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cc: T. Murphy
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Dear Broadcasters:

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Two years ago I moved from an area with commercial television (N.J.) to this area where cable is not an extra but a necessity. I regret that fact and I especially dislike the fact that one cable company has the monopoly. There are other disadvantages I won't go into. The good part is I get C-SPAN. I just learned what the initials stand for: Cable Satellite Public Access Network (I think).

I'm not a heavy televiewer. When I do watch it's almost entirely PBS that I watch. When the war started I was glad you were there. If I remember correctly I saw your channel in the presidential election coverage, too, and was pleasantly struck by the fact that you simply reported without interpreting, letting the viewers decide for themselves. That continued with the congressional debate on the war. I served in the USN in WWII but I don't remember any congressional debate or even vote. As I remember FDR simply declared war. Nor do I remember coverage of congress in the Korean or Vietnam wars. This was the first time I had seen (1) the congress' right to declare war vs. presidential powers, and (2) the issue of going to war debated.

President Bush, with whom I disagree strongly on most things, felt that a debate in Congress would send Saddam a signal that we are divided and weak. He should know that the strength of a democracy is in the fact that we can dissent and still be strong. Our president doesn't shoot anyone who opposes him the way Saddam does.

I have mixed feelings about your call-in shows. I think it's wonderful that the ordinary person can call in and offer his "two cents" but , as you know, some can be very irate and rude. One even asked the guest if he was Jewish. The guest acknowledged that fact. He then went on to attack Jews. I thought the lady who was hosting the show did a wonderful job of thanking the caller for reminding us that anti-semitism is still alive in the U.S.A. Neither she nor the guest speakers should have to put up with such personal insults. I don't know how that can be controlled. There is always the possibility that you could be accused of censorship if you screened calls. I wonder if someone could ask the caller the topic of his question or comment and judge by the tone whether it was constructive or not and screen him out. I don't know.

One of the most beneficial, or at least intersting outcomes of the call-in shows, I feel, might be the number of callers for and the number against the war. I realize that isn't an accurate measure. People who feel strongly either way are more likely to call than those who don't feel so strongly about it.

Then, too, there are the gray areas where people like myself "support" the troops so much we don't want them sent into battle to be maimed and killed. Is that supporting the war or opposing it? Supporting the troops and their families or opposing them?

Generally speaking I think you are doing a wonderful job and I feel it is very courageous and also a unique contribution to simply present the facts, callers and guests' opinions without editorializing. I am not sure if CNN is a rival of yours or an affiliate but they sure got the scoop on the other networks, though I am not one to glory in scoops. I don't know how they did it but I'm glad. Otherwise we might have had to interrupt the war for a Wheaties commercial. Of course, I think a pause MIGHT have given Saddam a chance to pull out but I'm not going to debate

that point here.

Thanks for handling so many strongly antithetical positions with such aplomb. I don't know how you do it. I admire your moderators even though I am ashamed to say I can't pull their names out of my head.

Keep up the good work!

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