

# PRAIRIEPUNDIT

COMMENTARY ON POLITICS AND THE CONTINUATION OF POLICY BY  
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FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2006

## Spinning for the enemy

Clifford D. May:

It is one thing to tell the truth even when it damages your friends. It's another to tell untruths in order not to offend your enemies. It's one thing to give the devil his due. It's another to do the devil's public relations.

How else to explain a dispatch from the Associated Press referring to Osama bin Laden as "an exiled Saudi dissident"? Such spin may not be inaccurate but it's like calling Jeffery Dahmer an "eccentric gourmet." It rather misses the point, don't you think?

Similarly, a recent report on National Public Radio discussed how dangerous Iraq is for journalists. The blame was placed on "the nature of this war" and "the security situation." No criticism of Militant Islamist cut-throats and car bombers was voiced.

And, of course, Reuters, the British wire service, has decreed that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." In Reuters corporate eyes, even the attacks on the World Trade Center can not be called terrorism.

Such relativism is common in academia as well as in journalism. The other day, on a BBC radio show, I debated Dr. Hooshang Amirahmadi, a professor from Rutgers University. His argument: The way to settle the conflict with Iran is for the U.S. to re-open full diplomatic relations. If President Bush would only reach out to the regime in Tehran, he'd find there have been misunderstandings, that both sides have made mistakes, and that there is ample room for compromise.

In response, I began to read verbatim quotes form Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other Iranian rulers about their lethal intentions toward the U.S., their genocidal plans for Israel, their hostility toward "Anglo-Saxon civilization."

Professor Amirahmadi objected that scholars and journalists must not take such remarks seriously. He suggested it was either unsophisticated or unfair of me (maybe both) to repeat such statements on the air.

It's tempting to dismiss such attitudes as simply the foolishness of the chattering classes. But the West is in the middle of a World War of Ideas -- a conflict as consequential as the war of arms. For intellectuals to retreat to a Switzerland-of-the-mind will have consequences. And their declaration of neutrality comes at a time when the enemies of the Free World are bringing out the big guns.

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