



Save on DIY Building Kits
up to 45% off Steel Buildings, Perfect for:
Garages, Workshops & More! **SAVE!**
FUTURE BUILDINGS



sign in



become a supporter

subscribe



search

jobs US edition ▾

theguardian

home US politics world opinion sports soccer tech arts lifestyle fashion business travel environment

≡ all

home > world > europe americas asia middle east africa australia cities development UK

World news

CNN let army staff into newsroom



11

Julian Borger in Washington

Tuesday 11 April 2000 21.34 EDT

Two leading US news channels have admitted that they allowed psychological operations officers from the military to work as placement interns at their headquarters during the Kosovo war.

Cable Network News (CNN) and National Public Radio, (NPR) denied that the "psy-ops" officers influenced news coverage and said the internships had been stopped as soon as senior managers found out. For its part, the army said the programme was only intended to give young army media specialists some experience of how the news industry functioned.

The interns were restricted to mainly menial tasks such as answering phones, but the fact that military propaganda experts were even present in newsrooms as reports from the [Kosovo](#) conflict were being broadcast has triggered a storm of criticism and raised questions about the independence of these networks.

"Maybe CNN was the target of a psy-ops penetration and is still too naive to figure out what was going on," wrote Alexander Cockburn, a liberal newspaper commentator. "In the Kosovo conflict, as with other recent wars, CNN's screen was filled with an unending procession of bellicose advocates of bombing, many of them retired US generals."

CNN hosted five psy-ops officers as temporary, unpaid workers last year, while NPR took three, all from the army's 4th Psychological Operations Group, based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The army's psychological operations are prohibited by law from manipulating the US media.

After the existence of the CNN internship programme was published in the Dutch newspaper, Trouw, the network immediately cancelled it.

Susan Binford, the head of CNN public relations said: "Is the whole thing embarrassing? Yes. Did it compromise us journalistically? No."

However, the independent watchdog group, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting asked in a press release: "Even if the psy-ops officers working in the newsroom did not influence news reporting, did the network allow the military to conduct an intelligence-gathering mission against CNN itself?"

Since you're here ...

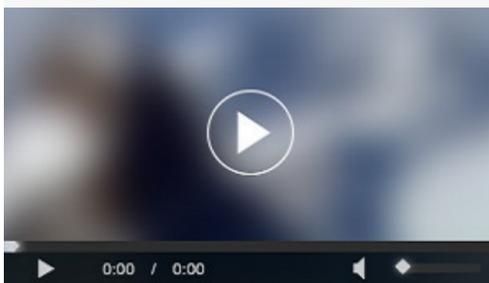
... we have a small favour to ask. More people are reading the Guardian than ever but advertising revenues across the media are falling fast. And **unlike many news organisations, we haven't put up a paywall - we want to keep our journalism as open as we can.** So you can see why we need to ask for your help. The Guardian's independent, investigative journalism takes a lot of time, money and hard work to produce. But we do it because we believe our perspective matters - because it might well be your perspective, too.



I appreciate there not being a paywall: it is more democratic for the media to be available for all and not a commodity to be purchased by a few. I'm happy to make a contribution so others with less means still have access to information.

Thomasine F-R.

Advertisement



Most popular in US



Men, you want to treat women better? Here's a list to start with



Reese Witherspoon alleges sexual assault by director when she was 16



Carrie Fisher gave predatory producer a cow's tongue in a box



Trump: 'Ask General Kelly' if Obama called after son died in Afghanistan



Snack attack: alligators like to eat sharks, study reveals