

The Mainstream Media and the War

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The mainstream media is now in full campaign mode for liberal Democrats, ferociously portraying the War on Terrorism as a total disaster. Like Neil Sheehan, Katharine Graham, John Chancellor, and Eric Sevareid a generation ago, Chris Matthews, Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, and Dan Rather now breathlessly claim that a Republican administration is leading America to disaster. The fact that George Bush's approval rating is not at 30 percent is a tribute to Rush Limbaugh, Matt Drudge, and Fox News.

This weekend, the leftist media was out in full force. On *Meet the Press*, CNN political analyst and *Los Angeles Times* columnist Ron Brownstein defended Michael Moore's odious movie, *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Moore's movie accuses President Bush of having ties to Osama bin Laden and waging war against innocent Iraqis for the purpose of enriching Halliburton. Though Brownstein conceded that some of Moore's charges are "over the top," he defended the film, saying:

"The second half of the movie, when he focuses on the impact, the cost of the war in Iraq, both in Iraq and in the U.S., although there are quibbles--you can have quarrels with him on that front as well--the theater that I was in, you could really hear a pin drop for the second half of the movie. I could barely hear people breathing. And I think it really is no crime to remind people every so often that war is hell."

Perhaps someone should remind Brownstein of the "hell" America endured on 9/11 or the "hell" that the Iraqi people experienced under the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

The conclusions of *Fahrenheit 9/11* have no basis in fact or reality. Michael Moore presents Iraq as a peaceful, beautiful nation destroyed by American military action. President Bush is portrayed as a warmonger, slaughtering innocent civilians — including women and children — to enrich the oil industry. Moore has positioned himself as the American spokesman for al Qaeda.

We conservatives do not have "quibbles" with Moore, as Brownstein suggests. This is not a little partisan debate about a Medicaid amendment. This is about the security of 300 million Americans, not to mention the future of 25 million Iraqis freed from the clutches of Saddam Hussein. Treating Michael Moore as if he has made an important contribution to American culture is a disgrace. To rub conservatives' noses in it further, Brownstein claimed that Moore's anti-American garbage is no different from what Fox News does:

"I have a more complicated view of [the movie], I think. I don't think you go to Michael Moore for fair and balanced any more than you go to the other people who use that slogan for fair and balanced."

So, in Brownstein's view, Brit Hume and Michael Moore are just two sides of the same coin.

Washington Week's managing editor Gwen Ifill did not think that Moore's movie was "accurate," but believes that it really is no different from what Republicans have said:

“Michael Moore is guilty of the same thing that he and a lot of Democrats say that the Republicans are guilty of, especially on the Iraq-9/11 connection, and that's -- I call it guilt by juxtaposition. You put several facts out there then and say to the viewer, "How could this not be true?" The president, according to Democrats, did that with 9/11. He said, "Well, there was terrorism on 9/11. There's terrorism in Afghanistan. And we know that Saddam Hussein consorted with terrorists, and you make the conclusion." Michael Moore is doing the same thing.”

Ifill uses the sly phrase “Democrats say,” but she is clearly giving her own view. We know this because she never offers the Republican side of the story. She simply claims that Moore is hypocritical because he does the same thing that Republicans do. But, of course, Republicans have not done the same thing that Moore has done.

The Bush administration has claimed that there is an Iraq-al Qaeda connection, has backed it up with irrefutable facts, and the leftist-dominated 9/11 Commission has conceded that the connection exists. Michael Moore accused George Bush of complicity in mass murder. There is no moral equivalence here. Ifill and Brownstein know this, but they have bigger fish to fry — fueling the propaganda war against George Bush.

On *This Week*, George Stephanopoulos, Fareed Zakaria, and David Brooks all agreed that the post-military action period in Iraq has been a failure. David Brooks, the right-wing representative on the panel, was the most hopeful, but even he declared that the Bush administration naively tried to “gift-wrap democracy” for the Iraqi people, thereby imposing it on them. Another panelist went further, claiming that the Iraq war was a blunder, akin to “jumping off a diving board with no water in the pool.”

Also this weekend, self-professed media watchdog — more accurately, media lapdog — Howie Kurtz furthered the antiwar agenda with these absurd comments on *Reliable Sources*:

“The New Republic, the liberal magazine that backed President Bush on the war now says it feels regret because its strategic rationale for war has collapsed...The New York Times recently published its own mea culpa for trumpeting the administration's WMD claims without enough skepticism. We need a lot more of this kind of soul searching. Reporting on shadowy intelligence is awfully difficult, but the press played a role in leading the country to war by not being more aggressive in challenging the shaky evidence on Saddam's supposed weapons.”

Yes, the problem with the media is that they have been far too pro-war. We need a liberal answer to the *New York Times*. Maybe that can be Al Franken’s next project.

Note to Howie: When your commentary leads you to conclude that the *New York Times* is too conservative because they helped “lead the country to war,” you are not showing your independence. You are showing your total detachment from reality. There is not one person in America who was swept up in pro-war fever by the *New York Times*.

Kurtz and others also had a field day with Vice President Dick Cheney saying to Sen. Pat Leahy, “Go f*** yourself.” Cheney made the remark in response to Leahy’s repeated assertions that the vice president had personally gained from Halliburton’s Iraqi contracts.

The media has been in convulsions. MSNBC appeared to intimate that Cheney was a warlock,

running the headline, “**Cheney curses Leahy on Senate floor.**” The *Christian Science Monitor* slammed Cheney for “set[ting] the bar lower” in political discourse. Taking a break from cheering al Qaeda’s beheadings, al Jazeera complained, “US Vice President, Dick Cheney, blurted out the “F word.” Sen. Max Baucus echoed the media’s claims, saying, “Things have been pretty bad around here, but as far as I know, as far as I’m concerned, this is a new low.”

Fine. Cheney should have been more moderate in his tone toward Leahy by accusing him of knowing about 9/11 beforehand, lying to the country to start a war, and profiting from American soldiers’ deaths.

President Bush led the nation to war in Iraq for three reasons: (1) to remove Saddam Hussein from power, (2) to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, and (3) to ensure that a new democratic Iraq will cooperate with the United States to win the War on Terrorism. The first two goals have been accomplished. The third will be accomplished, beginning on June 30.

In truth, President Bush’s record is quite extraordinary. In less than four years, the president has won two wars, broken al Qaeda into a million pieces, and has led our nation to an impressive economic recovery. Not that you’ll be hearing any of this from the mainstream media anytime soon.