

IF THEY CUT OFF YOUR RENT-A-GENERALS, JUST BUY-AN-ADVISOR

I highly recommend checking out this Media Matters database, which lists all 4500 appearances the Rent-A-Generals named in NYT's article on the program (I hope Media Matters expands it to include other Rent-A-Hacks listed in the full document dump). Here, for example, are the appearances made by David Grange, the most prolific Rent-A-General, just as the Iraq War began (Update: as drational points out, Grange appears to be the most prolific in this sample because Media Matter's methodology over-represents CNN).



Kind of hard to see, I know, but it basically reads CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN CNN.

Now, as it turns out, the last CNN appearance from David Grange was on April 25, just a few days after the NYT story. The other CNN favorite Rent-A-General, Donald Shepperd, actually stopped appearing in March.

So what's a poor cable news network to do, now that its Rent-A-General addiction (Lou Dobbs has a particularly bad habit) has been exposed?

I would suggest today's finalization of the news-first announced about a week after the NYT story—that Fran Townsend is joining CNN as a Buy-A-Hack might answer your question.

Frances Fragos Townsend, who recently stepped down as President George W. Bush's chief anti-terrorism and homeland security adviser, will join CNN as an on-air contributor providing analysis and insight on national security issues, it was announced by Jon Klein, president of CNN/U.S. Townsend, who has spent more than two decades in the fields of

intelligence and criminal justice, has served during the past three administrations, most recently as assistant to Bush for homeland security and counterterrorism. She chaired the Homeland Security Council from May 2004 until January 2008. Prior to that, she was a deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser for combating terrorism from 2003 to 2004. She has been at the center of America's effort to fight terrorism through her work in the U.S. Coast Guard, the Justice Department under President Bill Clinton and the George W. Bush White House.

If you can't continue to present Administration propaganda with the Rent-A-Generals anymore, I guess, you might have to suck it up and hire the Administration's own security "expert" to present the Administration's spin.

CNN has not announced whether Townsend will get favorable access to Administration briefings—beyond those available as a member of the PFIAB.