The ALA Council adopted this resolution on Wednesday, June 29, 2005

RESOLUTION ON DISINFORMATION, MEDIA MANIPULATION &
THE DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Whereas, American Library Association recognizes the contribution librarianship can make in giving support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on critical problems facing society (Policy, 1.1); and

Whereas, The mission of ALA is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all (Policy 1.2); and

Whereas, ALA has as one of its officially stated goals that government information be widely and easily available (Policy 1.3); and

Whereas, ALA opposes any use of governmental power to suppress the free and open exchange of knowledge and information (Policy 52.4.1); and

Whereas, Inaccurate information, distortions of truth, excessive limitations on access to information and the removal or destruction of information in the public domain are anathema to the ethos of librarianship and to the functioning of a healthy democracy; and

Whereas, Evidence exists revealing that some U.S. government officials and agencies use disinformation in pursuit of political and economic power, as well as war, thwarting the development of an informed citizenry and constituting a “critical problem facing society”; and

Whereas, The list of documented instances of government use of disinformation continues to grow, and includes:

- the distribution to media outlets of government produced “video news releases” under the guise of independent journalism;
- the use of commentators paid by government agencies to express views favorable to government policies in clear violation of Federal Communications Commission regulations;
- the censorship of scientific studies warning of the true threat of global warming;
- the fabrication and deliberate distortion of information used to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq;
- the removal of public information from U.S. depository libraries; and
- heightened assaults on constitutional rights under the guise of “national security”;

now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association goes on record as being opposed to the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics; and, be it further

Resolved, That ALA encourages its members to help raise public consciousness regarding the many ways in which disinformation and media manipulation are being used to mislead public opinion in all spheres of life, and further encourages librarians to facilitate this awareness with collection development, library programming and public outreach that draws the public’s attention to those alternative sources of information dedicated to countering and revealing the disinformation often purveyed by the mainstream media; and, be it further
Resolved, That this resolution be shared broadly with members of ALA, the press, the public and government officials.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, June 29, 2005
In Chicago, Illinois
Supporting Documentation:

ALA policy references:

1.1 Mission, Priority Areas, Goals – Introduction
1.2 Mission
1.3 Priority Areas and Goals
52.4.1 The Rights of Library Users and the USA PATRIOT Act

Selected Bibliography on Disinformation

1975 Inside the Company: CIA Diary, by Philip Agee. London: Allen Lane
1985 Storm Over Chile, by Samuel Chavkin. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company
1997 Warriors of Disinformation, by Alvin Snyder
2003 Abuse Your Illusions: the disinformation guide to media mirages and establishment lies, edited by Russ Kick.
2004 Inside the Pentagon Papers, by John Prados and Margaret Pratt Porter.