

FLASH

NEWS

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The Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Mix Victory with Vigilance

Dear Member,

The victories by conservatives and Republicans in this month's U.S. House and Senate elections are reason for celebration and concern.

It's a time for celebration because President George W. Bush now has control of the country's political agenda. It's a time for concern, however, because the liberal media and their political allies find themselves in desperate straits and will blame every problem for the next two years on conservatives and conservative policies.

The media shenanigans began on the night of the election. As soon as things started going south for Democrats, network correspondents and anchors began asking questions – and making statements – that were loaded with liberal talking points. As always, the MRC staff was monitoring every network far into election night and spotted – and countered – these media outrages immediately.

First, came the media contention that Republicans shouldn't have done well because there was a bad economy. "A lot of people have wondered why, given the state of the economy, are the Republicans doing as well as they're doing," ABC News correspondent Claire Shipman told viewers on election night. Over on NBC, anchor Tom Brokaw included the economy and two other supposedly Democratic

issues in a leading question to House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt. "A lot of Democrats," Brokaw claimed, "were surprised that your party was not able to take more advantage of voter concern with education and the economy and health care issues."

ABC's Charles Gibson followed the same script in an interview on the next day's *Good Morning America*. "You've got a President with big deficits," Gibson cried to soon-to-be Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle. "You've got an economy in the doldrums, you've got major corporate scandals, you've got a President talking about taking the country to war, which is never popular, and you still couldn't beat him."

Did it ever occur to Gibson, Brokaw and Shipman that voters can think for themselves and didn't blame the President

for a recession he inherited? Did it ever occur to the brilliant minds at the networks that the same voters – always wary of debt – understood that in times of war and recession the country had no choice but to run a deficit? Did it ever occur to journalism's elite that voters know war is a serious matter and voted for the President's candidates because of his stance on Iraq?

Apparently not, because almost every other question to Democrats berated them for not fighting the President on the economy or Iraq and suggested that they may have done better had they just been more liberal.



ABC's Claire Shipman wondered why voters didn't blame Republicans for economic problems.

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The Media Research Center's Third Annual

DISHONORS AWARDS

Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters of The Year!

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ABC anchor Peter Jennings practically scolded Democratic Senatorial Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray of Washington. "The knock on the Democrats tonight is that there was no consistent message," the disappointed anchor said to the senator. "And moreover," he added, "you were intimidated by the President and you wouldn't speak out on the economy, and you wouldn't speak out on the war."

After that liberal lament, Jennings subtly told viewers that they need to be scared of Republican power. "If the Republicans do end up in control of the Senate, what would worry you most?" he asked of Murray.

How interesting. The ABC anchor never posed a similar question to Republicans when Senator James Jeffords of Vermont abandoned his comrades and gave Senate control to the Democrats in 2001. In Jennings mind, of course, having Democrats in control of the Senate is no reason for worry.

Harry Smith, the liberal anchor that CBS brought back in October for a second go-around on its struggling morning show, expanded on the liberal theme the next morning. In an interview with Democratic National Committee Chair Terry McAuliffe, Smith vented his frustration with the Democratic campaign. "Did you run too close to the middle," Smith asked before he provided his own answer. "There's grousing already in the Democratic Party that you didn't act like Democrats, you acted like watered down Republicans."

A third theme the media have began developing, and one we're gearing up to combat here at the MRC, was that the election did not represent a mandate for conservative government and policies. The media, in effect, are making the curious argument that winning an election does not give the victorious party the right to govern in the manner they have campaigned for and promised.



CBS's Harry Smith urged Republican Senator Trent Lott to avoid a conservative agenda.

Smith warned soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott about this very thing in a November 6 post-election interview. "The margin of victory is so narrow in so many of these races," Smith told Lott. "It's just a razor thin difference in some cases between the parties, does that give you a responsibility to govern from the middle or with the majority do you go all the way to the right?"

ABC's Terry Moran developed the idea more specifically on that night's *World News Tonight*, suggesting that

pushing the conservative agenda would be divisive. Bush had a majority in 2001 and his insistence on conservative policies made Jeffords to leave the party and cost the Republicans control of the Senate, Moran claimed. For good measure, Moran also warned that the White House would now pursue their "deeply conservative" judicial nominations.

Earth to Smith and Moran. Parties campaign and win elections for the purpose of enacting their policies when they're in power. That's the way democracy works and, God willing, that's what this Republican Congress will do.

Despite the progress made on election night, there are many long roads and battles ahead. The media will do their best to convince the nation that every conservative policy is a disaster in the making and the airwaves and newspapers will be overflowing with condemnations from liberals.

We will be there to fight them with all the energy we can muster. For the first time in years, conservatives have a chance to enact meaningful policies that can truly change our country for the better. And we're going to do our best to see that they get a fair shake from the media.

None of this is possible without your support and as always I want to thank you and remind you how much your support means to the MRC staff and me.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III, President

CELEBRITY UPDATE

Protesting Bush and Bashing Republicans

James Carville is reasonable. If you compare him to Barbra Streisand.

The *New York Post* reported on November 4 that Streisand was “privately saying that Paul Wellstone’s plane crash was no accident.” An unnamed source also told the *Post* that the star of *Funny Girl* believed “there’s a bit more to this than meets the eye.”

The former star, in a statement on her web site, denied ever saying any such thing and beseeched her fans to vote for Democrats. Streisand claimed that if Republicans controlled the House, Senate and White House, it would be “devastating for reproductive choice, the environment, civil liberties, Social Security and health care.”



Barbra Streisand



Kevin Spacey

Poor Barbra. She must be worrying herself crazy – make that crazier – now that her nightmare has come true.

Streisand wasn’t the only celebrity to get in a few low blows before the election. Actor Kevin Spacey told CNN’s *Moneyline* on October 18 that Republicans “govern through

ideology and power” while Democrats “govern by evidence” and truly want to help people.

Then there was Hollywood’s disgust with the U.S. policy on Iraq. Sean Penn spent \$56,000 for a three-quarters page ad in the October 18 *Washington Post* to criticize the President’s policy and former *Cheers* star Woody Harrelson went on a tirade in a British newspaper, claiming that America’s Iraq policy was “racist and imperialist.” Susan Sarandon told a pre-election anti-war rally in Washington that it was “about business, the business of distracting American attention from Enron and Halliburton.”



Susan Sarandon

It’s safe to say that none of these celebrities were excited by the Republican victory on Election Day, meaning there’s bound to be more ludicrous statements from them – and some of their other Hollywood friends – in the months to come.

MRC STUDIES USED IN Court Challenge



The National Rifle Association is citing MRC studies in its court battle against the unfair aspects of the campaign finance reform law passed last March. The new law bans issue advertising on television and radio 60 days before a general election and 30 days before a primary.

One of the arguments the gun-rights group is making is that the media bias against gun ownership is so widespread that fairness demands they be allowed to purchase airtime before elections. To prove the point, the NRA is citing two MRC studies. The studies are *Outgunned: How the Network Media Are Spinning the Gun Control Debate*, an MRC Special Report released in January 2000, and *TV Gun Control Coverage Tilts Its Tone, Talking Heads and Labels to Liberal Side*, an MRC study released in the *MediaWatch* newsletter in December 1993.

Expanding Our Market!

The MRC and the Lexis-Nexis Group have agreed on a five-year contract that will make selected MRC publications available on the Nexis.com web service. The service is regarded as the top web service for news and business information and has 2.8 billion searchable documents and information from more than 30,000 news, business and legal sources. The agreement will make MRC publications available to thousands of journalists, Congressional staffers and academic researchers in an easy-to-search, easy-to-find format.

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To subscribe, just e-mail sengle@mediaresearch.org and say you want to get your FREE *CyberAlerts!* Mention that you read about it in *FLASH*.

Post Calls Bush a Liar

The *Washington Post* has never been the fairest of newspapers but an October 22 story by White House reporter Dana Milbank was nothing more than reckless character assassination two weeks before a mid-term Congressional election.

Milbank's front-page story claimed that George W. Bush was another Bill Clinton. "For Bush, Facts Are Malleable," the headline asserted, while the smaller subhead noted: "Presidential Tradition of Embroidering Key Assertions Continues."

What had the President lied about? First, his early October claim that Iraq had unmanned aerial vehicles that could threaten the United States was bogus, according to Milbank, who argued that



The *Washington Post*'s Dana Milbank's front-page story questioned President Bush's truthfulness.

the aircraft are experimental and don't have the range to reach the U.S. Apparently, neither Milbank nor the editors at the *Post* consider threats to American military installations in the Middle

East to be threats to the U.S., or ever considered the fact that the aircraft could be moved and launched from elsewhere.

Bush's second "lie" was a statement that Iraq was six months from developing a nuclear weapon before the Persian Gulf War. This was an untruth, Milbank claimed, because the study Bush cited found Iraq was "six to 24 months" from building the weapon.

As the MRC pointed out in a *Media Reality Check* issued the day the article ran, Milbank's story was nothing more than a petty, partisan rant designed to insult the President before the mid-term election. Perhaps it served as Milbank's contribution to the Democratic National Committee.

60 Minutes Does a Texas One-Step

CBS's *60 Minutes* rolled into Texas the weekend before the elections for a story on Democratic minority candidates Ron Kirk and Tony Sanchez. Kirk, the black former mayor of Dallas, ran for the U.S. Senate, and Sanchez, a Hispanic businessman, was a gubernatorial candidate. Both were ultimately unsuccessful.



Liberal columnist Molly Ivins was the only opinion *60 Minutes* used for its story on Texas elections.

But it wasn't because *60 Minutes* didn't try to help. Morley Safer's November 3 story on the two races was a slanted piece of reporting from start to finish. Safer featured the opinions of only one outside "expert," those of longtime Texas columnist and lifelong liberal Molly Ivins. Ivins slammed Republicans and praised Democrats, as anyone who knows Ivins would have predicted.

The problem, as pointed out in a November 4 *Media Reality Check*, was that *60 Minutes* saw nothing wrong with including only Ivins liberal commentary.

One liberal opinion was all the story needed in their view.

The long-running CBS news magazine has never been accused of possessing balance and, based on the Texas story, there's no reason to believe it will acquire it any time soon.

Democratic Gay-Bashing Not Newsworthy

Talk about double standards. South Carolina Democratic Senate candidate Alex Sanders attacked former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani as "an ultraliberal." He then added that Giuliani supported "banning all handguns, supports abortion, his wife kicked him out and he moved in with two gay men and Shih Tzu. Is that South Carolina values? I don't think so."



Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani asks Stephanopoulos about the media firestorm that didn't happen.

Unless you caught this comment on the Fox News Channel or heard George Stephanopoulos ask Giuliani about it on the November 3 *This Week*, this is probably the first time you've read the statement. That's because the major media ignored it. Even Stephanopoulos's question to Giuliani came a couple of weeks after the comment was made.

Now imagine Sanders had been a Republican. An immediate media firestorm would have erupted. "It would have been news for four or five days. Absolute major news," Giuliani told Stephanopoulos.

You bet it would have been. A Republican would have been described as mean and hateful and pilloried on every network and newspapers across the country would have condemned him as yet another intolerant conservative. A Democrat made the comment, though, and the media, who desperately wanted

that party to maintain control of the Senate, didn't make a sound. Just another example of the media's fair and even-handed approach to Republicans and Democrats.

Bob's Labeling Problems

Poor Bob Schieffer. He's seeing things that just aren't there.

Handicapping the Elizabeth Dole-Erskine Bowles Senate race in North Carolina for the November 1 *Imus in the Morning* radio show, the veteran CBS



Liberals look "fairly" conservative to Bob Schieffer.

newsman characterized Bowles, Bill Clinton's former Chief of Staff, as "pro business," "a conservative kind of Democrat" and "fairly conservative."

The November 4 *CyberAlert* examined Bowles stances on the issues – all it took was a visit to his campaign website – and found that the Democrat favored Ted Kennedy's prescription drug entitlement program and opposes school vouchers. The former Clintonite was also quoted on *CBS Evening News* as being in favor of imposing the family and medical leave burden on business.

So, let's see. Favoring Kennedy-style government entitlements makes a politician "fairly conservative." We sure

hope we never see a politician that Schieffer thinks is liberal.

Militant Links Overlooked

Sniper suspect John Muhammad is a member of the Nation of Islam, was so enamored with Louis Farrakahn that he lied about being his bodyguard and, according to acquaintances, openly spoke of his sympathy for the September 11 hijackers.

So this was front-page news across the country, right? Hardly. Those facts were buried or ignored by the national media, who preferred to describe the suspect as a former soldier and Gulf War veteran.

A MRC *CyberAlert* check of nine major national newspapers on October 25, the day after Muhammad and accomplice John Lee Malvo's arrest, found not a single reference to the Nation of Islam in the leads of the nine stories. The night before, the ABC, CBS and NBC evening news broadcasts buried references to Islam deep in their stories.

Can you imagine what the response would have been if the killer had been a self-proclaimed Christian evangelical? The media coverage would have overshadowed the Congressional elections.

Prominent Journalists Don't Bother to Vote

Remember this the next time you hear a reporter or talking head whine about low voter turnout.

A November *Washingtonian* magazine article, picked up by MRC's *CyberAlert*, looked at the party registration and voting record of several prominent journalists who live in the District of Columbia and its Montgomery County, Md. suburb.



Do as I say, not as I do. Go vote.

Maureen Dowd, the tart-tongued *New York Times* columnist, is a registered District of Columbia Democrat and missed nine of the 12 local elections from 1994 through 2000. Chris Matthews, the former Jimmy Carter speechwriter who claims to love elections on his MSNBC *Hardball* show, has missed seven of the last 10 local elections in Montgomery County.

And it gets worse. CNN's Judy Woodruff has moderated presidential debates and covered many an election night, but the registered Democrat just can't seem to get to the voting booth with any regularity, having missed seven of the 12 local D.C. elections from 1994 to 2000. Another D.C. resident, Margaret Carlson (D-CNN/*Time*), missed eight of the 12 elections. Thomas Edsall (D-*Washington Post*) has covered politics for 20 years, but missed seven of 12 D.C. elections.

So the next time you hear the media moan about the lack of participation in American democracy just remember that there's several of them that aren't participating...unless you count slanting the news for liberals as a form of participation.



Barbara Walters finds unique ways to praise Fidel

mini-bits

Barbara Walters claims "If literacy alone were the yardstick, Cuba would rank as one of the freest nation's on earth".....British Broadcasting Corporation World Affairs Editor **John Simpson** tells London's *Guardian* that "George Bush was a man of below average intelligence and a glove puppet of his Vice President, Dick Cheney, and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld".....Simpson adds that Fox News is "dysfunctional, grotesquely patriotic and embarrassing".....NPR's **Nina Totenberg** says "If we think we are going to fight the war on terrorism without some sort of significant gun control, we are crazy".....**John McCain** sings Barbra Streisand hits on *Saturday Night Live* and comments: "Do I know how to sing? About as well as she knows how to govern America".....Animal behaviorist **Jane Goodall** does a Yogi Berra imitation on *Today*: "If we don't continue to care about the environment now then if it gets worse than it is now the terrorists will win because there will be nothing left for our grandchildren."

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com Executive Editor



CNSNews.com Competes with the Top 100 Newspapers

Part of my job involves keeping an eye on our hit report - that compendium of reader data by which Internet sites increasingly live and die.

If our hit report is any sort of indicator, CNSNews.com appears to be not only alive but quite well.

Buried among this mountain of data is a statistic called 'unique visitors.' This figure represents the number of individual people who read CNSNews.com, the Internet newswire of the Media Research Center.

On the morning of November 13, our hit report showed 138,935 unique readers. This is a fine six-digit figure, but remains in something of a vacuum without putting it into perspective.

According to the *Detroit Free Press*, which maintains a ranking of the Top 100 newspapers in the United States based on 2001 circulation, our readership would put us in 86th place, nestled between the *Tulsa World* (circulation 139,383) and the *Salt Lake City Tribune* (circulation 134,712).

Being ranked alongside the 86th biggest newspaper in the country doesn't sound like much to brag about, but consider this for a moment: the *Tulsa World* first published in 1905 and the *Salt Lake City Tribune* dates back to the mid-19th century. By comparison, CNSNews.com was founded in 1998.

Being able to compete on a readership level with century-old newspapers after being in business less than five years is pretty amazing, but that's just a fraction of our reach.

We're reaching hundreds of thousands of other readers through our Cybercast system, a service by which we automatically transmit and publish CNSNews.com on subscribing Internet websites. But even that's just scratching the surface.

On November 6, Rush Limbaugh was doing his election post mortem and noted to his millions of radio listeners a CNSNews.com article written that date by Morning Editor Susan Jones about how Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe was trying to explain his party's historic loss by saying that "not much has changed."

I give credit for this to the staff for their hard work and diligence in producing a great product that more and more people want to read every day. I also give credit to Brent Bozell, who had the vision and guts to launch CNSNews.com in 1998.

But the lion's share of the credit goes to you and the others who generously support the Media Research Center and CNSNews.com. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Your belief in what we do and your support for our efforts are more than just important; they are the bedrock on which this organization and its achievements stand.

The news business is a competitive one, and I want you to know how much I value your help in allowing us to compete in this marketplace. It's a vitally important mission and with your continued help, we'll continue to succeed.

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MRC Kicks Off Media War Watch

The liberal media has consistently provided slanted coverage of a possible war with Iraq. To combat this unfair coverage, the MRC has undertaken a new project focused specifically on the liberal media's bias in reporting the subject.

Called Media War Watch, the new campaign has two objectives. The first is to expose the media's biased coverage of the issue and the second is to improve network coverage of both the Iraq issue and the war on terrorism. To date, a dedicated web section has been established (www.media-research.org/projects/www/welcome.asp) and it provides several items and MRC critiques. In addition, a fact sheet - it will include specific incidents of bias and slanted reporting patterns - will be developed and sent to the news anchors and Capitol Hill bureau chiefs of ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, FNC and MSNBC.



Using Tragedy for Political Purposes

NBC Nightly News and *Time* magazine attempted to link President Bush to the Washington, D.C. sniper.

How? Both outlets noted that the President of Bushmaster Firearms – the company made the rifle used in the murders – was the Maine state finance chairman for the Bush presidential campaign. Tom Brokaw shared the story with viewers on his October 24 newscast and *Time*, in its November 4 edition, went one better, claiming that the close relationship between gun-rights advocates and the White House “was underscored by the fact that the military-style gun used in the sniper attacks...was manufactured by a company owned by Richard Dyke, a Bush fundraiser.”



Brokaw linked the gun used in the D.C.-area sniper murders to President Bush.

And what was the purpose of this news item? For Brokaw, who merely noted the “connection” and moved on to another story, it was just a typical, run-of-the-mill network news cheap shot at a conservative President.

For *Time* it was an opportunity to tie Bush to gun violence and to make an editorial push for “tough gun control.”

Time reporters Karen Tumulty and Viveca Novak were openly disappointed by the absence of gun control talk in the shootings’ aftermath. The two journalists were especially upset with Maryland Democratic gubernatorial candidate Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who had been interviewed on CNN but “chose her words carefully, never once uttering gun control but referring instead to her support for ‘commonsense gun laws.’”

Townsend, who lost to Republican Bob Ehrlich in an election surprise, was an anti-gun candidate in a state with some of the most restrictive gun laws in the country and even she failed to pass *Time’s* litmus test on guns. Nothing short of an outright ban on private ownership will ever satisfy the liberal journalists at *Time*.

with say “yes” to everything. My husband walked from another part of the house stunned. He said it sounded like one of the Hitler rallies on the History Channel when they were glorifying Hitler and Nazi Germany. He and I were both surprised, it was supposed to be a memorial. By the way I have yet to hear, other than his wife and daughter, who the others who died were. Weren’t they important too?

~Karen from North Carolina

Brokaw Links Sniper Weapon to Bush Campaign (CyberAlert 10/25/02)

Tom Brokaw’s attempt to link President Bush to the D.C. area sniper is repulsive and yet another example of his leftwing bias....Brokaw’s repeated attacks against Republicans and conservatives continue to illustrate NBC’s liberal, leftwing bias and hypocrisy....NBC’s and Brokaw’s credibility of “fair” or “neutral” reporting have long been repudiated. By keeping Brokaw on the air, by promoting ONLY anti-Bush authors, NBC simply continues to affirm this repudiation remains justified. NBC’s and Brokaw’s anti-conservative, pro-Democrat, views are transparent to all. Thank you for your time and for your site.

~Lori from New York

Inside The MRC

Patrick Gregory



Patrick Gregory is a news analyst at the MRC and is responsible for tracking Fox News Channel and contrasting their news coverage with that of the other networks. Patrick also monitors CNN’s *Capital Gang*, *Reliable Sources*, *CNN Presents*, CBS’s *Saturday Early Show* and the *New York Times*.

A native of Chester, Va., Patrick is a graduate of the University of Virginia, where he received a bachelor’s degree in government, with an emphasis in American Politics, in 2001.

Patrick has worked at the MRC since July 2001 and thoroughly enjoys his work. “The best part is providing ammunition to the conservative movement,” he said. “I began listening to Rush Limbaugh in eighth grade so I was well aware of liberal media bias and it’s awesome to be a part of fighting it.”

Patrick is an usher at the First Baptist Church of Alexandria and enjoys mountain biking, video games and fishing. He hopes to attend law school at some point in the future.

MAILBAG

Upset by media bias? Impressed by an MRC publication? Share your comments with us by sending an e-mail to mrc@mediaresearch.org or a letter to

MRC Mailbag
325 South Patrick Street
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A limited number of comments will be reprinted in *FLASH* and posted on the MRC web site (www.mrc.org).

Morning Shows Downplay or Ignore How Wellstone Memorial Service Turned Into a Liberal, Anti-Conservative Political Rally (CyberAlert Extra, 10/30/02)

“That the Democrats would turn the death of Wellstone into a pep rally does not surprise me. They are vicious partisans who are mad for power and will do anything to acquire it. It’s ideology, stupid!”

~Don from Tennessee

I was watching the main blast of Sen. Wellstone’s Memorial/Pep rally. It was the parts



EDITOR'S CORNER

TIM JONES

Short Trips and Poor Predictions

I was sitting there, minding my own business, watching Tim Russert and *Meet the Press* when I got mad.

It was David Broder that set me off. The *Washington Post* political writer and columnist was forecasting the Minnesota election and picked Walter Mondale to win.

Which was fine. The problem was that he picked Mondale to win based on a weekend he spent in Minnesota. And that made me mad.

Think about that for a second. A man who works in Washington, D.C. went to a cold, frosty place a thousand miles away for two days and claimed the visit enabled him to pick a winner in a close race. That's baloney and arrogant to boot.

It's also the reason why so many Washington pundits and reporters seem to be wrong so often these days and it's why I have a news flash for them. There's no way, boys and girls, to know what is happening in some place that you don't live in day in and day out. It's just not possible, no matter how smart you are or think you are.

I can go back to my hometown in Kentucky – I lived there or around there for a full 32 years of my life but haven't been around much at all for the last six – and talk to friends and acquaintances on a weekend and come up with all sorts of theories about local politics. Despite my personal background, though, I'd be a fool to think that I could get the full picture of any election, or anything else for that matter, in that short amount of time.

But reporters and pundits think they can. And it's the primary reason why they missed the conservative surge at the polls on November 5.

In fairness to Broder, he was certainly not the only Washington pundit to be wrong about an election and I doubt the mild-mannered correspondent would even appear on a list of this town's arrogant media types. But his weekend statement was the perfect example of what's wrong with so much of the Washington media.

It's become a cliché, but these people really don't know what goes on outside of Washington. Journalists and pundits talk to each other and they talk to pollsters, Washington politicians and activists. Everything they hear reinforces the idea that they and the people they talk with have all the answers.

And one short trip out of town and a few missed predictions at election time isn't going to change that.



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and CNSNews.com

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and
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



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