Culture as a Tool of Statecraft: Case Studies

MODERATOR:
CELESTINE BOHLEN,
culture writer,
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PANELISTS:
DAVID DENBY, *film critic,* The New Yorker
RICHARD FORD, *Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist*
DAVID FRAHER, *executive director, Arts Midwest*
FELIX ROHATYN, *president, Rohatyn Associates, and former U.S. ambassador to France*
CYNTHIA SCHNEIDER, *professor of art history, Georgetown University, and former U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands*

ANDRÁS SZÁNTÓ
(Deputy Director, National Arts Journalism Program):
The concept of cultural property and patrimony was conspicuously raised in the last panel. I'm happy to say that four years ago we organized a major conference on that subject on this very campus called "Who Owns Culture?" We do have a publication based on it, and it's available at our Web site, www.najp.org.

We already saw in this last panel a wonderful mix of passions and ideas and practical suggestions, and it is in that spirit that we proceed now. Some of the words sticking in my mind from the last panel are the idea of "passive" cultural diplomacy, as distinct from aggressive or proactive cultural diplomacy. I like the expression "spaces of interaction," which was also used—places where people can gather and do what they do. And we heard some interesting new ideas about how we can be preemptive in other respects when it comes to safeguarding the cultural treasures of the countries that are involved in military conflicts. Perhaps there are new organizations, institutions or aspects of our armed forces that should be thinking about these issues, going forward.

What is evident from these past two days is that, of course, cultural diplomacy is a target of opportunity, not just for our government institutions, but also for our private funding institutions, since they already shoulder so much of the task of cultural management in this country. In this respect, there is indeed an enormous opportunity. We recently concluded a study that shows that of the 50 largest private philanthropies in America, less than 0.2 percent of their combined funding goes to this area. And of these 50 largest foundations, the cultural-exchange programs targeted at the Middle East add up to less than the price of a decent one-bedroom apartment in New York City. So there are opportunities everywhere.

We finally come to our last panel, which is moderated by Celestine Bohlen of *The New York Times*, who is soon moving to Paris to become Bloomberg's new diplomatic correspondent. Having surveyed the various aspects of our subject in the earlier panels, we hope that we can now come away from this conference with some very real ideas that others can carry forward in the months and years ahead.

BOHLEN: I'll quickly introduce everybody, many of whom will be known to you by their names and bylines and the jackets of their books, as well as by their illustrious careers. First is Felix Rohatyn, who of course needs no introduction to New Yorkers as the hero of our last fiscal crisis, but also a former U.S. ambassador to France. Also Cynthia Schneider, U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands from 1998 to 2001. Richard Ford, well-known author, Pulitzer Prize–winner and speaker on the circuit on behalf of the United States. David Denby, film critic for *The New Yorker* and also a participant in U.S. culture-abroad programs. David Fraher, who's executive director of Arts Midwest, which is a network of regional organizations throughout the Midwest that has been involved in international partnerships in the arts.

I've been a foreign correspondent for *The Washington Post*, but mostly for *The New York Times* I'm also a foreign service child, so I can say I've spanned a lifetime of cultural programs abroad, starting with being a child in Moscow when my father was there as a diplomat. "Porgy & Bess" was brought to enormous success and was a great cultural eye-opener to Soviet audiences then. I returned to the Soviet Union only to sit in many a dingy dance hall and in tourist hotels all over the Soviet Union, listening to "I Just Called to Say I Love You" many, many different times in many, many different ways. I was amused when Radio Sawa introduced, saying, "American music interspersed with local music." That was going on on the other side of the Iron Curtain very successfully, I would say, even in the darkest days of the Cold War through the post-communist period when Russian and Eastern European television was swamped with American products from "Santa Barbara" to "Dynasty" to "Dallas."

So American culture had never been absent. The question is which culture, and what is it that we're trying to promote. That's part of the issue here, that the job of American diplomats isn't only to promote dancers and poets and musicians, but is on occasion to help Hollywood lobby against restrictions on foreign content on national television,say, in France or in Russia. And when they say "foreign content," they mean American content. There are laws in countries that say there should only be 30 percent of non-national product on the airways. So another job of the U.S. State Department is insuring that our culture at home is as open to foreign films, books, artists and opinions as we want other countries to be open to ours. The policy on visas in the last year needs watching as we see many well-known artists, who have struggled just to come to this country to do that which we are all in favor of—cultural exchange. Some of these issues are obviously not part of the U.S. government's job because we are in a country that promotes a free market, so what people want is often what they get, but, at the same time, I think that cultural diversity is something that is a government mission. Today, we have people here who can talk to us about what it is they believe should be done, has been done, what they've promoted in terms of these goals.

ROHATYN: It's a great pleasure to be here with my colleague Cynthia and be here at this wonderful university. When I came to Paris as ambassador to France, I had no idea, even after the training program that you have at the State Department, what you do when you're an ambassador. By the time I got to Paris, I still didn't know what I was supposed to do as ambassador, although I knew I wasn't supposed to make Franco-American policy. That was left to the State Department, to the heads of state. So you start looking around at what can you do, and you find you can do almost anything as an ambassador, as long as you're staying within the guidelines of American policy. From that start we got into all kinds of things.

One of them was a museum-exchange program that my wife put together, but which was really an outgrowth of a philosophy of positioning the American embassy not in Paris, but in France, and getting into French culture on a broader basis in terms of where people live, in the regions with business, with mayors. We had an exchange of mayors. We had French, German and American mayors in Lyon, 30 of them, to talk about how you run cities, as how you run cities is part of the culture.

We also diversified the embassy. When I came to Paris we had two consulates. One in Strasbourg, because of the European parliament, and one in Marseilles, because we used to have a fleet down there, which we didn't anymore, but we still had the consulate. But we had nothing. We had closed Bordeaux, we had closed Lyon, we had closed practically everything in France, and we were there in a country of 60 million people with an embassy in Paris with 1,000 people, and nothing out in these big regional cities. So we decided to go out to the cities, my wife and I, and we saw a hugely wonderful market, not for product, but for explaining to people who we were. What is America? How do we function? What do we think? So we opened up, one after the other, over the great objections of the State Department as a matter of fact, six consulates, which we called "American Presence Posts" because they were tiny. We took one foreign service officer, two foreign service nationals, and we put them in Bordeaux, in Lille, in Reims. My greatest ally, to whom I will give everlasting credit on this, was Senator Jesse Helms, who understood what we were doing. We were doing what any big American multinational company does, which is to decentralize and to go where our customers are. Our customer essentially was French public opinion. By doing that we made friends with mayors. We made friends with local media. We made friends with local business. We made friends with local politicians who went to Paris twice a week, and we made friends with American business.

After we had created these six or seven new American Presence Posts in the major regional cities of France, I asked my wife—because by then we had a business initiative, we had a mayoral initiative and my wife is the eleemosynary part of our family—and she came up with the idea of having a museum-exchange program, putting together nine regional museums in France with nine regional museums in the United States, and not including Paris, and not including Washington, D.C., and not including New York City. She started on that course with the director of the French museums and with a young man who worked for the Sara Lee Company, who had been the curator of the Dallas Museum. His name was Rick Brettell. We started on this program that involved two totally different cultures: One is the culture of the French museum, which is all-government, all Napoleon, all centralized, and the culture of the American museum, which is all private, all decentralized and having nothing to do with the government except to try to get a little money from the National Arts Foundation, etc.

These 18 museums—in the United States starting in Portland and ending at the Yale Museum, and in France beginning in Reims and finishing up in Montpelier—over the last four years have had a series of remarkably successful joint exhibits, the first one being the week after Sept. 11 in Bordeaux. It was titled "Made in America." In Bordeaux, 10 days after Sept. 11, having a "Made in America" exhibit was a touchy thing, but it was spectacularly successful. We got Madame Chirac to help sponsor these from a French cultural point of view, and we had a group of advisors. We put up a little money, our family foundation and Sara Lee. The embassy probably put up a little travel money for a couple of people.

For four years we have had these exchanges, and they actually go beyond the exchanges themselves. I'm not an expert on art, so I'm just sitting in for my wife. She did this. We had an exhibit that came mostly from Minneapolis, which was called "Sacred Symbols," and it was about 4,000 years of American and American-continental artworks and pre-Colombian and things of that kind, which really had never been seen before in France. The result was that it became a place for schoolteachers to bring their students. We had—and continue to have—a huge amount of students that are coming to these exhibits. In fact, the program itself is developing a student-exchange program, just as we developed a curator-exchange program.

This is obviously just one piece of something. But what we did was to go to the local, to the regional culture of France. We went to the city culture. We went to the artistic cultures—one that is government dominated; one is private sector—and the arguments between these two groups at the beginning … They were very passionate about what you can do, what the government should do, what the government shouldn't do, what a terrible thing it is for private people to finance culture because then it means that big corporations dominate what kind of paintings you show. … In each one of these cities—and these eight cities we went to are now 80 percent or 70 percent of France—made a very big difference, combined with the fact that the biggest newspaper in France is not in Paris, it's in Reims. There is a paper in Reims called *Ouest-France*, and it has a circulation of 800,000 a day. If you take the three biggest Parisian newspapers, you get 250,000. You really have to go where you can connect up with the rest of the country, with their intellect, with their schools, with their media.

I don't think you need to snow people. I made a lot of speeches in France, and I never tried either to tell them what to do, or to indicate that I thought what we were doing was the answer to the maiden's prayer. I tried to tell them, "This is what we do. If you like it, use it. And if you don't like it, ignore it." We were trying to see what we could learn from being there. France is a highly developed, modern country with a long culture. If you're dealing in the

Middle East, or if you're dealing in Africa, or if you're dealing in a developing country, this might not work, or it would be very different. But for a developed country I think cultural diplomacy is really public diplomacy. It's having people understand a little bit better what you're trying to do and who you are. You don't need to do it by contracting with some ad agency to do a television film about how wonderful we are. I think we have very good, able, young foreign service officers who are usually in a big embassy in a capital. They're number 28 down on the list of the political section, and if you can just liberate them a little bit, send them to Bordeaux, tell them, "Write your own speeches; make your own mistakes; bring your two advisors with you and go do it." I think that is far and away the best way for America to connect up with cities and countries that think we're 80 percent B-2 bombers. That was just one aspect of something that we did, that I think worked pretty well.

In the Islamic world, this country must look like a nightclub that never closes, a kind of fleshly inferno, which obviously attracts some people and repels them in equal measure.

BOHLEN: Next, David Denby, can you tell us a little bit about your experiences?

DENBY: I will give a very brief account of my very trivial experiences during the Cold War period. And the triviality of them is part of the point, which was that there were thousands of people who were sent out by the USIS, principally, and the State Department in that period. I want to say at the end of this account, briefly, what I think the peculiar difficulties are at the moment of performing similar operations, explorations, in the Islamic world, and particularly the Arab world, because it's pressing down on us very hard.

I made two trips in the '70s. One I think you'd have to say was completely innocuous, and that was one I took near the end of the Vietnam War around '74.I trolled around the edges of the conflict lugging 16 mm prints of old American films to Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, as it was then called, and they were good entertainments intended to illustrate some aspect of American life. So "12 Angry Men" and Otto Preminger's "Anatomy of a Murder" served as jumping-off points for little discussions about the jury system and the legal system and so on. "Stagecoach" and "The Gold Rush" allowed me to talk about the frontier and the Turner thesis and so on. And there would be brief exchanges afterward, mostly very pleasant.

The second one was not so innocuous, and that was in 1978. The State Department in London organized a little tour of Eastern European capitals, and I convinced them without any real difficulty that we should show "All the President's Men" as an act of enlightened propaganda for a free society. It turns out that, as you remember, the Soviet line was rather pro-Nixon, and he had been removed by four capitalists, who got into a room and decided he had to go. Of course, there were people with access to the BBC or Radio Free Europe or underground press and many, many other ways of leakage who knew there was a lot more to it. But the notion that two journalists could initiate a process that brought down an American president was an electrifying idea in Eastern Europe in 1978. We had some heady evenings, in Krakow at the Jagiellonian University. It was very difficult screening because the translator would have the script in front of him and have to do simultaneous translation during this very complex screenplay, during the movie. … But the students were rapt. There were 800 students there, and a pin could have dropped and you would have heard it. And a fabulous discussion afterward.

There was one other moment in that little Eastern European tour that I remember, and that was in Bucharest, which in those days was a very dreary place. I went to the state-run documentary-film production unit, and they showed me their films, and I was really in for it—I saw noble tractors reclaiming Romanian soil with Mendelssohn on the soundtrack. Then we reassembled around a table, and there'd always be one guy at all these meetings in the Eastern bloc who never said a word, who was, of course, the party apparatchik who was keeping notes. The filmmaker said, "What did you think?" And I was polite and pointed out strengths and so on, and then there was a dead silence and then, "Yes, but what did you think?" I finally caught on, and I then launched into a much more vigorous discussion and said what was wrong with it and how boring they were, and I mentioned *cinema verité* and the documentaries by Frederick Wiseman and others. As it happened, the filmmakers knew about these films because they had access to them at the Berlin Film Festival, which was sort of the entry point for East and West. But I had fulfilled my role, which was to point out the inadequacies of their state-sponsored cinema in front of the state sponsor.

Now does this sort of thing make a difference? Does it ever go beyond righteous tourism and meddling? I think Mr. Rohatyn has already answered the question. I'm inclined to give the Cold War cultural ambassadors the benefit of the doubt. They were one tiny strand in an enormous process. But for years, people who would go to these things—and they're generally educated people, elites—heard and saw things from the State Department and the USIS that may have increased their dissatisfaction with communism as a system. And as the economies of those countries continued to weaken, life in the West seemed more and more appealing. Dissidents pressed their case. We know the end.

I think we were successful exactly as Mr. Rohatyn says because we did not engage in overt selling of America. That wasn't quite our job. To be most effective we had to exercise our craft, whatever it was, and to *be* Americans. That is, we had to stand there and be reasonably well-informed and to answer questions, a friendly, well-informed American embodying a free society, being a free person, and if necessary at times disagreeing with American policy. Can we do the same thing? Obviously, it's going to be much harder. We shared perhaps more with the Poles and the Czechs and the Hungarians than we do with the Iraqis or Yemenis or Syrians. How do we explain or present such core Western values as pluralism and secularism? We do not believe that life has any single end, any single goal, an over-arching purpose that reconciles everything and under which all other aspects of life must be subsumed. We believe that religion has its realm and its truth, and science has its realm and truth, and literature and the arts have theirs, and government administration is important, but that private associations and private entrepreneurial and business activities and the universities are just as important.

Each of these areas exists side-by-side, jostling each other but not, in the end, subordinating any of the others. And despite this and despite that, we are a complicated people who live with many different goals. We are not necessarily lost in great numbers or confused or incoherent. All of this, of course, is the opposite of fundamentalism. I'm not sure we can speak to fundamentalists with any success since pluralism is, I think, anathema. But there are obviously many people of moderate temperament in the Arab world who may believe some version of this, or certainly understand it, and we can make certain practical arguments.

The Arab countries are no longer isolated and haven't been for a long time. They live in a world, whether they like it or not, with many, different powerful systems impinging on them. In other words, they have to recognize the value of other beliefs—not embrace them, not convert to them, but recognize their force. Otherwise, they're going to get brutally shoved around by systems more powerful than their own. We can imply that our wealth and our power have something to do with secular education and unfettered exchange of information and transparency and the emancipation of women and all the rest. We do it again, as I say, not by boasting or exhorting, and certainly not by presenting them with a pre-processed film with smiling Americans or branding ourselves, but by showing up, by Americans showing up—a friendly, decently-informed American, standing on his own two feet.

How much do they know of us? Many people in the Islamic world, I suspect, know only the most commercialized aspects of our culture: Coca Cola, McDonald's and Internet porn ,i fth at gets through, and the most spectacular and empty of our movies, which, by the way, are consciously being formed and made in many cases for such countries, less and less made for us. The shift of gross receipts in box offices has gone from 30 or 40 percent of the total to, like, 60 percent, so many of these big movies aren't made for Americans anymore. They're made for international audiences. But in the Islamic world, this country must look like a nightclub that never closes, a kind of fleshly inferno, which obviously attracts some people and repels them in equal measure, and maybe repels them because it so much attracts them. Look at Mohammed Atta and some of the others. We talk of freedom all the time, and what they see is license. They don't understand, necessarily, that liberty is also inextricably tied up with notions of order. They know MTV, but they don't know Jefferson and Madison and the Bill of Rights and the writ of *habeas corpus* and the rest. So there are other enormous differences.

Westerners are often struck by intellectual and emotional habits in the Arab countries—and now here's where it gets a little bit unpleasant—that to our mind, border on self-pity and blaming other people constantly for one's own problem. Syria has oil, for instance, and Israel does not. Yet Israel's per capita income is many times that of Syria. Is Israel responsible for the woeful Syrian economy? I don't think it is, but it serves as a scapegoat for rulers who don't want their own inadequacies scrutinized. So how do we deal with, what is to us, an investment in being unconscious? How do we do that without explaining the value of a critical realism, without arrogance? I don't know the answer to that, and it's a very hard issue to broach because it speaks to the causes and the nature of belief itself. And any attempt to introduce the notion is going to be regarded not as an attempt to strengthen people but to undermine them. So it's going to take years. It's going to have limited practical benefit. Most of these cultural events at first will fail, I think. But I think we have to begin and keep at it. I certainly would have been very happy if after Sept. 11 there had been some Americans standing up in Islamabad or Riyadh or Damascus to say, for instance, that the widespread charges that the Israelis bombed the World Trade Center as a provocation are ridiculous, and by the way the last four interventions—in Kuwait, Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo—were all done on behalf of Muslims.

BOHLEN: And now David Fraher to talk about the microscope at the other end.

FRAHER: While this has been an incredibly stimulating conference, in many ways, I found it horrifically depressing, and I don't know if anybody else felt that way. But for me it's been horrifically depressing because I've heard a vast majority of speakers coming at this whole issue from a position of paranoia and fear in this drumbeat. I don't get this. I'm torn. Maybe because I'm working in cultural exchange on a daily basis and not thinking about it, but rather working in it, I don't feel that the same way. I feel much more positive, and I hope that you can also get some of that positiveness into your lives with this.

Secondly, I wanted to say that I heard a gentleman speak last fall from Canada, Laurent LaPierre, who's a senator in Canada, who said that as deeply committed as he is to Canadian culture and worried about globalism and the impact of globalism on Canadian culture, he was very, very committed to the notion of not having everyone tell the same story, but rather have everyone tell their *own* story and have the opportunity to be heard. What I've heard us talking about a lot is telling our story, but I haven't heard enough about listening to other people's stories. It's come up occasionally, but it hasn't come up a lot. So we're out marketing, marketing, marketing, export, export, export. We haven't listened yet, and unless we can listen, we're screwed. Unless we can fix the visa problems, we won't be able to hear very much. Another idea that we had in the back of the room: Maybe Halliburton could make the first contribution to the museum fund.

I'm supposed to be talking about a different perspective on cultural diplomacy or cultural exchange, and that topic is the role not of the federal government, but of the state agencies. I direct an organization called Arts Midwest. We are a nonprofit, regional arts organization. We are headquartered in Minnesota. We work with state arts agencies, state governmental, public-sector arts agencies, located throughout the heartland of the United States, but then also nationally as well on several projects. There are six regional organizations in the country. We cover all 50 states, and most of us are involved at some level or another in international programs.

During the course of the last 15 years, we've had at Arts Midwest deep and ongoing cultural exchanges with approximately 22 different countries worldwide. I want to emphasize a couple of points. One is "deep"—we spend a lot of time and a lot effort and a lot of conversation getting to know people. And "ongoing"—we have relationships that we've been working on for 15 years. These are not drive-bys. This is not, "Let's take a dance company, and go to a particular city, do a performance, leave, adiós, thank you very much." This is a relationship. I think the gentleman from the British Council spoke this morning about mutuality. We try to approach it this way.

Arts Midwest and the regional arts organizations, because of our nature, work with state arts agencies. So when I talk about our projects, I talk not only about regional organizations but about state agencies, state governmental agencies. And the question comes up as to, "Why would states be involved in international programming, in international exchanges? They have enough to do within their own state borders." In thinking about this, what I've looked at is four or five different categories of rationale for a state agency to be involved in this, and I've broken them down. I'm going to run through them quickly and then come back and give you some key examples of programs that I've seen happen that I think are really intriguing and important kinds of programs that might offer a different approach and a different model to some of the relationship building we might go forward with.

One is economics. States are very concerned about economics, trade-development. Commerce has essentially passed the ball and said, "Hey guys, you're the governors. Build your own market." So states are concerned about that. Secondly, community building—community building at the state level and community building internationally. We'll come back to that. Third, education, both within the state and beyond the state. And fourth, believe it or not, altruism. There's actually some altruism still out there.

I'm going to quickly run through some examples. In trade development, states are concerned about building export markets, attracting investors to their state, attracting foreign business placement, foreign students and researchers, foreign tourism. They're actually interested, in some places in the country, in immigration, in trying to have more of it, not less of it. States that work in this area, and I would use the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts as one example, are actively involved with their state trade office, with their governor's office in developing state trade missions so that there's a cultural component to every trade mission that goes out. And oftentimes the cultural components lead the mission so that there's an interplay on an ongoing basis. Pennsylvania even is concerned about raising and creating new markets for their artists abroad, separate and distinct from playing a role in supporting trade in other areas. We're doing an extensive amount of work right now, actually, with Pennsylvania in Japan with support from the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission and building an ongoing network there.

In community building, an example is a project that one of my colleague organizations, New England Foundation for the Arts, has been involved with for 10 years. It's out of their Newcomers Program, where they work with the state arts agencies in the New England region and the Cambodian community that had immigrated into New England following the devastation of the wars in Cambodia. Over the course of this period of time, by working first with the newcomer community in New England and then identifying cultural resources still present within Cambodia, they have worked to rebuild an entire tradition of the royal dance, within Cambodia and within the United States. They saved the culture. They also built an important component within their own community in New England, which helped to install a greater sense of pride and belonging for that newcomer community within New England. So people in New England learned about Cambodia. They learned about the people from Cambodia living in New England, and in Cambodia, they got their culture back; they got their dances back, and they got opportunities to learn back. Last year the Cambodian dance company did a tour in the United States, and we've begun this process of expanding that learning out into a university basis as well.

In education I would look at two different approaches. One is the concept of creating a generation of students in the United States that are more knowledgeable about global cultures and their place in the world. Even if it's being able to pinpoint a county on a map, it would be a nice thing. We're really actively committed, and the states that we're working with are actively committed to understanding that kids need to know what the world is about. One of the ways to understand what the world is about is by learning about cultures. We run a program called the Midwest World Fest out of our office that brings in performing artists—next year from four different nations—for weeklong residencies, not in big market schools, but rather in schools in tiny little communities like Sioux City, Iowa, where they really don't have access to this knowledge and this kind of experience. We couple that with a huge in-depth curriculum, and the curriculum is integrated. It goes beyond issues around art and culture and gets to what I would consider *civitas*.

We actually have the founding documents, the documents of statehood of the countries we're working with, and have lesson plans for teachers to be able to work with students in a kind of comparative analysis of what are the values that are exhibited in the Declaration of Independence, as compared with the Declaration of Statehood for the Republic of Turkey. How do those values get expressed? How are those values realized in our societies, or not? We enter these kids, K-12, into really deep discussions that are then complemented by the performances from the artists coming through. Another quick example of education is a project out of the state of Ohio, where they recognized that the artists in their state can grow and learn by being in other cultures and other countries. So they've actively set up residency programs in nearly 20 countries worldwide where their artists can go, spend a considerable amount of time, learn something and come back. Last year I had the opportunity to hear a panel of about 20 of the visual artists who participated, talk about their experiences, and to see an exhibition of work that they created as a result of the residencies. It was remarkable.

The last project I'll just mention is a project that we worked on again with Ohio, called "Aspirations," which was an exhibition of Palestinian and Israeli photographers—not U.S. at all. It was an exhibition we created with a co-curating process of an Israeli and a Palestinian curator, that toured for approximately two years, until, unfortunately, the beginning of Intifada II, when all the programs were cancelled. But that was total altruism.

BOHLEN: Now to Cynthia Schneider, who was ambassador to the Netherlands, but is also a professor of art history at Georgetown University, so has two perspectives on this.

SCHNEIDER: I want to begin with some general ideas and then give you some examples of things we did while I was in the Netherlands. First of all, I found it was possible to leverage a lot, that is, leverage American performers, scholars, artists, already visiting the country, then to just glob onto them and appropriate them in a nice way for the embassy. I also found it very valuable to do things at the embassy and to show that it was in fact the U.S. government and our official presence that was honoring, supporting these visitors, who had actually been paid for by someone else, but we at least usually managed to give them dinner. And the other thing is know your audience, which has been said a lot, and in this case I was particularly fortunate because my field of specialization is 17th-century Dutch art, and that is kind of an unusual situation. But I was able to leverage that so that I could, for example, take members of the Dutch government through the Rembrandt exhibition, and they loved to brag about that—the American ambassador cared so much about their culture. In fact, the current Dutch ambassador—I bumped into him at the Mauritshuis one of my trips back to Holland—said, "I was just explaining to my friend that you taught me everything I know about Dutch art." That's the kind of win-win thing, which is great for me, but is also great for them, because even the Queen said to me, "We are honored that you know so much and care so much about our history." Obviously, I'm an exceptional case, but there's no reason that we can't teach our foreign service employees something more about the culture and the history of the countries that they're going to. There are several steps along the way of foreign service training where this could be done.

These are not drive-bys. This is not, "Let's take a dance company, and go to a particular city, do a performance, leave, adiós, thank you very much." This is a relationship.

Let me give you an idea of some of the things we did, both long-term and short-term. Long-term, we had a millennium project in conjunction with Ellen McColloch-Lovell's millennium White House project, which nationally was about rediscovering American history and culture. Internationally, it was about the embassies linking up with their home country for some kind of project during the millennium year. We chose the moment in history that was really the peak of Dutch-American relations, and that was, of course, World War II. We went out to the high schools, and involved high-school students—we had about 100 students—involved in oral histories of World War II using both American veterans and Dutch citizens who had been part of the resistance, who had played a role during World War II. Our motivation was somewhat selfish in this because these memories of World War II are such a strong part of the Dutch-American relationship, but for high school students they're very distant. They have no connection to this at all in many cases, so we wanted to keep these good memories alive, as well as preserve some of these extraordinary histories. These students did the most amazing projects—videos, interviews, they had long, long Internet correspondence with their interview subjects. In the end there's a competition—the winners got to go for a week to America—judged by Dutch teachers. And we made a CD, so that is now part of the Dutch history curriculum in the high schools, this CD done by their own students.

Another opportunity for every American ambassador is to organize an exhibition at their residence of American art. If you're rich enough, it can be your own collection, or something that interests you or some connection between your country and America. I chose American artworks that had to do in some way with Holland, either contemporary, like de Kooning or earlier, such as Rembrandt Peale's great portrait of Thomas Jefferson. We then wrote a catalog for which we had help from Sara Lee in publishing. Then we could distribute the catalog to visitors at the residence, and I would always take them through. What they loved to see were the really tight connections between contemporary American artists and the Dutch 17th-century tradition,another link.

We were also involved with quite a few artistic performances. The largest indoor jazz festival in the world is the North Sea Jazz Festival, which takes place right across the embassy residence every summer. I innocently asked the first summer what the embassy did in connection with the jazz festival, and I was told that someone could get me tickets. I said, "But what do we do?" And the answer was nothing. This is an example of leveraging. There are hundreds of American musicians who come every summer to this festival,so we started a tradition of linkage with the festival. I don't know if they're keeping it up, but they did for a year. We would have a jazz-jam festival at the embassy residence with Dutch and American musicians. One year we tied it to Chicago because that was the theme of the jazz festival. We had the mayor of Chicago and his wife talking about Chicago and jazz; we had the Dutch and American musicians jamming together; we had about 500 people very informal, blue jeans, students to government ministers. We served chicken fingers and brownies, and I spoke for five minutes on why jazz is American, about freedom, spontaneity, risk taking, the individual. If you just make that little link—and this is kind of overused but—make it a whole American event, with the informality, the complete range of people there, and just remind people what's American about jazz,then I think that stays with them then, when they keep going to the jazz festival. Maybe some little thing goes on the next time they listen to jazz.

We also did more low-key, smaller things. I did a lot using films—that's not very expensive. "Saving Private Ryan" came out soon after I got there, and everybody, every embassy, did something with "Saving Private Ryan." I thought, rather than doing a big cocktail reception after the screening, I would try to use it in a more targeted way. I said to my protocol officer that I wanted to invite the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Dutch military and their wives, together with my military staff and their spouses. We would

go see the film and have dinner after and discuss it at the embassy. But this event kept never appearing on my schedule, and I kept asking, and it kept never appearing. Finally I said, "You think this is a bad idea, don't you?" And my protocol officer said, "Of course I do. You can't go to the movies in the afternoon with these people; this is impossible." I said, "I really want you to do it. Please do it." So she did, and we had an extraordinary experience, all 10 or 12 of us in the movie theater at 4:30 in the afternoon,and then going to the residence afterward.

We had an extraordinarily open discussion, and I insisted that the spouses speak as much as their partner. The Dutch heard each other say things they never knew they thought about. The Americans heard the Dutch say things. They really shared their most personal views about the meaning of war, the meaning of the military in today's society, would they want their children to join the military, whose orders do you follow, what's the point of it all. People talked to me about the "Saving Private Ryan" dinner right up until the moment that I left.

We also did more schmaltzy things, taking advantage again of what was going on. The movie "Pay It Forward" opened right when Secretary Colin Powell took over in the State Department, and we had long planned with Warner Bros. to do a big event on this movie. It was sort of a schmaltzy movie about doing good things in society. We decided to do something about philanthropy in both countries in connection with it. We had something about American philanthropy, and Dutch people talking about what they did in the Netherlands. And it suddenly occurred to me, about three days beforehand, that of course who was the most famous philanthropist in the new American government? It was the Secretary of State. So I quickly wrote the State Department and said, "Can I please draft a statement and have it be from him and read it at this opening?" Of course I got back the answer saying, "What a wonderful idea, but the next time you have an event with 400 people about philanthropy, give us a three-week warning, and we'll be happy to help you." I said, "There's not going to be a next time. Here is the statement, please figure out some way to OK it." Miraculously, they did. So I was able to read the statement from Secretary Powell about the importance of philanthropy in American society and what it meant. That was a front-page news story in the Netherlands, and they took it very personally—Secretary Powell personally greets the Dutch people in his first week in office. It cost nothing. It didn't take that much effort. It pointed out connections and made a big difference to them.

We did that with other guests, Michael Graves, Richard Meier, Joel Cohen—lots of different guests who came. We would just have them to the embassy and put them together with architects, with musicians, whoever their Dutch counterparts were. To me, the saddest part was the number of times the person would say to me, "This is the first time I've ever been in an American embassy." Including Richard Meier, who'd built the town hall in the Hague and spent months there. I think it would make a big difference if people would just take advantage of what's there, in their country. It would help if there were a system to inform embassies of who is coming to their country, a centralized system—that would make a big difference.

I'm going to close by reading something from Thomas Jefferson. There have been lots of definitions, questions about what is cultural diplomacy, and, as always, he already had it figured out in 1785. This is what he wrote to James Madison from Paris: "You see, I'm an enthusiast on the subject of the arts, but it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and to procure them its praise."

BOHLEN: On that note, Richard Ford from another part of the country, the South, will talk about having been another kind of ambassador.

FORD: For somewhere now between 10 and 15 years, I've visited a variety of European countries with the support of the United States Information Agency, and, after that, the State Department. I've done this, on average, every couple of years—going to France and to Spain and to Norway and to Italy and to Finland and to Germany, and to slightly less usual places, like the Czech Republic after communism fell, and to Egypt as well. My activities during these visits were fairly uniform and as David said, benign. Typically, I delivered university lectures, mostly to students, and on issues that I thought were pertinent to contemporary American literature, or I gave public readings of my own work. I also sat for print and radio interviews on literary subjects and had conversations that occasionally turned to political subjects. Europeans, and indeed most nations except ours, think imaginative writers know something about politics, and have political consequence, and so could actually be worthy of being listened to.

Going to these places under the State Department's insignia has meant a number of things to me, which I will briefly try to express. I always felt that going abroad, albeit under the State Department's flag, was an opportunity for me to see something of the world and to learn something about it. I didn't go abroad until I was 42 years old. I'm from Mississippi. I've written books now that have been translated into 23 languages, and so it has also been, frankly, an opportunity to advance my publishing interests, to meet readers, to meet other writers abroad. I heard John Romano say that mostly what we export is "Baywatch," but we actually also export Don DeLillo and Jane Smiley, and even me.

Recently, however, I was involved in planning a State Department trip to a Latin American country. This is only in the past two or three weeks. But when the post communicated to me its expectations for my activities when I was there, the letter said I would be "promoting American values" in the host country. I quickly wrote back to say that were I to come—and I have since declined—I wouldn't be "promoting" anything unless it was the books I had written and, by that act, promoting literature itself, I hoped. The officer at the post replied that her choice of words was perhaps, she said, unfortunate, but it was the necessary language, she said, for attracting support from higher-ups, and I shouldn't take it too seriously or feel much confined by it.

I tell this, although this sounds ludicrous, because, as an official exchange, it was unique to my experience with the USIA, and quite unique in my experience since the USIA has been absorbed into the State Department. To my memory, no one at any point along the administrative way over the years has ever said to me what ought to be the substance, or what I should lecture about, or what I should say in readings, or what I should say anytime at all. I think that though the Latin American officer I communicated with seemed to want to direct my behavior, she in fact didn't. Hers was as much as she said, the language of bureaucracy—the language of a sort of bumptious statecraft—a language, however, I simply don't speak. Our exchange is useful for characterizing, I think, my usual relations with this arm of the State Department, and for occasioning two or three small observations.

The concept of cultural diplomacy, … is to me, the marriage of the amorphous to the satisfyingly ambiguous. No autodidact worth his mettle would miss the chance to look up both terms—diplomacy and culture. The nicest thing I found said about diplomacy can be summed up in the remark: "Diplomacy is the intercourse of nations with each other." I assume no pun was intended by that. The by far more numerous and uncomplimentary sentiments expressly view that diplomacy is to do and to say the nastiest things in the nicest way.

The concept of cultural diplomacy is to me, the marriage of the amorphous to the satisfyingly ambiguous.

Culture, of course, the other word I needed to look up, is a word bandied about both loosely and sometimes fearsomely in our country, and almost always is employed to valorize, as academics used to say, one quadrant of human life, a belief and sense of what's good, at the expense of another. So much so that culture's origins—the origin of the word "culture," the thought of what a culture is, its origins are in nurturing and Arnold's notion of the best that can be known and thought in the world, the classless interest in perfection—that notion of culture has lost much of its useful potency in normal parlance. Culture has in essence been made adversarial.

Relying on none of these definitions, though, as I went abroad for the USIA and the State Department, did I consider myself a diplomat—cultural or otherwise. This of course isn't to say the State Department, the USIA, the post and anyone in my foreign audiences saw me in any way but as a representative of the American society and government. To the extent that there is a discrepancy of self-image here—how I see myself, versus how I am seen—it is a discrepancy that is resolved in the spirit of Auden's wonderful line, which I paraphrase slightly: "Literature makes nothing happen."

The view has been, and continues to be, that people like me, novelists and poets and playwrights—in the general opinion of American society, at least, and specifically in the view of our government—don't matter, frankly, very much at all. Real consequential American diplomacy is practiced either by experts or by well-connected and sometimes well-informed captains of industry and commerce. Mostly. But not specifically by artists, this conference notwithstanding. With this reason then,it wouldn't be worth anyone's time really to try to tell us writers what to do or what to say—or not to do or not to say. Because we're not consequential enough to be even mildly annoying or provocative. Although if we were consequential enough to be genuinely annoying or provocative, we almost certainly would not be chosen to go. This is not as self-abnegating or as resigned as it sounds. It only speaks to how American society and our government thinks of artists. I certainly don't mean to express how I think of artists by that, or how I think of my own aspirations as a novelist by that.

I sort of hold by Kundera's notion that novels are the fruit of the illusion that we can understand each other. And I don't mean to express, by that my own intentions going abroad are in any way skeptical. They are in fact important reasons for going abroad, or I wouldn't go. I think that no one like me can go to Egypt or Norway or the Czech Republic under the State Department's banner without knowing that he or she will be viewed by audiences there but as some kind of artfully chosen specimen of American culture. It is simply for that individual novelist or playwright to define for his audience and for himself or herself what manner of specimen you will be. In this way our government's relatively hands-off attitude confers a sort of existential freedom to us, really.

There will always be skepticism among foreign audiences about just what is the agenda of any writer coming to talk under the U.S. government's auspices. No amount of fulminating against the Bush Administration,if that is your persuasion, as it happens to be mine, or general bona fides seeking willingness to fairly discuss our foreign policy, or talk about how America is viewed abroad, can succeed, in my opinion, in overcoming that skepticism. Thus, in a sense, one will be perceived as being involved in the intercourse of nations whether one wants to or doesn't want to. This in fact is a precariousness one must really address if you go abroad—both in private and before you have to address it in front of a lot of people—because you *will* have to address that in front of a lot of people. In other words, you need, God forbid, to sort out what it is you're doing and decide if you can stand up beside your own behavior before you do it. What I've done is merely to try and comport myself abroad as I would ifI were in Ohio talking to the Elks Club. Though that may not be the best comparator, because probably the Elks Club wouldn't want me as much as even people abroad do.

The specimen American that I am believes that I am not a typical American. Since most Americans aren't privileged, middle-aged novelists. And I am not representative American, either, because the real culture in our country is much too diverse in race, in years, in wealth, in memory, for any one human being to be its apt representative. These things I always say because audiences abroad, on account of their distance from us and because they do know—or think they do—much of us by TV, are often in a dismayed way interested in what is a typical American. On that behalf, I am only willing to be an exponent of my own views, political or literary. And to the extent that I am insistently viewed to be a representative of America by my overseas hosts, what I always say is, I represent not American values, nor am I seeking to promote them, but rather I represent my personal human values, which I am simply free to acknowledge.

Though for countries and citizenries that only identify America with its leaders, this, who I happen to be, may yet convey useful information. The only other thing I do when I go abroad is I conduct myself as a writer. And what that means is, rather than doing

state's business, I do literature's business. I advocate that literature, not statecraft, is the supreme means by which we renew our sensuous and emotional lives and learn a new awareness. And that these means are the ones that *do* cause something to happen—not only what our statecraft should promote across international boundaries—but also that these means are at least as critical to the world's survival as any of those artificial boundaries that separate us will ever be.

BOHLEN: It was really such a great range of experience, knowledge, views, testament to good deeds well done, to thoughtful analysis of what it means to go abroad and be American, and in so doing to represent but not promote American culture. In a funny way, one of the things that we're really saying, the best thing, is to just be yourself and there shouldn't be any of this promoting and the branding and all the rest—that the best thing is to go to the small towns, to let a foreign service officer be himself, use the training that he's had to go and collect the people that come to the Netherlands, and let them show off who they are, and on down the line. I thought the experiences from the United States were almost the most telling of all—that there's an audience here that's willing to listen, just as there's an audience there that's willing to listen.

I have a couple questions. One is—the question of being yourself and doing your best, which sounds so corny, seems worth coming back to—to the two ambassadors. Do we think that the State Department is adequate to the task of training the people to be responsive in the ways that you've described? And then over to Mr. Fraher: Do you think that the State Department and other American agencies are sensitive to this question of cultural exchange when it comes to facilitating better, to helping people come here with visas? First, Mr. Rohatyn.

ROHATYN: I don't think anybody should go represent this country overseas without speaking the language. I think especially in countries like France or Germany or Italy or Spain. It's inexcusable to send people abroad who aren't fluent in the language because it makes the country feel that we're looking down on them, which is a terrible way to start anything. Secondly, we ought to do something very basic now in terms of cultural diplomacy. We should try not to lose what we've got, rather than trying to gain what we probably can't. We're rushing after public opinion in the Muslim countries, which is a really, really hard climb, and we're losing Europe. We had public opinion in favor of America two, three, four, five years ago in the 60s and the 70s, and in the last few months, we've had 70, 75, 80 percent of our European allies with public opinion that is dramatically against us. I think that should be our priority. I mean, we're people with similar values, with histories going back a long way, and maybe if we can't convince them to be with us, maybe we should begin to think about why they aren't. And that might also be a helpful exercise in public diplomacy. I don't think they're going to learn very much in Washington.

BOHLEN: Ms. Schneider, do you think that foreign service officers going over, or other people who are representing the government, are equipped in language, in cultural awareness?

SCHNEIDER: I just want to clarify something. People such as Felix and myself—political appointees— are allowed to go to the country without speaking the language. Neither of us did, but it is allowed. Foreign service officers always learn the language of the country. So all the career ambassadors always know the language of the country they're going to. But I agree with you that everyone should have to. For people such as us who come out of private life, they do what they can in two weeks to teach you, and then you just have to hope that we're smart enough to listen to the foreign service people in our embassies, and we don't do something terrible. It usually seems to work out. Or my employees would say, it worked out as much for political appointees as it does for foreign service professionals—just as many are good or bad in each category. For the foreign service professionals, I would just reiterate: They have several junctures along the way where they receive training in their career. And I wish very much for some form of cultural awareness—an understanding of how to use American culture and how to be receptive to the culture of the country they're going to, not country-specific—would be part of that training. For that to be the case, there would have to be an overall valuing of culture in the "tool kit," as Madeline Albright used to say, of a diplomat. At the moment, and I'm afraid that in the past administration, too, that doesn't exist.

BOHLEN: The other part of the question is whether we're finding, in this period when we're feeling sensitive to foreign opinion, that we're sensitive to the needs of people who come here as artists or performers or novelists.

SCHNEIDER: I think that we've been fortunate to have worked with incredibly positive, constructive posts overseas, with both foreign nationals in the post who have deep knowledge and understanding of the situation—they've always been supportive—and with career foreign service officers. So I would say that to a certain extent we've had great support. Simultaneously, we also know that the structure and the underlying system, for instance, on visas, is not necessarily "How can I help you get into the country?" but "How can I keep you out?" That is the nature of the beast, and this is just ratcheted up even more so. Secondly, when it comes to the area of culture, there has been, especially over the last decade, maybe even 12 years, an underlying culture within the foreign service (and this really goes back to USIA days) where actually the review process for officers was not favorably disposed toward spending time on culture. In some posts or some regions of the world, it punished officers for spending time on cultural issues, where they would be flat-out told, "If you spend time on a cultural project, it will count against you during your review." You cannot call that a favorable environment to work in.

BOHLEN: If that's not encouraged, what was encouraged? Spending more time …

SCHNEIDER: On political issues, on economics issues, … You could cut it offinto education even. But do not go to culture.

BOHLEN: I'm wondering for both David Denby and Richard Ford, whether you think this current climate—again, where we're all suddenly very sensitive to the antagonisms out there, not that they didn't exist before, but obviously everything's much more acute—whether this would somehow give you pause to go and do the kind of tours that you've done before. Not only because of fear of the audience, but also because of what you were describing, Richard, of people saying, "Your job is to come and promote something." It seems that the two tendencies have gone hand-in-hand—the more antagonism, the more we're supposed to promote.

FORD: No, it wouldn't deter me that there was a greater degree of voiced anti-American spirit in another country. What would deter me is our government. I don't want to go over there and spend my time fielding questions for a government that I think is wrong. But as far as going someplace where what I say might make a difference to the things I care about—the fact that they don't like Americans, or say they don't like Americans—I mean, I wouldn't want to be stupidly just walking into the face of vicious, violent, hideous hostility in which I knew I was going to get killed, but, short of that, I would go.

BOHLEN: To this idea that the mission is changing, that somehow one has gone from just being an American novelist, who's talking to other people who are interested in literature, to being part of an ad campaign—David, you haven't done it in a while, I guess.

DENBY: I haven't done it in 25 years. And I don't want to be shot on my way back to my hotel, but I don't think that I'd be deterred, either. As long as the bombs are falling and the machine guns are going it's not the right moment. But when the atmosphere, one hopes, changes a bit—sure. It's an adventure. You can expect to get into tremendous arguments with people. You don't want to defend the government's policy. In fact, in some cases, you have to make it clear, if you're going under government auspices, that you have the right to criticize it if someone asks you. I did that 25 years ago. I said, "If someone asks me something, I'm going to say what I think." They seemed to accept that. As I said before, you're taken as representative no matter what you say, no matter what denials you make. But the best thing you can represent is the nature of a free society by just standing on your own two feet and functioning as you would in a debate in New York and giving your opinion and answering as straight as you can. It would be a great adventure.

If we're going to reconstruct Iraq, it has to be done. The government has to tap into the vein of idealism in this country. If you're going to have thousands of hospital workers and civil engineers and schoolteachers and constitutional lawyers and all those people, they can't just be government people. They're going to have to get people like me. They're going to have to protect us to some degree, but they're also going to have to give us the freedom to be Americans as we want to best present ourselves.

FORD: Let me just add one thing. I don't think anybody really is asking novelists and playwrights and poets to go abroad and promote American values, at least not as I understand it. What that woman said to me was, I think, something that she misspoke. I think most people who practice this kind of vocation don't think that our culture is isolable enough, encapsulable enough, that we could ever go over and hand it over.

BOHLEN: Let's not forget there was a time when there was a blacklist on who could go, so politics has entered into that vocation as you called it before. The question is, are we at that stage again?

ROHATYN: I don't suggest that we try to change the minds of people, necessarily, but you can't be scared of having your own view. Now take one of the most controversial issues in Europe—the death penalty. The death penalty is a profoundly felt issue in Europe. It's a cultural issue; it's a conscience issue. At the same time back in Washington, people are very nervous about your going out to talk about the death penalty because some senators are very much for the death penalty. But you have to do it, and after a year of dancing around I gave an interview saying I was

I advocate that literature, not statecraft, is the supreme means by which we renew our sensuous and emotional lives and learn a new awareness.

against the death penalty. It made the front page of *Le Monde*. There was a big shudder in the State Department, but after that nothing else happened. We cleared up a big issue, and I think that is as much a part of cultural diplomacy as anything. I'm not going to give an opposite view to my government on the anti-ballistic missile treaty, or something like that, because that's not necessarily my thing. But take an issue like the death penalty, or the so-called election in Florida. On a Sunday, I was on the biggest talk show in France, expecting to discuss casually why Al Gore was elected president. When Al Gore wasn't elected president, I was there trying to figure out what to say. And the first question from the French reporter was, "Well ,Mr. Ambassador, how does it feel representing a banana republic?" It went downhill from there. So you do have to be prepared, and if you can speak to them in their own language, it does help a little bit.

BOHLEN: Do you think that the foreign service officer that you say you sent down to Bordeaux on his own to, as you say, make his own mistakes, if he had been interviewed on either the election or the death penalty, could he have spoken his mind?

ROHATYN: On the election? No. On the death penalty? Yes, I think so. I think you can talk about it and explain its history in the United States without necessarily saying all of us are right or all of us are wrong.

BOHLEN: One of the things that's so hard abroad is how Americans support the arts. It's a complete mystery to much of the world, because in most of the world, particularly in Europe, it's just done in a completely different way. It's state-supported and this running around, having charity balls and raising money and sending out flyers and televised appeals—all these things are absolutely very foreign to them. I was wondering if you find your-

self, particularly Mr. Fraher, having to repeat the speech. How do you get this across? Do you find people becoming aware of it now, after many years of explaining?

FRAHER: No, because it's a little bit dynamic even in our scenario as to how things are supported, or not supported. So we actually do spend a lot of time trying to understand a lot of the operational support structures—either the ones we're working with overseas or explaining what we have operating here. We figured out different ways of approaching it, but ultimately that becomes less of an issue. The things that are always the biggest challenges are issues around language, nuance, time and the time you're willing to spend in the relationship. Those are the biggies. If you're not willing to go seven times and have coffee before you actually even broach the concept of an exchange, you might as well not go.

SCHNEIDER: Two quick thoughts on support: Our largest export is products from the aerospace industry. Our second largest is cultural products. Our government spends a lot of money, and I can testify that we spend a lot of man-hours, targeting the sales of those aerospace products. One of the things I did was to work on the joint-strike fighter, which the Dutch eventually bought into. But we spent virtually no money at all and very little time targeting those cultural products. They're just kind of an, "Oh, well, it's out there." That may be why people see mostly "Baywatch." If we put just the smallest fraction of the amount of money and time we put into aerospace products into targeting cultural products and even subsidizing some cultural products, I think it would make a big difference.

Secondly, my favorite thing on the differences in support is, at the cultural diplomacy conference held at the White House in 2000, I had a question from a French member of the audience. She said, "But I just don't understand it. We spend 1 percent—I think some phenomenal amount of our GNP on culture—and you spend nothing whatsoever, and yet everyone in France wants to go to American movies and buy American music." And I said, "Yes, and your question is?" That is a frustration.

BOHLEN: It reminds me of a joke, that the French do everything to support their film industry except go watch the movies.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Bruce Rosen. A possible opening for New York City and state because everybody seems to say that there's no hope at the moment in Washington, D.C. The city has nine or 10 comatose sister-city relationships. The only extant relationship that I know of is with the second largest art collection in the country, which is in Brooklyn, with its counterpart in Cairo. I'm wondering what opportunities are there.

ROHATYN: At least from what I've seen, these city partnerships, these twin cities, never accomplish much. Where you can accomplish things is if one city has a particular project that works with another city, whether it's a museum project, whether it's the Olympics, whether it's music, whatever. But there are twin cities all over the world. They have a little ceremony the first time. One mayor goes to the other, then you hardly ever hear of them again. There has to be something more than just the idea of "We're twin cities." Twin cities to do what? I see substance in projects in cities that go with each other, and I think if those projects work, you can find financing for at least part of them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll be starting a two-year term in Tokyo, Japan, as a Rotary world peace scholar this coming summer. We've spoken a lot about the importance of cooperation, listening, and mutuality, and we've also spoken a lot about U.S. government programs. I was wondering why we haven't focused more on multilateral organizations to address cultural programs and if there are any that can provide us with a forum to continue this conversation so that we can perhaps—in concert with our friends, our allies and those around the world—work with them to build secure funding and to create mutually sponsored events.

FRAHER: One of the issues is UNESCO. There's a reason why we're not talking about it. That's because we haven't belonged to it for a long, long, long, long time, and we're just now getting ready to rejoin UNESCO as a dues-paying member. But even within that, there's a great degree of complication, and I think consternation, and a great deal of fear in the current administration about what that is, because let's face it—it's UNESCO; it's the U.N.; let's go down the list. The other piece here is that there are, at the governmental level, multilateral relationships that exist among Ministries of Culture, that again, because we don't have a Ministry of Culture, our participation in some of that dialogue is fairly limited, if not non-existent. So that becomes a little more complicated, too. Does that mean that there is no multilateralism? I think there are bilateral institutions, bilateral relationships. I think you find those more in the private sector. There is a ton of bilateral, and to a certain extent, regionally lateral, organizations.

BOHLEN: Do you feel or do you fathom that there may be some improvement if the teaching or the endorsing of human sciences in cultural operators would be promoted?

DENBY: Absolutely. But the most important thing for those of us who are going abroad is to learn how to listen and familiarize ourselves with where we're going and what we're doing. Americans, as many people have said, are astonishingly ignorant of the rest of the world. It's going to be a problem though, particularly in an Arab country. For all of the talk about multiculturalism in the last 20 years, multiculturalism has really been about us, not other cultures. That is what feeds into our mix. Something like a handful of American undergraduates actually graduated last year who had majored in Arabic—literally 10 or 12. That is an extraordinary scandal to my mind. And I don't think anyone should go abroad into the Islamic world without having grappled with the Koran, which is very, very difficult for Westerners in many cases, but is absolutely essential and is a virtually unknown text in this country. But there's a lot more to be said about this.

BOHLEN: We've said a lot. We certainly haven't said it all, but we should wrap it up and thank all of you.

BIOGRAPHIES OF "ARTS & MINDS" PARTICIPANTS

PETER J. AWN is Dean of the School of General Studies (GS) and Professor of Islamic Religion and Comparative Religion in the Department of Religion at Columbia University. Professor Awn has served as chair of the Department of Religion, chair of the Steering Committee of the Chairs of the Arts & Sciences Departments and chair of the Executive Committee of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. Professor Awn's book, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption: Iblis in Sufi Psychology*, received a book award from the American Council of Learned Societies. Professor Awn has received awards for distinguished teaching and research and has received numerous grants including a Fulbright and several grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

VOLKER BERGHAHN specializes in modern German history and European-American relations. He received his M.A. from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1961 and his Ph.D. from the University of London in 1964. He taught in England and Germany before coming to Brown University in 1988 and to Columbia 10 years later. His publications include *Der Untergang des alten Europa, 1900-1929* (1999), *Quest for Economic Empire* (1996), *Imperial Germany* (1995), *The Americanization of West German Industry, 1945–1973* (1986), *Modern Germany* (1982), and *Der Tirpitz-Plan* (1971). His book *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* appeared in 2001.

CELESTINE BOHLEN has spent 15 of the last 19 years as a foreign correspondent, first for *The Washington Post* and then for *The New York Times*. She did three tours in Moscow, during three different phases of the transition from failed communism to struggling democracy, and was also the *Times* bureau chief in Rome from 1994 to 1998 covering Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Vatican, and in Budapest from 1989 to 1991, covering Eastern Europe. For the last three years she has been a cultural reporter for *The New York Times* based in New York and in June will be moving to Paris as European diplomatic correspondent for Bloomberg News.

JOHN H. BROWN, a Princeton Ph.D., joined the Foreign Service in 1981 and has served in London, Prague, Krakow, Kiev, Belgrade and, most recently, Moscow. A senior member of the Foreign Service since 1997, he has focused his diplomatic work on press and cultural affairs. Under a State Department program, he has, up to now, been an Associate at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, where he was assigned in August 2001.

TRISHA BROWN is founder and artistic director of the Trisha Brown Dance Company. A member of the Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s, Brown founded her own company in 1970. Brown has created a repertory including the Robert Rauschenberg/Laurie Anderson collaboration "Set and Reset," "Newark," made in collaboration with Donald Judd, the classic, "For M.G.: The Movie," and "M.O." Her first opera production, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, won the *Grand Prix* in 1999. Brown's latest choreography, "Geometry of Quiet," received its American premiere in December 2002. Trisha Brown is the first woman choreographer to receive the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, along with five fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships. In 1988 she was named *chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres* by the government of France and in January 2000 was elevated to the level of *officier*. She was a 1994 recipient of the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award and, at the invitation of President Bill Clinton, served on the National Council on the Arts from 1994 to 1997. In 1999 Ms. Brown received the New York State Governor's Arts Award. Recently, she won the National Medal of Art.

RICHARD W. BULLIET is Professor of Middle Eastern History at Columbia University where he also directed the Middle East Institute of the School of International and Public Affairs for twelve years. He came to Columbia in 1976 after undergraduate and graduate work at Harvard and eight years of teaching at Harvard and Berkeley. He is a specialist on Iran and the social history of the Islamic Middle East and the author of *Islam: The View from the Edge* published in 1994. He is currently completing a book entitled *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*. His earlier books include *The Patricians of Nishapur, The Camel and the Wheel, Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, and *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History* (co-author). He has also written four novels set in the contemporary Middle East. His most recent book is a multi-authored collection of essays entitled *The Columbia History of the Twentieth Century* published in 1998 by Columbia University Press.

HODDING CARTER became president and CEO of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in 1998. For the preceding three years he was the Knight professor of journalism at the University of Maryland, following 10 years as president of MainStreet TV. From 1980 to 1995, he was involved as anchor, correspondent, panelist or producer of a number of public affairs series, documentaries and talk shows, winning four Emmys and the Edward R. Murrow Award. During the same period he was an op-ed columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and latterly was a syndicated columnist with NEA. Following seventeen years with his family's daily newspaper, the *Delta Democrat-Times* of Greenville, Mississippi as reporter, managing editor and editor, he served as State Department spokesman under President Carter from 1977 to 1980. He served on the Princeton University board of trustees from 1983-1998 and has been a trustee of the Century Foundation since 1969. The author of two books and contributor to seven others, he has written for numerous newspapers and magazines over the past 45 years.