

Rather than provide a check on the abuses of those in power, Accuracy in Media editor Cliff Kincaid says the media are making excuses for Obama Treasury Secretary nominee Timothy Geithner's failure over the years to pay a variety of taxes and to make sure those he hired as domestic help had legal status in the U.S. The media, Kincaid argues, are functioning as arms of the Obama Transition office. The most popular excuse, first put forward by the Obama office, is that Geithner just made "honest mistakes." This excuse has been picked up by the media, he notes.

In a column on the subject, Kincaid says, "based on the documents that have come out, he [Geithner] is either a tax cheat or a dummy when it comes to his basic personal finances and tax matters. Do we want either one as head of the Treasury Department?"

Kincaid suggests poor coverage of the scandal by NBC News may be related to the fact that Jeffrey Immelt, chairman and chief executive officer of NBC parent company General Electric (GE), is on the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, whose president is Timothy Geithner. "It is also interesting to note that a subsidiary of GE, GE Capital, is getting some of the federal bailout money that Geithner, if he is confirmed, will have a role in managing," Kincaid notes. He asks, "Conflict of interest, anyone?"

He adds, "Another member of the board of the New York Fed is Lee C. Bollinger, the president of Columbia University, who serves on the board of the Washington Post Company. This is the media conglomerate whose media properties include the Washington Post newspaper, Newsweek, and Slate."

"Connections like this help explain why Geithner's tax problems won't become a scandal or even much of a controversy for major elements of the media," the AIM editor concludes.