



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on August 30, 2010

Elites Push Government-funded "Public" Media

The Aspen Institute hosted its annual Forum On Communications And Society (FOCAS) August 15-18 in Aspen, Colorado, exploring the theme of "News Cities: The Next Generation of Healthy Informed Communities." Sponsored by the Aspen Institute and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the FOCAS gathering is the latest in a series of conferences and publishing events aimed at boosting the idea that the federal government should pump tens of billions of tax dollars into America's newspapers, broadcast news, and activist "citizen media."



The [aim of FOCAS 2010](#) is to advance the recommendations of the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy (Knight Commission), which were spelled out in the Commission's 2009 report, [Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age](#).

Those recommendations include calling on Congress to:

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[I]ncrease the funding available for the transformation and localization of America's public media....

Authorize increased support for public media, including increases for news and information at the local level....

Appropriate funds to help support local community "Geek Corps" that involve young adults 18-26 in providing technical training and consultation to local governments and community groups.

The Commission's ["Conclusion and Call to Action"](#) states: "The Commission has directed many of its recommendations to government agencies and officials. They are far more likely to respond if their constituents are campaigning day-in and day-out for a pro-information agenda."

And to insure that "constituents are campaigning day-in and day-out," the Knight Foundation and similarly-minded tax-exempt foundations (Ford, Carnegie, Rockefeller, MacArthur, etc.) fund a large network of media activists, organizations, and think tanks calling for a "pro-information agenda" that invariably involves ever-expanding government funding for the media.

Big Media, Big Foundations, Big Government, Big Money

On July 14, Rupert Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* provided Lee C. Bollinger, the president of Columbia University, with generous space for an op-ed entitled "Journalism Needs Government Help." The crux of his appeal was contained in the subtitle: "Media budgets have been decimated as the Internet facilitates a communications revolution. More public funding for news-gathering is the answer."

"[T]he financial viability of the U.S. press has been shaken to its core,"? Bollinger wrote. "The proliferation of communications outlets has fractured the base of advertising and readers. Newsrooms



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have shrunk dramatically and foreign bureaus have been decimated."

"The institutions of the press we have inherited are the result of a mixed system of public and private cooperation," says Bollinger. "Trusting the market alone to provide all the news coverage we need would mean venturing into the unknown — a risky proposition with a vital public institution hanging in the balance."

Bollinger (a member of the board of directors of the *Washington Post*) is a big fan of socialized media, praising Communist China's "news" agencies, as well as the British BBC and our own PBS and NPR. "Ironically," he notes, "we already depend to some extent on publicly funded foreign news media for much of our international news—especially through broadcasts of the BBC and BBC World Service on PBS and NPR."

Bollinger continues:

To me a key priority is to strengthen our public broadcasting role in the global arena. In today's rapidly globalizing and interconnected world, other countries are developing a strong media presence. In addition to the BBC, there is China's CCTV and Xinhua news, as well as Qatar's Al Jazeera. The U.S. government's international broadcasters, like Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, were developed during the Cold War as tools of our anticommunist foreign policy. In a sign of how anachronistic our system is in a digital age, these broadcasters are legally forbidden from airing within the U.S.

This system needs to be revised and its resources consolidated and augmented with those of NPR and PBS to create an American World Service that can compete with the BBC and other global broadcasters. The goal would be an American broadcasting system with full journalistic independence that can provide the news we need. Let's demonstrate great journalism's essential role in a free and dynamic society.

Bollinger's claims and premises went largely unchallenged by the mavens of the mainstream media. Indeed, his call for government funding is music to their ears. Many, apparently, have no problem with his implied message that government-funded media — not only the BBC and Al Jazeera, but CCTV and Xinhua news — are the shining exemplars of "full journalistic independence" and "great journalism" that will lead us to a "free and dynamic society." We are not aware that any journos of the "prestige press" bothered to ask Bollinger some fairly obvious and elementary questions, such as: How many investigative stories have CCTV and Xinhua news done on the ongoing Communist persecution of Christians, Muslims, and Falun Gong in China? How many have they done exposing Beijing's ongoing policies of genocide in Tibet? How many editorials criticizing the Beijing regime's brutal One-Child policy or its extensive censorship of the Internet? How many editorials have criticized any of the Communist Party's decisions or government policies?

As for the vaunted BBC, to take just one example, consider how slavishly it has flogged the "global warming" hysteria for years, refusing to give coverage to the wide array of world-renowned scientists that dissent from the Al Gore "climate crisis" thesis. And how did BBC deal with exposure of the "Climategate" email scandal at East Anglia University's Climate Research Unit last year? Well, it has since come to light that BBC knew about the emails before other media did, but had suppressed them. To compound its culpability, over the past months the BBC has given only spotty, grudging coverage to this hugely important issue and, for the most part, has continued to push its "crisis" bias, the corollary to which is that we need global government controls over all human-generated CO₂. Which means, of



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course, government controls over all human activity.?

Bollinger's appeal for a Mussolini-style public-private cartelized media is more fully explicated in his book, *Uninhibited, Robust, and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century* published by Oxford University Press this year — to rave reviews and beaucoups favorable media coverage, naturally, from the usual intelligentsia who demand the right to forcibly extract from us the wherewithal to fund what they deem appropriate for us to read, watch, and listen to. Yes, the title and the content are an incredible, oxymoronic mismatch — like dry water or socialist free enterprise. But Bollinger's message resonates with the higher powers who seek to transform America. Within days after his WSJ editorial paean to the fascist-socialist-corporatist media model, [Bollinger was voted in](#) as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the New York Federal Reserve, the lead bank in the Federal Reserve System that has been fanatically pushing the fascist-socialist-corporatist model for all sectors of our economy.

Variations on Bollinger's government-must-save-journalism theme have been proliferating over the past year. The institutions, organs, and venues promoting it include: the [USC/Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism](#), *Nation* magazine, the [Aspen Institute](#), the [Free Press](#), the [Knight Foundation/Knight Commission](#), [PBS](#), Rep. Henry Waxman, the [Los Angeles Times](#), and the [Columbia Journalism Review](#).

The Pratt House Matrix and "Ruling Class Journalists"

Big Media has been the handmaiden to Big Government for decades. Now that the Internet and independent media are challenging the statist game plan, Big Media and Big Government are desperately seeking to formally legitimize their longstanding illicit affair. To longtime observers it is not in the least surprising that the key players in this perverse Big Government-Big Media-Big Foundation symbiosis seem to hale disproportionately from the membership roster of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

Like the slime trail that leads to the slug, most of the major efforts to centralize, nationalize, and cartelize political and economic power over the past century can be traced back to the CFR and the matrix of corporations, foundations, think tanks, and universities its members dominate. So it is with the current push to have the federal government fund and control more and more of the media. Dr. Bollinger (of Columbia University and the Federal Reserve) is a CFR member. As are Alberto Ibarra, president and CEO of the Knight Foundation and Walter Isaacson, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute, key operatives leading the FOCAS campaign.

Listed as "FOCAS 2010 leaders and experts" are CFR members Marcus Brauchli (the *Washington Post*), Alberto Ibarra, (besides heading the Knight Foundation he is also chairman of both the World Wide Web Foundation and the Newseum in Washington, D.C.), Vivian Schiller (National Public Radio), Paul Steiger, (ProPublica), Ernest J. Wilson III (Annenberg School for Communication), Norman Ornstein (American Enterprise Institute), Charlie Firestone (Aspen Institute), Barbara Cochran and (University of Missouri School of Journalism).

It goes on and on. Another significant voice in the government-media merger choir is Geoffrey Cowan (CFR), co-author of the USC/Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism 2010 study, *Public Policy and Funding the News*. Cowan, who headed the Voice Of America under President Clinton, is director of the Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, dean emeritus of the USC Annenberg School and USC University Professor, and holds the Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership.



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The CFR's "Profile of the Membership" in its 2008 Annual Report lists 398 members as journalists, correspondents, and editors. That includes members such as:

Michael P. Hirsh (*Newsweek*)
Jim Hoagland (*Washington Post*)
Fareed Zakaria (*Time*, CNN)
Thomas Friedman (*New York Times*)
Erin Burnett (CNBC)
Ethan Bronner (*New York Times*)
Paula Zahn (Discovery cable channel)
Heather Nauert (Fox News)
Norman Podhoretz (*Commentary* magazine)
Tom Brokaw (NBC)
Lesley Stahl (CBS)
Andrea Michell (NBC)
Elaine Sciolino (*New York Times*)
Diane Sawyer (ABC)
Deroy Murdock (Scripps Howard News Service and National Review Online)
David Ignatius (*Washington Post*)
Alan S. Murray (*Wall Street Journal*)
Jim Lehrer (PBS)
Margaret Warner (PBS)
Judy Woodruff (PBS)
Christopher Dickey (*Newsweek*)
Mortimer Zuckerman (*U.S. News & World Report*)

The above list barely scratches the surface of the elite media folks tied to Pratt House, the New York headquarters of the Council, located at 58 East 68th Street in Manhattan. The nearly 400 "Journalists, Correspondents, and Editors" counted on the CFR rolls does not include the many additional CFR members who are the executive officers of major media corporations. They may or may not be publicly well known but they are the bosses of the more visible members of the Fourth Estate. These include CFR members such as:

Michael Bloomberg (Mayor of New York City, founder/owner Bloomberg L.P.)

Rupert Murdoch (chairman, CEO News Corporation)

Jeffrey Bewkes (Chairman, CEO of Time Warner, in which capacity he oversees Time, CNN, TNT, HBO, TBS, Warner Bros., etc.)

Christopher Isham (CBS News vice president), and Barry Diller (IAC/InterActiveCorp and *Washington Post*).

In addition to the above-mentioned individual members there are CFR Corporate Members, which are major financial supporters of the CFR and its programs and agenda. The media organizations that have become CFR Corporate Members include Time Warner, ABC Inc., Bloomberg, News Corporation, General Electric (NBC Universal), Google, Thomson Reuters, and the *Washington Post*.

The *Washington Post's* ombudsman and columnist Richard Harwood detailed the CFR's domination of his own profession in an October 30, 1993, column tellingly entitled "Ruling Class Journalists." In what



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was a rare admission (and/or boast) from a CFR establishment journal, Harwood characterized CFR members as "the nearest thing we have to a ruling establishment in the United States."

Harwood wrote:

In the past 15 years, council directors have included Hedley Donovan of Time Inc., Elizabeth Drew of the *New Yorker*, Philip Geyelin of *The Washington Post*, Karen Elliott House of the *Wall Street Journal*, and Strobe Talbott of *Time* magazine...

The editorial page editor, deputy editorial page editor, executive editor, managing editor, foreign editor, national affairs editor, business and financial editor and various writers as well as Katharine Graham, the paper's principal owner, represent *The Washington Post* in the council's membership.

The executive editor, managing editor and foreign editor of the *New York Times* are members, along with the executives of such other large newspapers as the *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times*, the weekly news magazines, network television executives and celebrities, Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw and Jim Lehrer, for example, and various columnists, among them Charles Krauthammer, William Buckley, George Will and Jim Hoagland.

Harwood noted that the CFR's Ruling Class Journalists (CFR-RCJ) "do not merely analyze and interpret foreign policy; they help make it." And not only foreign policy, of course; they have also had (and continue to have) a huge hand in making domestic policy as well. They are not content, however, with the illicit power they already wield. They are upset that millions of Americans refuse to accept their direction and continue to seek news and information from sources beyond the control (as yet) of the CFR-RCJ thought cartel. So they are trying to build a fake public consensus in favor of taxing the American public to provide the CFR-RCJ cartel with tens of billions of dollars in government funding to force us to hear and see and read what they think is important for us. Get ready for more barrages in this propaganda campaign. And, in the meantime, you may want to blunt the momentum these folks are trying to build for this campaign by contacting your Senators and U.S. Representative and letting them know that you oppose all subsidies and bailouts for the media.

[FTC Memo Threatens Free Press](#)

[Media Bias: Demonizing the Right](#)

[MSNBC's Matthews: Fear Mongering Over "New Right"](#)

[JournoList Story Confirms Liberal Media Bias](#)

[Media Censorship of Pro-life Rallies Backfiring](#)

[Media Bias Against Traditional Values](#)

Photo: Jonathan Klein, President of CNN, U.S., speaks at the Council on Foreign Relations, Sept. 10, 2009 in New York.: AP Images



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