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ABC Anchor Stands Out Like Sore Thumb As He Daily Scorns Bush's and America's Opposition to Iraq

Peter Picks a Peck of Pesky Protester Points

As America moves inexorably toward war with Iraq, Peter Jennings is assuming the role William F. Buckley once described for conservatives, to "stand athwart history, yelling stop." As CBS and NBC strike a more balanced tone, the ABC anchor seems to be growing more anti-war the more likely war becomes.

February 5: While other networks found Colin Powell's UN presentation moving public opinion toward war, Jennings could only dwell on doubts: "Many people will believe the Secretary of State today and some will not." After George Stephanopoulos said even Democrats were "impressed" with Powell, Jennings tried to rebut: "Let me add a note of skepticism. Does this mean they were impressed with substance or performance?"

Jennings added even if the Powell analysis was right, "it could be hell for American troops if the country goes to war." After reporter John McWethy warned of the chemical and biological threats to U.S. troops, Jennings rained skepticism on Powell's case again: "It's an 'if' still at the Pentagon, is it? If he has all of these provisions?"

February 6: Jennings noted a new ABC News poll found that 71 percent thought Powell was convincing and 61 percent thought the Bush team justified going to war. So he went overseas to find discontent: "There's a degree of opposition to war in every country, even where the government has been supportive" and that "many Arabs, even if they dislike Saddam Hussein, wonder about America's long-term intentions."

February 7: Jennings complained: "Now to the Bush administration's campaign against Iraq. Just as the Iraqis appear to be making some concessions, the U.S. thinks it has growing support for war." He ended the show with Bush bashing: "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."

February 10: Jennings teased at the top of the program: "On the road in America, listening to Oregon. There is no consensus about war." In fact, as he soon conceded, "the state as a whole supports the President." Jennings also suffered as ABC reporter Brian Ross uncovered a defecting Iraqi scientist who said they knew that cooperating with UN inspectors meant "killing and torture and going after the family." Jennings had denounced that on January 23 as "a very inflammatory charge at a very tense time."

February 11: Jennings again came at Team Bush from all sides, claiming they "haven't proved the connection" between Iraq and al Qaeda, and that battling both "might well be stretching the United States quite thin." Reporter Martha Raddatz implied toughness on Iraq may cause more terrorism: "Many believe this may backfire, saying, 'Who stirred up this hornets' nest?'" Jennings spotlighted a Senate hearing: "If you believe the witnesses today, the administration may not know" what it's doing after the war. Then,

from the Hajj in Mecca, reporter Jim Sciutto relayed complaints that the U.S. is in a war against all Islam and is "coming for oil."

February 12: From Phoenix, Jennings found an Iraqi Christian to complain, "The only way you fight my people is to kill them?...When is the last time that you hit someone and they became your friend afterwards?" Other Iraqi-Americans brought complaints from other sides, saying they wanted regime change, but not US occupation, or they said America shouldn't "betray" the country as they did by leaving Saddam in power in 1991. — *Tim Graham*

Everyone Knows Jennings Is Biased

ABC's Terry Moran: "What is the administration's assessment of the likelihood of the risk that Saddam Hussein with his back up against the wall, with war seeming almost inevitable, will open up his arsenal of germs and chemicals and disperse them to terrorists?"

Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer: "Does this mean that ABC News is acknowledging that Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction?" — Exchange at Wednesday's White House briefing.

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