ABC: The Anti-Bush Company

Dear Member,

I write you just as our country has gone to war. Let us pray that our victory is swift and the loss of innocent life is minimal. And let’s pray that the media, especially ABC, do a better job covering the war than they have of covering the debate leading up to it.

ABC was clearly in a league of its own when it came to partisan, anti-war, anti-Bush coverage. Yes, there was CBS's Dan Rather and his cuddly soft interview of Saddam Hussein, but that interview was more of a network ratings ploy than a real news story.

The long-time CBS anchor simply cannot be compared to ABC. Peter Jennings’ network treated Iraq and the United States as moral equals from the very beginning of the war debate and often depicted the U.S. as unreasonable in its disarmament demands.

ABC’s point man for this biased and blatantly offensive coverage has been smug White House correspondent Terry Moran. On March 3, at a White House press conference, Moran sounded like a U.N. inspector, or perhaps a French politician, claiming that Iraq’s destruction of a few missiles was proof Hussein was disarming. When press secretary Ari Fleischer disagreed, the supposedly objective journalist countered that “this is substance. This is real destruction of weapons.”

Moran went even further at President Bush’s press conference three days later, launching into an anti-war screed before getting around to the question. “In the past several weeks,” Moran began, “your policy on Iraq has generated opposition from the governments of France, Russia, China, Germany, Turkey, the Arab League, and many other countries; opened a rift at NATO and at the UN; and drawn millions of ordinary citizens around the world into the streets in anti-war protests.”

“May I ask,” he said as he finally got around to the question, “what went wrong that so many governments and peoples around the world now not only disagree with you very strongly but see the U.S. under your leadership as an arrogant power?”

This was no “question.” This was clearly a recitation of liberal talking points, but that breach of journalistic ethics didn’t bother the reporter. His only regret, as he told the March 17 New York Observer, was that he didn’t follow up his press conference question more forcefully.

“I don’t think he [President Bush] was sufficiently challenged,” Moran said of the press conference. He then proceeded to tell readers, and presumably the other White House journalists whose questions weren’t up to ABC standards, how journalists are supposed to approach a President.

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“In that room, one of the things a questioner has to do is create a moment, a confrontation with the President,” Moran explained. “The point is to get them to answer questions, not just stand up there and use all the majesty of the Presidency to amplify his image.”

It’s safe to say that the ABC News staff will never purposely do anything to help this President with his image. Their anti-Bush, anti-war fervor extends even into the late night hours, as Ted Koppel demonstrated on the March 4 Nightline.

The program was conducted before a live audience and Koppel kicked the show off by taking a cynical shot. “There’s a sardonic two liner making the rounds in Washington these days,” he gravely said. “How do we know Saddam Hussein has biological and chemical weapons? We have the receipts.”

Koppel’s joke selection was only the tip of the iceberg. The audience was loaded with anti-war voices who dominated the question and answer session. Of the thirteen questions from the audience, eleven came from the anti-war perspective. That is Nightline’s idea of fair and balanced.

Then, of course, there was ABC anchor Peter Jennings, who, among other things, stressed that U.N. inspections appeared to be working. In a March 4 report, he told viewers the Iraqis “continue to comply with the U.N. weapons inspectors.” Three days later, he asked Secretary of State Colin Powell why the U.S. wasn’t in favor of continuing inspections. “Most people think they’re doing a reasonably effective job at the moment,” Jennings argued.

“Most people?” Only if “most people” worked at ABC News.

As you expect, the MRC has not been idle while this was occurring. We took the network to task for its anti-war spin, researching and publishing an eighteen-page Special Report that detailed it’s one-sided approach to war coverage. On March 18, I delivered the Special Report to the media at the National Press Club and the study was subsequently cited in a New York Times story. I also wrote a nationally syndicated column on Koppel’s Nightline – the “town meeting” production was not his only thoroughly biased show – and dissected Moran’s behavior in another. In other areas, the MRC’s web site compiled a new section of Jennings’ biased statements from our daily MRC CyberAlerts.

The study, columns and web site compilation provide overwhelming evidence of how ABC News’ failed to be an impartial observer during the prelude to war. The fact that the nation’s most influential newspaper cited the report is proof of the study’s thoroughness and impact.

The MRC could not counter the bias of a powerful, broadcast network with your support. As always, I thank you.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III
Hollywood’s Geopolitical Geniuses
by L. Brent Bozell III

The United States is on the brink of war with Iraq. As Saddam Hussein begins to brace for the whirlwind, he’s got few weapons left. One of them is very predictable: Hollywood.

A group called “Artists United to Win Without War” planned a “virtual march” on Washington for February 26, an electric blitz of phone calls, faxes, and e-mails calling for delay, delay, delay – the complete set of Tariq Aziz talking points.

But wait a minute. Just how can one take these “artists” seriously when they give themselves a name like that? Just how does one “win without war”? We accomplished zip-lol with U.N. “enforcement.” Now we’re going to “win” by giving in to more of the same. Kumbaya.

To get the Hollywood campaign going, the “artists” put out 30-second TV ads featuring…themselves. Martin Sheen, NBC’s fake president, declares “Don’t invade Iraq…Inspections work. War won’t.” The ad does not include a laugh track. In a different ad campaign, sour-pussed “comedian” Janeane Garofalo informs viewers of a U.N. estimate of half a million casualties “if we invade Iraq.” She asks, “Do we have the right to do that to a country that’s done nothing to us?”

Celebrity Garofalo has been on news channels everywhere decrying how news channels only want to talk to celebrities instead of real experts. If only she had the decency to abide by her own argument and shut up! Hollywood plasters itself all over the public policy debate and after being picked up by news media, then they slam the press for being shallow.

They’re right.

As the Iraq threat grows more serious, these cultural ambassadors just get sillier. On last week’s Sunday “news” shows, while NBC poked at an actual acid-flashback sixties retread, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, CBS and Fox sank into silliness by inviting on celebrity Iraq “experts.” Can you imagine being one of the roughly 500 members of Congress who never get invited? If you want to match furrowed brows with Bob Schieffer, it would have been smarter to work first on the sets of M*A*S*H, or The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

CBS matched savvy National Review editor Rich Lowry with radical-left actors Mike Farrell and Susan Sarandon. This is one week where liberals might have complained about the imbalance to the right, one conservative heavyweight and two leftist lightweights. It was painful to watch, and we were all in trouble when Schieffer began his interview with Farrell by chatting like a smitten fan about how much he loved him as “the other doctor” on M*A*S*H. I loved that show, too, but it doesn’t stop me from wanting to stomp on Farrell’s wacky political agenda.

On Fox News Sunday, Tony Snow was wading warily through the gaseous fog that is Janeane Garofalo’s mind. This woman makes Joe Biden look sophisticated. It’s apparently riveting TV to match geopolitical wits with the star of The Truth About Cats and Dogs as she talks about “Operation Desert Fox.” Maybe she’s seen James Mason play Nazi Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in the 1951 movie “Desert Fox.” Or maybe she was just thinking about appearing on Fox. Maybe she is a fox. I don’t know.

In yet another appearance on MSNBC, host Mike Barnicle asked Garofalo who was more dangerous, Saddam or President Bush. She claimed “they are both very threatening to world peace and to deny that is to be incredibly naive.” Really? Well, sure, “There has been a war on the people of Iraq since 1990. The plan to go into Iraq for hegemony over the region has been in play for a very long time and the ideologues in this administration want to go in.”

Spare us. Garofalo here is merely chanting the mantras of America-loathing crackpots like Noam Chomsky and Ramsey Clark, who spent the 1990s blaming the United States for starving Iraqi children with an embargo, even as Saddam Hussein made food unavailable to his people while he loaded up on weapons manufacturing.

Giving these “artists” a little room to rant quickly reveals the lie behind their campaign’s claim to be a “mainstream voice” for “patriotic Americans.” Anyone taking the “artists” seriously must be prepared to deny the truth that the Sheen-Garofalo-Farrell-Sarandon crowd represent a hard-left fringe, decidedly outside the American mainstream on war and peace, and nearly everything else.

I believe the challenges we face are too serious to play jokes on the American people. But then I consider that on the brink of war, we deserve a few laughs to ease the pressure. So I look forward to the next Garofalo interview.

For more columns from L. Brent Bozell III, check out his nationally syndicated column which runs every week in several top newspapers across the country – or read the articles on MRC’s website www.MediaResearch.org.
Get the latest CyberAlert!

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 sengle@mediaresearch.org and say you want to get your FREE CyberAlerts! Mention that you read about it in FLASH.

Bye, Bye Phil

After only 223 days on the air, Phil Donahue’s comeback is over.

Donahue’s MSNBC show was cancelled on February 26. The liberal host’s radical pontificating and in-your-face attitude, more than anything else, was responsible for its failure. “MSNBC put this show on the air to attract a large liberal audience to compete with the O’Reilly Factor on Fox,” MRC President L. Brent Bozell said in a national press release issued when the program was cancelled. “Unfortunately it didn’t work.”

The raw numbers indicate how one-sided the battle was. The Washington Post reported that Donahue averaged 439,000 viewers a night in February while CNN’s Connie Chung Tonight averaged 970,000. Both shows finished far behind The O’Reilly Factor, which averaged 2.7 million for the month.

“I am sure more people heard about the show’s cancellation than ever watched it,” Bozell added. “But liberals shouldn’t be discouraged. There is plenty of room for shows like Donahue, so long as the cable networks don’t care that no one is watching.”

Donahue’s demise also meant more trouble for MSNBC. Despite its feeble numbers, the show was still the network’s highest-rated, prime time program.

Shields or Tools?

ABC News has never met a peace activist they didn’t like... or at least provide publicity for.

The network’s man in Baghdad, Dan Harris, proved the point in late February with a sympathetic look at a “human housing.”

The shields didn’t have an “image” problem. They had a truth problem. They were tools of Saddam Hussein and anyone who thinks otherwise is as hopelessly confused as they are.

Bill Clinton to CBS, “Friend of Bill” to ABC

The news that former President Bill Clinton was hired to do a point-counterpoint segment on CBS’s 60 Minutes with former Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole is hardly surprising. Clinton has never acted like a former President and we don’t expect him to start now.

What is surprising, or at least unsettling for conservatives, is that Clinton’s network premiere coincides with the return of his old friend Rick Kaplan to broadcast television. As CNN President in the late 90s, Kaplan turned the news channel into the “Clinton News Network” and he has never been shy about using his journalistic pull to help his old friend. Now he has returned to ABC News to oversee special events coverage for the next three months.

Here’s some examples of Kaplan’s overt support of Clinton. As an ABC News producer in the early 90s, Kaplan advised Clinton on media strategy for the Gennifer Flowers “episode,” organized a Clinton campaign appearance on The Don Imus Show and later spiked World News Tonight stories on the Whitewater scandal. After taking over at CNN, Kaplan
was a repeat overnight guest in the Lincoln Bedroom, produced a two-hour fundraising special in 1996 in which he instructed correspondents to limit their use of the word “scandal” and attended an “insiders only” Gore campaign meeting.

Now Clinton and Kaplan are both working for the networks. So much for the liberal argument that conservatives are taking over the media.

Is It Time For Helen To Go?

Helen Thomas, the always-irritable White House correspondent, is another journalist who acts as if the U.S. military goes to war with the intention – or is it, desire? – of killing civilians.

“Since we have no direct access to the President,” Thomas sneered to White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer in a March 5 press conference “would you state for the record, the historical record, why he wants to bomb Iraqi people?”

Fleischer suggested the President wants to eliminate the threat posed by Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. But that answer didn’t suit the veteran journalist. “There is no imminent threat,” she immediately snapped and got off at least two more argumentative statements before Fleischer could move on.

Thomas, to put it bluntly, has become an embarrassment to the White House press corps. It’s clear from her public comments – she recently called President Bush “the worst President in history” – that the long-time correspondent has no intention of being objective. Perhaps it’s time for journalism as an institution, or at least her employer, to suggest that Thomas begin enjoying a long overdue retirement.

Publicly Funded, Factually Challenged

Bill Moyers has used his taxpayer-funded PBS show NOW to once again slander conservatives.

On his March 7 show, Moyers complained that the Bush-Cheney administration’s habit of wearing flag lapels reminded him of Communist China. “When I see flags sprouting on official lapels,” Moyers solemnly intoned, “I think of the time in China when I saw Mao’s little Red Book on every official’s desk, omnipresent and unread.”

That was only a beginning for the PBS host, who had donned a flag lapel that night to “remind myself that not every patriot thinks we should do to the people of Baghdad what bin Laden did to us.” Moyers should be ashamed of himself. No responsible person has ever suggested that the U.S. pull a “bin Laden” on Baghdad and he knows it. Moyers also knows the U.S. military goes out of its way to avoid harming civilians, yet he still made this insulting, demonstrably false comment.

Remember, you’re tax dollars underwrite this drivel.

mini-bits

Andy Rooney on the military plan to “embed” journalists: “I think maybe they’re trying to stick it to the correspondents, they hope some of them will get killed” ☛ From The Who Do You Know Category: The Washington Post’s Mary McGrory says “among people I know, nobody was for the war” ☛ MSNBC’s David Schuster asserts “there are now perhaps two world superpowers. There’s the United States and then there are those millions of people who took to the streets opposing U.S. policy” ☛ “If Bush [was] a serious war President he would increase taxes,” according to Newsweek’s Evan Thomas ☛ From The You’ve Got to Be Kidding Department, New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines claims “our greatest accomplishment as a profession is the development…of a news reporting craft that is truly non-partisan and non-ideological” ☛ Capital Gang’s Eleanor Clift belittles the coalition of the willing: “It’s really a coalition of the bullied and the bribed.”
CNSNews.com Marches Off to War

I write this column the morning after President Bush issued his 48 hour ultimatum to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and 12 hours before shipping out to Kuwait to cover the events destined to take place in the Middle East over the coming days and weeks.

The decision to provide CNSNews.com readers with coverage of these events was not made easily. Only after careful consideration of the best information and risk assessments did MRC President and CNSNews.com founder L. Brent Bozell make this difficult and costly decision.

Ever since our founding in 1998, we’ve been dedicated to providing what we call ‘The Right News – Right Now.’ It’s a fine little marketing slogan that belies the important mission of CNSNews.com; to report on news and events that are ignored or under reported by the establishment media.

This is the philosophical keystone of our operations and drives our daily news coverage. Providing balance and perspective, and giving voice to that which would otherwise have none, represents the core of what we have done journalistically over the years.

But there are times when the nature of events transcends the battle against liberal media bias. While it’s inarguably important to serve in this capacity of exposing and balancing bias regarding the news of the day, there is a more indelible impact in what CNSNews.com does.

It’s been rightly said that journalists write the first draft of the history books. Rarely do academic researchers and historians attend the events they chronicle for future generations to read and learn about. Professional history, in terms of how today will be recalled in the years to come, is produced primarily by a study of documents.

Government records, official statements, images, literary and media reports are all culled by historians who distill this vast bulk of information into what invariably becomes what we call ‘history.’

Many of you realize that the liberal bias exposed by the Media Research Center is matched in many respects by the liberal bias that permeates a growing volume of the historical record.

Over the past few weeks, CNSNews.com has chronicled a variety of issues characterized by some as revisionist history that fails to portray the accurate nature of past events. So pervasive is this liberal historical bias, it’s become a staple at some of our nation’s foremost memorials and museum exhibits.

This is why it’s important for CNSNews.com to be present when the historic events of the impending war in Iraq begin to unfold. Like the news coverage of the New York Times and ABC News, the dispatches published by CNSNews.com will be folded into the total record of events and, with luck, be reflected in the future writing of history.

Lest this strike you as unduly dramatic or even exaggerated, the reporting provided by CNSNews.com has already be incorporated into the historical record. When we reported on the Clinton administration State Department’s disdain for the American sailors killed in the terrorist attack on the USS Cole, our reportage was placed in the Congressional Record, where it will remain for as long as America has a Congress.

Other CNSNews.com reports – on euthanasia, prospective links between abortion and breast cancer, and other issues – have already been incorporated into college and university curricula at institutions from Maine to California.

How the impending events in Iraq and the actions undertaken by the Bush administration will be recalled in their broader historical context remains to be seen. But it is certain that the reports published by CNSNews.com will become part of that historical record, providing a balance of perspective that historians and researchers can, and probably will, incorporate in some way into what winds up in the history books of the next generation.

It is gratifying to know that we help combat liberal bias in the day-to-day media coverage of ordinary events, but it is deeply humbling to also know that our work can endure and provide balance to those who would learn history in years to come. This is the larger work you so generously support, and with my thanks.

The only way to do this with the war in Iraq is to be there; to recount the events and place them in their proper context, with balance and accuracy. It’s hard work. It’s dangerous work. But it’s necessary work from which we will not shrink.
New MRC Project Has Its Eye on The New York Times

The MRC has kicked off a new campaign focused exclusively on analyzing and exposing the liberal political bias of the New York Times in mid-March.

Called Times Watch, the campaign initially features a website (www.timeswatch.org) and other projects will be added over time. Clay Waters, a former media analyst at the main office in Alexandria, Va., will direct the site and work out of an office in the New York area. Waters is responsible for analyzing Times content and will be supported by the news analysis staff at the main office.

MRC President L. Brent Bozell notified New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines of the new project in a March 19 letter. “Times Watch is an important and long overdue expansion of the MRC’s watchdog duties because of the New York Times agenda-setting functions for the network news,” Bozell told Raines in the letter. Bozell emphasized the site would be dedicated to careful and accurate analysis and invited Raines to visit the site.

Raines became Executive Editor in September 2001 and under his leadership the paper has developed a crusading style that has been condemned by the MRC, as well as newspapers, magazines and journalism websites, on several occasions. A recent example of the paper’s zealous approach was the more than 40 stories the Times ran on the Augusta National Golf Course’s admissions policy from July through December 2002.

The Times has also been blatantly anti-war. In one instance, they mischaracterized the position of Henry Kissinger, describing him as anti-war when he was not. This bias has been so bad that Newsweek reported that a Times staff writer, told to write an article about how the American press was driving the debate on Iraq, couldn’t finish it. After doing some research, the reporter was forced to tell the editors “the only publication injecting itself into the policy debate was the Times itself.”

For his part, Raines has vigorously defended his decisions and recently accused conservative critics of engaging in an “energetic effort...to convince our readers that we are ideologues. It is an exercise of, in disinformation, of alarming proportions.”

Our hope with Times Watch is to alarm Raines even more.

MRC Irritating Liberals

We’ve got them talking about us.

Los Angeles Times television critic Howard Rosenberg, a hopeless liberal, was so upset by the MRC web site section dedicated to the anti-war rants of actors, singers and other celebrities (members with Internet access can read the celebrity quotes at www.mrc.org/mrcspotlight/war/welcome.asp) that he used his March 14 column to attack us. Rosenberg called us “rigid right clowns” and “19th Century thinkers in stovepipe hats.”

A former L.A. Times colleague of Rosenberg’s, American University professor Jane Hall, also criticized the MRC. On the March 8 Fox NewsWatch, Hall scolded us for creating what she called “a very unfortunate climate” in which “people have been demonized for their opposition to this war.”

In both the Moyers and celebrity instances, the MRC reported exactly what was said. If that leads to name-calling from liberals in the media, so be it. We aren’t here to please them, nor do we have any intention of stopping.

MRC has also been a presence on the airwaves. In recent days, President Bozell appeared on both Fox’s Special Report with Brit Hume and Hannity & Colmes to discuss the Dan Rather interview with Saddam Hussein. MRC Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham appeared on MSNBC’s Buchanan and Press on February 27 and was a guest on Fox News The O’Reilly Factor the next day. Director of Research Rich Noyes also appeared on Fox News The Big Story with John Gibson to discuss media coverage of the Iraq debate.
The Truth Behind the “Peace” Protests

A second round of major “peace” protests held across the United States and Europe in mid-February was met with another wave of positive media coverage and shallow reporting.

“I mean you had soccer moms out there, professional people, people who have never really participated,” CNN anchor Carol Lin exclaimed on February 15. From Berlin, fellow CNN reporter Matthew Chance seconded the thought, telling viewers the protesters weren’t “radicals” but “bankers…office clerks, they’re just normal people…”

Over on NBC’s Nightly News, Pat Dawson highlighted relayed protest claims “that a silent majority of Americans is uneasy with the prospect of war.” On CBS, anchor Russ Mitchell ended his newscast with a positive segment on Code Pink, a feminist, anti-war group. Mitchell admired their style, noting that these radical ladies “aren’t afraid to mix their politics with white wine and Brie at a poster-making get together in a posh Manhattan apartment.”

What the networks again neglected was the sordid background of the primary protest organizing group International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), whose leadership is so radical that even left-wingers are leery of them.

An article by David Corn in the leftist newspaper L.A. Weekly explained that Workers World Party activists run ANSWER. This group split from the Socialist Workers Party to support the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and advocate socialism and the abolition of private property. They are also fans of Fidel Castro and have praised North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Il for preserving his socialist revolution. They are also fans of Fidel Castro and have praised North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Il for preserving his socialist revolution and the abolition of private property. They are also fans of Fidel Castro and have praised North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Il for preserving his socialist revolution.

Racism), whose leadership is so radical that even left-wingers are leery of them.

Marc is a Washington-area native who graduated from George Mason University in 1991 with a political science degree. From 1992 to 1996, he worked as a reporter for Rush Limbaugh’s television show. Following that, Marc worked as an investigative reporter for the nationally syndicated television news program American Investigator.

Marc finds working at CNSNews.com to be enjoyable and rewarding. “I really enjoy the intellectual and journalistic freedom to write about sensitive topics that other news organizations tend to shy away from. I also enjoy working for an organization and with colleagues that deliver uncensored news on a daily basis.”

Marc is married to Jennifer Frank Morano and the couple has a one-year old daughter.