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Has the Media Exaggerated the Situation in Iran?



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It is ridiculous that we in the media have been accused of exaggerating the crisis in Tehran. The true accusation is that there are those who played down the events in Iran, and failed in their [journalistic] role by being silent or playing down the events in their media coverage. This accusation should be made against those that want to be silent on this issue so that the realities of the events that are taking place in Iran are not reported in the media. Therefore those who ignore the most important event in the world are to blame, not those that report this [news]. The news media throughout the world has done everything to follow up on the controversial demonstrations and the subsequent political developments of this extremely serious event. This news is echoed throughout the media in Brazil to Germany to China, and this is standard procedure in media and political affairs. The media has not witnessed as serious a political event since the invasion of Iraq and therefore it is normal for the world to stand on tip toe in order to observe and comment [on the events in Iran]. These events have caused the Arab and Western governments to be in a state of alert around the clock in order to observe what is going on in Tehran.

We [in the media] did not exaggerate the situation nor were we prepared for it, we reported the events as they happened as it had never crossed our minds that the Iranian elections would end with such a sharp dispute resulting in hundreds of thousands of angry protestors taking to the streets in five Iranian cities condemning the theft of their votes. [Following this] other camps got involved, and pro-government supporters staged demonstrations, the Supreme Leader of Iran was forced to openly interfere in the events, and Iran as a whole fell into a crisis whose affects are felt far beyond its own borders as diplomats were expelled, the Revolutionary Guard got involved, and blood was shed in confrontations [with the protestors]. This is an event that cannot be compared to other events in the region, firstly because Iran is an important country, and power struggles here have an affect on numerous regional and international disputes.

The ordinary and traditional response to such serious developments is the media going on a state of full alert in order to report what is going on, as the events in Iran concern ordinary people as well as governments in the region and countries throughout the world. What is taking place in Iran is something that affects the situation in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and

the Gulf. Therefore how is it reasonable to play down the events in Iran and move on to more boring events that are taking place in our region?

There is no doubt that we did not exaggerate [the events in Iran], and in fact we believe that we reported the bare minimum of information due to the media blackout that prevented the press from speaking to opposition figures during the second week of the crisis. The correct question should then be; why did some [media] attempt to play down the events in Iran? Some wished to preserve Iran's image as an Islamic country free of [political] fraud, conflict, opposition, and power struggles, while perhaps others were [overly] concerned with what was taking place as they had a stake in the outcome of the events. These political and media groups acted in a manner similar to the Eastern European states during the early stages of the power struggle with the Soviet Union, namely by insisting that what is being reported is nothing more than Western propaganda.

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