



Media Reality ✓ Check

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Phil Donahue: "Don't Make America the Great Big Satan With Big Feet Stomping on Innocent People!"

Demanding Media Take Peaceniks Seriously

An article in Monday's *USA Today* described the plight of those unpopular "peace" advocates who oppose a military response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. "These days, dissenting words don't always get spotlighted in national magazines. In fact, they are subject to intense vitriol, testament to the fever pitch of national emotions," reporter Marco R. della Cava sympathized. "Even the San Francisco Bay Area, despite its history of hippies and peace signs, at times offers little harbor to those pressing alternative viewpoints."

Left-out lefties are trying to shame the media into giving them more airtime: "News anchors and commentators have stripped off even the cloak of objectivity and have essentially become the drum and bugle corps of the Pentagon," editor Matthew Rothschild of *The Progressive* complained to the *Hartford Courant* last week.

They should be careful what they wish for. This morning, ABC's *Good Morning America* gave one prominent activist, former talk show host Phil Donahue, a chance to make his case in a debate with the Fox News Channel's Bill O'Reilly.

First, Donahue alleged "a significant effort on the part of mainstream media to just shut up these peaceniks." After asserting the impossibility of bombing targets in Afghanistan without killing innocent people, he painted the U.S. as lonely and isolated. "I'm saying that this is time for the United States to reach out and join the world community," he told ABC's Diane Sawyer. "Show the world that we want to be members of the human community."

Regarding al-Qaeda, the terrorist network headed by Osama bin Laden, Donahue recommended arresting the wrongdoers, but didn't think they should face an American court: "I believe these people should be captured. I believe they should be brought to a world tribunal."

Despite the direct attack against the U.S., Donahue also insisted we should not act alone. "We have the biggest stick in the world and we are not walking softly," he worried. "This is not ours alone to fight. It is the world's fight and they want to fight it. Please don't make America the great big Satan coming in with the big feet stomping on innocent people in the name of those who died randomly by Messianic people who talk to God every day and God talks back... We can make our children safer by reaching out rather than lashing out."

The Washington Post Made Case for Force

"It is argued that striking back will only perpetuate the 'cycle of violence.' This is the most alluring argument, and the one that is flat-out wrong. There is a cycle of violence, but it has nothing to do with tit-for-tat. It is a cycle that includes the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the attack on Khobar Towers in Saudia Arabia in 1996, the bombing of U.S. embassies in east Africa in 1998 and the attempted sinking of the USS Cole in Yemen last year. These were attacks by Islamic terrorists that killed service members and civilians, American and foreign; the terrorists received shelter and support from anti-American governments; the governments paid no price. It is precisely to break that cycle of violence that the United States now must act." — September 30 *Washington Post* editorial, "The Case for Force."

Asked what the U.S. should do now, Donahue inexplicably complained about the Reagan administration's 1986 strike on Libya in response to a terrorist attack that killed two American servicemen: "We have bombed Tripoli, a crowded city, at night, where old people and children were sleeping."

Sawyer asked again: "But what do we do now? What do we do now?" Donahue replied, "Well, maybe we sign the land mine treaty, follow Canada's lead and all the other Western nations." But Donahue's bottom

line: "What we can't do is look like the only action we're capable of is a military action that will kill people."

Left-wing media critics complain that reporters cannot be pro-American and "objective" at the same time, as if the question of America itself is up for debate. Phil Donahue says the U.S. is too isolated, despised and clumsy to act alone. Is that really the sort of "objective" reading of America that can serve the public well? So far, not even the usually-liberal media are buying that line. — Rich Noyes

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