



Read our Ideas Contributors

Driving the Conversation:

Is Fox News a "legitimate news organization?" Is the White House smart, or not so smart, to take on Fox?

Oct. 19, 2009



Roger Pilon, Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute:
Is Fox News a "legitimate news organization?" As compared to what? The New York Times? NPR? MSNBC? Please!

The **Obama team**, Democrats like my good friend **Walter Dellinger**, and the so-called **Mainstream Media** (MSM) howl about Fox News for two main reasons. First, Fox is covering news the MSM ignores because it doesn't "fit." And second, in part because of that, the Fox audience continues to grow while the MSM audience is shrinking, raising a serious question about whether the MSM is any longer "mainstream."

Let's not pretend that the MSM doesn't "manage" the news. It does it mainly by deciding daily what is and is not "news" and then by deciding how to report that news. Do we need any better example than the current ACORN story? As Fox was bringing the facts to light, nowhere were those facts to be found in the MSM -- until they could be ignored no longer. Or take the huge 9/12 anti-big-government rally here in Washington. Fox covered it for the event that it was. Where was it covered in The New York Times? On page A37. And more revealing still, in the NYT electronic edition, the second of three stories posted under "Politics" was headlined "**Thousands Rally in Minnesota Behind Obama's Call for Health Care Overhaul**," the third was headlined "**Thousands Rally in Capital to Protest Big Government**" -- the implication being that the two rallies were equivalent in size when in fact the protest rally dwarfed the Obama rally by many multiples.

But why pretend it's otherwise? The president himself admits the MSM bias. Speaking at the May 9 White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, "I am Barack Obama. Most of you covered me. All of you voted for me. (Laughter and applause.) Apologies to the Fox table." A good laugh line in that setting, to be sure, but only because he's said at last what we all know to be true.

Walter Dellinger may write, citing no evidence, that the Tax Day Tea Party protests were "conceived and executed by Fox News," but he surely knows that's not true. He hails from North Carolina, albeit now from Duke. He knows that outside that cloister there's protest in the land. Fox News isn't generating that opposition to the Obama juggernaut. It's real, but it's so much easier for the MSM to blame the bearer of that news than to face the reasons for their own falling numbers: Their "news" doesn't fit with what so many people see with their own eyes. I'm reminded of the great Groucho Marx line: "Who are you going to believe, me or your own eyes?"

[Full Archive List](#)

© 2009 Capitol News Company LLC
Please read our Privacy Policy. By using this site, you accept our Terms of Service.