



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 19, 2014

CNN Spreads Lies About Radio Giant on Ebola

“It’s so unhinged we should probably not bother dignifying it with fact-checking.” So said CNN’s Jake Tapper, reporting on comments radio giant Michael Savage made about the Ebola crisis. But if Tapper had done some fact-checking, fewer people would now believe as fact that he checked his credibility at the newsroom door.



On a Tuesday CNN [segment](#) titled “Dangers of Ebola: Myths and misconceptions,” Tapper claimed that Savage was broadcasting “wild conspiracy theories,” accusing the host of alleging that Barack Obama was purposely trying to spread the disease among Americans.

“[C]onservative talk-radio host Michael Savage, who has one of the biggest radio audiences in the country, has even been suggesting that this is all some Obama plot to purposely infect the nation,” said Tapper. He then played audio of the host saying on the Savage Nation radio program, “There’s not a sane reason to take 4,000 troops and send them into a hot Ebola zone without expecting at least one of them to come back with Ebola, unless you want to infect the nation with Ebola.” This is when the newsman concluded with, “It’s hard to even know where to start with that one, the idea that the president wants to infect soldiers and then Americans? It’s so unhinged, we should probably not *bother* dignifying it with fact-checking.”

But Tapper could have started with [my coverage](#) of the Ebola situation at *The New American*, in which I’ve [frequently cited](#) Savage as an expert — he holds a doctorate in epidemiology from the University of California, Berkeley and has written the better part of 20 books on health and nutrition. As to this, Dr. Savage has been analyzing the Ebola response from an epidemiological perspective and has indicated that Obama’s actions are driven not so much by iniquity as by incompetence and ideology. In fact, after playing [comments](#) the president made about Ebola after a Thursday cabinet meeting, Dr. Savage said on that day’s edition of his show they were “not true” but also emphasized that he believed Obama was getting bad counsel from advisors.

Tapper quite possibly picked up the Savage story from one of the many far-left websites (such as Media Matters) that often present quotations from conservative figures out of context and then distort their meaning. Regarding this, the newsman obviously misconstrued Dr. Savage’s statement that you don’t pursue the policies Obama has “*unless you want to infect the nation with Ebola*” as meaning that this is the president’s intent; however, this is just a manner of speaking, one I suspect is especially prevalent in New York City (like me, Dr. Savage grew up in the Bronx). If, for instance, a New Yorker talks about someone who got hurt acting recklessly, he might shake his head and say “You don’t do stupid things like that unless you want to kill yourself.”

As to the specifics of Dr. Savage’s criticism of Obama, he has [pointed out](#) that epidemiological principles dictate that when combating a deadly virus you “isolate and you quarantine an entire nation,



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if necessary.” He explained, “You let nobody in from a country where you have a raging epidemic” because “microbes do not discriminate,” but said that Obama won’t do this “because the far-left agenda is to have an open-borders policy.”

Dr. Savage elaborated further when defending himself from CNN’s attack. As WND.com’s Chelsea Schilling [reported](#):

Reacting to Tapper’s segment, Savage told WND, “Since health workers in full biohazard gear have contracted Ebola, why wouldn’t we expect one of the 5,000 U.S. soldiers sent into the epicenter of one of the world’s most virulent epidemics to contract the virus?”

“Common sense would dictate not to send soldiers into this region without expecting some of them to contract the disease — common sense, which is lacking in Tapper’s illogical mind,” he said. “Moreover, the U.S. government is violating the primary rule of epidemiology by exposing our young men and women to this deadly virus.”

And Dr. Savage has a lot of company in making this assessment. Schilling cites ABC News medical expert Richard Blesser, who said “[T]he possibility of a soldier getting Ebola is very real and something we have to be ready for”; Gen. David Rodriguez, the top U.S. general overseeing operations in Africa, who has indicated that plans are already in place to deal with infected servicemen; retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. William Boykin and retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Paul Vallely, who have condemned the president’s decision to send troops to Africa; and Elaine Donnelly, president of the Center for Military Readiness, who said she was “appalled” and that “the United States seems to have a very confused vision of what ‘national security’ means.”

Schilling also reports that Dr. Lee Hieb, former president of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, echoed Savage, saying that if “doctors, who are highly trained people, got themselves infected,” troops are “not going to be able to protect themselves very well.”

“All it takes is one virus particle,” he warned.

Joining this chorus of common sense is Republican senator Rand Paul. As WND [reported](#) earlier this month on comments the presidential hopeful made on Laura Ingraham’s radio show: “You also have to be concerned about 3,000 soldiers getting back on a ship. Where is disease most transmittable? When you’re in a very close confines on a ship, we all know about cruises and how they get these diarrhea viruses that are transmitted very easily,” he said. “Can you imagine if a whole ship full of our soldiers catch Ebola?”

The senator also agreed with Dr. Savage on another point: that quarantining the affected nations may be the only effective policy.

Speaking of Paul, he was the subject of another example of a media employee getting things very, very wrong. Katy Conrad, a media booker for CBS *This Morning*, [recently mocked](#) the senator for rendering medical advice, tweeting, “Not sure when @SenRandPaul became a doctor, but says Ebola can spread from a person who has the disease to someone standing 3ft away #uhmm.”

Only, Paul *is* a doctor — a licensed ophthalmologist.

And now Jake Tapper is providing Twitter-level journalism. And with respect to this, he might be wise to note that you do not “dignify” a comment with fact-checking; you dignify yourself and your craft and do justice to your subject and audience with fact-checking. It is your job as a journalist.



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Photo of Michael Savage: AP Images



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