten, redacties en nieuwsorganisaties

(Galtung en Ruge, 1965). Door de vergelijking kunnen deze keuzes en selecties aan het licht komen. Het gaat hier om keuzes die gemaakt zijn over de onderwerpen of personen die ter sprake komen, de mensen die aan het woord gelaten worden en de gebeurtenissen en gedragingen die aanleiding waren voor een bericht. Wanneer in de berichten over moslims steeds dezelfde onderwerpen en personen aan bod komen, dan is het aannemelijk dat bij de productie van het nieuws voortdurend dezelfde keuzes zijn gemaakt. Wanneer de berichtgeving tussen nieuwbladen niet veel verschilt dan zijn de keuzes over de inhoud van het bericht zeer waarschijnlijk niet exclusief door de journalisten, de redactie of elders binnen de nieuwsorganisatie, maar buiten het nieuwsblad gemaakt. Het nieuwsblad functioneert in een dergelijke situatie vooral als een doorgeefluik van het nieuws.

In de berichtgeving kan elke beschrijving van moslims en joden worden onderzocht, maar in mijn onderzoek gaat het om de beschrijvingen waarin het nieuwsblad niet alleen benadrukt waarover (een onderwerp, persoon of gebeurtenis) het de lezer informeert, maar daarbij ook aangeeft wat (een interpretatie) de lezer daarvan moet denken of vinden (Entman, 2007). Ik ben op zoek naar specifieke interpretaties van de positie van moslims en joden in de samenleving.

Deze interpretaties maken deel uit van een min of meer gesloten (samenhangend) geheel van interpretaties, resulterend in een beoordeling van nieuws, die ik in het vervolg omschrijf als *normatieve referentiekaders*. Deze referentiekaders beschouw ik als normatief omdat zij richtinggevend zijn voor de wijze waarop nieuwbladen onderwerpen, personen en/of gebeurtenissen beschrijven. Wanneer ik deze referentiekaders vaak en met enige regelmaat in de berichtgeving aantref, dan spreek ik van beeldvorming. Beeldvorming die ook zichtbaar kan worden door de aan de referentiekaders gerelateerde aandacht voor bepaalde onderwerpen, personen en gebeurtenissen. Het zijn deze vaste patronen en kenmerken die ik in de berichtgeving over moslims en joden wil achterhalen.

Deze beeldvorming kan per nieuwsblad verschillen en na verloop van tijd veranderen. Berichtgeving en de beeldvorming die daaraan ten grondslag ligt, draagt in een belangrijke mate bij aan de meningsvorming van de lezer en de publieke opinie (Entman, 2007; McCombs, 2004; Lippmann, 1961). Het systematisch onderzoek naar beeldvorming in berichtgeving over moslims en joden kan ons inzicht verschaffen in de rol die media spelen bij het ontstaan of het

verminderen van spanningen rond de positie van minderheidsgroepen in de samenleving.

Dit proefschrift is geen media-effect studie, dus dit onderzoek richt zich niet op de feitelijke beïnvloeding van de publieke opinie door berichtgeving.

Voor de inhoudelijke analyse heb ik voor beide perioden een selectie van berichten uit nieuwsbladen gemaakt. De berichten over moslims uit de periode 1990-2013 zijn afkomstig uit de vijf belangrijkste landelijke dagbladen met een betalend lezersbestand: *NRC Handelsblad*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *Trouw*, *De Volkskrant* en *De Telegraaf* (Bakker & Scholten, 2014). Het gaat om een groot, maar niet volledig, bestand van digitaal beschikbare artikelen. De berichten over joden uit de periode 1890-1910 zijn afkomstig uit: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, *De Telegraaf*, *De Tijd*, *De Standaard*, *Het Volk* en *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad*.

Ik begon allereerst op een nog niet heel systematische manier te grasduinen door de verzameling berichten over moslims uit de periode 1990-2013. Ik vroeg me af waarover de berichten die ik als problematiserend aanmerkte, gingen.

Wat waren de problemen die aan de orde kwamen in deze berichten? Opvallend vaak trof ik in deze teksten het woord integratie of vervoegingen van dit woord aan. Een eerste analyse van de berichten met het woord integratie gaf een gemêleerde verzameling van beelden over moslims te zien, waarbij het regelmatig ging om de vraag wat de plaats van moslims is in de samenleving en hoe die plaats er in de toekomst mogelijk uit gaat zien. In die berichtgeving viel op dat begrippen gebruikt werden die overeenkwamen met de beschrijvingen van emancipatieprocessen door Verwey-Jonker (1983). In de berichtgeving komen naast integratie ook met enige regelmaat de begrippen assimilatie en segregatie voor. De betekenis van deze begrippen ligt niet vast en heeft vaak weinig te maken met de manier waarop Verwey-Jonker (1983) deze in haar analyse gebruikte. De begrippen assimilatie, integratie en segregatie lijken een eigen leven te leiden in het publieke debat en in de berichtgeving. Juist dat 'publieke' gebruik is voor mijn analyse van belang.

Brubaker (2013) spreekt van analytische en gebruikscategorieën om te laten zien hoe dezelfde begrippen enerzijds als analytische concepten worden gebruikt in wetenschappelijk onderzoek, en anderzijds als categorieën in media en publieke debatten, waarbij de betekenis door het veelvuldig en clichématige gebruik niet scherp is af te bakenen of te definiëren. In mijn analyse richt ik mij op de

begrippen assimilatie, integratie en segregatie als gebruikscategorieën. In hoofdstuk 1 ga ik daar wat uitvoeriger op in.

Was het mogelijk om op basis van deze eerste waarnemingen de berichtgeving over joden op een vergelijkbare manier te onderzoeken, en trof ik daarbij dezelfde begrippen aan? Hoewel ik niet altijd dezelfde begrippen vond - integratie komt in deze berichtgeving niet voor - trof ik wel vergelijkbare uitspraken over de plaats van joden in de samenleving aan. De aanwezigheid van deze gelijksoortige thematiek bood mij een aanknopingspunt om een vergelijking tussen de berichtgeving uit beide perioden te maken.

Natuurlijk ligt een vergelijking niet in alle opzichten voor de hand. Het gaat om een totaal andere historische en politiek maatschappelijke context, maar er zijn niettemin opmerkelijke overeenkomsten. Een historische vergelijking tussen de beeldvorming over beide gemeenschappen is ook niet nieuw, maar vormt slechts een klein deel van de literatuur over de vergelijking tussen beide groepen. Ook historisch onderzoek naar de beeldvorming in nieuwsmedia gedurende langere perioden is eerder uitgevoerd (Poorthuis en Salemink, 2006 en 2011). Ik beperk mij in het vervolg van dit onderzoek tot de bespreking van literatuur waarin de beeldvorming wordt vergeleken.

In veel gevallen beperkt de vergelijking zich tot een specifiek deel van beeldvorming, namelijk antisemitisme en islamofobie (Meer, 2013; Klug 2014). In deze studies vormt een negatieve houding ten opzichte van beide groepen het uitgangspunt voor een vergelijking tussen verschillende samenlevingen of tussen verschillende perioden. Farris (2014) kiest voor een historische vergelijking van het 'joodse' vraagstuk in het midden van de 19e eeuw, onder meer verwoord door Bruno Bauer (1809-1882) en Karl Marx (1818-1883), en het 'moslim' vraagstuk zoals dat in de huidige Franse samenleving vorm krijgt. Ook bij haar vormt de geproblematiseerde situatie het uitgangspunt voor de vergelijking van beeldvorming zoals onder meer door een afgedwongen emancipatie van moslims in de Franse seculiere publieke ruimte (Farris, 2014, p. 296). Wertheim (2017) vergelijkt de toetreding van Heinrich Heine tot zijn niet-joodse en christelijke omgeving aan het begin van de 19e eeuw met de toetreding van Hirsi Ali tot haar niet-moslim en seculiere omgeving. Hij vergelijkt beide situaties omdat de keus van Heine en Hirsi Ali om zich volledig aan te passen aan hun omgeving, hen gelijktijdig het verwijt oplevert dat zij door hun aanpassing of assimilatie niet authentiek zijn. Hij beschrijft deze situaties als voorbeelden van de toepassing

van dubbele standaarden voor emancipatie (Wertheim, 2017, p. 268).

Mijn onderzoek sluit aan bij deze historische en diachrone benaderingen. In een aantal opzichten is mijn onderzoek vernieuwend. Vooral de vergelijking van een grote verzameling berichten over twee verschillende groepen gedurende twee lange perioden in een groot aantal nieuwsbladen was tot voor kort niet mogelijk.

Grootschalig en digitaal onderzoek naar recente berichtgeving over moslims is al vaker uitgevoerd. Dit geldt in een veel beperktere mate voor de analyse van de berichtgeving over joden in de periode 1890-1910. De beperkte mogelijkheid om het materiaal digitaal te onderzoeken speelde hierbij een belangrijke rol. Mijn populatieonderzoek (het betreft namelijk een onderzoek waarin alle beschikbare teksten worden gebruikt) is een van de eerste waarin de berichtgeving over joden uit verschillende gedigitaliseerde nieuwsbladen voor een zo lange periode wordt onderzocht. De historische vergelijking die zo mogelijk wordt, levert aanvullende en nieuwe inzichten op over de berichtgeving over moslims nu en joden toen. Het brengt andere maatschappelijke, historische en mediafactoren aan het licht, die bij een vergelijking van de berichtgeving over één gemeenschap of over één periode niet altijd zichtbaar worden.

Met deze historische vergelijking van de berichtgeving over beide groepen beantwoord ik de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

Waarin onderscheidt de beeldvorming over moslims in Nederlandse nieuwsbladen tussen 1990 en 2013 zich van de beeldvorming over joden in Nederlandse nieuwsbladen tussen 1890 en 1910? Wat zijn de overeenkomsten en verschillen, en hoe zijn deze te verklaren?

Zoals gezegd, onderzoek ik niet alle beschrijvingen van moslims en joden, maar alleen beschrijvingen en interpretaties die betrekking hebben op hun positie in de samenleving. Juist hierin zijn opmerkelijke overeenkomsten te zien in de berichtgeving over joden toen en moslims nu, hetgeen vergelijking interessant maakt. De wijze waarop ik deze beschrijvingen en interpretaties categoriseer, gebruikmakend van de begrippen assimilatie, segregatie, integratie en dominantie, bespreek ik uitgebreid in hoofdstuk 1. In hetzelfde hoofdstuk schets ik een beeld van de toenmalige Nederlands joodse gemeenschap en de huidige Nederlandse moslingemeenschap. Daarmee plaats ik de berichtgeving over beide groepen binnen hun historische en maatschappelijke context.

In het tweede hoofdstuk beschrijf ik hoe ik de berichtgeving ga onderzoeken. Eerst bespreek ik verschillende vergelijkbare studies naar de beeldvorming over beide gemeenschappen in beide perioden in Nederlandse media en ga ik na op welke wijze zij deze beeldvorming hebben onderzocht. Vervolgens ga ik in op de door mij gekozen 'mixed methods' benadering (Creswell, 2003), waarin ik kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve analysemethodes combineer bij mijn onderzoek.

Media- en communicatietheorieën vormen een belangrijke schakel bij de mogelijke verklaring van de uitkomsten van de afzonderlijke deelonderzoeken en de onderlinge vergelijking. In hoofdstuk drie bespreek ik een aantal theorieën over de selectie en de productie van nieuws, de rol van media, de positie van nieuwsbladen ten opzichte van andere nieuwsmedia in de samenleving, destijds en nu. Voor een deel zijn deze theorieën op beide situaties van toepassing, maar wat betreft de positie van nieuwsbladen ten opzichte van andere nieuwsmedia en de samenleving in het algemeen zijn er duidelijke verschillen aan te wijzen, die ik in hoofdstuk drie uitvoerig zal bespreken. Ondanks de verschillen tussen beide perioden bestaat de huidige berichtgeving over moslims, net als de berichtgeving over joden rond 1900, nog steeds voor een belangrijk deel uit geschreven teksten die met behulp van dezelfde methode kunnen worden onderzocht en vergeleken. Ik had ervoor kunnen kiezen om wat betreft de berichtgeving over moslims ook gebruik te maken van digitale media. Dit zou echter tot methodologische en inhoudelijke problemen leiden die ik in hoofdstuk 2 bespreek.

Om te onderzoeken welke onderwerpen, personen en gebeurtenissen regelmatig voorkomen in de berichtgeving over moslims en joden, heb ik, net zoals voor de beschrijvingen van hun de positie in de samenleving, zoekopdrachten met combinaties van zoektermen ontwikkeld. Deze zoekopdrachten verschillen voor de beide onderzoeken. De uitwerking hiervan staat centraal in hoofdstuk 4.

Na aandacht te hebben besteed aan geldigheid en betrouwbaarheid van de methode van onderzoek, sluit ik het vierde hoofdstuk af met het analyseplan. Ik beschrijf daarin de opzet van de inhoudsanalyse en de uitwerking van de probleemstelling in de onderzoeksvragen voor beide deelonderzoeken.

De uitkomsten van beide deelonderzoeken bespreek ik in twee afzonderlijke hoofdstukken. Hoofdstuk vijf bespreekt de uitkomsten van de analyse van de berichtgeving over moslims. Als eerste presenteer ik de belangrijkste onderwerpen, de toonaangevende nieuwsactoren en gebeurtenissen in deze

berichtgeving. Daarna bespreek ik de mogelijke samenhang tussen de aandacht voor deze nieuwselementen en de weergave van de posities in de samenleving in de berichtgeving. Verder kijk ik naar verschillen of overeenkomsten in de bladen wat betreft hun berichtgeving over moslims. Onderscheidt een zogenaamde populaire krant als *De Telegraaf* zich in de berichtgeving over moslims sterk van de berichtgeving in bijvoorbeeld *Trouw*? Na bespreking van de resultaten van de kwantitatieve analyse bespreek ik de beeldvorming zoals die naar voren komt in de uitkomsten van een kwalitatieve analyse van een aantal specifieke, door mij op basis van beschreven criteria geselecteerde, artikelen. Zo'n analyse is noodzakelijk om inzicht te krijgen in het type betogen en de talloze variaties daarbinnen die met een kwantitatieve analyse niet kan worden verkregen.

Op een vergelijkbare wijze behandel ik in hoofdstuk 6 de uitkomsten van de analyse van de berichtgeving over joden. Bij de selectie van nieuwsbladen heb ik rekening gehouden met hun maatschappelijke achtergrond, zo heeft het *Algemeen Handelsblad* een liberale, *Het Volk* een socialistische en hebben *De Tijd* en *De Standaard* een religieuze achtergrond. Het is daarom interessant om na te gaan of deze verschillen ook leiden tot een andere berichtgeving over joden. Het feit dat een van de onderzochte bladen het *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* is, maakt de onderlinge vergelijking van de nieuwsbladen mogelijk nog interessanter. Wat betekent het als de berichtgeving over joden afkomstig is van een joods nieuwsblad en in hoeverre wijkt deze berichtgeving af van de overige nieuwsbladen? Wordt een eigen kleur zichtbaar of lijkt de berichtgeving sterk op de berichtgeving van een algemener nieuwsblad zoals het *Algemeen Handelsblad*?

De mogelijkheid om de berichtgeving over joden door een joods nieuwsblad te onderzoeken, is ook interessant voor de vergelijking met de huidige berichtgeving over moslims. Er is namelijk geen met het *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* vergelijkbaar islamitisch nieuwsblad beschikbaar. In hoeverre wordt dit verschil zichtbaar als we de resultaten van beide analyses met elkaar vergelijken?

De feitelijke vergelijking van beide deelonderzoeken vindt plaats in het zevende hoofdstuk. Ik bespreek de belangrijkste overeenkomsten en verschillen in de beeldvorming over moslims en over joden. Ik zal deze verklaren met behulp van mediatheorieën, de veranderde maatschappelijke positie van nieuwsbladen en de historisch maatschappelijke context waarbinnen de berichtgeving verschijnt.

In de epiloog ga ik in op de betekenis van dit onderzoek voor de berichtgeving in

het huidige debat over de positie van moslims en daarmee voor de huidige journalistieke praktijk.

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Chomsky: US Policy Toward Russia Is Blocking Paths To De-Escalation In Ukraine



Noam Chomsky

Russia's war in Ukraine is producing an earthquake in international affairs. The war has raised new questions about national security across Europe and is [shaking up energy geopolitics](#). In addition, the war seems to be creating new divisions between the Global North and the Global South while Russia and China strengthen their strategic relationship.

In the interview that follows, world-renowned scholar and leading dissident Noam Chomsky addresses some of the new developments taking place in the world system on account of Russia's assault on Ukraine. Chomsky also ponders the question of whether Vladimir Putin can be prosecuted for war crimes in light of the mounting evidence that brings to mind the atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II. [Recent evidence](#) also indicates that Ukrainian forces have also engaged in war crimes by killing captured Russian soldiers.

Chomsky, who is internationally recognized as one of the most important intellectuals alive, is the author of some 150 books and the recipient of scores of highly prestigious awards, including the Sydney Peace Prize and the Kyoto Prize (Japan's equivalent of the Nobel Prize), and of dozens of honorary doctorate degrees from the world's most renowned universities. Chomsky is Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT and currently Laureate Professor at the University of Arizona.

C. J. Polychroniou: The war in Ukraine has turned Russia into a pariah state throughout Europe and North America, but Moscow continues to receive support from many countries in the Global South. The strategic relationship between Russia and China seems to be getting stronger, although both countries had identified each other as major factors for maintaining order and stability in an "emerging polycentric world" long before Putin and Xi Jinping. In fact, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said following a recent meeting with his Chinese counterpart that the two countries are working together to advance a vision of a new world order, a new "democratic world order." Is the new world order one that pits Global North and Global South countries against each other? And what do you make of the statement of Russia and China working together to promote a new "democratic world order?" To me, the idea of two autocratic states working together to promote democracy across the world sounds like a crude joke.

Noam Chomsky: The idea that Russia and China will be working together to promote a "democratic world order" is, of course, ludicrous. They will be doing so in much the way that the U.S. was laboring to "promote democracy" in Iraq, the goal of the invasion as President Bush announced when it became clear that the "single question" — will Saddam abandon his nuclear weapons program? — had been answered the wrong way. With rare exceptions, the intellectual class and even most scholarship leaped to attention and vigorously proclaimed the new doctrine, as I suppose is also the case today in Russia and China.

As U.S.-run polls showed, Americans enthralled by the “noble” goals belatedly proclaimed were even joined by some Iraqis: [1 percent of those polled](#). Four percent thought the U.S. invaded in order to help Iraqis. The rest concluded that if Iraq’s exports had been asparagus and pickles, and the center of global petroleum production was in the South Pacific, the U.S. wouldn’t have invaded.

I don’t pretend to have any expert knowledge, but from my own experience in past weeks with the Global South — press, many interviews and meetings, much personal discussion — it doesn’t seem to me quite accurate to say that it is supporting Moscow, except in the sense that Moscow is getting support from the Western powers that keep paying it for petroleum products and food (probably by now the source of Russia’s main export earnings).

My impression is that the Global South has sharply condemned the Russian invasion, but has asked: “What’s new?” The general reaction to President Biden’s harsh condemnation of Putin as a war criminal seems to be something like this: *It takes one to know one*. We agree that he is a war criminal, and as creatures of the Enlightenment, we adopt the Kantian principle of universality that is dismissed with contempt by the West, sometimes with angry charges of whataboutism.

It is, after all, not easy for people in the civilized world — increasingly, the Global South — to be impressed by the “moral outrage” of Western intellectuals who just a few years ago, when all the horrific facts were in, were enthusiastically applauding the success of the invasion of Iraq, [spouting pieties](#) about noble intentions that would have embarrassed the most abject apparatchik. And we can just imagine the reaction when they read the pious [invocation of the Nuremberg judgment](#) by the editors of *The New York Times*, who are just now coming to recognize that, “To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime: it is the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.” The accumulated evil includes the instigation of ethnic conflict that has torn apart not only Iraq but the whole region, the horrors of ISIS, and much more.

Not, of course, what the editors have in mind. The supreme international crimes that they have supported for 60 years somehow escaped the Nuremberg judgment.

While there is appreciation in the Global South for the fact that at long last

Western intellectuals and the political class are coming to perceive that aggressors can commit hideous crimes, they seem to feel that it is perhaps a little late, and curiously skewed, as they know from ample experience. They are also able to perceive that Westerners consumed with moral outrage over the crimes of enemies are still able to maintain their usual silence while their own leaders carry out terrible crimes right now — in Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, Western Sahara, and all too many other places where they could act at once, and expeditiously, to mitigate or end these crimes.

Let's turn to the "strategic relationship between Russia and China." It does indeed seem to be strengthening, though it is not much of a partnership. The corrupt Russian kleptocracy can provide raw materials and advanced weapons to the economic system that Beijing is systematically establishing through mainland Asia, reaching also to Africa and the Middle East, and by now even to U.S. domains in Latin America. But not much more. Russia's role in this highly unequal relationship is, I think, likely to diminish further, much as Europe's international role is likely to diminish after Putin has handed Europe on a golden platter to the U.S.-run "Atlanticist" system, a gift of substantial significance, as [we've discussed before](#).

Can China help end the war in Ukraine? If yes, what's stopping Beijing from using its influence over Moscow for a peace agreement to be reached in Ukraine?

China could act to advance the prospects for a peaceful negotiated settlement in Ukraine. It seems that the Chinese leadership sees no advantage in doing so.

China's "information system" appears to be pretty much [conforming](#) to the Russian propaganda line. But more generally, it doesn't seem to diverge much from a fairly common stance in the Global South, illustrated graphically by the [sanctions map](#). The states joining in sanctions against Russia are in the Anglosphere and Europe, as well as Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. The rest of the world condemns the invasion, but is mostly standing aloof.

This should not surprise us. It is nothing new. We recall well that the Iraq invasion had virtually no global support. Less familiar is the fact that the same was true of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11. A few weeks after the invasion, an international [Gallup](#) poll asked the question: "Once the identity of the [9/11] terrorists is known, should the American government launch a military

attack on the country or countries where the terrorists are based or should the American government seek to extradite the terrorists to stand trial?”

The wording reflects the fact that their identity was not known. Even eight months later, in his first major press conference, FBI Director Robert Mueller could only affirm that al-Qaeda was suspected of the crime. If the poll had asked about actual U.S. policy, the very limited support would doubtless have been even lower.

World opinion overwhelmingly favored diplomatic-judicial measures over military action. Opposition to invasion was particularly strong in Latin America, which has a little experience with U.S. intervention.

The free press spared Americans knowledge of international opinion. It was therefore able to [proclaim](#) that “the opposition [to the U.S. invasion] was mostly limited to the people who are reflexively against the American use of power.”

Quite a few suffer from this malady, apparently. Global opinion today should come as no great surprise.

China’s unwillingness to devote its efforts to a negotiated settlement of the Ukraine conflict deserves criticism, but it is hard to see how such criticism can properly come from Americans. After all, China is adhering to official U.S. policy. Simply put, the policy is to “fight to the last Ukrainian for Ukrainian independence” while offering no way to save Ukraine from further tragedy. Even worse, current policy undermines such hopes by informing Putin that he has no way out: It’s The Hague or proceed to destroy Ukraine.

The quote and the opinions just paraphrased are those of one of the most astute and widely respected U.S. diplomats, [Ambassador Chas Freeman](#), who goes on to spell out the options, and to remind us of the history.

Like anyone who cares in the least about the fate of Ukrainians, Ambassador Freeman recognizes that the only alternative to Russian destruction of Ukraine — which, with their backs to the wall, Putin and his narrow circle of [siloviki](#) can implement — is a negotiated settlement that will be ugly, offering the aggressors an escape. He also carries the history back further than we have done in our earlier discussions, back to the Congress of Vienna of 1814, which followed the

Napoleonic Wars. Metternich and other European leaders, he observes, “had the good sense to reincorporate [defeated] France into the governing councils of Europe,” overlooking its virtual conquest of Europe. That led to a century of substantial peace in Europe, which had long been the most violent part of the world. There were some wars, but nothing like what preceded. The century of peace ended with World War I.

Freeman goes on to remind us that the victors in the war did not have the good sense of their predecessors: “The victors — the United States and Britain and France — insisted on excluding Germany from a role in the affairs of Europe, as well as this newly formed Soviet Union, the result was World War II and the Cold War.”

As we’ve discussed earlier, a leading theme throughout the Cold War was the status of Europe: Should it subordinate itself to the U.S. within the Atlanticist-NATO framework, the U.S. preference? Or should it become an independent “third force” along Gaullist lines, accommodating Russia within a Europe without military alliances from the Atlantic to the Urals?

The question arose starkly when the USSR collapsed, and Mikhail Gorbachev outlined the vision of a “common European home” with no military alliances from Lisbon to Vladivostok. In a limited form, the concept was revived by French President Emmanuel Macron in his recent abortive interchanges with Putin.

If there had been anyone in the Kremlin who resembled a statesman, they would have leaped at the opportunity to explore something like the Gorbachev vision. Europe has strong reasons to establish close relations with Russia, ranging from commerce to security. Whether such efforts might have succeeded, avoiding the Ukraine tragedy, we can only guess. The answer could only have been found out by trying. Instead, the hard men in Moscow turned to violence, compounding their criminal aggression with self-defeating foolishness.

The Gorbachev conception had some partial U.S. support within the framework of the Partnership for Peace, a U.S. initiative intended to provide a cooperative security system with a limited relation to NATO. Ambassador Freeman, who had a significant role in establishing it, describes its fate in words that are worth heeding:

What happened in 1994, which was a midterm election year, and 1996, which

was a presidential election year, was interesting. In 1994, Mr. Clinton was talking out of both sides of his mouth. He was telling the Russians that we were in no rush to add members to NATO, and that our preferred path was the Partnership for Peace. The same time he was hinting to the ethnic diasporas of Russophobic countries in Eastern Europe — and, by the way, it's easy to understand their Russophobia given their history — that, no, no, we were going to get these countries into NATO as fast as possible. And in 1996 he made that pledge explicit. [In] 1994 he got an outburst from [Boris] Yeltsin, who was then the president of the Russian Federation. [In] 1996 he got another one, and as time went on, when Mr. Putin came in, he regularly protested the enlargement of NATO in ways that disregarded Russia's self-defense interests. So, there should have been no surprise about this. For 28 years Russia has been warning that at some point it would snap, and it has, and it has done it in a very destructive way, both in terms of its own interests and in terms of the broader prospects for peace in Europe.

None of this provides any excuse for Putin's invasion, Freeman emphasizes. But it is important to understand that, "There were those people in the United States who were triumphalist about the end of the Cold War.... This allowed the United States to incorporate all the countries right up to Russia's borders and beyond them, beyond those borders in the Baltics, into an American sphere of influence. And, essentially, they posited a global sphere of influence for the United States modeled on the Monroe Doctrine. And that's pretty much what we have."

Russian leadership tolerated Clinton's violation of the firm U.S. commitment to Gorbachev not to extend NATO beyond East Germany. They even tolerated George W. Bush's further provocations, and U.S. military actions that struck directly at Russian interests, undertaken in such a way as to humiliate Russia. But Ukraine and Georgia were red lines. That was clearly understood in Washington. As Freeman continues, no Russian leader was likely to tolerate the NATO expansion into Ukraine that began after the 2014 "coup, [carried out] to prevent neutrality or a pro-Russian government in Kiev, and to replace it with a pro-American government that would bring Ukraine into our sphere.... So, since about 2015 the United States has been arming, training Ukrainians against Russia," effectively treating Ukraine "as an extension of NATO."

As [we've discussed](#), that stance became explicit policy in Biden's September 2021

[official statement](#), possibly a factor in Russia's decision to escalate to direct aggression a few months later.

Crucially, to repeat, current U.S. policy is to “fight to the last Ukrainian” while offering no way to save Ukraine from further tragedy and in fact undermining such hopes by informing Putin that he has no way out: It's The Hague or proceed to destroy Ukraine.

China is probably relatively satisfied with the course of events. Very likely the same is true in Washington. Both have gained from the tragedy. And the euphoria among weapons and fossil fuel producers is unconcealed as they lead the way toward indescribable catastrophe, underscored in vivid terms by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [report](#) of April 4.

Turkey's position over the war in Ukraine is to maintain neutrality while acting as a mediator in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis. Can Turkey continue to maintain such a balancing act since we know that it has been supplying military assistance to Ukraine since 2019 and that it is aligned with the geo-strategic vision of Washington over Ukraine?

Turkey has had an ambiguous position in global affairs for many years. It is a member of NATO, but the EU has rejected its appeals for membership on human rights grounds. In the 1990s, Turkey was indeed responsible for hideous crimes: its massive state terror against its Kurdish population, leaving tens of thousands dead, 3,500 towns and villages destroyed, a flood of hundreds of thousands of people from the devastated Kurdish regions to miserable slums in Istanbul. The crimes were mostly concealed by the “free press,” perhaps because Clinton was pouring arms into Turkey, the flow escalating as atrocities mounted. Turkey became the leading recipient of U.S. military aid (apart from Israel-Egypt, a separate category), extending a very close correlation between human rights abuses and U.S. aid that goes far back, but somehow does not detract from its much-lauded nobility.

By 2000, Turkish state crimes were abating, and in the following years the situation greatly improved — something I was able to witness personally, with much appreciation. By 2005, under President Recep Erdoğan's increasingly harsh rule, the progress ended and reversed. That might have been in part a reaction to the continued refusal of the European Union to accept Turkish membership,

ignoring the great steps forward in recent years and fortifying the sense that Europeans simply won't accept Turks into their club.

Since then, Erdoğan's rule has become far more brutal, again targeting Kurds but also attacking civil and human rights on a broad front. And he has been trying to turn Turkey into a major actor in regional affairs, with hints of a renewed Ottoman caliphate. He accepts Russian weapons over strong U.S. objections but remains a central part of the NATO system of regional — by now global — dominance. The “balancing act” with regard to Ukraine is a case in point.

If Turkey can facilitate negotiations that will bring the Ukraine horrors to an end, that will be a most welcome development, to be applauded. We can only speculate about what the chances are while the U.S. insists on perpetuating the conflict “to the last Ukrainian” while blocking an ugly negotiated settlement that is the alternative to destruction of Ukraine and perhaps even nuclear war.

Russian gas continues to flow to Europe although Putin had demanded that European governments pay for it in rubles. What would be the impact in the geo-strategic relations between Europe and Russia if the former became independent from Russian gas?

It doesn't look likely in the near future. Europe could manage to end the use of Russian coal and oil, but gas is a different matter. That requires pipelines, which it would take years to build, or transport facilities for liquified natural gas that barely exist. But the question we should be asking I think is different. Can we ascend to the wisdom of the reactionary tyrants who provided Europe with a century of peace in Vienna in 1814? Can we move towards the Gorbachev vision of a European common home with no military alliances, a conception not too far from the U.S.-initiated Partnership for Peace that was undermined by President Clinton? Can some resemblance to statesmanship appear in today's Russia? Such questions as these should, I think, be in the forefront of our thinking, and our active engagement in trying to influence discussion and debate, and policy choices.

Evidence of Russian war crimes is mounting. Can Putin be prosecuted for war crimes in Ukraine?

Prosecution for war crimes, in the real world, is “victor's justice.” That was clear from the Nuremberg Tribunal and was not even concealed in the accompanying

Tokyo Tribunal. At Nuremberg, saturation bombing of densely settled urban areas was excluded because it was a specialty of the Allies. German war criminals were exculpated if they could show that the Allies carried out the same crimes. In subsequent years, the Nuremberg principles were thrown out the window. They have only recently been discovered as a cudgel to beat official enemies.

There can be no thought of trying the U.S. for its many horrendous crimes. An effort was once made to bring the U.S. to justice for its war against Nicaragua. The U.S. responded to the International Court of Justice orders to end the crimes by sharply escalating them while the press dismissed the court as a “hostile forum” as shown by its daring to convict the U.S. (per *The New York Times’s* editors), following ample precedent.

Putin might be tried for crimes if he is overthrown within Russia and Russia can be treated as a defeated country. That is what the record indicates.

Imaginably, the world might rise to a level of civilization in which international law can be honored instead of righteously wielded against selected targets. We should never cease efforts to bring that about. In doing so, we should not succumb to the illusions fostered by the global doctrinal systems.

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