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August 23, 1990

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Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 North Capitol Street, NE
Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb,

Like a good many other people evidently, I have been watching C-SPAN rather intensively these last two weeks. In general I have been pleased and impressed, but sometimes I wonder how much you personally know about the Middle East and what your position is regarding the programs. For instance, you permitted Steven Emerson's half-truths and outright lies to pass uncorrected (i.e., that the Israelis did not know about the Sabra/Chatila massacres right away, when in fact they had previously arranged for the Christian (so-called) Phalangists to enter the camps and aided them at night with spotlights; that the infamous Sharon was reproved but left unsaid was his retention as minister-at-large and now housing minister, where he is able to continue his unbridled persecution of Palestinians; as well as the Jewish caller who claimed that Jews were denied weapons by the British in 1948 while the Palestinians were allowed to possess them (when it was quite the reverse) and that the land the Israelis captured in 1967 was really theirs). Strange that the U.S. should deny Iraq's retrieval of land that was part of it in this century when no protest is made about Israel being given land they hadn't seen for some 3,000 years, and then only as invaders whose tenure of it lasted less than 500 years.

The basis for most of the unrest in the Middle East is the total injustice of the handling of the Palestinian tragedy and the blind U.S. backing of every Israeli action, whether it is killing our own men on the SS LIBERTY or violating the most basic human rights of Palestinians. This is the reason callers equate Israel with Iraq, apparently to your surprise. Kuwait has been a state in its own right and cannot go back to Iraq, anymore than Israel can fulfil its claim to all land from Euphrates to Egypt. It is as if the Italians were to demand England and most of Europe because they were once part of their empire. Unfortunately, the U.S. still seems to have the cowboys and Indians mentality, where only one side (Israel) must be armed to the teeth and the rest cannot be allowed to defend themselves. No one will endure such a situation for ever and the U.S. may (in our "charming" phrase) take out Saddam Hussein but you may be sure that others will replace him as long as Israel's belligerence and arrogance remain unchecked. Hence, Hussein's popularity with the masses.

Mr. Emerson's belief that terrorism can only be stopped by force, without seeking its source ^{ie cause} may in some cases be right (as we have proved with certain murderers from the western camp), but the fact remains that when a country 92% Arab and 8% Jewish is divided arbitrarily by alien powers (with a larger portion going to the minor

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recipient) without reference to the majority's wishes, you cannot expect it to be forgiven and forgotten overnight. I can imagine what would happen if one of our states was handed over to Canada or Mexico with the subsequent forcing out of homeowners at machine gun point, long years of torture in prison and deprivation of those trying to remain, administrative detention, beatings to death, shootings, night arrests (all in the Gestapo tradition), stealing of water and destruction of orchards, house demolitions, desert prison (even Israeli doctors were shocked at the ghastly conditions in ANSAR III), systematic bone breaking and shooting at children's eyes, not to mention tear gassing of the newborn - even a Saddam Hussein might seem a savior in face of all that.

If you have read as far as this, which I doubt, and wonder why I have so much time to be so garrulous, it is because no one needs Italian translators in this city! I would like to add that I am glad to see so many Americans aware at last that a Palestinian "problem" exists and that we hold much of the blame for it. With Jewish control of U.S. media, it is surprising that Americans have still found ways to be informed. Even the intensely pro-Israel "Washington Post" may one day become more even-handed. Meanwhile, your silence in the face of half-truths and lies does no credit to the "free press" of America. You asked overseas callers on one occasion what the local papers were writing and I hope you noticed the hesitation in reply. Years of living in Italy taught me that the papers may say one thing (usually long tirades against the U.S.) and the government another, but the people are very hostile to us, pro-Palestinian (we had massive demonstrations throughout the country) and firmly against war. I don't doubt their feelings remain the same. As you well know, media control of some kind is exercised in most countries; it is a pity that ours, too, is not genuinely free. I would also add that I find Ambassador Al-Mashat a welcome presence and a sign that in this instance at least we allow the other side freedom to speak, even if one has to have reservations about some of the content!

I am not certain that the Saudi request for help was entirely of their own seeking and they will have to face the consequences sooner or later. As will Kuwait's Emir who is not as well loved as we are being led to believe. I hope Mr. Bush will stop being pig-headed and start negotiating but we have always neglected trying to understand Arab minds and feelings, and I can only hope we don't start a shooting war. In any case, whatever happens, we will still have to face squarely what we can do to win credibility again in the Middle East. You can help, if you will, by not being indifferent to whether it is a lie or the more insidious half truth which is being bandied about. Thank you.

Sincerely,

