

Written Representation 113

Name: Yam Yi Jie

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Deliberate online falsehoods, otherwise known as fake news, can be very damaging. However, it is unfortunate that the mainstream media does not identify those fake news which are truly damaging and continues to report them as real news, while being ignored by current anti-fake news laws.

During the Gulf War in October 1990, a Kuwaiti teenager Nayirah al-Sabah, who claimed to be a nurse, testified that Iraqi soldiers had taken babies out of incubators in a hospital and left them to die. In 1992, it was found out that Nayirah was actually the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the USA, Saud al-Sabah. It was also found out that babies in Kuwaiti hospitals had died, but they had not been taken out of incubators by Iraqi soldiers. Rather, they died after hospital staff fled from invading Iraqi forces.

On 26 February 1991, when Iraqi forces withdrew from Kuwait, US aircraft started bombing retreating Iraqi military and civilian vehicles on Highway 80 between Kuwait and Iraq, destroying hundreds of them and killing many of the passengers. The highway became known as the "Highway of Death". The bombing has been described as a war crime.

In support of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said: "It is clear to everyone, unless that person wears blinkers, that this is a war to remove the weapons of mass destruction from Saddam Hussein." Singapore sent SAF servicemen to Iraq in 2003 to support the NATO coalition and continues to send servicemen to this day to aid in operations against ISIS. No chemical weapons were found. Also, it must be noted that ISIS was allowed to rise because of Iraq's destabilization following Hussein's toppling.

On 4 April 2017, at the height of the Syrian Civil War, a chemical attack occurred in the town of Khan Shaykhoun. US President Donald Trump accused Syrian government forces of carrying out the attack even though there was no concrete evidence, and authorized a missile strike on Shayrat Air Base, destroying several aircraft and killing 9 civilians in nearby villages. The Syrian military claimed that they had bombed a rebel-held factory containing chemical weapons, and that terrorist groups such as ISIS were responsible for the attack.

The solution to fake news is for people to turn off the mainstream media, the weapon of mass deception, and question everything.