

FLASH

NEWS

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Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Forecasts and Facts ...and a Few Figures

DEAR MRC MEMBER,

Remember those dark days when columnists and talking heads of all kinds said Afghanistan was going to be another Vietnam? Remember when some correspondents and even a news anchor fretted that every military move was destined for disaster, was bound to create thousands of civilian casualties, and would only compound a famine already threatening millions?

I do, because we were keeping track of their comments, issuing MRC *Media Reality Checks* on network coverage, and running daily sanity checks in our *CyberAlerts*.

With the war in Afghanistan slowing down, now is as good a time as any to compare some of those forecasts with the facts and remind a few of our journalist friends that we are holding them accountable for their statements.

I'm not suggesting the war against terrorism is anywhere close to being over or that the dangers in Afghanistan are finished. But the indisputable fact is that this hapless nation is significantly better off at this moment than at any time in its recent history. And this happened because of the skilled and forceful application of American might, will, and compassion.

This much-improved Afghanistan comes less

than 90 days after so many in the media were telling us that the Taliban was composed of fierce, unbeatable mountain warriors with a history of humbling empires. Many pundits also saw an Islamic falling sky, claiming that the world's Muslims would rise as one to help their Afghan brethren as we stepped up the war. Some scribes even went so far as to claim the Taliban had popular support.



In October, Peter Jennings and ABC reported that the war effort could disrupt famine relief and put millions of Afghans at risk. What happened? U.S. and international aid — after the Taliban's defeat — has prevented the famine.

Never in recent memory has a group of journalists been more wrong in their predictions. Which leads me to a pertinent question: What in the world were these guys thinking?

For starters, anyone with access to a library, or capable of conducting an Internet search, would have quickly discovered that Afghanistan's wartime winning percentage against Western powers was a lot closer to .500 than a thousand. Secondly, many of the pundits and columnists, to put it as gently as possible,

gave opinions that had no basis in fact.

The December 24 *Wall Street Journal* ran a lengthy article that detailed the many misstatements made by prominent media commentators in October and November of last year. From sea to sea, from the *New York Times* to the *Los Angeles Times* and several points between, editorial writers and columnists consistently made mistakes about

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the military, diplomatic, and humanitarian facets of the war.

Examples? On October 28, Maureen Dowd, the trendy, tart-tongued *New York Times* columnist, called the Taliban the “most brutish, corrupt, wily and patient warriors in the world.” Brutish and corrupt, yes, but the “most” wily and patient? Her *Times* colleague, R.W. Apple, appeared to be in a morose trance for a month, and despaired on October 31 that “signs of progress are sparse.” This outburst came in one of the four articles Apple wrote in October and November that compared Afghanistan to Vietnam.

Dowd and Apple were eternal optimists, however, compared to National Public Radio’s Daniel Schorr and the *Los Angeles Times*’ Jacob Heilbrunn. Schorr, appearing on NPR’s *Weekend Edition* on October 27 flatly stated “this is a war in trouble.” Heilbrunn, a staff editorial writer for the left-coast *Times*, was just as rattled. “The United States is not headed into a quagmire,” he wrote, “it’s already in one.”

Schorr’s take by Christmas? “I had to eat a little crow,” the long-time newsman told the *Wall Street Journal*. “I have never been in Afghanistan and know nothing about Pashtuns and the rest of it.”

Amazing. He admits he knew nothing about Afghanistan but still gave his opinions to millions over the airwaves. Well, at least he’s honest about it. Now.

As bad as the missteps of columnists and pundits are — and there were several more listed in the *Wall Street Journal* article — the unduly pessimistic slant of supposedly objective reporters is even more upsetting. The undisputed leader in “we’re doomed” reporting, especially in the early part of the war, was ABC News. ABC’s reporters not only

provided the most pessimistic analysis and reporting but also seemed to employ a “whatever the U.S. is doing, it can’t be right” approach.

This approach was best illustrated by the network’s strong penchant for dwelling on civilian casualties supposedly caused by the U.S. bombing. The MRC noted the civilian casualty bias early on and issued a *Media Reality Check* on November 5 that took ABC to task. The report led to an appearance on Fox News Channel’s *The O’Reilly Factor* by our Director of Media Analysis, Rich Noyes.

ABC also had an early fondness for quoting sources that claimed the U.S. was hampering the famine-relief efforts underway in Afghanistan. Two of the worst cases — we were happy to highlight them in our bi-weekly *Notable Quotables* — came from *World News Tonight*. On October 8, Peter Jennings told viewers the non-governmental organization Doctors Without Borders was unhappy with U.S. war making. The bombing had stopped the organization’s relief effort and U.S. food drops were just “military propaganda,” according to the good doctors.

The next night, ABC’s Dan Harris continued the theme. “The attacks have significantly hampered a large humanitarian effort and the U.S. food drops simply can’t compensate for that,” Harris said.

And what became of that famine? It never happened. The *Washington Post* reported on December 31 that the unprecedented movement of wheat during the month — more than 90,000 tons — prevented a major famine. According to the *Post*, the United States provided more than half of the wheat and paid more than half of the logistics costs.

And how many stories has *World News Tonight* run about how the U.S. prevented the famine? A quick Nexis check shows that they ran a November 22 story about an improving

humanitarian aid system but not one word on how the famine has been averted.

What a surprise. If I didn’t know better, I would think ABC was only interested in running segments critical of the U.S. effort.

But enough of comparing forecasts and facts. I think our point is very clear. Now I want to give you some figures, some figures that show what we do with your help.

Here’s one figure. 123,948. That’s the number of times, from December 19 through January 1, that our *Best of Notable Quotables 2001* edition has been accessed on the MRC website. What’s more, at least seven major newspapers — the *New York Post*, *Columbus Dispatch*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, *Daily Oklahoman*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and *Las Vegas Review-Journal* — have used the publication as the basis of an editorial or column during the week between Christmas and New Year’s. Our staff has also participated in a number of radio interviews where the *Best of NQ* has been the centerpiece.

The *Notable Quotables* are made up of the most outrageous quotes and comments from the media. Our news staff publishes the newsletter every couple of weeks and, at the end of every year, we choose the very best with the help of more than 40 judges from around the country.

The widespread use of the *Best of Notable Quotables* by mainstream newspapers all across America is yet another example of the impact we are having in our fight against liberal bias. And it is all because of members like you.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III
President

Coming Next Month

A Recap of the Media Research Center
DISHONORS AWARDS:
Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters of 2001

“Spectacular success!”
“One of the most hilarious evenings in Washington in many a moon.”



Goldberg Talks About the Media and Why They're Biased

Former CBS correspondent Bernard Goldberg has written a book detailing what the MRC has been proving for years: the anchors, reporters, producers, and executives at the network news departments are mindlessly, hopelessly liberal. *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*, provides a firsthand look at how liberalism influences network news on a daily basis.

As might be expected, the book has struck a chord with the reading public and is number one on the *New York Times* bestsellers list as we go to print. Shortly before Christmas, Goldberg, who describes himself as an "old-fashioned" liberal, spoke with *FLASH* editor Tim Jones about bias at the networks. The following are excerpts from the wide-ranging, 30-minute interview.



opinions and we don't get nearly enough opinions on the side of the issue that they personally disagree with.

"It's bad because if we're to believe what they tell us, that in a free country it's important for the electorate to have all the information, well, they're not giving us all the information."

Why networks will not address — or even admit — liberal bias...

"It's either the result of arrogance, because if I'm arrogant I can just dismiss anything you say, or it's just an incredible kind of ignorance even among educated people. We don't think of educated people being ignorant but I think educated people are capable of great ignorance.

"There's a tenet among psychiatrists and psychologists and that is if you don't acknowledge that you have a problem, you can't fix that problem. The problem here is that it doesn't matter who the anchor person is, who the president of the news division is, if they don't think there's a problem...they can't possibly fix it."

On the media's role in a free society...

"The media's role is not to take sides. It is not to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. That's the role of social workers and priests."

When he first began noticing liberal bias...

"I got a call from a guy — who's an executive at PBS. He said 'congratulations, I'm glad you finally got it out, you were talking to me about this years ago.' And I thought back, when was the last time I saw this guy? It had to be in the early '80s. So this was cooking in my head — not as a book — but this was cooking in my head as a problem since the early '80s. Coincidentally or not, since Ronald Reagan became President."

Why the media disliked Reagan so intensely...

"I think what happened in the early '80s is that liberals really felt as if they were on the outs. Here was a President they had no respect for. The coin of the realm in liberal circles is really IQ more than anything else, and they just didn't respect Reagan's intelligence and they didn't like his politics..."

"I think, mostly, they didn't like the fact so that so many regular Americans did like him. They (liberals) felt they were on the outs and that's when I started noticing that they were not just covering the big issues of our time — whether it was homelessness, or feminism, or race, or gay rights or whatever — but they were taking sides on these issues and I don't know that it would have been the same if in 1980 a liberal Democrat had won..."

Why media bias hurts the country...

"It's bad because they're not fulfilling their mandate for one thing. They should be giving us the news straight with a variety of

What attacks by network news executives and correspondents reveal...

"...These attacks on me are attacks on their own audience. Forget about me. Let's say I'm wrong. You know who else are wrong? Millions and millions and millions of people who either still listen or used to listen to Brokaw, Jennings, and Rather. If they don't want to consider the arguments I make about liberal bias, they're just slitting their own throats by not considering the arguments that their own audiences are making..."

An Excerpt from *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*

"...(T)here's not much chance they'll (network news correspondents) take on more serious problems which leaves the field wide open...to the real pros...the conservative media watchdogs that monitor every second of network news in order to document every single example of liberal bias, real or imagined.

"Such an organization is the **Media Research Center**, based in Alexandria, Virginia, right outside Washington, D.C. Every month or so MRC mails a newsletter to reporters and anchors and other sages in the big-time national media. *Notable Quotables*, they call it, is chock-full of 'the latest outrageous, sometimes humorous, quotes in the liberal media.' They also put out a daily report online called *CyberAlert*, which the MRC says tracks media bias.

"You'd think this exposure, before your own colleagues no less, might cause a certain amount of embarrassment, especially when the example of bias is especially egregious. Dream on. Network correspondents don't embarrass easily."

How do Brit Hume, Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Reagan, Janet Parshall, Matt Drudge, *National Review*, the *Washington Times*, *World* magazine, and thousands of others stay on top of the latest liberal media bias? They read the MRC's *CyberAlert*. And you can too...for FREE! As a member of the MRC, you can sign up to receive the MRC's near-daily e-mail report *CyberAlert*!

To subscribe, just e-mail MRC@MediaResearch.org and say you want to get your FREE *CyberAlerts*! Mention that you read about it in *FLASH*.

That Trick Never Works. And When It Does, Don't Mention It.

ABC's *World News Tonight* took a unique approach to a successful December 4 National Missile Defense test.

They refused to report it.

Contrast that approach with the one taken on the May 1 *World News Tonight*. That night, Peter Jennings delivered a report on the Bush administration's decision to move forward with NMD tests and used animation to illustrate how the system is supposed to work. Bowing to NMD opponents, Jennings added a caution as the segment finished.

"One other note. Critics often object to the animation in news reports because the animation usually has the systems working."



Jennings and ABC refused to cover a successful NMD test.

A story that uses a cartoon to demonstrate how the system could work has a disclaimer from critics that Jennings dutifully delivers. A successful test involving a real missile, a real interceptor rocket and thousands of miles of air, sea, and space — the missile was fired from California and was intercepted and destroyed by a rocket fired from a South Pacific island — doesn't even receive a mention. That's *World News Tonight's* idea of fair and balanced reporting.

Thankfully, CBS *Evening News* did report on the successful test. If they hadn't, we might have never found out about it.

Today Reviews the Supreme Court's Election Decision

Almost every recent issue of *FLASH* has had a story about the 2000 Presidential election. Why? Because the networks refuse to let it go!

December 12 — the one-year anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that required the rule of law be followed — received spotlight treatment on an NBC *Today* segment that dripped with condescending liberal bias.

Katie Couric, in an interview with the two primary attorneys in the post-election legal battle, characterized the Republicans as "take no prisoners" types while the Democrats were "academic" and "professorial." Couric also



Give it up, Katie. Bush won.

asked if there was something "implicitly unfair" about Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris overseeing the election recount and then asked the attorneys what they thought of liberal Harvard Law School professor Laurence Tribe's comment that the Supreme Court had done a "rotten job."

What a shock. Katie thinks Republicans are bad, Democrats are good, and she ignores the fact that Katherine Harris was required to oversee the election in accordance with the law. And, as usual, the only comments on the Supreme Court decision come from a noted liberal law professor.

Hey, we've heard it all before. Many times. Your guy lost at the ballot and in court. Get over it.

NBC Says U.S. Deliberately Broke a Treaty and Its Word

The U.S. withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to pursue National Missile Defense testing apparently angered NBC News. While CBS and ABC simply reported the facts, NBC and its cable network, MSNBC, went out of their way to inaccurately characterize the withdrawal as breaking of a treaty and a nation's word.



NBC and MSNBC go out of their way to inaccurately present President Bush and the U.S. as breaking a treaty.

On the December 13 NBC *Nightly News*, Tom Brokaw told viewers, "Today, President Bush deliberately broke a treaty with Russia." Brokaw continued, providing the liberal, anti-National Missile Defense spin, "Without a defense, both sides are vulnerable and that's a deterrent."

MSNBC's Brian Williams followed suit just a couple of hours later. "Tonight," Williams said, "why the U.S. is deliberately going back on its word in front of the rest of the world."

The administration had told all involved it planned to withdraw from the treaty — either side can withdraw with six month's notice — and had worked closely with the Russians on the issue. For NBC to characterize the withdrawal as the deliberate "breaking" of a treaty or "going back on its word" is inaccurate at best and false at worst. It is yet another case of NBC News disguising editorial comments as news reports.

Here's a novel suggestion for NBC. Provide facts to viewers — not biased, slanted, erroneous descriptions — and let them decide if an action is wise or unwise.

Clueless in Manhattan

The stereotype of the *New York Times* has always been that it's an elitist, out-of-touch newspaper with a fiercely liberal agenda. According to the paper's publisher and executive editor, the stereotype is right on target.

Publisher Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. and Executive Editor Howell Raines appeared on the C-SPAN show *Washington Journal* on Nov. 30. In an interview with host Brian Lamb, Sulzberger admitted that he doesn't read any other newspaper on a regular basis and, in response to a caller's question, seemed surprised to find that most Americans support military tribunals.

Raines followed Sulzberger with a confession of the obvious. The *Times* — while duty bound to report on Whitewater and Travelgate — loved former President Bill Clinton's administration. "In the case of President Clinton, who I'd known since the late '70s,

we'd editorially supported virtually every aspect of his program, and were particularly evangelical, I would say, about his medical care reform package."

Raines, of course, is famous for both his disdain of Ronald Reagan — he once said the Reagan years "oppressed" him — and his liberal stances while editorial page editor at the Times.

The one good thing we can say about the



The New York Times openly admits its bias and adoration of Clinton.

comments is it's nice to have our long-held suspicions so enthusiastically confirmed.

Greasing the Revolving Door

The old Washington game of government official-turned-journalist was played again in December as the former chair of the Consumer Product Safety Commission signed on with NBC's *Today*. This latest version has a twist, though.

Ann Brown, the CPSC chair during the Clinton years, has signed a contract to do 12 consumer stories a year for the morning show. The announcement drew caustic comments from rivals CBS and ABC, who often complained about Brown's exclusive appearances on *Today* when she was head of the CPSC.

ABC's *Good Morning America* producer Shelley Ross wonders if some sort of deal might have been worked out. In a *USA Today* article



Years of exclusive interviews with NBC pay off for ex-Clinton official.

on December 11, Ross said, "I find it curious that after three years of giving *Today* exclusive coverage of many stories and exclusive appearances, that as soon as she decides to leave government, she goes on the *Today* payroll."

Steve Friedman, the producer of *The Early Show* on CBS, thought a deal might have been arranged as well. "You might see it as a quid pro quo, if you will, in past life, in present life," he said.

While Brown's hiring provided valuable entertainment — feudin' and fussin' between rival producers is always enjoyable — the bad news is that *Today* has added yet another liberal, pro-regulation, government-is-the-key media personality to go with Katie Couric and Matt Lauer. Look for even more calls for government involvement in practically every walk of life from the *Today* cast.

CNN Gets What It Paid For

CNN's penchant for finding globetrotting free-lancers to report from faraway hot spots has provided the network with some great successes. Any system so dependent on timing and luck, however, can occasionally uncork some real duds.

Thus enters Robert Young Pelton. A CNN contributor, Pelton is the voice talking with American Taliban John Walker in that initially famous, widely shown video. Pelton describes himself as an author but "not a journalist" and

he spends the interview proving it.

The interview was actually a rambling discussion between the two men and included this head-turning statement from Pelton to Walker: "I respect the call and I respect the cause." As shocking as that comment is, it turns out that it's not a surprise. According to the *New York Post*, Pelton has a history of such zany remarks, once even saying there is no such thing as terrorism.

Forgetting about Pelton's unusual comments, the most frustrating part of the interview was his refusal to ask the one question that really mattered. All Pelton had to do to be a success was look at the bearded, bedraggled Bay Area boy and say: "Why did you join the Taliban, son?"

But he didn't. And why not?

Pelton told Howard Kurtz, the host of CNN's *Reliable Sources*, that he wasn't there to "politicize" Walker or "ask him opinions about politics" or to "muckrake or set him up in any way."

Great. Pelton says he respects the cause that



CNN freelancer sympathizes with John Walker...even doubts existence of terrorism.

murdered 3,000 people but doesn't want to deal with questions of why Walker joined Al Qaeda because that might cross into politics.

We don't know what CNN paid for Pelton's interview, but whatever it was, it was too much.

MRC's Mini-Bits

Today host Katie Couric signs a \$60 million contract and says "I really don't enjoy this playing out in the press"...Always dependable Helen Thomas asks, "What gives him [President Bush] the authority to go into other countries and bomb them?"..."I hope he is reformed and returned to society, maybe pardoned by a future President," *Newsweek's* Eleanor Clift says of John Walker, the American Taliban...From the "speak for yourself" category, British reporter Robert Fisk explains the beating he received at a

refugee camp: "If I was an Afghan refugee...I would have attacked Robert Fisk or any other Westerner I could find"... "I've always been pretty opinionated, even as a reporter," confesses *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman...Retiring ultraliberal *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis shows some of that left-wing logic: "The [British] health service doesn't work. I'm still for it. But it doesn't work"... "If arrogance were a crime, there wouldn't be enough jail cells in the entire United States to hold all the people in TV news," says an anonymous network correspondent quoted in Bernard Goldberg's book, *Bias*.

The Lasting Impression of Internships

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com
Executive Editor



One of the most important things to supporters of the Media Research Center is the youth of America, and a key part of our mission is to identify young people with journalistic aspirations and groom them for the news profession — the right way.

At CNSNews.com, we take this responsibility seriously through our aggressive internship program. I've written in this space before on the importance and value of interns at CNSNews.com, as well as the caliber of applicants who compete for these positions.

But having the opportunity to consider these internships from the perspective of the intern is personally enlightening.

Brigham Young University intern Seth Lewis spent the summer of 2001 with us and did yeoman's work, reporting on how pharmaceutical companies manufacturing AIDS drugs were sponsoring homosexual events, the risks of abortions at sea to circumvent local laws, national politics, and scores of other important stories.

Seth and his wife, Tiffany, sent us a copy of their family Christmas newsletter which took note of Seth having worked at CNSNews.com and "getting our fill of politics and Beltway traffic."

We also received Christmas greetings from former intern Mark Mead, whose card offered his appreciation for working with us.

"I wish to thank you again for allowing me to participate in the best internship program, by far, offered for student journalists in the D.C. area," wrote Mark. "This past summer was one to remember, and I have CNSNews.com to thank for that."

The notes from Mark and Seth brought a grin to my face, and I posted their correspondence on the bulletin

board for the entire staff to enjoy. But it also reminded me of the other kids who've cut their teeth in the news business at CNSNews.com.

Last summer, we were visited by Jennifer Groover and Lora Amy Bright, two young ladies who interned here in 2000. Jennifer and Lora spent their summer covering the waning days of the Clinton administration and an array of cultural issues, and did a great job in the process.

While visiting the area, they decided to stop by "just to say hi," and see how everyone on the staff was doing.

Another alumnus from the CNSNews.com Intern Class of 2000 is Trebor Worthen, who earned his stripes that summer breaking the story about how the New York City Metro Transit Authority was refusing to sell advertising to a pro-life group, catching the attention of the *New York Post* and the *Chicago Tribune* in the process.

Trebor calls us from time to time with political updates from his neck of the woods in Oklahoma.

When CNSNews.com was founded, our mission was to have an impact on American journalism, which we have done time and again. But we've also had an impact on something far more important: people.

Young people who, like you, are dedicated to the conservative cause and want to make an impact of their own as journalists. We give them that opportunity and it makes a positive, lasting impression on them.

You know that, as a hard-bitten news hound, I love the scoops. But not half as much as knowing that we make a difference in the lives and careers of aspiring journalists. That's worth more than a wall of awards.

Have you discovered CNSNews.com yet?



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MAKING AN Impact

Inside The MRC

The Media Research Center and CNSNews.com spokesmen and reporters are frequent guests on talk radio shows nationwide and on TV news programs. In addition, we are cited almost daily by hundreds of newspapers, magazines, radio talk shows, and TV news programs every month. Below are just a handful of some recent examples.

Investor's Business Daily — Jan. 3, 2002

"Dogma at Eleven — Media Bias: Perhaps no institution needs a New Year's resolution more than the elite press. Last year was again marked by its leftward bias. The Media Research Center the watchdog of the dominant media, has published its 14th annual *Awards for the Year's Worst Reporting*. It is a useful and humorous reminder of the media's insularity and ideological arrogance...."

Fox News Special Report with Brit Hume — Jan. 2, 2002

Hume noted how the Media Research Center exposed the *New York Times* for burying a story on Chief Justice Rehnquist's criticism of the Democratic-controlled Senate for failure to act on the 94 judicial vacancies. In contrast to four years ago when the senate was under Republican control and there were only 82 vacancies, the *New York Times* made it a front-page story.



CNN's Greenfield at Large — Jan. 7, 2002

In a recent interview with Bernard Goldberg, Jeff Greenfield asked him about Bryant Gumbel, "who has been accused more often of liberal media bias than anybody else in the news. If you look at the Media Research Center, which you often quote..."

Rolling Stone — Dec. 2001

In a recent three-page article on Dan Rather, *Rolling Stone* asked Rather about Brent Bozell and the MRC.



Rolling Stone: "Still, there are factions on the right that can be relied upon to criticize almost anything you do. Brent Bozell, for instance, the Media Research Center guy — I get the sense that, if he could, he'd attack the way you eat breakfast, or your fly-fishing technique."

Rather: "Too much drag on the dragline. That kind of criticism, you brush it aside and move past it. Everything in my experience doesn't whisper to me, it shouts to me, that the public understands..."



New York Post — MEDIA BIAS: The 2001 Awards — Dec. 31, 2001

Once again, the *New York Post* along with numerous other newspapers across the country, ran the entire list of awards and winners from the MRC's *Best of NQ* for 2001. Categories included "Swiss Press Corps Award for Neutral War Coverage," "Selected, Not Elected, Award," and the "Carve Clinton into Mount Rushmore Award," to name a few.

FNC's Fox & Friends — Dec. 7, 2001

MRC Director of Media Analysis, Rich Noyes appeared on *Fox & Friends* to discuss how the media have a different spin on the war in Afghanistan.



The Best of Notable Quotables 2001: The Fourteenth Annual Awards for the Year's Worst Reporting

If you don't already have a subscription to the MRC's popular bi-weekly newsletter *Notable Quotables*, as a member you may receive a FREE COPY of the *Best of NQ*. Simply call (800) 672-1423 or e-mail MRC@MediaResearch.org. Remember to provide your mailing address.

Notable Quotables

Subscribe to NQ for only \$30 a year for members and \$40 a year for non-members.

Mez Djouadi

Mez Djouadi works as the Webmaster and Systems Administrator at the MRC.

Among his many duties are maintaining, updating, and re-designing the website and ensuring the computer network is maintained properly and works efficiently.



A Washington-area native, Mez was born in the District of Columbia and raised in South Arlington and McLean, Va. He is a graduate of George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., where he received an exercise science degree.

Before coming to the MRC, Mez was a convention and meeting planner with Smith, Bucklin and Associates in Washington, D.C. Since joining the MRC last May, he has found his work to be enjoyable and challenging.

"The number-one thing that I enjoy about working here is the people," Mez said. "I couldn't ask for better people to work with in the information technology department and within all of MRC. Another thing I enjoy here are the many challenges that I encounter on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis."

Mez plans to continue his work in both web design and computer networking, with his primary goal being to become fluent in the most current web design language and techniques.

Mez enjoys outdoor activities and his hobbies include mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, camping, and skiing.

Editor's Corner

TIM JONES

Sometimes, You Have To Laugh

One of the best things about working at the MRC is the comic relief provided by the national media. While a good deal of what they say and write makes me madder than a wet hen — Dan Rather can feel free to use that one — the line between outrage and laughter is often a very thin one.

I try to laugh a little because, as a former reporter, I know it can be a tough job and sometimes phrases that sound so good at deadline sound really dumb a couple of days later. I also know that if I took all the liberal screeds disguised as news stories to heart without finding something to laugh about in them that I would soon turn into a depressed, angry little troll.

But back to the funny stuff. Many of the year's most ridiculous statements were compiled by the MRC staff and put in the *Best Notable Quotables of 2001* and some of it is just plain goofy.

My favorite? Howard Fineman, who appears to be a serious, sensible guy during his numerous appearances on MSNBC, actually compared the California electricity crisis to the WWII bombing of London in a July 25 *Newsweek* article. Watching California Governor Gray Davis work electricity issues was like "glimpsing Churchill in Whitehall during the blitz," Fineman wrote.

Ridiculous? Laughable? You bet.

Davis was dealing with a mess that was the result of misdirected government policy and the only things at risk were political careers. Winston Churchill, on the other hand, was defending the last refuge of European civilization against Nazi tyranny with millions of lives and the future of freedom at stake. I have to admit that I'm a big Churchill fan — "We shall fight on the beaches...We

shall fight in the fields and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." I get goose bumps just typing that. Writing that Davis was like Churchill was the most ridiculous comparison of the year. If I took it seriously, I would be furious, but it's so outrageous that I have to laugh about it.

One comment that I couldn't help but find infuriating — but it had an outcome that brought a smile — was ABC News President David Westin's "no opinion" response to a Columbia University graduate student. Asked if the Pentagon should be considered a legitimate terrorist target, Westin responded that he really didn't have an opinion on that one. Now that made me mad three ways.

First, I was angry because there's some guy attending Columbia University who will soon be a journalist and actually believes there might be such a thing as a legitimate terrorist target. The Pentagon would be a legitimate military target in an announced, shooting war, but there is no such thing as a legitimate terrorist target, period! Second, an entire class of 20 or so students — again, all grad students and future journalists — didn't find a thing wrong with Westin's response. Third, the president of a network news division actually said he had "no opinion" as to whether men and women in uniform can be legitimate terrorist targets.

As soon as word got around about Westin's comment — MRC Vice President Brent Baker caught it on C-SPAN and told the world about it in a *CyberAlert* that was picked up by Rush Limbaugh, the *New York Post*, and several others — I had a reason to smile, though.

Faced with public outrage, the ABC News president chose to apologize immediately.

The reason was simple. People like you were madder than those proverbial wet hens and called and e-mailed ABC by the thousands. The powers that be at ABC didn't like that, and not because they really care about your opinion or mine, but they really, honestly, sincerely care about the advertising dollars they might lose if we stop watching.

And that — the fact that our combined voices can force changes in the media giants — is a great reason for a smile and a laugh as we enter the new year.

So keep up the good work — and laugh a little while you do it.



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