

Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky, professor emeritus at MIT, in e-mail correspondence with a CU employee, April 13, 2005, says:

Without reservations, I support Churchill's right to free speech and academic freedom, and regard the attack on him as scurrilous - and by now craven cowardice as well, as the state authorities and other critics pretend that the issue is (suddenly) his academic credentials and ethnic origins. That's a real disgrace.

As for his work, I've never read this article [on 9/11] and have no interest in doing so—in fact, would not do so as a matter of principle in the present context, for reasons that go back to the Enlightenment origins of defense of freedom of speech. I was interviewed by Colorado newspapers, and told them basically what I've just written. I was then asked what I thought of his earlier work, and told the truth: that I found it serious and important, stressing again that these comments have precisely nothing to do with the outrageous events now underway.

I have no idea what the plagiarism and other issues are, [but] if the charges were serious, they would have been brought up before. For what it's worth, there's no indication of that in anything of his I read—that is, nothing more than is standard in scholarship. . . . Such matters are sometimes raised in the context of political persecution, by cowards who are desperately seeking to conceal what they are really doing. Seems pretty transparent in this case. Why now and not before?