

[REDACTED]
Rockville, MD 20852

September 10, 1993

Mr. Brian Lamb
C Span

Dear Mr. Lamb:

I've been a fan of yours and C Span for some time, believing it to be the last, best hope of television news because it has been the least biased.

However, your 10-hour series on the crisis year 1968 was appalling, a nauseating parade of self-congratulatory creeps from the left fringe preening over their final victory, now that one of their own has been elected president.

Your scanty balancing acts -- Jeane Kirkpatrick, Bill Bennett, Fred Barnes and one or two others -- did little to offset the army of sickies your producer assembled for you: Tom Hayden, "Off-the-Pig" Bobby Seale, the proud SNIC Eleanor Holmes Norton, representatives from NOW (representing mighty few women) and the ACLU, and some of the most vapid drivel I have ever heard from the NAACP (which used to be a respectable organization) and the hapless Martin Luther King III, among others too numerous to count. I include their accomplice, Connie Morella, a wolf in GOP's clothing.

Worst of all was Dan Rather, who was allowed to pontificate about his own independence and integrity without contradiction (no telephone calls were taken from then on). Rather recalled that Lyndon Johnson called him to say something like, "That broadcast was the biggest load of (bleep) I ever heard." (He did not say what the bleep was. Then Rather unloaded on the C Span audience a massive pile of (bleep), praising to the skies the 1963 class of Vietnam reporters, David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan, both subsequent Pulitzer winners.

Try to stay with me now: earlier, Fred Barnes had lamented that journalism has gone downhill from the days before it was required to be in an adversary relation to government and especially to presidents. Halberstam and Sheehan invented that adversary relationship in 1962-1963 in Vietnam, so successfully that almost all subsequent reporters in Vietnam imitated them, Don Oberdorfer, for example.

Dan Rather said that Halberstam-Sheehan "clashed with reporters from World War Two" who had believed Eisenhower and were accustomed to believing what generals told them. What an outrageous smear of Marguerite Higgins, the best American

George Mitchell
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reporter in Vietnam, who wrote an excellent book, *Our Vietnam Nightmare*, contradicting Halberstam, but could not follow up on it because she died of a parasitic infection she got visiting every combat area in Vietnam.

It was Marguerite Higgins with whom Halberstam and Sheehan clashed, and although she was married to an Air Force officer, she certainly did not believe generals, sheep-like; MacArthur tried to have her banned from Korea, where she won a Pulitzer. Halberstam and Sheehan also clashed with Marine Gen. Victor Krulak and Bill Richardson, CIA station chief, whom was then pulled out by President Kennedy.

Higgins, who was born in Asia and previously knew Vietnam, talked with President Diem, Madame Nhu and Thich Tri Quang, the Buddhist monk at the center of the famous pagoda raid. I have seen no evidence that Halberstam interviewed any of them. But Halberstam had as a close adviser the Reuters correspondent Pham Xuan An, and cited him in his book as the best-informed reporter on defense matters; he was a North Vietnamese spy and agent of influence, still in Vietnam and still friendly with Sheehan and Morley Safer, among other American correspondents.

Halberstam and Sheehan, aided by Stanley Karnow and *Time* magazine reporters, maybe slightly by Malcolm Browne, and helped mightily by the State Department's Roger Hilsman and George Ball, exaggerated the mild raid* into carnage, and caused President Kennedy to stage the coup that killed Diem and his brothers, the single most shameful act in American foreign affairs.

You asked repeatedly in the 1968 program, how did we get into the Vietnam War? Kennedy got us in, after he was forced to kowtow to Khrushchev at the Vienna summit. Kennedy told Khrush, "What's yours is yours, and what's ours is ours," in Berlin, which was a green light to build the Berlin Wall. Kennedy thought he would get even in Vietnam. His inspiring the murder of Diem, however inadvertent, committed us to the war. You cannot kill a country's only leader and then walk out.

Don Oberdorfer did not cover himself with glory on your program. Tet was the biggest thing that ever happened to him, but that does not ensure that his book was reasoned; Peter Braestrup's *Big Story* was the best book on Tet, and it did not find a conventional publisher because Halberstam, patsy for a Communist spy, at the time still was the hero of the Western world and sole guardian of the truth about Vietnam.

You also were not up to your usual standards, repeating Pat Buchanan's amazing, to you, revelation that Nixon did not really have a Secret Plan for Vietnam during the 1968 election. You asked at least two guests whether Nixon's (apparently false claim of a secret plan) affected the close election to beat Humphrey, trying to get them to say "another Nixon crime" and they gave equivocal answers instead of contradicting you.

* Nobody Killed, a UN investigation said (unlike our police raid ON A WACO, TEXAS, CULT THAT KILLED 70+.)

This is pernicious. Nixon has said repeatedly that he never had a secret plan and never had claimed one; it was a typical capsulized summation of his comments by a sloppy news media, product of a rewrite man or headline writer, repeated over and over until it became dogma.

I'm sure you will not look it up if I tell you Nixon said this in his Frost interviews and in his memoirs, to mention a couple of places. I have done your research for you and enclose one instance from a best-seller published 15 years ago.

I am afraid you are among those who hate Nixon because you know nothing about him, having swallowed the portrait created by Jack Germond, Bob Woodward, etc. etc..

Nixon did more to win the cold war than anyone, in practical terms probably even more than Alexander Solzhenitsyn or Pope John Paul II. In 1972 his bombing of Hanoi and mining of Haiphong harbor showed the Soviet Union was a pitiful helpless giant, too. Brezhnev's welcoming him in Moscow put the Soviets on a slippery slope from which they could not recover, even though the American anti-war mob got rid of Nixon to give the Soviets a respite. His opening to China is the reason that almost all Chinese love Americans (except for Bill Clinton).

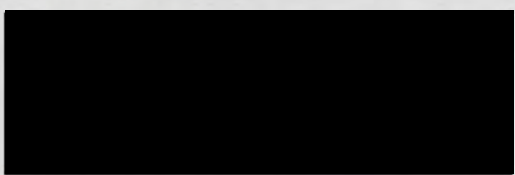
The Soviet collapse began in 1968, but your program on 1968 avoided the subject of Czechoslovakia entirely. I was in Czechoslovakia for the Warsaw Pact invasion, and was told by a devoted Communist, "It's an atom bomb in the socialist camp," which it was. The chance to get France or Italy into the camp was gone, and the East bloc became more moribund than ever.

I held a ringing phone to my ear for an hour and finally made connection to your program, to be asked what I wanted to say. I said, "I want to ask why the Prague Spring and invasion of Czechoslovakia is not mentioned on the program so far, while a lot of trivia is, such as the Soviets launched Cosmos 221 and a laundry list of people who died in that year?" A minute later someone told me, "We are doing foreign affairs next week, but thanks for calling," and dismissed me in favor of a caller who wanted to talk about the plight of the Native American, unrelated to 1968.

The 1968 program was dismaying to me. It seemed to promote the worst fringe elements in the country, who had been justly defeated in 1968 and 1980. It epitomized American withdrawal from the world, crybaby introspection, and a fear of the future also characteristic of the opponents of NAFTA.

It was a program that makes me worry about the country.

Sincerely,



ily careful of the image and tone my campaign projected. Third, there was the danger of allowing the primary campaign to split the Republican ranks so deeply that whoever won would inherit a dispirited and disunited party. Johnson's popularity ratings were low because of North Korea's seizure of the intelligence ship *Pueblo* in January, the Tet offensive in Vietnam in February, and the bitter disunity being stirred up among the Democrats by Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy's antiwar candidacy. Even considering these factors, it would still be very difficult for any Republican to challenge Lyndon Johnson, a resourceful politician armed with the powers of incumbency.

The Vietnam war was the dominant issue in New Hampshire, as it was throughout the campaign. I wanted the war to end, but in a manner that would save the South Vietnamese people from military defeat and subjection to the domination of the North Vietnamese Communist regime.

I felt that there were a number of unexplored avenues to probe in finding a way to end the war. I believed that we could use our armed strength more effectively to convince the North Vietnamese that a military victory was not possible. We also needed to step up our programs for training and equipping the South Vietnamese so that they could develop the capability of defending themselves. Most important, I believed that we were not making adequate use of our vast diplomatic resources and powers. The heart of the problem lay more in Peking and Moscow than in Hanoi.

As a candidate it would have been foolhardy, and as a prospective President, improper, for me to outline specific plans in detail. I did not have the full range of information or the intelligence resources available to Johnson. And even if I had been able to formulate specific "plans," it would have been absurd to make them public. In the field of diplomacy, premature disclosure can often doom even the best-laid plans.

To some extent, then, I was asking the voters to take on faith my ability to end the war. A regular part of my campaign speech was the pledge: "New leadership will end the war and win the peace in the Pacific."

I never said that I had a "plan," much less a "secret plan," to end the war; I was deliberately straightforward about the difficulty of finding a solution. As I told the AP on March 14, 1968, there was "no magic formula, no gimmick. If I had a gimmick I would tell Lyndon Johnson."

Although Romney campaigned vigorously and spent large sums of money—much of which was rumored to have come from Rockefeller—the polls continued to move against him.

I was in the middle of a campaign swing through a number of small towns when Pat Buchanan came up after a speech and said that he had

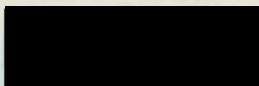
to talk to me alone. He guided me to a nearby men's room and said that he had just heard from a reporter that Romney was going to hold a press conference and pull out of the race. I was utterly astonished, and I asked my staff to watch Romney's press conference and fill me in. Their report was in the broad grins they wore when they walked into my room after the broadcast. Personally I was disappointed by Romney's withdrawal. Even though I had knocked him out of the ring, now I would win without having actually defeated an opponent in the election—and the test of the election was, after all, the reason I had decided to enter the primaries in the first place.

Despite Romney's withdrawal, we continued publicly to forecast my vote at only 45 percent to 50 percent of the total. While I hoped and expected to win more, I believed it was better to understate the prospects than to overstate them.

On the night of March 12, Pat and I went to a victory celebration at national Nixon headquarters in New York. I was pleasantly surprised when I polled 78 percent of the vote. Even without Romney in the race, my win was hailed as significant, and it dwarfed the handful of write-in votes that had been solicited by some of Rockefeller's unofficial supporters.

The New Hampshire results changed the political picture for both parties. On the Democratic side, Johnson won with 49.5 percent of the vote, but Senator Eugene McCarthy's unorthodox antiwar candidacy received a phenomenal 42.4 percent. The media attention and analysis concentrated so heavily on McCarthy that many people got the impression he had actually won—and, for all practical purposes, he had. Four days after McCarthy had shown that Johnson might be defeated, Senator Robert Kennedy of New York announced his candidacy for the nomination. Many of the conscientious antiwar liberals felt that Kennedy was cynically moving in to usurp the fruits of McCarthy's labors. Liberal New York *Post* columnist Murray Kempton charged that Kennedy had merely waited until Johnson was "bloodied in New Hampshire," and that Kennedy was a coward for coming "down the hills to shoot the wounded."

On the Republican side, Romney's withdrawal and my victory put pressure on Rockefeller, and on March 21 he called a press conference. I fully expected him to declare his candidacy. Instead he announced, "I have decided today to reiterate unequivocally that I am not a candidate campaigning directly or indirectly for the presidency of the United States." He said he would "do nothing in the future by word or deed to encourage" a presidential draft and that he had signed an affidavit taking his name out of the Oregon primary. For emphasis he added, "The terms of the affidavit are precise. They plainly declare that I am not, and will not be, a candidate for the presidency."



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