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.

Enjoyed by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, June 29, 2005
In Chicago, Illinois

EDITOR’S NOTE: This resolution originated in PLG, was approved by SRRT
Action Council, then revised and adopted by the Council of the American Library
Association on Wednesday, June 29, 2005 in Chicago, Illinois. The text reproduced
here is the final, official ALA version.