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To: Matthew Hiltzik <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Thoughts from Chomsky

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I've watched the horrible way you are being treated in the press and public. It's painful to say, but I think the best way to proceed is to ignore it. I've had plenty of experience, though of course not on this scale. A google search will bring up tons of hysterical accusations of all sorts, even groups devoted to vilifying me. I pay no attention, unless I'm approached for a comment on a specific matter. It's a nuisance, but it's the best way. The same conclusions from experiences of others, in some cases close friends.

What the vultures dearly want is a public response, which then provides a public opening for an onslaught of venomous attacks, many from just publicity seekers or cranks of all sorts -- which are impossible to answer (how do you prove that you are not a neo-Nazi who wants to kill the Jews, or a rapist, or whatever charge comes along?). That's particularly true now with the hysteria that has developed about abuse of women, which has reached the point that even questioning a charge is a crime worse than murder. For virtually everyone who sees any of this, the reaction will be "where there's smoke there's fire, maybe raging fire" (whatever the facts, which few will even think of investigating).

In general, it's best I think not to react unless directly questioned, particularly in the current mood -- which, I presume, will fade away, even if not in time to prevent much torture and distress.

Hard to say, but it's the best advice I can think of.

Noam

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please note

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