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C-SPAN
400 N. Capital St. N.W. Ste. 650
Washington D.C. 20001

Brian Lamb et al:

I am writing for the first time although I have been a frequent (constant) C-SPAN watcher since it first became available to me in 1986. In addition, I am also a regular caller to your call-in shows.

The reason I am specifically writing after many times wanting to do so is to express my admiration and heartfelt thanks to you for providing Dr. Mohamed Al-Mashat the time and the courtesy which he deserved to attempt to express his country's views across to the American people.

As we (the world) are now on the brink of the worst war since Vietnam, it is a service of utmost importance that C-SPAN is providing America with - a town hall, a time for serious debate and thought. This is not to minimize the contributions that C-SPAN has made in the past, or to overlook the times you have been remiss in dealing with other subjects or viewpoints (subject: John Hull and U.S. dope dealing - viewpoints: Noam Chomsky, or the Houston Post's Pete Brewton).

But as to the subject at hand, I thank you again for giving the U.S. access to the excellent and informative guests that you have been putting on the air for the last few weeks concerning the Iraq/Kuwait affair. The history show with the Johns Hopkins University anthropology asst. professor originally from Afghanistan was typical for C-SPAN, but exceptional even by cable standards. It was much needed relief from the inane network drivel over the semantic questions about the meaning of "hostage", "war", and "blockade".

Let me make a point before closing which is too long to make over the phone, but which perhaps you can make to one of your guests for his or her reaction. Essentially, this is a debate over the current status of world superpowers. Let me demonstrate:

1. I think it is a given that the principles of democracy and freedom have nothing to do with our involvement in this latest Middle East internal affair. Even the mainstream media have generally written this unless it serves them in a particular specious instance. The double standards are just too obvious - China/Tibet, or the U.N./World court rulings against us or one of our "allies", etc. The Israel/Palestine double standard is the most relevant here.

2. Oil is also secondary to this latest mission of President Bush. Three or four facts (some learned on C-SPAN no doubt) make this clear. First, the most Saddam Hussein could raise the price of oil would be to about 42 dollars a barrel (today it hit almost 32). This - as a recent oil industry expert you had on the air said - would be the ceiling because oil shale can be produced for 45 a barrel, and North America has the world's largest reserves of oil shale. The most Saddam Hussein could hope for is about 38 dollars per barrel.

The pre-Kuwait invasion price was 18, so the price of oil could little more than double before the oil shale would be competitive to produce. Now, in the 1973 oil shock, the price quadrupled from 3 to 12 dollars a barrel, and the world survived nicely.

Second, since only 12% of our electricity is produced from oil it is primarily only the transportation sector that would be greatly affected. It is of little concern to us strategically. It seems to be the common wisdom that a retooling of this sector would be good for the economy anyway and would help us with both our ecological and competitiveness problems. If Iraq controlled ALL the oil in the Middle East, it would control only 50% of the presently-known reserves anyway. Any rational scenario would not have Iraq in this position for years to come, if ever. But in a worse-case scenario, what if he did? Aha.

3. The reason we are intervening in this somewhat justified annexation of the so-called country of Kuwait is simple. Under NO circumstance, in any weather, no matter what race, color or creed of people are involved, it is NOT EVER allowable for ANY other country to develop into being a superpower in this world. This would indeed affect "our way of life".

The U.S. people, recently called the first "omnipower" in the Washington Post, do not comprehend this. If the vacuum left by the Soviet Union in the Middle East is to be filled, the U.S. will only allow itself or our sanctioned replacement to fill it. The U.N., which we have laughed at for the last 12 years, may or may not participate in this ritual, depending on how we can stack the deck there.

In illustration, if Israel suddenly had access to the kind of oil Iraq has, with their nuclear weapons, Shamir would just as quickly become a "power-hungry madman" etc. This is why we will try to bill Japan for our latest imbroglio, but we would never approve of Japan having a navy of her own. This fact is not discussed or even mentioned in the press, nor by any government official when discussing our interests in the Middle East.

God forbid our brothers in that region ever have access to the policy papers that the CIA and various administrations have developed over the years concerning the role of Israel and the other agents which have for times at least been useful to us in attaining our goals in the Middle East. I believe the Iran/Iraq war, for example, was escalated into what it became for these aims. Henry Kissinger once expressed: "...to serve the ultimate U.S. interests, both sides must lose.". No doubt Henry - a man who once used chemical weapons against his own people on the battlefield - is now calculating what can be done to the Saudi government when this is all over.

For unless there is a contingency plan of this nature, what will become of the gigantic weapons depot that we are now creating over on the Arab soil? We cannot pretend as we did (and do) in Panama, that a continued U.S. base is a necessary evil in this world, put in place only to protect the Arabs from each other. All analysts are calling this a losing game. Time will pass and the Arab world will want to control their own resources. As we turn over the keys to "Freedom Oasis" to the (hopefully) multinational armed force that we will leave there, what will happen then? I'll give you a hint, it will involve more weapons than we had stashed in Panama.

Again, my best wishes to you - and I must mention that I thought you had the best and fairest coverage of the Barry trial, and the best coverage of the Panamanian invasion. No insult to all of your fine hosts, but Mr. Lamb is the best interviewer in the country. The tough questions are asked, the right nuances pursued, the right amount of personal information put across, and it all works to inform as well as pose philosophical questions that need to be asked.

The bits on the history of the District of Columbia were done very well, and were well timed. The long talks by John Stockwell, Noam Chomsky, Alex Cockburn, and your coverage of the Iran/Contra affair all were great, and too many other shows to mention. My only complaint is that some of the best stories running through the left alternative press are not given enough serious attention. Surely after all this time, you could get a group together to discuss the link between the CIA and the savings and loan scandals. The Houston Post has published at least 35 articles on this!!! You should have had several shows on this by now.

It has been said by many of your callers over the years, but you just don't get it: the U.S. has had since the sixties, a direct involvement in the operational and banking aspects of the drug business. I'm sure that since Mr. Lamb is a fan of the WOL call-in radio show, he is well aware that this is common knowledge in the black community here and elsewhere. This is the subtext to the entire Barry trial. The endless requests for facts on John Hull are all about this. The interest in the Kerry subcommittee hearings ditto.

There are thousands of dead young men and women who deserve more than a little lip service on this one. Do your homework and you'll discover dozens of reputable, well-written books on it. Another story that I urge you to cover is the connection between the government of Israel and the so-called Columbian cartels. At least the people of the Middle East are informed on this (thanks in part to the fine work of Jane Hunter). The denials that Mr. Harari and others like him are in touch with Israel officially are no different than PLO denials that they are officially in touch with their people. But look at the difference in coverage. Come on. There are journalists who know this one - Jane Hunter, for example.

In the meantime, my best wishes for your continued success and health. If there is ever anything you could use in the way of help from a low vision person, let me know - I'd consider it public service. I know computers, can work from home, and serve as an electronic media consultant to Print News Report, a Montgomery County cable show about the media. Whatever you need, please call.

Sincerely,
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Bethesda, Maryland 20814
[REDACTED]