

Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Bush Bashing Signals a Gathering Media Storm

DEAR MRC MEMBER,

Forget the unity we saw after 9-11. The liberal media have turned on President Bush — with a vengeance.

The growling and snapping began during the bogus media frenzy over what the administration supposedly knew about terrorist attacks prior to September 11. The sniping has since escalated into innuendo about, well, anything that might damage the reputations of President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and anyone else the press can find in the administration.

Newsweek plastered Bush Sr. and W. on the cover of its July 29 issue and wondered if the son could avoid the father's mistakes. The gist of the article was that the Bushes were good for war but bad for the economy. *Time* then added fuel to the fire by

reporting that the Clinton administration actually had a plan to deal with terrorism, which they handed to the Bush people, who dropped the ball.

The *Time* story was obediently picked up by CBS and NBC, in spite of the fact that it was a purely partisan hit job. The magazine interviewed former Clinton aides who suddenly claimed they were ready to go to war after the USS Cole was attacked in October 2000 but pulled up short because it didn't want to hand a war to a new administration.

The suggestion that the Clintonistas were capable of the leadership necessary to take morally

courageous and politically risky military actions is simply unbelievable. If the Clinton administration thought fighting terrorism was so important, why didn't they go to war, rather than launch a pointless and

harmless cruise missile attack, after the 1998 attack on our embassy in Kenya that left scores of Americans dead?

continued on page 2



A *Time* story, repeated by CBS and NBC, gave a forum to Clinton administration officials who claimed they had a plan for fighting al Qaeda that the Bush administration was slow to act on.



INSIDE

PAGE 3
*Tim Russert's
Blind Spot*

PAGE 4
*Bits & Pieces:
NBC Can't ID
Democrats*

PAGE 6
*Hogie Notes:
Cultural Sentinels*

PAGE 7
*Impact:
Making Headlines
& Breaking News*

PAGE 8
*Editor's Corner:
Reuters Strikes
Again!*



DEAR MEMBER

continued from page 1

The long and short of all this is that the liberal media have become the presidential adversary I always knew they would. And this is only the beginning.

The Bush vacation, as I noted in my nationally syndicated column on August 5, has now moved to the top of the media hit list. Once again, when a Republican President goes on vacation, somehow he's doing something wrong. *USA Today* devoted a front-page article to Democratic Maryland Governor Parris Glendening's ramblings on the subject and Katie Couric, for the second year in a row, used her *Today* pulpit to wonder if "taking a month off" will hurt the President. Forrest Sawyer, sitting in for Brian Williams on CNBC on August 7, claimed the month-long working vacation had triggered a "firestorm" of controversy.

We've heard it all before. Do you remember how Ronald Reagan was accused of spending too much time at his California ranch? George Bush 41 the victim of the same kind of attack editing, with the media portraying his golfing and boating as a rich man's indulgences in a time of recession.

But, Bill Clinton's elitist vacations — zooming around Martha's Vineyard on an expensive boat with Walter Cronkite and doing dinner with the late *Washington Post* publisher Katherine Graham — were never the fodder of such media broadsides. Clinton was a liberal Democrat and a favorite of the Washington press corps. George W. Bush is a conservative and a man the media can barely tolerate.

That's not a simplification. The media, especially the White House press corps, don't like George W. anymore than they liked his father. And they really didn't like his father. "(T)he White House press corps by and large detested George Bush," *Time* correspondent William A. Henry III admitted in an interview on election night in 1992.

Ten years have passed and only the



Newsweek got into Bush bashing with a cover story asking if the son could avoid the father's mistakes.

thing that has changed is the Bush in the White House, as evidenced by Dana Milbank's *Washington Post* article on July 16. "The White House's control over information for the past 18 months has generated a large amount of pent up hostility in the press corps," Milbank wrote.

Some of the comments from other White House reporters (all provided anonymously of course) reinforced the notion that they're gearing up to get the President.

"If they treat the press like the enemy, eventually we are," one reporter told Milbank. Another reporter said if the press becomes increasingly hostile to Bush, administration officials "have only themselves to blame."

These are the same reporters who act insulted when they're accused of being biased. Loudly, repeatedly, they claim that personal feelings never interfere with their coverage. Yet here they are, admitting in one of the nation's most prominent newspapers that they don't like the way the Bush administration does business and that they're going to make them pay.

This whining and complaining oozes with liberal bias and contains more than a touch of incompetence. Reporters are supposed to develop sources and work for their stories. Presidents and presidential staffs, on the other hand, want to control information in order to control the political agenda. The press pulls and the administration holds. That's the way the Washington game has been played for decades.

The Bush administration, by all accounts, is good at the game because it is a tight, disciplined ship that contains few leaks. This discipline didn't happen by accident. George W. worked in his father's administration and personally witnessed the White House press corps do a number on his father. He's determined not to let the same thing happen to him, which antagonizes the liberal press even more.

The next step in the media offensive is easy to predict. The White House press corps, already mad and already plotting, will dutifully follow the President to his Crawford, Texas ranch. After the inferno of a Texas August, interrupted by almost daily cross-country trips for ribbon-cuttings and announcements, an exhausted, sweaty and thoroughly belligerent press corps will return to the nation's capital in September and immediately begin sharpening their pens for the Congressional elections. And they will take dead aim at the President and conservatives.

The MRC, because of your tireless and generous support, will be waiting. We'll use the traditional August downtime — everybody leaves Washington in August except us — to prepare ourselves for the upcoming battles. As always, we will monitor and report on the liberal media and battle those who unfairly attempt to undermine the Bush administration and other conservatives.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III
President

Russert's Blind Spot:

The Bush Tax Cut

NBC *Meet the Press* host Tim Russert has a well-deserved reputation for being a fair man who asks tough questions of both liberals and conservatives. Russert has a chink in his objective armor, however, when it comes to the President George W. Bush's tax cut.

MRC Director of Media Analysis Rich Noyes studied Russert's tax cut bias and issued a *Media Reality Check* on the subject. (*Media Reality Checks* are issued two to three times a month and expose specific examples of liberal media bias.) Every *Meet the Press* episode aired to date in 2002 was examined. MRC researchers found that Russert had asked questions about repealing or delaying the tax cut 30 times. He asked questions suggesting support for the tax cuts on only two occasions.

One of those questions was to James Carville, the fierce Democratic partisan whose outrageous claim that the tax cut caused the recession was promptly — and properly — shot down by Russert. "The recession began in March. The tax cut was passed in July.

How is that possible?" Russert asked the Ragin' Cajun.

But that common sense question was practically the only conservative argument Russert has advanced about the tax cut this year. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Commerce Secretary Don



Tim Russert is a fair man...except when it comes to the Bush tax cut.

Evans, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card and Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels, as well as Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, were all hit with anti-tax cut arguments when they appeared on *Meet the Press*.

At the same time, tax cut opponents

and prominent Democrats have been provided with opportunities to slam the tax cut. John McCain and Joe Lieberman, two senators who voted against the tax cut, were asked by Russert if they could delay the tax cuts. House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt was asked if he believed the government could "find the money for education, Social Security, Medicare, defense, education, energy, and still have in place the Bush tax cut?" Russert never asked Gephardt to contemplate spending cuts, of course.

The same anti-tax cut questions were also spoon fed to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-North Dakota) and Massachusetts Senator and Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry.

Such questions only play into the hands of liberals, who can't bear the idea of cutting any government program, even wasteful, needless ones. Russert is as balanced and fair as any journalist on network television, but he's not serving his viewers well when it comes to taxes and government spending.

More Media Hypocrisy

Newspaper editorial pages and television commentators have spent the better part of the last month condemning corporate America for its business practices, and rightfully so.

But guess what? Large media corporations use the same practices their newspapers and networks condemn.

MRC Vice President Brent Baker found this information in a *Washington Post* story and provided a detailed report on it to more than 10,000 *CyberAlert* subscribers across the nation on July 19.

According to the *Post*, media companies, from the high and mighty *New York Times* to the global, image-conscious corporate giants that own the networks, use many of the same corporate and accounting practices as business bad boys Enron and WorldCom did.

The *Times*, which holds itself up as the paragon of journalistic virtue, even

did business with Enron, the failed business that has become the epitome of corporate evil. "Five years ago...the New York Times Co. struck a "newsprint swap agreement" — a financial deal in which no physical assets changed hands — with [Enron]," *Washington Post* media critic Howard Kurtz reported.

The article also detailed how the *Post*, the *Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, AOL Time Warner, Gannett (publisher of *USA Today*), Knight-Ridder, the *Wall Street Journal*, General Electric (NBC), Disney (ABC) and Viacom (CBS) do not count stock options as business expenses, a practice almost every newspaper has railed against. In addition, several of the companies, including Viacom, Disney, General Electric, the *Times* and the *Post*, employ auditing companies as both auditors and consultants, another practice widely condemned in the media.

Kurtz and the *Post* are to be commended for covering this story. Most media outlets demand full disclosure from those serving the public interest but almost never feel obligated to disclose controversial or damaging information about themselves.



Media companies also use questionable business practices, according to a report by *Washington Post* media critic and CNN *Reliable Sources* host Howard Kurtz.

Get the *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*.

Ignoring the Party Label, Again

Why is it that when Democrats are the center of controversy the media have so much trouble calling them...Democrats?

Former Rep. James Traficant (D-Ohio) was expelled by the House of Representatives in July for his conviction on racketeering and other charges. But he



NBC News had difficulty identifying former Rep. James Traficant as a Democrat.

was identified as an "independent" by CNN's Aaron Brown on July 24 while NBC neglected to mention his party affiliation even once during a two-minute story it filed on July 18.

This just continues a trend. An MRC study found that from April through July last year, that Rep. Gary Condit was labeled as a Democrat in only 14 of 179 network news stories, believe it not.

By the end of July, NBC's identification problem had gotten even worse, as newsreader Hoda Kotbe overlooked what party Democratic Senator Robert Torricelli belonged to in a July 31 *Today*, stating only that "the Senate Ethics Committee severely admonished New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli for taking gifts..."

In a July 30 report on Traficant's sentencing, however, Tom Brokaw finally identified him as a Democrat.

Cuban Defectors Aren't News at NBC

Here's some more curious coverage from NBC.

CBS and ABC both ran stories on July 29 about the 23 Cuban Catholics who defected during the World Youth Day in Toronto, Canada. CNN's *Newsnight* devoted a full segment to the massive Cuban defections later that day.



On July 29, CBS, ABC and CNN ran stories about Cuban defections during the World Youth Day in Toronto, Canada but NBC never mentioned the defectors.

NBC spiked this huge story — completely. Tom Brokaw simply informed his audience that Pope John Paul II had arrived in Guatemala and made his first public comments about the Church's sex abuse scandals.

Hmmm. NBC can't identify Democrats who are in trouble and doesn't seem concerned that 23 Cubans — handpicked by Fidel Castro no less! — decided to flee Castro's island prison. July was certainly a strange month for the Peacock Network.

Still Defending Clinton... and Blaming Conservatives

When Fox News Channel's Brit Hume suggested former President Bill Clinton



Gloria Borger wrote that Bill Clinton couldn't be blamed for corporate corruption, but that the tax cut had somehow made it worse.

might share some of the blame for corporate corruption, the liberal media rallied to Clinton's defense.

NPR's Juan Williams, a fellow panelist on the *Fox News Sunday* program where Hume made the comment, immediately countered that the culprit wasn't Clinton, it was Newt Gingrich and the "Republican revolution" of the mid-90s.

Gloria Borger, a *U.S. News and World Report* correspondent who also works for CBS News, expanded on Williams point in the magazine's July 29 edition and used former Clinton administration Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin to do it. "Blaming Clinton is absolutely ridiculous," Rubin told Borger.

Borger's thoughts, like Williams's, quickly turned to the Republican Congress. "(T)he GOP's 1994 Contract with America was flush with proposals to roll back business regulation and legal accountability," she claimed.

After carrying a Gingrich denial, Borger, with the help of Rubin, admitted that blaming Congress was out of line. "No one in particular" is to blame, Rubin told her, but "the trillion-dollar tax cut has made it worse."

A tax cut in 2001 made corporate executives cheat and lie more in the late 90s? Is anyone editing this stuff? The comment is, however, another example of how far the media will go to slam the tax cut or any other idea that is contrary to their tax-and-spend philosophy.

A Case of Selective Reporting

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told a Senate committee on July 16 there was no rush to pass new regulations because corporate leaders had been

“chastened” by the scandals of the last several months.

FNC’s Brit Hume noted Greenspan’s “go slow” regulatory comment on *Special Report with Brit Hume* that night and wondered how many other media outlets would pick up on the remark.

Vice President Brent Baker decided to check and made this report the next morning in the MRC’s *CyberAlert* report: “...(T)hat theme was absent from ABC, CBS and NBC as well as CNBC’s News with Brian Williams...”



Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said there was no rush to pass new regulations but the networks ignored the remark.

Another case of the networks ignoring information with which they disagree. And another case of the MRC catching them doing it.

Stock Market Decline Is Cheney’s Fault

While journalists were going to great lengths to take former President Clinton off the blame line, Vice President Dick Cheney was being singled out for somehow personally causing the declining stock market.

That’s right. Cheney’s time at



Joie Chen blamed Vice President Cheney for the stock market decline.

Halliburton in the 1990s led to the stock market decline in 2002.

On the July 20 *CBS Evening News*, correspondent Joie Chen claimed “small investors pin the blame for the falling stock market on Mr. Cheney.” Chen then corroborated her claim with a soundbite from a protestor who said “the golden years are no longer golden because of the Cheneys of the world.”

Giving vent to those who mindlessly blame Cheney for the market’s fall was hardly the only media cheap shot the Vice President received. Bill Schneider of CNN compared Cheney’s troubles with the “investigation of Spiro Agnew in the 70s.” Schneider ignored the fact that Cheney exercised a perfectly legal stock option when he left Halliburton in 2000 and did so in large part because the media and Al Gore’s campaign were insisting he had an ethical duty to make a total financial break from the firm. In other words, Cheney couldn’t win. Don’t sell and get slammed. Sell and get slammed.

Rooting for Reich

The July 18 *Boston Globe* reported that 15 journalists donated money to the gubernatorial campaign of left wing former Clinton administration Secretary of Labor

Robert Reich. The group included a senior editor from *The New Yorker*, a producer for WGBH, Boston’s PBS affiliate, an Associated Press correspondent and several free-lancers and local newspaper reporters.

For the conservative view of this revealing story, the *Globe*’s Bill Dedman interviewed MRC Director of Media Analysis Rich Noyes, who pointed out that when these conflict of interest stories involve a liberal politician, the media powers never seem too concerned.

“Nobody is going to lose his job out of this,” Noyes noted. “But if it came out that three of four journalists gave to Jesse Helms, or National Right to Life, that might rub [media] people differently.”



Former Clintonite Robert Reich’s gubernatorial campaign has received the financial backing of 15 journalists.

The reporters’ reaction to being caught varied. The public television producer admitted she had asked Reich’s campaign to “make it more anonymous.” A reporter for the *Springfield Union-News* was bluntly honest about it, however, telling the *Globe* what the MRC and its members have always known.

“I’m just a liberal,” the *Union-News* reporter said. “Another one of those liberals in the media.”

MRC’s Mini-Bits

Newsweek’s **Eleanor Clift** openly pines for the demise of the Bush administration: “For the President to continue to push the partial privatization of Social Security is political suicide, I hope”...*New York Times* headline on July 24: “Study Calls Rescue at Pentagon Chaotic”...*Washington Post* headline, same story, same day: “Report Calls Response at Pentagon Successful”...This was a real **Associated Press** headline: “Hillary Clinton Emerges as a Moderate”...From the “Where Has This Guy Been” category: “...who would the people turn to right now to get out of this [corporate corruption] mess? They’d probably vote for Clinton...” former *Washington Post* reporter and Clinton biographer **David Maraniss** says.

Cultural Sentinels

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com
Executive Editor



One of the challenges faced by news organizations is keeping readers interested in news during the summer. There's a well-defined and simple pattern of 'news consumption' during the summer months; it drops, almost universally.

But amid all the traditional summertime distractions, something extraordinary happened at CNSNews.com, the Internet newswire of the Media Research Center. Our readership in July actually rose. Specifically, our audience grew to more than 700,000 readers.

What is it that makes CNSNews.com buck such established trends? At the risk of appearing a simpleton, permit me to offer a simple explanation; we live up to our promise of delivering news the establishment media ignore.

News like Staff Writer Michael Betsch's July 29 piece on a group of children who are fed up with the programming on the cable television channel MTV and took a stand against it.

You didn't see that story on the network news, but readers were thrilled to learn that these teenagers were taking a stand against trashy television. These readers were just as thrilled to know that CNSNews.com was covering the issue.

Where were the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* when radical Princeton University professor Peter Singer lectured about how Christianity was a 'problem' for the animal rights movement?

The *Post* and the *Times* were in the proverbial tall grass, but CNSNews.com Senior Staff Writer Marc Morano was on the job, reporting on this most recent assault on American culture.

When South Dakota enacted a new law barring politicians from seeking multiple federal offices, it was poo-pooed by the staff of home state Senator Tom Daschle as 'a little law,' even though it would prevent Daschle from seeking both reelection to the Senate and election to the White House, should he want to do so.

This belittling response by the Senate Majority Leader's office was ignored in *Time* and *Newsweek*, but CNSNews.com intern Jessica Cantelon brought home the story.

These are the stories that indicate the slow chipping away of American virtues; stories that illustrate the erosion of those values that have made this nation the greatest in the planet's history.

While we never conceived our mission in such terms, that's really a large part of what we do everyday at CNSNews.com. Many news organizations don't find such decay newsworthy; we do, and we pursue such stories with vigor.

In a way, we sometimes think of ourselves as sentinels; something not uncommon among news organizations. The ideal of the news media as government watchdog is as old as the republic.

More recently, however, we see the need for cultural and societal watchdogs. While many in the establishment media eschew such a role, the entire CNSNews.com staff assumes this role with pride and diligence.

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MAKING AN Impact

Inside The MRC

Amanda Monson

Media Research Center spokesmen are frequent guests on radio talk shows and TV news programs and are cited almost daily in newspapers and magazines. During the month of July, MRC experts appeared or were quoted on 17 separate occasions by outlets ranging from KKLA Radio in Los Angeles to the *Washington Times* to the Fox News Channel. Here are a few recent examples.

The Washington Times — August 1, 2002

"The Fox News Channel became the first TV network to break the silence about former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's links to the Enron scandal, the Media Research Center's Brent Baker writes at www.mediaresearch.org."



National Review Online — July 30, 2002

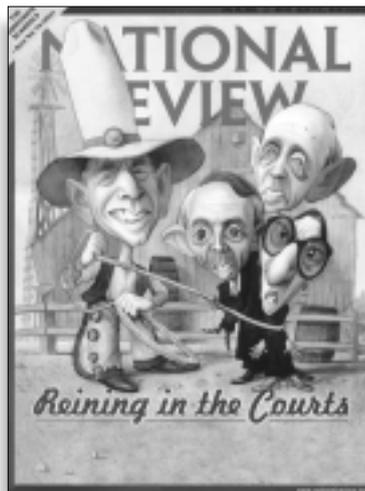
"Not surprisingly, the media are already writing Dick Cheney's political obituary...From here it seems to be, at least for the ragged end of the journalistic fabric, but a short step to blaming Cheney for pretty much everything that has gone wrong with the U.S. economy, as Joie Chen of CBS did (as noticed by the Media Research Center)."

The Washington Times — July 29, 2002

"Supporting abortion rights and affirmative action makes one a 'moderate' and 'nonideological' in the lexicon of the *New York Times*," Brent Baker writes at the Media Research Center's website, www.mediaresearch.org."

National Review — July 29, 2002

"The Media Research Center has found that, during a five-year period, reporters from evening news programs on ABC, NBC, and CBS applied the term 'liberal' to groups and political leaders just once for every four times they used the term 'conservative.'"



Amanda is a research assistant in the news division and is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the conversion project, which involves copying 15 years of news archives

from VHS tapes to digital video discs.

Her work also includes processing the numerous research

requests the MRC gets from networks, production companies and research companies. In addition, Amanda is also responsible for "capturing" the FLASH pictures from videotape.

Amanda is an Alexandria native and a graduate of Bishop O'Connell High School in Falls Church, Va. She attended James Madison University, where she spent one summer studying in Italy as part of an exchange program before graduating May 2001. Amanda worked as an intern at BAE Systems and did some work with the Young Entrepreneurs Organization before coming to the MRC. She has also participated in the Smithsonian Behind the Scenes volunteer program.

Amanda, who has a degree in history, enjoys the daily history lesson she receives while copying the tapes of late 80s and early 90s news programs over to DVDs. "Some of the things I remember and other events I'm seeing for the first time, but both make the job very interesting," she said.





Editor's Corner

TIM JONES

Reuters Strikes Again! Terrorists Are Now "Suspected" Militants

A recent Reuters dispatch about Michael Jackson — yes, Michael Jackson, the one-gloved, moonwalking pop singer — offered more proof that the London-based news service is lost in a liberal fantasy of its own creation.

The report was out of Reuters Tokyo bureau and concerned Jackson's charity recording for 9-11 victims. There's an argument over the release date and a Japanese company is involved in the controversy. Jackson's management hopes the song will raise \$50 million and the money — this is how Reuters reporter Isabel

Reynolds put it — will go to "victims' families and survivors of the attacks by suspected Islamic militants that killed nearly 3,000 people."

Suspected Islamic militants? Suspected? Is it impossible for Reuters to print the word "terrorist"?

It's another example of the British news service's left-wing European worldview that sees the Western world and militant Islamic terrorism as morally comparable combatants. It was Reuters global head of news, Stephen Jukes, who announced that the word "terrorist" would not be used by his reporters in the days after September 11

because "we all know that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

Jukes' comment, like so many left wing rants, was just plain stupid. What freedom is Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda fighting for? The freedom to treat women like dirt? The freedom to kill anyone who doesn't agree with them? The freedom to make everyone stop shaving?

Reuters latest bit of sanitized wording falls into the same category. In addition to being factually incorrect — all 19 hijackers belonged to al Qaeda, which makes them real, not suspected Islamic militants — the

phrase just doesn't make sense.

How and when does a man move from being a "suspected" Islamic militant to being a full-fledged Islamic militant? And if blowing up buildings causing the deaths of over 3,000 innocent men and women is not an act of terrorism, what is?

We don't have to worry about the answers because you can bet the smug powers-to-be at Reuters — who wouldn't exist without the freedom and protection Western civilization affords them — aren't about to start labeling murderers in a way that makes sense to the ordinary American. We can only be thankful that the dictionary-defying, morally-neutered executives at Reuters are all alone in their own little world.

It's enough to make you thankful for ABC, CBS and NBC.



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