

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH JAMES K. GLASSMAN

SUBJECT: JAMES K. GLASSMAN, U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT WILL DISCUSS “THE NEW AGE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY”

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DONNA LEINWAND: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon. Welcome to the National Press Club for our an annual speaker luncheon featuring Under Secretary Glassman. My name is Donna Leinwand. I'm a national reporter at *USA Today* and vice president of the National Press Club. I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the audience today, as well as those of you watching on C-Span.

We're looking forward to today's speech, and afterwards, I will ask as many questions as time permits. Please hold your applause during the speech so that we have time for as many questions as possible.

For our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general public who attend our luncheons, and not necessarily from the working press.

I'd like to now introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. From your right, we have Arshad Mahmud, correspondent for Daily Prothom Alo, from Dhaka, Bangladesh; Will Stebbins, bureau chief for the Americas Al Jazeera English; Constance Ikokwu, correspondent THISDAY Newspaper from Nigeria; Hiroki Sugita, bureau chief

for Kyodo News of Japan; Melissa Charbonneau, vice-chair of the Speakers Committee; Beth Glassman, wife of the guest speaker.

And skipping over the podium, we have Angela Greiling-Keane, Bloomberg News and chair of the National Press Club Speakers Committee. Skipping over our speaker, we have Myron Belkind, George Washington University and NPC speakers committee member who organized today's event; Mahtab Farid, she is a blogger on U.S.-Iranian issues and founder of USI News which provides news to Farsi speaking outlets that serve Iran from abroad.

Christopher DeMuth, president American Enterprise Institute; and finally, Morton Kondracke, executive editor for *Roll Call* and a commentator for Fox News. I forgot one person. We have Robert Doherty, bureau chief for Reuters News. (Applause.)

When Senator Joseph Lieberman introduced today's guest at his Senate confirmation hearings earlier this year, he described James Glassman as the supreme allied commander in the war of ideas. Our guest today has the formal title of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs with a multitude of responsibilities including improving the U.S. image abroad and creating better understanding between this country and the rest of the world.

That clearly is a challenging task when set against the backdrop of polls that show a dramatic decline in respect for The United States in many parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East and in some parts of Europe.

In his first four months in his new role, where he succeeded formal White House counselor, Karen Hughes, Mr. Glassman has made the war of ideas a central theme of his office. In the view of Mr. Glassman and that of President Bush's national strategy for combating terrorism, winning the war on terror means winning the battle of ideas, a point our guest made in an op ed column in *The Wall Street Journal* last June.

Specifically Mr. Glassman believes that the aim of the war of ideas must be to ensure that negative sentiments and day-to-day grievances towards The United States and its allies do not manifest themselves in violence. In his words, and I quote, "We want to create an environment hostile to violent extremism, especially by severing links between Al Qaeda and like-minded groups and their target audiences."

Mr. Glassman entered the field of diplomacy at the State Department this year after a long career in journalism that began at Harvard University where he was managing editor of *The Daily Crimson* and where he graduated cum laude with a degree in government. Between 1993 and 2004, he wrote a column on

investments for *The Washington Post* and was known as the paper's main stock picker.

In 1999, he co-authored a *New York Times* bestseller called *Dow 36000* in which he and economist Kevin Hassett concluded that stocks were undervalued and projected the Dow to reach 36000. Mr. Glassman is former president of the Atlantic Monthly Company, publisher of *The New Republic*, executive vice president of *U.S. News and World Report*, and editor-in-chief and co-owner of *Roll Call*.

Immediately prior to joining the State Department, he was a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and served as chairman of the broadcasting board of governors, the independent Federal agency that oversees all U.S. government non-military international broadcasting.

Mr. Glassman's position as Under Secretary of State in the normal course of events would end when the Bush Administration's term ends next January. Meanwhile, Senator Sam Brownback, Republican from Kansas, introduced legislation last week to create a national center for strategic communications, patterned after the old U.S. Information Agency.

Significantly, Brownback's proposal would abolish the office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and the Broadcasting Board of Governments (sic) whose functions would then be taken over by the newly proposed agency. Mr. Glassman, whatever happens to the office of Public Diplomacy, perhaps there will come a time when you will want to return to journalism. If you do, we would be pleased to consider your application for becoming a member for the National Press Club.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in giving a warm welcome to Under Secretary of State, James Glassman. (Applause.)

JAMES GLASSMAN: Thank you, Donna. May I call you Donna? (Laughter.) Also, at the same time, I'd like to issue a shout-out to all the nursery schoolers in Las Vegas and New Orleans, nursery schools attended by my two grandchildren, Tess and Violet.

It's a great pleasure to be here today. This is really one of Washington's noble institutions. And I want to thank Myron Belkind for getting me up here. I wouldn't be here without you, Myron. Thank you. I also want to thank three people especially who are at the head table — Chris DeMuth, president of AEI, who taught me to love ideas, Morton Kondracke, executive editor of *Roll Call* whom I hired, perhaps against his better judgment, and who taught me about integrity and forthrightness. I don't think there's a journalist in Washington who

has these qualities in the abundance that Mort does. And my wife, Beth, who has taught me, among many other things, about grace and courage.

Well, five years ago this month, the advisory group on public diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim world mandated by Congress and chaired by Ambassador Edward Djerejian, produced a powerful report that concluded that a critical time in our nation's history, the apparatus of public diplomacy has proven inadequate. The report pointed to our unilateral disarmament in the weapons of advocacy and urged The United States to get serious and strategic about public diplomacy, rebuild the institutions, provide inter-agency leadership, increase resources, and get the President and Congress fully behind the effort.

I served on the Djerejian Commission and criticisms expressed in that report continue to be heard today. We heard them at the discussions of Senator Brownback's legislation. But many of those criticisms are quite simply out of date. Times have changed profoundly. Today, there is a broad bipartisan consensus that soft power, smart power, public diplomacy are absolutely critical to achieving America's interests, and particularly in creating the conditions for the defeat of violent extremism around the world.

In addition to broad support and a will to win, public diplomacy today has reorganized. We have a solid and efficient, though imperfect structure. Public diplomacy has inter-agency cooperation. It has a sound strategy. It has thousands of public diplomacy professionals in the field, both American and host country nationals working hard, often under exceedingly dangerous conditions, to defend American interests. In short, America has a public diplomacy that we can be proud of, public diplomacy that is succeeding.

How can I say that at a time when The United States' ratings around the world are so low? How can I say this at a time when, as one former diplomat put it, a man in a cave can out-communicate the greatest communications power on the planet? The fact is that support for America is rising and support for violent extremism is falling. The latter trend is stronger than the former, and in my view, far, far more important.

What is public diplomacy? It is diplomacy aimed at foreign publics as opposed to officials. Like official diplomacy and like military action when that becomes necessary, public diplomacy has, as its mission, the achievement of the national interest, primarily the twin goals of reducing threats of violent extremism and weapons of mass destruction and promoting freedom. Our goal is not to boost America's rating in the Pew Global Attitudes survey.

Certainly a better liked America would have an easier time achieving the national interest. If we do our job well in explaining and advancing American

interest, improved likeability may be a positive collateral result of our success. But likeability itself is not only an elusive goal in any short time period, but also far from the best way of measuring whether we are advancing the national interest. It is a means, not an end.

Public diplomacy performs its mission of achieving the national interest in a particular way, by understanding, informing, engaging, and persuading foreign publics. The understanding part is vital. You can't persuade if you don't truly understand the people you're trying to persuade.

Senator J. William Fulbright who created the Fulbright exchange program in 1946 put it well. "The essence of inter-cultural education," he said, referring to what would become one of the most effective public diplomacy programs, "...is empathy, the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something that we have failed to see."

Public diplomacy works best when we give our officers in the field considerable latitude to devise objectives and programs. They are supported with four major efforts in Washington. Education and cultural affairs, mainly exchange programs which are our crown jewels — this year, despite tighter visa requirements, a record 600,000 foreign students will come to The United States to study. The U.S. is still by far the most popular learning destination in the world.

Next, international information programs will tell America's story through speakers, publications, and a robust Internet presence. Our aim is not to preach, but to encourage interaction that will lead to understanding of American principles and policies. We see ourselves as facilitators of a grand conversation which we convene because we have the confidence that it will lead ultimately to the adoption of universal values of freedom, toleration, and justice.

Third, U.S. international broadcasting, which is directed by an independent board that I used to chair, and then over the past eight years, has increased its weekly audience by 75%. Our mission since 1942 has been to broadcast in the vernacular, currently in 60 languages, into countries that have limited freedom of the press or none at all.

For the Broadcasting Board of Governors which runs the effort, 2008, has been a very good year. Our audience in Pakistan has doubled. We've done vital work in Burma and Tibet and Cuba and Georgia. Big gains have been achieved with our Voice of America television into Iran where we broadcast seven hours a day. And we are effectively starting to shift our Russia strategy to the Internet. Just this week, we started special programming into the camps of Darfur.

Sadly the Senate has not seen fit to approve a new slate of governors for the BBG, for Republicans and for Democrats. The BBG, America's single largest public diplomacy program, operates today without a chairman, in short, by three governors. This state of affairs is extremely disappointing and harmful to the nation.

And finally, ideological engagement, the war of ideas, as opposed to the war of bombs and bullets. Public diplomacy has a great tradition. During the Cold War, after a slow start, The United States became very good at it with such institutions as the Congress of Cultural Freedom, USIA, and Radio Free Europe. But starting in the late 1990s, the U.S., in bipartisan fashion, began to dismantle this arsenal of persuasion.

Since the programs have long-term effects, it is reasonable to believe that the cutbacks of the 1990s have hurt The United States in the first decade of the new century. It soon became apparent that in the 1990s the threats had changed, but they had not disappeared. With 9/11, they became manifest. We had entered what columnist David Brooks called "the Hobbesian decade."

As the decade went on, we learned not only that there were forces that did not obey the rules of civilization, but that as we had discovered during the Cold War, there were limits to the use of military force to deter those forces. As Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates said recently, "Over the long-term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory. Non-military efforts, tools of persuasion and inspiration were indispensable to the outcome of the defining struggle of the 20th Century. They're just as indispensable in the 21st Century, and perhaps more so."

As the words of the Pentagon's leader reflect, there is now a consensus in Washington that public diplomacy is essential to defeating the violent extremist threat and to promoting freedom. In fact, today in Washington, there is a consensus that in this struggle ideas are more important than bullets.

It is this war of ideas imperative to which I have devoted my tenure as Under Secretary. As Under Secretary, I lead the inter-agency, the government-wide effort in the war of ideas, which includes coordination with the Defense Department, the intelligence community, other agencies, and the private sector. As Donna said, Senator Joe Lieberman in introducing me in my confirmation hearings called me, "the supreme allied commander in the war of ideas." In fact, we don't command the allies. But I can tell you that we do work closely with them.

So let me be specific. Our mission today in the war of ideas is highly focused. It is to use the tools of ideological engagement, words, images, and deeds to create an environment hostile to violent extremism. We want to break the

linkages between groups like Al Qaeda and their target audiences. Indeed, in the war of ideas, our core task is not how to fix foreigners' perceptions of The United States, but how to isolate and reduce the threat of violent extremism. Our task is not to build our brand, but to destroy theirs.

Is this a change in Washington? Yes. It is a shift in emphasis and focus. And it's a significant shift. Ultimately our objective is to achieve a world in which the use of violence to achieve political, religious, or social objectives is no longer considered acceptable, where efforts to radicalize and recruit new members are no longer successful, and the perpetrators of violent extremism are condemned and isolated.

How do we achieve such a world? First by confronting and undermining the ideology that justifies and enables the violence. We try to remove the fake veneer on the reputation of violent extremists and allow the public to see the shame and hypocrisy of life in terrorism. While this is an effort that requires credible Muslim voices to work effectively, it is not a cause only for Muslims.

The effort is to show populations that the ideology and actions of the violent extremists are not in the best interest of those populations. This is precisely what we have done effectively in Iraq and are trying to do today in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and in fact everywhere where extremist ideology, whether based on a twisted interpretation of a religion or not, has gained a foothold.

Al Qaeda is making this job easier because it contains the seeds of its own destruction. Analyst Peter Bergen noted in congressional testimony last year that Al Qaeda has four strategic weaknesses. It keeps killing Muslim civilians. It has not created a genuine mass movement. Its leaders constantly expand their list of enemies, and it has no positive vision. As Orwell asked in response to the Bolshevik saying about having to break eggs to make an omelet, but where's the omelet? It's all broken eggs — bombings in Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan have taught this lesson. Al Qaeda and other violent extremist groups are dramatically losing support as I will show shortly.

At the same time, we recognize that The United States itself is not at the center of the war of ideas. There is a complex, multi-sided battle going on in Muslim societies for power. And in this battle our main role is to support constructive alternatives to violent extremism. More and more credible Muslim voices are indeed speaking out. And they are having an impact. Last year, one of Bin Laden's most prominent Saudi mentors, Salman al-Oadah, publicly reproached him for spreading mayhem. "How many innocent children, elderly people and women have been killed in the name of Al Qaeda," asked al-Oadah, in a refrain that is echoing widely.

Just as dramatic are the many gatherings of community, religious, and national leaders rising to confront and challenge violent extremism. We see major pronouncements by credible voices in India, Turkey, Jordan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and of course in Iraq where we've seen a dramatic turnaround. We have common cause with these brave people. Although some may disagree with us on such policy matters as Iraq and the Israeli/Palestinian issue, on the threat of violent extremism to their own societies, we are absolutely on the same page.

Our second objective is to offer, often in cooperation with partners in the region, a full range of productive alternatives to violent extremism. The shorthand for this policy is diversion, powerful, credible, and lasting diversion, the channeling of recruits away from violence with the attractions of culture, literature, technology, sports, education, and entrepreneurship, in addition to politics and religion.

I just returned yesterday from Colombia where I saw one of the most dramatic and successful examples of diversion in the world, the program that encourages members of the murderous FARC, the violent extremist group that has been operating as a narco-terrorist for the past 44 years, to defect, demobilize, and reintegrate into Colombian society. Most of these demobilized FARC members are young. I talked to some who joined the organization at 12, 17 and 18 years of age. Like Al Qaeda, like the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka and other violent groups, and like criminal gangs in Brazil and The United States, these young people are hijacked and exploited and indoctrinated at a time in their lives when they are seeking an identity. FARC members soon regret their choice, but it's been hard to leave until now.

The anti-FARC movement is working because of a society-wide commitment that begins with President Uribe. I met with young people who, using Facebook, brought one million Colombians and another 11 million people around the world into the streets in a mass anti-FARC march earlier this year. The U.S. government through US-AID and other agencies has supported the demobilization and reintegration effort. I might add, we had absolutely nothing to do with what the young people did using Facebook. That was completely spontaneous. Both our government and the Colombian government had zero to do with it.

But we have supported the demobilization and reintegration effort, which, this year, will bring more than 3,000 violent extremists out of the FARC. We want to apply the lessons learned in Colombia around the world.

The point is, that while winning hearts and minds would be an admirable feat, the war of ideas adopts the more immediate and realistic goal of diverting

impressionable segments of the population from the recruitment process. Ideological engagement comes down to a contest of alternative visions. Going beyond diversion, we seek to build counter-movements by empowering groups and individuals opposed to violent extremists, movements both electronic and physical, that bring people together with similar constructive interests such as women opposed to violent extremists, built on the MADD or Mothers Against Drunk Driving model, believers in democratic Islam, entrepreneurship, and technology.

Let me give you some other examples of the diverse and innovative ways that we are trying to reverse the momentum that extremist ideology has had in the Middle East and South Asia especially. In Morocco, we are using a mix of tried and true and new programs to reach younger populations at risk for radicalization. These include a range of education, sports, and music-oriented programs. A cornerstone effort is the annual English language summer camp. We also support a program to improve dialogue between prisoners and the government, and mitigate the effects of extremists in prisons.

In Kabul, we are supporting a pioneering media center to help the government of President Karzai respond rapidly to Taliban lies and terror attacks and communicate more effectively to enlist the support of the Afghan people. And throughout the region, our field officers are reaching out to influential religious leaders. In Yemen, for example, we've established a program targeting young charismatic influential imams. We bring them to The United States on visits to show how inter-faith dialogue works in practice. And then when they return home, they receive technical education and participate in workshops, demonstrating the inherent compatibility of Islam with concepts such as women's rights, human rights, and democracy.

Teaching English is really one of our best tools. People around the world want to learn our language, and through teaching, we can impact ideals of tolerance and critical thinking. When I was in Colombia yesterday, I met with young Afro-Colombians who are enrolled in our Martin Luther King fellows program, learning English to help them advance in college and beyond.

Thanks in part to these efforts, but certainly even more to the efforts of those in the region themselves who abhor extremist violence in their own countries, we are beginning to see results. Minds are changing.

As recently as 2005, some 58% of Jordanians believe that suicide bombing was at least sometimes justified. In 2008, the proportion had dropped to 25%. In Indonesia, support for suicide bombing fell from 20% in 2004, to 11% in 2008. The new Pew survey from which these statistics are drawn, states that, "Opinions about Osama Bin Laden have followed a similar trend."

For instance, only three years ago, about 61% of Jordanian Muslims voiced at least some confidence in the Al Qaeda leader. Today just 19% have a positive view. Seven years after the September 11th attacks, Bin Laden's ratings have plummeted to the low single digits in Turkey and Lebanon. Earlier this year, former Jihadist leaders of the Egyptian Islamic group published a series of books highly critical of extremists and Al Qaeda to which al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda's number two, felt compelled to respond directly, and, I might add, completely inadequately.

In London, in April, former extremists have launched the Quilliam Foundation, an organization dedicated to exposing and discrediting the ideology and voices of violent extremism. Clerics and scholars are also speaking out. In an article published in *The Washington Post*, the Grand Mufti of the al-Azhar mosque in Egypt noted that attacking civilians, women, children and the elderly by blowing oneself up is absolutely forbidden in Islam.

Let me inject here a note of caution. Clearly, the attraction of extremist ideology and especially the fear that it induces in ordinary men and women who are just trying to get on in their lives will not dissolve overnight. In Pakistan, many have reacted to the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad by just hoping that Americans would leave and the problem would go away. But at the same time, Pakistan's new president has said, "This is Pakistan's war." And it is. Violent extremist pose an existential threat to Pakistan.

In the region we hear more and more that Al Qaeda and Taliban must be confronted. A post-bombing editorial in Al-Haram of Cairo stated that Al Qaeda has harmed Islam and Muslims more than any non-Muslim person, organization, or nation. A *Jordan Times* editorial asserts that Jordanians consider Bin Laden an archenemy, and Al Qaeda's worst crime has been to poison the minds of some young Jordanians fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The decline in support for violent extremism is, I would argue emphatically, far more important than the results of any surveys about global attitudes toward The United States. I should add here that a June Pew survey found that U.S. ratings rose in the past year in 80% of the countries surveyed. In regions like Africa, in much of Asia, support for The United States is strong. It's strong in large nations like India and Japan. Overall ratings were more positive than negative in about half of the countries Pew surveyed.

We should not become fixated on the top-line numbers from opinion surveys, whether good or bad. What people say is one thing. How they act is another. Pew research shows that many of the same nations, including France, that give us high, unfavorable ratings also see us by wide margins as partners.

And The United States remains the country where people around the world want to go to school, or for that matter, to work and to live.

We must be mindful of the long road ahead. Despite the decline in support for violent extremism, we still have a lot of work to do. There is a widespread belief in Muslim nations that The United States and other Western powers want to destroy Islam and replace it with Christianity. This root belief underlies much of the passive support for the violent extremism of Al Qaeda and similar groups. The flow of new recruits has not stopped. Have we been slow to react, to get it right? Yes, indeed.

My boss, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, has said, "Sometimes it is the case that democracies don't really organize themselves until there's a real wake-up call." Now this country, and I would say the international community are better organized to deal with this threat.

In the end, the American mission in this new age of public diplomacy is to tell the world of a good and compassionate nation, and at the same time, to engage in the most important ideological contest of our age. We have reorganized the effort at state and the inter-agency. The strategy is set. The will is there. We are now engaged vigorously, and we will win. Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. LEINWAND: Since 2006, the State Department has been in charge of the nation's worldwide strategic communications. Yet the State Department will spend far less, \$5.6 million dollars, on public diplomacy in Iraq than the U.S. Defense Department will spend there. The Defense Department recently entered into contracts for PR work in Iraq worth over \$300 million dollars over the next three years. Has the Defense Department's campaign to win hearts and minds usurped the State Department's role? How can the State Department have impact in this situation?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, let me just say emphatically that the State Department is not usurped-- I'm sorry. Let me put it this way. Let me say emphatically that the Defense Department has not usurped the State Department's role in public diplomacy, not by any means.

First, the President two years ago designated the Under Secretary of State, now me, as the lead in the inter-agency. That means that we lead all of the agencies of this government that engage in public diplomacy. And there are lots of them. It's not just the Defense Department. It's Treasury. It's DHS. It's the intelligence community. And that's my job. And I coordinate very closely with the Defense Department, and have since I started my job.

I read in *The Washington Post* that we spent \$5.6. They spent \$300. Iraq is a war zone. And I think it's appropriate for the Defense Department to be spending what it's spending in a war zone. And we're quite cognizant of what they're spending. And we coordinate with them. They have their job. We have our job. But we do work together. And it's been a very, very good relationship. I can say that absolutely. And I think if you talk to the people at Defense, they would say the same thing.

MS. LEINWAND: Now people abroad are blaming the U.S. for the world's economic woes. How detrimental will this be to the public diplomacy mission?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, there is a tendency in the world to blame The United States for practically everything. There's no doubt that the financial problems that now afflict The United States are also beginning to afflict other parts of the world. In fact, in other parts of the world, some cases, started earlier. I mean, there was a story in *The Washington Post*, I think it was yesterday, about how Europeans are beginning to wake up to the fact that they have their own problems that were generated in Europe itself.

So I think there's a lot of blame to go around. There's a lot of blame in this country. And there's a lot of blame around the world. You know, I think the one thing I can say about The United States from what I know about its economy over the last 200 years is that it's very, very resilient. And I think that these are indeed tough times, but that The United States will rebound.

MS. LEINWAND: Okay, we're going to kind of go around the world here. We have so many questions from the audience, but we'll start with Europe. U.S. approval ratings are down in Europe and other regions considered to be U.S. allies. What types of diplomacy are focused on these places?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, we do a lot in Europe. But I must say that much of our work actually in Europe is-- our war of ideas work certainly is focused on Muslim communities in Europe. As I said in my talk, we're not out to specifically boost America's ratings, especially in places like Europe. You know, I think Europeans, while they like to grouse about The United States in general, down deep or a little bit deeper, have a great deal of respect for The United States and for its-- especially I think for its technology, for its education, for all the things that we have achieved.

And as I said, when you look deeper, when, you know, Pew asked the question, "Do you consider yourself a partner to The United States," I may have these numbers wrong, but just about-- The French say, by a margin of 66% to six percent, that they do. So I think that, you know, among friends-- and we are

friendly with the Europeans. We work very closely with them. We're working closely with them now in the Russia/Georgia situation. You know, there are animosities.

Remember freedom fries, right? You know, we have our own problems occasionally with the French. But I think the trend in Europe actually is in the opposite direction. And we can see that in Germany. We can see that in France. We certainly can see that in the U.K., where I just came back from. And we work very, very closely with our colleagues in the U.K. on these war of ideas issues. We don't work jointly, but our approach is very similar, and we share ideas. So, you know, it's disturbing when anybody says they don't like you. But it does not deter us from getting our job done. And our job really is to reduce threats, and to promote freedom in the world.

MS. LEINWAND: By focusing on extremism, especially Islamic extremism, have we gone too far in that we've inflated the threat? One could argue that Islamic extremism is not on par with other ideologies with global pretensions.

MR. GLASSMAN: No. I don't think that we've exaggerated the threat of extremism, of violent extremism. But as I said, I think it's very important to understand that violent extremism that's associated with a particular-- a twisted interpretation of a religion is not the only kind of violent extremism in the world. And, as I say, I just came back from Colombia where an entire nation has been held hostage by a violent extremist group, actually several violent extremist groups, and violent extremist groups from different sides of the spectrum. Although the one that is particularly threatening right now is the FARC, which today holds, despite the liberation of 15 hostages, including Ingrid Betancourt and three Americans, holds 700 hostages in terrible, terrible conditions in the jungles of Colombia.

So this is a true violent extremist group where successes are happening. And there are many others around the world. So I think it's a-- I would say this, that if the idea is that the only kind of violent extremism is that that's associated with a twisted interpretation of the Muslim religion, if that's all we're fixated on, that would be a mistake.

But the threat of violent extremism in a world where destructive technology is as available, as readily available as it is today, that is a serious threat. And anyone who thinks that it's not is living in a dream world.

MS. LEINWAND: America's image seems to have improved in Africa where the U.S. has poured in resources to combat HIV/AIDS, poverty, and

disease. Will the strategy work in other parts of the world, and in areas of violent extremism to boost America's image?

MR. GLASSMAN: The United States is very well liked in Africa. And by the way, I keep using the word 'liked'. And that's really not right. I think more important is trust and respect. That's really, I think, what any country wants from people around the world. And it's certainly true for The United States and Africa where the Pew ratings are 80s, 90s, 70s in very important countries.

And certainly part of that is the dedication that this Administration and the Congress have shown to help improve the situation regarding HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The United States, citizens of The United States, they're the ones who are paying for this, have now devoted more of their resources toward fighting a disease, AIDS, internationally, not just in The United States, but internationally, than any nation in the history of mankind has ever done for a single disease. And that's something we can all be proud of. And yes, it's having positive effects.

There's another reason though that people in Africa feel close to The United States. And I think that what you find in Africa is a lot of kind of aspirational types of emotion. People in Africa, much more than anyone would suspect, considering their state, their poor state of health and their poor economic state, really believe that they can succeed. They have a lot in common with the optimism of Americans. And I think that's also part of the link. And can we learn? Yes. In fact, that was one of my very first questions when I got to the State Department. Why is it that we have succeeded in Africa? And that story's not over of course. But I think there are lessons.

MS. LEINWAND: China will be The United States' biggest competitor, or perhaps partner in the future. What programs do you have aimed at the Chinese populous? And what message do you want the people of China to know from The United States?

MR. GLASSMAN: Let me just talk about broadcasting in China, because I think that's an important issue, and one that's quite disturbing. I mean, it seems to me that China, as a great nation, as it is, with the kind of economic power that it does have, and the amazing achievement-- The Chinese have brought more people out of poverty than any nation in history. That that kind of nation really needs to allow its own people access to information from the outside world.

I mean, it is really a shame what is happening in China. Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, are consistently jammed. Our Internet efforts to get into China are consistently blocked. It would seem to me to be an embarrassment if I were a

leader in China to have that kind of a policy. And so, you know, much of our effort really is communication. And it's very simple. I mean, we're just trying to tell the Chinese the truth about what's going on. It's not propaganda. It's just simply the news about what's happening in their own country, which Radio Free Asia does, and about what's happening in The United States and the rest of the world.

And the Chinese regime has been resisting that. And the Chinese people need to know. They have the same desires that we have, and they should be allowed.

MS. LEINWAND: Does the elimination of vernacular broadcast to Georgia, Russia, and India going to hurt your war of ideas effort?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, first of all, we're not eliminated vernacular broadcast to-- certainly not to Georgia. We actually have increased our broadcasting to Georgia. India-- You know, there are interesting cases which the Broadcasting Board of Governors has to consider. They're very difficult, *very difficult*. The BBG has limited resources. And so you want to look at, how important is the target audience? How easy is it to reach that target audience? How can you reach that target audience, that is to say, the means.

It used to be a lot easier in the early days when we had shortwave. That was the main way we reached people, and lots of people had shortwave receivers. But when you look at Russia today, only two percent of Russians listen by shortwave to anything during the week, two percent. So there's not a very good shortwave market. Neither does The United States, by the way — you know, as countries become more developed, they drop out of shortwave markets. Although there are very important shortwave markets, and Africa is a good example.

In Russia, the way that the Broadcasting Board of Governors decided to reach Russia (and I think it was very smart policy) was through radio. And in the cities, what do people listen to? They listen to FM radio mostly. So we made arrangements with private FM stations where we affiliated with them and took blocks of time in those stations.

Starting about two years ago, when the Putin regime decided that it didn't want Russians to be exposed to the outside world too much, the regime began to put pressure on those private stations, and our contracts were not renewed. So we went from having more than 100 such stations to having only a handful. And our penetration in Russia dropped to below one percent.

We saw this happening and we began to move to an Internet strategy. And I think that's a very smart strategy going forward. Now, we're well aware of the

fact that Internet penetration in Russia is not all that high. It's not like The United States. But it's growing. India is another case. And in India, India has a robust media scene. So does Turkey. So does Greece. You think we should be broadcasting in Greek? Should we be broadcasting in Turkish?

These are difficult questions. We have limited resources. And so we-- and I say 'we'-- I used to be the chairman of the BBG. I'm now just one of the governors or a-- Actually I represent the Secretary of State. These are really tough decisions. I think one of the accomplishments of the BBG has been to increase its audience by 75% in eight years. And half of that increase has been through Arabic language broadcasting. A great deal of it has been through Farsi.

So we are very much linked up with the foreign policy of The United States at the BBG, and are moving toward the target audiences for foreign policy. Pakistan, Afghanistan are also good examples. Thanks.

MS. LEINWAND: How much does the continued use of the Guantanamo prison, which you recently visited, hurt the U.S. image abroad?

MR. GLASSMAN: I did go to Guantanamo about a month ago. And I would recommend to all of the journalists in this audience, because the image of Guantanamo that you have, the orange jumpsuits and the sort of cages, those pictures are from April, 2002. It's a very different place, and you should see it firsthand.

The President said two years ago he would like to close Guantanamo. That's not as easy as it sounds. So far, 800 detainees have been through Guantanamo. Five hundred and fifty of them have been released. There are 250 left. Our government has announced its intention to release many of those 250. Some of them will also be put on trial. But many of them we would like to release. We have a problem with releasing them, three problems.

One is that we don't have a good place to release them to, because the governments don't want them back where they came from. Another problem is, when we do send them back, some of the governments don't pay very much attention to them, and they go back to the battlefield and kill Americans and kill other people. And that's happened, certifiably, in 37 cases of people who have been released.

And finally, we don't release them because we think they're going to get killed or tortured or otherwise abused in the countries to which they would return. And one example of that, a very good example of that are the Uighurs of China. If we release them to the Chinese, I think the likely result would be, they would not

emerge alive. And we've been trying to release the Uighurs somewhere else. And my understanding is, we've asked 100 countries to take them.

So these are the kinds of problems that the caricature of Guantanamo does not really permit to be discussed. And what I have tried to do in fact is not put my head in the sand, or that of anyone else who's involved in these issues, but really to try to explain them to people. I think the issue of detainees is a very difficult issue. If you pick somebody up on the battlefield, what do you do with that person? Do you kill them? Do you put them in prison? Do you run them through the legal system? Do you try to send him back to where he belongs?

It's a very tough problem. And we certainly did not get it right in the beginning. I think we're getting it right now. So I don't think we have anything to be ashamed of about Guantanamo. I agree with the President; I would like to see Guantanamo closed. But it's not easy to do.

MS. LEINWAND: Iran, according to the State Department, is the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Some reports reflect that new Persian News Network doesn't fulfill the role of telling the American side. Are you aware of the problems? And have you done something?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, I'm aware that there are those who have criticized VOA's Persian TV service, which is called Persian News Network, and which, frankly, has done an amazing job in a very short period of time, going from two hours-- one or two hours a day of broadcasting, now to seven hours a day.

My experience with PNN has been excellent. And I really commend their work to all of you here. Are they perfect? No. Do they tell the American side? Yes. Are they a propaganda arm of The United States government? No, and they're not supposed to be. That's what the law-- The law says that, that what we do at the BBG is not propaganda.

I've appeared now twice on a program called *Roundtable With You*, which is just an amazing experience. You're sitting there in a studio in Washington and listening to questions live, you know, as though you were on C-Span or another call-in show, from Iran, from Iranians, from actual Iranians in real-time, asking you questions about what's going on in America, what's going on in their own country, which, in many cases, they only know because they've been watching Persian News Network.

Persian News Network has a 28% weekly-- Twenty-eight percent of adult Iranians tune in at least once a week. That's pretty good testimony to the effectiveness of the broadcast. So thanks.

MS. LEINWAND: We cannot avoid politics today. Wouldn't Barack Obama's election as President instantly improve America's image?

MR. GLASSMAN: I'm not going to answer that question, because I just don't know. Let me say this. There's no doubt in my mind that the current election campaign has been a tremendous boon to American public diplomacy. In a way, I sort of wish it would go on. I'm the only person in America who wishes it would go on, you know, for another ten years. Everywhere I go, including yesterday in Bogota, people are really interested in this election.

By the way, the Colombians love Sarah Palin, for reasons-- They think she's hot, for one reason. This is what I was told. But they also like her and they like her ideas. And certainly much of the world-- we've seen the polls-- admires Barack Obama. But really what they're interested in is the fact that this is a story about American democracy. It's a story about an African-American who suddenly rose through the ranks and became the Democratic nominee, great story, beating a woman candidate.

And then on the Republican side, you have a prisoner of war who was completely out of it, had no chance to win the Republican nomination, who gets the Republican nomination, and chooses a very feisty woman as his running mate. So this is a great story. And we have done our best at the State Department, in my office, to bring people from around the world to observe our elections. We've brought them to watch the primaries. We've brought them to the conventions. We're bringing them out on election night.

It's very exciting. I was told in Bogota when I was there yesterday that there was a party among locals and some Americans to watch the vice presidential debate. I mean, you know, how many-- Ten years ago or twenty years ago, can you imagine people around the world watching the *vice* presidential debate in the American election? So it's an election that people are very interested in.

You know, the question about whether it would help America's image or not, you know, I think people are excited anywhere about some kind of change. I think whoever gets elected President will be exciting the world. I think the world may not understand that historically Presidents have not changed our foreign policies all that dramatically, certainly in their early stages in office. Although it has happened.

MS. LEINWAND: How would the world receive John McCain?

MR. GLASSMAN: I think I answered that question. I think very well.

MS. LEINWAND: Putting on both your diplomat and journalist hat, in which country do you think freedom of the press is most dire? And is there any reason to expect change in that country?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, there are lots of them, as we-- Broadcasting Board of Governors broadcast in 60 languages to about-- I think it's about 90 countries. So, you know, I could certainly talk about a country like Burma which is completely sealed off except for the efforts of BBC and our own Voice of America and Radio Free Asia. But I have to say, the country that bothers me the most is Russia. You know?

Maybe it's Russia and China both, because these are advanced nations with well educated people. And their regimes feel that they need to keep people cut off, and not just from Voice of America, but from other, you know, impartial international broadcasters. I really go, frankly, with Russia and China.

I would tell people here that we do pour a lot of resources into both of those countries. And some people have said to us, "Why do you do that?" You know, you've only got a tiny audience in both of these countries. And we think it's necessary to continue to do that.

MS. LEINWAND: Immigration authorities have made it increasingly difficult for foreign students from Pakistan and some Middle Eastern countries. Isn't this against the very interests you mentioned in your speech? What is the state doing about it? And is the state working with Homeland Security on this issue?

MR. GLASSMAN: It's a tough issue. It really is. And, you know, I think that-- Well, first let me say, yes, state is working with Homeland Security and has been for some time to strike a good balance between having a safe America (and that's absolutely necessary) and making America a welcoming place for people from around the world, especially students.

And it has become more difficult to get a visa. There's no doubt about that. But as I said earlier, this past academic year, 600,000 foreign students have been matriculating in The United States. And that's a record. The number dropped after 9/11, but it has risen steadily, and this year will be another record.

So I would say in general that we could do a better job of making people feel, from other countries-- We could do a better job of making people from other countries feel welcome in The United States through the system by which we admit them. And we're working hard to make that a reality.

MS. LEINWAND: We are almost out of time, but before asking the last question, I have a couple of important matters to take care of. First of all, let me remind our members of future speakers. On October 7th, we have Christo and Jeanne-Claude. World renown contemporary artists will discuss two works in progress, “Over The River: Project For the Arkansas River, State of Colorado”, and “The Mastaba: Project for the United Arab Emirates.” And October 23rd, we have Billy Joel, the Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter, and on October 24th, Dan Hesse, the CEO of Sprint. Second, I would like to present our guest with the traditional NPC mug.

MR. GLASSMAN: Thank you very much. Wonderful. (Applause.)

MS. LEINWAND: So for our final question, how can Americans traveling abroad or greeting foreign visitors in the U.S. do more to avoid the ugly American stereotype and become ambassadors of goodwill?

MR. GLASSMAN: Well, first let me say that this has been a great pleasure. And also, I love Christo and I love Billy Joel. Dan Hesse, I know nothing about, but--

Well, how can Americans avoid the-- whatever it is-- the ugly American stereotype....? Let me just say that the best public diplomacy program that we have is one that puts an American face-to-face with somebody from another country. And if we had the money to do a lot more of that, I think we'd be in better shape in the world.

It's very hard to do, though. I mean, we bring 50,000 foreigners here to The United States. We do a lot of exchanges in the other way. And of course, lots of Americans travel abroad. And what happens is, people learn that Americans, in many cases, aren't what they thought we were.

I mean, we just had an IFTAR(?) reception at the State Department, my office did. And we invited young people (those are really the people that my efforts have been mainly addressed to in the war of ideas) but young people from Washington, Muslim-Americans who are staffers in Congress or who work for NGOs here, or are students.

And among the people that we brought in were young people in a program that we call YES, where we bring students from Muslim societies to The United States as exchange students in American high schools all over the country. It's an amazing program. They live with families in Butte, Montana, places that, in many cases, have never met a Muslim, much less somebody from Afghanistan.

So I made it a point to talk to the three or four YES students that we had who were living in Washington who came to the IFTAR. And I said, "Is America what you had expected?" Every case, they said, "No." They expected a very different kind of place, a more violent place, a more uncaring place. They learned within-- They'd only been here for three weeks. They learned about what Americans are really like.

So I don't really have any lessons for Americans traveling abroad. I think they're pretty good at being, you know, who they are as Americans themselves. And I would just encourage them to travel abroad more. You know, I keep hearing from people, you know, "What can I do to help? What can I do to help build America's image? What can I do in the war of ideas?" And frankly, there's a lot that you can do.

We're working with the private sector on particular initiatives that are really interesting, that I don't have time to go into here. But you, as an individual, can simply travel around the world or meet people here in The United States, the many people who come to The United States every year, and show them what an American is really like, which is a pretty good person.

So as I said, I think the very end of my little talk, I talked about a good and compassionate nation. And I think that's what The United States is. I think we know that here, but the rest of the world learns that best by communicating directly with Americans themselves. So thank you very much. (Applause.)

MS. LEINWAND: I'd like to thank you all for coming today. I'd also like to thank the National Press Club staff members, Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, JoAnn Booz and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also thanks to the NPC library for its research.

A video archive of today's luncheon is provided by the National Press Club Broadcast Operations Center. Many of our events are aired on XM Satellite Radio and available for free download on iTunes, as well as on our website. So maybe some folks in Colombia can get this on their iTunes. Non-members may purchase transcripts, audio, and videotapes by calling 202.662.7598 or archives@Press.org.

For more information about the Press Club, please go to our website, www.press.org. And thank you. And we are adjourned. (Gavel sounds.)

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