



Campaign 2000

Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Media Bias ☆ Thursday Afternoon, October 12, 2000

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Networks Found No Gore Flubs Worth Pointing Out; ABC's Jack Ford Feels the Vice President's Pain

ABC Pushes Bush Gaffes, Ignores Gore's

The *Washington Post* "fact check" on the second debate this morning was almost entirely about the facts of George W. Bush. TV coverage this morning also focused on Bush's claims, but ignored Gore's claims.

Blur, Blur, Blur. On *Good Morning America*, ABC's Jack Ford pointed out to Bush that he had erred in asserting that the three assailants in the death of James Byrd in Texas are not all getting the death penalty, since one got life in prison. "The question people now ask is, is that, however, the kind of error you've criticized the Vice President for making?"

Ford asked the same thing to Gore about the Byrd boo-boo: "Is that the type of error, the type of mistake that the Bush campaign has criticized you for making?"

Gore's Green Gaffes. No network last night or this morning questioned the veracity of Gore's statements on the environment. For example, Gore claimed "There was a study a few weeks ago suggesting that in summertime, the polar ice cap will be completely gone in 50 years."

Gore was referring to a front-page *New York Times* article on August 19. However, the *Times* retracted the story ten days later: "Recent eyewitness reports of open water from melting ice at the North Pole have prompted climatologists and other scientists to make a closer study of satellite imagery and other observations of northern sea ice, past and present. Although striking and unusual, those reports are not as surprising as suggested in a news article on Aug. 19." (Memo to Jack Ford: ABC promoted the story on the 19th, but ignored the retraction.)

Gore also asserted that "the level of pollution is increasing significantly." In the April 30 *Washington Post*, Jonathan Rauch differed: "Since 1970, the population has

grown by almost a third, and both the gross domestic product and the number of miles we rack up while driving have more than doubled. Yet sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide levels are down by two-thirds, nitrogen oxide by almost 40 percent, ozone by 30 percent...the volume of toxic substances released into the atmosphere has dropped 42 percent since then."

Then there's the political question: if pollution is up significantly, isn't that on the Clinton-Gore watch?

Chernomyrdin. ABC's George Stephanopoulos took issue this morning with Bush's claim that International Monetary Fund dollars "ended

up in [former Russian Prime Minister] Viktor Chernomyrdin's pocket," suggesting "there's no evidence at all" of that claim. Stephanopoulos left out that Swiss magistrates have complained that a lack of cooperation from the United States is holding up their probe of misused IMF money in Russia.

Stephanopoulos also ignored that *The New York Times* reported last Friday a Chernomyrdin gaffe by Gore in the first debate. Gore said he "took a risk" in personally urging Chernomyrdin to become involved in ending the war in Kosovo. "In fact, President Boris Yeltsin of Russia had two weeks early [*sic*] designated Mr. Chernomyrdin as a special envoy to the Balkans, and the diplomatic mission that Mr. Gore described had been initiated by other top officials in Russia, Europe and the United States." — *Tim Graham*

Never Asked to Dan Quayle...

"Let me ask you this, and this is really more of a personal question. You're the Vice President of the United States. You've had a distinguished career in the House and the Senate, and yet you find yourself onstage, in front of friends and family members and tens of millions of people, with a moderator asking questions about your integrity and your credibility. Does that hurt?" — ABC's Jack Ford to Al Gore, today's *Good Morning America*.

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; Brent Baker, Tim Graham, Editors; Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Ted King, Paul Smith, Brad Wilmouth, Media Analysts; Kristina Sewell, Research Associate; Liz Swasey, Director of Communications. For the most complete media bias analysis, see the *CyberAlert* at www.mrc.org