

# OMNI SPECIAL NEWSLETTER #2 ON MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE MEDIA, CONTROL OF INFORMATION AND STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, March 6, 2008

## BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE THROUGH FREE COMMUNICATION AND INDEPENDENT INFORMATION

Compiled by Dick Bennett (OMNI Media Newsletter #1, October 13, 2007.)

WE, THE PEOPLE

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FCC Pro-Big Media

Radio Censorship

Chomsky on Control of Information/US Propaganda System

MORE BOOKS

## WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 3

OMNI and *Free Weekly* are planning a commemoration for the journalists killed while gathering the news for us. Contact Dick or Susan Porter to help. [jbennet@uark.edu](mailto:jbennet@uark.edu), 442-4600; Susan Porter ([sporter@nwaonline.net](mailto:sporter@nwaonline.net)). At least we will read some of the names to honor these true heroes. What do you suggest?

## Film portrays murdered Russian journalist

[http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/news/travel/Film\\_portrays\\_murdered\\_Russian\\_journalist.html?siteSect=411&sid:](http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/news/travel/Film_portrays_murdered_Russian_journalist.html?siteSect=411&sid:)

[Swiss film portrays murdered Russian journalist Politkovskaya ...](#)

**ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA.** The journalist **made** a name for herself with her reports about Chechen conflict, ...  
Eric Bergkraut – Internet **Movie** Database (imdb) ...

[www.swissinfo.org/eng/news/travel/Film\\_portrays\\_murdered\\_Russian\\_journalist.html?siteSect=411&sid=86959](http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/news/travel/Film_portrays_murdered_Russian_journalist.html?siteSect=411&sid=86959)  
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[BBC World Service | World Agenda - Living With The Consequences](#)

Journalists in danger **Murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkovska** portrayed as a saint. **The** figures show that killing a **journalist** is virtually risk free," said Sambrook. **A special enquiry by the International News Safety Institute (INSI), chaired by BBC Global News Director Richard Sambrook, reveals that 1,000 news media personnel around the world have been killed trying to report the news during the past ten years - almost two deaths per week.**



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Free Press is a national, nonpartisan organization working to reform the media. Through education, organizing and advocacy, we promote diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications.

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current features



You can help stop Kevin Martin's rush to gut media ownership limits.

[Tell Congress to Support the Media Ownership Act of 2007 »](#)

**ACTION NETWORK**

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**SAVE THE INTERNET**

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**STOPBIGMEDIA**

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- [Stop Postal Rate Hikes](#)
- [Rescue Internet Radio](#)
- [Save Our Spectrum](#)
- [Support Low Power Radio](#)
- [Save Community Internet](#)
- [Uncover Fake News](#)
- [Protect Public Media](#)
- [Get a Radio Station](#)

resources

- [Beginner's Guide](#)
- [National Conference for Media Reform](#)
- [Congress Center](#)
- [Who Owns the Media?](#)
- [Reform Organizations](#)

Comcast has violated Net Neutrality.

It's time for the FCC to act. We've filed a legal action. Please add your voice.

[Tell the FCC: Stop Comcast. Save Net Neutrality. »](#)

Grab your wooden mallet and smack down the media mogul whose name is synonymous with runaway consolidation.



Join thousands of people from all walks of life dedicated to building better media in America.

Learn more at [FreePress.net/conference »](#)

the latest

[Listen to This Week's Media Minutes](#) This week: FCC Chairman Kevin Martin is paving the way for the agency to more closely regulate cable TV companies. And the FCC must

must see

**Tell Congress: Stop Big Media**

The FCC's Kevin Martin let Big Media get bigger. can [help get Congress to act.](#)

[More V](#)

today's news

November 21, 2007

[Some Doubt Journal's Board Rather's Lawyer Claims CE Investigation](#) [Suckered by Web-Based Newspaper Se on News Junkies](#) [FCC to V Ownership Rules Review A Will Go to Iraq to Defend Photographer XM-Sirius Re May Live On Broadway. Gr Gloom About the Holidays : America: All's Well in Cable Skyrocketing Rates and Lo Customer Service All in Yo](#)

[More I](#)

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upcoming events

Nov 26-28  
[World Congress of Science and Factual Producer](#)  
New York, NY  
Nov 27  
[FCC Open Commission Meeting](#)  
Washington, DC

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rule on Verizon's forbearance petition by Dec.5. Further "deregulation" could mean higher prices and less competition for...

November 22, 2007

[PODCAST]

[Suckered by Astroturf](#) USA Today joins the illustrious list of news organizations to be taken for a ride by Astroturf. In an article earlier this week, the paper's media beat reporter David Lieberman writes that the end of the Internet is nigh. It will start crashing down...

November 20, 2007

[SAVETHEINTERNET.COM]

[NCMR 2008: Call for Suggestions](#) Free Press is currently seeking ideas for sessions and presenters for the 2008 National Conference for Media Reform on June 6-8 in Minneapolis. Please help us plan the conference program by providing your input and ideas.

November 20, 2007

[WHAT'S NEW]

[Are Media Ownership Rules Out of Date?](#) Despite overwhelming public opposition from across the country and the political spectrum, the chairman of the FCC, Kevin Martin, isn't letting up in his relentless push to allow a handful of media giants swallow up more of your local media.

November 16, 2007

[MUST READ]

[Listen to This Week's Media Minutes](#) This week: Media companies are refusing to give writers a small piece of the digital pie, which forced 12,000 movie and television writers to strike last week. And FCC Chairman Kevin Martin has proposed lifting a longstanding ban on media...

November 15, 2007

Nov 28

[FCC Public Forum on WWOR-TV License R New Jersey](#)

*Newark, NJ*

Nov 29

[Be the Media](#)

*Boston, MA*

[Complete Ca](#)

## MEDIA ALTERNATIVES

"...contributions from these panels are available as an ebook entitled *Alternatives on media content, journalism, and regulation*. Edited by Seeta Peña Gangadharan, Benjamin De Cleen and Nico Carpentier, and published by the University of Tartu Press, this book brings together the fascinating stories of how civil society intervenes (sometimes successfully, sometimes less successfully) in the creation of alternative content, in the organization of alternative journalism, and in the attempts to influence the regulation that impacts upon the communicative processes.

The pdf version of the book can be downloaded (for free) from this URL:

[http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/reco\\_book2.pdf](http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/reco_book2.pdf)

(please note there is an underscore between reco and book2)

It is part of the Researching and Teaching Communication Book Series, which you can find at this URL:

<http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/>

WATCH FSTV DOCUMENTARIES ON CAT, Channel 18, 3 to 9 a.m.

Amy Goodman's *Democracy Now* 7a.m. weekdays

ALTERNATIVE Information, INDEPENDENT Views.

# Watch Al Jazeera English via satellite

## **ACTION ALERT**

March 5, 2008

**Contact: Joshua Walsh**  
[communications@wrmea.com](mailto:communications@wrmea.com)

## **Watch Al Jazeera English via Satellite**

### **Coming Out of the Dark**

The *Washington Report* recently installed a satellite dish in our office and various “news junky” staff members purchased dishes for their homes. Once we tuned into Al Jazeera English—available in the United States only via satellite, on the Internet, or a few local cable stations—we realized what we have been missing.

Al Jazeera English started in late 2006 as a 24-hour news channel with a “follow the sun” broadcast day using broadcasting centers in Doha, Kuala Lumpur, London and Washington, DC. As of today, Al Jazeera English reaches over 100 million homes around the globe but no major carrier will carry it in the United States. This excludes the vast majority of Americans from this excellent English-language resource.

Al Jazeera English news is a far cry from the “infotainment” that currently dominates mainstream TV news. While American network news stations were busy comparing Britney Spears’ troubles to Michael Jackson’s we were able to watch in-depth reporting on the elections in Russia and Pakistan, Malaysia and the United States. There were thoughtful discussions about Fidel Castro’s exit and Turkey’s attacks on the PKK in Iraq, all complemented by voices different than the rotating cast of characters shared by American networks.

The benefit of having access to this uncompromising network was painfully clear to *Washington Report* staff during the recent Israeli attacks in northern Gaza. Al Jazeera English brought in-depth, on-the-ground reports of the tragedy, from both Gaza and Israel. Reporters and commentators did not shy away from confronting the heavy-handed IDF tactics, or documenting the real damage done to Palestinian society. They provided context to the conflict—too often missing from American journalism.

Real news reporting is often unpleasant; it can be disturbing and uncomfortable. But it is reality. Al Jazeera English’s bold coverage confronts us with unvarnished coverage so that we may end the day with a truer understanding of our world.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

In the United State, markets *will* respond to demand. We must initiate that demand. Make your voice heard in your local market; contact your cable provider and demand that the voice of Al Jazeera English be available in your community.

The two largest gatekeepers through which cable channels must pass are Comcast (24 million subscribers) and Time Warner Cable (26 million subscribers). Please encourage them to add Al Jazeera English to their lineups:

#### **Comcast:** 1-800-COMCAST

<[www.comcast.com/Corporate/Customers/contactus/ContactUs.html](http://www.comcast.com/Corporate/Customers/contactus/ContactUs.html)>

**Time Warner Cable:** <[www.timewarnercable.com/Localization/Corporate.ashx](http://www.timewarnercable.com/Localization/Corporate.ashx)>

#### **How You Can Watch Al-Jazeera English Today**

**Buy a Satellite Dish:** The best way to watch Al Jazeera English is to purchase a satellite dish from:

1. WS International, 1200 Cobb Parkway North, Suite 100B, Marietta, GA 30062-2418 Phone (770) 420-5272 Fax: (770) 420-5350 E-mail: [sales@wsidigital.com](mailto:sales@wsidigital.com) <[www.wsidigital.com](http://www.wsidigital.com)> (This is what we used. Mention WR0801 to get a 10 percent discount for *Washington Report* readers. They’ll mail a dish to your home or office and find a local installer for you.)
2. Globecast, a division of France Telecom. Call 1-888-988-5288 to order a World TV Home Satellite System, or order from the Web site: <[www.globecastworldtv.com](http://www.globecastworldtv.com)>. . >

**View on the Internet:** To view portions of daily broadcasts online, visit the Al Jazeera English website

<<http://english.aljazeera.net/English>> or watch reports on Al Jazeera English’s YouTube channel

<<http://youtube.com/user/AlJazeeraEnglish>>.

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The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, PO Box 53062, Washington DC 20009. Phone: (202) 939-6050, Fax: (202) 265-4574, Toll Free: (800) 368-5788, [www.wrmea.com](http://www.wrmea.com) Published by the American Educational Trust, a non-profit foundation incorporated in Washington, DC to provide the American public with balanced and accurate information concerning U.S. relations with Middle Eastern states. Material from the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs may be printed with out charge with attribution to the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.

*Censored 2008, The Top 25 Censored Stories of 2006-2007*, published every year through the Department of Sociology in the School of Social Sciences at Sonoma State University. Project Censored is an intensive media analysis of underreported news dedicated to journalistic integrity and the freedom of information throughout the United States.

## **“Fox News is in for a very rough 2008”** by Eric Boehlert

My guess is that Fox News guru Roger Ailes has been reaching for the Tums more often than usual early in the New Year, and there are lots of reasons for the hovering angst.

....

Bottom line is that Fox News is in for a very rough 2008. And the umbrella reason for that is quite simple: Eight years ago the all-news cable channel went all-in on the presidency of George Bush and became a broadcast partner with the White House. Proof of that was on display Sunday night, January 27, during Fox News' prime-time, "Fighting to the Finish," an "historic documentary" on the final year of Bush's presidency. Filmed in HD and featuring "unprecedented access," according to the Fox News press release, the show was pure propaganda. (I must have missed Fox News' "Fighting to the Finish" special back in 2000, chronicling the conclusion of President Bill Clinton's second term and his "extraordinarily consequential tenure.")

The point is that Fox News years ago made an obvious decision to appeal almost exclusively to Republican viewers. The good news then for Fox News was that it succeeded. The bad news now for Fox News is that it succeeded.

Meaning, when the GOP catches a cold, everybody at Fox News gets sick. As blogger Logan Murphy [put it](#) at Crooks and Liars, "Watching FOXNews getting their comeuppance has been fun to watch. They made their bed, now they're having to lie in it and it's not too comfortable."

The most obvious signs of Fox News' downturn have been the cable ratings for the big primary and caucus votes this year, as well as the high-profile debates. With this election season generating unprecedented voter and viewer interest, Fox News' rating bumps to date have remained underwhelming, to say the least.

For instance, on the night of the big New Hampshire primary, CNN, which habitually trails behind Fox News in the prime-time race, attracted nearly 250,000 more viewers than its top competitor, marking a changing-of-the-guard of sorts.

entire story here: <http://mediamatters.org/columns/200801290001>

## **MEDIA CONCENTRATION**

--Klinenberg, Eric. *Fighting for Air: The Battle to Control America's Media*. Media diversity very popular, but the FCC majority favors the few big media corporations that seek further consolidation.

--Chester, Jeff. *Digital Destiny*. How digital and cyber space are controlled by a few media giants, and how citizens can take them back. See below.

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## BILL MOYERS' SPEECH AT THE 2005 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEDIA REFORM, DON'T MISS IT

### [Bill Moyer's Keynote Address to the National Conference on Media ...](#)

**Bill Moyers'** Address to the 2005 National Conference on **Media Reform** ..... Commercial **speech** must not be the only free **speech** in America! ...

[www.commondreams.org/views03/1112-10.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views03/1112-10.htm) - 61k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Take Public Broadcasting Back](#)

by **Bill Moyers** Closing address National Conference on **Media Reform** ... I mean the people who squelch free **speech** in an effort to obliterate dissent and ...

[www.commondreams.org/views05/0516-34.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0516-34.htm) - 54k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

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### [Free Press : Bill Moyers' speech to the National Conference for ...](#)

Free Press editor's note: The following is the text of **Bill Moyers'** **speech** to the National Conference for **Media Reform**. You can listen to an audio recording ...

[www.freepress.net/news/8120](http://www.freepress.net/news/8120) - 63k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Free Press : Bill Moyers' Speech at the National Conference for ...](#)

**Bill Moyers' Speech** at the National Conference for **Media Reform** ..... The other story of America that says, free **speech** is not just corporate **speech**. ...

[www.freepress.net/news/20357](http://www.freepress.net/news/20357) - 65k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Democracy Now! | Bill Moyers: "Big Media is Ravenous. It Never ...](#)

The veteran broadcast journalist **Bill Moyers** spoke on Friday before 3500 at the opening of the National Conference on **Media Reform** in Memphis. ...

[www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/01/16/159222](http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/01/16/159222) - 67k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

## GOODMAN ON FCC



### [The FCC's Holiday Gift to Big Media](#)

By Amy Goodman, King Features Syndicate

A recent vote by Federal Communications Commission would have made George Orwell proud. [Read more Â»](#)

## FCC FOR BIG MEDIA MONOPOLY

Free Press: Martin's New Rules Are Corporate Welfare for Big Media

<http://www.commondreams.org/news2007/1113-08.htm>

## RADIO CENSORSHIP

### [Pirates on the Open Airwaves](#)

By Brooke Jarvis, YES! Magazine

Grassroots voices are increasingly being denied legal access to radio space.

[Read more Â»](#)

## CHOMSKY ON CONTROL OF INFORMATION/REALITY USA

<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20080101.htm>

**"We Own The World," Noam Chomsky, ZNet, January 1, 2008**

**excerpt:** "So we had the usual kind of debate going on, which illustrates a very important and pervasive distinction between several types of propaganda systems. To take the ideal types, exaggerating a little: totalitarian states' propaganda is that you better accept it, or else. And "or else" can be of various consequences, depending on the nature of the state. People can actually believe whatever they want as long as they obey. Democratic societies use a different method: they don't articulate the party line. That's a mistake. What they do is presuppose it, then encourage vigorous debate within the framework of the party line. This serves two purposes. For one thing it gives the impression of a free and open society because, after all, we have lively debate. It also instills a propaganda line that becomes something you presuppose, like the air you breathe..."

The same is true with regard to many other issues. But for articulate opinion it's pretty much the way I've described —

largely vigorous debate between the hawks and the doves, all on the unexpressed assumption that we own the world. So the only thing that matters is how much is it costing us, or maybe for some more humane types, are we harming too many of them?"

## BOOKS

--Reporters of the Associated Press. *Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else*. Princeton Architectural P, 2007.

--Faludi, Susan. *The Terror Dream: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9-11 America*. Metropolitan, 2007. Rev. *CJR* (Nov. Dec. 2007), "Cowboys and Damsels" by Bree Nordenson. Why did US react the way it did, as reflected in the media, in regression and illusion: "our return to a fifties-era culture of masculine strength and feminine weakness" in order to restore the national myth of invincibility?

--Hamilton, Jay. *Democratic Communications; Formations, Projects, Possibilities*. : Lexington Books, 2008. While it has always been hard to do, asserting an essential distinction between mainstream media and alternative media has become even more

difficult within the past twenty years. ... This book reconstitutes the cultural and historical roots of this protean media landscape and assesses its relevance to democratic communications. Using a comprehensively argued cultural and historical analysis, the book rethinks long-standing assumptions about alternative media and democratic communications. By providing greater understanding of historical resources, limitations, and possibilities, this book makes a key contribution not only to scholarship in this area, but also to this pressing social, political, and cultural issue.

## MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT

--Nordenson, Bree. "The Uncle Sam Solution." *Columbia Journalism R* (Sept.-Oct. 2007). A multiple review of books and essays and support for government assistance of news reporting because the newsroom cutbacks are "the journalistic equivalent of a scorched earth." Market forces are destroying news reporting.

--Kumar, Martha. *Managing the President's Message: The White House Communications Operation*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2007. Rev. *CJR* (Nov.Dec. 2007). How controversies in the news looked from the inside.

***Digital Destiny: New Media and the Future of Democracy*** by [Jeff Chester](#)

**THE CELEBRATED MEDIA ADVOCATE'S CLARION CALL FOR NEW MEDIA TO SERVE THE PUBLIC INSTEAD OF CORPORATE INTERESTS—AND WHAT'S INVOLVED IN THIS HIGH-STAKES STRUGGLE**

**For thirty years Jeff Chester has been the leading investigator of corporate interests who appropriated and cheapened the public's property—the airwaves. His new book warns that the manipulators of television now threaten freedom in the new digital world.**

—BEN H. BAGDIKIAN, AUTHOR OF *THE NEW MEDIA MONOPOLY*

[BILL MOYERS ON DIGITAL DESTINY AT THE 2007 MEDIA REFORM CONFERENCE \(click to watch\)](#)

With the explosive growth of the Internet and broadband communications, we now have the potential for a truly democratic media system offering a wide variety of independent sources of news, information, and culture, with control over content in the hands of the many rather than a few select media giants.

But the country's powerful communications companies have other plans. Assisted by a host of hired political operatives and pro-business policy makers, the big cable, TV, and Internet providers are using their political clout to gain ever greater control over the Internet and other digital communication channels. Instead of a "global information commons," we're facing an electronic media system designed principally to sell to rather than serve the public, dominated by commercial forces armed with aggressive digital marketing, interactive advertising, and personal data collection.

Just as Lawrence Lessig translated the mysteries of software and intellectual property for the general reader in *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*, Jeff Chester gets beneath the surface of media and telecommunications regulation to explain clearly how

our new media system functions, what's at stake, and what we can do to fight the corporate media's plans for our "digital destiny"—before it's too late.

**Jeff Chester** is the executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy. He has long been on the front lines fighting against the consolidation and commercialization of the U.S. media system. A former investigative reporter and filmmaker, he lives outside Washington, D.C.

**Praise for *Digital Destiny*:**

Jeff Chester is the Paul Revere of the media revolution. Read this book and you will understand the stakes.

—Bill Moyers

No other work as concisely and powerfully frames the democratic challenge that media policy presents. It is time people understood plainly just what is at stake. This book makes that understanding possible.

—LAWRENCE LESSIG

*Digital Destiny* is the most important book on media policy in years and will become required reading for a generation of students, scholars, activists and concerned citizens across the nation. —Robert W.

McChesney

A noble and eloquent guardian of the public interest, Jeff Chester shows how Big Media too often allows journalism to take a back seat to profit margins. *Digital Destiny* is a passionate and powerful book. —Ken Auletta, media writer for The *NEW YORKER*

All Americans should read this important and timely book. It discloses the multi-billion dollar agendas of the powers-that-be and precisely how they impact our lives. —Charles Lewis, founder, The Center for Public Integrity

**MEDIA REPORTING OF RELIGION**

“Left Behind: The Skewed Representation of Religion in Major News Media.” Media Matters for America, 2007. Mainstream media prefer conservative over progressive religious figures.

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