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ENGAGING AMERICAN FAMILIES IN OUR NATION'S SECURITY

Fraud, Waste, and Sabotage

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"A few blows from a sledge hammer in the right place, can stop a power station working *[sic]*."

George Orwell

George Orwell, in his [1942 essay entitled "The Meaning of Sabotage,"](#) discussed the ability of a few within Europe to significantly inhibit the workings of Hitler's military industrial base. His description of active, physical sabotage was instructive; but he also explained the concept of "passive sabotage" - a form of willful demolition that is much less recognizable as such. This type of vandalism can be accomplished by slowing processes; encouraging confusion, complexity and chaos; and otherwise "preventing it [e.g. the system, organization, etc.] from working smoothly."

If Orwell were alive to analyze the current status of U.S. federal bureaucracies, what would his findings be? Can fraud and waste be categorized as vandalism? Do our federal systems work "smoothly?" If not - why?

The extent to which governmental megasystems have become bogged down in red tape, regulatory obstacles, remunerative favoritism, and politically biased tendencies should be obvious, at this point, to even the casual observer. Extensive scandals associated with the VA, IRS, GSA, EPA, OPM, DOJ, and other "alphabet soup" organizations that would have been unimaginable 15 or 20 years ago seem almost as if ripped from the pages of an Orwellian novel. Confusion, complexity and chaos? Yes! Sabotage? Perhaps. Intent may be hard to prove, yet it appears that there is plenty of circumstantial evidence.

What about waste? In addition to the wasteful spending on vacant buildings and unused property, reports of bad accounting practices and unwanted/unnecessary "stimulus" projects fuel the fire of taxpayer fury. Billions of dollars have been spent on dubious research, programs such as commodity advertisements, subsidies for alternative energy sources, community restoration and entertainment (beach re-sanding, private golf courses, teen centers), "humanitarian" benefits (broadband access, cell phones), and unneeded equipment (jets, airplanes, cars, tanks, office decor). Some estimates include at least a few billion dollars of the huge amounts exported under the label "foreign aid." Is there waste? Unquestionably.

Fraud? There have been payments to non-existent disaster victims, for falsified IRS filings, and fraudulent health care claims. These con-jobs are, of course, entirely separate from the fraud associated with undocumented interorganizational monetary and personnel diversions as well as a whole host of legislative "earmarks" that are of no obvious benefit to anyone other than the legislators proposing them (which have included big ticket items such as bridges and airports). Fraud? Absolutely.

Can fraud, waste, and malfeasance on the grand scale detected in recent years be considered methods of sabotage? When the mere mention of a government agency or department conjures up images of corruption to the extent that political cartoonists can capitalize on associated scandals as a general theme identifying the organization, there is a problem. When such a problem exists over a broad spectrum of governmental bodies, one must wonder if the biblical "four horsemen" have found their way to Washington, D.C.

Yet few perpetrators, if any, are held accountable - and those who eventually are may have only been following someone else's lead. Instigators seem to be able to shield themselves against allegations of

impropriety by finding convenient scapegoats. Experienced instigators may be among those who rise to the top of the organizational structure they have infiltrated, thereby gaining even more cover.

Orwell, in 1942, applauded European saboteurs who threw wrenches into the works of German wartime machinery, while [other authors wrote about German sabotage](#) happening within the borders of Allied nations. Subversive activities that are now more associated with movies, were then very real. WWII-era spies worked to destroy the political systems that employed them. Often, unknowing accomplices assisted these saboteurs in their efforts.

Could that be happening here - and now? Interestingly, claims of subversion are usually deflected with ridicule and accusations of "conspiracy theory," if not McCarthyism. Deflection is a tool of spies and their "useful idiots" to be used as a calculated maneuver for covert operations. Thus, the use of deflection by character assassination (which is rarely accompanied by rigorous, unbiased assessment) should be seen as an indictment of the accuser, as opposed to the individual who is trying diligently to raise a red flag of concern. Regardless, those who immediately retreat from tactics of vilification, do nothing more than accommodate assailants and facilitate their objectives.

Does sabotage need intent? As defined in the U.S. legal code, yes. But a plethora of witting and unwitting accomplices may become involved and could be held legally accountable (depending on specific circumstances, of course). In fact, the actual saboteur(s) may only be guilty of ideological provocation. The recruitment of accessories ("cannon fodder") for the "dirty work" allows the real villain(s) to escape undetected by virtue of plausible deniability and a lack of provable intent.

Sabotage? Not only are our bureaucratic systems at the federal level not working smoothly, in many ways they are not working at all. Failure on such a massive scale seems coincidental, at best. Sabotage should at least be investigated and, if found not to be applicable, ruled out.

This must be done soon. Should an equivalent of Orwell's "few blows from a sledge hammer in the right place," or even a less discernable "passive sabotage" be in actual operation, and deflection is allowed to prevail, all bets are off for the survival of this sovereign nation.

*This is an expanded version of an op-ed that ran in The Gettysburg Times on July 26, 2016.



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