

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Jon Katz will appear on Arab Television Network/Press TV Monday, December 17.

Â Camera image from U.S. Geological Survey website.Â Â Â On Monday, December 17, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. EST, the "American Dream" show (available on cable television) will spend about an hour interviewing me (in Arab Television Network's Washington, DC, studio) and specialists in sociology and human behavior about the tragic (they all are tragic) December 6, 2007, mall shootings in Nebraska. The producers already know from my initial appearance on the program in October 2007 (detailed here and here) about my support of strong protection for gun possession rights unless and until the Second Amendment is amended. I believe that weakening Second Amendment rights disservices robust protection of First Amendment rights. (Compare: (1) "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances" (the First Amendment); and (2) "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed" (the Second Amendment).) I do not know the extent to which other aspects of the criminal law will be discussed on the program. The shooter killed himself, so I suppose that any discussion on the program about criminal law will be more relevant to other cases and about efforts at preventing repeats of such tragedies. I will also be ready to discuss how -- aside from mental illness that is hard to treat -- violence often arises from the strong disconnect, disenfranchisement, and powerlessness that so many people feel in American society. Plenty of people feel that violence in the entertainment and news media plays a substantial role in encouraging real-life violence, but I tend to feel that the feelings of disconnect are at the heart of the matter. We all can reduce the feelings of disconnect by reaching out to others, one-by-one, from such simple enough deeds as letting the other driver pass in front of us, to inviting a neighbor for dinner, to being there patiently to listen to a person who needs to be heard or who needs just not to be alone, and the list goes on. The show will air on Press TV. Press TV's website says: "PRESS TV is the first international Iran-based news network to broadcast in English on a round-the-clock schedule. Our Tehran-based headquarters is staffed by media professionals from around the world. PRESS TV has an extensive network of bureaus located in the world's most strategic places." The International Herald Tribune reports that the station launched in mid-2007. Other reports confirm that Press TV is at least partially-funded by the Iranian government. An article on IndyMedia.org quotes Amir Afra -- who produces and hosts Press TV's "Fine Print" program -- as saying: "We're state-funded, not state-governed... We are like so many non-governmental organizations that receive state funds. We have our own editorial board." I did not know about the Iranian government funding aspect of this program until after I appeared on the show the last time. This time around, I told the person inviting me on the show for December 13 that I accepted the invitation so long as I will not be censored, which she said I will not. If it were only so easy to know something is so just because someone says it is so. Then again, why would the Iranian government wish to censor information and opinions about social ills in the United States? Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 11:00