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C-Span
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RE: CNN - TEN YEARS LATER - THE GROWTH OF CABLE TELEVISION
A GOOD OMEN FOR CONSERVATIVES - A VIEW FROM THE RIGHT
The Ocean View Times, week of May 24-30, 1990
Norfolk, Virginia

Gentlemen:

Enclosed please find a copy of an article published "Ocean View Times" for the week of May 24-30, 1990, entitled "CNN-Ten Years Later-The Growth of Cable Television-A Good Omen for Conservatives-A View from the Right". I thought this might be of interest to you.

"The Ocean View Times" is a weekly newspaper which covers the Ocean View section of the City of Norfolk.

As you can see I find your programing very interesting and obviously you provide sources of information that no one else seems to provide. As I observed when I called in on Sunday, June 4, 1990, at approximately 11:25 a.m., particularly it seems like the most important events have come after 6:00 and of course the three major networks don't think that news happens after six because they sort of walk away from it.

Very truly yours
[REDACTED]

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Norfolk, Virginia
[REDACTED]

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Enclosure

A View from the Right: CNN 10 years later — Cable TV growth a good omen for conservatives

Next week will mark the 10th anniversary of the birth of an unusual idea, considered somewhat odd at the time: the Cable News Network, the first 24-hour all-news channel. Owned and conceived by Ted Turner, who had created the first Superstation by bouncing the signal of WTBS, a local independent station seen in Atlanta on channel 17, off a communications satellite to cable systems throughout the country, CNN lost money the first few years, but somewhere along the way quietly started making money and became a force in network news.

It was CNN's Bernard Shaw, the only black anchorman at any of the four networks, who asked the devastating question of Michael Dukakis to open the second debate about whether he would support the death penalty for a rapist-murderer of Kitty Dukakis.

As CNN matured, so did the rest of cable television. If you were traveling and staying in a hotel 10 years ago, you could not find cable television channels even in first class hotels. Some hotels offered pay-per-view movies, but that was it. In 1990, CNN or CNN Headline News and such stations as WTBS and ESPN are standard fair in hotel rooms around the country and around the world.

In 1987, when Ronald Reagan wanted to meet with the network anchors, he said, "call the four networks (including CNN)."

CNN was novel when first introduced and consistent with what was thought to be Ted Turner's anti-establishment orientation. It offered a variety of viewpoints, providing forums for daily commentaries from Barry Goldwater and Phyllis Schlafly, as well as liberal voices. Turner was widely reported as concerned with the lack of family-oriented television programs and his entertainment stations (WTBS and TNT) filled the gap he perceived by providing family programming. In recent years, however, Turner's left wing, pro-Soviet liberal political orientation has become public.

It is CNN that airs "Crossfire," the program that provides conservative Pat Buchanan an opportunity to match

wits with liberal adversaries. While Buchanan was serving in the Reagan White House such luminaries as California Congressman Robert Dornan and syndicated columnist Bob Novak filled in for Buchanan. An even better forum for conservatives is the Saturday night program, "Capital Gang," which was recently given an award for being the best news show. "Capital Gang" was conceived by

Political Commentary

By [REDACTED]

Bob Novak and is hosted by Pat Buchanan and affords conservatives Novak and Buchanan an opportunity to match wits with liberal foils Mark Shields and Al Hunt. On May 12, Buchanan criticized the "boss" (Turner), naming as his "Outrage of the Week" Turner's statement in support of the Chinese government's repression in Tienamen Square last June. It was true free speech — the "marketplace of ideas theory" — in action. Would Dan Rather dare criticize the President of CBS on the evening news?

In the decade since CNN signed on and with the expansion of cable television, not only has cable become more popular but conservatism and the Republican Party are better off. More and more viewers are turning off the network news on the three major networks and turning to CNN and independent news sources. More and more Americans have access to the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network and are seeing Congress, Congressional hearings and leaders, from the President on down, in unedited formats, hearing everything they have to say, not just what the network editors choose as the "sound bite" of the day. Indeed, Virginia political analyst Larry Sabato has acknowledged that CNN and CSPAN viewers are high information viewers with a better understanding of the political process.

Those that do have access to cable are better informed, have a wider range of information to choose from and as a general rule, if they start off open minded at all, are winding up supporting Reagan, Bush, the conservatives and the Republicans.

Sometimes cable is the only source of a particular news item. For example, in last fall's gubernatorial election, the second debate was aired on a much smaller network of local stations and *not aired* in Washington, D.C., except through CSPAN. That means that only cable viewers in Northern Virginia had an opportunity to see the second debate, the debate that Marshall Coleman clearly won. Many people believe that if the second debate had been broadcast in commercial television in Northern Virginia, the election would have been a lot closer and had a different result. Notwithstanding that fact, the only vehicle for seeing the second debate was CSPAN.

When the cases were argued at the Supreme Court this week dealing with the new Federal Flag Burning Statute, Senator Joe Biden came out and spoke in support of the statute and committed himself to a constitutional amendment if the statute was struck down. Then the seven defendants, along with their lawyer, came out to speak to reporters. The seven defendants insisted on making their statements before allowing their lawyer, William Kunstler, to speak and despite the pleas from the press that they "wanted Kunstler," he waited and let his seven clients have their say first.

All of them — radical extremists — claimed to oppose fascism and forced patriotism. Only the CSPAN viewer got to see the kind of people who burn the American flag and if any American had any doubt that flag burners are not worthy of First Amendment protection, the seven defendants in the flag burning cases settled the question once and for all. However, while some would praise the network news for not putting on these lunatics, the conduct and attitude of these seven made a strong

argument that flag burning is not really free speech, but is just a vehicle to get attention.

Another contribution of cable has come in the entertainment industry. No longer are adults forced to crunch through popcorn on the floor to sit in crowded movie theatres with teeny boppers. Many others have done what this adult has chosen to do and that is to simply to wait a few months and see films via pay-per-view and pay movie services. In my experience, the proliferation of older movies via such superstations as WGN, WTBS and WWOR, are more worthy of my time than are the new releases coming out of Hollywood. When watching with my five-year-old daughter, I don't have to be as concerned in the middle of the day, watching a film on cable, as I would if we were going to the movie theaters watching the latest release from Hollywood, or even watching the network daytime or prime time soap operas.

Of course, cable gives an invaluable look into the democratic process with the gavel-to-gavel coverage of the House of Representatives, coverage of Congressional Committee Hearings and the speeches by opinion makers on CSPAN. Many viewers are given a true window on Washington. Many of the reports presented in this column of speeches by Senator Dole, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Derwinski and others, have come through the magic of the CSPAN viewing, without my ever having to leave my living room. A frustration in this area is that Cox Cable has not seen fit to add CSPAN II, the U.S. Senate channel.

While I am not a fan of bureaucracy and regulation, Congress is looking at the Cable Policy Act and is considering re-regulating cable to protect rates and provide minimum service. My suggestion is that, when Congress takes such action, it require two things. First, I think that every cable system should be required to carry CSPAN and CSPAN II, the channels carrying the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

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Additionally, some vehicle should be developed to assure that the largest service cable channels, particularly news and public affairs channels and the top entertainment channel superstations be carried by all cable systems. It is disturbing to hear that in some localities monopolistic cable owners are resistant to carrying stations that they disagree with, especially the station presenting the U.S. Congress.

While there are many opportunities in the cable television field for increased diversity, especially in the area of programing and information, I find that in Norfolk there is a tremendous waste of channel space by the city of Norfolk having two public access channels. Many times the same program is shown on one of the channels exactly as it was shown on the other channel just a few hours before. I would urge Cox Cable to free up either channel 28 or 29 to bring CSPAN II, the U.S. Senate or other worthwhile programming.

It is amazing that the city of Norfolk needs two channels, especially when Norfolk is the only city in the area that does not consent to the broadcast of City Council meetings via cable television. In all other Hampton Roads cities, as well as the city of Richmond, city council meetings are broadcast on local cable ac-

cess channels. It also seems to me that the General Assembly should be broadcast gavel-to-gavel on the local access channels when it is in session.

Certainly the degree of heightened involvement and interest and information by the public that has come in the 13 years of the House of Representative being covered gavel-to-gavel and the four years of the U.S. Senate being covered gavel-to-gavel should be extended to city councils, boards of supervisors, and the Virginia General Assembly.

In conclusion, we congratulate CNN for their 10 years of service and their role in expanding the access of the cable television industry. There is no question that the more information and the more choices out there and the better and broader look that people have at government and the wider range of opinions, particularly conservative opinions that are offered via the magic of cable television, will bode well with conservative political success and Republican party success in the 1990s.

and a lawyer who practices law in Norfolk. The foregoing represents his views as an individual, and is not meant to express the official view of the Republican Party of Norfolk, nor is it meant to express the official views of the Publisher or any candidate for public office.