

"My view is that, after Watergate, the American press became tamed. It stopped going after the government," Ms. Dergham said

Protecting national interests became the de facto priority of the media. The issue of national interests graduated into the issue of national security during the Gulf crisis, and let's note that Congress was much braver than the media. Congressmen went on record, debating the choice between war or embargo or sanctions to reverse Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait, while the media refrained from doing its homework. Instead, the media was falling victim to the brilliant packaging of the war.

As examples of Madison Avenue packaging, she pointed to the portrayal of Saddam as another Hitler, the effort to disguise the nature of the Kuwaiti leadership, the description of Kuwait as a democracy, which it has never been. "The media marched in lock-step with the government towards war," Ms. Dergham said.

To kick the Vietnam syndrome, the government decided there would be no pictures of pain or blood, or dead children. I think the media became the mouthpiece for the government, it gave up its privilege of free criticism, reinforced the us-versus-them syndrome. "We" were the strong US; "they" were either the enemy or the irrelevant weak. When patriotism becomes ethnocentric, it's dangerous.

Explaining how the American media stifled dissent, Ms. Dergham said that her own appearances on PBS were suspended without explanation, and that the prominent Democrat, Ramsey Clark, who attempted a personal peace mission, was given slight coverage. A regular on the PBS programme MacNeil-Lehrer Report for more than ten years, she was dropped for about three months shortly after the Iraq-Kuwait crisis began, although the Middle East is her area of expertise. The CBC consistently used her on both radio and TV public affairs programmes. After PBS had taken heavy criticism for its one-note commentary on the war, she was "rediscovered" and put on the show three times running. "This is a difference between American media and Canadian media, and there is a big difference," she said.

On the same panel, Ann Nelson an American who has worked for CBC's *The Journal* and *Maclean's*, as well as PBS, charged the US media with extensive self-censorship, not for reasons of security, but to mislead the American public on the nature