Dec 4, 1991

Mr Brian Lamb
C-Span
400 North Capitol St NW
Washington DC 20001

005418 DEC 11 91

Dear Mr Lamb:

Television was once considered to be an entertainment medium. No longer. Television is now generally regarded as a news medium. Television news has come to dominate the networks.

As you of course know, network advertising revenues depend on the sales of the products being advertised. And the sale of these products depends on the general public's willingness to spend. And its willingness to spend depends, to a great extent, on its perception of the local and national economy and its financial effect on their personal lives.

Since it has been determined that a majority of Americans receive their news from television, it reasonably follows that the public's perceptions, including that of the economy, are greatly influenced by television news. — Unfortunately television news has a propensity for accentuating the periodic failures of government and society rather than the successes. This is a bi-product of adversarial journalism, but such a policy, if pressed too hard, can sometimes have a demoralizing effect on the general public, and, as in the present case, cause a diminution of national morale which is reflected in the loss of retail sales, and an inevitable decline in the national economy.

It cannot be realistically denied that television news has been an important factor in the decline of the national economy, and, ironically, in its own financial well being because of the subsequent drop in advertising revenues.

This isn't the first time television news has been a party to a national economic decline. During the 1960 presidential election campaign, coming off of eight years of Eisenhower prosperity, John F. Kennedy and television news sounded the cry that the United States had lost its "prestige" and its economic momentum and that we had to get the nation moving forward again. This indictment got him elected but soon resulted in a nationwide recession.

Again, in 1974, during the so called oil crisis, television news drilled into us that oil was a "finite" resource, and that because of our irresponsible avarice we had used it all up, and that we would therefore have to drastically curtail our standard of living, and that what gasoline was left would cost at least five dollars a gallon. President Carter told us to turn out the lights whenever possible, and to turn off the air conditioners, etc., and before long we had a recession with stagflation. many people lost their jobs and others sold their homes, for what they could get, and moved away. — We discoverd a couple of years later that there really was no shortage of oil, and that there was plenty of gas to be had at $1.35 a gallon. Interest rates dropped, inflation dropped, and the country again returned to normal.

Fortunately, the networks have within their power the ability to moderate the present recession by raising public morale, and to increase sales, and ultimately to increase their own advertising revenues. — They have got to learn to accentuate the positive, and the affirmative, and to eliminate the negative to a reasonable degree.

If, however, television's current onslaught upon the state of the economy is politically motivated and part of the pre-election strategy, we probably cannot effect a break until after the upcoming presidential election.

[redacted]

Longboat Key Fl 34228