

Dear Dave,

9/20/91

I've not been sending you Post stories on the Gates nomination. I have been keeping them. I presume that from your local papers, radio and TV news you have a general knowledge of the controversy and a bit about the hearings.

I think you'll recall that from time to time I've been noting that the Post, which claims to be independent, has with some regularity supported the most questionable administration policies and decisions, most recently with regard to the Middle East.

Its today's coverage of yesterday's hearings on Gates to be CIA head is, - know by accident, a distortion of normal journalistic standards. It represents an editorial decision to support the administration and the Gates nomination in the news rather than the editorial columns.

I'd been listening to the Thomas hearings on the car radio when I used it yesterday. ~~When~~ When I drove out to get the papers at 3:30 this morning that station came on automatically and it happened to be a rebroadcast of yesterday's testimony, that of Thomas Polgar, not Alan Fiers, who is featured in the Post reporting. (Fiers has copped a plea before the independent Iran/Contra counsel.)

Polgar's intelligence experience goes back to the OSS. When he retired from the CIA he, among other things, worked for the Iran/Contra hearings. He appears to be an intelligence traditionalist rather than an intelligence politician and as such is outraged by abuses of this tradition and of politicizing the Agency and being dishonest by lying.

Polgar made a very strong case that Gates did lie, did perjure himself, and that he ought not head the CIA. He had written an oped page article for the Post saying this. That led to the request for him to testify in the Gates hearings.

I did not hear all of this broadcast, although I heard it all for the time I was in the car and in the house. I took a hand-held portable with me when I left for walking about 4:45 but there were spots as I walked where the station could not be heard. I did hear enough to believe that he made as strong a case against Gates's nomination as can be made and that it is more than just credible.

It was not a case of legal proof, authentication beyond reasonable doubt. It was a case based on practice, procedure, agency functioning and methods and of need to know. Although some of the Members tried to refute what he testified to in support of Gates, their beginning point, none that I heard succeeded.

So, ignoring this, the Post's lengthy story is almost entirely devoted to Fiers' testimony in support of Gates and just misses avoiding Polgar's by ending with a couple of paragraphs on Polgar's testimony.

I am not suggesting that Fiers' testimony should not have been reported. I am saying that the more significant and newsworthy testimony was Polgar's and with the issue of fitness to head the CIA and of Gates perjury it was much more newsworthy. The Post likes Gates.

9/21 Consistent with this the Post gave major attention to former spook/^madmiral Bobby Inan's testimony also in support of Gates, the testimony entirely conjectural and seriously ^{clawed} failed.

He conjectured that to protect Gates Casey kept him ignorant. If this had been so, there were too many other ways in which Gates had to know of the Iran/Contra illegalities.

It recently had an editorial endorsing the Thomas ^{my} appointment on the stated but spurious ground that the president is entitled to have his own man on the Court. It of course is not possible that Meg Greenfield and Stephen Rosenfeld never heard of the Senate's advice and consent role. In this ^{my} the Post is supporting the growing authoritarianism in our government, which has the Congress rubber-stamping in its interpretation of the Constitution.

On Israel as on other foreign matters it again goosesteps with Bush et al. I'll be sending today's stories in which for the first time it quotes an Israeli source as saying it ~~is~~ being pressured. I'd say blackjacked. (I expect some minor consideration in return so that Bush can make the false appearance of ^{my}ven-handedness.)

My reading of today's stories is that Baker has been making major concessions to the Arab powers in return for which they are pressuring the PLO. Not that any Palestinian delegation sitting with Jordan's won't have at least PLO approval, whether or not membership.

The Post has played this down ^{while} ~~is~~ making mention of some of it, like return of the Golan for Syria and of all the other territories said to bring what it ^{my} can't, peace. There is never any mention of the ^{my} ~~all~~ resolutions, which all refer to "secure" borders. Of which I see no chance at all, regardless of the public postures of the Arab powers. They have and they will support the Palestinian terrorists.

There may be a question of Shamir's wisdom in responding to each major pressure under Bush with the announcement of new Jewish housing in the territories but I think it was the only way he could see of signalling to Bush that Israel would not knuckle under to pressures favoring the Arabs. He may have underestimated Bush's determination that he will have a pro-Arab policy and overestimated Bush's morality and sense of fairness and decency, if any. In any even the situation looks more dangerous ^{my} to me daily. I think that turning any of the territories, particularly Samaria and Judea over to the Arabs inevitably means weakening Israel and endangering its citizens again, as returning the Golan will. too. (if you were not then aware of it, while the Syrians could lob artillery shells from it even the babies had to be taught to rush to the bomb shelters and even the kindergartens had to have them.)

Because I'm sending you the current Columbia Journalism Review I'll include the clipping with ~~them~~ it and use 3rd class.

Not satisfied with the Post's reporting I got an inexpensive small short-wave set. I've been logging stations so I can get BBC news, which I've respected since the 1920s, and perhaps Israel. I've gotten almost every country except Israel, even Australia and Delhi but not at the times I've checked, when I rest after walking, Israel. Most news has been good, fair.

Hard