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Gentlemen:

Of the many, many things that are wrong in this country, the C-Spans (and CNN, FNN and others) are SO VERY RIGHT that I made myself sit down to write this letter of thanks before this year is history. I will be critical later in this letter, but before, I want to say that 98% of what you are doing is excellent, in my opinion.

The call-ins, think-tanks, coverage of Armed Services & Foreign Relations committees, Japan, Germany, British parliament, Russia, distinguished journalists and government figures, the fall of Communism in E. Europe, the Chinese revolution/abortion, the conventions in the USA, the Booknotes program, etc. are just tremendously educational. Through your efforts, one can become an informed citizen of this country and my interest in national affairs has increased dramatically since C-Span/cable came to me in Lexington, Ky. We are really becoming a global village and you are a vital part of that. I see tremendous potential for good in this over the long range.

Recently I just wrote both Senators, a Representative, the local paper, and the President about the Gulf crisis. There must have been others writing, because I noticed that Ford took a public position close to my letter a week afterwards. Not so with Bush, but someone there must be counting. Carter said politicians are influenced by their mail.

More than any other virtue is your OBJECTIVITY! I had a history professor in college who was truly objective: he presented both sides of every argument between Democrats and Republicans without bias in the pursuit of truth. After many courses with him, I had no idea who he had voted for in past elections or would vote for in future elections. I had despaired of ever finding anyone else like him in the 30 years since, but Brian Lamb comes close in his questioning, commentary, etc. None of the interviewers from the C-Spans have given me any twinges of bias, and who could not help but respond to the sweet, spiritual purity that flows out of those big baby blues of Susan Swain? Your people are as good as McNeil-Lehrer whether you are talking with the Iraqi ambassador or George Mitchell. Hooray for you all.

MAR 5 - ANS'D

Now to the criticism: there is one terrible thing and one only---your feeble attempts to inform us when good programs are coming. It is more an accident than anything

else when I happen to tune into a splendid program. I have NEVER NEVER known in advance! I wonder how many great things I have missed and I can't tell you how many good ones I have caught the last of without recourse, i.e. an opportunity at some future time to hear the full tape. No, I cannot wake up at 3 AM to hear _____, and even if I could set the recorder to tape it, I don't know when it will be repeated, if it will. Do you really think any number of people are going to call long distance (unless you supply an 800 number) to find out? Come on! You should have a scroll at the bottom every ten minutes of the day's entire schedule and let people know at the end of each program when that might be repeated at night or on the weekend.

Right now I'd love to see the full speech of Cuomo before the National Press Club, and also Ross Perot but I only heard the tail ends. You may think you do a good job because you have a few set times to present the day's events, but people have full lives of HUNDREDS of other events. As much as I try to see these schedules of what is coming, I RARELY am able to do so. It was pure chance that I happened to tune into the Kennedy School of Government's excellent debates between Democratic liberals and Republican conservatives, both of whom I found myself liking and agreeing with incidentally, Gilder's foray into the microcosm, and that brilliant lady from Stanford's Hoover Institute on the Coming Soviet Crash.

FNN gives a summary of the DJ every two minutes I believe and you should consider something like this at the bottom. Put question marks if you are doubtful, and retain flexibility, which is important but PLEASE do a better job of informing us!

Now you may think the C-Span Update is a great little informer, but the sad truth is that it is not a schedule of coming events and I found it practically useless. It told me little about the schedule I didn't already know. You must retain schedule flexibility, but you must do a better job of letting people know in advance, two or three days for many good programs. We get caught up in real life events ourselves and don't see C-Span for several days sometimes.

Two other minor things: you need more historians (you can't beat Arthur Schlesinger) and articulate university types for the call-ins and panels discussing important news articles from the press (such as Wash. Post and NY Times that I don't have time to note) and magazines.

I disagreed strongly when one of the newsmen on one of the roundtables tried to maintain that whether or not he was Jewish was not relevant to his discussion of Mid East politics. Really? Could a Catholic be "objective" if a dictator was threatening to incinerate the Vatican? Or a

Christian about Jesus? Hey folks, wake up! It IS RELEVANT when a newsman is Jewish; it IS relevant if he is an Arab. Our cultural identity does not exist independently to a discussion of the Mid East crisis and Israel. Would you think a discussion of politics or a congressional debate without knowing which is Republican and which is Democrat is not relevant? The heart rules the head I'm afraid, all too often, and that information is relevant when a newsman gives the appearance of trying to be objective.

There is no such thing in reality; there are only more or less mature attempts to be fair and truthful. Conflicts of interest DO EXIST and it is better to be open about these rather than try to hide them. You certainly let us know when we are hearing Arab opinions and that is certainly relevant to what is being said. The Senate ethics investigation should have made this clear long ago. I did not approve when the C-Span interviewer accepted this farce. It is high time we, as a nation, tried to look objectively at Israel and separate what is in our national interest from what is in Israel's national interest. It is our double standard in the Mid East that is partly responsible for the coming bloodbath of American blood there, I'm afraid. We could have been better served by sharper distinctions, just as we must have in Europe and Japan between American interests and those of other countries.

Sunshine is a good disinfectant; let it shine in and the American people will gradually sort it out. That is one of the things that really are great about the call-ins---sooner or later, all points are made. Which brings me to another question: how are the callers selected? I have heard you SAY you don't pre-screen them, but I can hardly believe this. So often we get pro and con following one another so perfectly that I can't believe this is purely chance. Please present information on this with advanced billing or repeat it enough that I will hear more about it.

The programming on Public Radio was very good.

Going to foreign nations and getting their leaders on joint programs seems extremely useful. The time is coming when there will be great pressure on the pockets of ignorance and abuse of human rights. Media like the C-Spans can shine great spot-lights on people and become a tremendous force for peaceful evolution and growth into world citizenship. I'm just tremendously encouraged and inspired by what you are doing and will no doubt do even better in the years to come.

It is great to hear people calling in from all over the world. It is hard to stop listening many times to get my own work done. I am just tremendously pleased and happy with your work and your efforts---makes paying taxes much less onerous. But my feelings about Congress are another story.

