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The ever changing story: Anatomy of a typical US military propaganda campaign

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One month later, after the bombings of a village in western Afghanistan that killed up wards of 150 civilians, we now get [this](#) half assed admission of culpability on the part of the US military.

The US military is now saying that "errors" were made in the air strikes last May 4th that resulted in over a hundred civilian deaths. Oh, they are still claiming that most killed were "Taliban" (what the Pentagon and their pocket poodle American media call anyone who take up arms against the holy selfless Paladins of the US military in Afghanistan). And they are still hinting that this "Taliban" is responsible but this new story, a month later, is in stark contrast to first initial responses of the US military on this bombing- which were, in my opinion, outright lies made up out of whole cloth.

[This is a well worn pattern for our federal military.](#) A sizable clump of peasants with unpronounceable names from an equally unpronounceable village on the other side of the globe are slaughtered by a drone, air strike, or troops on the ground. The initial story appears complete with quotes from locals, local officials, and aid workers- many if not all going on the record and giving their names- on or near the scene that lay out the basic facts of the story- that the US killed a bunch of civilians. And within hours of this come the denials from the US military. And not just any denials but creative ones. If not denying outright that anyone was killed at all (which is sometimes their first reaction) the US military will then offer up their own story in which the evil "Taliban" or "Al Qaeda in Iraq" killed the civilians in question. The sources for the military's side of the story are almost never named, were no where near the incident, and have no first hand knowledge of the event in question at all.

This doesn't stop our "liberal" media from giving the stories from anonymous military sources far removed from the atrocity equal if not more weight than the named local sources on the ground.

This recent bombing is unusual in one respect however, the speed in which their story has changed. Usually the US military staggers out their changing story lines on events like these over a period of months if not years . . . long past the time that anyone remembers or cares and long after the headline has faded. The text book case for this propaganda technique is the [Pat Tillman episode](#) in which the truth was kept from emerging by the military (and some say it still hasn't emerged) for literally years. The Jessica Lynch propaganda campaign is another example of this technique. The Lynch campaign was an even more successful campaign than the Tillman one. At least we were spared a movie of the week that put the deliberate lies of the US military about Tillman's death on the boob tube for millions to suck up without question. We were not so lucky when it came to the Lynch fairy tale which was [put on the silver screen by NBC](#) in a matter of only a few months (don't hold your breath for that filthy lie of a movie to be rerun anytime soon.)

What these stories all have in common is that they involved deliberate lies on the part of the US military. Not lies of omission. Not "mistakes". Not "misquotes". Not "confusion". Lies. These were stories that were invented out of whole cloth when the truth was known and knowingly fed to an unquestioning semi government controlled and highly consolidated corporate media for them to disperse to an equally unquestioning (and uncaring) American public.

The US military knew Pat Tillman wasn't killed in glorious combat by the "Taliban" the day he was killed. They knew he was killed by his own troops. They, and the Bush White House, knowingly spread an elaborate lie about his death. Then- as this lie was questioned they invented new lies, each time slowly admitting to a piece of the real story. The same with the Jessica Lynch "rescue" story. And it is the same here, in this recent bombing case. Some "communications" office of the US military invented lies and spread them to a media that would give them equal, if not more weight, than the real story given to them by sources on the ground.

[Here](#) is one of the first initial stories on the May 4th bombing in Afghanistan. That AP story was written by named reporters which is in contrast to later stories from AP on this bombing that gave the military's side and that quoted anonymous US officials and were written by AP anonymous "staff"). In that story are quoted numerous local officials, residents, and eye witnesses all of whom say that US bombs killed up wards of a hundred civilians, mostly women and children.

[Now here is a CNN story](#) reporting the US military side of the story about a day later. Their story is that the Taliban entered the village, chopped off three heads (cause that is what the Taliban does- cause they are the Taliban and remember- when they are not doing that [they are killing puppies](#)) and then herded a bunch of women and children together- killed them with hand grenades- and then waved down some American fighter planes to bomb the area to make it look like the US did the deed. None of the quoted US "officials" who gave this story are named. We have no idea who they are or their proximity to the actual event. Their ridiculous anonymous

story has now been given the same weight as the first initial story that has named sources of actual people on the ground near the event, some of whom who actually witnessed it!

Funny, you would think that in the first story from AP that quotes the locals they would have mentioned be-headings and the Taliban grenading civilians to death or at least might have mentioned that they heard something like that or that the possibility existed that the deaths were due to the Taliban?

That is what you call a "Big Lie". That phrase gets thrown around carelessly a lot by people as it references a propaganda technique used by the Nazis. I am not using that phrase lightly. The story that the "Taliban" killed people with grenades and then got the US to bomb buildings so they could blame the US is a "Big Lie" and it was knowingly invented and spread by the US military to our media. There were no "reports" that these "US officials" were citing that this is what happened. There was no "intel" that the Taliban killed these people. There were no "indications" that this was the case. This was a lie- invented and spread on purpose for the purpose of diffusing the story. It was thought up in a military "communications" office somewhere- probably during a "brainstorming" meeting. It was then story boarded and disseminated to their Rolodex of reliable mainstream media press stenographers who call themselves "journalists" and who grant these professional liars automatic and unconditional anonymity. I imagine that a phone conference was held with the [big Network "Military Analysts"](#) as well- in which they were fed this garbage can story to spread around while being "interviewed" by our hired for their hairdos media personalities.

It doesn't matter if this first initial "Big Lie" won't hold up. It doesn't have to. It just has to float around for the first few days along with the initial story and facts. A good third of Americans will believe the "Big Lie" without question. Another third will believe some of it. And any critics will be put on the defensive. Most impressions of the event were formed in the first week of reporting. As time goes on the story fades and few minds will be changed and the "Big Lie" will have done its job even if exposed as not being the truth a month later by one or two media stories.

Now this "Big Lie" didn't hold up long. [And within days the story began to change](#) from one to the next. With each day a slight change in the story occurring until the initial absurd story of an evil wandering band of Taliban serial killers who somehow manage to keep getting support despite being rabid killers of their own women and children has all but been discarded but for vague claims of their somehow being "responsible".

This military/government media managing method is the reason why there are still sizable chunks of the American public that think [Saddam Hussein was behind 9/11](#), that think Osama Bin Laden and him were best buddies, that think OBL hid in lairs [like this](#), that think [Iraq was behind the Anthrax attacks](#), and that now think [equally absurd things about Iran](#).

Here is how this event was "reported" and commented on by Bill O'Reilly on his show the "O'Reilly Factor" that same week:

Stomach churning isn't it? The lies and distortions in that clip could merit their own thesis paper by a journalism grad student. Note the hit on Obama and Hillary. Portraying those two warmongers and wholly reliable Beltway stooges as being "soft" - is classic two party fraud Kabuki Theater. So now a "debate" has been generated that pits the "liberal" warmongers against the "conservative" warmongers over an "issue" that is at heart- a lie itself. That, in a nutshell, represents all "debate" on foreign policy (and most issues of import) in this country- they take place in an utter fantasy land of lies.

And note the portrayal of the "corrupt media". The [reich wing's](#) idea of a "corrupt liberal media" is one that doesn't sound like the Soviet media agency, TASS, reporting [primitive propaganda](#) about happy dancing Afghan children who are thrilled to be under Soviet occupation circa 1985. The "liberal media" chimera is central to the ongoing [kook-i-fi-cation](#) and marginalization of the GOP. All but the most absurd lies of the Pentagon and their media allies are dismissed out of hand by the military worshiping wastrel remnant of the GOP faithful because anything not sourced from one of their own bona fide lie factory propaganda outfits is dismissed out of hand as being "liberal".

This "Big Lie" about the "liberal media" is dangerous because whole swaths of Americans are being removed from any semblance of reality. What was once a legitimate conservative complaint about American corporate media on a whole range of social issues has been cynically hijacked and abused by the Pentagon and used to stem off any criticism of the military as being inherently "leftist" and "liberal." And if I may address directly any GOP "conservative" faithful who may have, by some miracle, actually read this far- this isn't 1969. This is 2009. Opposition to these wars in the ME isn't inherently "leftist". It isn't "communist". There is, in fact, nothing "conservative" about these wars in the slightest. Secret 5th columnist commie hippies are not trying to "fool you" with lies so the Red Army can come in through Canada and "take us over". Get over the Vietnam era template of dirty anti-war "leftists" and patriotic war supporting "conservatives". That paradigm is deader than Lenin. Support for these wars is in fact, a radical pro big government and Washington DC loving position that is not grounded, in any way, shape, or form to anything that could be called conservative. Stop being dupes for Neocons!

How much longer will we have to wait for the military to admit the full truth of the events of last May 4th? They may never admit the full truth. If they are not further challenged, and it appears that they won't be, then they will simply let stand their last string of lies on the matter. Maybe a year from now, maybe two, a "report" will come out that will all but admit to the facts of the initial story- that in no way bears any resemblance to their initial lies about the Taliban herding women and children together and grenading them to death. But no one will notice or care. And besides- three more "accidents" will have occurred in the meantime which will keep our press reporting whole new lies.