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Amy Goodman Scolds Corporate Media during Atlanta Speech

By Scott Crutcher, Staff Writer, Atlanta Progressive News (September 24, 2006)

(APN) ATLANTA – “The media has been part and parcel of the propaganda machine that was cranked up five years ago on 9/11 and is still churning and well-oiled today,” David Goodman told an audience of 400 at an WRFG fundraiser at the First Iconium Baptist Church, on Monday, September 18, 2006.

“How else do we explain the so-called ‘world’s freest media’ having gotten not just a little bit wrong, but having been a conveyer belt for the lies of this Administration that led us into the tragedy of the quagmire that we are in now?” David Goodman asked.

Amy Goodman, host of the nationally syndicated Democracy Now independent radio news program and her brother, fellow journalist and co-author, David, also conducted a book signing as part of an 80 city tour for their recent book entitled, [Static: Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back.](#)

DAVID GOODMAN’S REMARKS

“It’s a sad day when the government no longer has to cover up its dishonesty because the American media does it for them! This is the state of the corporate media today,” David Goodman said.

“We need a media that is fiercely independent, un-embedded, journalism that works to inform, not to deceive. The soldiers and civilians in harm’s way in Iraq deserve no less. The citizens of the devastated and abandoned Gulf Coast are counting on it, and the people shackled in America’s secret gulags cry out for it. Free speech is Democracy’s last line of defense. We must demand it, defend it, and, most of all, use it now, ” David Goodman concluded.

Static criticizes the collusion between The New York Times Newspaper and the Bush Administration to suppress, for twelve months, its scoop that Bush was using the National Security Agency (NSA) to conduct warrantless surveillance of Americans’ telephone conversations in violation of the Foreign Surveillance Intelligence Act (FISA).

“It turns out The Times did, in fact, have the story ready to go before the 2004 Election but decided to wait at the request of the people running for re-election who rightly feared how the public might respond to the revelations,” David Goodman said.

“Imagine just for a moment how different things might have been if this explosive expose’ had been published when it was written,” David Goodman said.

“As... Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) pointed out... ‘placing illegal and unconstitutional programs in jeopardy is the whole point of the First Amendment,’” David Goodman said.

“More astonishing was [New York] Times Executive Editor Bill Kelly’s explanation... the Bush Administration had ‘assured Senior Editors at The Times a variety of legal checks had been imposed that satisfied everyone involved the program raised no legal questions.’” David Goodman said.

“Mind you, this is the regime of George W. Bush we are talking about. The folks who assured us torture was legal, that preemptive war was legal, and that holding prisoners incommunicado in offshore gulags was legal. But to the Editor of The Times it is enough just to take the government’s word when it says something is legal,” David Goodman observed.

Some critics say the corporate media was tricked by the Bush Administration into parroting its deceptive talking points, but David Goodman says this isn’t the whole story.

“We know what the front pages of the leading newspapers were graced with and we know where the voices of dissent were placed—at best on page A-15 and that would be on a good day. Propaganda doesn’t happen by chance. It’s really very meticulously orchestrated,” David Goodman asserted.

David Goodman also described how the Bush Administration, as part of a multi-million dollar covert operation implemented by the Pentagon, planted propaganda stories in receptive Iraqi daily newspapers such as Al Mutar. Associates of Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Ahkmed Chalabi ran this paper.

Prior to the US Invasion of Iraq, Chalabi was a primary source of false stories about alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD) fed to former New York Times reporter, Judith Miller.

When CBS TV’s 60 Minutes program belatedly confronted Chalabi about these lies, he did not deny his falsehoods but smugly asserted they had successfully achieved their political goal: To help goad the American people into supporting the US Invasion of Iraq.

AMY GOODMAN’S REMARKS

Amy Goodman in her speech recalled the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina and the American corporate media’s reaction to the Bush Administration’s failure to respond to the massive human suffering in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane.

“The side effect of [top Bush administration officials] not responding is that when the corporate press actually did the right thing in this

case—just showed up in New Orleans—there were no troops to embed with and we actually saw reporting of the victims’ perspective,” Amy Goodman said.

“Ground Zero reporting. You’d see a body floating by on your TV screen. Then the Bush Administration leaped into action. They said, ‘You are not to film the bodies,’ and the Editor of The [New Orleans] Times-Picayune Newspaper said, ‘You have GOT to be kidding,’” Goodman remembered.

“I watched this young woman reporter. A man waded up in the water clearly in shock holding his boy’s hand. He said he’d been in the attic holding onto his wife, and as her hands slipped out of his she was saying, ‘Please take care of our children’...she slipped away... and he was clearly in shock and just walked off in the midst of the interview with this boy in the water. And the young reporter started to cry. That’s what reporting from the victim’s perspective looks like and it galvanized the nation,” Amy Goodman said.

“And you think, if for just one week we saw that kind of un-embedded reporting in Iraq—babies dead on the ground, women with their legs blown off, cluster bombs either in Iraq or Lebanon, soldiers dead or dying, for one week...Americans are a compassionate people. They would say, ‘No, war is not the answer to conflict in the 21st century,’” Amy Goodman exclaimed.

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The corporate press “got it wrong” when it described Civil Rights activist Rosa Parks as a meek and tired seamstress unwilling to give up her seat on a segregated public bus, Amy Goodman said.

The truth was, Rosa Parks was an activist who was, by experience and deliberation, a “first class trouble maker,” Amy Goodman added.

Pacifica Radio, which carries the Democracy Now program, carried one of the first interviews with Parks before she was discovered by the corporate media, Amy Goodman said.

“The way the media works is they denigrate movements. They isolate people. If they’re going to acknowledge someone they’ve got to strip away the movement they come from and the movement they inspire. And that’s how they miss history. That’s why it’s so important to read books like Howard Zinn’s A People’s History [of the United States],” Goodman explained.

“You know, it’s not so important that we agree with each other. There is a saying that ‘Great minds don’t think alike.’ But we do have to stand together to make it harder to target any individual because that is what is frightening in this country today. We are the greatest Democracy on Earth—for some. But for others it’s a very frightening place and we have to take that very seriously and bridge the gap. It doesn’t make anyone safer when people, when poor populations feel marginalized, feel alienated...Building bridges, that’s the BEST that media can do,” Amy Goodman said.

Amy Goodman discussed the importance of the political movement

led by Cindy Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed during the US Invasion of Iraq.

She said Sheehan's activist response to her deeply personal loss serves as a focal point for other mothers and fathers across the country who have lost loved ones in what they regard as an illegal, brutal and pointless war. Goodman added that Democracy Now carried one of the first interviews with Sheehan before she decided to protest in Crawford, Texas, at Bush's "ranch."

Amy Goodman recalled the corporate media disconnect from public reaction in New York to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Democracy Now broadcasted those events occurring near them in their New York firehouse studio.

"As we broadcast at the firehouse what was unfolding as it was happening we recognized that what was being projected to the rest of the world did not match the reality on the ground at Ground Zero. It was not the blood curdling call for revenge; it was sorrow, it was mourning, it was people joining together against terror. There was a sticker... 'Our grief is not a call for war.' Thousands would gather in parks and talk, and hug each other and hold candles and flowers. That's what was happening in New York, not what was projected through this corporate lens as the war machine geared up in Washington," Amy Goodman remembered.

Amy Goodman recalled how many family members of victims slain in the 9/11 attacks told the media and Bush Administration not to use the names and stories of their family members as political media fodder to justify a retaliatory war. This led to the creation of the nationwide movement, Not In Our Name: September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

Goodman recalled family members who would show photographs of their missing loved ones to passers-by and ask them if they had seen them. She compared them to the little pictures carried by the mothers of the "disappeared" in Argentina as they walked the Plaza de Mayo.

"Sometimes we watched [family members of victims on 9/11] on television but only when they described their loved ones. When they moved from description to prescription [the networks] cut away and went to the terrorism 'experts'—the Oliver Norths and the Henry Kissingers--and they would recommend war. We have to have a uniform standard of justice. Terror is the killing of innocent civilians," Goodman said.

Goodman detailed former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's policy role in the creation of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile; his support of the generals in the "Dirty War" in Argentina; and his involvement in the Viet Nam War that killed millions of civilians in Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam during the Nixon Administration. She described Kissinger's complicity with the Indonesian dictator Suharto during the genocidal occupation of East Timor during the

same time frame.

“I think Osama Bin Laden and his accomplices should be tried and, if found guilty, severely punished. But I also think Henry Kissinger should be tried for war crimes,” Amy Goodman said.

“It’s why the President today is trying to change the War Crimes Act, not [just] the Geneva Conventions, yes, they have been violated by the U.S. government, but for those who say that’s international law that’s not our law, this is our law—the 1996 War Crimes Act,” Amy Goodman said.

“The White House has been quietly trying to change it because they are concerned U.S. officials and U.S. soldiers will be tried for war crimes. CIA officers are taking out insurance as they travel abroad because they too are afraid. Now even the Republican Party is at loggerheads with [Republican US] Senators Lindsay Graham, John McCain, and John Warner...taking on the Administration around the issue of torture. This is not the best of America—torture. This extraordinary term ‘extraordinary rendition’—there is a simple term for that. It’s called ‘kidnapping,’ or in Latin America it was called ‘disappearing people,’ and if people in this country understood what was happening they would say, ‘No.’ That is why it is our job in the media to present what is going on so that people can make their own decision,” Goodman said.

Amy Goodman concluded by pleading for consistency in our use of the word “terrorism.”

“September 11th united us with people around the world against terror, against the killing of innocent civilians... Whether as individuals who engage in this or States, we have to be honest about this definition. It goes for all,” Amy Goodman said.

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