

Bush used military analysts as propaganda tool

By [Global Research](#)

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The administration of President George W. Bush has manipulated military analysts working for leading US television networks to generate favorable coverage of the war in Iraq and other issues, The New York Times reported on its website Saturday.

The newspaper said in trying to achieve its goal, the administration exploited not only ideological and military allegiances but also a powerful financial dynamic, namely the fact that most of these analysts have ties to military contractors vested in the very war policies they are asked to assess on television.

Military analysts, who regularly appear on TV commenting on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are usually retired high-ranking military officials.

But what is never disclosed to viewers, the paper said, is that the men represent more than 150 military contractors either as lobbyists, senior executives, board members or consultants.

The companies include defense heavyweights, but also scores of smaller companies, all contractors seeking hundreds of billions in military business generated by the administration's war on terror, the report said.

It is a furious competition, in which inside information and easy access to senior administration officials are highly prized, The Times pointed out.

According to the report, the Bush administration has used this fact to transform the analysts into an instrument intended to shape terrorism coverage from inside the major TV and radio networks.

Analysts have been invited into hundreds of private briefings with senior military leaders, including officials with significant influence over contracting and budget matters, the paper said.

They have been taken on tours of Iraq, given access to classified intelligence and received briefings from top White House, State Department and Justice Department officials, The Times said.

In turn, members of this group have echoed administration talking points, sometimes even when they suspected the information was false or inflated, the report said.

The conclusion came following The Times' examination of 8,000 pages of e-mail messages, transcripts and records describing years of private briefings, trips to Iraq and Guantanamo

Bay, Cuba, that the paper obtained after winning a lawsuit against the Pentagon.

These records reveal a symbiotic relationship where the usual dividing lines between government and journalism have been obliterated, the paper said.

Internal Pentagon documents repeatedly refer to the military analysts as “message force multipliers” or “surrogates” who could be counted on to deliver administration “themes and messages” to millions of Americans “in the form of their own opinions.”

While analysts are paid network consultants who make between 500 dollars to 1,000 dollars per TV appearance, in Pentagon meetings they sometimes spoke as if they were operating behind enemy lines, the report said.

Some offered the Pentagon tips on how to outmaneuver the networks, and some warned of planned network stories.

“Good work,” Thomas G. McInerney, a retired Air Force general and Fox News analyst, wrote, according to The Times, to the Pentagon after receiving fresh talking points in late 2006. “We will use it.”

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca