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June 10, 1993

Mr. Brian Lamb
c/o C-Span
400 North Capital Street, NW #650
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb:

re. Yet another criticism for the national press.

The national press ignores many public policy time bombs, apparently waiting for them to explode in our faces before it judges them "newsworthy". Two examples, out of many, follow:

1. The press asked no questions about the burgeoning S&L fiasco during 1988 Presidential debates, reflecting the lack of coverage during the whole campaign. The public had to wait until after the election — after the loss had grown to \$500 billion — before it became a news story, before it came into public view.

Why? Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans sought to raise the issue since leaders in both major parties had their snouts in the S&L trough. The press ignored the S&Ls throughout the campaign, giving scant consideration for the public interest.

(To date the national press has failed to explain its failure to report the S&L fiasco in a timely way. To date the national press has even failed to explain why the S&Ls failed, why the conditions that caused failure and will inevitably produce another failure remain.)

2. During the 1992 Presidential campaign the press failed to ask the major candidates: "Why has America's prison population tripled over the last fifteen years?" "Why is America's per capita prison population now the highest in the world — higher than police states, like China, North Korea and Albania?"

Why the press reticence? The Democrats and Republicans have nothing to say about the exploding prison population. Aware that they have nothing to say, the press doesn't even ask. Again, the press ignores an issue of genuine public interest, allowing the problem to grow. (See enclosure.)

More fundamentally, the press grants the monopoly for framing all political debate to the Democrats and Republicans. It still fails to see that the sterile Democrat-Republican debate provides no real answers, no real policy reform.

The press does some really heavy lifting for the Democrats and Republicans when it fails to adequately support democracy's chief instrument: elections. While every American voter saw the names of *four* presidential candidates on their 1992 ballots — Libertarian Andre Marrou achieved 50-state ballot access one week before Ross Perot! — very few could make an informed choice about Marrou's candidacy. Hardly democracy's finest hour!

(Media polls leading up to the election even failed to provide the people with the same choice they all had on their ballot. People polled were only given the Bush-Clinton-Perot alternative. The press is not a neutral player.)

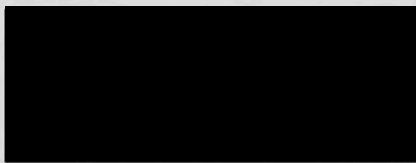
A necessary by-product of the press blackout of the LP is a blackout on credible methods for defusing these public policy time bombs and even a blackout of their existence. As each explodes, the public's disillusionment with the Democrat-Republican government and its toadies in the national press grows.

Any element of the press — including C-Span — can really write some history by revealing these time bombs *before* they explode; and by providing credible, comprehensible explanations and solutions. That is, they can provide a libertarian perspective.

re. C-Span. I love C-Span.

For its part, C-Span has written a more meritorious chapter in American history, circa 1990s. Personally, I appreciate the forum C-Span has provided the Libertarian Party over the last two years. More persuasive LP reps are coming forward.

Peace,



enclosure: "The 'War on Drugs': Building America's Criminal Infrastructure"

The "War on Drugs"

Building America's Criminal Infrastructure

The government's "War on Drugs" is a foolish replay of Prohibition. Like Prohibition, the "War on Drugs" is producing the same pathologies — including progressively more brutality, violence and crime; powerful, violent gangs — for the same reason — high illicit profits. (Also like Prohibition, the government has reacted to drug war-generated crime with a broad assault on the Bill of Rights.)

In the parlance of 1993, the government's "War on Drugs" is building America's colossal and growing criminal infrastructure. The case is compelling:

America's prison population has tripled in the last 15 years. America now has the world's highest per capita prison population — more than police states like China, Cuba, North Korea and Albania! (And they are overflowing; 75% of convicted felons do not even go to prison!)

Why? Mainly, the government's "War on Drugs".

How? The drug war is the perpetual convict-generating machine. Every imprisoned dope dealer is replaced before he enters prison. High illicit drug profits ensure uninterrupted service, especially in low-income neighborhoods.

But prisons aren't just "warehouses"; they are universities of crime. More cops, more prisons, etc., just mean expanded enrollment and increasing numbers of trained criminals injected back into society. It amounts to a strange government "investment" — building up America's colossal and growing "criminal infrastructure."

The drug war is public policy that cannot be sustained. There is simply not enough wealth on the planet to protect every bonehead (who wants to use illicit drugs) from himself.

America urgently needs a debate on intellectually bankrupt public policy, like the drug war. Given a critical debate, the public may finally see the government's "War on Drugs" for what it is: a foolish replay of Prohibition.