

*We Hate You
(But Please Send Us
More Austin Powers)*

The Tribeca Film Festival

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USC ANNENBERG

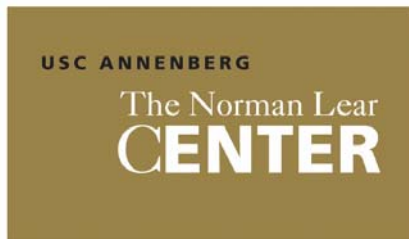
The Norman Lear

CENTERTAINMENT

Exploring Implications of the Convergence of Entertainment, Commerce, and Society

The Norman Lear Center

Founded in January 2000, the Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce and society. On campus, from its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communication, the Lear Center builds bridges between schools and disciplines whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through scholarship and research; through its fellows, conferences, public events and publications; and in its attempts to illuminate and repair the world, the Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice in the field. For more information, please visit www.learcenter.org



The Tribeca Film Festival

The Tribeca Film Festival was founded in 2002 by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff as a response to the attacks on the World Trade Center. Conceived to foster the economic and cultural revitalization of Lower Manhattan through an annual celebration of film, music, and culture, the Festival's mission is to promote New York City as a major filmmaking center, and help filmmakers reach the broadest possible audience. For more information, please visit www.tribecafilmfestival.org



Entertainment Goes Global

The Norman Lear Center launched this venture in 1999 to explore the implications of the globalization of entertainment. Since then, the Lear Center has held roundtable discussions on the topic and received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to research the health effects of [American entertainment abroad](#). Martin Kaplan, director of the Lear Center, moderated a high-powered Writers Guild of America panel called, "[We Hate You, \(But Please Send Us More *Baywatch*\): The Impact of American Entertainment on the World.](#)" In May 2004, the Lear Center took the debate to the [Tribeca Film Festival](#). For more information, visit www.learcenter.org/projects/



We Hate You (But Please Send Us More Austin Powers)

Who is responsible for America's image abroad? On May 4, 2004, the Norman Lear Center hosted a panel discussion at The Tribeca Film Festival about Hollywood, advertising, the State Department, and the impact of our ever-burgeoning media in the Middle East and elsewhere.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Jacki Lyden

Jacki Lyden is a host and correspondent for National Public Radio. She is the author of the best-selling memoir of her mother's mental illness, *Daughter of the Queen of Sheba* (Virago/Penguin), which is under contract to Paramount Studios: Reese Witherspoon and Meryl Streep are attached to play Lyden and her mother. Lyden's *Daughter of the Queen of Sheba* is out in eight foreign editions, and is considered a memoir classic by *The New York Times*. In early 2004, Lyden took a leave of absence to write her second book, a travelogue set in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan – all places where Lyden has reported for NPR. Tentatively titled *Vox Babylonia*, it will be published in 2005 by Houghton Mifflin (Viking Penguin in paperback).

Neil MacFarquhar

Neil MacFarquhar has been the Cairo Bureau Chief for *The New York Times* since January, 2001, writing about the swath of Arab countries from Iraq to the Atlantic, plus Iran (it is supposed to be roughly 22 countries, but given the tumultuous events of recent years, he confesses to handing off some of the smaller or more distant ones to visiting correspondents). Raised mostly along Libya's Mediterranean coast, he returned to the U.S. for his education, studying International Relations at Stanford University. He was sent back to the region as a correspondent for the *Associated Press* from 1988 to 1994, where he covered both the first Gulf War, and the aftermath of the Oslo agreements in Israel and the Occupied Territories. He then graduated to covering Newark and other Metro beats for *The Times*. He speaks fluid French and Arabic, and tries periodically to master more trying dialects like Iraqi.

Kevin Misher

Producer Kevin Misher got his start in entertainment as a financial analyst with HBO after gaining a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania in 1987. Misher then worked in the mailroom at the International Creative Management Agency, and soon after, made the move to TriStar Pictures, rising quickly from creative executive to Senior Vice President. While there, he oversaw a host of movies, including *Rudy* and *Donnie Brasco*. He then spent six years at Universal, the last three as President of Production, where he supervised production on some of the company's

most successful franchises and features, including *Meet the Parents*, *The Fast and the Furious*, *The Mummy* and *The Mummy Returns*, and *Erin Brockovich*. After forming Misher Films in 2001, Misher went on to produce the smash hit *The Scorpion King* and *The Rundown* starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. His current project, *The Interpreter*, starring Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn and directed by Sydney Pollack, is a highly anticipated thriller set at the United Nations.

Jehane Noujaim

Jehane Noujaim began as a photographer and filmmaker in Cairo, Egypt, where she grew up. She moved to Boston in 1990, where she attended Harvard University and graduated *magna cum laude* in Visual Arts and Philosophy in 1996. Earlier that year, Noujaim was awarded the Gardiner fellowship, under which she directed *Mokattam*, an Arabic film about an Egyptian garbage-collecting village. She then joined the MTV News and Documentary division as a producer for the documentary series *Unfiltered*. Noujaim left her producing job at MTV to produce and direct *Startup.com*, in association with Pennebaker Hedgedus Films. The feature-length, highly acclaimed documentary has won numerous distinguished awards including the DGA and IDA Awards for best documentary. She has since worked in both the Middle East and the U.S. as a director and cinematographer on various documentaries, including *Born Rich* (Jamie Johnson), *Only the Strong Survive* (Miramax Films), and *Down from the Mountain* (Coen Brothers).

Keith Reinhard

Keith Reinhard is chairman of DDB Worldwide, one of the world's largest advertising agency networks, with 206 offices in 96 countries. DDB is acknowledged as the advertising industry's most creative network, and was named "Global Network of the Year, 2003" by both *Advertising Age* and *AdWeek* magazines. Reinhard rose through the creative ranks, prompting *Advertising Age* to name him one of the 100 most influential figures in the history of advertising. He lives and works in New York, and serves on a number of New York philanthropic boards. Reinhard is also the president and founder of Business for Diplomatic Action, Inc., an initiative to activate the private sector for public diplomacy.

Miriam Shahin

Mariam Shahin is a contributor to the London-based monthly *The Middle East*, and a producer of ABC's *Nightline*, *Good Morning America*, and *World News Tonight*. She holds a B.A. in international affairs from American University in Paris, and a MA in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She has contributed articles to international publications including *The Guardian*, *Macleans*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Shahin is the coauthor of several books, among them *Unheard Voices: Iraqi Women on Sanctions and War*, and was a contributing author to *Let's Go Guide to Egypt* and *APA Guide, Jordanian*. She has two books due for publication in 2004: *Palestine: A Traveller's Guidebook* and *Palestine Ceramics*. Shahin has also produced numerous television documentaries, including *Arab Rap*, *Women Suicide Bombers*, and ARD's *Hezbollah and Ayman Zawahiri-The Mastermind of September 11th*.

Jay Snyder

Jay Snyder was sworn in by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell as a member of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. Snyder is a principal of HBJ Investments, LLC, specializing in private equity investments, as well as a principal of Ashfield Consulting Group, a financial services firm. His prior government service includes serving as a U.S. Representative to the 55th United Nations General Assembly. As a public delegate appointed by President Bill Clinton, Snyder was actively involved in a variety of issues, particularly those related to the international HIV/AIDS pandemic, sustainable development, and U.S. efforts at UN reform. Snyder has also served at Biocraft Laboratories as vice president of research and development and as a member of the board of directors, and as managing director for the Mayberry Core Asset Management Group. Snyder studied chemistry while attending Boston University and New York University.

Philip Strub

Phillip Strub, Special Assistant for Entertainment Media, is the senior policy advisor and action officer at the Department of Defense regarding requests for U.S. military assistance in entertainment-oriented productions; these have included the motion picture ***Black Hawk Down*** and the television series ***JAG***. Strub attended the American College in France, received a B.A. in political science from St. Louis University, and completed Naval Officer Candidate School in Rhode Island. After a tour of duty in Vietnam as a boat group commander in the amphibious forces, he retired as a captain in the Naval Reserve public affairs community. Strub went on to attend USC, receiving a master's degree in cinema production, as well as the Directors Guild of America's Young Filmmaker Award. While employed in private industry and in federal service, Strub has won many awards for writing, producing, and directing documentaries, commercials, among others. Strub is married and lives in Virginia with his family.

Martin Kaplan

Martin Kaplan is the Director of the Norman Lear Center and Associate Dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication. A ***summa cum laude*** graduate of Harvard, a Marshall Scholar to Cambridge University, and a Stanford Ph.D., he has been an Aspen Institute program officer; a federal education staffer; a Vice President's chief speechwriter; a Washington journalist in print, television, and radio; a deputy Presidential campaign manager; a Disney Studios vice president of motion picture production; and a film and television writer and producer.

We Hate You (But Please Send Us More Austin Powers)

Marty Kaplan: Hello, everyone! For those of you who haven't heard of us, the Norman Lear Center studies the impact of entertainment on society: if you'd like to know more about what we do, www.learcenter.org is the place to go.

We're thrilled to be partners with the Tribeca Film Festival and Institute in this panel, as well as a number of other panels this week. Thank you for coming: we've got a great topic and a terrific panel.

The topic, "We Hate You, But Please Send Us More ***Austin Powers***," looks at the way in which foreign policy and diplomacy is set not only by the government, but also by popular culture, both advertently and inadvertently. All these panels are hosted by ***The New York Times***; we're grateful for their sponsorship.

I am delighted to be able to introduce to you an amazing group of panelists, a dream group, that will address the topic that, sadly, is as relevant tonight as it could possibly be; we also have a dream moderator. But hold your applause for a moment, and please join me in welcoming Keith Reinhard, Philip Strub, Kevin Misher, Neil MacFarquhar, Mariam Shahin, Jay Snyder, Jehane Noujaim, and our moderator for the evening, Jacki Lyden.

Jacki Lyden: It's great to be here tonight. I think that, as Marty just said, this panel would've been timely a week ago. Of course, it is even more timely today with all that we have seen come out of Iraq in the last week.

I'm Jacki Lyden. I've been with National Public Radio for over 20 years. I just want to say that I'm here representing just myself, and not my network: I'm actually on leave right now. I was very keen to be on this panel because after 15 years of being in and out of the Middle East and seeing how the images of our films, our television shows, our commentaries are received in different parts of the Arab and Muslim world, I, myself, am very curious about what our panelists have to say tonight. Everybody has a unique experience, and I think everyone is going to have something

to offer that you wouldn't have considered before; we'll all be learning together. I think a great sense of understanding is one of the things that this panel might help us to achieve.

I've asked everybody to talk just a little bit about why they agreed to be on this panel, why they would come here to to speak to this topic: I'll start with myself.

I have been spending a lot of time in Iraq since October, having first gone to Iraq to cover the first Gulf War. I've been living with an Iraqi family this last month, and I just got home a few weeks ago: I'm writing a book this time. This isn't straight reporting for NPR, I've seen what the family goes through. I'm also writing about my former interpreter, who was one of Saddam's interpreters. So that is what I think might be called the soft news side: soft power, Joseph Nye, the academic's, conception, rather than hard power.

I've also asked everyone if they would introduce themselves a bit, and so I'll start with Neil MacFarquhar, who is the Cairo Bureau Chief for *The New York Times*, he just arrived this morning. Welcome, Neil.

Neil MacFarquhar: Thank you. I am also here just representing myself. *The Times* didn't assign me to this or anything.

When I think about American image and cultural exchanges, my memory always goes back to when I was first studying Arabic in Cairo in the 1980s. I would be accosted on the street by taxicab drivers and people in cafés, and they'd say, "You know, we're watching this American series on TV, and it's supposed to be about this bald guy, but we've been watching it for weeks now, and he hasn't shown up. Have

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you seen this program, and can you tell us when he's going to come?" And I didn't know very much Arabic and even less about American TV series, so I had to ask around, and ask around. It turned out that they were referring to a soap opera called *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and they had translated it as *The Bald and the Beautiful*, and they were waiting for the bald guy to show up.

I think a lot of the misunderstandings between the United States and the Arab world come because people don't look at the other's point of view enough: I think that's particularly true right now, as words really matter in the Arabic language. People really hang on to what the United States says about the regions of the Middle East, and they pay a lot of attention to it. It's not just words used by the United States; it's what their own governments say.

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In terms of the politics of the area, one example has to do with the transition in Jordan from the former king to the current king. The former king spoke really beautiful, Arabic; the current king was mostly educated in the States and England, so he doesn't. So when there were riots or any kind of unrest in Jordan, King Hussein could go on television and make a speech, and it would calm the country because he spoke this beautiful, poetic Arabic; the current king can't. So when there's unrest in the country, the current king is forced to calm the country in other ways. I thought the difference in personal styles was exaggerated, but a colleague who works in my office went and spoke to her mother about it. She asked, "Was King Hussein's Arabic really that good?" And her mother answered, "Of course. How do you think a little Arab guy like that got a tall, blonde American to marry him?"

In the current situation, the United States has gotten itself into difficulty with its vocabulary and the way it addresses the Arab world. It started, unfortunately, right after September 11th when the President was asked, "How long is this fight against terrorism going to last?" His answer was, "It's a crusade." That word is weighted with so much meaning because, of course, they relate it to the medieval crusades, and the invasion of Middle Eastern Europe, and it has never gone away; they have never been able to erase the stigma of that word. We can come back to this point, but I think in all the efforts that the United States has made to sway the region, it comes back to this: their message always addresses the Arab world from an American point of view, as opposed to listening to the Arab world and finding their point of view.

There have been American attempts to set up a television network – the one started in February is called al-Hurra, "the Free One," and it's supposed to compete with the message that al-Jazeera's disseminating. People turn it on. They're interested. They channel-surf, and they're avid consumers of news. But they always say, "The stories are in the wrong order. They're not our priorities." The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they really care about that, and it's usually at the end of the newscast. For the battle of Falluja, the broadcast always talked about the American hostages being taken first, they weren't talking about the people in Falluja. I think that much more needs to be done in terms of listening to the Arab point of view first; it would improve the whole image of the United States.

The same thing has happened with Abu Ghraib. Despite all the discussion by our senior leaders, no one has really addressed the Iraqi people on this and said, "You know, this is what we were trying to prevent when we took over your country." It's always been, "This isn't the American way. This isn't the American system." So the audience is lost because they think no one cares about them. I see it again and again.

Jacki Lyden: We'll obviously be parsing that out a lot, along with phrases like, "They hate our freedoms," and some of the other phrases that I think have been one-way messages to the Arab world. But let's give everybody a chance, and then we'll talk some more. There will also be room for your essential questions in the last half-hour of tonight's event.

Jehane Noujaim grew up in Egypt, and when she's home, lives in New York. She has just produced an amazing documentary about the CENTCOM operation set up by the U.S. government in Qatar. Why don't you tell us a bit about that?

Jehane Noujaim: I grew up in Egypt. I was born in D.C. My mother's from Indiana, from the Midwest, and my father is Egyptian. So a lot of what's been happening in the world recently has been very personally affecting, I think it's what's motivated me to make my film.

A lot of people are very curious about what's happening in the Middle East right now, but I went back to make the film *Control Room* when I just felt like traveling between the U.S. and Egypt. I'd see the same world events covered so completely differently, and people feeling so differently about things that are going on: most of the information they're getting is from their news. And I would think, "How are people supposed to communicate with each other and work things out if their whole basis for reality is so completely different?" So I was very interested in news creation. In Qatar, which is this tiny Gulf state the size of Rhode Island, you have Al-Jazeera, which was disseminating the news to a huge population in the Arab world. I had heard so many negative things about it in the Arab world because they had been kicked out by many Arab governments for criticizing them; they'd also been criticized for being pro-Israeli because they were the first Arab channel to have Israeli officials working on it. Finally, they had come under very heavy criticism in the United States. So I was curious who the people were behind it, and why they were so popular.

In Cairo, everybody would watch Al-Jazeera in the coffee shops; just 10 or 15 miles away was CENTCOM: all of the major news networks were



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based there – ABC, CNN – out of there was most of the news being disseminated to the Western world. This is really what took me there.

I don't make films about people who I don't look up to, or have an interest in following. I think if you're spending so much time with somebody, and you're going to be editing them, and really working with them, you have to admire where they're coming from. So I picked two of the journalists at Al-Jazeera whom I thought were very intelligent, complex people, and a military press officer, who was a very, very open, interesting, and intelligent guy. So that's the genesis of the movie; it'll be opening in May.

Jacki Lyden: Thank you.

Jehane Noujaim: Thank you.

Jacki Lyden: All right. Our next panelist tonight is Jay Snyder. Jay is the Democratic representative appointed last year by the Bush administration to the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. He comes to us from the world of business. His is the 55-year-old commission that's been set up to advise the State Department on the U.S. image abroad. Welcome.

Jay Snyder: Thank you for having me here today. The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy was formed 55 years ago as part of the old U.S. Information Agency; the agency was merged into the State Department in 1999. Our role is to advise the President and Secretary of State on how to understand, engage, and influence foreign publics. I think that today's panelists brought up some very interesting issues, and I'm just thrilled to be able to be here today to participate.

Jacki Lyden: Great, thanks.

Keith Reinhard is Chairman of DDB Worldwide, absolutely one of the largest and most eminent advertising agencies. The agency certainly has something to do with advertising around the globe,

and is an image-maker. Keith is also the President and Founder of Business for Diplomatic Action, which we're going to let him talk about. He's hoping that business executives can step in and talk about the American image in places where the American government cannot.

Keith Reinhard: Thank you, Jacki. We started this project in October, 2001 after the President had a press conference expressing dismay that anyone would not love us. And I thought, "Oh, my God, I hope that the presidents and CEOs of American multinational companies are not so naïve." The following morning, we put together a 17-member taskforce from 17 countries: my brief to them was from the Scottish poet Robert Burns, "Oh, would that God the gift might give us/To see ourselves as others see us." The response was quite astonishing; keep in mind, this was just a month after 9/11, and the sympathies of the world were still very much with us.

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Yet even then, by the end of 2001, we saw in our research alarming signs of anti-American sentiment, not just in the Middle East, but in the entire globe. We serve clients, such as Johnson & Johnson, McDonald's, ExxonMobile, many global clients, who need to know how America is perceived. It occurred to me then that while U.S. business could not really do anything directly about foreign policy, U.S. business could address many of the root causes of anti-American sentiment. So that led to the establishment early this year of a corporation called Business for Diplomatic Action. We believe that this anti-American sentiment can be presented to the U.S. business community as a business problem, and that if we present it as a business problem, U.S. CEOs will, in their own self-enlightened interest, be activated to that effect.

Many CEOs say, "Well, we haven't felt it yet." McDonald's sales are rising around the world, yet we see all the warning signs: ten restaurants in Hamburg will no longer serve you Coca-Cola, or sell you Marlboro, or take your American Express card. One out of four people in the Asia-Pacific recently said, "We are boycotting U.S. brands." One U.S. company said, "We're a global company, one that makes local brands, but in Bahrain, the retailer knows which are the American-owned brands, and they're simply not stocking us." A Vancouver-based Website has 36,000 people signed up to boycott American brands. So we believe that there is a noticeable cooling toward American culture, and that this will be linked eventually to a negative impact on the bottom line. We have identified three non-U.S. policy root causes, and we're lining up action programs behind these to address this alarming sentiment.

If you look at the peer reports, you can see a bifurcation in the research: people who hate the government versus people who hate American people. And yet when you think back, and some of you are old enough to remember World War II, the actions of the leadership of Germany, Italy, and Japan soon fused with our hatred of those countries *and* their people: we have to watch that this sort of thing doesn't happen. Business can do something about that.

Jacki Lyden: Thanks very much. Kevin Misher is here in New York to produce the movie, *The Interpreter*. Those of you walking around the streets of New York recently may have seen this movie shooting on the street. I think I'll let him talk about it: it's about a U.N. interpreter, and is the first film ever shot at the U.N. Welcome, Kevin. This is a timely subject for the film.

Kevin Misher: Yeah, that's actually one of the reasons why I wanted to be here today. Up until working on *The Interpreter*, on which I started on September 10, 2001, I hadn't really thought nor discussed the responsibility nor the power of the image overseas. Certainly, you always discuss the financial impact that occurs overseas because in a business where 60 percent of your income comes from the overseas marketplace, you're always very aware of that. But, largely, you're dealing with it on a genre basis, for example, we know that action films work overseas. You're

not dealing with it on a cultural basis, where you're looking at the film's content, and beginning to talk about what matters, and what's important in the film in terms of its cultural impact.

Authenticity is so important, given the world that this movie is set in. Being allowed to shoot in the United Nations put a responsibility on the filmmakers' shoulders to get it right. Essentially, we spent many, many hours dissecting each of the set pieces, and discussing what was that responsibility. The caveat to all that, of course, is that the ultimate responsibility of the film is that it entertain: it's a political thriller. It's an assassination thriller. So when we went in and discussed with the United Nations what we were going to do, we immediately discussed the fact that, in order to have a thrill, you have to have a villain, and since this is an assassination thriller, there's going to be some violence to that effect, and they understood that. But the thing that was very important was making sure that there was a cause and effect to the violence, as there is in the world. That became something that we policed as best as we could as we went through the script.

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The other reason I wanted to be here is because I realized the power of the star system that Hollywood has created: when you have stars like Nicole Kidman, the message can often get lost.

Jacki Lyden: But you had been saying something of a different nature. Before we came out here, Keith had said he hadn't seen a falloff in demand for at least the American action film from places like Turkey, Egypt, and others.

Kevin Misher: No, not at all. In fact, it's been growing. And you said people aren't paying attention to the warning signs, to the leading

indicators, perhaps, but I think that in terms of business, profits have been growing in line with the rest of the world.

Jacki Lyden: All right. Let's finish introducing ourselves, and then we'll be free to interrupt each other a bit.

Mariam Shahin is a writer and producer. She contributes to a great many publications and also has been a producer for *Nightline*, *Good Morning, America*. For the last 20 years, she's lived in the Arab world, for the last five, she's been living in Ramallah. We are very, very glad that she could be here with us tonight. Mariam, thanks.



The media plays a huge role, and, I think, could play a much more productive role in creating a peaceful co-existence.



Mariam Shahin: Thank you. Thank you for having me. I guess the reason that I'm here is not just as a journalist, and as a communicator, but as a member of two worlds, really: the Arab world and the Western world, and that includes the Americas. For the last four years, where I've been a resident of Ramallah and the West Bank, and have traveled frequently to Iraq, I've found myself in a very difficult position of trying to interpret, explain, and create bridges between the Arab world, which is my home, and the Western world, which is also my home. As such, I feel a huge responsibility, both professionally and personally, to communicate and to help open the channels, because on some level, the communication channels have largely broken down. The media plays a huge role, and, I think, could play a much more productive role in creating a peaceful co-existence, as could both business and entertainment, not to mention politicians: I think that message hasn't been brought across at all. I feel there's a lot of racism that's come across, a lot of misinterpretation, a lot of slogans, and I hope that we can communicate tonight, and that I can perhaps help answer some of your questions.

Jacki Lyden: Thank you.

Philip Strub has come up from Washington. He's the Special Assistant for Entertainment Media at the Department of Defense, meaning he advises a lot of filmmakers who want military assistance to create verisimilitude in their films. We're glad that he could come up, and join us, and tell us a little bit more about what he does.

Philip Strub: Thank you. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be up here. What I do is I take action on requests from filmmakers for assistance in the production of entertainment, movies, and TV shows. We feel that these requests represent a very important opportunity to tell the American public, primarily, something about the U.S. military, and that perhaps as a by-product, we benefit our recruiting and retention programs at the same time.

How important? Well, our recruiting policy folks have some surveys that show that there are large sectors of the public who derive their primary impressions of the military from entertainment, TV shows, and movies. So it certainly behooves us to take this sort of media seriously.

Is this new, this relationship between the military and Hollywood? Certainly not. It goes back at least to 1926, when the Army Air Corps provided a lot of assistance, aircraft, and access to bases for the making of a film called *Wings*, which was very successful, critically and commercially. In fact, it won the first Oscar in the newly created Best Picture category in 1927. And from what I've read, one of the reasons why it was successful was because of its military authenticity. Cynics refer to this relationship as a relationship of mutual exploitation, and I suppose that there's some validity in that description. What does Hollywood want from us? It wants access to our bases, it wants hardware, ships, aircraft, and so on and so forth, to create this military authenticity, which it feels is exciting or interesting. And what do we want? We want the opportunity to have some influence over the scripts. So while there's nothing very new about this relationship, what is certainly new, as you've heard already, is the importance of the overseas market, and so as Hollywood shows greater interest in that, we're interested as well. I'm here primarily to learn

about trying to bridge these big gaps in communications, which we're finding so appalling today. Thank you.

Jacki Lyden: Great, thanks.

I think everyone in this room is probably aware that the image of the American government is at an all-time low in some of these places we're talking about, and that since the events at Abu Ghraib prison were beamed around the world, the bottom of the barrel has just completely fallen out. Neil and I, and Mariam, and probably Jehane, and people who are able to spend time in the various countries of the Middle East know this intimately. It's been a sad and profound journey to talk to some of the same people over time, and see hopes dashed, and expectations not met. All of us as communicators are interested in doing our craft to the best of our ability, and in elucidating the widest variety of opinions that we can as unelected, unofficial representatives of our own country. But then events happen that get ahead of our attempts to communicate, events which, perhaps, we, ourselves struggle to try to interpret. I think that's something that we can talk about as a panel, and should confront, and not avoid.

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One of the things that is often said in response to acts that happen, like the uprising in Falluja by the insurgency there, is that there are people in the Arab world who hate our freedoms, or people in Iraq who hate our freedoms. You and I were talking about that phrase, Neil, and I thought you had a very interesting take on that.

Neil MacFarquhar: As reporters, the classic thing that we always run across in Iran, or in Gaza, or anywhere, you'll be at a demonstration, and they'll be chanting, "Death to America! Death to America! Death to

America!" And then they'll turn around and say, "Where are you from?" And you'll say, "Well, I'm an American." And they'll say, "Could you get me a visa?" But I'm beginning to sense that that's changing. I think Keith raised an interesting point in that after a while, they stop identifying the issues with the government, and they just start identifying them with the people as a whole. I've lived on and off in the region since I was two years old; I was in Saudi Arabia last week, and I was talking about this with someone who works there in a public relations firm who had been there three years. He said, "When I first got here, they would say, 'I hate the Bush Administration!' And then it started to switch to, 'I hate the American government!' And then it was, 'I hate the Americans!' And after that, the pictures in the prison came out, he said, 'I hate you Americans!'" He felt like he was becoming the embodiment of the enemy for the people in his office. Once that process starts, it's very hard to re-create the bonds, though I think there is a lot of goodwill towards America, and its institutions, and its culture. I think people like the United States, but...

Jacki Lyden: Like the values of the United States? Like the values that we, inconsistently perhaps, apply not only abroad, but even to ourselves? But are there still values here that you would say would enjoy a lot of support? For instance, can we talk about truth in publishing, or truth in the press, and at the same time shut down a newspaper?

Neil MacFarquhar: I think Iraq is seen as a great contradiction because all the things that we promise we would do, we haven't done yet to make it this model of democracy. And I think as far as our value systems go, the Iraqis do know a lot about it, and they are confused at the moment.

For example, on the public diplomacy front, the first thing the U.S. tried to do was to create a series of television advertisements for the Muslim world to explain to them about the United States. And there was a Muslim housewife in Iowa—I'm not sure she was in Iowa, but from the Midwest somewhere—who said, "I'm free to pray." And everybody said, "We know enough about the United States. We know you're free to pray; we respect that. We know that if you're a Muslim in America, you're allowed to pray. But we hate your policy, and that's why until you

change your policy towards us, and start treating us with a little respect, you're never going to change our attitude."

When I was in Iraq last, I was trying to assess what their feelings were: I was trying to do a mood piece, and in doing so, I ran into three Iraqis. First off, my translator – I wasn't interviewing him, but he was a 28-year-old guy, an architecture student, who had spent the last six years running from Saddam Hussein's army because he didn't want to be inducted into the draft. So he hid in plain sight: it was an amazing feat because he could get arrested, get his ears cut off, be executed for running from military service. He had tried to escape to the North; he couldn't. He tried to escape to the South; he couldn't. And he was at the point of being suicidal. But then, it looked like the Americans were going to invade, and he became really optimistic, thinking that his country was going to change. After the invasion, as we were running around talking to all kinds of people, he said, "You know, when I ride the bus home at lunch, I can have a political conversation, and I can express my point of view, and I can argue, and I can fight, and I can criticize the government, but I know that I can go home and I can have lunch, and no one's going to come and arrest me for what I said."



My translator said, "I know that I can go home and I can have lunch, and no one's going to come and arrest me for what I said."



On the flip side, we went and talked to a construction magnate. He was dying for American contracts, and he couldn't get into the Green Zone. There was so much security where the Americans were: he tried to send them e-mail messages, and he couldn't get in. He wanted construction contracts. The Baghdad skyline is all blackened and burned-out buildings, still there a year since our invasion; the looting that they shouldn't have let happen in the first place has never been reversed. And he's like, "I want the contract for those buildings, but they say that you have to write an environmental impact statement before you are

awarded the contract, to see whether you really need to rebuild that building." The people who write the environmental impact statements work for U.S.A.I.D.; they don't want to come to Baghdad because the security situation is bad. So the contracts are never awarded. That was six months ago, and I see nothing has changed.

Again, to come back to a theme, it's like they're trying to do things the American way in an environment where it doesn't apply. If you were rebuilding buildings, you'd take the unemployed off the street, and you would change people's mood because they would have the impression that you cared about the country because you're rebuilding their government buildings. Little, simple sorts of steps don't happen, and it feeds on the idea that we don't really care about the people there.

Jacki Lyden: I'd really like both Keith and Jay Snyder to respond to that, because there's two things that this administration has tried to sell to the post-Saddam Iraq, Keith and Jay, one of which is this idea that the country will be free to redefine and rebuild itself. I understand that this is the Tribeca Film Festival, where we'll be talking about films. But at the same time, when I talk about images getting ahead of the films, or outside of the films, or around them, these are the kinds of things that the prospective film audience has to live with. So they might well watch *Shrek*, and then go through the frustrating example that your building contractor went through.

I was in Afghanistan within 10 days of the Taliban's exit, and was amazed that straight from Pakistan, we found probably bootlegged copies of *Shrek* and *Zorro*, we watched them on our Korean DVD player at night. Yet, I would say people are now beginning to look at the Americans more critically. Every time I hear the phrase "you people" when I'm in Iraq, I feel a little shiver go down my spine. And I think, "Oh, if only I could make policy for this whole country, what I would change!"

We have tried two things: one is the idea that we were going to give Iraqis the ability to remake their country for themselves. We've also tried this propaganda campaign – call it what it really has been – al-Hurra, the television network, and al-Sawa, "Togetherness," the radio network.

Jay, I'm going to put you on the spot.

Jay Snyder: Thank you.

Jacki Lyden: How do you think these attempts at propaganda by the government have gone, what was their thinking? And is that thinking still in place? Some of the people involved have now departed.

Jay Snyder: Well, I will say that I think that my fellow panelist has very strong views about both Sawa and al-Hurra.



Seems to me that if al-Sawa is broadcasting 100 percent news, and is the number one station, then it must be having an impact on the populations that are listening.



Jacki Lyden: Al-Hurra's the TV network; al-Sawa's the radio network.

Jay Snyder: Right. Radio Sawa is our Middle Eastern radio network, which produced about 90 percent popular programming, and 10 percent news when it started in March, 2002; it is evolving to be solely more news content and less popular programming. The popular programming is a mix of Western music, as well as Middle Eastern music.

Radio Sawa is the number-one radio station in the eight countries that it transmits in. So it makes no sense to say people aren't listening to the news, it's their number-one station! During the initial phases of the Iraqi war, it broadcast 100 percent news, and was the number-one listened-to radio station in eight countries in the Middle East. Seems to me that if it were broadcasting 100 percent news, and is still the number-one radio station, then obviously, it must be having an impact on the populations that are listening. At one point, I think their market share in

one of the countries, I can't remember which, was a 30-share, which is enormous by broadcasting standards.

Jacki Lyden: My lucky traffic night driver always listened to Radio Sawa, which is mostly music now. But he likes music that's fast, and all the music I brought over was stuff like the Beatles, so he'd say, "Very nice. Let me turn on the radio."

Jay Snyder: Some of the research that has been done by A.C. Nielsen demonstrates that the amount of people who are listening to the news portion of Radio Sawa, and who believe that the news is fair and balanced, has gone up significantly since its inception. So I understand that there may be anecdotal evidence about people who don't appreciate it, or who think that it is not worthwhile to listen to, but the overall statistics don't bear that out.

Al-Hurra is our brand new satellite news network. It's broadcasting now about 18 hours a day, and will be broadcasting 24 hours shortly. It's a station in a very crowded market, but from the anecdotal evidence that I've heard, people think of it as fair, and balanced, and independent. Now, that doesn't mean that there aren't people who dislike it: a lot of state-run television enterprises particularly dislike it. And there may be people who don't realize we're still developing the format. In any case, both stations are operated out of our Broadcasting Board of Governors, which has done an extraordinary job over many years in creating an independent, government-backed media.

Jackie Lyden: How much has the Bush administration spent on disseminating images and radio since 2001? Neil might know if you don't. I think right after 2001, the State Department decided that it wanted to foster better images of America.

Jay Snyder: I don't know the total value. I know al-Hurra had – I actually have some numbers here, I think – al-Hurra had a budget of \$62 million, and it's been increased, with a supplemental budget of \$40 million.

Jacki Lyden: Neil, you wrote about one of the exceptions to al-Hurra in Cairo, about the offer that would create a satellite.

Neil MacFarquhar: Jehane, because you spent a lot of time in markets in Jordan, and in the occupied territories, I'm sure those are two of the countries where al-Hurra and al-Sawa are most watched, I'd be interested in your current perceptions. How much do people really pay attention?



People in the Arab world are not interested in conflict. They would love to see American freedom in Arab countries, it's important to them.



Jehane Noujaim: What I want to comment about al-Hurra is that those people who receive it often do turn it on to see what the Americans are saying. Of course, it's perceived as an Arabic language channel, but people – and I think this is very important – that people want to know what are the Americans saying. Perhaps they don't think that al-Jazeera is telling them about the Americans' position sufficiently, and CNN certainly is not.

But with al-Hurra, the Arab population is able to see what the American position is, and the fact that they're turning it on is a strong indicator that they want to know. They're interested. They're not as they're often portrayed, one-sided and wanting to believe only one thing. People in the Arab world are not interested in conflict. They would love to see American freedom in all Arab countries, in fact, it's important for them. The vast majority of the people want to believe that America has come to Iraq with the best intentions.

Of course, there are cynics who said from the beginning, "Well, they're just here for our oil." People do turn in to al-Sawa, to al-Hurra, to understand what the American position is. And the word and language is very important. People cling to words. It's very important what

American officials say, how journalists express themselves, what words they use to describe what's going on. Is what is happening in Falluja considered terrorism, or is it considered an insurgency against an occupation army? Very important. And they look for small clues in the American media. "Are the Americans understanding how we feel?" It's terribly important to them, and in that sense, Sawa and Hurra have a big role to play, and the American intention can, in fact, be explained to the Arab public through these channels, though I'm not sure they always are. Certainly, Sawa is very popular for its popular music programs, but...

Jacki Lyden: People outside Iraq tend not to watch al-Hurra so much, but I think both these outlets indicate to the Arab public what American intentions are. And when American casualties in Iraq are the top news item, then they get really upset because this is the channel in Arabic for them. They want to know who the victims are, how many Iraqis were killed today, how many, you know, Palestinians. And people do care about Americans killed, even soldiers, and also Israelis killed. They want to know. They're not disinterested, that's not true. But they also want to know about their casualties, and that their casualties matter. And I think that's very important. I think both these channels could play an important role if they were more in tune with the sensibilities of the people that they're intended to address. Do you want to comment on that?

Jehane Noujaim: I was talking to another Saudi newspaper columnist, and he's very disappointed in Al-Hurra. He said, "I really wanted them to create a station that we would really be proud of, that would teach us something, that would tell us how news should work, and that it would be in Arabic so a lot of people will understand it, and it hasn't happened." He's a general supporter of the United States, and it's a disappointment.

To its credit, al-Jazeera has provided an incredible service to the Arab world, whatever its biases, because it has opened up the dialog, and it has forced governments to come forward and make statements. When there's a bombing in Saudi Arabia now, they come out within an hour or two, and they start making statements about what's happening because they're afraid what's going to come on Jazeera, and they want the facts out, and they want to try and control it. In the old days, they would've waited three, four days. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the first Saudi announcement

came three days after it happened. And they know that al-Jazeera has got this Islamic overview, but now, they move much faster. They get the news. I keep it on in my office because I know that they are very good at getting news, and they will be the first ones to report something in the region: they get it on there as quickly as possible.

So I think that in condemning al-Jazeera, the United States is making a big mistake, and it's interesting how other nations handle it. For example, almost every Russian ambassador in the Middle East is fluent in Arabic, and they go on that station, and they speak in classical Arabic, and the people are blown away. It's like, "Wow, the Russians speak Arabic really well! They really respect our country!" There's no American ambassador who does this. There's one or two people in Washington who speak Arabic well enough to go on that station and present the point of view, and they're just not on very often: it's a big handicap.

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There's only one or two people in Washington who speak Arabic well enough to go on that station and present the point of view; it's a big handicap.
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Jacki Lyden: Of course, I don't understand al-Jazeera. I've seen it a lot in the house where I was staying in Baghdad: it and the BBC were on.

But I want to ask, are American films considered? We want to get back to Kevin and ask if there's any expectation. Kevin, you said you wanted to make a good drama or a good film, and you wanted to follow the conventions of drama and entertainment, and you want the pay-off, you want the funny lines. But does American culture get parsed on al-Jazeera? Does one see the whole package? We know that al-Jazeera is right there for news as al-Jazeera sees it. I mean when I – and, by the way, we've neglected to say that most of the journalists who have been killed in the Iraq conflict are the Arab journalists, and the Iraqi, and Palestinian, and Egyptian, Iranian, who have, by far, suffered the most

because they're the first people at the checkpoints. Not even a question of who may or may not have been at fault, they're the ones killed; they're literally on the front lines. But back to my question – do they parse, would you say? How much do they deal with American culture?

Jehane Noujaim: It's tough, because I spent six weeks there, and now I'm expected to be an expert on al-Jazeera, where I followed just two guys there. But they're really a news station: they started to have a sports section recently, they're starting a documentary channel, they're coming out with an English channel. But I didn't see much about American culture on there.

I think maybe why I chose al-Jazeera is because I knew that there would be a fascination with them in the Arab world, as well as in the U.S., to know who are the people behind it because one has heard so much. That's how you gain an audience for a film.

It's interesting, because in Germany, for example, al-Jazeera hasn't been talked about that much, so when we showed the film in Germany, people were like, "What's al-Jazeera?" whereas it's been talked about so much here that everybody knows what it's about, and is quite curious about it.

I was interested in following the al-Jazeera journalists I followed because, for example, one of the guys used to take classes in Washington with Cheney: he went to University of Arizona, he was a BBC journalist, and a Sudanese Brit. You see him getting very emotional about what's happening during the war, but a lot of that comes from the fact that he really has these very positive feelings about the United States, he lived here in the '60s and is kind of a hippie, and he really believes in what the United States stands for, its freedoms, and the opportunity here. It's so true that you hear all of this criticism about U.S. foreign policy, but then you look at the lines outside the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, and...

Jacki Lyden: Applications for visas haven't fallen off.

Jehane Noujaim: Yeah, it hasn't stopped at all. People really have a love for what this country stands for, its freedoms, and many of its values. As Neil was saying about the guy that turns around and says, "Well, can you get me a visa?" The other guy in the film who grew up in Iraq, he's a Jordanian, is one of the senior producers at al-Jazeera, and he's very critical about many of the Arab governments, and of what the U.S. was doing in Iraq, but he said nonetheless, "I would send my kids to college to the States in a second. This is what I really want for my children because I believe that this is where they're going to have the most opportunity, where they're going to learn the most, have the best education." People still really feel that.



A senior producer at Al-Jazeera said, "I would send my kids to college in the States in a second. I believe that that is where they'd have the most opportunity."



Jacki Lyden: Images can hurt a lot, they can get ahead of our ability to define an issue. I'm sure that Keith has noticed this as an advertising executive. The images of the corpses hanging from the bridge in Falluja and the images of what went on in Abu Ghraib compelled people around the world.

Keith, can you say something about how that plays out for you? Kevin, I'd also like you to talk about whether the quintessential American film has a place in a world that we fear from all these polls, a world wherein our direct experience is ever more polarized. First, let me start with Keith: can you possibly make a film or sell a product that's more powerful than these direct experiences?

Keith Reinhard: Well, let me start with film. As you know, I'm neither a filmmaker nor a diplomat, but we know, for example, that one of the root causes of anti-Americanism in the Middle East is the pervasiveness of America's pop culture, and that there is a cooling among certain population segments toward that culture. However, according to the

research in the Muslim states, especially, the young people are especially attracted to what some would say is the worst of our entertainment product because they grew up in a very restrictive environment. And so they willingly and enthusiastically engage with the entertainment product that is available to them, especially that which their parents and the mullahs would characterize as sexually immoral and criminally violent.

Jacki Lyden: So they want skin.

Keith Reinhard: Exactly. And so from the filmmaker's standpoint, this is how you make money in many regions of the world. But if that's your total impression of the United States, or if that forms a large perception of the United States, then in the hands of our enemies, it is a very powerful weapon to say, "This is what the United States is really like."

When you put that fact together with the population pyramids, where you see that in the emerging countries especially, the young people are the vast majority of the population, and are learning, strangely enough, to hate the country which provides them with this entertainment: it's quite a paradox. According to the research, if current trends continue, then one could speculate that our sons and daughters and grand-daughters and grand-sons will face an anti-Americanism more virulent than we face today. We think the antidote to this is that the entertainment industry can do some things which will counteract this notion. In our diplomatic initiative, we have some definite ideas on how to handle it.

Jacki Lyden: What are those ideas?

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In the Muslim states, young people are especially attracted to what some would say is the worst of our entertainment product.
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Keith Reinhard: Well, starting with young people: the head of the *Sesame Street* Workshop is on our board, and as you know, *Sesame* has done a wonderful job around the world of becoming localized. But the State Department made a comment which infuriated the *Sesame* people, they said, "Now *Sesame* is going to do an Egyptian program which will teach American values to Egyptians." This is exactly the opposite of what *Sesame Street* was doing. We were trying to embrace Egyptian values, and use *Sesame Street* techniques, and so forth, to impart knowledge and to embrace that culture.

America is universally admired for its technology: what we need is a technology company to get together with, let's say, a Lebanese broadcaster whom we've identified to be the producer. Let's say Microsoft or IBM enables the technology part, *Sesame* teaches the art, and young children begin to learn about technology in both their Arabic language and in the English language; the star of the story, however, is the Lebanese broadcaster, and the broadcast is reported by Lebanese journalists. We also have some MTV ideas that could be very attractive. That's our take on the region.

Jacki Lyden: Kevin brought something really interesting with him. Are you going to be able to show that on screen, the image that you brought?

Keith Reinhard: I think we can do that.

Jacki Lyden: This image embodies the paradox we've been discussing. Can everybody see it?

Keith Reinhard: It's a follower of al-Sadr, and it was in *The New York Times* recently.

Jacki Lyden: This is a picture some of you might've seen from the *New York Times* in the last couple of weeks. It's of a follower of Muqtada al-Sadar with a Nike cap that's been made to look like a balaclava. For me, this picture shows how images get appropriated in unforeseen ways. Yeah, go ahead, Keith.

Keith Reinhard: We talked a little bit about this today, about what I fundamentally believe is the best of American films. First, I just want to say this: the Hollywood movie? There is no one Hollywood movie. Hollywood puts out 600 movies a year, so some are good, some are bad, all different genres, all different types of movies, some very violent, some have great sexual content, some are silly little comedies, some are of great moral value. So it's a difficult thing to say, "This is what Hollywood does."



The average cost of a movie is \$103 million, which is more money for one film than they've laid out for al-Sawa and al-Hurra.



I brought just a couple of facts, not to bore you, but I think they're important. According to the Motion Picture Association of America, last year, the average production cost of a movie was \$64 million. The average print and ad costs – that's the full marketing costs – were \$39 million. So the average cost of a movie is \$103 million.

Jacki Lyden: Which is more money for one film than they've laid out for al-Sawa and al-Hurra.

Kevin Misher: This summer, actually, you'll be able to see it: it'll happen week-in and week-out. It's been all over the local trades, if not the news: it's going to be the summer of the \$200 million film. That's negative cost of the film. So the financial considerations truly become global when you have dollar figures that are that great. And as I said in my opening statements, when 60 percent of your box office comes from the overseas marketplace, what people think of you as it pertains to they're buying your product becomes of critical importance.

I think it's impossible to separate what makes America from what makes an American film. The best of American films are about what I think is essential to all of us, which are American civil liberties. Look at what I

think is the most classic of American genres, the Western: the Western is all about the iconic class, the individual, who stands up to an oppressive system. That's in the DNA of the American film. In a repressive society, a film that celebrates the ideal of the individual over the system will be regarded as a threat. So I think that may fundamentally be a problem: you're never going to be able to pull that strand of DNA out of the chemical make-up of American film.

Jacki Lyden: It's interesting, because you bring up a contradiction: that the Western would certainly appeal to someone who felt that they were fighting an occupier, because they would identify with the individual.



The movie Western would certainly appeal to someone who felt they were fighting an occupier, because they would identify with the individual.



We do we want to hear from you, Philip, about which American movies the U.S. military has liked, and worked on, and approved, and which it hasn't; I know you're a technical advisor. If you could just run through that list, and then we're going to get to the questions and answers.

Philip Strub: Sure.

Jacki Lyden: A little of that list 'cause it's a long one.

Philip Strub: Yeah, it's a very long list, both those that we worked on, and those that we didn't work on. Just recently, some of the pictures that we worked on were *Behind Enemy Lines*, *Black Hawk Down*, *We Were Soldiers*, *The Sum of All Fears*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Windtalkers*, *Antwone Fisher*. We worked on a couple films you've probably never heard of, one called *The Green Dragon*, which was an art house picture. One of the misconceptions about what we do is that we're only interested in action pictures: this was a film that was a dramatization of

some of the cultural obstacles that the Vietnamese had to resolve when they were resettled in the United States after the fall of Saigon in 1975 – a great number of them were resettled temporarily at a Marine Corps base in Southern California. So it's not that we define what we're going to work on by genre at all. The pictures we haven't worked on recently, and these are not necessarily films in which we were approached because very often, people just go ahead and make them without ever bothering to contact us, were *Buffalo Soldiers*, *Basic*, *High Crimes*: these are several pictures we didn't work on, for one reason or another.

From our standpoint, the more significant thing isn't so much movies we worked on, or TV shows we worked on, or did not work on, but rather, filmmakers with whom we've had both successes and failures, if you will. I can name a whole bunch of directors and producers with whom we've worked, and with whom we have not worked, depending on the script that they're producing: Wolfgang Petersen, Ridley Scott, producers like Jerry Bruckheimer, Mace Neufeld. People who've had a relationship with us are not hesitant to contact us, and start or resume a dialog. It's what it's all about.

Jacki Lyden: What was the trade-off when getting involved with the American government or the U.N.?

Kevin Misher: When you're dealing with the U.N., there's going to be some impact to the creative bottom line. That's not the financial bottom line, that's creatively what you're going to be allowed to do. Everybody's got their own agendas, and the agenda of the American military is to protect their image, so you have to trade off authenticity versus creativity in what you're trying to accomplish. We weren't going to be able to shoot at the United Nations until Sydney Pollack, who's directing our film, was able to sit down with Kofi Annan and really look him in the eye, and say, "Listen, this is what the film is about. These are the ideals that we're trying to represent in the film." And Kofi Annan, as representative of the U.N., had to feel comfortable that they were going to be represented. He read multiple drafts of the screenplay, and...

Jacki Lyden: So what were those ideals? I'm just curious.

Kevin Misher: The first thing that was stated was that words matter; that's really the premise of our film, the issue of diplomacy versus violence. Again, it's set against the backdrop of a political thriller, but both the characters played by Nicole Kidman and Sean Penn represent different ideologies, one that words matter, and the other, that actions matter. So it's a clash of their ideologies as they try and solve this mystery.



There are a lot of countries where movie theaters are actually banned, like Saudi Arabia and most of the Gulf countries.



Jacki Lyden: Neil wants to say something, and then why don't people who have questions come down to these microphones, and we'll get started on those. Neil?

Neil MacFarquhar: You have to acknowledge the point that there are a lot of countries where movie theaters are actually banned, like Saudi Arabia and most of the Gulf countries. They have none, so people get movies on video, but what they get is sometimes limited. In Cairo, I almost never go to movies because, first of all, any movie that contradicts the Muslims' sense of propriety is cut out, so sometimes they're incomprehensible because they're so cut up.

Secondly – I went to see *The Hours* in an upscale movie theater, and it's a family event. They bring their kids, it's midnight. Three-year-olds are running around the audience. People are eating, they're talking on their cell phones. No one's really paying attention to the movie. It's like you're out with the family and, yeah, there's something going on the screen, but it's not really happening. So the idea that movies are the

medium with which you're going to influence people seems rather remote to me.

I think it's the same thing with Radio Sawa. If somebody who drives around in their car all day listening to Britney Spears next sees a picture of an American woman soldier pointing at a naked Iraqi man in jail, he's not going to say, "You know, I listen to Britney Spears all day! I'm not going to think badly of those Americans because I really like her music!" I think people are sophisticated enough in that part of the world to parse their feelings about culture, and what they like for entertainment, and how they feel about the political situation: that's where I think that their interest in our culture creates an enormous feeling of goodwill. And then, on the political side, we fall on our faces because we never address those concerns.

Jacki Lyden: Do we have some questions in the audience? Much as we like to hear ourselves talk, we're here for you; we hope that you'll participate. Yes?

Audience Member #1: Hi. I've lived in the Middle East fairly extensively, and until September, 2001, it was like a wall coming back here. Trying to talk to people about what it was like there, you know, what the culture...

Jacki Lyden: Which country did you live in?

Audience Member #1: I went first to Iran in 1975; I've also lived in Saudi Arabia. I was married to an Arab, so I had relatives in Syria. I traveled in Syria and Jordan.

Jacki Lyden: You're saying it's like a wall trying to explain yourself?

Audience Member #1: The ideas that Americans have about the Middle East are so divergent from what it's actually like to be there, but then you go to a movie or watch television, or watch the news, and you see stereotypical attitudes – it's like self-reinforcing feedback. I'd be particularly interested in hearing what Keith Reinhard thinks about the relationship between America's lack

of understanding about the Middle East, and how that plays out in advertising media and culture, because it seems as if we're talking about why they don't understand us, but we don't understand them. That, to me, is the biggest problem.

Keith Reinhard: That's a very good question, and a point well taken. Our own criticism regarding the attempts at videos and films on behalf of the State Department was just that, that we did not stop to listen. Americans do not listen: Americans talk – we see that in every country of the world. When we ask for advice about Americans, they say, "If you must talk, if you can't listen to us, will you please at least lower your volume?"



When we ask for advice about Americans, they say, "If you must talk, if you can't listen to us, will you please at least lower your volume?"



There is an enormous job in creating understanding within the United States, not only of the Middle East cultures, but of any culture: Americans do not know the difference between Austria and Australia. Three years ago, when asked in a multiple choice question who the combatants were in World War II, 40 percent of graduating seniors in U.S. high schools picked that Germany and the United States had fought the Russians. These are high school seniors graduating! When we did research on the streets of 17 countries, where we asked people for their positives and negatives about Americans, the negatives were all about what you just inferred – Americans are ignorant of others' culture and arrogant, the supreme arrogance being that we assume everybody wants to be exactly like us, and they don't. One person said, "If we were to host an athletic event called the World Series, it would occur to us to invite other nations."

Then there's the language thing, that Americans don't even attempt to learn another language. We think that as a part of our initiative, U.S.

business could do a great job in educating its own workforce, in educating students abroad. We asked 100 of our offices to give us 10 tips on what you would say to Americans traveling or working abroad. The response was more than robust – first of all, they were startled that an American would ask the question, quite sure that we would not listen to their answers, but we did. We turned this content over to a group of students at Southern Methodist who are passionate about this issue, and they have produced a *World Citizens Guide*, which we will distribute through the Study Abroad program. Two hundred thousand kids a year leave this country to go and, among other things, it reminds them graphically that if the world were 100 people, only one of those would be a U.S. citizen. It also gives them some of the research we have about how Americans are regarded, and what they can do, and we're hoping to create a general audience version that airlines can at least hand out with every international ticket just to start to raise awareness. It's an enormous job, but you are quite right.



**The question is no longer, "Will the United States be a world citizen?"
The question is, "Will it be a good one or a bad one?"**



Finally, we took videotape of these person-on-the-street interviewees saying, "The Americans are like a disease. They come into the body. They don't care about the body, and they're ignorant," and so forth. And we showed it in nine U.S. cities, this 2.5-minute tape which experts tell me is representative: we stayed out of the major metropolitan centers, but we did 100 interviews about it in each of nine cities across the country. One out of four of those respondents said very clearly, "Who gives a shit?" Another woman in California said, "These other countries are chicken crap." We've got a big job to do, but the question is no longer, "Will the United States be a world citizen?" The question is, "Will we be a good one or a bad one?" That's the only question.

Jacki Lyden: And the tone, of course, set by the administration plays into all these things.

Keith Reinhard: As anybody in diplomacy understands, style is often substance...

Jacki Lyden: Absolutely.

Keith Reinhard: ...And so your point about tone is so right on.

Jacki Lyden: We've been talking about language from the very beginning, the language of unilateralism, how you talk to people, your body posture. I speak enough Arabic to get in and out of taxis and in and out of hotels, but I often really hope my body posture is saying a lot, because there's so much I know I don't know. Fortunately, my reception in places has been mostly terrific, but this is not what we're here to talk about. Let's take...

Audience Member #2: You've been talking primarily about the Middle East, but it seems like anti-Americanism is more universal, and that the people in Europe and Canada like us less than they do in Egypt and Iran. How is the United States supposed to react to stuff like that? What should the American foreign policy be to say, Europe or East Asia, or in South Korea, where they want us to get out so the North can come in and take over?

Jacki Lyden: I don't know that it is necessarily true that the people in those countries like us less. When I look at all these polls, I think it's a matter of who they talk to. But I think that the people in Europe and Canada feel a lot more empowered to disagree with the U.S. in their choices, to live their lives outside the American sphere of influence. One of the things that they're looking at is our policy right now, as some of the criticism that's coming from the Middle East has been coming from them for many years. It's just growing in volume, and a series of policy decisions that have compounded and inflamed this perspective. We were talking about when people say, "They hate our freedoms," but you, Neil, were saying you've never interviewed anybody who said, "I hate freedom," you know, or, "I hate my mother." Well, maybe perhaps some individual does, but we act as if these people don't have values similar to our own.

Audience Member #3: Here's a question that may have bearing on what you've just said, and this pertains to a Roper study just released last week: an interesting question was asked in 30 countries, "Do you believe your values match up with American values or what you perceive as American values?" Which would you suppose is the number-one country that would agree with the statement, "We think our values match American values?" The answer is Venezuela. And which was the country that said, "American values least match my own"? That would be Germany.



Americans themselves said, "America no longer represents my values."



Jacki Lyden: Hmm, that's interesting.

Audience Member #3: There was something else very interesting about this study: the United States dropped to the middle because Americans themselves said, "America no longer represents my values."

Jacki Lyden: Do we have another question here?

Audience Member #4: Pardon me for paraphrasing the last point, which is really awful, but there was a quote on *The West Wing* where a lead character said, "They'll like us when we win." I think that's become very much the American attitude. "They'll like us when we win." That was a quote on *The West Wing*.

Also, you talked about *us* versus *them*. But there's always an *us* and there's always a *them*. To us, they're the *them*. To them, we're the *us*, or whatever. You know what I mean.

The third thing is you mentioned the Western theme in movies, and how that's what appeals. But during every period of war, there's always American movies that are propaganda. John Wayne is a great example: World War II films during the period of Korea, where John Wayne was the sort of iconoclastic American hero – even those war films were Westerns. They were just Westerns with M-16s instead of Springfield rifles.

Kevin Misher: Yes, absolutely. I think these themes are in all of the bigger films – the films that everybody's buying, the big films, the spectacles. They tend to buy American production values as much as anything else. And sprinkled through all of them is the iconoclastic hero.



There's a chicken-and-egg quality to this: are our movies, our American culture, a reflection of us, or do they shape the way we view the world?



Jacki Lyden: Well, we're going to have to finish up here, Kevin. The last concluding thought: we know that people need entertainment the way they need, you know, salt; they need time out. They need to leaven their lives with something that takes them away from realities or overwhelming problems. Do any of you think that in the creation of images in this country, be they advertising or films, or radio or print, for that matter, that anyone is going to pay more attention? Do you think anyone will think about the audience as being perhaps, if not unfriendly, then at least not immediately loving us? Is that going to enter our consciousness as creators?

Kevin Misher: I think there's a chicken-and-egg quality to this: are our movies, our American culture, a reflection of us, or do they shape the way we view the world? That'll be interesting to see how that plays out, because I think you're going to stop seeing American films that portray such over-the-top villainy, and you're going to start seeing films where authenticity is of greater import. I think as a result of this, you're going

to see multiple points of view, where it's not just going to be, "Hey, let's go over there and blow them up." It's going to be, "What are the repercussions of the violence?" I know a number of other films which are in the works, films you may know about that are being discussed right now, which will represent a significant shift.

Jehane Noujaim: I just wanted to say quickly regarding all the difficulties that we've faced with cultures understanding each other over the past couple of years: I used to work at MTV, and tried to pitch them the following: we used to have this show where we sent out cameras to kids across the United States, and they filmed their own stories and sent us back the footage, and we edited it together. It was called *Unfiltered*. And I pitched it to MTV to get them to do the same show, but internationally, giving kids cameras – kids who were in places of conflict. But there was never an interest. You know, "U.S. kids are not interested in what's happening outside the borders," this, that, and the other.

Now, it's very different – there's been a lot of people who have contacted me. MTV has contacted me. "What about that show idea that you were thinking about?" This pitch is concentrated in the Middle East because there is such an interest in the Middle East right now. There is a positive movement that people are starting to feel, an interest among the youth to understand what's happening abroad.

Jacki Lyden: I'm teaching 10 Afghans between the ages of 19 and 35 starting in June to do audio radio diaries of their own lives. I understand they don't speak any English at all, so this is really going to be a challenge.

I think you'd agree, this is the kind of panel that could go on all night. I was thinking, as I prepared for it, about the following quote: writing for *The New Yorker* fifty years ago, A.J. Liebling said, "The power of the press goes to those who own it; the power of images goes to those who create them." But I think that's fundamentally changing – I think we're going to see that the power of image-makers, and purveyors of language, and images, and ideas will, I hope,

include more and more of the perceptions of those who view them, or listen to them, or read them.

We're certainly glad that you came; thank you for your attention in what I think has been a fascinating debate and panel.