

Some of you may recall that CNN drew some criticism early on for our showing of Saddam and the British hostages -- given that it was our first look at the man since the invasion and a look at the British prisoners, and given the global audience -- the decision to play that material in full from Iraq TV was not a difficult one. It took about fifteen seconds of discussion. Until Iraq TV was turned into rubble at the outset of the air war in mid-January, we received almost daily phone calls and dozens of cables from them making offerings, some of which were used, much of which we didn't use. As an aside, the Iraqis caught on quickly to some Western television techniques such as the crawl translation across the bottom or lower third of the screen, and the change to a more hospitable location as a backdrop when Saddam met with other hostages. It's my view that the speeches, statements and appearances of Saddam throughout the war were not directed at the leaders of the West as a primary audience. Rather he was going after his potentially strong majority, the Arab man and woman on the street, the Islamic equivalent of the blue-collar worker. Otherwise, the content and convoluted structure of his speeches made no sense.

Ultimately, his strategy failed and failed badly. There was not a revolution or uprising in the more sympathetic countries in the East, although we did not know it at the time, since it then seemed a near and close thing. The other Hussein, King Hussein of Jordan, appeared as a sad and uncertain figure. On several occasions, he or his emissaries called CNN in Atlanta and asked for coverage of a speech. I recall one weekend we agreed to carrying a speech from the King's office in Amman that was directed to President Bush, which we thought was a way to save postage. The CNN people with the President in Kennebunkport, as I recall, alerted his staff that such a message was en route and according to them Mr. Bush watched. It was about a half-hour, and his only reaction was it contained nothing new.

In one morning, during the early days of the war, one particular morning, we had on live President Mubarak, King Fahd, King Hussein and President Bush. Prime Ministers Mulroney and Thatcher were on tape for technical reasons -- nothing personal there regarding the Commonwealth. At CNN, I believe we have added some new turns on an old format that began perhaps back when Edward R. Murrow stood on the tops of buildings in London and reported the Blitz. In the late 1950s and 1960s, Huntley, Brinkley