



Media Reality ✓ Check **QUICK TAKE**

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IN '90, RATHER ASKED ABOUT "A VIETNAM IN THE SAND" FOR THE U.S.

CBS'S RERUN PUBLICITY GIMMICK: SADDAM FLOATED DEBATE IDEA IN '90

CBS is starting to milk the publicity machine for its exclusive interview with Saddam Hussein, but already its appetite for promotion is plugging up its nose for news. On last night's *CBS Evening News*, Rather promoted the supposed scoop: "President Hussein has a surprising proposal for President Bush. He is challenging the President of the United States to join him in a live radio and television satellite linkup and debate the need for war before the entire world."

Is this really "surprising"? Let's go to the videotape. On an August 29, 1990 prime-time special, Bob Schieffer introduced the Rather interview with Saddam: **"While it may sound a bit unusual to Westerners, Saddam Hussein seems very serious about wanting a television debate with President Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher."**

Basking in its 2003 scoop, CBS last night neglected to tell viewers what the AP reported: Rather had the help of a "good word" to Saddam from radical-left, Saddam-embracing former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, a man presently leading a campaign to have President Bush impeached.

Hopefully, Clark's "good word" didn't translate into a softball interview from Rather, who's never hesitated to throw hardballs at (Republican) U.S. Presidents. In 1990, Rather beseeched Saddam to warn the American audience of the dangers of tangling with Iraq: **"Mr. President, do you think this is a Vietnam in the sand for the United States?"**

Through his interpreter, Saddam replied: "The harm caused to the invaders who come here will be greater than whatever they suffered in Vietnam. Iraq will come out victorious."

We know how that prediction turned out.