

British press baron Lord Northcliff said, "News is something that someone, somewhere wants to keep secret, everything else is advertising." If this is true, then U.S. government funding of Reporters Without Borders must be news, because the organization and its friends in Washington have gone to extraordinary lengths to cover it up. In spite of 14 months of stonewalling by the National Endowment for Democracy over a Freedom of Information Act request and a flat denial from RSF executive director Lucie Morillon, the NED has revealed that Reporters Without Borders received grants over at least three years from the International Republican Institute.

The discovery of the grants reveals a major deception by the group, which for years denied it was getting any Washington dollars until some relatively small grants from the NED and the Center for a Free Cuba were revealed.

The I.R.I., an arm of the Republican Party, specializes in meddling in elections in foreign countries, as a look at NED annual reports and the I.R.I. website shows. It is one of the four core grantees of the NED, the organization founded by Congress under the Reagan administration in 1983 to replace the CIA's civil society covert action programs, which had been devastated by exposure by the Church committee in the mid-1970s (Ignatius, 1991). The other three pillars of the NED are the National Democratic Institute (the Democratic Party), the Solidarity Center (AFL-CIO) and the Center for International Private Enterprise (U.S. Chamber of Commerce). But of all the groups the I.R.I. is closest to the Bush administration, according to a recent piece in The New York Times exposing its role in the overthrow of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide:

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