



## The White House War on Glenn Beck

Glenn Beck is clearly on a roll. First he exposes the radical past of Van Jones, who was until September the Special Advisor for Green Jobs for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. It was heavily due to Beck's coverage of Van Jones on his Fox News Television show (and his radio show) that Jones resigned from his position. Now Beck has unearthed footage of Obama's White House Communications Director Anita Dunn at a high school graduation last spring praising Mao Tse-Tung as one of her two "favorite political philosophers."



Dunn [said in a high-school commencement address](#):

The third lesson and tip actually come from two of my favorite political philosophers, Mao Tse-Tung and Mother Teresa. Not often coupled with each other, but the two people that I turn to most to basically deliver a simple point, which is you are going to make choices, you are going to challenge. You are going to say why not. You're going to figure out how to do things that have never been done before. But here's the deal, these are your choices, they are no one else's. In 1947, when Mao Tse-Tung was being challenged from within his own party on his plan to basically take China over, Chaing Kai-Shek and the Nationalist Chinese held the cities. They had the army. They had the air force. They had everything on their side. And people said, "How can you win? How can you do this? How can you do this against all of the odds against you?" And Mao Tse-Tung said, "You fight your war, and I'll fight mine." And think about that for a second. You don't have to accept the definition of how to do things, and you don't have to follow other people's choices and paths. Okay? It is about your choices and paths. You fight your own war. You lay out your own paths. You figure out what is right for you.... Everybody has their own path.

Dunn said she intended the statement as irony. "The use of the phrase 'favorite political philosophers' was intended as irony, but clearly the effort fell flat — at least with a certain Fox commentator whose sense of irony may be missing," she [told CNN](#) on October 16.

It may be irony to juxtapose Mother Teresa with Mao Tse-Tung, as the latter was literally the *Guinness Book of World Records* record holder for mass murder when *Guinness* was keeping such records. But calling Mao a "favorite political philosopher" is neither irony nor humorous. If a Republican were to say at a high-school commencement address that Adolf Hitler and Mohandas Gandhi were his favorite political philosophers, the quote would rightfully be all over the news. But finding Mao as a hero just may be a bit worse, since Mao killed about six times as many helpless civilians as Hitler did.

Beck's high profile and relentless efforts to break news stories like the Dunn story have drawn the fire of Obama administration officials, who have called the Fox News Channel an "[opponent](#)" and "[not really a news station](#)" in recent weeks. The specific White House objection, according to White House Senior Advisor David Axelrod on [NBC's Meet the Press for October 18](#) is that "the only argument Anita was making is that they're not really a news station, if you watch — even — it's not just their commentators,



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but a lot of their news programming, it's really not news. It's pushing a point of view. And the bigger thing is that other news organizations, like yours, ought not to treat them that way, and we're not going to treat them that way. We're going to appear on their shows. We're going to participate, but understanding that they represent a point of view."

The White House is essentially arguing that if a news outlet has a point of view that means they are not reporting news. This is an antiquated mid-20th-century idea of how news "should" be reported: that news should be unbiased. That old paradigm of an "unbiased" news was always a myth, even when reporters sincerely practiced it. There's always a point of view reporters take to a story, even if it's a point of view that's popular or unanimous with an audience.

That myth was also usually employed as a ruse designed to camouflage a leftist bias for Democratic-leaning television networks. For decades, private foundations like the Media Research Center have noted that professional reporters identified with the Democratic Party four or five times more often than with the Republican Party. But if being "unbiased" in reporting the news is the standard of determining whether or not a channel is a "news" network, then all of the other national television news networks — and particularly MSNBC, with its strongly leftist commentators like Rachel Maddow, Keith Olbermann, Ed Schultz, and Chris Matthews — are not news networks either. All of the other national television news networks have a leftist bias, some more than others, but all represent a non-constitutionalist worldview. It's only Fox, with its Republican-friendly worldview, against whom the administration has registered an objection. The NBC/MSNBC network that Axelrod was talking on was one of those "other news organizations, like yours," Axelrod noted.

Beck's revelations about Dunn came more than a week after Dunn had declared an administration war on Fox News, a fact that *Time* magazine took note of as early as October 8. "It's opinion journalism masquerading as news," Dunn [told](#) *Time*. "They are boosting their audience. But that doesn't mean we are going to sit back." More recently, Dunn [said](#), "The reality of it is that Fox News often operates as either the research arm or the communications arm of the Republican Party." Don't hold your breath waiting for the administration to demand that MSNBC stop acting like the research and communications arm of the Democratic Party.

For his part, Beck makes no claim to being an unbiased journalist and openly avows his show is about opinions. "I am not a journalist," he [said](#) on his show last week, "in fact I wear that as a badge of honor." But this self-professed "rodeo clown" is unquestionably breaking big news stories in between the jokes, shouts, and tears on his show. And he is unquestionably having a positive impact on government under the Obama administration



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