

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

Beseeching Blix, Bashing Bush

"Can you imagine a point at which you would say, 'They [the Iraqis] are cooperating enough that I'm going to step out of my role and say, personally, this war is not justified'?"

— ABC's Diane Sawyer to UN Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix on *Good Morning America*, February 10.

"The UN weapons inspectors go back to Baghdad this weekend. They have not been happy with Iraqi cooperation so far. We'll see if the Iraqis do any better — and if that means anything to the Bush administration."

— ABC's Peter Jennings, *World News Tonight*, February 7.

Scoff First, Verify Later

"There is no way to know how the administration verifies that Iraqi scientists were threatened with their lives if they talked to the UN inspectors. It is a very inflammatory charge at a very tense time."

— Peter Jennings on the January 23 *World News Tonight* after noting U.S. charges Iraq threatens its scientists.

Brian Ross: "[The UN has] important new and credible information about the intimidation of Iraqi scientists. The information comes from a recent defector who also has told his story to ABC News....The defector says the Iraqi scientists being interviewed by the UN have been required to sign two written documents — one public, pledging to cooperate with the UN. A second one, he says, is secret, holding the scientists responsible if the security of Iraq is harmed."

Defector: "The words 'being held responsible for harming the country's security' are well known for Iraqis. The penalty: killing and torture and going after the family."

— ABC's *World News Tonight*, February 10.

While Iraqi Propagandists Sleep, ABC Still Broadcasts Their Spin

"When the leadership of this country wakes up...I suspect they will latch on to many of the complaints we've heard from President Bush tonight. Most notably, I think the low hanging fruit is this idea that they're still hiding weapons of mass destruction. They'll point out that the inspectors have been here for more than 60 days and have so far found nothing. I think you'll also hear a reaction to this idea that President Bush put forward of liberating Iraq. Saddam Hussein was on TV a couple of hours ago saying the Americans want to enslave Iraq."

— ABC's Dan Harris in Baghdad immediately after Bush's January 28 State of the Union address.

"Serious" Presidents Hike Taxes

"If Bush is a serious war President he would increase taxes. This is a time for sacrifices. This is a real war and we need money to pay for it."

— *Newsweek* Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas on the February 8 *Inside Washington*.

Pretending Iraqis Speak Freely...

"On the streets of Baghdad, the word to the U.S. is essentially, 'Put up or shut up!' People here just don't believe their President is hiding weapons of mass destruction. These men say the inspectors have found nothing because Iraq has nothing to hide, that the U.S. government's real agenda is to seize Iraq's oil fields."

— NBC's Ann Curry on *Today*, February 5.

...Even Though NBC Knows Better

"There is this kind of Manchurian Candidate quality about life there [in Iraq]. People are afraid to say anything because the wrong thing gets them not only in trouble, but probably executed. The record is pretty complete on that."

— NBC anchor Tom Brokaw on CBS's *Late Show with David Letterman*, February 6.

Blame U.S. For Korean Nukes

"This may be a technicality, but [North Korea] did mothball their plutonium program. And what they did was start up a parallel program with uranium, which violates the spirit of the framework, but not the technicality. And for the U.S. end, we didn't deliver on our end either which was to move towards diplomatic relations and to provide them with light-water reactors....I'm not necessarily defending them, but all the fault's not on their side."

— Eleanor Clift on the February 8 *McLaughlin Group*.

The Opposite of Wonderful Bill

"A friend of mine here at CNN has a theory about the Bush administration. They're convinced that everything Bill Clinton ever did was wicked, bad and awful, and so they want to do the opposite....Clinton wanted to save all that wilderness area in Alaska; and Mr. Bush wants to drill for oil there. Clinton fussed about clean air; this President wants to ease new restrictions on coal-burning power plants.... Clinton, my friend noted, had surpluses. Obviously, the Bush administration thinks those are evil, because what they want is deficits — big ones, maybe the biggest ever."

— CNN's Bruce Morton on *Late Edition*, February 9.

30 Straight Years of NASA Cuts?

"There's certainly been talk that in recent years that Congress's attitude and, for that matter, the attitude of a succession of Presidents beginning with President Nixon, running through Carter, Reagan, Bush first and President Clinton and now President George W. Bush, there's been more cost cutting that has resulted in safety cutting."

— **Dan Rather during CBS's live coverage on February 4 of a memorial for Columbia's crew. Moments later, CBS space expert Bill Harwood corrected Rather, pointing out that "after Challenger, the budgets really ramped up."**

Rise Is "Large," Decline Is "Slight"

"The nation's jobless rate unexpectedly rose last month, to 6 percent, matching April's figure as the highest rate in eight years....Many analysts had expected a small increase from October's 5.7 percent unemployment rate, but few if any expected so large a jump."

— **Washington Post reporter John Berry in a December 7 article headlined, "Jobless Rate Rose to 6% in November; Size of Increase Surprises Analysts."**

vs.

"Unemployment Down Slightly to 5.7% in January."

"The nation's unemployment rate in January dropped to 5.7 percent from 6 percent, but economists cautioned that businesses still aren't hiring aggressively."

— **Headline and first sentence of a February 8 Washington Post article by Neil Irwin and Kirstin Downey.**

Bush's "Sop to the Far Right"

"Not by nature a gifted public speaker, Bush did well for the most part, warming up himself and the crowd with a semi-ambitious domestic agenda (with, as a sop to the far right, a call for an end to 'partial-birth abortions')."

— **Washington Post TV critic Tom Shales in a January 29 column reviewing the State of the Union. A mid-January Gallup poll found 70 percent would outlaw partial-birth abortions except when the mother's life was in jeopardy.**

"Child" Downgraded to "Fetus"

"The conditions of the mother and unborn child were not available last night."

— **From a brief unbylined item about a pregnant woman shot on Boston's subway, which appeared in the early editions of the February 6 Boston Globe.**

"The fetus of a 29-year-old passenger on the Orange Line died last night after the woman was shot...."

— **From a longer story by reporter Michael S. Rosenwald about the same crime which appeared on the front-page of later editions of the February 6 Globe.**

Touting "Respected Statesman"

• **Dan Rather:** "In South Africa today, a prominent new voice joined the international chorus of protest against President Bush's preparations for war against Iraq...."

• **Tom Fenton:** "Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize winner and one of the world's most respected elder statesmen, let the Bush administration have it right between the eyes.... He attacked America's record on human rights and for dropping atomic bombs on Japan in World War II."

• **Nelson Mandela:** "If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world, it is the United States of America. They don't care."

• **Fenton:** "....His attack on American policy may be one man, one voice, but it's a voice that will be heard around the world."

• — **CBS Evening News, January 30.**

Bush a "Sadistic Murderer"

• **President Bush:** "More than 3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries. Many others have met a different fate. Put it this way: They are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies."

• **MSNBC's Chris Matthews:** "I'm afraid that's the President at his least attractive, that kind of, I don't know, college fraternity master. 'We had killed the bad guys.' I don't know."

• **Former Gore campaign manager Donna Brazile:** "Well, I know, but that's probably the part of the President that I, that I really like because, I know that sounds strange but—"

• **Matthews:** "You like the sadistic murderer?"

• — **Exchange shortly after 11pm EST January 28 during MSNBC's live coverage of the State of the Union speech.**

Do Any Newsweek Staffers Protest Leftward Deviationism?

• "At the morning editorial meetings, [Newsweek Arts and Entertainment Editor Sarah Pettit would] be protesting any rightward deviationism in Newsweek's political coverage — and campaigning for extra pages in Arts. A couple of years ago, she stayed up nights and weekends plotting a wholesale redesign of the magazine; she even got her way about some of it."

• — **Newsweek's David Gates in the February 3 issue, in "An Appreciation" of Pettit, who died of lymphoma.**

She Must Know Lots of Reporters

• "Among people I know, nobody was for the war."

• — **Washington Post columnist Mary McGrory in a February 6 op-ed announcing that Powell's UN speech had persuaded her to support using force against Iraq.**

Notable Quotables

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