

# Notable Quotables

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A bi-weekly compilation of the latest outrageous, sometimes humorous, quotes in the liberal media.



Bringing Political Balance  
to the Media

## Impossible for Feds to Make Do On Less than \$2 Trillion a Year

"Dick Arme y's mandate to cut taxes, it's complete. Taxes have been cut as much as is humanly, or inhumanly, possible. So, he can go."

— *Time's* Margaret Carlson, discussing the Majority Leader's decision to retire, on CNN's *Capital Gang*, Dec. 15.

## Scolding Bush for "Breaking" a Treaty By Following Its Provisions

"When we come back, the other big news from the White House today. President Bush makes a major announcement. Tonight, why the U.S. is deliberately going back on its word in front of the rest of the world."

— MSNBC's Brian Williams promoting an upcoming item on Bush's decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty, on the December 13 *News with Brian Williams*.

"Today President Bush deliberately broke a treaty with Russia, as he promised he would — the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that bars both countries from building a missile defense system. Without a defense, both sides are vulnerable, and that's a deterrent. But President Bush says times and threats have changed."

— NBC's Tom Brokaw introducing a Dec. 13 *Nightly News* story about the U.S. giving Russia the required six months advance notice that we would withdraw from the treaty.

## Wasting Tax Money on Fantasies

"What [a missile defense program] does is probably set off an arms race in China and Southern Asia of countries who will want to have nuclear capability. And second, it's not a proud thing for a superpower to walk away from a treaty. This is the first since World War II of this kind of behavior. Thirdly, where is the money? This is billions of dollars and the latest test of the booster rocket just failed this week. This is fantasy technology."

— *Newsweek* contributing editor and reporter Eleanor Clift on the December 15 *McLaughlin Group*.

"I don't think the problem is as much the Russians as it is maybe the world and...a certain sense of unilateralism. But even more, I just think conservative Republicans have a total knee-jerk thing about SDI. They cannot get over it. We have other things that are much more likely bad to happen to us that we should be spending money on."

— NPR reporter Nina Totenberg on the December 15 *Inside Washington*.

## George W. Bush, War Criminal

"Ari, what makes the President — I'm taking note of his wide-swinging threats in speeches recently. What makes him think that he has the right to go into a sovereign country and bomb the people?"

— Hearst White House correspondent Helen Thomas questioning White House press secretary Ari Fleischer at Dec. 5 briefing shown live on cable news channels.

## "Caught Up" in Terrorism

"John Walker's now been in custody, in U.S. custody, for more than a week and interrogated pretty regularly. As an American citizen, he has a constitutional right — in that he's facing very serious criminal charges — to talk to a lawyer. He hasn't. Why not?"

"Does the President, is this an indication of the kind of due process that people caught up in these terrorist investigations are going to face?"

— Questions from ABC's Terry Moran to Fleischer at a December 18 briefing.

"Are we so primitive that we would ship this man in a box, deny him legal rights, deny him the right to see a lawyer, deny him the right to see his parents? I mean, is that America?"

— Helen Thomas questioning Fleischer at Dec. 19 briefing.

## ABC News Stars Think "Insular" Americans Need Enlightening

"It isn't just about campaigning against terrorism around the world. That's just too simple. There are a lot of root causes for dissatisfaction around the world and I think for the country to exercise real global leadership, when globalization in itself is kind of complicated, it's not just American business or selling American culture around the world. I think it's a very big challenge for a leader to get us all engaged in that because, you know, Americans are pretty insular people for the most part."

— ABC anchor Peter Jennings on CBS's *Late Show with David Letterman*, December 21.

"One of the things that's been lacking here in the States is a real open debate about the effect of our policies in the world, about why some people in the world do hate us and the effect of our policies on them. I think we need a little bit more of that in the coming year."

— ABC's George Stephanopoulos during his network's special New Year's Eve program *ABC 2002*, December 31.

## Castigating the “Vendetta” Against the Clintons

“As you know, some people are also saying it just opens old wounds at a time when we’re trying to have political unity in this country. Was that part of your consideration?”  
“You’ve lived in the political culture long enough to know that admirers of the Clintons or other people who are neutral in all of this are going to say, ‘Look, this is just a continuation of a political vendetta against that couple.’”

— NBC’s Tom Brokaw on the December 21 *Nightly News* questioning Solicitor General Ted Olson about his decision to proceed with a book about scandals late in the Clinton administration, written by his wife Barbara Olson who was killed on September 11.

## Still the Media’s Hero

“Jim Jeffords is the personification of one man, one vote, and his story a classic of American politics. What Jim Jeffords did simply was turn Washington on its ear. In the months following President Bush’s inauguration in January, the 67-year-old Jeffords found himself increasingly at odds with the GOP on Capitol Hill and the White House over issues ranging from education, to the environment, to the size of the tax cut, all of which forced him to examine his core beliefs....Jeffords knew and agonized that a political switch at this time in his career would affect not only him, but Republican colleagues, and his staff and family....But flying to Vermont in May, Jeffords knew he’d made the right decision....Today, Jeffords is a man at peace with himself, enjoying work on his Vermont farm, splitting logs, saving a few pennies with some inventive repair work on a wheelbarrow.”

— NBC’s Katie Couric introducing a December 15 *Today* show interview with Jeffords.

## Fondness for Communist Failure

“Gorby. Glasnost. Perestroika. Those quaint, inseparable terms entered the global lexicon in the 1980s as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed a new glasnost (openness) in Soviet society and began implementing perestroika (restructuring) in its economy and politics. He sought a more conciliatory relationship with the U.S., negotiating arms reductions. With a Western-style politician’s charm and a homey touch, he became, as *Time* put it, ‘a symbol of hope for a new kind of Soviet Union: more open, more concerned with the welfare of its citizens and less with the spread of its ideology and system abroad.’ What did spread, at home and abroad, was a fever of democratic reform.”

— *Time* in its double-issue dated Dec. 31, 2001/Jan. 7, 2002, explaining why it selected former Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev as Man of the Year in 1987 and 1989.

## What NYT Columnist Learned In 50 Years: Ashcroft = Bin Laden...

“Maybe it’s a twin conclusion. One is that certainty is the enemy of decency and humanity in people who are sure they are right, like Osama bin Laden and John Ashcroft. And secondly that for this country at least, given the kind of obstreperous, populous, diverse country we are, law is the absolute essential. And when governments short-cut the law, it’s extremely dangerous.”

— Retiring *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis after being asked what big conclusions he had drawn over his half-century career, in a December 16 interview with *Times* editor Ethan Bronner.

## ...& Failure Beats Free Markets

“I can remember when the Labor government was elected in 1945 in Britain....And I thought, well, this is great. Socialism is really going to have a chance. Democratic socialism is going to have a chance. Well it just turned out to be more difficult and the resources weren’t there. You know, the health service doesn’t work. I’m still for it. But it doesn’t work.”

— Anthony Lewis, later in the same interview.

## Hinting of Hillary in ‘04?

“Not in prison, and I hope he is reformed and returned to society, maybe pardoned by a future President.”

— *Newsweek’s* Eleanor Clift on the Dec. 8 *McLaughlin Group*, predicting where John Walker, the U.S. citizen who fought for the Taliban, will be in ten years.

## Correcting Lopsided Labeling

**Aaron Brown:** “Some conservatives jumped on [Taliban fighter John] Walker, saying he is a product of cultural liberalism — the California kind — helping to turn an impressionable kid against his own country. Joining us from Salinas, California, one of those conservatives, Shelby Steele of the Hoover Institution. Mr. Steele wrote a provocative article the other day in the *Wall Street Journal* — a column in the *Journal*. And here in New York, a columnist who thinks Mr. Steele is making an awfully broad generalization: Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post*. It’s nice to have both of you here. Mr. Steele.”

**Shelby Steele:** “First of all, let me interrupt you just a minute. Is Richard Cohen a liberal?”

**Brown:** “Yeah, Richard Cohen’s a liberal. I think he would say that, wouldn’t he?”

**Richard Cohen:** “On this issue.”

**Brown:** “Okay. Everyone is now branded, I guess.”

**Steele:** “Great. If I’m going to be, everybody’s going to be.”

— Exchange on CNN’s *NewsNight*, December 18.

## Notable Quotables

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