

"60 Minutes" report about a Marine charged in the killings at Haditha.

On "The Daily Show," Ms. Logan echoed the comments of other journalists when she said that many Americans seem uninterested in the wars now. Mr. McCarthy said that when he is in the United States, bringing up Baghdad at a dinner party "is like a conversation killer."

Coverage of the war in Afghanistan has increased slightly this year, with 46 minutes of total coverage year-to-date compared with 83 minutes for all of 2007. NBC has spent 25 minutes covering Afghanistan, partly because the anchor Brian Williams visited the country earlier in the month. Through Wednesday, when an ABC correspondent was in the middle of a prolonged visit to the country, ABC had spent 13 minutes covering Afghanistan. CBS has spent eight minutes covering Afghanistan so far this year.

Both Ms. Logan and Mr. McCarthy noted that more coalition soldiers were killed in Afghanistan in May than in Iraq. No American television network has a full-time correspondent in Afghanistan, although CNN recently said it would open a bureau in Kabul.

"It's terrible," Ms. Logan said in the telephone interview. She called it a financial decision. "We can't afford to maintain operations in Iraq and Afghanistan at the same time," she said. "It's so expensive and the security risks are so great that it's prohibitive."

Mr. Friedman said coverage of Iraq is enormously expensive, mostly due to the security risks. He said meetings with other

television networks about sharing the costs of coverage have faltered for logistical reasons.

Journalists at all three American television networks with evening newscasts expressed worries that their news organizations would withdraw from the Iraqi capital after the November presidential election. They spoke only on the condition of anonymity in order to avoid offending their employers.

### ACTION

1. Consult alternative news sources such as [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org)
2. Consider this fact: the main stream media is actually selling the size of their readership to advertisers. Thus, you are a commodity.

Local contact:

### 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice

*A Catholic faith-based NGO  
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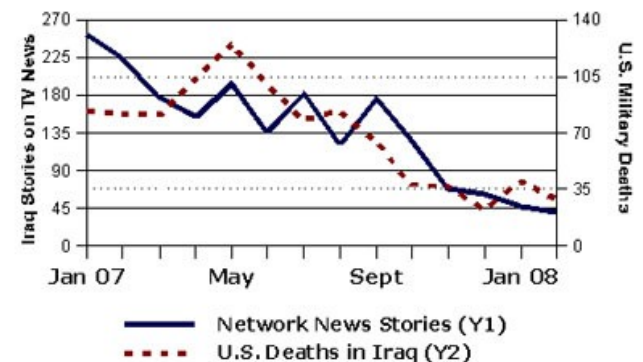
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# Networks Block War Reports

Brian Stelter, New York Times, 6/34/08

Getting a story on the evening news isn't easy for any correspondent. And for reporters in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is especially hard, according to Lara Logan, the chief foreign correspondent for CBS News. So she has devised a solution when she is talking to the network.

### TV's Bad News Bias on Iraq Coverage Falls as U.S. Deaths Decline



"Generally what I say is, 'I'm holding the armor-piercing R.P.G.,'" she said last week in an appearance on "The Daily Show," referring

to the initials for rocket-propelled grenade." 'It's aimed at the bureau chief, and if you don't put my story on the air, I'm going to pull the trigger.'"

Ms. Logan let a sly just-kidding smile sneak through as she spoke, but her point was serious. Five years into the war in Iraq and nearly seven years into the war in Afghanistan, getting news of the conflicts onto television is harder than ever.

"If I were to watch the news that you hear here in the United States, I would just blow my brains out because it would drive me nuts," Ms. Logan said.

According to data compiled by Andrew Tyndall, a television consultant who monitors the three network evening newscasts, coverage of Iraq has been "massively scaled back this year." Almost halfway into 2008, the three newscasts have shown 181 weekday minutes of Iraq coverage, compared with 1,157 minutes for all of 2007. The "CBS Evening News" has devoted the fewest minutes to Iraq, 51, versus 55 minutes on ABC's "World News" and 74 minutes on "NBC Nightly News." (The average evening newscast is 22 minutes long.)

CBS News no longer stations a single full-time correspondent in Iraq, where some 150,000 United States troops are deployed.

Paul Friedman, a senior vice president at CBS News, said the news division does not get reports from Iraq on television "with enough frequency to justify keeping a very, very large bureau in Baghdad." He said CBS correspondents can "get in there very quickly when a story merits it."

In a telephone interview last week, Ms. Logan said the CBS News bureau in Baghdad was "drastically downsized" in the spring. The network now keeps a producer in the country, making it less of a bureau and more of an office.

Interviews with executives and correspondents at television news networks suggested that while the CBS cutbacks are the most extensive to date in Baghdad, many journalists shared varying levels of frustration about placing war stories onto newscasts. "I've never met a journalist who hasn't been frustrated about getting his or her stories on the air," said Terry McCarthy, an ABC News correspondent in Baghdad.

***"The Death of one [person] is a tragedy. The death of a million is a statistic."***

commonly attributed to Josef Stalin

By telephone from Baghdad, Mr. McCarthy said he was not as busy as he was a year ago. A decline in the relative amount of violence "is taking the urgency out" of some of the coverage, he said. Still, he gets on ABC's "World News" and other programs with stories, including one on Friday about American gains in northern Iraq.

Anita McNaught, a correspondent for the Fox News Channel, agreed. "The violence itself is not the story anymore," she said. She counted eight reports she had filed since arriving in Baghdad six weeks ago, noting that cable news channels like Fox News and CNN

have considerably more time to fill with news than the networks. CNN and Fox each have two fulltime correspondents in Iraq.

Richard Engel, the chief foreign correspondent for NBC News, who splits his time between Iraq and other countries, said he found his producers "very receptive to stories about Iraq." He and other journalists noted that the heated presidential primary campaign put other news stories on the back burner earlier this year.



Ms. Logan said she begged for months to be embedded with a group of Navy Seals, and when she came back with the story, a CBS producer said to her, "One guy in uniform looks like any other guy in a uniform." In the follow-up phone interview, Ms. Logan said the producer no longer worked at CBS. And in both interviews, she emphasized that many journalists at CBS News are pushing for war coverage, specifically citing Jeff Fager, the executive producer of "60 Minutes." CBS News won a Peabody Award last week for a