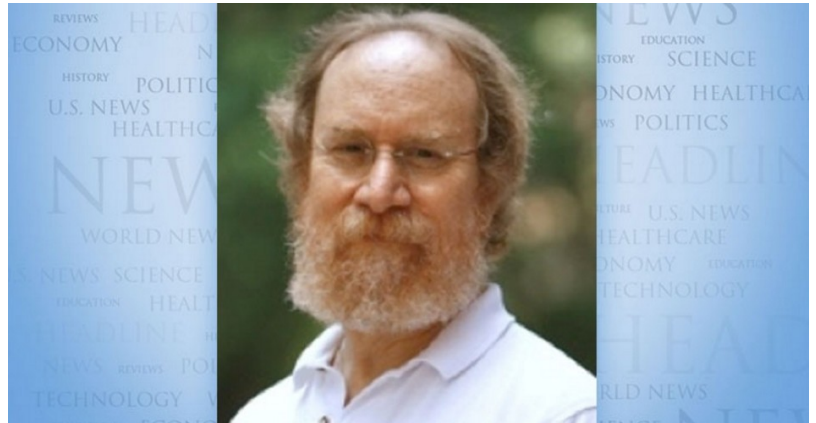




Written by [Sheldon Richman](#) on February 11, 2015

Brian Williams Helped Pave the Way to War

The scandal of the week is NBC anchor Brian Williams's shabby bid for self-glorification by falsely claiming he was in a U.S. military helicopter forced to land in the Iraqi desert after being hit by ground fire in 2003. Of course so-called news people shouldn't make up stuff to look good, but there's something much worse: uncritically passing along official lies intended to prepare the American people for war.



Williams, like nearly all of his mainstream media colleagues (with [precious few exceptions](#)) did this [incessantly](#) in the run-up to George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq. As conduits for the Bush administration's baseless claims about weapons of mass destruction and [Iraqi links to 9/11](#), Williams and the others did Bush's bidding in manufacturing public support for the illegal and morally outrageous invasion and occupation that would wreck Iraq even more than it had been wrecked in the 1990s through the military and economic warfare waged by George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

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What did these fake-news presenters learn from that disgraceful episode? Not a thing. If you want proof, tune in to the three major networks' newscasts or consult the American cable news channels: CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. There you'll find stage actors conveying the Obama administration's neoconservative line about the ISIS threat to the American people and the need for government military action to counteract it — never noting that there was no ISIS or al-Qaeda in Iraq before the Bush war they helped make possible. Reporting "news" without providing the context is a surefire way to mislead viewers. Why don't they know that? Or do they know it and prefer to mislead their viewers out of a sense of patriotism and in a quest for ratings?

You need another example? Take Iran. (Ukraine would also do.) For quite a while these same media stars have been hawking the claim that Iran has been relentlessly working toward building nuclear weapons. Yet, although the U.S. and Israeli governments have repeatedly *threatened* Iran over the years — claiming "all options are on the table" (which logically includes nuclear strikes) — and have engaged in covert and proxy war and terrorism against the Islamic Republic — Iran has not started down the road to acquiring a nuclear arsenal.

In his book [Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare](#), independent reporter and historian Gareth Porter [shows](#) that there is no evidence Iran has intended to do anything but obtain a civilian nuclear-power and nuclear-medicine capability. Porter's book overflows with documentation that supports his case, including a *fatwa* from Iran's current leader declaring that possession of nuclear weapons violates Islamic law.

I repeat: Iran — which is routinely inspected by the International Atomic Energy Administration, has signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (unlike the Middle East's only nuclear power, Israel), and is [complying](#) with the interim agreement negotiated with the United States and other powers — has not sought nuclear weapons. American and Israeli intelligence agencies agree.



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Have you heard that from Brian Williams, Andrea Mitchell of MSNBC, Wolf Blitzer or Fareed Zakaria of CNN, David Muir of ABC, Scott Pelley of CBS, or Shepard Smith, Chris Wallace, and Bret Baier of Fox News?

No, you have not. Instead, they casually refer to “Iran’s nuclear weapons program” as if it were an indisputable fact. Therefore, in their eyes it is unnecessary to interview anyone who could challenge that claim. Their subtext is: “The U.S. government says Iran has a nuclear weapons program. That’s good enough for us.”

This can only have the effect of softening up the American people for a war of aggression against Iran, which has already been devastated by economic sanctions, if the hawks in Congress, in cooperation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, succeed in driving Iran from the negotiating table with even more sanctions.

Yet even this is not enough for the government mouthpieces who call themselves journalists. Recently, Joe Scarborough, host of MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, one-upped this reckless gang by asserting that Iran has “promised to get a nuclear weapon and then has promised to use the nuclear weapon to annihilate Israel.” He then repeated this double lie.

Compared to Joe Scarborough, Brian Williams is a piker.

Sheldon Richman is vice president and editor at [The Future of Freedom Foundation](#) in Fairfax, Va.



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