



## **Ex-CIA officer Ray McGovern on confronting war criminals**

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**Aaron Maté (AM):** I'm curious, Ray, for your reflections on your personal experience with the media. You used to be prominently featured; I remember, Donald Rumsfeld gave a speech, I think it was in Atlanta, and you confronted him in the audience. And when you did- and there was video of that- and when you did that, that was like top news on MSNBC. Keith Olbermann was the anchor at the time, he prominently featured it. I met you through Democracy Now where you used to consistently appear. I'm curious about your own experience with mainstream media and how it's evolved to where it is today and whether you think there's less space today allowed for dissent or more.

**Ray McGovern (RMG):** There's less space for sure. That mini debate with Rumsfeld, which took four minutes, was in Atlanta on the 4th of May 2006. Now, there was a whole confluence of circumstances that made that possible for me to be on TV that night. First of all, it was at noon, early enough. Second of all, it was on CNN. It was on C-SPAN. It was captured live. Third of all, it was consistent with what a couple of people had done a couple of months before, challenging Rumsfeld. And fourth of all, I was allowed not to be dragged out screaming. I was allowed to conduct a sensible debate. Now, that made it so that CNN had it, and CNN was going to run it. Therefore, its competitors needed to run it as well because it was news. They had enough time to check it out. And they did. Olbermann in those days was pretty good and he did check it out and saw that what Rumsfeld was saying was untrue and what I said was true. But that was a unique set of circumstances where they just couldn't avoid having me on. In the event, well, let me just add, what's his name? Anderson Cooper. He calls me up. I'm still trying to get out of this auditorium. And he said, Mr. McGovern? And I say, Yeah?! This is Anderson Cooper. I like to have you on my show tonight, but I want to ask you a question. So, what was that? He said, well, why weren't you, like, weren't you afraid? And I thought for a second, I said, wait a second. This is the heir to the Vanderbilt fortune. This is the pretty boy on CNN. And he has a point here. I said, Anderson, actually, you know, I had done a lot of homework and I knew that if I got a chance

to ask, I'm going to ask him a real question. It was a real high. Oh, actually, you may want to try doing that sometime. Get some prepared questions that mean something. You know, you'll find us a real high. You try that. Okay. Now I thought I would have embarrassed Anderson Cooper. Not so. I got on his show two hours later. What does he start with?! Mr. McGovern, weren't you afraid? I mean, these journalists don't have any idea. But don't be afraid. It's our tradition not to be afraid. So all I'm saying here is that it was a unique set of circumstances. That's the only time I got on- that I can remember- that I got on all the networks that night, almost all of them. And even then, they tried to tilt it around. Paula Zahn says, So how long have you had this animus toward the Secretary of Defence? So that's the way that ran.

**Max Blumenthal (MB):** Well, we actually have that clip right now and I want to play it so we can segway into the next topic because I need to take a 30 second break. Ray, thank you so much for being so generous with your time and staying with us. Let's watch Ray McGovern own Donald Rumsfeld. And this is at a different time when sage voices like his were actually allowed on mainstream media and got interviewed by people. I don't know if you can call him a journalist, Ray, but Anderson Cooper had you on. We know who he's afraid of. He's afraid of those who are responsible for fuelling his ambitions; the executives at CNN. But you obviously weren't afraid here. And this is a totally different time when hundreds of thousands of people were marching against Bush's Republican war. And it's before, I guess, flash forward 15 years or so, and George W. Bush has been rehabilitated and the only people holding him accountable are Russian pranksters, impersonating Zelensky.

**RMG in Video:** And so I would like to ask you to be upfront with the American people. Why did you lie to get us into a war that was not necessary, that has caused these kinds of casualties? Why?

**Donald Rumsfeld (DR) in Video:** Well, first of all, I haven't lied. I did not lie then. Colin Powell didn't lie. He spent weeks and weeks with the Central Intelligence Agency people and prepared a presentation that I know he believed was accurate. And he presented that to the United Nations. The president spent weeks and weeks with the Central Intelligence people, and he went to the American people and made a presentation. I'm not in the intelligence business. They gave the world their honest opinion. It appears that there were none weapons of mass destruction there.

**RMG in Video:** You said you knew where they were.

**DR in Video:** I did not. I said I knew where suspect sites were and we were just using...

**RMG in Video:** You said you knew where they were; near Tikrit, near Baghdad and northeast, south and west of there. Those are your words.

**DR in Video:** In my words, my words were that... No, no, no, no, wait a minute, wait a minute. Let him stay one second. Just a second.

**RMG in Video:** This is America, huh?

**DR in Video:** You're getting plenty of play, sir.

**RMG in Video:** I just like an honest answer.

**DR in Video:** I'm giving it to you.

**RMG in Video:** We are talking about lies and your allegation that there was bullet-proof evidence of ties between al Qaeda and Iraq. Was that a lie? Or were you misled?

**DR in Video:** Zarqawi was in Baghdad during the prewar period. That is a fact.

**Max Blumenthal (MB):** He was not.

**RMG in Video:** Zarqawi. He was in the north of Iraq in a place where Saddam Hussein had no role.

**DR in Video:** He was also in Bagdad.

**RMG in Video:** Yeah, when he needed to go to the hospital. Come on, these people aren't idiots. They know the story.

**DR in Video:** You are... Let me give you an exact example. It's easy for you to make a charge. But why do you think that the men and women in uniform every day when they came out of Kuwait and went into Iraq, put on chemical weapon protective suits. Because they like the style?! They honestly believed that there were chemical weapons. Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons on his own people previously. He'd use them on his neighbours, the Iranians, and they believed he...

**AM:** With Rumsfeld's help...

**RMG in Video:** That's what we call a non sequitur. It doesn't matter what the troops believed. It matters what you believe.

**Speaker in Video:** [00:07:48] I think, Mr. Secretary, the debate is over. We have other questions in person to your audience.

**MB:** How come no one does that anymore? I mean...

**AM:** By the way, look, we could do a whole show of clips of Ray confronting these former officials. You've also confronted Jim Clapper. Right, Ray?

**MB:** Hillary Clinton.

**RMG:** Hillary. Yeah, well, Hillary, I didn't say anything. I got wrapped up anyway. Spent the night in jail.

**MB:** They injured you in that event?

**RMG:** Yeah, that was... Well, you know, I've been injured. I've been appealing to people my age. There's a sympathy factor in play here. Americans don't like old people to get beat up. And so I've been encouraging my colleagues of a certain age to put their bodies into it. Young people, yeah, they get beat up. They have a comment on them. Old people, not so much. And so I think it's come to that. I'm saying that in all seriousness, we can complain and we can worry about being deplatformed, but I would just invoke one other thing, and that is what I call the Noah Principle. No more awards for predicting rain. Awards only for building arks. We have to be smart enough. I think we are. We have to be smart enough to figure out how to platform ourselves forever, to build the kind of ark that people will be attracted to and seek as an alternative source of information. I dare say that I've thought for a long time that the fault in our inability to do that is not in our stars, but in ourselves. Let's do it. Let's figure out a way to do the kinds of things that Julian Assange showed us could be done to good effect. Thanks a lot for having me on. Appreciate it very much. Well, au reservoir [goodbye until we meet again], as they say in French.

**END**