



Reporter says media back Bush, war, business

Protests ignored, author contends

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Journalist Amy Goodman's take on the mainstream news media is simple -- they have become a "megaphone" for those in power.

Journalists failed to adequately challenge the Bush administration's rationale for the Iraq war and gave short shrift to dissenters and protesters, Goodman told an overflow Louisville audience last night at the Clifton Center.

Once combat began, reporters "embedded" with U.S. troops portrayed a pro-military view of war while failing to show its toll on innocent Iraqis, she said.

"We need an independent media in a time of war," said Goodman, who argued that corporate-owned newspapers and television networks often fail to hold the U.S. government accountable.

Goodman, 48, is host of Democracy Now!, a news show on the alternative Pacifica Radio network carried by more than 330 radio and TV stations. It is not available in Louisville.

She has gained a national following for her blend of investigative reporting and political activism focusing on government accountability and media responsibility. She's also a frequent guest on CNN and other news talk shows, and her honors include the George Polk Award for her documentary on "Drilling and Killing: Chevron and Nigeria's Oil Dictatorship."

Last night's stop on her "Un-Embed the Media"



Geoff Oliver Bugbee, Special to The Courier-Journal Josh Baird, 28, traveled from Cincinnati last night to hear Amy Goodman, right, author of "The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media that Love Them."

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speaking tour was sponsored by Carmichael's Bookstore and the Center for Kentucky Progress, a think tank.

Her book, "The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media that Love Them," just came out in paperback.

It criticizes what she views as abuses by government and business interests -- such as Iraq war contracts won by key Bush campaign donors -- while excoriating corporate-owned media monopolies for quelling dissenting voices.

Last night she cited a 2003 Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting study on Iraq coverage by ABC, NBC, CBS and PBS news during the weeks before and after former Secretary of State Colin Powell's United Nations address making a case for war.

Of 393 people interviewed on-camera, only 17 percent were "skeptical" of U.S. policy. And only three were anti-war representatives, the study found. Goodman said networks interviewed mostly former generals or government officials.

Instead, the media should be "a sanctuary of dissent," she said.

Increasing corporate consolidation of media has had other negative effects, she said, such as one company barring its 1,400 radio stations from playing certain anti-war songs.

The Courier-Journal is owned by Gannett Co., whose U.S. holdings include 102 newspapers and 21 television stations.

Goodman also blasted the media for their coverage of Terri Schiavo, the brain-damaged woman whose husband and parents fought over removing her feeding tube. Judges refused to order the tube reinserted, and she died.

Goodman said polls showed the vast majority of Americans didn't want Congress or the courts to intervene, but disproportional coverage of religious-right protesters made it seem as if the nation was divided.

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