



Media Reality ✓ Check **QUICK TAKE**

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ABC, CNN, AND NBC TOUTED SADDAM 100-PERCENT "VOTE" IN 2002

WILL THEY DISMISS A REAL VOTE, WHEN THEY FELL FOR A FRAUD?

While the network news gurus have spent weeks questioning whether Sunday's elections in Iraq would (A) occur on time or (B) be accepted as legitimate, it's important to remember that when Saddam Hussein called a vote in October 2002 as coalition troops moved into place, ABC, CNN, and NBC accepted the dictator's "100 percent" vote as a credible plebiscite, not a joke. To his credit CBS's Tom Fenton explained why everyone voted aye: "You would be foolish not to — a U.N. human rights report said 500 people were jailed in the last referendum after casting a negative ballot." But other networks, desperate for access into Saddam's Iraq, played dumb and parroted the dictator's script:

■ **"Iraqi citizens are preparing to go to the polls to decide whether Hussein stays in office."** — Preview of an October 14, 2002 segment on CNN's *American Morning with Paula Zahn* posted on CNN's Web site.

■ **"Seven years ago, when the last referendum took place, Saddam Hussein won 99.96 percent of the vote. Of course, it is impossible to say whether that's a true measure of the Iraqi people's feelings."** — ABC reporter David Wright, *World News Tonight*, October 15, 2002.

■ **"All 11,440,638 eligible voters went to the polls with one thought: Yes to Saddam Hussein! The government proclaimed it a victory of light over darkness, good over evil. It seemed more like a political miracle."** — NBC reporter Keith Miller on *Today*, October 16, 2002.

■ Diane Sawyer: **"I read this morning that he's [Saddam Hussein] also said the love that the Iraqis have for him is so much greater than anything Americans feel for their President because he's been loved for 35 years, he says, the whole 35 years."**

Dan Harris in Baghdad: **"He is one to point out quite frequently that he is part of a historical trend in this country of restoring Iraq to its greatness, its historical greatness. He points out frequently that he was elected with a 100 percent margin recently."**
— ABC's *Good Morning America*, March 7, 2003.