

美伊之戰引發家人間的辯論 文席謀 4/18/2003 於洛杉磯

3/20/2003 美國發動對伊拉克的戰爭, 在四月中不到一個月, 便因美軍進佔巴格達, 而取得全勝. 世人對美軍的勝利不感意外, 意外的是薩達姆海珊戰前和作戰初期如此強悍有信心, 而竟敗得如此之速, 如此之慘. 這場戰爭是本世紀美國發動的第二次戰爭(第一次是2002年在阿富汗境內的戰爭), 戰前, 戰時, 戰後, 在美國國內 和 世界多地 充滿 爭議. 論點在時,地,立場,等方面有所不同. 現在 事件並未完全結束. 將來在歷史上定必是一件大事. 這戰爭進行近十天時, 這事在我部份家人間 竟有一場 辯論. 現事過境遷, 將經過記錄下來作為紀念.

辯論經過 :

一。3/28 孫女 (JENN) 將她在網上輾轉收到的一篇文章、以‘伊媚兒’傳給家人觀看。文章的作者為 CINDDY OSBORNE。(以下簡稱‘原文作者’), 有感於不久前有大批‘好來塢名流’在320戰爭爆發後群起反戰遊行。用了‘笨蛋’(STUPID)、『蠢材’(MORONS)、『白痴’(IDIOTS) 一類辱罵惡毒字句、攻擊布希政府團隊。其中某一女明星揚言最近在西班牙作秀時以身為美國人為羞。‘原文作者’認為此時反戰和詆譏政府行為不當, 寫了一篇約五千字的文章。首先將‘布希政府’中重要的五人, 和‘好來塢名流’十五人的學歷列出相比較。(前者全是名校出身的高學歷、後者多有留級或低學歷記錄)。再說明前者掌握國家大事資訊, 而後者對國事見識遠較淺薄。所以用『‘布希團隊’和‘好來塢名流群’誰較聰明?』(THE BUSH TEAM VS THE HOLLY WOOD CROWD WHO IS SMARTER?) 為題、寫出這洋洋大文。文中也闡述一些‘主戰’的理由, 和多年來‘好來塢名流’反戰的經過, 凸顯其無知和幼稚。這文章在網際流傳。JENN 收到該文後、未置可否。全文‘FORWARD’到我家人二十幾具電腦中。

二。3/28 次子 (JOHN) 當即針對 JENN 網上‘WHO IS SMARTER’文, 認為布希政府這次是否做得聰明、應該‘就事論事’。不應僅以當事人‘學歷’和‘資訊’為憑來論定。以往美國所犯錯誤如: ‘麥加錫’‘越戰’‘水門’等事件, 都不是能用‘學歷’和‘資訊的掌握’來決定其‘是非’的。認為在美國的民主精神之下, 好來塢名流群有表示他們意見的自由。認為‘原文作者’似乎患有‘瘋狗症’。

三。3/29 長子 (DOUG) 看過 JOHN 的發言、隨即寫上一則意見: 認為‘好來塢名流群’對政治的‘專業性’不夠。顯然基於‘作秀’心態而‘反戰’。對國家、社會、和年輕人造成不良影響。

四。3/29 JOHN 提出反擊。認為他僅是認為‘原文作者’憑‘學歷’和‘資訊的有無’來比較, 而不‘就事論事’, 是不對的。

伍。JENN 的母親 SOPHIA 基於愛國心而響應 DOUG 的觀點。對 JOHN 所提意見有所批評。

六。DOUG 認為‘好來塢名流’的言行過份, 涉及對政府官員的人身攻擊。不應以民主精神來為他們辯護。

七。JOHN 強調僅是就事論事。。。。。

八。JENN 開始說出自己的觀點。說明她原也不贊成布希政府對伊戰爭。認為布希動機和決策是有問題。但是戰爭既已展開、已不能半途而廢。此時美國的勇士們正在浴血作戰, 希望快速取得勝利。國內不應以‘反戰’來製造問題。對國家沒有好處, 祇有壞處。

同意 JOHN 的兩項觀點。同時認為‘好來塢名流群’的叫囂反戰, 全然不是‘就事論事’。

九。大女兒 ALICE 肯定大家在網絡上的討論是好通事。

十。ALICE 隨後顯示個人意見。她認為‘原文作者’如認為‘好萊塢名流群’不好，應該用其他其他方法，而不應以‘教育背景’來衡量。她指出事實上布希 在校成績僅是 ‘C’等。

十一。SOPHIA 向 JENN 指出 現在民意調查有70%的人贊成美伊戰爭。只27%的人民反對。

關於布希主戰的正確性、容有進一步辯論的必要。

十二。3/30 JOHN 提出他3/31 將去舊金山開會。4/4 才能回家。暫不能參加討論。

十三。3/30 JENN 表示 所謂 70% 的民意贊成布希對伊作戰的動機容有研究和解釋的。部份人是始終支持這場戰爭的。另一部份是認為戰爭既已開打，便須快速求勝而予以支持。

以下是有關這場辯論EMAIL 全文。

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[13] 3/30/03 JENN TO SOPHIA/ALL

Mom,

No, I did not realize that a poll indicates that 70% of Americans are for the war. To be honest, I was basing my statement on my own personal poll which indicates the opposite. However, all information must be taken with a grain of salt. Does that poll really indicate how Americans feel? We don't know who responded to that poll. It's just another piece of information that can be left for interpretation.

Along the same note, I mentioned "Bush's motivations for war" because we really don't know Bush's motivations for war. There are many people who believe that Bush is just interested in the oil in the Middle East. Does that mean it's true? Who knows? Only Bush and those close to him do. We do not know if what he says is really what he means or just something he wants us to hear. Of course we always hope that politicians are honest with us but history has shown that that is not always the case. The things we hear from the politicians as well as the media cannot always be taken for face value. (And you should know from watching "West Wing" that the government can't be honest all the time and divulge everything.)

As with most of the decisions we make in life, we must take in all the information we get, interpret it and form our own opinions about it. As we can see from this string of messages, people interpret things differently and have varying opinions on many matters. For example, I can believe that the poll you quote truly represents all of America; I can also believe that it may represent a certain population of America; or I can believe that it was totally made up and no one really supports the war. My feelings about your poll is that it may represent a certain population of America. Does this mean I am disregarding the poll entirely? No. Does it change my views? Yes. This new piece of information would cause me to take back my statement that "much of America is opposed to the war." But at the same time, I would not necessarily say that most of America is for the war.

Back to Bush's motivations, I really do not have an opinion on that. I would like to believe that Bush is doing it to get rid of Saddam because he is evil (that is the opinion that I have formed about Saddam based on what I know). But because I know that politicians often have ulterior motives, part of me thinks that that may not be the case. At the same time I do believe that the government knows more than it is telling us and that may also be part of Bush's motivations for war.

Point to take home: this is only the way I see things. Interpret it the way you want. You can call me stupid and ignorant or brilliant and thoughtful (the latter is however preferred). Unfortunately I do not know that much about the war because I have not been able to keep up with it. (It's hard without a TV and with all the medicine I'm trying to learn.) I do agree that our country should try to remain united and support our troops since they are out there and risking their lives.

Though I did not think the initial email would send our family racing to their pens (or keyboards for that matter), I am glad it did because I think it has opened our eyes (well, at least mine) to the many different views on the issues going on in our country. If you feel that you would like to continue debating on some of these issues, I would suggest going to the Wen-X forum and starting a discussion there (then email everyone so they can participate). By the way, has everyone checked out the site? () Bookmark it! The purpose of it is so that our family can have some kind of medium to communicate through. I have a web page on it and try to put things on it that I would want to share with family and friends. For example, a distant cousin of ours in Hunan found my site and left a message in my guestbook. If you guys want to be more connected with each other I would highly take advantage of what the site has to offer. You can put your own web page on it, get your own e-mail or just put some kind of link to yourself there. Contact Jeff for more info. (Do I sound like a commercial?) Let's keep that family pride going! Okay, enough of my chitter chatter.

Jenn

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[12] 3/30/03 JOHN TO ALL

I'll be in San Francisco for a conference from Monday (tomorrow) to Friday.

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[11] Jen, 3/30/03 SOPHIA TO JENN/ALL

In response to your quote " I am sure that Bush realizes that much of the country is opposed to what he is doing (how could he not?)." I have to ask: Did you follow the poll on war issue? Today's poll indicates 70% of the American is for the war and 27% is opposed to the war. Most of the people are supporting the effort that we are doing and the manner of we are conducting. I am sure there were much less people for war before. However, it is beyond debate now. The Senate Minority Leader felt the same way. People have to be rational. We don't want another Jane Fonda at this moment. Before anyone blindly protests what I just said, follow the facts what she did then protesting Vietnam war. That was one level lower than treason. Most of people on this e-mail list were either too young or were not born when that happened. I am also puzzled that your words on "Bush's motivation for war". I can start another debate. But let's put out the difference and support our country's unity.

Sophia

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[10] 3/30/03 ALICE TO ALL

It is a great opportunity for us to communicate. I do enjoy your point of view.

Alice

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[9] 3/30/03 ALICE TO DOUG/ALL

Wen Jien:

Your last letter to express your point of view about celebrities is correct. However I see nothing wrong with John's point of view either. He expressed his opinions directly toward the article. It make no sense to object John's view. If the author wanted to prove the celebrities are wrong they should use other methods rather than the education titles. Bush actually is a "C" student at Yale. This will give our next generation a chance to view the information we received from outside, with a more open mind to all aspects. Don't believe everything we read.

Your big sister Wen Ling

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[8] 3/30/03 JENN TO ALL

Um...I just thought it was funny how little education these celebrities have and yet they make so much more money than any of us ever will. But since I am the one who circulated this article, I'll put in my own two cents. I think everyone makes valid points. John is right in that everyone is entitled to an opinion regardless of what their educational background is. However, I think the author's motivation for writing this article was in response to the flaunting manner in which the celebrities choose to express their opinions. And yes, these people do influence others in our society.

These celebrities are openly voicing their shame in our country (which I think is terrible because I have so much pride in this country and love being American). They set an example for others (i.e. protestors) and fuel their emotions. Uncontrolled emotions lead to trouble. Though I may not agree with the war, I am not lying down in streets disrupting traffic. Unfortunately all of this "voicing" of opinions has not helped our country in any way. It disrupts our daily activities, causes people to get injured (in protests) and hurts the morale of our troops. We ARE at war and I don't think there is much we can do to stop it at this point. Instead we should focus on maintaining the peace within our own country. I am sure that Bush realizes that much of the country is opposed to what he is doing (how could he not?). It is difficult to understand his motivation for war. No, we should not blindly follow his lead just because he has access to better information. But might we change our opinions if we know what he may know? Who knows? This is just my input. I don't disagree with the 2 points that John makes and I don't necessarily agree with what the author of the article says. However, I do share the feelings of the author in regard to how some celebrities choose to express their opinions of the war, only the author chose to respond by making personal attacks on their lack of education. Though it may not be right, I was quite amused as I am sure others were too. I think everyone should just calm down and chill. Laugh a little. Let's not get all stirred up and have the emotions get out of control. That is what really causes problems.

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[7] 3/30/03 JOHN TO ALL

Please help me to understand which part of my view you are objecting to. Do you think more education mean validity of opinion? Do you think we should trust our leaders just because we assume they have better access to information? I think we are talking past each other arguing different thing.

John

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[6] 3/29/03 DOUG TO JOHN/ALL

I was only voicing my objection to your view. You feel that the author belittles the celebrities' opinion by pointing out their lack of education, but I feel that the celebrities deserve the criticism because they make personal attack on others while unable to present a credible argument. This shows the shallowness of their characters. You see, we read the same article but come away with totally different views. There is no reason to raise objections to any of the points in the article. After all, the author has the right to express his opinion, just like you and I. So, we should just understand the author's view and form our own opinions. Your Elder Brother (I got to pull seniority on you to stop further debate).

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[5] 3/30/03 SOPHIA TO JOHN/ALL

Personal attacks"? These so-called "Celebrity" launched personal attack on our leaders. Go to web site to see Michael Moore's personal attacks on President Bush. Was he on "issues"? They are self-absorbed people. If they think they know so much and calling others "morons" or "idiots", they must possess great deal of knowledge. Does knowledge come from "education" and "information"? Therefore, I see no reason to be sensitive about comparing education background. There were strong debates about the war in Senate. It was civilized and none of the name-calling. Does that count for some difference in background? The danger is those don't know what they don't know. Too much of Liberalism is like a run away train. It doesn't know when to stop. I agree with you on "The cornerstone of democracy is vigorous debates of all points view." However, people not only use democracy as a platform to launch personal political view, even go as far as trashing others and the country. This is not about "Democrats" or "Republicans" any more. It is about "America". People should show some restrain and in touch with the reality. The reality is we are in different situation now after Sep. 11, 2001. I still recall the anxiety of walking through all the stairs when the elevators were not operating in World Trade Center at a normal day (the days that I worked there). We can't wait until other terrors strike us again. John, this is my view. I hope you don't take it as personal and I agree with Douglas on his view.

Sophia

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[4] 3/29/03 JOHN TO DOUG/ALL

My objection to that article is 1. equating education to validity of opinion, and 2. trusting our leaders blindly just because of the assumption that they have better access to information (by the way, access to information does not ensure correct analysis of information nor the subsequent decisions). Expressing one's opinion publicly is everyone's right in a democracy. Just because someone is a celebrity does not deprive her/him of that right. Indeed, these days, with the Internet (like blogging on Dongdong's site), we can all participate in such a public forum if we so choose. If you're angry about the influence of celebrity, that's another issue, which is well worth exploring, but has nothing to do with democracy nor my objections to the article.

John

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[3] 3/29/03 DOUG TO JOHN /ALL

Just like the saying: There are two sides to a coin. While John sees the author attacking the character of the celebrities, I see a totally different message in the article. Today in our society, there are too many so-called celebrities (movie stars, singers, sportsman, etc.) who think they have a special status. For instance, when Mark McGuire hit a record number of homeruns in 2000, he talked on TV that he was so proud of his contribution to the society. Or Magic Johnson, after contracted HIV, which resulted from his own wild sex parties, suddenly becomes the evangelist and spokesman for AIDS prevention. In my view, Magic Johnson

should be ashamed of himself, stay home and live a quiet life. The celebrities are good at what they do just like I am a good engineer and John is a good professor. There is nothing special about them. They just take the opportunity to create publicity. True, they are entitled to their opinions, but they certainly are not qualified to call others stupid especially when themselves have little or no credentials to show. I am not for the war, nor am I a fan of the current leaders of our country. But, I certainly am turned off by the celebrities and their influence on our children.

-----Original Message-----

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[2] 3/28/03 JOHN TO ALL

The author of the article is clearly a rabid conservative (reminds me of Rush Limbaugh or many of the AM talk show hosts), but there are some troubling messages that must be rebuked: * Denigrating someone's view because of their lack of formal education is wrong. There are many Nobel prize winners against the war on Iraq also, does that make their arguments automatically correct? The debate should be on issues, not personal attacks. * Blind deference to our leaders because they have "more information" is dangerous and a threat to democracy, as we have seen in the past, from McCarthy, to Vietnam, to Watergate. The cornerstone of democracy is vigorous debates of all points view.

John

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[1] 3/28/03 JENN FORWARDED TO ALL

----- Forwarded message from Natalie Shum < -----

Date: Thu, 27 Mar 2003 13:25:35 -0800

From: Natalie Shum Reply-To: Natalie Shum

Subject: Fwd: Who is smarter

To: , , , -x.com, , , Interesting...

From: Martin Shum "The Bush Team vs The Hollywood Crowd Who's Smarter?"

by Cindy Osborne

The Hollywood group is at it again. Holding anti-war rallies, screaming about the Bush Administration, running ads in major newspapers, defaming the President and his Cabinet every chance they get, to anyone and everyone who will listen. They publicly defile them and call them names like "stupid", "morons", and "idiots". Jessica Lange went so far as to tell a crowd in Spain that she hates President Bush and is embarrassed to be an American. So, just how ignorant are these people who are running the country? Let's look at the biographies of these "stupid", "ignorant", "moronic" leaders, and then at the celebrities who are castigating them:

President George W. Bush: Received a Bachelors Degree from Yale University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He served as an F-102 pilot for the Texas Air National Guard. He began his career in the oil and gas business in Midland in 1975 and worked in the energy industry until 1986. He was elected Governor on November 8, 1994, with 53.5 percent of the vote. In a historic re-election victory, he became the first Texas Governor to be elected to consecutive four-year terms on November 3, 1998 winning 68.6 percent of the vote. In 1998 Governor Bush won 49 percent of the Hispanic vote, 27 percent of the African-American

vote, 27 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of women. He won more Texas counties, 240 of 254, than any modern Republican other than Richard Nixon in 1972 and is the first Republican gubernatorial candidate to win the heavily Hispanic and Democratic border counties of El Paso, Cameron and Hidalgo. (Someone began circulating a false story about his I.Q. being lower than any other President. If you believed it, you might want to go to URBANLEGENDS.COM and see the truth.

Vice President Dick Cheney: Earned a B.A. in 1965 and a M.A. in 1966, both in political science. Two years later, he won an American Political Science Association congressional fellowship. One of Vice President Cheney's primary duties is to share with individuals, members of Congress and foreign leaders, President Bush's vision to strengthen our economy, secure our homeland and win the War on Terrorism. In his official role as President of the Senate, Vice President Cheney regularly goes to Capital Hill to meet with Senators and members of the House of Representatives to work on the Administration's legislative goals. In his travels as Vice President, he has seen first hand the great demands the war on terrorism is placing on the men and women of our military, and he is proud of the tremendous job they are doing for the United States of America.

Secretary of State Colin Powell: Educated in the New York City public schools, graduating from the City College of New York (CCNY), where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in geology. He also participated in ROTC at CCNY and received a commission as an Army second lieutenant upon graduation in June 1958. His further academic achievements include a Master of Business Administration Degree from George Washington University. Secretary Powell is the recipient of numerous U.S. and foreign military awards and decorations. Secretary Powell's civilian awards include two Presidential Medals of Freedom, the President's Citizens Medal, the Congressional Gold Medal, the Secretary of State Distinguished Service Medal, and the Secretary of Energy Distinguished Service Medal. Several schools and other institutions have been named in his honor and he holds honorary degrees from universities and colleges across the country. (Note: He retired as Four Star General in the United States Army) Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld: Attended Princeton University on Scholarship (AB, 1954) and served in the U.S. Navy (1954-57) as a Naval aviator; Congressional Assistant to Rep. Robert Griffin (R-MI), 1957-59; U.S. Representative, Illinois, 1962-69; Assistant to the President, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Director of the Cost of Living Council, 1969-74; U.S. Ambassador to NATO, 1973-74; head of Presidential Transition Team, 1974; Assistant to the President, Director of White House Office of Operations, White House Chief of Staff, 1974-77; Secretary of Defense, 1975-77. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge: Raised in a working class family in veterans' public housing in Erie. He earned a scholarship to Harvard, graduating with honors in 1967. After his first year at The Dickinson School of Law, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served as an infantry staff sergeant in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star for Valor. After returning to Pennsylvania, he earned his Law Degree and was in private practice before becoming Assistant District Attorney in Erie County. He was elected to Congress in 1982. He was the first enlisted Vietnam combat veteran elected to the U.S. House, and was overwhelmingly re-elected six times. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice: Earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, from the University of Denver in 1974; her Master's from the University of Notre Dame in 1975; and her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of International Studies at the University of Denver in 1981. (Note: Rice enrolled at the University of Denver at the age of 15, graduating at 19 with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science (Cum Laude). She earned a Master's Degree at the University of Notre Dame and a Doctorate from the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies. Both of her advanced degrees are also in Political Science.) She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from Morehouse College in 1991, the University of Alabama in 1994, and the University of Notre Dame in 1995. At Stanford, she has been a member of the Center for International Security and Arms Control, a Senior Fellow of the Institute for International Studies, and a Fellow (by courtesy) of the Hoover Institution. Her books include

Germany Unified and Europe Transformed (1995) with Philip Zelikow, The Gorbachev Era (1986) with Alexander Dallin, and Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army (1984). She also has written numerous articles on Soviet and East European foreign and defense policy, and has addressed

audiences in settings ranging from the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Moscow to the Commonwealth Club to the 1992 and 2000 Republican National Conventions. From 1989 through March 1991, the period of German reunification and the final days of the Soviet Union, she served in the Bush Administration as Director, and then Senior Director, of Soviet and East European Affairs in the National Security Council, and a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. In 1986, while an international affairs fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations, she served as Special Assistant to the Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 1997, she served on the Federal Advisory Committee on Gender--Integrated Training in the Military. She was a member of the boards of directors for the Chevron Corporation, the Charles Schwab Corporation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the University of Notre Dame, the International Advisory Council of J.P. Morgan and the San Francisco Symphony Board of Governors. She was a Founding Board member of the Center for a New Generation, an educational support fund for schools in East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park, California and was Vice President of the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula. In addition, her past board service has encompassed such organizations as Transamerica Corporation, Hewlett Packard, the Carnegie Corporation, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Rand Corporation, the National Council for Soviet and East European Studies, the Mid-Peninsula Urban Coalition and KQED, public broadcasting for San Francisco. Born November 14, 1954 in Birmingham, Alabama, she resides in Washington, D.C. So who are these celebrities? What is their education? What is their experience in affairs of State or in National Security? While I will defend to the death their right to express their opinions, I think that if they are going to call into question the intelligence of our leaders, we should also have all the facts on their educations and background:

Barbra Streisand : Completed high school Career: Singing and acting Cher: Dropped out of school in 9th grade. Career: Singing and acting pleted high school. Career: Acting

Sean Penn: Completed High school. Career: Acting

Susan Sarandon: Degree in Drama from CatholicUniversity of America in Washington, D.C. Career: Acting

Ed Asner; CompletedHigh school. Career: Acting

George Clooney: Dropped out of University of Kentucky. Career: Acting

Michael Moore: Dropped out first year University of Michigan. Career:Movie Director

Sarah Jessica Parker: Completed High School. Career: Acting

Jennifer Anniston: Completed High School. Career: Acting

Mike Farrell: Completed High school. Career: Acting

Janeane Garofelo: Dropped out of College. Career: Stand up comedienne

Larry Hagman: Attended BardCollege for one year. Career: Acting

While comparing the education and experience of these two groups, we should also remember that President Bush and his cabinet are briefed daily, even hourly, on the War on Terror and threats to our security. They are privy to information gathered around the world concerning the Middle East, the threats to America, the intentions of terrorists and terrorist-supporting governments. They are in constant communication with the CIA, the FBI, Interpol, NATO, The United Nations, our own military, and that of our allies around the world. We cannot simply believe that we have full knowledge of the threats because we watch CNN!! We cannot believe that we are in any way as informed as our leaders. These celebrities have no intelligence-gathering agents, no fact-finding groups, no insight into the minds of those who would destroy our country. They only have a deep seated hatred for all things Republican. By nature, and no one knows quite why, the Hollywood elitists detest Conservative views and anything that supports or uplifts the United States of America. The

silence was deafening from the Left when Bill Clinton bombed a pharmaceutical factory outside of Khartoum, or when he attacked the Bosnian Serbs in 1995 and 1999. He bombed Serbia itself to get Slobodan Milosevic out of Kosovo, and not a single peace rally was held.

When our Rangers were ambushed in Somalia and 18 young American lives were lost, not a peep was heard from Hollywood. Yet now, after our nation has been attacked on its own soil, after 3,000 Americans were killed, by freedom-hating terrorists, while going about their routine lives, they want to hold rallies against the war. Why the change? Because an honest, God-fearing Republican sits in the White House.

Another irony is that in 1987, when Ronald Reagan was in office, the Hollywood group aligned themselves with disarmament groups like SANE, FREEZE and PEACE ACTION, urging our own government to disarm and freeze the manufacturing of any further nuclear weapons, in order to promote world peace. It is curious that now, even after we have heard all the evidence that Saddam Hussein has chemical, biological and is very close to obtaining nuclear weapons, there is no cry from this group for HIM to disarm. They believe we should leave him alone in his quest for these weapons of mass destruction, even though it is certain that these deadly weapons will eventually be used against us in our own cities. So why the hype out of Hollywood? Could these celebrities believe that since they draw such astronomical salaries, they are entitled to also determine the course of our Nation? That they can make viable decisions concerning war and peace? Did Michael Moore have the backing of the Nation when he recently thanked France, on our behalf, for being a "good enough friend to tell us we were wrong"? I know for certain he was not speaking for me. Does Sean Penn fancy himself a Diplomat, in going to Iraq when we are just weeks away from war? Does he believe that his High School Diploma gives him the knowledge (and the right) to go to a country that is controlled by a maniacal dictator, and speak on behalf of the American people? Or is it the fact that he pulls in more money per year than the average American worker will see in a lifetime? Does his bank account give him clout? The ultimate irony is that many of these celebrities have made a shambles of their own lives, with drug abuse, alcoholism, numerous marriages and divorces, scrapes with the law, publicized temper tantrums, etc. How dare they pretend to know what is best for an entire nation! What is even more bizarre is how many people in this country will listen and accept their views, simply because they liked them in a certain movie, or have fond memories of an old television sitcom!

It is time for us, as citizens of the United States, to educate ourselves about the world around us. If future generations are going to enjoy the freedoms that our forefathers bequeathed us, if they are ever to know peace in their own country and their world, to live without fear of terrorism striking in their own cities, we must assure that this nation remains strong. We must make certain that those who would destroy us are made aware of the severe consequences that will befall them.

Yes, it is a wonderful dream to sit down with dictators and terrorists and join hands, singing Cumbaya and talking of world peace. But it is not real. We did not stop Adolf Hitler from taking over the entire continent of Europe by simply talking to him. We sent our best and brightest, with the strength and determination that this Country is known for, and defeated the Nazi regime. President John F. Kennedy did not stop the Soviet ships from unloading their nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 with mere words. He stopped them with action, and threat of immediate war if the ships did not turn around. We did not end the Cold War with conferences. It ended with the strong belief of President Ronald Reagan... PEACE through STRENGTH.

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