

January 8, 1994

Richmond, KY 40475

Mr. Brian Lamb
C-Span, I & II
400 N. Capitol St, NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Thank goodness for C-Span. You're doing some great things.

"Those who are uncompromising in their quest for excellence will attract unto themselves others of like mind. And, the result of their joint effort will be truly outstanding!"

So it is with C-Span!

But, lest this adulation go to your head, I have a few suggestions to make C-Span even better!

1. Those damn ID lines at the bottom of the screen drive me nuts!
 - a) The person in charge of changing them does so far too often. The name of the person speaking is the most important. It should be up most of the time. The seminar (or whatever) should be shown occasionally--but not every 10 seconds!
 - b) Better yet, show both on the same two-three lines--and not change anything except when the speaker changes. This could easily be done on two lines for most shows. Example:

C-SPAN Ku Klux Klan National Convention
John Smith, Chairman and Chief Executioner

Move C-Span logo to extreme left--and it will free up most of Line #1 for copy PLUS all of Line #2, if logo is small.

2. Avoid using newsmen as guest experts. They are NOT experts. Reading the news a few years ~~doesn't~~ make them experts. It makes them good at reading well; making reading sound like ad lib... and that's about all. Common sense, judgement, wisdom? You won't get much of either from newsmedia people.

Where do you get it? From call-ins, occasionally and from people working out in the trenches; directly involved in the subject being discussed. There aren't many experts in Washington. If there was, the country would not be in the mess it's in, right?

3. Identify the bias(s) of your guests. It matters if the speaker is discussing gun control and is President of the NRA. It matters if he is discussing mine regulations and owns 91 mines. It matters if he is giving the President Hell--and is running for President (already)--people like Sen. Robert Dole, for example.

Provide some ordinary information--party affiliation, present occupation, future political plans, if known, involvement in anything related to the issue to be discussed.

4. You have an obligation to be neutral. But, -you also have an obligation to your listeners to correct any obvious mis-statements or outright lies put forward by your guests. Example: "In the 55 states, 31 have state constitutions". 50 states; all have constitutions. "Only 40% of voters voted for Clinton". Correction: 65% voted for change; voted against Bush.

5. Bring some factual information to the table--when it has not been brought up by your guests. Clinton majored in International Affairs at George Washington University, for example. I have never heard that mentioned in any of the criticism of his inexperience in foreign affairs. That's a pertinent point.

No military service? Point out that X number of former Presidents have not served in the military--or, if they did, not in positions of authority or in combat. That's pertinent too! Delano Roosevelt, Commander in Chief during WWII was one of them!

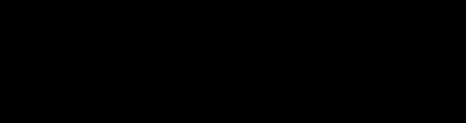
6. When evaluating the performance of your guests, keep in mind this quote: "The common fluency of speech in many men...is owing to a scarcity of matter, and a scarcity of words. For whoever is a master of language and has a mind full of ideas will be apt, in speaking, to hesitate upon the choice of both. Whereas, common speakers have only one set of ideas, one set of words to clothe them in and these are always ready at the mouth. So people come FASTER out of an empty church than when there is a crowd at the door!"

Many, many times, I see panels made up of one person with common sense, wisdom, judgement, logic and several "talking heads" or "educated fools". Because this first person doesn't talk as fast or is less polished in his presentation, the others dominate the conversation/discussion. The result is, as someone from Maine best expressed it, "They sure do talk a lot. But, they don't say much that is worth hearing!"

The talk show^s from radio were excellent, interesting, exciting to watch. Imus is one wild character! A welcome relief from the polished performance of many others--that contain nothing of substance.

Hope some of this is helpful.

Sincerely,



aka Thomas Paine IV
(pen name)

The Richmond Register

Opinion

U.S. must share peacekeeping role

By Thomas Paine IV

Future historians will probably describe the United States as a "warrior" nation. Averaging a new war every 20 years for over 200 years, the United States has, by force of arms, imposed its will upon many peoples and nations.

But, in today's post-Cold War world, this great warrior nation is being called upon to make an abrupt change of direction — from warriors to peacemakers. We Americans are very proficient at making war. It remains to be seen if we can become as proficient at making peace.

This year, we are spending 260-plus billion dollars for defense (war), but very little for peace. Perhaps, if we spent a dollar for peace for every dollar we spend for war, we would soon make a successful transition from a nation of warriors to a nation of peacemakers.

The role of the United States in the new world order, as the only remaining superpower, is being debated here and around the world. Three options are available to us: 1. Do nothing. 2. Do our fair share (working within the U.N.). 3. Do everything, getting involved in every conflict everywhere. **Do nothing?** We are a kind, compassionate, caring people. The national conscience will not allow us to sit by and do nothing. **Do it all?** With a 4 trillion dollar national debt, we cannot afford to do it by ourselves anymore.

Therefore, only one option remains open to us. Work within the U.N. with other nations to keep the peace, establish or maintain economic and political stability whenever conflicts arise.

Guest Column

Recently, some rather tentative steps in that direction have been taken. Multinational U.N. contingents have been used in Iraq, in Somalia and as peacekeepers in several other nations. But, the U.N., like the U.S., is unprepared to assume its new role as peacemaker. Deficiencies in leadership, organization, and staffing have occurred. Considering the circumstances, this should come as no surprise to anyone.

As international peacekeeper, the U.N. must have the means — money, weaponry, manpower — to impose an immediate cease-fire and bring the combatants to the negotiating table immediately before people, cities and nations are totally destroyed by war. And, the United States, along with other industrialized nations, has a duty and responsibility to provide these means to the United Nations to enable it to do its job — so that we do not, by default, have to do it ourselves.

(Thomas Paine IV is the pen-name of a Richmond resident who is compiling a series of brief essays in which he attempts to address modern problems in the style of Thomas Paine, author of the Revolutionary War-era "Common Sense" pamphlets. His essays will be published periodically in the Register.)

Don't just gripe, demand deficit cut

By Thomas Paine IV

You and I, and our children and grandchildren, now owe more than four trillion dollars, plus interest, to the holders of U.S. government bonds, bills and notes!

And, in 1993, the government will borrow an additional one-third trillion dollars as it continues the "borrow-and-spend binge" begun in the 1981 frenzy of excessive tax-cutting that shattered the fiscal stability of the nation.

The annual deficit is the amount of money the government borrows when it spends more than it takes in. The national debt is the accumulated debt for the current year and all previous years' borrowings.

From 1776 to 1976 — 200 years — the nation accumulated a national debt of one-half trillion dollars, most of which was borrowed to survive the Great Depression and finance World War II. By 1982, the national debt had doubled — to one trillion dollars. By 1986 — only 4 years later — the debt doubled again to two trillion dollars. By 1990, another trillion dollars was added and, in 1992, the debt doubled again to 4 trillion dollars. This represents a 900 percent increase in 16 years!

If this borrow-and-spend binge isn't stopped NOW, by the Congress or by a Balanced Budget Amendment — if Congress lacks the will or the courage to do it — the debt is projected to reach 5 trillion in 1995, 6 trillion in 1997, 7 trillion by the year 2000.

To put these debt increases into proper perspective, the national debt increased by an average of 5 billion dollars per year from 1946 to 1970. This year's deficit (debt) will be 340 billion dollars — a 6,800 percent increase!

199 billion dollars of this 340 billion debt will be for interest payments on the 4 trillion dollar national debt. This year's interest is more than total government expenditures in 1970 (196 billion dollars)!

To whom do we owe the money and pay the interest? One trillion dollars has been borrowed from 150 government-maintained trust funds, the Social Security Fund being the largest. Foreigners and foreign government represent 16.6 percent of the remaining debt. State and local government own 17.7 percent. The

Guest Column

balance is owned by American citizens and companies.

Who is responsible for the borrow-and-spend binge that has led to our present predicament? President Reagan and Bush and the Democratically controlled Congresses of the 1980s when, by their actions (or inaction) they increased the national debt by 2.297 trillion dollars. We paid a very dear price for the economic "good times" and the tax cuts of the 1980s! And, the irony of it is that, while spending trillions of dollars, our social problems became worse. The money was spent on THINGS instead of on PEOPLE! Despite all this, many of the same senators and representatives are still in office, still continuing to spend more than the government takes in each year! In 1988, 96 percent of the incumbent members of Congress won re-election; in 1990, 98 percent won re-election; in 1992, 93 percent won re-election! Why? The apathy of 50-60 percent of eligible voters (who do not vote) and the special interest groups (PACs). Ninety-seven percent of all PAC money goes to incumbent members of Congress. Unfortunately, we have a House and Senate for sale to the highest bidder — and the highest bidders are the PACs!

What can be done to solve the deficit/debt problems? Vote out of office all those who are unfit to govern, become a political activist, donate money and time to elect good people — and, if nothing else, REGISTER and VOTE! And, before election day next year, write your congressmen, tell them how you feel, send them copies of this and other editorials that express your views. Don't just gripe about it, DO SOMETHING to stop it!

(Thomas Paine IV is the pen-name of a Richmond resident who is compiling a book of essays in which he attempts to address modern problems in the style of Thomas Paine, author of the Revolutionary War-era "Common Sense" pamphlets. His essays will appear periodically in the Register.)

Monday, December 13, 1993

The Richmond Register

Opinion

No more new taxes should be needed

By Thomas Paine IV

The politicians would have us believe that a shortage of money is the reason why social programs and other much-needed programs are not being funded. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

In 1990, the Internal Revenue Service alone collected over one trillion dollars in taxes from the American people. Another trillion dollars (maybe more — no one knows exactly how much) was collected in state and local income taxes, taxes on company profits, property taxes, sales taxes, city payroll taxes, gasoline and other fuel taxes, licenses and permits (which are a disguised form of taxes), vehicle registration fees and hundreds of other hidden taxes. Over two trillion dollars of taxes collected in a single year!

American taxpayers now work almost half of each year to pay these tremendously high taxes. Despite this, politicians would have us believe that even more taxes are necessary if everything that needs to be done IS done.

This is nonsense — pure and simple! Two trillion dollars would provide two weeks pay at minimum wage for every person in the world; a four-week paid vacation at Club Med for every person over 18 in the United States; two full years of tuition at Harvard for every per-

Guest Column

son under 18 in the United States.

To spend two trillion dollars per year, the government must spend almost eight million dollars per business day, every day of the year! Eight million dollars per day is more than sufficient to fund both the government — at the size it **SHOULD** be — and all other necessary programs not now being funded.

We don't have a shortage of money in Washington; we have a shortage of common sense among those we elect and send to Washington. We don't need *new* taxes; we need *new* members in the House and Senate.

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