



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 18, 2015

Media Bigwigs Love the Clinton Foundation

More than a dozen news organizations and media magnates have contributed to the Clinton Foundation, *Politico* reported Friday, the same day ABC News star George Stephanopoulos offered an on-air apology for not disclosing to his employer and the network's viewers his contributions to the charitable foundation.

"NBC Universal, News Corporation, Turner Broadcasting and Thomson Reuters are among more than a dozen media organizations that have made charitable contributions to the Clinton Foundation in recent years, the foundation's records show," wrote *Politico*'s Dylan Byers in his ["On Media" blog](#). Byers was the first to publish the news last Thursday that Stephanopoulos, the ABC chief political correspondent and host or co-host of the network's news and public affairs programs, had contributed \$75,000 to the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation from 2012 through 2014.



Comcast, Time Warner, and Viacom are among the media corporations that have contributed to the fund, Byers reported, along with "a few notable individuals, including Carlos Slim, the Mexican telecom magnate and largest shareholder of The New York Times Company, and James Murdoch, the chief operating officer of 21st Century Fox. Both Slim and Murdoch have given between \$1 million to \$5 million, respectively."

Hillary Clinton has come under criticism in some — mainly Republican — quarters for accepting, while serving as secretary of state, donations to the foundation from contributors, both foreign and domestic, who had dealings at the time with the U.S. State Department. Clinton has insisted the contributions had no influence on decisions she made.

The media donations raise questions about the objectivity of news reports and analyses on the foundation and its critics. There is nothing inherently political about the causes supported by the Clintons through their non-profit foundation. Stephanopoulos said he gave money to support the work the foundation was doing on AIDS prevention and deforestation. But viewers, watching and listening to Stephanopoulos on a recent *This Week* telecast grill *Clinton Cash* author Peter Schweizer about the book's allegations concerning the former Secretary and some of the questionable contributions, were unaware of the host's ties to the foundation. Some with long memories may have recalled the politico-turned-journalist's former employment as communications director for Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign and later as a senior political advisor in the Clinton White House. But even with that in mind,



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the zeal with which Stephanopoulos interrogated Schweizer seemed out of the ordinary. It could hardly have been more intense if the *This Week* host were cross-examining the author as Mrs. Clinton's attorney.

"Really quite stunned by this," Schweizer wrote in an e-mail to Bloomberg Politics, calling the host's silence on his contributions "a massive breach of ethical standards. He fairly noted my four months working as a speech writer for George W. Bush. But he didn't disclose this?"

The history of political coverage by the national media in recent years — perhaps even recent decades — raises questions about the objectivity of the alleged "watchdogs of the press." That became painfully clear during much of the media cheerleader "coverage" of the Iraq War and, in particular, the Bush administration's build-up to it. Columnist Paul Krugman, writing in Monday's *New York Times*, noted "a definite climate of fear among politicians and pundits in 2002 and 2003, one in which criticizing the push for war looked very much like a career killer.

"On top of these personal motives," [wrote Krugman](#), "our news media in general have a hard time coping with policy dishonesty. Reporters are reluctant to call politicians on their lies, even when these involve mundane issues like budget numbers, for fear of seeming partisan. In fact, the bigger the lie, the clearer it is that major political figures are engaged in outright fraud, the more hesitant the reporting. And it doesn't get much bigger — indeed, more or less criminal — than lying America into war."

It would, of course, have been awkward for Krugman to have mentioned in that regard, the significant role the *New York Times* played in disseminating uncritically in its news columns Bush administration claims about the alleged arsenal of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons Saddam Hussein was developing and accumulating, which arsenal was said to be a threat to the United States and the rest of the world.

Columnist, commentator, and former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan had an interesting phrase for those risk-averse politicians and pundits who prefer the feathering of their own nests to an honest and fearless pursuit of truth. They are, he said, "kennel-fed." Too often the media "watchdogs" might be better described as the puppies and even the lapdogs of the Fourth Estate.

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