

should. What about the oil slick? I'd like to know about that myself." Ms. Dergham said the question of casualties was not just a follow-up story, but a major tragedy.

Ms. Rossier said that the military briefings she attended in Saudi Arabia were not false, but perhaps half true, and did contain what turned out to be outright falsehoods. As examples, she cited the statement early in the war that Iraq's nuclear capability had been destroyed; and another statement that twenty-seven Americans had been killed by an Iraqi Scud missile even before the war began. As this is written in October, Iraq's nuclear development is still a cause of international anxiety.

A reporter who pursued his own quest for truth before, during and after the war, was Milton Viorst, Middle East correspondent of the *New Yorker*. His major concern, as he outlined in a luncheon speech, was whether the US government had genuinely sought to avoid a war with Iraq, or whether its apparent peace efforts were camouflage for a determination to teach Saddam Hussein a lesson and establish the United States as the unchallengeable major power in the Gulf. His presentation suggested the latter, but some other seminar participants expressed the opposite view.

Mr. Viorst said that he had spent a full year covering the crisis area. "Did the media coverage of the war make a difference?" he asked rhetorically. "My answer is that you bet it did." His research had only recently led to the information that General Schwarzkopf, as a member of the US Army's Central Command, had been to Kuwait several times in the months leading up to the war. He had been influential, in the aftermath of the Cold War's end, in redirecting US concern about danger in the area from the Soviet Union and Iran to the threat from Iraq.

This is the principal issue as I saw it, that it was one more item of evidence that the United States had a great deal of influence on the attitude of Kuwait in the months prior to the invasion. And perhaps this was a very unhealthy attitude in terms of a tense set of negotiations with Iraq.... The president in his role as chief propagandist for the United States told us what he wanted us to know, but the problem was that the press did not challenge what he was saying. I read *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* every day, and see something of television. In the American press, I saw no evidence of anything very different from President Bush's agenda.... Congress didn't obtain, and the American people didn't obtain the information needed