Cultural Diplomacy in Historical Perspective—From 19th Century World's Fairs to the Cold War

MODERATOR:
VOLKER BERGHAHN, *professor of history, Columbia University*

PANELISTS:
JOHN BROWN, *research associate, Georgetown University, and former U.S. foreign service cultural affairs officer*
FRANK NINKOVICH, *professor of history, St. John's University*
PENNY VON ESCHEN, *professor of history, University of Michigan*
MICHAEL WARNER, *historian, Central Intelligence Agency*

BERGHAHN: This is the hour of the historians. There is on my extreme left, Professor Frank Ninkovich. He is very well known, has been working in the field of cultural diplomacy from a historical perspective for many years, and I hope he will start off to give us this long-term view. Next to him is Michael Warner, who is a historian at the Central Intelligence Agency. As some of you will know, during the Cold War period, the CIA was deeply involved in cultural diplomacy. Next to him is John Brown, who has worked at USIA, one of the other major agencies in this. And then finally, Penny Von Eschen, who has just finished a fascinating book on jazz and cultural diplomacy. As you can see, we are starting off with agencies, if you like, that try to conduct cultural diplomacy, and then we will have Penny at the end to give us a view of the artists and the cultural producers that were sent abroad and their connections with the international community.

I should say straight away that this is a very courageous panel, because you probably know that historians are often—here I have to make a self-confession—rather cowardly. They rummage in the past and find out all sorts of wonderful and fascinating things, but when you ask them, "Are there any things to be learned for the present and perhaps even for the future?"they leave it to the political scientists or economists to talk about that. I hope that this panel will not be cowardly, but on the contrary will stick their necks out and also in the question period will try to look at some of the lessons, perhaps negative but also positive, that can be learned from the past. In this connection I would also like to mention perhaps one aspect that could also be raised in this panel—partly because it's my own research—is not just the official cultural diplomacy of USIA and the State Department and other official bodies in this country, but also, very important and often forgotten, the big foundations and American philanthropy and what they achieved in the past in terms of projecting an image of this society. Which, when you draw the balance sheet, was in fact a very important initiative. Millions of dollars, as you probably know, went precisely into the support of cultural ventures abroad.

There is currently among historians a very fascinating discussion, a very sophisticated discussion, about the meaning of Americanization, actually. It is no longer seen simply as America imposing itself almost like a steamroller, not just in military or economic terms, but also in cultural terms. It's seen now as a much more sophisticated dual-carriage highway, if you like, where indeed ideas and people are exchanged. If you ask me, from a historical perspective, one of the most successful programs was the exchange of people, and that may be something we should try to get back to.

We always forget that, I believe, 50 percent of the population in Iran and also in Iraq now are young people, who were born after all these crises of the 1970s and 1980s. I'm a product of the "jazz generation," if you like, in the 1950s, that became fascinated by American popular culture. It's very important that what the United States brought—certainly to Europe but also more broadly to the world after 1945, during the Cold War—was a very broad definition of culture. The Europeans had a very narrow definition, as you know, which was essentially high culture, and anything beyond that was beyond the pale. That created many criticisms and tensions between different continents. But this broad definition should be remembered, because it's not just popular culture and American "mass culture," so-called. I look at the activities of the big foundations—the Ford Foundation, for example, which had an international program that promoted precisely cultural ventures, but closely related to it they also had an overseas development program, which actually spent more dollars abroad, and that was a program that supported education, poverty programs and very important ventures also in the sciences. The American definition of culture was really as broad as you can possibly think of it, and that is an important element that perhaps we should remember when we now look at the cultural activities of the 1900s, going back to the World Exhibitions and then especially looking at the Cold War period.

NINKOVICH: Modern efforts to promote cultural relations were pioneered by the European powers in the era of high nationalism. In the race for cultural influence, the French set the early pace by setting up institutes abroad to teach the French language and literature. In 1910, a Bureau for Schools and French Foundations Abroad was created in the Foreign Ministry. German cultural foreign policy started with the establishment of a division for cultural affairs in the German Foreign Office in 1921, but the pre-war imperial government had supported German schools and libraries abroad and had lent a hand in the formation of public school systems in China, Turkey, Japan, South America. The first British Institute was founded in 1926, but the integration of cultural and foreign relations came with the creation of the British Council in 1935, which was intended to serve as "a school of national projection" and to mediate between governmental and private needs. In the U.S.S.R., the All Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) was created in 1925 as an arm of Soviet foreign policy.

The Europeans had also been culturally active in the private sphere. The Rhodes scholarships, established in 1902, are one important example. Another well-known illustration is the Alliance Française. Founded in 1883 to promote the French language and culture abroad, the Alliance saw the United States as its most fertile ground for the expansion of French civilization. Between 1880 and 1900, the Alliance established committees in San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Texas, Chicago, Denver, Brooklyn and New York. During the next 14 years, it established some 150 new local committees around the country. By 1904, the Alliance counted more than 25,000 members in the United States.

Although the U.S. government was a latecomer to formal programs of cultural relations as a foreign policy activity, it had a long, if haphazard, history of promoting an understanding of American culture abroad. In 1867, the Smithsonian Institution was appointed as the official center for exchanges of literary products and government documents. The many world's fairs and expositions held in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which generally required modest governmental backing, were intended to project to non-Americans a favorable image of the American way of life. At first, this meant an emphasis on industrial innovation, indeed, the term "Americanization" first made its appearance in the 1867 Paris Universal Exposition as a synonym for industrial modernization. By the early 20th century, U.S. efforts sought increasingly to promote national artistic and intellectual achievements as well as industrial successes.

A small number of cultural efforts had obvious foreign policy connections. The remission of the Boxer indemnity in the amount of $18 million, which resulted in approximately 2,000 Chinese being trained in American universities, was clearly aimed at strengthening U.S.-Chinese ties. The exchanges of statues and busts between Wilhelmine Germany and Theodore Roosevelt was a symbolic way of improving U.S.-German relations. World War I brought a potentially path-breaking change with the creation of the Committee on Public Information, or Creel Committee, but the brief period of American belligerency and the desire to return to "normalcy" led Congress to ax the agency, which, in any case, was distrusted by many because of its propaganda activities. The government backed a few other modest efforts. In 1908 and 1915, Pan-American scientific congresses were held under the auspices of the Pan American Union. In the 1920s, the U.S. government worked through the Union to promote cultural relations with Latin America. By the 1930s, as an outgrowth of the Good Neighbor Policy, the United States began to sign modest cultural conventions with Latin American nations.

However, if one tries to trace the origins of systematic programs in cultural relations, one must look to the private sector, especially the philanthropic foundations—especially the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Guggenheim Foundation—which in the two decades following World War I established an extensive system of international educational exchanges. The foundations were themselves trying to systematize earlier private efforts. By the end of the 19th century, an imperium of American schools abroad in Cairo, Beirut, Sofia and most notably, in China, was in existence. Here, too, the initial pattern was the emergence of a hodge-podge of unrelated activities consisting chiefly of various inter-university exchange programs and missionary efforts.

The major philanthropic foundations substituted system for chaos. In the core field of educational exchanges, they took a major step by subsidizing the creation of the Institute for International Education in 1919, a clearinghouse which is still in existence. The Rockefeller Foundation's extensive programs in China were an example of a well thought-out attempt to promote modernization by cultural means. As part of its four decade-long effort, the foundation created a modern medical school, the Peking Union Medical College, in 1919, promoted the study of Basic English, funded fellowships and subsidized relations between scholarly societies of different countries.

By the late 1930s, educational and scholarly exchanges had developed to the point that greater centralization and coordination were desirable. The Division of Cultural Relations was created in 1938 with a first year budget of $28,000. The new Division was intended to be a clearinghouse to coordinate a hodge-podge of private activities, and not a policy making body. Policy, such as it was, would flow from advisory committees composed of representatives of private institutions.

Although nearly everyone involved professed satisfaction with this setup, there were some problems. It was no secret that private organizations hoped for government funding without government direction, a hope that ran counter to the common sense notion that money is power. There was also agreement on the need to avoid a close connection with U.S. foreign policy. The antipathy to getting into bed with the State Department stemmed from a fear that cultural activities might come to be seen as propaganda. Cultural advocates worried that the activities themselves would be compromised if they were perceived as political. It may be useful to recall that, even at the high tide of the New Deal, education was not conceived to be a sphere fit for federal intervention. However, the creation of the Division was justified in part by the German cultural threat in Latin America, which we now know to have been exaggerated. This willingness to cry wolf to the legislative branch would establish a pattern for the future in which cultural programs would be justified before the legislative branch by linking them to national security.

Unlike the European programs, early American proponents of cultural relations were liberal internationalists, who believed in "international understanding" as a way of lessening international conflict and, eventually, eliminating war. Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, an important early figure, looked to the eventual creation of an "international mind." In a period of rapidly growing functional interdependence, the promotion of international understanding seemed to be a prudent way of assuring that greater global integration did not collapse. Conflicting ideas and beliefs could be reconciled by improved communication. Cultural internationalists were driven by a universalist belief that, at bottom, all cultures had common interests. In principle, at least, the programs viewed cultural relations as a two-way street on the assumption that Americans had much to learn abroad. The programs were also elitist in character—that is, they defined culture as high culture in the expectation that those most influenced by exchanges would be in a position to put their new understanding

to effective use in positions of importance in their societies. The ambition was to create a like-minded, liberal, international elite that would be the core of an effective world opinion.

Once created, the cultural programs had little opportunity to function as intended. The rapid onset of World War II and unstoppable pressures to conscript cultural programs in the service of the war effort quickly transformed them in ways no one had anticipated. For many, culture had a very important role to play, as the war seemed as much a conflict of ideas as it was a matter of power politics. The result was that cultural relations very quickly took a political turn. Cultural attachés were created within the State Department in 1943. New agencies with new functions acted on different definitions of intercultural contact. The Office of War Information, the reincarnation of the Creel Committee, specialized in the use of mass media in the effort to sway international opinion. Unlike programs of cultural exchange, it was concerned to influence mass culture in the form of public opinion, in getting rapid results and in a one-way flow of information, and in forging close connections to the twists and turns of foreign policy. In Latin America, the coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, under the leadership of an ambitious Nelson Rockefeller, felt few qualms about the mobilization of culture. As part of the surge of enthusiasm for international organization, the United States also played a leading role in the creation of UNESCO, the cultural arm of the U.N., which began its career in 1946.

During the war, there were some debates about the degree to which the programs should explicitly promote American values. But those who warned against going too far too fast in the embrace of politics were trying to hold back an unstoppable tide that ebbed only with victory. After the war, it was not certain for a few years that cultural programs had a future even if tied directly to foreign policy. To be sure, cultural programs were an important feature of the American occupation policy in Japan and Germany and later in the Marshall Plan. But there was a good deal of conservative, sometimes nativist, resistance within the 80th Congress to continue funding of activities that had been justified as wartime measures.

The onset of the Cold War proved to be the salvation of cultural programs. What could not be sold in the abstract or in practical terms was peddled much more easily under the label of anti-communism. Convinced that the Soviets were making strenuous cultural efforts, Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which formally adopted the programs that had grown up during the war and, since then, had seemed on the verge of abandonment.

In agreeing to institutionalize the programs, Congress also institutionalized various tensions that the programs had never resolved—tensions between culture and information, elite and mass targets, nationalism and internationalism and short-term and long-term approaches. These embedded tensions had made impossible the formulation of any coherent concept of cultural relations. They also ensured that the cultural programs would have a rather rough ride, politically, even at the height of the Cold War. Congressional skepticism about their usefulness was a constant. Liberals and radicals also raised objections on occasion, as in the late 1960s, when the programs were tainted by association with the CIA. Tension between those who advocated informational programs tied to foreign policy and those who continued to argue for an apolitical internationalism made for some interesting times in the cultural affairs bureaucracy. But the problems did not go away with the end of the Cold War. On the contrary, present-day difficulties are very much a product of this muddled history.

In the remainder of this presentation, I want briefly to highlight five problem areas. The first problem is that of institutionalization, which, more than 50 years after it should have been settled, is still rather confused. If one looks at the organizational history of the cultural programs, one cannot help but be amazed at the bureaucratic confusion, the constant reorganizations and shuttling about, the changes of rationale and the ups and downs of funding. Part of the problem is traceable to the changing emphases of different presidential administrations. But the more fundamental difficulty is conceptual—the failure to define in a convincing and consistent way what the governmental function of cultural relations is.

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The second problem has to do with the public-private relationship. Although a governmental role in culture has over time become more widely accepted, Americans continue to have mixed feelings about a state role. Unlike Europe, where the history of aristocratic patronage and the acceptance of a more powerful state make a leading governmental role unproblematic, Americans can be quite uncomfortable about being asked to perform cultural functions for political purposes. On occasion, the disturbing element in the public-private relationship has originated in the private sector. When intellectuals or artists have expressed ideas that seemed not in keeping with mainstream views, the result, at times, has been a backlash against government funding of cultural functions. Democracy and art-for-art's-sake have not always been reconcilable in a governmental context.

A third problem has to do with the definition of cultural relations. What exactly are we talking about? Are we actually talking about culture? If so, the history of the programs displays remarkably little critical analysis of fundamentals. For example, if cultural relations are indeed about culture, few have noticed that cultural relations were and are, in fact, *anti-cultural* relations. This is a problem that is usually finessed verbally by phrases like "breaching of cultural walls" or "intercultural understanding." But internationalism as an ideology would be totally incoherent and unsustainable if culture were the last word in our definition of humanity. At a minimum, it implies the promotion of a worldview that is supra-cultural. At the maximum, it requires the creation of a "global culture." This deracinating side of cultural relations has become more obvious from a post-Cold War perspective, an era in which the clash of ideologies has been replaced by a conflict of civilizations. It is of central importance to understanding our relationships with underdeveloped areas because it presumes the necessity of major transformations in their ways of life. The idea of cultural relations as a two-way street is clearly out of place in this context.

Fourth, the relationship between culture and policy has always been rather muddy. One often sees cultural relations referred to as a "tool" of foreign policy, but it takes only a moment's reflection to realize that they are not tools in the ordinary meaning of the word. Tools are used to do specific things, to achieve specific tasks. But cultural programs are not instrumental, in terms of rational means/ends calculation, because we still do not know how they work, or even if they work. The early cultural advocates feared that too close a connection to policy might defeat the purposes of cultural relations. But even in the most optimal of circumstances, it was not clear how they would function. For instance, shortly after the Havana Conference, Raymond Leslie Buell of the Foreign Policy Association admitted that "the defect, or perhaps the advantage" of promoting cultural diplomacy "is that we never know whether it has any results or not." So, then, should the emphasis be upon high culture or mass culture? Intellectual relations? Mass opinion? The mass media? The long term or the short term? Only when questions of instrumentality are answered satisfactorily, and it is not clear that they can be answered, can choices begin to be made rationally about what kinds of programs to emphasize.

The means/ends problem is something that Congress, long a whipping boy of cultural enthusiasts—and oftentimes for good reason—has intuitively understood. It was always very hard to sell the cultural programs to Congress, which was not only ideologically suspicious of the cultural programs, but which also, understandably, wanted to know in quite concrete terms what they were achieving and how they were achieving it. Inasmuch as the internationalist rationale alone was insufficient to get Congress to open its purse strings and explicit instrumental rationales were not available, the programs were sold, *faute de mieux*, as a way of combating communism in the Cold War. It is this need to show results that has led some to see promise in using Madison Avenue and advertising as its model. I personally am quite skeptical of this approach. Advertising is a business necessity, in part as a matter of self-defense, but it cannot save a bad business. Can Detroit continue to sell cars if it doesn't improve its product? The ad campaign, "This is not your father's Oldsmobile," one may recall, has been followed up by the disappearance of Oldsmobile altogether.

The success of cultural policy depends to a significant extent on the wisdom of foreign policy with which it is associated. If the foreign policy is sound, cultural policy can only be a supplement—there are some good reasons why cultural specialists rank low in the foreign policy pecking order. If not, no amount of good cultural policy can retrieve faulty political and military policies. To the extent that U.S. foreign policy is internationalist and is successful, an internationalist cultural policy will also likely be successful, or so I believe.

But even if they are associated with wise foreign policies, the expectation that cultural programs can create a favorable international climate of opinion is unrealistic. They might, perhaps, contribute in some measure to this end. But in my view this is something that is beyond the reach of any cultural or informational machine; indeed, it is beyond the reach of foreign policy altogether. Cultural relations are an act of faith based on the creedal assumption that contact, which produces a transformation, preferably an expansion, of intellectual and cultural horizons is, on balance, a good thing. Only the long-term outcome of globalization, whose success depends on a myriad of other factors, can tell us whether that assumption is true or not.

Fifth, and most broadly, the relationship between culture and power in its broadest terms remains unexplored. The sense of the early cultural pioneers was that too close an association with power had a tendency to corrupt. But inasmuch as the exercise of power is unavoidable and cultural relations always take place within political contexts, compartmentalization may be impossible. The extreme expression of this point of view is summed up by Charles Colson of Watergate fame, who believed that "if you have them by the ____, their hearts and minds will follow." It is clear to me, at least, that cultural policies cannot work well in the absence of relations of power, but we are unable at this point to generalize about the kinds of political contexts in which cultural policies work well. Historians of international relations who are interested in cultural affairs are only now beginning to take up such issues, but there may be no general answer to that question.

BERGHAHN: I now introduce Michael Warner, and I rather envy him, because he is one of those historians who has access to material that most of us will only receive 40 years from now.

WARNER: Professor Ninkovich's survey of the institutions of American cultural diplomacy puts me in mind of another set of federal agencies. These were created by the Roosevelt administration in the world crisis before Pearl Harbor and served with distinction in the World War but fell on hard times just afterward. The Cold War brought them statutory sponsorship, but congressional attention, both in the McCarthy era and during the investigations during the 1970s, was not an unmixed blessing for them. Their activities are sometimes difficult to explain to the public, and, after the Cold War, some wondered if they needed to exist at all. But recent events have won them more attention.

I am speaking, of course, of the Central Intelligence Agency and its predecessors, and I draw this parallel with cultural diplomacy not to be arch, but to note how the similar institutional paths of cultural diplomacy and intelligence work in America and suggest that this nation, since 1940, has gathered many of the appurtenances of its mentors and the statecraft of the great powers of Europe. To glimpse some of the ramifications of this development, let us examine that brief period in American history when cultural diplomacy and intelligence work were secretly combined.

In 1976, a Senate Select Committee headed by Frank Church of Idaho, issued a lengthy public report that stands as a monument to public accountability. Its chapters on the Central Intelligence Agency revealed, for instance, that the CIA had briefly and secretly become one of the world's largest grant-making institutions. Indeed, in the mid-1960s, CIA funding was involved in nearly half the grants in the fields of international activities made by American foundations other than the big three, Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie. Some of these grants went to influence foreign, cultural and intellectual elites like Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Most such subsidies ended abruptly in 1967, although the agency

sponsored what it called, the "Radios," until 1972. I do not have time to examine such programs in detail, but I can give a brief account of the CIA's role.

Covert cultural diplomacy arose from the Truman administration's efforts to halt the spread of communism on the continent and to give the Marshall Plan a chance to rebuild the economies and societies of Western Europe. "Psychological warfare" was the term of the time, and it seemed a powerful new weapon that totalitarian regimes employed with more dexterity than their democratic opponents. Fighting communism with bullets and bulldozers was not enough, Truman's lieutenants argued. America and the West also needed to publish the social, economic and cultural achievements of liberal democracy. This is one reason why President Truman told Americans in 1950, "We must make ourselves heard around the world in a great campaign of truth."

Truman officials soon found, however, that organizing such a campaign was harder than it looked. Time after time, American and foreign groups and leaders discovered that overt government agencies and private sector programs seemed unwilling, or unwilling to help. Propaganda seemed downright un-American, and congressmen such as Joseph McCarthy wanted no government funds spent on groups whom they deemed critical of the American way of life. Covert funding thus seemed the only alternative to leaders in both the Truman administration and its CIA. In the words of agency veteran Tom Braden, "The idea that Congress would have approved many of our projects was about as likely as the John Birch Society's approving Medicare." As diplomat George Kennan also added in 1967, "This country has no Ministry of Culture. The CIA was obliged to do what it could to fill the gap."

The CIA's early psychological warfare operations accordingly sought to prevent communism from winning new adherents among various sectors of foreign societies, such as students, youth, labor and intellectuals. These projects began during the Korean emergency, when the emphasis was on getting operations started as fast as possible in anticipation of a Soviet assault on Europe. At the time, the agency's Covert Action Office was brand new and was thus dependent on the foreign connections of concerned American citizens, many of whom were themselves friends and contacts of CIA officers. Many projects continued after the Korean War, well into the 1960s, enjoying bipartisan support at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Nevertheless, this era of the CIA's history ended abruptly in February 1967. As dissent over the Vietnam War rose on American campuses, the new left magazine *Ramparts* exposed the agency's long ties with the National Student Association, the nation's largest intercollegiate student group. Reporters from the mainstream press followed leads in the *Ramparts* story, and soon tracked agency money to other clients, including the Radios and the Congress for Cultural Freedom. President Johnson banned covert subsidies of student groups, and the CIA quietly terminated many of the compromised projects.

Much debate has ensued since 1967 over the degree of ideological conformity that agency subsidies imposed on artists, writers and others who wittingly, or not, took CIA funds. I cannot settle this controversy here or anywhere else, but I can note, what CIA leaders believed to be the case, while the operations were still ongoing. They were convinced that covert funding of a diverse range of publications, exhibitions, conferences and activities was ultimately in the interest of the United States, because it demonstrated to foreign thinkers, who might be wavering between East and West, that art and thought could flourish in liberal democracies. And there was, indeed, a bias toward funding particular political views, but that bias was toward what the Agency called the non-communist left. The CIA's late Gordon Meyer explained, "The right wing and conservatives had their own sources of financial support and the real competition with the communists for votes and influence was focused on the left side of the political spectrum."

Volker Berghahn is much better qualified to speak on the Agency's effects on Europe than I am. So I will only mention that testimonials for groups such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom and other projects are not that hard to find, nor are criticisms hard to find either. A final accounting must await a full opening of Eastern and Western archives. Future historians, however, will also want to consider the bitter allegations and countercharges prompted by the 1967 revelations of covert CIA subsidies, as well as the extravagant speculation that surrounds them, even today.

Since this gathering more rightly looks to the future than to the past, I offer two parting observations on the CIA's secret campaign to influence the hearts and minds of foreign cultural and intellectual elites. That experience surely represented something unique in American history. Never before had the United States attempted such an effort, which was already a thing of the past when the Church Committee issued its report in 1976. The end of the Cold War, as well as stricter covert-action oversight, make it unlikely that the agency will ever again have the authority and the means to do something similar. And finally, I submit that the unlikelihood of repeating such covert cultural diplomacy is not necessarily a bad thing, since it is always a risky business with significant unintended consequences.

VON ESCHEN: In 1955, Felix Belair, Stockholm correspondent for *The New York Times* proclaimed that "America's secret weapon is a blue note in a minor key ..." and named Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong as "its most effective ambassador." The jazz/Cold War metaphor was infectious. In 1956, Armstrong performed before a crowd of more than 100,000 in Accra, Ghana. Signifying on the trumpeter's virtuosity and pervasive fears of nuclear disaster, Africa-wide *Drum* magazine quipped, "Satchmo Blows Up the World." Beginning with Dizzy Gillespie's 1956 tours of the Middle East and South America, over the next two decades, the State Department sent hundreds of jazz musicians on tours of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and South America.

While the State Department performing arts tours involved many areas of the performing arts, it was jazz that became the pet project of the State Department. Unlike classical music, theater or ballet, U.S. officials could claim jazz as a uniquely American art form—and there are many resonances with modern dance although time does not permit discussing them today—and, critically, jazz was an African-American art form. U.S. officials pursued a self-conscious campaign against worldwide criticism of U.S. racism in a world of 40 new African and Asian nation-states and a world of U.S.–Soviet competition for the resources and allegiances of formerly colonized peoples. The glaring contradiction in this strategy was that the United States promoted black artists as "goodwill ambassadors"—symbols of the triumph of American democracy—when America was still a Jim Crow nation.

As I discuss in my forthcoming book "Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz, Civil Rights and the Cold War," which Harvard is publishing in 2004, in the Cold War cultural presentation programs, U.S. officials quickly caught onto the value of jazz over didactic programming and propaganda. Through informal polls taken at exhibitions, State Department and USIS officials learned that Soviet citizens, for example, tended to resent what they regarded as the heavy-handed propaganda of Radio Free Europe. In contrast, they welcomed the cultural programming of Voice of America, and Willis Conover's jazz programs ranked as the most popular. Praise for the success of the early tours flowed from audiences and the State Department alike. "The language of diplomacy," one Pakistani editorial argued, "ought to be translated into the score for a bop trumpet." Jazz tours worked precisely because they were *not* propaganda. Musicians talked freely about their own struggle for civil rights and put their own stamp on diplomacy by promoting egalitarianism. In Karachi, Pakistan, Dizzy Gillespie refused to play until the gates were opened to the "ragamuffin" children who couldn't afford tickets.

The ironies and contradictions of the jazz tours were explored in "The Real Ambassadors," a 1962 collaboration between Dave and Iola Brubeck and Louis Armstrong. Both artists and their bands had recently returned from tours. Both artists and their bands had deliberately been sent into foreign policy crises—Brubeck into the 1958 Middle East crisis, and Armstrong into the Congo crisis. In the song "Cultural Exchange," note lyricist Iola Brubeck's telling observation that "no commodity is quite so strange, as this thing called cultural exchange." Indeed, cultural exchange was a commodity that closely pursued the quintessential Cold War commodities, oil and uranium. The very first stop of the hundreds of jazz performances that would follow was in Abadan, Iran. As Dizzy Gillespie's band's alto saxophonist Phil Woods remembered, they flew into to "the smell of crude oil." While in Abadan, the musicians lived in the oil workers' barracks "as the upper echelon workers did." In addition to the Brubeck tour during the Middle East crisis and Iraqi coup of 1958, the Duke Ellington Orchestra ended up in the middle of the November 1963 Iraqi coup. But rather than focus on the coups, I want to talk about the Ellington performance before the coup. This is a very painful example, but we have had a lot of discussion here about how to form alliances with forces of modernization and democracy in the Middle East, and I want to suggest that artists and musicians are a powerful force for connecting modern, democratic and critical elements in any society, as they certainly were in the Middle East 40 years ago.

In November 1963, the Duke Ellington orchestra's eventful visit to Baghdad, Iraq began auspiciously with a performance at a party celebrating the founding of the U.S. Marine Corps at the home of U.S. Ambassador Robert C. Strong. Noting especially that the 188-year-old birthday party took place in a 1200-year-old city, one U.S. official reported, "The ambassadorial residence rocked," as 400 Iraqis and Americans danced to "such old favorites as 'Take the A Train,' 'Mood Indigo,' 'Sophisticated Lady' ... or crowded around the orchestra for a closer look at the ageless Duke." The first concert on November 12 not only sold out but was broadcast in its entirety by the Baghdad Television Station, Iraq's sole station. "An enthusiastic first-night audience," reported U.S. officials watching the concert at Khuld Hall near the Presidential Palace "while all over the city thousands sat around television sets in open-air cafes and restaurants or in the comfort of their own homes and enjoyed the artistry of one of the great contemporary figures in American music."

How we got from there—Ellington's ease in a modern Iraqi nation—to here is certainly not a simple story, but the musicians' views of the tour may help us to ask the right questions. On this same tour, when the Ellington musicians protested that they were only playing for elites already familiar with jazz when they had expected to play for "the people," escort Officer Thomas Simons struggled to reconcile his role in the State Department with the musicians' view of "the people." The orchestra members, Simons explained, had a "different conception of what they were to do" than the State Department. Simons reported: "The orchestra members had misunderstood the word 'people,' and were disagreeably surprised." Positioning himself as a mediator between the musicians and the State Department and not attempting to mask his sympathy for the musicians' perspective, Simons attempted to explain that in that "part of the world ... the 'people,' the lower classes, do not in fact 'count' as much as they do with us, and that we are trying to reach out to those who did count." Few of these arguments made any real impression. Band members continued to feel that they would rather play for the "people," for the men in the streets who clustered around tea shop radios.

Of course, today, one might argue that it was U.S. officials who had misunderstood the word "people," *not* the members of Duke Ellington's orchestra, and that misreading of "the people" as Middle-Eastern neo-colonial elites in unholy alliances with Western oil interests has cost the people of the region and the world dearly.

Artists have a good deal to teach policy makers. Jazz artists were warmly embraced throughout the globe, not by presenting propaganda, but because of their creative brilliance and the fact they spoke freely about their own struggles for freedom. Indeed, the international power and appeal of jazz lay, not as some officials would have it, in representing the music of a free country. Rather, the jazz ambassador, epitomized by Louis Armstrong,

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conveyed through his inimitable horn and voice, hopes and aspirations for freedom—something audiences from Africa, to the Soviet Union and the Middle East, could relate to all too well.

The jazz tours worked not because they claimed to present a perfect or superior American democracy, but precisely because they exported the conflicts and contradictions of America, even tending to convey an oppositional American culture. Jazz Ambassadors presented America at its creative, irreverent best. Indeed, American artists need to be at the forefront of reconnecting to the forces of modernity, creativity and democracy throughout the globe.

BROWN: Let me very briefly talk about the United States Information Agency in terms of its drawbacks, if you will, maybe failures, and in terms of its achievements. As you know, the United States Information Agency was created in 1953 at the height of the Cold War to be a propaganda agency—the word was not used—in part because the State Department did not want to soil its hands with the nasty word "propaganda," even though the administration then in power believed we had to win the war of minds through propaganda. This agency was created in 1953 separate from the State Department, and it existed until 1999, when it was consolidated into the State Department after the demise of communism. There is no definitive history of the USIA. The archives and the records are hard to get at. They're scattered. I understand a British scholar, Nicholas Cull, is working on a history. I've been in touch with him, but there is no history and it's really a challenge to write.

What would be the drawbacks of the USIA viewed from a historical perspective? I would say four of them. The first one is that, it's not that it practiced propaganda—I personally don't think there's anything wrong with propaganda, *per se* The best scholars on the subject would suggest that it's a morally neutral process of persuasion that has existed under other names since at least the ancient Greeks with their rhetoric. The problem is when propaganda is used stupidly or abused, and unfortunately there are many examples in the history of USIA since 1953, when it really did not do a very good job with propaganda. When the propaganda was vulgar, it was simpleminded—when the propaganda was directed to an audience the USIA did not know very well. In 1978, the Office of Cultural Relations became part of USIA. It was then in the State Department. That, on the whole, may have toned down a bit the propaganda-side of USIA by making USIA responsible for the administration of the Fulbright program, for example, which up until then had been within the State Department. Oddly enough, when USIA was consolidated in 1999, Secretary of State Albright characterized it—if I recall the words correctly—as the greatest anti-propaganda agency in the history of the United States. So it went from being a propaganda agency to an anti-propaganda agency. But its main drawback, as I say, is that it often did not do very intelligent propaganda, if you will, with war.

A second drawback was that it was hampered by bureaucratic rules, regulations, obstacles, you name it, which slowed it down. The institutionalization … meant it was a smaller agency than the State Department, but nevertheless, there were many bureaucratic obstacles in Washington and abroad that made implementation of programs difficult.

A third drawback was that USIA didn't quite know what it was doing much of the time. There's no word that's harder to define than public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is equally difficult to define. "Public diplomacy" was coined in the mid-1960s by Dean Gullion of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy as an effort to describe activities that went beyond traditional diplomacy, people-to-people exchanges, that went beyond national borders, if you will. So they came up with the term "public diplomacy." By the 1970s, USIA appropriated the term to try to define what it was doing. It essentially was U.S. government-supported programs, and information, education and culture. But still, the debates within USIA, at the State Department, in the Congress, about what USIA is doing, continued throughout its history. And many people in the field were not always sure either.

A final drawback is that very often USIA was not on the front burner, it was a secondary player. The directors of the USIA did not have the ear of the White House. There were exceptions. For example, when Charles Z. Wick was director of the USIA, he was very close to Ronald Reagan. But as a rule, the directors did not have the pull to have a strong impact on policy. Edward Murrow, who was, as you know, director during the Kennedy administration, made the point. He said, "Look, we want to be present at the take-off, not at the crash-landing." Very often USIA was there at the crash-landing. "What are we going to do about it now? We've got to explain what happened." So those are some of the drawbacks, but I would say on the whole the achievements were considerable as well.

I would list four main achievements. The first one is that, for all its faults, USIA and the people working in the field for USIA represented America in all its complexity, really. And especially, I would argue, at the field level where USIA officers were able to talk one-on-one with people, to visit academic institutions and so forth, it presented a human face of the United States that had a considerable impact during the Cold War. The second achievement was the establishment of a framework of educational exchanges that still exists today. The Fulbright program was created in 1946. As I say, it was in the State Department until 1978, but it still exists today. I think USIA did manage to maintain the integrity of the Fulbright program and to make it quite efficient despite the bureaucracy. For example, the Fulbright Alumni Associations were encouraged by USIA. It's a very important thing, people who took part in the Fulbright program organizing themselves abroad to maintain traditions of this wonderful program. A third achievement—and here I feel very strongly about this because I'm essentially hedonistic—one of the things that USIA provided through its cultural programs, through its exhibits, were moments of sheer delight. I think that's very important abroad, for Americans to be able to say, "Let's look at a beautiful picture together; let's look at a wonderful ballet together." Finally, USIA instilled memories, shared memories between Americans and foreigners, that still continue today. Programs like the International Visitor Program enabled distinguished foreigners to come to the United States and examine a problem or issue that interests them for two to three weeks. They remember that trip. Just as people who visited American Centers throughout the world remember that first time they looked at an American magazine, and these memories are tremendously important. I thank the USIA establishment.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm Naima Prevots from American University. I wrote about the modern dance going abroad. I have a couple questions. One—this is for Penny—was it not the State Department and the USIA in terms of the jazz? Then also, did you write at all about "Porgy & Bess"? That's another, rather fascinating issue in terms of sending issues of racism abroad. Then I have two comments. One, there seems to be a deep hesitation, which relates to Trisha Brown's comments about art. There are issues of low art/high art. We seem to be afraid of sending high art abroad, and I think that is not something other people are necessarily afraid of. I don't think we repeat the Cold War paradigm where we sent Martha Graham and so forth. Yesterday we heard a lot about Hollywood. I wonder if we might address the issue of what's wrong with sending some of our great artists, who are not necessarily commercially viable. And then the big question that was raised is, who are we sending this for? Can we reach everyone, and who are we trying to reach? The issue of the elite, the non-elite, the people … do we send different kinds of things? Can everyone receive some of the same kinds of things?

VON ESCHEN: "Porgy & Bess" is very much related to our topic. That's something Eisenhower, who was very complacent about race relations and just completely uninterested in change, understood—that that had a powerful effect abroad, so I think that was what prompted educated policy makers to dive into jazz.

The issue of high art versus low art is fascinating. [The State Department] was fixated on promoting high art and high modernism and they define jazz as high modernism. There are all sorts of contradictions here. It divorces it from its origins in African-American working-class institutions of leisure. It's as absurd to say that Armstrong isn't an entertainer as to say he isn't an artist. But, nonetheless, that was the ideology they fastened onto. What I see in the tours is that that ideology breaks down by the '60s, precisely because of the issues you're talking about. Who are they trying to reach? They're trying to reach a lot of audiences. Initially it's more of the elite. They then try to get to the youth and broader audiences. So that whole notion falls apart. Related to the issue of race, they start exporting by the late '60s R & B, a lot more pop music and gospel, which they wouldn't have seen as high art in the initial state.

BROWN: As somebody who was in the field, if you will, for 23 years, I grew somewhat skeptical trying to define audiences too specifically. One of the wonderful things about the Center is that, in a sense, they were generous to the extent that they didn't ask you to be part of an audience to participate in the program. The doors were open to everyone. That doesn't look very good on paper, except to say, "Well, we had 1,200 people," when you're asked to define specific audiences. Giving a certain leeway in the kind of audience you're addressing provides a symbol of generosity, which is very important in cultural diplomacy.

NINKOVICH: If you speak about effectiveness, you have to talk about cause and effect, and we just don't know what the relationships are. It's much too complicated. So, as I indicated earlier, cultural relations in my view are not instrumental in a technical sense, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't have cultural policies or promote cultural interaction. We have lots of government policies in other areas that are not instrumental. For example, the space shuttle might be considered one of them. Some may consider military programs to be another, another aircraft carrier. We have lots of programs that profess to be instrumental but which are, in fact, not, but are just being sold that way. I think the commitment to cultural relations has to be rooted in a larger understanding about the dynamics of international relations in which all your categories of thinking—such as realism or imperialism, in my view—are outdated. Essentially, we are committing ourselves to an internationalist destiny, which is more than anything, an act of faith, I believe. And if you say that's silly, I could make a long argument—and in fact I have done, in some of my writings—that this is what American foreign policy in the 20th century has been all about, and that the promotion of cultural relations is no different.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name's Susan Jenkins. I'm a writer, and I also have been a cultural specialist for the State Department in the last year. I traveled to Uzbekistan and Bangladesh with an exhibit of photographs taken by the photographer Joel Meyerowitz, whom I worked for for the last five years. I'd like to ask the panel if you're aware of what kinds of programs have been happening in the last 18 months, since Sept. 11, and if you could characterize those at all in the context of this discussion.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Tanya Melich, and I'm a political writer and political consultant. I wonder if the panel would speak about the impact of the Olympics, about Mohammed Ali, about all of the American teams that have gone all over the world, all the way back to the '50s, and give us a perspective on how that relates to the discussion we've been having about art.

BROWN: In the past 15 months, to speak very generally, there's been a close connection between propaganda and war. In World War I, the Committee on Public Information was established by Woodrow Wilson in 1917 as a propaganda agency to whip up the war spirit at home and to sell the message of democracy abroad. In World War II, you had the Office of War Information (OWI) that essentially produced propaganda, somewhat reluctantly, given that you had people like Archibald MacLeish in the OWI. In the Cold War you had, of course, the USIA which was created to propagandize to fight this war. There's a war on terrorism now, and again the pattern is coming back, that because of this war—whether you like the term or not; people have legitimate reservations about it—the emphasis for the past 15 months has been on propaganda. Again, as I was trying to point out in my presentation, there's nothing wrong with propaganda in itself, but for the past 15 months the kind of propaganda that's been produced by this administration has been appalling. It shows an absolute ignorance of the audience, as was pointed out yesterday by Professor Bulliet, of how important it is to understand the audience, especially in Muslim lands. The results were lame videos about American values and Muslim Americans. There has been an abuse of propaganda, in that it has made it the most important public diplomacy tool of this administration at the cost of cultural and educational programs. Finally, what has been happening in the last 15 months, in my modest opinion, is that there has been

an absolute disconnect between the propaganda and the policy. As a result, the world isn't convinced of what we did in Iraq, and as a result there are all kinds of conspiracy theories: "What are the Americans up to?" That's perhaps an overly partisan response to your question, but I really do think propaganda is what's been happening in the last 15 months.

VON ESCHEN: I very much agree with that, and it's striking that it seems a real throwback to an earlier period, and in a sad sense what was learned from the enormous value of the arts and things that were clearly not propaganda. The question on sports I find very, very interesting, and there are many parallels. I don't think arts and sports are the same thing, but I don't want to draw a sharp distinction and say that sports are very different because it's that Olympic or versus-the-Soviet-and-Chinese intense competition that you get. But in terms of the racial politics of sports and promoting black American athletes—and you bring up the example of Mohammed Ali, which was not something necessarily promoted through the State but became this national and international symbol—I think the racial politics are quite similar.

NINKOVICH: Just a general comment on the larger implication of international opinion about hero-athletes, be it Mohammed Ali or Michael Jordan or whomever. What's important here is to try to ask yourself what the larger significance of this is. My way of understanding it, which may not be yours, is that this all connects with the development of something that we might call "world opinion." This is something that's been talked about since at least the 19th century, and the existence of which has been strenuously denied by various theoretical types, in particular realists who argue it doesn't exist, it can't exist and so on. But I think if you're talking about something like sports, you see a version of it in that narrow area. You can see it in a host of other areas as well. This is important, I would argue, because it's incontestable that we have a global society, a functioning global society, not very well at times but functioning nevertheless. The question that that raises is whether or not the continuation of this kind of society is conceivable without the formation of something like a world opinion, because you just can't have functional interconnection without some common basis in values that keeps it all together. You can't hold them together simply by power. It's a long way from sports to international society, but nevertheless there are connections to be drawn.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm Roslyn Bernstein, professor of business journalism, Baruch College. I'd like to do a slight shift from political relations to economic relations and address this to everyone on the panel. Would you say as the world economy has developed, that we have seen tourism co-opt cultural relations, and, if so, what are the consequences of the global tourist industry shaping, adopting, controlling and deriving its revenue from cultural relations?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Bianca Baumler. I'm from the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy. Regarding the issue of American musicians performing for the people versus the elites … I worked at the French Cultural Institute in Morocco for six months, and that was a very big issue. The issue was more how to inspire the people to come to the events. There was, maybe, a fear of coming to the French Institute and also a different culture of performance, not the sort of "sit down and watch" type of performance. Could you or anyone else on the panel respond to the issue of how to deal with that?

VON ESCHEN: I want to go back to this issue of Michael Jordan as a way of trying to sum up. It's an interesting example because Michael Jordan is associated with Nike, not the U.S. state. And for all the contradictions of the policies we're talking about, I do think there's something greatly lost when we have turned over something that is potentially democratic and accountable, something a nation is doing, something that has to do with its citizens, totally to the realm of corporations that are not accountable to anything. Back in the time I was doing research, the State Department tried to do private/public sponsorship, and they did, in a sense, and it really worked. And in another sense they would talk about, "Well, the audiences are confused. They don't know—is this Pepsi, is the U.S. government?" They did feel it was very important that these performing arts were associated with the U.S. government, the U.S. state. We lose a lot when we give up any connection to potential democracy and accountability.

BROWN: It's very important to try to define target audiences. On the other hand, having been out in the field, you try to leave the door as open as possible to everyone.

NINKOVICH: I'll just take 30 seconds on tourism, and I'll talk about what historians know about this. Historians of foreign relations are just beginning to take seriously the study of cultural interaction, and the answer to what they know about tourism is very little. What historians have to do, I think, is a bunch of micro-studies. As far as I can see, they're starting to do this, to see if we can get any hard information as to exactly what happens when people interact in various ways, what the dynamics are and what the implications are.

BERGHAHN: What really fascinated me about this country, as a young person in the 1950s, were precisely the things that we were talking about on this panel. The greatest pity of the moment is that as there are millions and millions of young people in these areas that we will talk about this afternoon, especially the Middle East, and I think their relationship with us is being ruined. The kind of enthusiasm that I certainly felt—I can't see this happening. It's not an older generation that's anti-American at the moment, but it may also continue into the next generation. If that happens, we are in for a very bad first half of the 21st century.

The Cultural Diplomacy of Other Nations

INTRODUCTION:
ELLEN McCULLOCH-LOVELL, *president and CEO, Center for Arts and Culture*

MODERATOR:
ALEXANDER STILLE, *author and editor,* Correspondence: An International Review of Culture & Society

PANELISTS:
JEAN-RENE GEHAN, *cultural counselor, French Embassy*
ANDY MACKAY, *director, British Council USA*
ARTURO SARUKHAN, *consul general of Mexico*
PETER SÖTJE, *director, Goethe Institut, United States and Canada*
JEANNE WIKLER, *general director for cultural affairs, U.S., Consulate General of the Netherlands*

McCULLOCH-LOVELL: The Center for Arts and Culture is a cultural policy center, and we work to inform and improve the decisions that shape cultural life. Cultural diplomacy, or perhaps better expressed "citizen diplomacy," is one of our signature efforts. One of our objectives is to create a written record through a series of studies, including "Recent Trends in Department of State Support for Cultural Policy" by Juliet Sablosky. That's where you can find some figures that I don't think have come out as vividly as they should, such as the 30 percent decline in support for these activities since 1993, and the fact that only about 10 percent of the Fulbright exchange program and only 5 percent of citizen exchanges, although they are signature programs of state, are arts-oriented at all. So while they're important culturally in a broad sense of people understanding each other, a very, very modest amount of those programs are devoted to exchange of artists. Another study you can get today as well is a survey of the history of cultural diplomacy and the U.S. government by political scientist Milton Cummings. Three more studies are forthcoming: a study of the private-sector funding for cultural diplomacy, best practices in cultural diplomacy—which is very important because we need to know how, and why, and if these programs work—and a comparative study of other nations' approaches, which is so relevant to this next panel that we are about to begin.

The Center is also forming a coalition with arts and humanities organizations, foreign policy NGOs and foreign service officers to expand federal, state and local government activities and cultural diplomacy. There will be other forums that will follow this, and for those of you who will ask, "What's next? What do we do about it?" I want to invite you to join this education and action agenda.

Now continuing this valuable conversation means learning from our counterparts in other countries, not only in France, England, Germany, the Netherlands and Mexico, but also Japan, Singapore, Austria, the Nordic states, Brazil, Colombia and many, many others. Alexander Stille is here to guide us in this conversation. He's an important freelance writer. His most recent book, "The Future of the Past," will be familiar to many of you—portions of it were printed in *The New Yorker*—and I can't think of anybody better qualified to guide this next panel.

STILLE: I wanted to start out by simply asking each of the participants to introduce themselves and explain what the basic cultural policy or philosophy is in their different countries, because they do vary a great deal. For example, some countries have a separate culture ministry, which has the exclusive role of promoting culture in their society. Others have culture as part of the foreign ministry and see it as a part of foreign policy. It might be interesting to understand a little bit about how that works, if they're also able to give us an idea of the resources committed to culture in their respective countries, as well as introducing themselves to all of you.

GEHAN: I'm cultural counselor at the French Embassy in the United States. So I'm a diplomat. I'm leading a service that is part of an embassy, but which is basically composed of all kinds of people, American and French. I think it's a network of more than 150, and I'm the only diplomat in this organization. All the others come from different walks of life. Our base here is in New York in terms of artistic and communication and audiovisual, and we have another main office in Washington, which is for education, universities and French schools. And then we have people all over the country. That being said, in terms of what we do, a lot of our activity, and I would say more than half of our activity, is linked to education, meaning what we do in support of French-teaching in schools, French schools in this country, and in terms of the programs we have with universities, in our presence in the universities to effect exchange between French and American universities. Additionally, we work on promotion of contemporary creation in the different fields of the arts, in music, visual arts and so on. We also promote literature, and we have also an individual program where we support radio and television and cinema. And we have also an open dialogue with the NGO. We have within our department people now dealing with that.

To be very brief, I will say three things. One, in terms of method: We are not an administration. We don't work as an administration. We are more like a little company. We work in partnership. All our action is linked to the network. We have a network of American partners, whether they are the traditional partners like Alliance Française, which are in all the countries—about 160 Alliance Française in the country. But we have partnerships with museums, with universities, with radio. Whatever project we do, we do it with the partners. We have not the means, and it's not our aspiration to direct anything. We always negotiate, meaning that if Carnegie Hall is interested in a concert, we are not going impose anything; we negotiate with them to facilitate. This is really a central theme, and we even have a foundation that we work with very closely.