**NPR admits a liberal bias**

Taxpayers Subsidize Public Broadcasting's Biased News Coverage

National Public Radio is properly understood, even by the media, as radio by and for liberals, not the general public. As Washington Post media reporter Howard Kurtz puts it, the media landscape stretches "from those who cheer Fox to those who swear by NPR."

The only ones who seem not to know that the left has a massive, taxpayer-funded radio network of 700 affiliates are the liberals trying to sell investors on their own private-sector talk-radio network.

A recent PBS "NewsHour" story on talk radio turned ridiculous when reporter Terence Smith allowed liberal-network booster Jon Sinton to proclaim: "Every day in America on the 45 top-rated talk radio stations, there are 310 hours of conservative talk. There is a total of five hours of talk that comes from the other side of the aisle."

Don't buy that for a minute. The key word in that sentence is "top-rated" stations. Sinton's upset that conservatives apparently dominate "top-rated" talk. That doesn't mean NPR doesn't have hundreds of hours of liberal talk shows, not to mention liberal "news" shows. It's just not "top-rated."

Last week, NPR's own official ombudsman, Jeffrey Dvorkin, admitted a liberal bias in NPR's talk programming. The daily program "Fresh Air with Terry Gross"-a 60-minute talk show about the arts, literature and also politics-airs on 378 public-radio stations across the fruited plain.

Gross recently became a hot topic on journalism Web sites for first having a friendly, giggly interview with "satirist" Al Franken, promoting his obnoxious screed against conservatives on September 3, and then on October 8, unloading an accusatory, hostile interview on Bill O'Reilly's show. She pressed the Fox host to respond to the obnoxious attacks of Franken and other critics.

Dvorkin ruled: "Unfortunately, the (O'Reilly) interview only served to confirm the belief, held by some, in NPR's liberal media bias . . . by coming across as a proFranken partisan rather than a neutral and curious journalist, Gross did almost nothing that might have allowed the interview to develop."

The news reports on NPR should be cause for greater public concern. Under the guise of "objective news" reporting, the left is actively advancing its political agenda.

On the October 17 "Morning Edition," host Bob Edwards launched into a long "news" report on the flaws of the Bush foreign policy, observing: "Overall, the policies of the United States are still very unpopular around the world. The Bush Doctrine, a preference for unilateral military action and a disdain for multinational diplomacy, is under scrutiny more than ever."

The Middle East "road map" was "in tatters," Iraq and Afghanistan were "highly unstable." NPR may as well have suggested it was time for a different president.

Reporter Mike Shuster was intent on driving home the theme that the Bush foreign policy may (read: we hope) one day be analyzed as an utter failure. His three primary, supposedly nonpartisan "experts" were Ivo Daalder, a member of Clinton's National Security Council; Michael Mandelbaum, a foreign policy adviser to the 1992 Clinton campaign; and John Mearshimer, a regular critic of Bush foreign policy who argued in Foreign Policy magazine that Iraq should have remained under "vigilant containment," which we could also describe as maintaining a murderous tyrant in power. Their controversial views and Clinton connections were not developed by NPR.

Perhaps the biggest public-relations problems for NPR come when its liberal reporters hit the weekend talk-show circuit and let their opinions fly wildly.

On October 18, NPR legal reporter Nina Totenberg pronounced from her regular panelist perch on the TV show "Inside Washington" that Gen. Jerry Boykin, who sermonized in Christian churches with the shocking, less-than-Unitarian message that Christianity is true and other creeds are false, should be fired.

Well, that's not the way it came out.

First, Totenberg said Boykin's remarks were "seriously bad stuff," and then she said, "I hope he's not long for this world." Host Gordon Peterson joked, "What is this, 'The Sopranos?'" Withdrawing to damage-control mode, Totenberg said she didn't mean she hoped he would die, just that he shouldn't last long "in his job."

But it's Totenberg who ought to fear for her job with these outbreaks of hate speech. Totenberg used this very same TV show to wish in 1995 that if the "Good Lord" knew justice, Sen. Jesse Helms (R.-N.C.) will "get AIDS from a transfusion, or one of his grandchildren will get it."

It's awfully ironic that a woman who has spent 30 years saying outrageous liberal things on the taxpayer dime is now attacking a general on the grounds that there ought to be some things government officials cannot say and keep their jobs. The concern over these Boykin remarks should not be about the separation of church and state. It ought to be about the separation of National Public Radio from the state.

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