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"PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE AGE OF OBAMA: GETTING THE WAR OF IDEAS RIGHT"

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MR. PAVLISCHEK: My name is Keith Pavlischek, and I'm senior fellow here at the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Senator Santorum was looking forward to moderating today's event, but regrettably, he's unable to make this forum due to a family emergency. If you have some questions about that afterwards, I'd be pleased to talk to you about that. He very much was looking forward to being here, but I'm afraid this was unavoidable. So that leaves me as the pinch hitter in my capacity as the director of the EPPC's program to protect America's freedom. It also leaves me having to confess that my introduction will be considerably less eloquent that Senator Santorum's.

I wanted to say a quick word about the Ethics and Public Policy Center. Founded in 1976, EPPC is Washington's premier institute dedicated to applying the Judeo-Christian moral tradition to critical issues of public policy. From the Cold War to the war on terrorism, from disputes over the role of religion in public life to battles over the nature of the family, EPPC and it's scholars have consistently sought to defend the great Western ethical imperatives – respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, individual freedom and responsibility, justice, the rule of law and limited government.

EPPC is almost unique among Washington think tanks in its ability to develop and promote these ethical imperatives. We deal openly and explicitly with religious and moral issues in addressing contemporary issues. We work to clarify the ways in which moral principles shape the choices that political leaders must make in our democracies and we are genuinely ecumenical and inter-religious. Our Protestant, Catholic, Jewish scholars probe the riches of their own traditions, forge alliances within their communities and work together to promote a shared understanding of the common good. We are privileged to have two very distinguished guests joining us today to discuss the issue of public diplomacy. How does the U.S. better understand, inform, engage and influence foreign publics in this age of violent Islamist extremism?

What have been the successes and failures of the Bush administration in the area of public diplomacy and what are the challenges confronting the Obama administration in the coming years? Our first speaker, Jeffrey Gedmin – welcome – was named president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in February, 2007. In that capacity, he directs broadcasting and Internet operations in 28 languages to 20 countries, stretching from Belarus to Bosnia, from the Arctic Sea to the Persian Gulf. Prior to joining Radio Free Europe, Dr. Gedmin was director of the Aspen Institute in Berlin and a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. At AEI, Dr. Gedmin served as executive director of the New Atlantic Initiative, a coalition of top policymakers, journalists and business executives dedicated to the revitalization and expansion of the Atlantic community of democracies.

A frequent contributor to international newspapers and guest on television and radio, Dr. Gedmin has authored a number of books on foreign affairs and produced two documentaries for PBS. He has taught at Georgetown, holds a Ph.D. and master's in German studies from Georgetown and a B.A. in music from American University. Dr. Gedmin is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a member of the board of the Council for Community of Democracies.

Our second speaker, Kenneth Pollack, currently serves as the director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. He is a renowned expert on national security, military affairs and the Persian Gulf. He was director for Persian Gulf affairs at the

National Security Council after having spent seven years in the CIA as a Persian Gulf military analyst. He is the author of "A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy" – (laughter) – right on cue – "A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East." He holds a Ph.D. from MIT, a B.A. from Yale and has taught at the National Defense University. We have scheduled plenty of time for discussion and question and answers following their presentations. And now, please welcome Dr. Gedmin.

(Applause.)

MR. GEDMIN: Thank you very much for a kind introduction, and I'm delighted to be hosted here and to be on this panel with you, Ken. We did not coordinate, and that may have advantage or disadvantage, but I'll just say at the top, while I don't know what you're going to say, I'm sure I'm going to agree with it because I'm big fan and a big admirer of yours, for my part. I was in Romania this summer in Bucharest for a ceremony that marked the closure of our Romanian Service – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty – the Cold War's over; the transition is not quite complete but we were closing our Romanian service.

Our service was given an award by the president of the country, as was BBC by the way, and the president asked me at a reception if I knew a woman who had worked for us for years and had died in the summer. And her name was Monica Lovinescu, and I didn't know her personally, but I knew of her from colleagues and from reading. And he said, you know, we tried to have a state funeral for her. It was defeated by communists in the parliament, but we did get two million signatures on a petition, which I thought was striking. And he said, but we're not giving up, we're going to get a major boulevard in the city – in the capital of Bucharest – named after her.

Now, Monica Lovinescu was a reporter, simply, for Radio Free Europe during the Cold War. She worked out of Paris. She did culture – she was a literary critic, actually. And at one point, the Ceausescu regime sent officers of the Securitate to murder her. They didn't succeed, but they put her in a coma and then when she recovered, she went back to her desk and her microphone and continued to broadcast intellectual resistance, so to speak, from the literature.

Our group, our organization – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty – has changed in some ways the last two decades. We've moved east and south and as you've said we've got now not only Russia, but we have the Caucasus, we have Central Asia, we have a part of the Middle East. We've developed modern technologies. It's not just radio, it's a bit of television, a lot of Web, increasingly significant amounts of video, but the mission is basically the same. It's – you could call it providing free media for unfree or partially free societies, and the circumstances and predicaments are strikingly similar.

Example: We've got a woman working for us in Prague named Parnaz Azima. She was detained or blocked from leaving Iran for eight months last year when she went to visit a 95-year-old, ill mother. She's been sentenced to prison in absentia. She has faced harassment; her mother has faced harassment at 95 years old. The regime has threatened to take away the deed to her home and Nasi – her nickname – Parnaz Azima – she does culture! Women's rights, literature – she's known in Iran as a translator of Faulkner, okay. But apparently, much like Monica Lovinescu – a feared figure, a hated figure – someone who has to battled or coerced or blackmailed or sent to prison, ultimately.

It seems to me, at least from my own personal experience in working the last year-and-a-half for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that – it's stating the obvious perhaps, but all the things that we take for granted in free societies – the free flow of information and idea, dissent, discussion, debate – there's still a considerable part of the world that is less fortunate, that absolutely yearns for these things. That's what I'd like to say at the top – it's striking – it hasn't changed. Communism is gone, but this fundamental truth, in my judgment, hasn't changed.

The other thing that hasn't changed is the constant, ongoing debate and discussion about public diplomacy. One of my colleagues here in the Washington office – John Lingbergh brought to my attention yesterday a quotation by Eisenhower in 1947, who was arguing that we have to do more than just work with guns and planes and ships. It will not suffice, he said, in 1947. Another colleague of mine came across a 1979 GAO report to Congress on public diplomacy, three decades ago, and the report found – and I'll read from it – in 1979: "By comparison with both allies and adversaries, the U.S. government investment in public diplomacy is low. In absolute terms, the United States is outspent by France and by the Soviet Union." – 1979. Sounds kind of familiar to me.

What I'd like to do is – I don't have any grand conclusions or terribly brilliant policy recommendations because that's why Ken is here and that's why he's speaking second, but I do have, if you indulge me, 10 extremely brief, and I think reasonably modest, reflections about public diplomacy. Here it goes. Number one: the messenger matters, and it does start at the top. And I think it's stating the obvious to say that President Bush had the right language and body language for about half of the United States, at least for a period of time, but for the rest of the world, he had the right body language and language for maybe 5 percent of the globe. There are reasons for that, and I think that President Obama, who Charles Krauthammer said has a first-class intellect and a first-class temperament, by being the messenger himself, will make a difference. Someone called him a weapon of mass attraction. I think there's some truth to that. Point one.

Point two: The messenger matters – the message matters. And I recall sitting in Berlin once, in a room with the American ambassador and a high official from the State Department – from the Public Diplomacy Department – in a meeting with German editors, and the conversation was about how the United States can sell certain policies – Guantanamo, Patriot Act and so forth. And I recall after the meeting, the editors walking out – the German editors – saying, we don't want to buy it! You can slice it and dice it and package it and market it and change the language and improve the body language, but some of these things we simply will not buy. That's not an argument, by the way, for shaping public diplomacy to please allies – and more about that later.

Point three: Expectations are important, and I think whether you're dealing with the allies in Europe, so to speak, other parts of the world, including the Muslim world – if certain things are important to us, if certain things qualifies an objective, like combating or diminishing anti-Americanism, I think we should be sober and realistic about what we think we can accomplish. Let me read a quotation to you if I may. Quote, "You know what I think of this country, which I used to love and what I think of these Americans, who make such a big fuss about Christianity and are most assiduous church-goers; a country where everybody's equal – they're equal bores." Close quote. Well, that's not from the Bush administration, and Kathleen,

it's not from the Sarah Palin weeks – that's from Germany's most celebrated poet – Heinrich Heine, from 1830. So we can combat some of these things, but I think we should be realistic and understand what we can reasonably accomplish and those things that we can't.

Number four: Expectations are important again, and the world has changed; and I believe that the power of government today is really quite limited. That's what I believe from public diplomacy. I'll give you an example. One of our former colleagues, Daniel Kimmage, has done a tremendous amount of work looking at how insurgents and extremists and terrorists in Iraq use the Internet. And he found that they're quite successful because they're decentralized and of course they use – have good use of symbols and imagery and music and messaging, but they are enjoying tremendous amount of sovereignty, freedom, they have flexibility, they're fast, they're nimble and they get hardened, conventional wisdoms done in the scene in Iraq by the time the State Department has held its first meeting. They're small; they're fast; they use technology; that's number four.

Number five: We need – in my view – Voice of America. Voice of America cannot be replaced or supplanted by other things. And the argument that we have international media, we have CNN, in my view just doesn't cut ice. I think it's really lacking in any kind of compelling rationale. I love markets – CNN and other things like that are commercial – but I do think markets at times lack wisdom and judiciousness and have flaws. They do give us things like Paris Hilton and pet rocks.

Number six: I think we ought to continue to provide, through government, surrogate broadcasting. That's what Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty does. But before that sounds too self-serving, just look at what a sister organization of ours does – Radio Free Asia in China, in North Korea, in Burma. It is remarkable work. It's serious. They have audience, they have impact.

Number seven: I think we need to rethink the State Department's role in public diplomacy. The public diplomacy cannot be executed merely by the department or bureau called public diplomacy and by the official called the undersecretary of state for public diplomacy. And of course it has to be part and parcel of what senior officials do and I think the Bush administration, if I may say, has gotten better at that. But I think if one were taking this seriously, one would have to take a hard look at the kinds of people you recruit for the foreign service, what kind of talent, what kind of aptitude, what kind of training they have, because the old model of what foreign service officers did in the '40s or '50s or '60s or '70s or even '80s, I think, is broken. And it may be a cliché, it bears repeating – I think that when we're training people, you have to look seriously at language. I have a board member who likes to say it may be true that people abroad get their information in English, but it's in their native language that they make love. And I think that's not unimportant.

Number eight: I would not neglect, as we're looking at the world and the Muslim world, the Middle East and terrorism and Bin Laden and al-Qaeda, I would not neglect the core of our global alliances, and that's in Europe, and that's the democracies in Europe. I would not take them for granted. I would not be complacent. Remember the solidarity that the Bush Administration supposedly destroyed after 9/11? It was always my view that that solidarity was a little more fragile than a lot of us wanted to believe. Die Zeit, the prominent, prestigious German newspaper found in a poll after 9/11 that one out of five young Germans under 30

thought that we had conducted the attacks – the CIA – in a modern democracy. Remember Le Monde, that published the famous headline, "We're All Americans Now?" Well, Le Monde also, in the same week, ran an editorial saying American got what they had coming because it was their policies that invited all of this. I wouldn't neglect the allies.

Number nine: I would spend money. You get what you pay for – ask al Jazeera; ask Vladimir Putin.

Number ten: Culture matters – I think theirs and ours. On ours, there's a new book being written by Martha Bayles, who is a scholar at Boston College, that looks at, among other things, the role and effect of the export, intentional and otherwise, of American culture abroad. I think there's a pretty complex and sophisticated debate to be had about what kind of effect – about what kind of impact that has, including – and perhaps especially – in the Muslim world.

Their culture matters, too. I had been on the job at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for just a few months when we had an Iraqi colleague – a 29-year-old woman in Baghdad – kidnapped! We got her out. She came to Prague; she was free and safe. And she chose not to go back to Iraq for three different reasons. Number one, for fear that the kidnappers would come after her again. Number two, for fear that her neighbors would come after her, because the day she was kidnapped, she was being driven by her neighbor, who was shot and killed, and the neighbors had for her a blood debt, and if she didn't – and if her family didn't – pay a certain amount of money, they threatened to kill her. The third reason why she didn't want to go back to Iraq is because the male relatives, on her father's side, from Kirkuk, threatened her with an honor killing, because she had been abused in captivity. Culture matters when we're thinking about taking messages and communicating with the rest of the world.

In closing, I think one thing that has to frame everything about public diplomacy, no matter how you slice it or dice it, is what its central and fundamental and ultimate purpose is. And I would like to suggest that it is not for the United States to be popular, okay. I remember when Ronald Reagan died, I saw something astonishing on German television; it was a ticker-tape coming across. It said: Former U.S. President Reagan dies – helped in the Cold War.

And I thought it was astonishing, because when Reagan was busy winning the Cold War, he was not popular in Germany; he was not popular with Der Spiegel; he was not popular with Stern; he was not popular with network television. When he went to Berlin and said, in 1987, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear this wall down," he was not popular with the tens of thousands, not thousands, tens of thousands who took to the streets to throw stones and curse, because he was a cowboy, because he was a mindless Hollywood actor, and because he was wrong and dangerously wrong. That was the big conventional wisdom at the time.

One concern that I would have is that the new Obama administration, with a number of advantages – some of which, I've alluded to – may well be so eager to reverse the unpopularity of the Bush years that it may/can be, at times, in danger of losing its compass – I don't wish it – and think that popularity is the end in itself. And the end, in my view, should always be, of public diplomacy fundamentally, to advance American interests consummate with American values. So I'll stop with that and turn it over to you.

(Applause.)

KENNETH POLLACK: Thank you so much, Jeff. Thank you also to EPPC for inviting me today and to all of you for coming out on this chilly fall afternoon. Jeff, I will say that it is an equal honor for me to share this dais with you, because I have the same admiration for you and for your organization and its work. I was also smiling – a number of you probably noticed that – during the course of your presentation, because as you predicted, our thinking is very much along the same lines and you used a number of lines that – I suspect that you were looking over at my sheet of paper – (laughter) – because I can't imagine that we simply came up with these things simultaneously, but entirely on our own. And I think that that's actually a useful thing.

My role here, as I see it, is to place public diplomacy into the wider perspective – the wider context – of American foreign policy, exactly as Jeff was getting at in a number of his different points. And I'll say that when EPPC first contacted me about doing this, I said to them well, look, all of my experiences with public diplomacy have been terrifying and I don't know if I could stand up there and give the kind of message that I assume that you want. And they said, no, no, no, that's exactly what we want to hear from you. And so I thought about it more and I thought well, you know, that's actually a very useful thing to do. And, again, many of the points that Jeff was making – many of the cautions that he introduced – are part of the complexity that I'd like to present today.

I wanted to start with kind of the core terrifying experience that I had with public diplomacy. For me, it's about when I was at the National Security Council, exactly as Keith described it. I was there – served two tours – and my second tour at the White House was from 1991 to 2001. Without using any names, it started, for me, in late 1998, right after, for those of you who remember it, we bombed Iraq – Operation Desert Fox – and President Clinton announced that our policy toward Iraq would be changing from containment to regime change. I got a call from one of my old bosses at the NSC, saying, I guess you heard that we're changing our policy toward Iraq. And I said, absolutely, I had heard and my eyes kind of widened when I heard it. And he said, well good, we need you to come back here and explain to us what we just got ourselves into – (laughter). And so I duly said, no problem, I can be there Monday and went back to the NSC.

And of course, it was about trying to figure out what regime change was going to mean. It was a long, interesting, but also painful process. And one of the clichés of that period of time was we had these Principals Committee meetings – I assume most of you Washingtonians know what the Principals Committee meeting is – that's the highest level of the National Security Council meeting together – and there were endless Principals Committee meetings on Iraq, you know, to the point where there were one or two a week. And at the end of almost every single one – in fact, I would venture to say, at the end of 99 percent of those Principals Committee meetings, whoever was chairing the meeting would then turn to me and say, Ken, you're going to work up a new public diplomacy campaign to sell this policy.

Yes, sir, right on – and I'd duly go back and we had a public diplomacy committee over at State and I would go there and we would come up with every idea that we possibly could to sell the policy – to sell the U.S. policy on Iraq. And it goes right to Jeff's lesson number two; you can't sell a policy that nobody wants to buy. And all through that experience, we tried everything. And remember, at the time, the real fight was over the impact of sanctions on Iraq, where the Iraqis were trying to claim that the sanctions were apocalyptic – were causing

horrendous damage to their society – and we were trying to push back and say, no, they really weren't, and to the extent that they were, it was all Saddam's fault. And we generated press briefings and interviews and pamphlets and brochures and massive intelligence packets; we thought of everything that we possibly could, from kind of the most pop to the most sophisticated and erudite, in terms of products, to get out there and try to convince people of our position.

And we tried to demonstrate that the people who were dying – the Iraqis were exaggerating the numbers who were dying, and even if they were dying, they were dying because Saddam was withholding the goods and services that they needed to survive, and all that should be going through – and all this was true, by the way; everything that we said was absolutely, 100 percent true – and it just didn't matter, because every statistic we put up, every point we made, every piece of U.N. Security Council resolution that we held up, every piece of evidence that we could find all dissolved when the Iraqis put a dying child on TV and said the sanctions are causing this. It didn't matter at the end of the day. I think that is very important and helped change my thinking, or shake my thinking, on public diplomacy.

And I will say that I continue to believe that public diplomacy is extraordinarily important to the United States of America, and that's why I'm here today; because I do think it is extraordinarily important. And some of you in this room – Jerry Rose, in particular – know that I spend a lot of time – I've spent a lot of time in my career ever since I left government – on public diplomacy, trying to put my money where my mouth is, or I guess, in this case, put my mouth where my mouth is, because I do believe that it is so important. But what I'd like to talk about today are, ultimately, the limitations on public diplomacy, the context of public diplomacy and my own fears that we are trying to make public diplomacy a substitute for good policy, and to see it as covering up policies that are simply unpalatable and that we're going to have to recognize as unpalatable. And I think that, since 9/11, a lot of the discourse in the United States has fallen into both of those two different traps.

Let me talk a little bit about some of my lessons and, again, I think that you're going to see how closely they parallel Jeff's lessons. The first one for me is, public diplomacy is not advertising, okay? They are fundamentally different things. And you hear this all the time in the public discourse and our leaders say it to themselves; they say, why is it that the country that produces Madison Avenue and figured out how to sell products to people who don't want or need those products can't figure out how to sell this wonderful product, the United States of America. And the problem is – and Jeff used exactly the words – we're not selling; okay, this is not advertising and you cannot think of it that way.

There is always going to be ambiguity in every foreign policy. There are always going – even in the greatest, most wonderful foreign policies – there are going to be aspects that people don't like and, at the end of the day, it's not a product – it's not a thing you can hold. And the differences are huge and we need to keep that in mind and we need to stop thinking about public diplomacy as advertising, and that has ramifications in a whole variety of different ways and I'll talk more about that.

The second point: We do need to keep in mind – and, again, Jeff alluded to this a number of times – that, ultimately, actions do speak louder than words. Our words are important and we shouldn't be taking actions without the words to accompany them, to explain to people what it is

that we're doing and why we're trying to do it, and also what it is that we're not doing. A lot of what we do – and I think this was one of Jeff's last points – a lot of what we need to do is combat misimpressions and misinformation and conspiracy theories out there. There are actions that we take that people don't like, but they don't like them for the wrong reasons. And there are actions that we take that people should like and they don't like them, because they don't understand what it is that we're doing and why, or even who is doing them.

All of that is very important, but we need to recognize at the end of the day, a wonderful public diplomacy campaign is not going to substitute for a poor policy. And poor policy can have many different meanings. It can mean a poorly thought-out policy, one that is not actually accomplishing what we hope to achieve. But I also mean it in the sense of simply a policy that actually may be doing exactly what we want it to do and what we need it to do but that is simply unpalatable to a group of people. And I'm going to come back to that a little bit later.

In addition, for me, a lot of this came to the fore with the post-9/11 foolishness that "they hate us for who we are and not what we do," okay? We now have enormous amounts of evidence, tremendous amounts of polling data, qualitative studies, studies of behavior versus polling numbers, everything you want. By the way, I just spent a lot of time in it in this book – that's why I have it up here. And I've got a lot of those numbers and a lot of those studies for people who are interested. But I think it's very clear now that most of the people – at least in the Islamic world, who hate us, hate us because of our policies.

They don't hate us for who we are. In fact, to a very real extent, they like who we are. They like many of our values. And in fact, one of the things that they hate us most for is that they believe that we have not applied our values to their part of the world. And when you speak to people in the region, one of the things that they bristle against – they bridle against most forcefully is what gets called Arab exceptionalism. And by that, they don't mean that we think better of them than we do everybody else. In fact, what they mean is that for the United States for 60 years, we promoted democracy in every part of the world except the Middle East.

And that, to them, is humiliating, it is frustrating, it's a source of tremendous anger and resentment toward the United States of America because they see us out there talking about democracy and then they look at our actions in their part of the world and they see the United States unwilling to do anything to promote democracy there. And when you talk to many Arabs about what they felt – thought of President Bush's freedom agenda, their greatest point was he got our hopes up and then dashed them and did nothing and clearly not nearly enough to actually fulfill the expectations that he created in all of us.

Second one – third one, excuse me – public diplomacy is not a quick fix. Public diplomacy works best when it works over the long term. Again, I think this is echoed in a number of different points that Jeff made. And, you know, I'm going to come back to this again but it's one of the reasons why things like Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty are so important and why they ought to be the central thrust of much of our public diplomacy work, because they are about creating change and changing perceptions over the long term. And when we try to get out there and try to gin up some kind of a public diplomacy campaign to change people's minds about something in a matter of months, we're almost doomed to failure. It's extraordinarily difficult to do.

Public diplomacy's also about telling the world who we are and why we do things. So it's also about combating misinformation. For that reason – and again, this is Jeff's last line, and I couldn't agree with it more – it has to echo our values. We need to recognize that the world does like many of those values. They don't like all of them – Jeff's point about culture is a very important one too. But again, especially the part of the world that I focus on and that has become so problematic for the United States today, the problem is not the disconnect in values. The problem is not differences in values. Again, the problem is that they believe that we have not been living up to our own values when it comes to our policies toward their part of the world.

Now, for me, this kind of all gets translated into operational matters because that's how I think about the world. I'm a foreign policy guy and I think that these theoretical considerations are important and we need to keep them in mind but for me, it's always about all right, how does the rubber meet the road? And I wanted to talk a little bit about some things – or at least one thing that we should not be doing when it comes to public diplomacy as a way of illustrating some of these points and then things that I think that we should be doing.

The thing that we should not be doing that I want to use as an example, the thing that troubles me most about the post-9/11 world, is the fact that in particular elements within the U.S. government and specifically elements within the military, have decided that we have to wage the war of ideas and that the way to do it is that we need to promote moderate Islamist voices and even devise our own theological arguments against those of radical Muslims, the Salafi extremists, et cetera. And this is all seen as part of the war of ideas and I fully understand where it comes from. And in particular, I understand where it comes from within the Pentagon.

You've got a lot of, you know, bright, well-meaning young men and women who understand that what we're going through now has a very important philosophical component to it – the war of ideas. And they look around and say, well, nobody else is waging the war of ideas so by god, we better do it. You know, I travel to Iraq fairly frequently and it's part of what is actually helping us to succeed in Iraq, is this mentality within the military of okay, well, we know this is important, nobody else is doing it; fine, we'll figure out how to do it. And typically, they figure out how to do it and they do it superbly well. But in this case, I think it is deeply misguided and it's deeply misguided on two levels.

First, we need to recognize, again, that because of our reputation in the Middle East, the idea of our promoting moderate Islamism is fundamentally contradictory. Our touch, in many cases, delegitimizes the very people who we'd like to be supporting. And so the idea of us getting out there, picking particular Muslim clerics or Muslim theologians or philosophers and trying to hold them up and get the people of the region to pay attention to them as opposed to Ayman al Zawahiri or Osama bin Laden is ultimately self defeating because what we wind up doing is, again, hurting them in this war which needs to be waged and won.

And that brings me to the second point, which is it is ultimately a war that needs to be waged and won within the Muslim worlds. And we need to recognize that we simply don't have the tools to do it. It's not just that we, in many cases, corrupt everything we touch, at least at this moment in this particular area. It's also that this is not our war to fight. We don't have the tools; we don't know what we're doing. And if we try to engage it directly, if we do, as I said, there are offices within the U.S. government trying to do, try to formulate our own counters to Salafi extremist ideology – it's not just it's going to hurt – excuse me – moderate Islamists, it's that it's

also going to hurt us because the Muslims of the world are going to look at this and say why on earth is the United States government meddling in our religion?

This is not going to help. And again, it stems from exactly the right place that this is a war that is also about ideas and shouldn't we, since we're involved in this war, be contributing some ammunition to some fight? And the truth is, that's one where we need to take a step back and recognize that that's not where public diplomacy lies. Now, things we should be doing and again, particular focus on one. As I said, a lot of this is about remaining true to our own values and for me, it is about thinking about the long term and what we do, in many ways, to allow public diplomacy to complement policies of the United States and strategies, long-term strategies, grand strategies. And for me, that is where, as I've already mentioned, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Radio Asia, Radio Farda, all of these different programs come in.

They're enormously important but, again, I think in many ways, we tend to misunderstand what their actual impact is because we tend to see it, again, as a part of this advertising model, which I think is just fundamentally wrong-headed, that we're selling American policy. We're not selling American policy. It is American policy, in many ways. Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty – think about what they did during the Cold War. They were a beacon of hope to the people of Eastern Europe. They were a symbol, out there, that there was a different world, that there was an alternative to the kind of life that they were being forced to live and it was an alternative that they found extremely attractive, that they wanted.

They heard the values, they saw what it was that we were trying to tell them was out there and they loved it. And ultimately, when they had the opportunity, they chose it. It is also a demonstration that their own governments are not acting in manners consistent with their own values. Again, this is something that you see, in particular, in Iran, where one of the things that we do by constantly allowing additional information into Iran is we allow Iranians to recognize that what its own government is saying isn't necessarily the truth and what it's doing isn't necessarily what the people of Iran want. And that's also extremely important.

As I mentioned before, the last – the penultimate point that I want to make is that we ultimately have to recognize that we can't assume that public diplomacy is going to make palatable policies that others just don't like. Again, this is Jeff's point with this German editor saying you may want to sell it but we just don't want to buy it. And I think that we also need to recognize that this is part of the complexity of public diplomacy and its place in our larger foreign policy, which is that at times, we are forced to – here, well, throughout foreign policy, there are always issues between values and interests. Sometimes, very fortunately, there are times when our values and our interests coincide and that's wonderful, when we wind up doing things that both support our values and support our interests.

There are other times when those things diverge. That becomes much more problematic and it becomes very difficult to explain even to ourselves why we're doing what we're doing. It's often why we have deep divisions within this country because some people favor whatever policy is more consistent with our values and at other times and other groups will favor the policies that are more consistent with our interests. And that's why we have democratic process to try to sort that out. But beyond that, we also have to recognize that often times, our policies are not just not consistent with other peoples' values. That's less often the case, although it sometimes happens. But in many cases, it's simply not consistent with their interests. And when

that's the case, it's going to be very hard to sell them our policy. The best that we're going to be able to do is hopefully make them understand why it is that we're doing what we're doing.

Some examples that come to mind – Kosovar independence – I would actually suggest that Kosovar independence is fully consistent with both our values and our interests. The problem is, it's not consistent with Russia's interests and there are people from Belgrade to Vladivostok who deeply oppose this policy. And there is no amount of public diplomacy that is likely to convince them otherwise, certainly not in the short term and we need to recognize that. And for me, a kind of a larger issue that I'm trying to get into with this is this question of America's support for Israel in the Arab world.

This adds to the complexity of the problem. There is no question that our support for Israel is part of Arab animosity toward the United States and part of the wider anti-Americanism. Now, I will certainly say to you that I believe fully that America's support for Israel at the broadest level is fully consistent with both America's values and America's interests. That doesn't necessarily mean – I spend a lot of time in the book talking about this as well – that we need to support every single thing that the government of Israel does. That's actually a very different point. And unfortunately, I think over the last – at least the first five or six years of the Bush administration, we kind of lost sight of that fact.

And that was very problematic because added to Arab and Muslim grievances that we were supporting Israel at all, was the fact that we were supporting Israeli interests in an almost excessive way, certainly a way that they felt excessive and many Americans felt excessive – that even some Israelis felt was quit excessive. But setting that aside, we do need to recognize that at the end of the day, support for Israel is always going to be unpopular in the Arab world. And we need to recognize that and we do need to take that into account. And for me, that is part of why I would aggressively support an aggressive effort to broker peace between Arabs and Israelis.

That's never going to deal with the extreme sentiment within the Arab world that hatred of Israel. There are always going to be some people who always are angry at the United States because they just simply cannot accept Israel's existence. But of course, there are a lot of people who would be willing to do so if there were an equitable peace brokered among them. And that is the best way to square that circle and as I'm suggesting, that's ultimately a problem of diplomacy, not a problem of public diplomacy. And it also, for me, gets to a point that Jeff made of – I'll use slightly different words but almost exactly the same – which is that ultimately, we do need to recognize that U.S. foreign policy is not a popularity contest.

And while it's nice and important that we remain as consistent to our values as we possibly can, a big part of what I have to say in this book is about rethinking our policies toward the Middle East so they are more consistent with our values. We do need to recognize that there are going to be times when the United States needs to pursue interests that the rest of the world simply isn't going to like. And under those circumstances, public diplomacy is not going to be very helpful. It can take the edge off and over the long term, it might be able to set up a reconciliation to make people understand why we're doing things and where the areas of compromise are because it will take care of – it will help get rid of the mythology. But it's not going to make people happy about those kind of particular policies in the short term.

My final point – as you've heard me say, I think public diplomacy's enormously important for a whole variety of reasons. But I also think that it is also limited and we need to see it for its limitations and understand the complexity and how it should and should not fit into the wider U.S. foreign policy. But for me, as a guy who comes at it more from the policy side than from the public diplomacy side, I just want to make a pitch for thinking about our policies a little more in terms of their long-term impact. Again, that is the central premise of the book, where I point out that one of the greatest problems that we've created for ourselves in the Middle East is we've pursued policies that were in our short-term interest, but that were inconsistent with our values and as a result, prove to be long-term, against our interests.

But over the last 50, 60 years, the policies that we pursued, which always in the short term seemed right – support the autocrat, forget about internal problems, don't worry about the economic and social and political problems of the Arab world, the dictators and monarchs will take care of those problems and we won't have to worry about them – were wrong. And that the only way that we're ultimately going to deal with these set of underlying problems, which – let's face facts – create and exacerbate all of the crises of the Middle East, the crises which we have been dealing with for 50 years and which we increasingly find so difficult to cope with.

The only way that we're going to deal with them is to take a much longer term perspective and to recognize that what is best for us and for the region over the long term is a policy, is a set of policies that is much more consistent with our values and their values as being the only way to solve these conundrums. And of course, my hope is that if we are willing to take this longer term perspective and to see where our interests lie over the long term, then sort of doing – we'll also make it a lot easier to handle the public diplomacy side of that. So finally, you have a policy that's worth selling. Thank you.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Before I open this up, I wonder if you'd like to respond to –

MR. GEDMIN: I'll make one quick observation to ask Ken a question. The observation is we agree, but that's no fun so let me try to stir things up a little bit. (Laughter.) It is true and I said it myself, Ken, that you can't sell – shouldn't be selling anyway – but can't sell policies that no one wants to buy. We both used the same language. But you can engage people, explain to people, illuminate to people, and diminish anti-Americanism and hostility that exists over unpopular policies, too, can you not? And I can think of two examples.

There are many reasons why the Bush administration got itself into hot water with Europe and became quite unpopular in Europe but I'll think of two. One is Guantanamo and one is the Patriot Act, okay? And it fed the idea that we're turning away from the rule of law, no longer a beacon of democracy and liberalism. If I had been – and thankfully, no one trusted me to do any job with any particular real responsibility – but if I had been there, Ken, I would've argued that in those cases, you could've taken unpopular policies and at least made them more palatable because those policies involve dilemmas and they were real dilemmas.

The case of Guantanamo – Kathleen, you and I had breakfast the other day and I may have mentioned this – I remember where Gerhard Schroeder was chancellor and the feeling between the United States and Germany was so bad that Schroeder's interior minister announced at a dinner that I attended, that of course he was against Guantanamo, but he added I'm glad those people aren't here because we don't know what to do with them. We wouldn't send them

back to their countries to be tortured; we wouldn't return them to the battlefield; we wouldn't put them in our civilian court system. And he said, glad it's your dilemma, not ours. And I wish we had teased that debate out a little bit or actually, I would have said, we care about civil rights too and at the time, there were 15 EU countries. Each EU country should take 30 prisoners and resolve it that way. (Laughter.)

Second case is in the Patriot Act, just to illustrate – use an illustration – my understanding that the much vilified Patriot Act was largely crafted in the Clinton – of the Clinton Justice Department and some of its most controversial passages were never implemented because the Bush administration feared being contested in court. Well, it illuminates. It doesn't make them popular, but it mitigates and I think diminishes some of the wild and I would even say mindless and reckless hostility. That's an observation – I'd be happy to hear you on that.

The question is, and you are the expert on the Middle East – the question I have is about the values issue and I think you said something to the effect that where we have problems in the Middle East – I'm probably overstating for effect, Ken, is because we're not honoring our values. It's not because people don't like our values but we espouse democracy and then we support autocrats. But isn't it also true – the idea of posing a question – I have a precise idea what the solution is – that one of the claims of the extremists resonates with a lot of so-called moderates, that is, this United States of America is a country of aggressive secularism, mindless consumerism, heartless materialism, hedonism, all sorts of things that we don't want because we tend to be socially conservative here?

MR. POLLACK: Great points, Jeff. Let me respond to both of them. Your first point about – with the examples of Gitmo and the Patriot Act – I'll put it this way – I don't know if public diplomacy can actually ameliorate or make those kind of policies more palatable. I would say you have to try because in some cases they can, in other cases, they can't. A lot of it though has to – and I take this back to the point that both of us made about actions and public diplomacy, which I think in part, you know, the problem with Guantanamo is that you had an administration that wasn't willing to engage that dilemma either.

I think that it might have played very differently if the administration had been more forthcoming in saying to the nation, look, here is our dilemma and you know, debated it more effectively much more openly. And that would have allowed the rest of the world to see not only that the dilemma existed but that the United States was responsive to both sides of it and was itself trying to grapple with them. And I think in other words, that set of actions also made it made it difficult and part of what happened was that, you know, Gitmo was treated off limits and it allowed, you know, the worst kind of mushrooms to grow in the dark in terms of false ideas about it and a whole mythology that grew up and our unwillingness to have that debate played out in public seemed to simply reinforce that point.

Another one I actually am inclined to mention because I was thinking about Hughes and I'd mentioned Hughes in both Guantanamo and actually Abu Ghraib as again, areas where our actions speak incredibly loudly and where we seem to be rather insensitive to the fact of that. For me, Abu Ghraib was a crime in many different ways, starting with the fact that when we invaded, I couldn't believe that we were going to take Abu Ghraib and use it as a prison. I remember saying to a very senior Bush administration official that you know, Abu Ghraib is as close to Auschwitz as you get in Iraq and you know, if we had occupied Auschwitz and used it as

a camp, and you know, for Iraqis, it was effectively the same thing. I'm glad that we're out of there but you know, add to that the misbehavior and that seemed to reinforce to a lot of people that were not actually living up to our words.

But as I said, I don't know if you can actually win those battles. You do have to try and as I said, for me, this is consistent with my point that at the very least, you do want to try to explain to people why we are doing things and why we aren't doing things so that at least if they don't like what we're doing, they don't like it for the right reasons, which allows for the potential for compromise at later points and gives people much more realistic basis of understanding what the U.S. is and is not and helps to combat the more extreme claims of people like the bin Ladens and the Zawahiris.

Now, let me go to your second point because that's a perfect segue way for it about how we are this idol, this Baal of secularism and commercialism and everything else that the Muslim world doesn't like. The first point I'd make is actually a great many Americans don't care for that either. And you know, one of the points that I develop in the point is that's really not necessarily America or American value of ideology. That's really globalization and what you see is that wave striking the United States and invoking the exact same of general reactions here in the United States, although the particular manifestations are very different.

Our fight over family values, the, you know, the battle cry of the American conservative movement is effectively identical to what you're hearing from the Muslim world. It's just that the Muslim world, which had a different cultural system than the United States – it's even more pronounced; it is even more problematic for them. In many ways, we had cultural values of individualism and individual achievement that resonated better with some of the cultural impacts of globalism, which don't exist in the Middle East. And so that's one where I would actually say that there are consistent values and we need to overcome them.

The second point I'd make is that at some level, and again, I talk about this quite a bit in my book because it needs to be part of this larger strategy, this larger effort to engage the region. Yes, at some level, this is a problem that we're going to need to engage in. But there, I think it needs to be engaged at the level of policy as much as it does at the level of public diplomacy. The Arab world, the Muslim world, is going to have to come to grips with modernity just as every society around the world is being forced to come to grips with modernity. And I think that the United States, because we are the first society to come to grips with modernity and we are still fighting that fight ourselves within our shores.

We can be helpful, in some ways, to the people of the region. And at the very least, we can be sensitive to it and we can recognize it. And we can go to them and say, look, you know, we're not trying to push this down your throat, okay? You want to buy up iPods? That's fine. It's not an object of U.S. policy to make very Arab, every Muslim carry an iPod. And again, at the end of the day, this is a struggle which they are going to have to deal with themselves. And yes, at some level, it does get identified with us and it's going to be very hard for us to disentangle ourselves because we are the first globalizer and because it was consistent with many American values and we have – once we internalized it, began re-exporting.

We're not the only ones doing so, but that's certainly there. And as a dare, I think that we can make some changes in other areas. We can certainly handle the situation better. We can

certainly be more sensitive to them. But this, too, is one where they're going to have to deal with it themselves. It's going to be very difficult for us to deal with it for them.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Okay, thanks. Listen, I guarantee you we're going to get to all your questions. We're going to go until 2:00. I think we said in our announcement 1:30? But so if you want to – I think we're going to try to keep this open because we'll have a lot of questions and I want to pose one that I think is going to made – a little provocative in order to get the discussion going, maybe.

Ken, you said in your comments about public diplomacy that they need to echo our values and particularly within the context of being less hypocritical in terms of the freedom agenda. But I wonder if that doesn't also – might be potential conflict with what you said about taking sides in the Middle Eastern Islamist debate between moderates and radicals because if, in fact, the values we want to promote are radically inconsistent with radical Islamist notions of Sharia law, religious persecution of non-Muslims, lack of religious freedom, treatment of women, et cetera. Don't we simply – by promoting our values, take sides in that debate? In other words, we want a theological winner and we want a theological loser, right?

We want the theological moderates to win, right? And so my question is, how is it possible to defend robustly the idea of stable, representative democracies that are free, and we here are particularly concerned about religious freedom and opposition to religious persecution, with not taking sides in that debate. It seems to me you are, in fact, taking sides. You want the moderates who have a more moderate understanding of Sharia to win.

MR. POLLACK: It's a hard question. But again, it gets to exactly something I've been kind of dancing around all day, which is, in some ways, about kind of public diplomacy as an effort to represent ourselves as opposed public diplomacy as an effort to change others. And my feeling is public diplomacy has to be about representing ourselves. We have to be very, very careful and we need to be very aggressive about that. We have to be very careful when it comes to using public diplomacy to change other people. It's a very difficult tool to use.

It does have its uses and again, I think that you know, one of the values, one of the things that Radio Free Europe did was it did have an impact in changing others, in changing how they thought about things and I think it is having that same impact in other places around the world. But you know, we talk about the military as being a blunt instrument, wow. Public diplomacy is an extraordinarily blunt instrument in exactly that way. I think that we need to be very careful and that was my point about thinking through the war of ideas.

For me, a lot of what we need to be doing is standing up and saying here is what we – who we are and what we stand for. And we hope that you stand for the same thing and we hope that you'll recognize that it is possible to be free and prosperous and strong in doing these things. And then this is what you want as well and if so, the United States is willing to help you to do those various things. But exactly what you talked about, you know, I look at that and say all right, it came from the CIA. If we had a CIA that knew what it was doing, that's what they ought to be doing, okay? That's the kind of black propaganda which, if you could absolutely keep America's hands off of it and be certain that no one would ever find out that the United States was trying to influence that fight, fine.

Since I have zero confidence of that, I would not necessarily ask the CIA to do it and again, when we were talking about public diplomacy, again, this is overt. This is acknowledging it and the point that I made is that this is one of these areas where I think that trying to change people can be very, very dangerous for us. You're right. We would very much like the moderates of the region to succeed in this. But directly engaging that fight is very problematic – directly engaging it overtly. What I would say, my last point, and I'll be interested in Jeff's reaction to it.

My last point is by the same token, I think that there are things that the United States could be doing and that things that we can do that will indirectly affect that. Again, a lot of this book is about exactly that. A lot of it is about changing the material circumstances, about changing our own relationship, about changing how we do things in the region, with the recognition that first, a great deal of the appeal of the extremists – their ability to garner widespread support is driven by the underlying grievances of the people of the region.

They're angry at their economic and political and social and cultural circumstances. And if you start to erode that, the appeal of the extremists will go away very, very quickly. And secondarily, part – another piece of the appeal of the extremists, although much less is this rallying against the evil policies of the United States. And again, some of the policies of the United States, I think are absolutely right and I would not say we should change them. But there are other policies I think that we can change. We can certainly tweak, in many cases and in some cases, we can abandon altogether.

And you know, a lot of what I think we need to do in the Middle East and elsewhere as well is think through the ones that we need to keep despite the fact that other people don't like them, the things that we can tweak to make more palatable, and the ones that you know what? We can just give up because they don't really serve our interest and the amount of anger they generate is actually more problematic than any particular benefit we gain from it.

MR. GEDMIN: I would have something to say but I think I'll pass and yield to the first question.

Q: (Inaudible.)

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Yeah, but we'd like to get this on tape, so – how are we doing out there?

Q: Thank you for these very wise remarks you've made in respect to the state in which public diplomacy is today. I wonder, however, if we really calmed the doubts of how bad it is. I offer two quotes to illustrate. One is from Lieutenant General J.R. Vines who was ground commander in both Afghanistan and Iraq, who said recently out of some very bitter frustration, quote, "We can kill them but we can't influence them," unquote, in other words, we have tied our arms behind our back in not even allowing ourselves to engage in this kind of influence.

The second quote is Jeff Trimble, the chief of staff of the Broadcasting Board of Governors at a conference on strategic communications at National Defense University several weeks ago. Speaking of all U.S. government broadcasting, which is overseen by the BBG, he said, quote, "It is not in our mandate to influence," unquote. So if we don't even have a mission

statement that that is what we ought to be doing, it's not surprise that we find ourselves not doing it. The other thing I would simply suggest to is public diplomacy is distinct from public affairs ought to operate at the level of either advancing moral legitimacy of our cause or undermining the moral legitimacy of the cause of our opponent.

And if what we're engaged in isn't doing at least one of those two things, it's not public diplomacy, but I would call it move it somewhere else or stop doing it. You can comment, thank you.

MR. GEDMIN: Gee, I don't know what to say. That's a colleague of mine, I don't know what to say about the quote that it's not in our mandate in influence because I haven't read the mandate. But Bob Reilly, if after the program, I shake your hand, I'm in the game of influence. Firm, soft, body language, warm or hostile so it's hard to divorce yourself from influence. The other thing is – it is not a satisfactory answer but you said, quoted the general in Afghanistan, we can kill but not influence. I do believe, as I said in my remarks, that in some cases, government is limited, we're limited, and the depth of the problems are just enormous. They're immense.

But I believe we influence. I believe all the horror stories and the deficits and the problems. You can have countless instances – and you know this from your experience – you have countless instances where one does influence and have impact. Now, I say I used to be a high school teacher and you know, when you're teaching in a high school, you think that you're there in front of a class and you've got 25 kids and you're influencing the 25. And it turns out years later, that some of them you didn't touch at all and it turns out years later that the guy who sat in the front row and always came on time and always did homework and always raised his hand first, didn't amount much.

And it also turns out that the guy who's in the corner always eating his lunch with his shirt tail, you know, untucked, turned out to be some sort of professional star. So I think that it requires some modesty in places like Afghanistan to figure out how we're influencing. But for us, for our very small piece, Radio Free Europe, what is called Azadi Radio Liberty, we do have 60 percent market share. So people are listening to us. Now, 60 percent market share, it says 60 percent of the people listen, it doesn't mean you're influencing them or in any positive way.

But – and this won't satisfy you entirely, but literally this morning, across my desk or across my BlackBerry, came a letter from our director of our Afghan service and he said I just thought I'd share this with you. It comes from an Afghan expat visiting her homeland in Kabul and she stopped and tried to buy vegetables. And she could not get the guy to pay attention or make a sale because he was listening to Radio Liberty for five and 10 or 15 or 20 minutes. And at the end, when she got her vegetables, she said, how come, you know, this is business. How come you were hooked to that radio for 15 minutes? And he said, you need vegetables, I need something else.

(Laughter.)

MR. POLLACK: Let me just pick up on Jeff's point briefly because since you raised General Vines, I'm going to take the point to make a – bring a couple of examples from Iraq is again, the point is, we – I completely agree with Jeff – we've got to be the influencer.

The point that I absolutely try to make is we need to recognize that there are areas where we have an ability to influence that are far greater than in other areas. And even at times, our influence can actually hurt what we're ultimately trying to achieve and we need to keep this in mind. And I just wanted to bring up three examples from Iraq, which I think are worth using to flesh out this. First point – and it's going to be about actions and words. I don't think there's any question that the most important thing that we've done in Iraq since 2007 was change the strategy, the tactics, the approach. Before 2007, it didn't matter what we said – we weren't protecting the Iraqi people; we were allowing the country to spiral into civil war; it was disastrous.

And, on the one hand, General Petraeus came in and did have a much better public diplomacy campaign than General Casey did. But the simple fact is, whatever impact the public diplomacy had was vastly outstripped by the changes the Iraqis saw on the ground. And there has just been an incredible sea change in the kind of behavior of the average Iraqi toward American forces as a result of it, because we are now protecting them and they know it. And it is the one thing that they wanted, and it's huge. And that is one where you know, all the good public diplomacy in the world was not going to make one wit of difference until we made that change in action.

Now, I want to give you two examples where, I think, the words really do matter. One was when we first went into Iraq, and maybe some in this room were a part of that experience, but something I've heard over and over again from Iraqis is, what are you doing at the palace? Once a week, you issue these edicts – we've dissolved the army, we're dissolving the intelligence – we have no idea why! We have no idea how you're thinking through these things; we don't know what the process is; basically, there's no transparency.

And, you know, look, I think at the end of the day, there were a number of decisions that we were going to take – many bad decisions, which were bad for us too – but that the Iraqis were not going to like. You know, setting aside the fact that they were, in many cases, the wrong decision for us, they were certainly things the Iraqis didn't like. But, there were a lot of other decisions we made that would have been much more palatable to the Iraqis if we had just explained ourselves to them, if we had done a much better job of engaging the Iraqi public and explaining to them what we were trying to accomplish, how our actions were designed to accomplish those goals, taking onboard their criticisms and concerns, and saying, we're taking onboard you're criticisms and concerns; I think we could have done a much better job in the early weeks.

And the last one, the SOFA – the Status of Forces Agreement. I think we've done an utterly miserable job with public diplomacy on the SOFA. And I'll start by saying, I have deep reservations about the SOFA and, if you want, we can talk about that, but it's not germane to this. But the simple fact is that the Iraqis are getting the best SOFA the United States has ever signed, okay? Our European allies, our Arab allies would kill to have a SOFA that is as friendly, that is as concessionary to the host government as the Iraqis are getting.

There is nothing that is going to protect their sovereignty more than that SOFA. And we systematically failed to explain that to the Iraqi people; instead, we allowed the Iranian propaganda, which is just outright B.S. to triumph, and to convince people that the SOFA was, in fact, turning sovereignty over to the Iraqi people when in fact, it was the exact opposite. And

that was just an utter failure of American public diplomacy, and at the end of the day, it has real impact, because we wound up signing an even worse SOFA than we would have if we had done a better job with the public diplomacy.

If we had done a better job with the public diplomacy, we could have signed it during the summer or in the fall; it would have said very different things; it would have given us much greater freedom of action and allowed us to influence the situation in Iraq; it would have been a much more positive development. But instead, we wound up with a worse SOFA, and we wound up with a worse SOFA, in large part, because we did not do a good job with public diplomacy and we allowed the Iranians to take the field.

Q: Hi there. I'm John Glenn from the German Marshall Fund. I want to thank you both for a really stimulating discussion and it's nice to see you, Jeff. I think what I'd like to begin with is distinguishing between – the two of you were speaking about public diplomacy with different targets, if you will. Jeff I heard talking about public diplomacy toward our allies, and Ken, in some ways, I heard you talking about public diplomacy towards our antagonists. Now, at the German Marshall Fund, we talk a lot about mending trans-Atlantic relations. And I can't tell you how many times I've heard Europeans say in the past months, where is Europe in your electoral campaign? How come we never hear anything about Europe? And I found myself saying to them, oh wait, I'm sorry, when we – when both McCain and Obama talked about restoring America's credibility abroad, you should have heard Europe, because one of the key things they were talking about was our allies. Now, it's a trap between the messenger and the message; one of the risks we have here in public diplomacy upcoming, is that there are – at least among our allies – the risks that, in changing the messenger, that would be sufficient, because I think that we're looking at a situation now, especially in Afghanistan, where we are going to be continuing to ask some similar things of our allies: to do more in Afghanistan. In some way, this could be almost a litmus test about the relationship between the message and the messenger.

So I'd like to ask you to speculate a little bit about the case of Afghanistan, what an Obama administration, you know, what sort of prospects they have. There's a lot of discussion these days about the prospects for even worse expectations being dashed. I think that's fairly widely understood. But I think that the risk, in some ways, for us may be that we have, by all accounts, a very articulate, good communicator who's going to come into office. But, at the same time, will that sort of make us think, ah, that we don't have to worry about public diplomacy anymore?

MR. POLLACK: It's a really interesting question, John. I was actually with a whole bunch of Europeans, seeing Europeans yesterday talking through kind of where trans-Atlantic relations are likely to go under Mr. Obama. I'll start by saying that my hope is that an Obama administration is going to be a change not only of the messenger but of the message as well. And, you know, here, I think that the Bush administration did a pretty poor job of selling some of its policies – and I'm purposely using a term that I dislike because I think that is what they tried to do – in ways that did not resonate with the rest of the world.

I think that was more true with Iraq than with Afghanistan, but it was certainly true in both cases. It was trying to picture this all about the global war on terrorism and the threat of terrorism, which resonates to a certain extent among Americans, doesn't have nearly the

resonance once you get beyond the United States and can ultimately be a counterproductive way of trying to justify our actions in Afghanistan and the need for European support in Afghanistan.

And my hope would be that President Obama is going to recognize that and is going to think through, all right, how do I explain to Europeans why this is important for them? And I think that there are a series of messages that can be used along those lines in terms of, look, this is not just about terrorism, although you have terrorism problems as well. This is about stability in an important part of the world. This is about the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a country which we are very, very uncomfortable with. But this is also, ultimately, about the future of NATO. One of the big topics of conversation at this conference yesterday was the fact that NATO was/is losing its first war. You know, we barely won in Kosovo – or, sorry, in Bosnia – barely won in Kosovo, but those were at least wins of a sort.

But right now Afghanistan is looking like a loss and that is going to have profound ramifications for the NATO alliance. And I think that there are a series of other ones as well but, again, in my mind, that is an area where public diplomacy is very important because I think that the actions are out there and can be understood but they need to be framed properly. And I think that we haven't done a very good job of framing them properly so that Europeans are going to see their own interest and their own values engaged as well.

MR. GEDMIN: You know, John, I would add, in all those transatlantic debates that have to do with public diplomacy and engagement, we all want good relations with allies. In a lot of these debates, I think that we lose our compass and forget the fact that – take the example of Iraq. The problem in the Iraq debate, or the run-up to the Iraq war, the Iraq war principally was not Bush, it wasn't Chirac, it wasn't Schröder, it was Saddam Hussein. And it was a very vexing and difficult problem and we came up with different solutions, and the implementation of the Bush solution has been a debacle, okay? The problem was Saddam Hussein, and I presume, if he lives up to campaign promises for President Obama, Afghanistan is going to figure prominently. But the problem is principally not the European Union or German's willingness to fight or whether Obama adds more troops. The problem is principally the Afghans, and it is bin Laden and it is the Taliban and it is warlords and a very big dose of very complex history and culture.

And even if – I would submit – even if the next administration gets everything right, Ken, and even if he gets what he's not going to get, which is the Europeans to spend more on defense and to fight more, we're going to have the problem of Afghanistan if we stay, I stay think, for a very long time. I don't think that's a pessimistic view, I think that's a rather realistic view. So I think that the Obama administration, and I think he's quite wise to do that already, has to manage expectations down, has to communicate with Europeans what he expects and also has to communicate with the United States what one can deliver. If we haven't been able to get the Europeans, over the last four decades, to raise their defense expenditures, I don't think the presence of a celebrity rock star is going to turn that around.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Now let me just – since you're from the Marshall Fund, I just saw some statistics about European opinion about Afghanistan, and I was stunned by one statistic, that on providing security, they're in favor of providing security, they're in favor of training, but then when the question comes down to engage in combat operations against Taliban forces, it drops from 70 (percent), in the 70s to 46 percent. Now think about that for a second. You have 35 (percent) to 40 percent of European opinion thinks that you can provide security in

Afghanistan without engaging in combat operations, COIN or otherwise, against the Taliban. Now, I think the technical, philosophical term for that is "crazy". (Laughter.) So enough commentary. Yes, sir.

Q: Leonard Oberlander, currently a consulting international liaison. Having had experience in this area over years in government, my question is about two facets of this discussion, which has been tremendous. And I'm in full agreement and I would underscore the facts and the principles that you've talked about. My question has to do with, first, something that is needed, in terms of information that we need, and secondly, in terms of how we go about doing something. The first part is, very often in the places where we're, which we're talking, our representatives are the military on the ground. How well do you think information about the culture and the values and ways of communicating in public policy on the ground have been studied, translated and inculcated into the troops who are in direct contact with the people, as well as the chain of command above which directs them? And has there been enough, from the military and from the intelligence community, information gathering and analysis to provide to public policy-makers, so that they can make wise decisions not only on how to communicate, advertising and other ways, but what to say and some of the methods of verbalizing? Second part of the question is, you said that advertising is not the way to do it, public policy pronouncements.

What do we do when the nature of our society is that members of the – our administration and Congress have voter constituencies, not only individuals but corporate constituencies, in their geographic jurisdictions and in such as, areas such as labor unions and so forth, which they are elected and appointed to serve as their representatives, and they have in the geographical districts corporate entities whose business is to make a profit. Part of making a profit uses advertising. When the government has a problem with getting the word across through public diplomacy, it is in the nature of our society for businesses to come forth to their representatives and government and the administration and to lobby for advertising, or for grants or contracts, to do this the right way. And particularly executives that form councils to advise the government on how to do it the right way. How do we approach this, how do we actually implement the policies that you're very clearly are not for what we need to do?

MR. GEDMIN: I'll take the first part and leave both to the second part to you, and I'll be brief. You know, if I understood correctly, you know, how well prepared are our military to dealing with these cultural complexities? I think if you deal with U.S. military, you deal with some very capable, very sophisticated, very well-trained, very thoughtful people, that's point one. Point two is, in the case of Afghanistan and Iraq, don't forget, we never really thought we would be where we are today. As I recall, in Afghanistan, the original war aim was to close camps, right? And then when the Taliban refused to cooperate and shielded terrorists, we toppled the Taliban and we got into a situation where, you break it, you own it, okay? But I don't think at that time on right or left in the United States people envisioned this kind of assignment and enterprise, saying that Iraq – again, I tip my hat to the U.S. military from my limited experience, but also, consider the scope of the enterprise and challenge, and I think we have to be a little sober and realistic.

I've got a friend, he's got a son, he just came out of Iraq, he's a Marine. He went to Iraq when he was 22 years old, okay? This is an educated, talented, serious, listening, learning 22 year old American from San Francisco, okay? And we put him into Iraq, okay? And I'd like to

suggest, with all the training and all the preparation, all the wisdom in the world, how does that kid get his head around blood debts and honor killings and anti-American, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, and I think that there were a number of instances early on where American troops, including Marines, did very nice things that backfired, and it's hard for me to blame them. I think there was one case, Ken, where Marines were passing out soccer balls to kids. Well, that's what you do, right? You know, it's not just guns, it's butter, and you emotionally connect, and the Marines found out that all the fathers and the male figures in that tribe or region were very unhappy, because these 22 year old Marines are not supposed to supplant or replace the role of the male figure. Well, you know, layer after layer after layer. So my general take, Leonard, is, I bet you, you have lots of instances where our military does an absolutely superb job, but I think the task in those countries is really enormous, that's what I think.

MR. POLLACK: Good points. I'll see if I can tackle both of them. First, just to agree with Jeff, you know, the U.S. military is just a superb learning organization, and I think, you know, that if anyone doubted that just look at what the Army in particular did in Iraq. The Army, which was considered the least intellectual of the services, the least culturally sensitive of all the services, which, you know, my God, what they've achieved in Iraq in the last two years is unbelievable. And they did it even sooner, in less than two years. And I think Jeff's point is absolutely right, is that it's very hard to equip soldiers beforehand with this kind of degree of cultural sensitivity, for both of the reasons that he mentioned. One is, we have a very bad track record of predicting where we're going to fight, and two, it's even hard when you know where you're going to fight. Now, on point number one, you can actually make the case that part of this was the problem of the armed services, in particular of the Army. You know, on the one hand, you can look – I just, a quick list.

Major American military deployments since World War II. If in 1950 you had said to, you know, Dwight Eisenhower, we're going to fight major wars in Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Iraq and Afghanistan, he would have said, you're nuts. Okay, nobody expected those wars. And unfortunately, in some cases that's why we found we had wars there, is because we weren't prepared to fight them and again, part of it's just, we were surprised. In other cases, though, you can say, well, look, you know, we should have known this. The military was obsessed with fighting the Soviets, they even, you know, after Vietnam, even after some of these other places they were so focused on the north German plain that they weren't thinking about the need to fight elsewhere. That is certainly true, and you can also make the case that, you know, look, after the Gulf War, it should have been pretty obvious that combat in the Persian Gulf was not unlikely in the future, and you may remember that, you know, after the Gulf War, we had this concept of two major-theater wars, and one of them was going to be in the Gulf. So we should have been doing a much better job of preparing our troops to deal with the cultural sensitivities, et cetera, of the region.

Dare I say, it's really not – I'm willing to blame the intel community for a lot of things, that ain't one of them. The intel community is actually much more sensitive to this kind of stuff, and they did a much better job at what they're, their piece of it, which was predicting how the Iraqis would react and other countries would react to our actions inside the country, both at the tactical level and the strategic level. They did a very good job there, the problem was nobody wanted to listen to them. The problem that we've had is we didn't have the system in place to actually inculcate some of these cultural values and patterns of behavior in the troops themselves. We've done a much better job over the last four, five years. You know, you go out

to Fort Irwin and they're not doing tank combat anymore. They've got an Iraqi village and they are bringing in surrogate Iraqis, maybe of them are, themselves, Iraqis, to try to teach some of this stuff. And as Jeff points out, you're never going to get to where you'd like to be, but they're certainly doing a job than they are.

And there's an issue, Keith and I were talking about this beforehand, you know, you've got this big fight within the armed services and even within the military about what the future of warfare is going to be and are we going to keep doing these low-intensity conflict missions or are we going to have high-intensity wars? The low-intensity conflicts require this level of cultural sensitivity, and, you know, if the David Petraeuses of the world are the ones who wind up running the army, there will be much more of an emphasis placed on it and hopefully we'll do better next time. But there is, of course, another school of thought in the military, and UI won't use names there, that basically says, you know, low-intensity conflict is not really what we should be doing, or it's minor, or we can figure it out on the fly, and we really need to be focused back on the high-intensity conflict. That could be how we get right back to where we are.

And then just the last point, on your second point, I think, it's always for me it's easy, which is, I'm less concerned with the firms than what we're asking the firms to do. And of course that's the heart of it for me. And I think back to what happened after 9/11, where we said, well, they just don't understand America and they don't understand our values. And if you remember, we asked a PR firm to put together a whole series of commercials about what Americans were like and what our values were. And they're very nicely made commercials, and I think the firm tried to do a very sophisticated job of figuring out what would be appealing, and film it – and of course it was a complete, you know, fiasco. They had no impact, because again, the problem really wasn't that they hated us, the problem really was that they hated our policies and their perception of our policies. And, you know, both of those things – and again, the public diplomacy is absolutely instrumental, it's critical to dealing with the perception of the policies. But the policies themselves were also part of the problem.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: We're going to go back here, and while you're taking it back, you know what they say about low-intensity conflict, right? It all depends if you're in the middle of it whether it's low intensity. It's sort of like a ham-and-egg breakfast. It's low intensity for the chicken but it's high intensity for the pig.

Q: Thank you very much. I'm Juliana Pilon, I teach politics and culture at the Institute of World Politics. So far the presentation is terrific. I'd like to bring the focus back to Iran, if I may. In the first place, more kudos for you, Jeff. A couple days ago at the Heritage Foundation there was a woman speaker. She is a lawyer for some of the patriots in Iran who would like to see regime change, including Shia fundamentally, in some sense, Muslims who are appalled at the current situation. And she said that Voice of America and Radio Farda, insofar as it has money to engage in the actual language rather than music, is tremendously popular. And she finds it appalling that more is not spent on this, it's the sort of thing that's a wealth in the Cold War, and in Iran it's a perfect place, people are glued to the radio, and it's, you know, something we don't have to invent and relearn. So that is something terribly, terribly significant.

But the question that I have for you, Ken, has to do with the issue that you brought up, very critical, regarding how to support – let's call them moderates in the Islamic world, but, for lack of a better word. Certainly, in Iran, any kind of American money, any influence is the kill

of death. On the other hand, this is a woman who has essentially been funding her work herself, and this might be a situation where I mean she's got a fatwa on here and so on. One way the United States government could help is to already, you know, fund someone like this. But a specific example that I'd like to bring to you and ask you a question about it – there is currently an incredible blog and website, ahfaqh.org (ph), which perhaps you are familiar with. It is, it's certain, it's being funded, of all organizations, by Memory, which is based in Israel. Ahfaqh (ph) has taken off, it allows moderate Arabs, and it – I realize I'm departing now from Iran. Of course, a very similar kind of discussion could be engaged in Farsi. But who would fund something like this? It so happens that according to the person who is currently running it, it would not hurt to get American funding for it. Certainly, it's not ideal to get an Israeli fund for it. That's it.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you for the question – this is you. You're raising some very nettlesome issues, and I think you're right to do so. You know, the point that you're making about supporting moderates in a place like Iran, in my book, "Persian Puzzle", I actually describe this as, we have the Groucho Marx problem. You know Groucho's famous line that, "I wouldn't want to be a member of any club that would have me", my feeling has always been about Iranians is that any Iranian dissident who will accept money from the United States is not someone who we should be giving money to, because it means probably that they are members of the Iranian Intelligence Service, because those are the people who are most desirable from getting money from us, and if not, they're someone who has absolutely no support and no chance of getting support in the people because, you're right, for every reasonable moderate, we are the kiss of death.

I think there are certainly some things that we can be doing. I mean the particulars that you were mentioning raises in my mind simply that I think we ought to be doing a lot more in Iran, which is simply publicizing human rights abuses. This is a regime that is ultimately very sensitive to criticism on ground like that, and I think that the United States has done a very poor job of simply pointing out as, again, this I think has been a very successful element of our public diplomacy over 60 years, is pointing out when other governments are committing human rights abuses. I mean, what we've seen is that in many cases, they're very helpful to the individuals themselves and they were also very helpful to the larger cause of giving people space in which they can express themselves. So I think it has both a micro and a macro impact.

But beyond that, the point that I would make, and it gets to your last question, and it's a theme running through this book, is that we need to have a conversation with the people of the region themselves. It's all well and good for us to sit in a place like this or elsewhere in Washington and debate what we think is best, but ultimately it has to be about finding out from the people themselves what would be most helpful to them. And again, we were saying this, it's not as if we should just tailor everything we do to what they tell us – you know, we have our own values, we have our own interests, we've got to keep those always in mind. But in particular, when we are trying to do something as difficult as help moderates in a part of the world that has enormous problems, and one of its problem is that they don't particularly like us, both for what we do and what they think we do, that makes it incumbent upon us to ask them how it is that we can help.

Just a last story on that, even there, while I think that is unquestionably the right way to do it and we need to stop talking to ourselves so much and talk to them much more – even there,

we need to recognize that we have to have very low expectations. Again, I was in the Clinton administration, responsible for Iran at the end of Clinton when we made major overtures to the Khatami government. We made 11 major gestures to Khatami, and trust me, every single one of those gestures was gestures that Khatami's own people told us to take. Okay, we didn't do any of that on our own, we were asking his people, what can we do to help Khatami? And they told us, you know, take us off the counter-narcotics list. Put the MEK on the terrorism list. Stop the sanction, the prohibition against humanitarian sales to Iran, and then the last one, you know, Madeleine's apology for 1953 and the lifting of the ban on imports from Iran, food stuffs and textiles. Every one of those things were things that we did because Khatami's people told us, this is what will help him. And in the end, it didn't help. So we got to have that conversation, but we got to recognize that doing something like this is very difficult, and the conversations alone may ultimately not be enough.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Yeah, we'll go here and then –

Q: My name's Jo Freeman. I'm a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Taking off from what you just said about having conversations with the people themselves and the earlier statement, which I think we all agree with, that in the Middle East they object not to – they object to our policies, not who we are. I haven't heard anyone talk about the elephant in the parlor, when it comes to our policies in the Middle East and how people perceive us, and that's our strong alliance with Israel. I would like you to address, in this very real sense, how does Israel fit in any kind of a dialogue that we might have about what people really want? Israel is and always has been a favorite nation, more so than almost any other nation in the world, with perhaps exception to some of the European nations. And the Middle East people on the ground level really hate us for that fact. How do you resolve a serious conflict and something we hold very dear and something ordinary people, not just our opponents in the Middle East, view as totally detestable?

MR. GEDMIN: Well, first of all, it's my – you may have a different experience, it's my personal, anecdotal observation that in the Middle East, the debate has change a bit the last five, six, seven, eight years, and I don't have very strong, compelling evidence, but the following. I've been traveling – probably not as much as you or Ken to the Middle East, but I've been to the Middle East a healthy number of times in the last half dozen years. I have participated and convened conferences with Iraqis and Iranians and Syrians and Jordanians and in Amman and in Doha and other places, and it seems to me it used to be that if you were an American, you couldn't have any of these conferences without it being dominated by the subject of Israel. I mean, it was just a fixation, it was just nearly the exclusive focus.

As my own experience, that it happens more and more frequently that people are interested in engaging us about Israel and about hypocrisy and double standards and about rule of law issues and all sorts of things in their countries and not just about Israel. I have had – I ran a round table with Syrians, exiles and from inside the country – who were those people from inside the country? I don't know, but from inside the country – for three years when I was running the Aspen Institute Berlin. And I heard a number of things that I found revealing. I heard Syrians say to me, you know, when it comes to the issue of Israel and Palestine, we have much greater chemistry of the Europeans. But we don't trust them. We think they're cynical and manipulative and jaded. For you, we have deepest of problems, but we think that you are the only hope to resolve that question. Or I'll add to the list of reflections, I had Syrians in at least

eight different round tables in formal setting, even when it was small, a dozen participants, project the greatest hostility toward Israel, I mean, intense and typical and predictable, and then over coffee later in the day say, well, I don't really have particular deep passion for that, but, you know, it's part of the discourse and part of the debate. That's the first thing I'd say.

The second thing I'd say is, if we solved – you know, a lot of the people you're talking about want a solution to the Israeli question that we don't want, which is, pluck it off the face of the Earth. (Chuckles.) I remember once being, again, in Amman, which is a moderate state, and in the offices of the court, which is a relatively moderate government and visiting the then-Prince Hassan, Crown Prince Hassan at the time in Jordan. I was surprised, as a naïve, ignorant American that – and Jordan had a peace treaty with Egypt, a peace treaty with Israel that on the map, on the wall in the royal court, Israel didn't even exist. That's not Syria, that's not Iran, that's not, you know, all of these overtly hostile radical countries.

So my fear is – and I'm just posing questions, Ken will solve the problems – my fear is, even if we solve the problem, they may hate us less; I don't know if they'll love us anymore.

MR. POLLACK: Yeah, that's the perfect place where I'd like to pick up. I'm going to repeat myself a little bit because I did talk about this in my presentation, but I'll try to expand on it a little bit. I would make three points about Israel and the U.S. relationship to Israel. Point number one, I actually think the United States has both compelling, strategic and moral interest to support the security of the state of Israel and to maintain a relationship. And, as I said before, at the end of the day, there are just going to be some policies which are in our interest and conform to our moral values that people are not going to like. And, you know what? At the end of the day, we're going to need to learn to live with that and, ultimately, they're going to need to learn to live with it, too. And public diplomacy is not going to fix that problem. And I wouldn't necessary throw overboard policies, which we see as being consistent with our strategic and moral values just because they're unpopular, and this goes back to the point that Jeff and I were both making about popularity.

Second point – and this picks up perfectly on Jeff's point – which is that there absolutely is a role of anti-Zionism or even anti-Semitism in the anti-Americanism out there, but it does get greatly exaggerated. And I spent a lot of time in the book trying to deal with this because this is a very subtle subject. And I don't want to say to people, look, it's not there; don't worry about it, Israel. You know, hatred of Israel really isn't part of anti-Americanism; it is there. But, by the same token, it is not the most important thing going on in the Arab world or the principal component, certainly the only component of anti-Americanism out there.

And I just quickly just want to say a couple of things here. And we've got a lot of polling data now and a number of polls have tried to spin out, you know, how much the anti-Zionist element is part of the anti-Americanism. There's one interesting one, 2007 Zogby surveyed people in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. And they asked them, basically, why do you hate the United States? Assuming you hate the United States – and that was the first question – why do you hate the United States? And they gave them five choices which in previous surveys they had found were the plurality of different answers.

And only 14 percent of the respondents said they sympathized with al Qaeda because it stood for Muslim causes such as the Palestine issue; that was third in a field of five. The by-far

largest response was that they sympathized with al Qaeda because of al Qaeda's willingness to confront the United States, and that had 33 percent of the vote. Okay and, again, this is a consistent theme that you see which is, ultimately, their anger at the United States is driven by a variety of sources but the truth is, the biggest one for most of the people of the region is, they are desperately unhappy with the economic, political, social circumstances. They blame their regimes, not wrongly, for that and they blame us for being complicit with their regimes, as being the power that stands behind their regimes.

And, again, it's not – this is not perfect. I'm not suggesting that's the only thing going on either. A second one – and I'll stop at this point with this – a study of actual behavior, for instance, riots and demonstrations between 2000 and 2005 found that 73 percent of the anti-American riots had been triggered by active U.S. policy; only 20 percent had been triggered by an active Israeli policy. So, again, it's not that there's no impact, but it does get exaggerated.

My third point on this is that, at the end of the day, the best way to square the circle, and I actually think that it is a very good way to square the circle, is an aggressive pursuit of an equitable peace between Israelis, Palestinians and other Arabs. And I think the best evidence I can give of that is the comparison between the 1990s and the 2000s. In the 1990s, we didn't actually achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians, but everyone thought it was coming and everyone saw the United States taking a very active role in brokering it. And, believe me, at the end, there were plenty of people who believed that the United States was too heavily in favor of Israel and that Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk and everybody else in the administration was Jewish or biasing things.

But, nevertheless, the mood in the region was remarkable in terms of everyone felt that peace was coming and, as a result, you had changes all over the place. That didn't remove anti-Americanism; there was anti-Americanism still in the region at that time, but the mood was completely different and that is why, for me, as I said, the best way to square that circle is to broker an equitable peace.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: We've only got time for a couple more minutes – one more – really one more question. I apologize to those we didn't get to but we –

Q: Ed Barrett from the Naval Academy in the Air Staff. I'm also a little conflicted. The question I think mainly for Ken on policy towards Saudi Arabia, what would a democratic Saudi Arabia look like? (Laughter.) Would that comport with the U.S. interest in the near term and/or long term?

MR. POLLACK: Okay, well, since – I think they would all be flying in jetpacks and they would have homes on the moon, because we're talking about 2050 or something like that. You know, look again – you're right – this is a very big issue, and again, something I spent a lot of time in the book talking about because what's interesting is it is clear that the people of the region want democracy. I mean, they have said that overwhelmingly again and again and again and there's a lot in there. But getting from here to there is going to be a very long difficult process. And, you know, part of that is just that the institutions and the educational bases are not there to make this a workable process. So I think it is going to take a long time. It's one of the reasons why I actually think that King Abdullah's policies are probably the right way to do it.

People complain that they are moving at a glacial pace but you know what? That's probably what's going to be required to move it stably.

And I look at some place like Iraq or Palestine, where we tried to ram elections down people's throats and we got the absolute worst outcome imaginable. And you talk to post-conflict specialists and they will say to you never do this. You know, if you've got a rapid change, you don't go immediately to elections. So it's going to take a long period of time. And then beyond that, the other thing that I'd say, and again this gets back to my point about talking to the people of the region, is that I can't tell you what a democratic Saudi Arabia looks like, and it would be a huge mistake for me to try. The only people who can really figure out what a democratic Saudi Arabia is going to look like is the Saudis themselves.

And I think it's been one of the mistakes that we have made is that we have tried to sit back and to the extent that we've promoted democracy at all, we've said, all right how – what does democracy look like in our mind and how do we promote it over there? And what you find all across the world is that every country has taken – every country that has succeeded in moving to democracy – and obviously lots of them have – every one has taken its own path. And everyone took a path that was consistent with its own culture, its own history, its own values, its own aspirations. And no external power is able to figure that out and tell them here's what you do.

Where it has succeeded and where we have helped it succeed, we have helped it succeed by doing just that – helping it – by enabling certain things; by creating a security environment where the state can focus on its internal problems without worrying about the external; by providing some degree of material assistance or advice by creating trade patterns that, again, alleviate other pressures on it. Those are all the kind of things that we ought to be doing in the Middle East. And the worst thing that we could do is go into the Saudis and say okay, you say you want democracy, here's what democracy looks like, just follow this easy plan and in 10 years you'll have democracy. We have no clue what democracy in Saudi Arabia looks like, and I personally don't.

MR. GEDMIN: I would just add – the question wasn't directed to me – but I'm going to add anyway, and boy, I sure am very glad that we said good things about the U.S. military today, Ken. (Laughter.)

Saudi Arabia is a great way to end the conversation, as far as I'm concerned, because Ken, you're right, I think, that we need to talk assertively, intelligently to the people in the region and part of that involves fessing up to double standards. And I'm for double standards by the way and you are too, you just said you are. You know, in Saudi Arabia, we want two things, and they're not compatible. We would like greater civil society and respect for rule of law and women's rights and human rights and so forth, but we don't want instability, we don't want loss of that economic lifeline to some extent. And I don't think there's anything wrong with – in our conversations on the public stage with allies and people of the region saying – and in private quarters saying – you know what, it's a dilemma. A dilemma is a situation that requires a choice between two equally unfavorable options. Now, if you're upset that we have a dictatorship – to borrow a phrase – and double standards, resolve the dilemma for us. But otherwise, we're doing the best we can.

MR. PAVLISCHEK: Okay, thank you gentlemen for your outstanding talks and for everybody for outstanding questions and we look forward to seeing you next time.

(Applause.)

(END)