



Media Reality ✓ Check **QUICK TAKE**

Friday, July 1, 2005 ☛ www.mrc.org ☛ MEDIA CONTACT: Tim Scheiderer (703) 683-5004

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY: NBC NIGHTLY NEWS SUGGESTS "THE FIRST SEVERAL U.S. PRESIDENTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALLED TERRORISTS," JUST LIKE AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S RADICAL HOSTAGE TAKERS IN IRAN

SICKENING MORAL EQUIVALENCE FROM NBC ANCHOR BRIAN WILLIAMS

Remote controls flew at TV sets across America last night as *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams came out of an Andrea Mitchell story on whether Iran's new President was one of the captors of U.S. hostages in 1979 during Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution. Williams suggested a sickening moral equivalence between the Iranian radicals and America's Founding Fathers. Both, he thought, could be called terrorists: **"Andrea, what would it all matter if proven true? Someone brought up today the first several U.S. presidents were certainly revolutionaries and might have been called terrorists at the time by the British Crown, after all."** Mitchell replied: "Indeed, Brian." (Brian Williams worked in the White House during the Carter administration, beginning as a White House intern.)

This is not the first time Williams has mangled a historical analogy. During MSNBC's live coverage of precision bombing of Baghdad on March 21, 2003, Williams played amateur historian: "That vista on the lower-left looks like Dresden, it looks like some of the firebombing of Japanese cities during World War II." The Allied bombing of Dresden in February 1945 destroyed much of that city and killed tens of thousands of civilians.

This is also not the first time NBC has compared American revolutionaries to terrorists. Last November 9, *Today* co-host Matt Lauer interviewed Lynne Cheney on her children's book about the Revolutionary War: "Let me talk about this idea that a rag-tag group – not well-fed, not well-clothed, completely under-equipped as compared to this great British army and the Hessians – could accomplish this. And let me ask you to think about what is going on in Iraq today, where the insurgents – not well equipped, smaller in numbers – the greatest army in the world is their opposition. What's the lesson here?" A shocked Mrs. Cheney replied: "Well, the difference of course is who's fighting on the side of freedom."

This is also not the first time NBC has tried to ruin Independence Day, although Williams has trumped 2003, when NBC promoted their July 4th edition of *Dateline*: "They had good jobs, making good money, but now they've lost almost everything. An American nightmare: The new homeless. All new *Dateline*, Friday."

Hear the audio clip of Brian Williams at www.mrc.org.