

Notable Quotables

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A bi-weekly compilation of the latest outrageous, sometimes humorous, quotes in the liberal media.



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Special Edition: America At War

Saddam Besting Hypocrite Bush

"Saddam has done remarkably well right now. In fact, the most remarkable achievement of the Bush administration so far has been creating quite a bit of worldwide sympathy for Saddam Hussein, who was until this war began perceived all over the world, including the Middle East, as just one horrible thug. Well, he's gotten quite a bit of sympathy and I suspect he wants to keep that sympathy, and I don't think he will be in the business of killing POWs...."

"It was also interesting that this administration, which has been so cavalier about its own commitments to conventions and multilateral agreements and treaties and has insisted on setting its own rules, making its own rules, doing its own thing, doing whatever it deems best, is now all of a sudden invoking international conventions."

— CBS reporter Bob Simon, who was himself held prisoner by the Iraqis during the 1991 Gulf War, on *The Early Show*, March 24.

We're Bullies for Not Losing

"It seems to me that we're moving relatively freely toward Baghdad — you, General Myers, talked about we're 100 miles inside — there's reports of surrenders and that, with the attack on Wednesday, that we degraded Saddam's capability of communicating with his commanders. Yet, we keep talking about this overwhelming force that we're prepared to use. I'm wondering, are you concerned at all that we will be seen as a bully?"

— Question from an unidentified reporter at the Pentagon briefing shown live on all major news channels early in the afternoon of March 21.

"One danger the administration may face in the next few days....is, the war is going so successfully and Iraq is putting up so little resistance, when we win, will it appear that we have been a bully, that we were, you know, we totally outmatched the other side, and if there are a lot of Iraqi casualties, that, of course, would dramatize that. But I think that's the one danger the administration must be worrying about now."

— David Gergen, a former Ford, Reagan and Clinton aide who is now Editor-at-Large of *U.S. News and World Report*, during ABC's prime time war coverage, March 21.

U.S. Bombing Like Dresden, 9/11

"That vista on the lower-left looks like Dresden, it looks like some of the firebombing of Japanese cities during World War II. There's another one. Still going on. You hear them overhead. Either jet aircraft or cruise missiles but yet another explosion."

— Brian Williams during MSNBC's live coverage of coalition bombing in Baghdad on March 21. The Allied bombing of Dresden on February 13-14, 1945 destroyed much of the city and killed tens of thousands of civilians.

"To many New Yorkers, the scenes of a city under siege were achingly familiar. New Yorkers watching the televised bombing of Baghdad yesterday said they were riveted by the raw and uninterrupted display of American military might. But for some, the bombing brought back particularly visceral and chilling memories. They could not help thinking about Sept. 11, and how New York, too, was once under assault from the skies."

— *New York Times* reporter David Chen in a March 22 news story headlined "Baghdad Bombing Brings Back Memories of 9/11."

Leftists Are Ahead of the Curve

"Across the country, citizens have been coming out to voice their opposition, all calling for the same things. They want government accountability, they want environmental justice, and most of all, they're calling for peace....While protesters like today are a statistical minority, in American history protests like this have been prescient indicators of the national mood. So the government may do well to listen to what's said today."

— ABC correspondent Chris Cuomo on a special Saturday edition of *Good Morning America*, March 22.

AP Writer Finds Saddam "Stirring"

"With U.S.-led forces closing in on Baghdad, a composed Saddam Hussein tried to rally his people and his troops with a stirring address Monday in which he vowed that allied forces would be crushed and 'victory will be ours soon.'"

— Lead paragraph of a March 24 dispatch from Baghdad by Associated Press writer Hamza Hendawi.

See the Back Page for the Winners of the MRC's 2003 DisHonors Awards

One Network's News Source Is Another's "Propaganda Machine"

"Iraqi television is still on the air. They broadcast a statement from Saddam Hussein today. He urged peasants and his paramilitary guerillas, the Fedayeen, to kill the American invaders whatever way they can."

— Peter Jennings on the March 25 *World News Tonight*.

"The Air Force blasted Iraqi TV with an experimental electromagnetic pulse device in an attempt to knock it off the air and shut down this propaganda machine which continues to show the regime is firmly in charge and ignores the fact that the American Army is almost literally at the gates."

— David Martin on the same night's *CBS Evening News*.

Peter Pushes Protesters' Cause

"There is a considerable body of opinion in the United States that thinks this war is a mistake and was opposed to the war. Very struck yesterday, huge ads in some of the nation's newspapers on the very eve of all this, being opposed to the war. History tells you that it's going to be very difficult for people who are opposed to the war to debate it now that the forces are in combat."

— Peter Jennings to historian Michael Beschloss during ABC's live war coverage about 2:45pm ET on March 20.

Peter Jennings: "I suppose it makes sense that the time for debating the war or the future of the campaign is completely over."

Democratic Senator Joe Biden: "Completely over...."

Jennings: "Let me ask you this, then. There are still a large number of people in the country who are opposed to this, realize they cannot stand it, but look to members of the Democratic Party, particularly, to sort of be their port in a storm, their place to manifest their dissatisfaction. What happens to them at the moment?"

— Exchange during ABC's live war coverage a few minutes later.

Marxism for Dummies

"By the way, 'No blood for oil,' from many people who are opposed to the war is, is not complicated at all. They believe the United States wishes to occupy Iraq in the long term to have the oil. Just so we understand why they wear those little buttons, 'No blood for oil.'"

— Jennings on *World News Tonight*, March 20.

Arnett Buys Another Iraqi Promise

"This morning the Trade Minister Mohammed Saleh told us in a press conference that President Saddam Hussein had personally ordered that these [U.S.] prisoners [of war] be treated well. The Iraqis are aware that there is increasing American concern about the treatment of their people that are being held, a total of I believe, seven now. The Trade Minister said Saddam wants them given the best medicine and the best food."

— *National Geographic Explorer's* Peter Arnett reporting from Baghdad for NBC's *Today*, March 25.

Can You Handle Koppel's Truth?

"We ought to take note of the significance of what is happening here because this is an invasion that in this particular case, of course, was not prompted by any invasion of the United States. I know that members of the administration have been creating a tenuous linkage between al-Qaeda and the Iraqis so that there is that linkage between 9/11 and what's happening here now, but this is a more proactive, pre-emptive kind of operation, certainly a larger pre-emptive operation than I think the United States of America has ever engaged in and whichever way it goes I think it's going to shift the plates of the world."

— ABC's Ted Koppel, accompanying the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division in Iraq, during live war coverage at about 10:20pm ET on March 20.

"There is no reason to believe that ultimately, perhaps even in the next week or two, U.S. forces will not prevail. But success will come at a significant cost. Forget the easy victories of the last twenty years; this war is more like the ones we knew before. The President has determined that U.S. security and national interests are at stake. Such determinations always carry with them a high cost in blood and treasure. Watching that unfold on your television screens, sometimes watching it live, as it's happening, will not be easy for you. Telling you if and when things are going badly for U.S. troops, enabling you to bear witness to the high cost of war, is the hard part of our job. In a famous couple of lines from the movie *A Few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson, playing a Marine Colonel, snarls: 'You want the truth? You can't handle the truth.' Well, this is no movie. We'll do our very best to give you the truth in the hope and the belief that you can handle it."

— Koppel at the conclusion of a one-hour *Nightline* on March 24.

Bush's Responsibility for Iraqi Dead

"The President has spoken many times of the special burden and the special responsibility he has as Commander-in-Chief of sending young Americans into harm's way.... But have you heard him talk about this other responsibility which may weigh on him heavily today, and that is for the death of innocents, for Iraqi moms and dads and children who may, despite our best efforts, be killed?"

— ABC White House reporter Terry Moran's question to Ari Fleischer during a televised briefing on March 21.

"Obviously, the Iraqi regime has mined this harbor and that is a wicked thing to do, but the coalition battle plan was to bypass Basra and leave the more than half million citizens there essentially to fend for themselves until we can get this aid flowing. It's not that we can't only get ships into Umm Qasr, it's that we didn't take Basra, which is now a scene of utter chaos and total unpredictability and there's no telling when aid will flow there. Does the administration take any responsibility for the plight of the people in Basra?"

— Moran's question to Fleischer at the March 25 White House briefing.

“Summit of the Convinced”

“There was...some confusion about this summit meeting in the Azores, ‘a summit of the convinced,’ some people said, when the time might have been used to work on those who are not convinced that war is the way to go, including the French. One thing is very clear, the Bush administration has not been able to convince the French President, who says he will veto any UN resolution which actually authorizes war.”

— ABC’s Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight/Sunday*, March 16, after President Bush’s meeting with British, Spanish and Portuguese leaders.

Bush’s Coalition of None

“You’re a journalist who’s also a historian. Can you recall a time when the United States has been quite so alone?”

— Peter Jennings to *Newsweek’s* Fareed Zakaria during an ABC News prime time special, March 17.

“I want to come back to you, Fawaz, and ask you the consequences in the Arab world of the United States going it alone?”

— Jennings to ABC News consultant Fawaz Gerges, a professor at Sarah Lawrence College, a few minutes later.

“Very Challenging” Enemy Spin

Peter Jennings: “In his first war briefing from the U.S. Central Command site at Doha in Qatar, U.S. commander Tommy Franks faced reporters from all over the world who were there and at one point he was asked a very challenging question about weapons of mass destruction.”

Unidentified Middle Eastern reporter (to Franks): “Was it a big lie or just a cover to justify your invasion of Iraq and to remove its regime, which still cannot use any kinds of these weapons to defend itself against your attacks?”

— ABC’s *World News Tonight/Saturday*, March 22.

No Flowers for U.S. Troops

Peter Jennings: “Yesterday we saw images of a jubilant reception in the southern Iraqi town of Safwan, where soldiers stood by as people tore down a picture of Saddam Hussein and jumped in the streets — at least for the cameras....”

John Donvan: “I didn’t see anything like that. What I saw was a lot of hostility towards the coalition forces, towards the United States, towards George Bush and wasn’t particularly friendly towards us journalists. It’s the first time I’ve heard somebody refer to me to as a Satan, and I think we know what that might mean.”

— ABC’s *World News Tonight/Saturday*, March 22.

“For months the administration has predicted — or seemed to predict, to be fair — that cheering Iraqis would be greeting Americans in the streets and it doesn’t appear to have happened so far. Maybe we just haven’t seen it. What do you think has happened?”

— Jennings to former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle during an ABC News special, March 24.

Extolling “Diverse” Protesters

“It was a very calm and peaceful march, a lot of family members. The march was really led off by a group called September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. These are all people who lost their families on September 11th. They were heading off the march and behind them the children’s contingent and behind them the religious contingent. A very diverse group of people.”

— CNN’s Maria Hinojosa during live coverage at about 5:25pm ET, March 22.

Painting Daschle as the Victim

“At the White House today there were lots of harsh words directed at Democrats on Capitol Hill. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle in particular....Democrats called the barrage of criticism a pre-emptive strike, orchestrated by the White House, to try to intimidate them from speaking out before war even starts.”

— Campbell Brown on *NBC Nightly News*, March 18.

“With the nation perhaps just hours away now from war in Iraq, the White House and the Republican Party appear to be questioning the patriotism of the Senate’s top Democrat....The White House bristled at suggestions that anyone is trying to muzzle him.”

— NBC’s David Gregory on *Today*, March 19.

“You were under a certain amount of criticism especially directly from the White House as the day before the war actually began you talked about the failure of diplomacy. Did you feel along the way, and especially in the hours after that, that some Republicans were actually questioning your patriotism?”

— Harry Smith’s question to Senator Daschle on CBS’s *Early Show*, March 21.

“Listening to most of the public pronouncements on Capitol Hill, you’d think it was a united front behind the President and his strategy. But listen carefully and you can hear a significant grumbling, especially behind the scenes, things people don’t want to say publicly in wartime....Why all of the covert frustration? Why hasn’t there been more public dissent? Well, it is a tricky business to criticize a President during wartime. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle did it recently and was practically tarred and feathered.”

— ABC’s Claire Shipman during an ABC News prime time special on the war, March 24.

Reality Check:

“I’m saddened, saddened that this President failed so miserably at diplomacy that we’re now forced to war, saddened that we have to give up one life because this President couldn’t create the kind of diplomatic effort that was so critical for our country.”

— Senator Daschle in a speech to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees on March 17. None of the the above stories quoted Daschle’s linking of future war deaths with Bush’s “failure.”

Winners of the MRC's 2003 DisHonors Awards

On March 27, 2003 at the Omni Shoreham hotel in Washington, D.C., the Media Research Center presented its annual "DisHonors Awards" for the most outrageously biased liberal reporting of 2002. **Cal Thomas** served as the Master of Ceremonies; **Sean Hannity**, **Laura Ingraham** and **Ann Coulter** presented the awards. The winners were chosen by a panel of 15 distinguished media observers listed below. In place of the journalist who "won" each award, a conservative accepted it in jest. For the runners-up, and to watch these quotes and the awards event via RealPlayer, please visit www.mrc.org.

Ozzy Osbourne Award (for the Wackiest Comment of the Year)

"Seven years ago, when the last referendum took place, Saddam Hussein won 99.96 percent of the vote. Of course, it is impossible to say whether that's a true measure of the Iraqi people's feelings."

— **ABC's David Wright** on *World News Tonight*, Oct. 15.

Accepting for David Wright.... Rich Lowry

The 'I'm Not a Geopolitical Genius But I Play One on TV' Award

"I despise him [President George W. Bush]. I despise his administration and everything they stand for....To my mind the election was stolen by George Bush and we have been suffering ever since under this man's leadership....There has to be a movement now to really oppose what he is proposing because it's unconstitutional, it's immoral and basically illegal....It is an embarrassing time to be an American. It really is. It's humiliating."

— **Actress Jessica Lange** at a film festival, September 25.

Accepting for Jessica Lange.... Stephen Moore

Ashamed of the Red, White & Blue

Bill Maher: "Not for the rest of the world. We take pride in being big charity givers. We're in fact dead last among the industrialized nations. We give an infinitesimal amount of our money to people around the world. I think what people around the world would say is it would take so little for this rich country to help and alleviate so much misery and even that is too much for them. We're oblivious to suffering."

Larry King: "And so we are hated because of this?"

Maher: "Yes, I think so. I mean, I think, Iraqis, I think, feel that if we drove smaller cars, maybe we wouldn't have to kill them for their oil."

— **Bill Maher** on CNN's *Larry King Live*, November 1.

Accepting for Bill Maher.... Mona Charen

They Called It Puppy Love Award

"For Castro, freedom starts with education. And if literacy alone were the yardstick, Cuba would rank as one of the freest nations on Earth. The literacy rate is 96 percent."

— **Barbara Walters** narrating her interview with Fidel Castro on ABC's *20/20*, October 11.

Accepting for Barbara Walters.... Judge Robert Bork

I Hate You Conservatives Award

"The entire federal government — the Congress, the executive, the courts — is united behind a right-wing agenda for which George W. Bush believes he now has a mandate. That agenda includes the power of the state to force pregnant women to surrender control over their own lives. It includes using the taxing power to transfer wealth from working people to the rich. It includes giving corporations a free hand to eviscerate the environment and control the regulatory agencies meant to hold them accountable. And it includes secrecy on a scale you cannot imagine.

"Above all, it means judges with a political agenda appointed for life. If you like the Supreme Court that put George W. Bush in the White House, you will swoon over what's coming. And if you like God in government, get ready for the Rapture...."

"So it's a heady time in Washington, a heady time for piety, profits and military power, all joined at the hip by ideology and money. Don't forget the money...."

"Republicans out-raised Democrats by \$184 million and they came up with the big prize: monopoly control of the American government and the power of the state to turn their radical ideology into the law of the land. Quite a bargain at any price."

— **Bill Moyers' commentary** on PBS's *Now*, November 8.

Accepting for Bill Moyers.... Tony Blankley

The Judges:

- L. Brent Bozell III**, President of the Media Research Center
- William F. Buckley, Jr.**, *National Review* Editor-at-Large
- Steve Forbes**, President of Forbes, Inc.
- John Fund**, columnist for OpinionJournal.com
- Lucianne Goldberg**, Talk Radio Network and Lucianne.com
- Lawrence Kudlow**, co-host of CNBC's *Kudlow & Cramer*
- Rush Limbaugh**, radio talk show host, EIB Network
- Stephen Moore**, *National Review Online* columnist
- Robert Novak**, national columnist and CNN commentator
- Kate O'Beirne**, Washington Editor of *National Review*
- Michael Reagan**, national radio talk show host
- William Rusher**, Distinguished Fellow, Claremont Institute
- Cal Thomas**, columnist and host of FNC's *After Hours*
- R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.**, Editor-in-Chief, *American Spectator*
- Walter Williams**, economics professor, George Mason U.

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