

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Event: PPRC Friday rally and march condemns US bombing campaigns in Iraq, spotlights the flagship mouthpiece for the Republican Party, Rupert Murdoch's Fox network.

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Date: Friday, October 15th, 2004

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Places: Pioneer Courthouse Square

PPRC Friday rally and march condemns US bombing campaigns in Iraq, spotlights the flagship mouthpiece for the Republicans, Murdoch's Fox network.

The *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition's* Friday rally and march calls for an immediate end to the intense bombing campaigns of the US military in Iraq, and takes up the issue of Rupert Murdoch's key role in propagandizing the American public in support of Bush's wars and domestic agenda. Last week, award-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported that Bush has "been bombing the hell of that place ... since he set up this Potemkin Village government with Allawi on June 28 ... the bombing, the daily bombing rates inside Iraq, have gone up exponentially."1

Hersh criticized the US news media in particular for not reporting these facts. "There's no public accounting of how many missions are flown, how much ordnance is dropped, we have no accounting and no demand to know," said Hersh. "The only sense you get is we're basically in a full-scale air war against invisible people that we can't find, that we have no intelligence about, so we bomb what we can see." Reports from British newspapers, the *Independent* and the *Guardian*, indicate very high rates of civilian casualties from the US bombing in Iraq. Local opponents of the war and occupation cite the central role played by commercial media in the US drumming up support for the Bush policies.

"Whether by way of the lies of 'Mr. Shut-up', Bill O'Reilly, or the ludicrously branded 'fair and balanced' Fox news, Rupert Murdoch has played a key role in defrauding our nation into the Iraq war and removing any shred of genuine journalism from commercial broadcasting here in the United States," said William Seaman, a volunteer with the PPRC. "As Murdoch has wrapped Fox in the flag, pedaling the lies of Bush and the neocons, the other networks have followed his lead to new depths of right-wing propaganda in the service of corporate profits rather than the principles of good journalism." Seaman cited the work of journalism scholars such as Ben Bagdikian, author of Media Monopoly, and Robert McChesney, author of Rich Media, Poor

Democracy, as important starting points for understanding the challenge facing the public in the run up to the November elections.

“The struggle for a genuine democracy in this country begins with how a community becomes informed about the issues that affect them, the issues and perspectives and ideas that they weigh when they vote and when they become engaged in the civic life of the nation,” said Seaman. “The airwaves belong to the people, and yet they’ve been hijacked by corporations that use them as a license to print money through advertising revenue, and as the primary means of controlling awareness and thought and debate on the crucial issues of the economy, of war, of security, of our future.”

Seaman cited the work of media activist organizations such as *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting* (www.fair.org) and *FreePress* (www.freepress.net) as examples of how people in the US can get involved in the growing media reform movement. “We’re not dependent on the corporate news media, whether it’s the local affiliates or the national network news,” said Seaman. “We must support community-based media like KBOO listener-sponsored radio, and we must also support the reform efforts underway at the national level.”

1. “Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh spills the secrets of the Iraq quagmire and the war on terror”, By Bonnie Azab Powell, U.C. Berkeley NewsCenter, 11 October 2004, http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2004/10/11_hersh.shtml