



Worst of the Week

The Most Egregious, Horrendous and Stupefying Liberal Media Bias of Campaign '08

COURIC SCORNS "EMBARRASSING" LACK OF PRE-WAR DISSENT ON TV

During a three-anchor tour on the May 28 edition of CBS's *The Early Show*, CBS anchor Katie Couric endorsed the claim from former Bush press secretary Scott McClellan that the "liberal media" didn't live up to their reputation before the Iraq war. He wrote the public would have been "better served" by fiercer anti-war criticism.

"I think it's one of the most embarrassing chapters in American journalism," Couric echoed. "And I think there was a sense of pressure from corporations who own where we work and from the government itself to really squash any kind of dissent or any kind of questioning of it. I think it was extremely subtle, but very, very effective. And I think Scott McClellan has a really good point."

What's really embarrassing is Couric trying to argue the media slavishly ignored anti-war arguments. An MRC study of TV coverage in October 2002 found nearly three in five soundbites from members of Congress (59%) opposed the use of force, or roughly double the percentage of Senators and Representatives who actually voted against using force (29%).

Despite Couric's claim that the media were pressed to quash "any kind of questioning," an MRC study of all Iraq stories on ABC's *World News Tonight* during September 2002 discovered that ABC reporters were nearly four times more likely to voice doubt about the truthfulness of statements by U.S. government officials than the claims of Saddam Hussein and his propagandists. This may be why the other anchors disagreed with Couric. ABC's Charles Gibson said ABC asked all the tough questions before the war.

On CNN's *The Situation Room* on May 28, media reporter Howard Kurtz also claimed dissent was squashed: "Anti-war voices had limited access, it seems, to the airwaves, while administration officials, of course, were on every day." CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer disagreed, noting CNN devoted a reporter, Maria Hinojosa, to cover just the anti-war protest beat.

An MRC study of 12 hours and five minutes of coverage of rallies in New York and other cities on Saturday, March 22, 2003 found an astonishing 38 reports on the day's protests in that time. Other anti-war protests in January and February were lead stories on TV newscasts.

