

APPENDICES

A PRE-WAR COVERAGE -- DID IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE? -- Milton Viorst

Did the media coverage of the war make a difference? My answer is that you bet it did. I'm proud to be a journalist. I think on the whole we conduct ourselves with professionalism and integrity and I'm glad to be a member of this craft. But I'm not one of those people who think we set the international agenda. I think the international agenda is set by governments and people. In the interaction between governments and people I think that we have an extremely essential job, particularly in a democratic society such as ours. If we don't do our job, the role of the people on governments is nullified I think that's what happened in this last Gulf crisis, we didn't do our job and I think that we came up with the wrong answer.

I was in Kuwait last month and I learned a story there that I'm ashamed I missed because I spent a whole year covering this. I was told by a Kuwaiti dissident in London, where I stopped on the way to Kuwait, that General Schwarzkopf had been to Kuwait several times in the months before the war for discussions with the Kuwaiti government. My source was a dissident and I treated this information with some scepticism. I had never heard it before -- perhaps there are some of you here who do know this.

But I got to Kuwait and I asked an American diplomat about it and he said sure, sure, he was here quite often before the war. It was part of his responsibility as a member of the Central Command; his job was to give confidence to the Kuwaitis that if they got into any trouble with Iraq, we were standing behind them. Then I got around to looking up the most recent biography of General Schwarzkopf by two competent journalists, and they didn't quite confirm that information but they did say, that when General Schwarzkopf took over the Central Command shortly after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, its orientation was the traditional orientation of the American policy-makers in the region, based upon the Carter doctrine, and that is that the danger was coming from the Soviet Union and from Iran. It was General Schwarzkopf's contribution to the Central Command that he totally transformed it into directing its attention towards the threat that he saw from Iraq.