

Who Needs Truth When There's Revisionism?

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Abstract

Just when you think you've heard it all Just a couple weeks ago, President George W. Bush let loose what we in Texas parlance (at least among polite company) term "a whopper" (no, not the hamburger). First he went on news saying how we needed to get more results from Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri [...]

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Just a couple weeks ago, President George W. Bush let loose what we in Texas parlance (at least among polite company) term "a whopper" (no, not the hamburger). First he went on news saying how we needed to get more results from Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki's Administration, and start seeing real progress. This coming right on the heels of the Iraqi ministry taking a month of vacation while the life-or-death issues of this "fledgling democracy" teetering on the brink are put on hold with all the urgency of reviewing a bill on water allocation to farmers. Seemingly, give-'em-hell-George appeared to be lighting a fire under the Prime Minister.

Then at almost breakneck direction change, the Mr. Bush calls another press conference to reiterate his "unwavering" support of Al-Maliki, and blasting critics calling for his ouster. He goes on to chide the critics of Al-Maliki, noting, "it's not up to the politicians in Washington, D.C., to say whether he will remain in his position. That is up to the Iraqi people who now live in a democracy and not a dictatorship."

Odd that Georgie would bring that up because a mere year and a half ago, it was Ibrahim Al-Jaafari that appeared poised to be re-elected as Prime Minister in Iraq. Unfortunately for him, the White House wanted none of that. The Bush Administration insisted Al-Jaafari step down, and Al-Jaafari dug in his heels initially and refused. With no small amount of arm-twisting, and some help by enlisting the cleric Ali Sistani to show that Al-Jaafari's obstinance would hold the nation back, the man who the Iraqi Parliament would've elected stepped aside.

The man that Iraq's Parliament on whole were not so keen on (especially the Sunni segment), was instead "democratically elected" - with a little help and wisdom from their neighbors halfway across the globe! Hey, we would expect nothing less in our own democracy, right?

And while Bush's words sounded like the typical beat-up-a-Democrat, Congress-been-keeping-me-back rhetoric, he was actually responding to critics within his own party.

The astonishing part of all of this was ... Bush did this with a straight face! More impressive, virtually

no one called him on it!

It's something we've seen a startling increase in, especially in the 21st century: Real-Time Revisionism. Unlike other examples in history, these days revisionism can't wait for the history-book writers to massage the facts in a decade or two. No, history is now revised now in the span of a mere year or two.

This brand of nuanced politic-speak has been perfected to an art form by the Bush / Cheney Administration, most notably with the Iraq War mission creep. Revisionism has also become a well-used defense or attack strategy by the RNC, and to good effect. And in typical RNC fashion, as long as you say it loudly enough and long enough (especially if you shout the challengers down) it becomes fact. It's notably helpful to have the press in your pocket, where they can participate in spreading the desired outcome of what's already past.

To be sure, this isn't strictly a conservative trait. Indeed some of their counterparts have watched their success with revision and wish to duplicate for themselves.

It's become a concept that's in vogue in the GLBT political community as well. It's not a new approach by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) as they've used this to lesser success over the years. Lately, however, it's become much more forward, particularly with a sales push to the transgender community.

Claims made about their historical "support" of inclusive language in either Hate Crimes or Employment Non-Discrimination bills fly directly in the face of reality. In later years they've taken note of the pressure of other GLBT organizations pushing them to get with the program that most others adopted years ago: actively pushing for trans-inclusive language. It hasn't stopped them from trying to support language such as the Senate bill that has gender only as they attempted to slide with in the previous Congress.

Now, with the assistance of a few trans leaders they tap to assist in getting their marketing message to the transgender community, the message is all about how they've supported us all along. Ahem, nice try.

Even one of the transgender organizations is now claiming they themselves has always supported fully inclusive language - i.e. gender identity. Yet it completely contradicts their helping market the message from HRC, which was "gender", in order to become the insiders in 2003 - 2004. Even the explanations given about this discrepancy were explained away as being done to please legislative lawyers from these allied organizations. Yet they too wish to rewrite reality simply to assuage guilt or puff up their legacy.

The bottom line, both of these organizations wish to retroactively change their past behavior. Physically that's impossible, but revising history is much easier, requires no difficult stands to be taken, and as the GOP has shown, is successful. At least it's successful as long as you can intimidate the rest into not pointing it out or making an issue of it.

Therein is the key to successful revisionism: complacency by those of us who see it and who should say something about it, but don't. If we let it slide, then we deserve the kind of false history we'll get.

Those who actively succeed in real-time revisionist history, whether conservative or liberal, all have common traits. Revisionists want no responsibility for their actions. Sure, everyone wishes they could

all have a "free pass," but nobody gets that. In fact, these very same revisionists will be the first one to hold others accountable.

Revisionists are also keen on having a storybook legacy - they just don't want the muss and fuss of actually going through the hardships to accomplish it.

We as a nation need to begin pulling in the slack, and not giving free passes to this behavior. We should all start questioning the equivocating speech by nailing them down on the specifics and keeping it on record.

If revisionism is allowed, then why bother expecting accountability? What's the point of truth? It's a sad day when money buys our history and we never live to know fact.

"Life 'tis all a cheat
Fooled with hope, men favor the deceit
Trust on, and think tomorrow will repay
Tomorrow's falser than the former day."
from the play "Aureng-Zebe" by John Dryden

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