

1984 in 2021: We're Doing Big Brother's Job for Him

George Orwell's classic dystopia *1984* describes a future (as of 1949, the year of its publication) in which a totalitarian state attempts to control both present and future by modifying the past. The novel's protagonist, Winston Smith, works at the Ministry of Truth, "rectifying" past news accounts:

"[T]he Ministry of Plenty had issued a promise ... that there would be no reduction of the chocolate ration during 1984. Actually, as Winston was aware, the chocolate ration was to be reduced from thirty grammes to twenty at the end of the present week. All that was needed was to substitute for the original promise a warning that it would probably be necessary to reduce the ration at some time in April."

Disturbing, yes, but a prediction fail on Orwell's part. The political class's openly stated desire for a Ministry of Truth to suppress "misinformation" on social media notwithstanding, there's little evidence that it needs any such brute mechanism to let it have its way with the facts.

Circa 2021, mainstream media spend most of their ink and bandwidth uncritically regurgitating, and affirming their faith in, the political establishment's preferred narrative of the moment.

The collapse of Afghanistan is a perfect example.

How many cable news talking heads have we watched nodding at each other like chickens pecking corn as they discuss how, well, of COURSE the US had to invade in Afghanistan in 2001, because the Taliban wouldn't turn over Osama bin Laden? Quite a few.

How many of those same talking heads even mention that the Taliban offered to turn over bin Laden upon presentation of evidence that he was behind the 9/11 attacks? Or that then-President George W. Bush declined the offer and chose to invade anyway? Any?

It's not just Afghanistan or foreign policy.

From the delta variant panic-pandering of "public health authorities" and mainstream media, one wouldn't know that COVID-19 deaths in the US are at a quarter of their pandemic high. Or, given the constant emphasis on "the chiiiiiiiiiiiiidren," that COVID-19 has killed fewer than 400 Americans (out of a total of nearly 625,000) in the under-18 age bracket since the pandemic began.

Those "public health authorities," with the aid of compliant media, have given themselves whiplash over the last 18 months from constantly reversing themselves on policy and

science, entreating us all to trust them and hide under our beds.

No Ministry of Truth had to “rectify” the public record to put these whoppers over on us.

The information is freely available and easily accessible.

But the mainstream media either don't want us to know it, or can't be bothered to know it themselves. And, for the most part, the same is true of the rest of us.

As Orwell's language framers would put it, “doubleplusgood.”