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Subject: One more story on climate -- from Media Research Center

More Greenhouse Gaseousness

by L. Brent Bozell III  
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The Jayson Blair fiasco has not affected the power of The New York Times. The Newspaper of Record still can start an avalanche of liberal spin on television. Its front page can still launch a thousand ships with cannons trained on any conservative influence that surfaces in the Washington policy arena.

On June 19, the Times devoted part of its front page to a leak from a disgruntled environmental bureaucrat. The scoop? The Environmental Protection Agency's forthcoming report on the state of the environment had been edited by the White House, and "a long section describing risks from rising global temperatures has been whittled to a few noncommittal paragraphs."

So what? Our government churns tons of paper each year for Washington reporters to consider or ignore. Even those tons of paper edited by the White House are usually too massive to trouble the scholars of the press. What is new about an executive branch report being revised by the chief executive's team? It's just a report, not a bill before Congress, or an executive order, or a new set of regulations.

If you were a liberal environmentalist, you'd think otherwise.

Which explains the network reaction. ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, and CNBC all lunged for the Times scooplet. How predictable: leak something to liberal reporters in advance, and suggest that the White House is in disarray and conflict due to obnoxious conservatives, and you're headed for the spotlights at a mile a minute.

To hear the networks tell this tale, there aren't liberals and conservatives in this policy battle. There aren't scientific boosters of global warming theory on one side and scientific skeptics on the other. No, liberalism for the purposes of this news cycle was packaged as the essence of nonpartisanship, idealism, sound science, the public interest, and the well-being of small children and bunnies. The conservative perspective was, naturally, the opposite: partisan, unscientific, cynical, bought and paid for by arrogant corporate polluters.

It's all in a night's work of fairness and balance.

ABC's Barry Serafin groaned that "Environmentalists are angry about what they regard as science pushed aside by politics." Dan Rather laid it on thick, saying the greens were "taking the President to task for what they say was the cynical changing of a major report on global warming. They say it was altered to put hardball partisan

politics over hard independent science." At NBC, David Gregory was already counting the liberals (they weren't called that, of course) as winners: "The flap over this new report gives new ammunition to administration critics, both here and abroad, who contend the President has ignored the threat of global warming to appease corporate polluters opposed to more environmental regulation."

In case you thought those stories were a little too tame, there was CNN's "NewsNight" at 10. Anchor Aaron Brown began: "Once upon a time a scientist named Galileo said the Earth was round and the political leaders of the time said 'no, no Galileo it's flat.' And Galileo got life under house arrest for his little theory." Today, he proclaimed, the "vast majority" of scientists say global warming is real, and "if the charges leveled against the White House are true, an important environmental question is being twisted or ignored for the sake of politics."

If newscasts were cars, CNN would be facing a recall. Galileo did not argue the world was round, not flat. He was condemned for suggesting the earth revolved around the sun, not the other way around.

Liberals love casting themselves as Galileo, as they have also done repeatedly in the arguments over cloning and stem cell research. They are Science; conservatives, Unreason. But reporters are supposed to project objectivity, not endorsements of one scientific/political cause and denunciations of the other as an industry-funded fraud. Nearly every news story touts the "scientific consensus" behind the need for big energy taxes and regulations, as if assembling a numerical majority, not the testing of hypotheses, was the basis of sound science.

It is possible that the scientists that will be proven correct – the Galileo stand-ins for the 21st century – are the scientists skeptical of the doom-and-gloom assessment. More than 17,000 scientists have signed a petition against the proposed Kyoto Accord. Don't forget that the Senate voted 95 to 0 during the Clinton years to reject the treaty's onerous burdens on the United States while "developing" nations faced no energy limitations.

That's an entirely different consensus. But the media are too warm and comfy in the green lobby's pocket to consider a more objective, less demonizing portrait of competing environmental visions. They would like to pretend it's only President Bush and his conservative pollution-loving friends that ever need to face the harsh winds of controversy over the prospect of global warming. They aren't making news stories. They're making political cartoons.

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