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Muffled Media

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I am an American with roots to Afghanistan but I would like to think, above all else, I am a human being wanting to end cases of victimisation whether in the examples of Nazi Germany, Apartheid South Africa, or in my own homeland of Afghanistan. So, I am voicing my outrage on the recent incident media blackout of The Los Angeles Times regarding the February 20th UCLA lecture of the Columbia University professor Edward Said -- probably one of the top intellectuals in contemporary America.

His talk was relevant since it discussed the prospective Iraq invasion. Shouldn't the American public be made aware of this issue especially since it will be our sons and daughters trekking over to the Middle East to fight a war many here are doubtful about? Why is it that you can send journalists into the mountainous caves of Tora Bora but not into Royce Hall at UCLA?

When the media practices self-censorship it serves no purpose because all they are doing is manufacturing consent among the general public for a myth, lies or what Said calls "Orientalism". By filtering reality, you give a slanted view of the world to your readers creating a "mental Berlin Wall" for the American public. Misrepresentations of facts to the masses, naïve assessments, and faulty research by the media and also scholars have incited the world against the Middle East.

The San Francisco Chronicle and The Oakland Tribune found Said's previous day Berkeley lecture worthwhile pursuing, but the great The Los Angeles Times did not feel so about his UCLA lecture. Well, it was this naïve sense that partially contributed to 9/11 -- the day when thousands of people who put their trust in a free and responsible media became martyrs.