

Obama Administration Closes In On Control of Media

FTC draft report includes five new possible taxes as ways to fund media and limit freedom of the press.

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Conservatives have been rightly worried that the Obama administration would target the 2nd Amendment and try to take away our gun rights. But it turns out liberals are starting with the 1st and trying to seize control of the American media.

No, the black helicopters are not flying overhead and all of my aluminum foil is in the kitchen where it belongs. This is real, this is dangerous and the federal government, the left and many in the media are trying hard to make it happen.

Forget how much the media already adore Obama. The Federal Trade Commission just released what it called "[Potential Policy Recommendations to Support the Reinvention of Journalism](#)," a 47-page terrifying bureaucratic plan to insinuate government into the very information that forms the basis for democracy. The draft document is just in time for the FTC's third workshop on the future of journalism June 15. Coming on the heels of the government's new \$350-billion national broadband plan, this shows an extensive attempt by the Obama administration to seize control of the press.

No one doubts journalism needs "reinvention." Every industry does on a regular basis. But what is the FTC, and for that matter Congress, the FCC and more doing messing with journalism? Butting in where they don't belong.

This is the simplicity of what they are trying to mess with, our Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

That doesn't matter to the left. And many journalists, too. They're desperate for funding and for a career future. Their industry is facing hard times and that's what they care about. So a coalition of hard-left groups, some respected journalists like The Washington Post's Vice President Len Downie, and a horde of Big Government types are trying to make you bail out journalism and fund a new, openly leftwing replacement.

This has been going on for more than a year and was viewed by many as a non-starter. The press has written little about the idea while prominent members of the media have attended the hearings or written reports asking for a handout.

It's not just the press. It's groups like the George Soros-funded Free Press, founded by Robert McChesney, a strident lefty. McChesney, who once edited what his own website calls an "[independent socialist magazine](#)," now wants to socialize American news

media. He and a coauthor recently came out with a book called “The Death and Life of American Journalism.”

You don’t have to read its recommendations – just look at the FTC report. It’s rife with them. Every page seems filled with their “reasoning” and illogic implying that postal subsidies from early America amount to a justification for full support of left-wing media by our government. Earlier this year, the authors appeared on PBS calling for a \$30-billion annually to fund the “public good” of journalism.

But the FTC report doesn’t quote everything McChesney says, just the more palatable comments. He’s also a guy who has defended [Venezuela’s nutball dictator Hugo Chavez](#) and his attacks on that nation’s media.

Of course, anything coming out of the Obama administration is also automatically about taxes. This working paper mentions some form of the word “tax” 95 times in 47 pages. If government wants to make the media dependent on it for cash, it has to tax us to do so.

The paper listed five possible new taxes to pay for a “Citizenship Media Fund.” Those include a \$4 billion tax on consumer electronics like your TV or iPod; a \$5-6 billion advertising tax; and a tax on both ISP and cell phone bills.

It also listed a host of other possible solutions for the problems that impact journalism – everything but the free market. That concept is foreign to the same administration that seized control of Wall Street, Detroit and our health care system.

At the very same time this has been happening, the National Hispanic Media Coalition whined to the FCC about “‘hate speech’ on talk radio and cable broadcast networks,” according to [The Hill](#). The coalition, which includes a variety of lefty groups such as Common Cause and La Raza, wants the FCC to shut down speech it doesn’t like on cable and talk radio – in other words, Fox and conservative stations.

While their complaint avoided naming names, it’s obvious what’s going on here. Left-wing groups pressure the government to fund media even more than we do now for PBS/NPR. Then they pressure the government to regulate conservative media they don’t like. And the Obama administration gets to pull it all together and come up with a Big Government solution that taxes all of us to support new media alternatives that are forever tied to that Big Government.

There is still [time to comment](#) and tell the FTC they have no right to mess with press freedom, but don’t expect your view to be heard unless conservatives scream loud and long about this. In third world nations, the left would send troops or rioters to TV stations and newspapers to seize complete control of the media. Here they try to do it with the FCC and FTC.

Don’t let them.