THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD:

ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE U.S.-MUSLIM WORLD RELATIONSHIP

Washington, D.C.

Monday, October 6, 2008

Introduction and Moderator:

DR. STEPHEN R. GRAND
Fellow and Director, Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speakers:

AMBASSADOR CYNTHIA SCHNEIDER
Senior Non-Resident Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution and
Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy
Georgetown University

SALMAN AHMAD
Musician/United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS
Junoon

ZARQA NAWAZ
Writer/Filmmaker
Little Mosque on the Prairie

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

DR. GRAND: Hello and welcome. Can everyone hear me?

My name is Steve Grand, and I'm the Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World which is housed within the Saban Center for Middle East Policy here at Brookings.

We're delighted that you could join us. Tonight will not look like your typical Brookings policy briefing, I can promise you.

Tonight, we want to showcase our Arts and Culture Initiative and its recent publication, *Mightier Than the Sword*. We will do so in part by showcasing the work of two artists whose work has helped increase understanding and confront stereotypes between the West and the Muslim World. In so doing, we hope to convey to you and bring to life the untapped potential of the arts to increase understanding, knowledge and respect between the United States and the Muslim World.

As many of you know, each year, we convene

in Doha the U.S.-Islamic World Forum, which brings together leaders from many different sectors -- from government, from business, religious leaders, civil society leaders from both the U.S. and the Muslim World.

In 2006, my predecessor in this job, Peter Singer, who's with us tonight, invited Ambassador Cynthia Schneider to organize a group of arts and culture leaders to join us at this large forum. The interest and enthusiasm that first group of artists and cultural leaders -- which included author Amy Tan, musician Salman Ahmad who is with us tonight, film producer Michael Nozik of Syriana fame and art collector Nasser Khalili -- led us to form our Arts and Culture Initiative that we will be telling you about tonight.

Over the last two and a half years, we have brought prominent artists and arts leaders together for meetings, not just in Doha at the U.S.-Islamic World forum, but also in Los Angeles, New York, Washington and Cairo. From these gatherings, we've

built a network of some 200 arts and culture leaders from both the U.S. and a variety of countries in the Muslim World, who are engaged with us in finding ways to leverage the power of arts and culture, the power of creative expression to increase understanding on both sides.

A number of important flowers have bloomed from this effort. One very concrete outcome, which I wanted to mention here tonight is the creation of MOST, which has been a collaboration with Unity Productions Foundation, Gallup and One Nation Media Fund. MOST, which is short for Muslims on Screen and Television, a cross-cultural resource center, will have its official launch on December 3rd at the Paley Center for Media in Los Angeles. It will be a place that Hollywood screenwriters and producers who want to incorporate a Muslim character or a theme related to Islam into their television show or film can for information and for script ideas.

The publication we are highlighting tonight, *Mightier Than the Sword: Arts and Culture in the*

U.S.-Muslim World Relationship, seeks to encapsulate for a policy audience what we've learned from our many discussions with arts and culture leaders as well as the findings from a more systematic survey that Ambassador Cynthia Schneider and her co-author Kristina Nelson, with the assistance of Mohammed Youssry, conducted of arts, artists and arts institutions in both the U.S. and the Muslim World.

Tonight, we would like to share with you the broad findings of the report. Then, we would like you to experience firsthand the real transformative power of creative expression.

Our program for tonight is as follows: I will introduce and turn the floor over in a moment to Cynthia Schneider who will briefly summarize the report's findings.

Then, Salman Ahmad -- rock musician, filmmaker and U.N. Goodwill Ambassador -- will perform, treating us to songs he played at the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize Awards Ceremony.

Following Salman's performance, we'll see

clips from Zarqa Nawaz' hit television program *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, now beginning its third season in Canada.

Afterwards, Salman and Zarqa will take questions, first from Cynthia and then from all of you.

Ambassador Cynthia Schneider leads our Arts and Culture Initiative. A former U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, she is also a professor at Georgetown University and an important colleague.

Cynthia.

(Applause)

AMB. SCHNEIDER: "You see, I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts, but it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world and procure them its praise."

The words that Thomas Jefferson penned to his friend, James Madison, from Paris in 1785 I think are just as apt today as they were then as guidance

for how America could behave in the world, and they're especially relevant to what the Arts and Culture Initiative is trying to do.

Jefferson is also an apt way to begin this evening. I, personally, think he's an apt way to begin just about any evening, but he's particularly apt tonight because he shares with the Prophet Muhammad a belief that the pen is mightier than the sword. In Islam, this phrase evokes the hadith or saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr."

Jefferson urged Thomas Paine to "Do with the pen what has been done before with the sword."

Today, when the divide between the U.S. and Muslim World presents one of our greatest foreign policy challenges, leaders from Secretary Gates on down are recognizing the limitations of military power and the need to enhance diplomacy and engagement with other cultures. Within that context, arts and culture has untapped potential as a component of the engagement between the U.S. and Muslim World. This is

because, number one, of the power of creative expression to tap into our emotions and to move us and to shape and reveal identities.

It is also true that funding for arts and culture engagement with the Muslim World, sadly, does not begin to take advantage of this potential. In fact, funding from the public sector, from the government, for worldwide cultural engagement -- this is not university exchanges, but sheer cultural engagement -- is only around $11 million. From private philanthropy, at a time when overall numbers have increased, the amount of money that we could figure out that goes to arts and cultural engagement with the Middle East is about 1/10th of 1 percent. At the same time, the unique U.S. ability to create successful commercial culture represents an asset that is not at all, sadly, being strategically deployed.

Now, the Gallup poll, which is the largest survey ever taken of Muslim populations worldwide, further supports this idea of an opening, a potential for cultural engagement within this relationship.

Conducted over the past seven years, the Gallup poll identified cultural factors, a sense of disrespect and a perceived lack of understanding from the West as the key causes of the schism between the two sides.

In other words, when Muslims were asked what they thought was the key problem, the key cause for the divide between the U.S. and the Muslim World, they didn’t say the Iraq War or Israel-Palestine. They said lack of respect and understanding.

Gallup’s poll of Americans on their opinions of Islam confirmed this view. When asked what they admire most about the Muslim World, the most frequent responses were nothing or I don’t know.

This evidence shows us that the “why do they hate us”, is the wrong question. We’re not in a Cold War paradigm. We’re not trying to win hearts and minds. Instead, we’re trying to increase understanding and respect.

The Gallup poll further shows us that Muslim views towards America were shaped not so much by what they think of Americans, but what they think Americans

think of them, and there is an opening for culture because where do these opinions come from, especially from many people who actually don't know Americans personally.

Well, they come, of course, from policies. They come also from media and news, and they come from popular culture where sometimes we find good news because while studies find that more than 70 percent of the Muslims around the world view the United States as ruthless, large majorities view the Americans -- so the United States policy is ruthless, but Americans are viewed as friendly, even from people who have never met one.

People we interviewed about this to try to understand this paradox explained it with one word, *Friends*, not as in you're my friend, but *Friends* as in the TV show. This TV show and others like it humanize Americans. They make them accessible. They make them understandable. The show you're about to see, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, works much in the same way.

Arts and culture helps to set American

people apart from American policies. They also can show us common ground between people. As Steve mentioned, in our first group of arts and cultural leaders, we had Amy Tan, the novelist, not particularly known for her exploration into the Muslim World.

But what we found was when she spoke before a group from the public in Doha, she was introduced by two students at Georgetown's campus there -- one Palestinian girl and one Qateri girl -- and Amy was astonished to see that the Qateri girl spoke about how much Joy Luck Club had meant to her when she was trying to resolve issues of her identity, having grown up in London and then moved to Qater at about age 15 and struggling with issues of modernity and tradition.

Similarly, the other girl was Palestinian, felt a very strong Palestinian identity, but had never actually been in the country. She had turned independently to the Joy Luck Club to help resolve issues of her own identity. So through powerful stories, through powerful narratives, we can find

common ground through creative expression.

Art can also provide a kind of neutral territory -- a sort of Switzerland, if you will, but of course without the money because it's art -- for relationships that are particularly tense such as, for example, our relationship with Iran. We could find many things to talk about and to engage with Iran in the area of culture, which Iran has such a strong tradition in literature and film and other areas of the arts.

Finally, U.S. commercial culture, in fact, our unique ability to create successful commercial culture could be a tremendous asset in this relationship, but currently it is not being strategically used. We're talking about for most of the Muslim World, not the Asian Muslim World, but most of the Middle Eastern Muslim World, a region with a huge youth population and tremendous problems with unemployment and a real sense of hopelessness. Young people have no sense of what they're going to do with their future.

Well, if we used our imaginations, we could use the U.S. ability to create successful commercial products, both in film and in music, in a new kind of aid and capacity-building, and we could combine this with our knowledge and leadership in new media because now, of course, you don't need to have an agent and all of that. You can produce your own music online and your own films online.

There are plenty of problems around this still in the Muslim World such as how to monetize that content. As our Iranian hip-hop artist, YAS, will say, hundreds of thousands of people have downloaded his music, but he hasn't made a cent off it yet. So there are hurdles to be crossed, but goodness knows we have in this country the people who could figure out how to cross those hurdles, but they haven't been asked to think about this task.

And, we could apply this to targets of opportunity that already exist such as, for example hip-hop music which is pervasive all over the Middle East. We had, again in our first meeting, Ali Shaheed

Muhammad from a Tribe Called Quest, and he captured very well I think the resonance of hip-hop. He said, people identify with the struggle. It doesn't really matter where you come from, we all have the same story.

Well, modern and hip is important, but so is the past, and all you have to do is compare the U.S. approach to protecting cultural heritage in World War II, when plans were made at the highest levels, years in advance, to protect the heritage in Germany, France and Holland and other occupied countries, with the similar lack of planning before the invasion of Iraq notwithstanding the best efforts of cultural leaders to inform the Pentagon about museums and archeological sites. The fiasco of the looting of the Baghdad Museum points out the important of integrating cultural considerations into policy and the importance of understanding the impact of culture on identity.

In conclusion, to take advantage of the potential of arts and culture to increase understanding and to impact positively the U.S.-Muslim

World relationship, we need first of all to take our own culture as seriously as the rest of the world does. We need to integrate knowledge from and about arts and culture into policy. We need to increase funding to support artists in the Muslim World and support exchanges and collaborations including in the area of new technologies. And, we need to develop new forms of public-private partnerships to leverage the value of our commercial culture and to help and to share that knowledge with others who could benefit from it.

The good news is that we have the essential elements. We have music, literature, dance, theater, film that has tremendous attraction all over the world. We just need to be more strategic about how to use them.

I'm going to end with a quote from my co-author, Mohammed Youssry, who said, "Culture does not stop at times of conflict. Artists have continued to collaborate. People have continued to read American literature and see movies. Culture pervades in ways

that politics do not."

And now, I'd like to introduce Salman Ahmad, my friend who, as you have heard, is a doctor, author, filmmaker and musician, and he will be performing for you with his tabla player, Saline Punh.

Welcome to both of you.

(Applause)

MR. AHMAD: Good evening, everybody. How is everybody doing?

AUDIENCE: (Inaudible)

MR. AHMAD: I bet you guys never came to Brookings before and saw a rock guitar player and tabla player. I think in the two years since I've been working with Brookings -- Cynthia Schneider, Stephen Grand, Peter Singer is here tonight, other friends in the audience --we've tried to sort of get Brookings to loosen up a little bit.

So this might be a little bit louder than normal, but in the mood of destroying walls between cultures -- yes.

(Musical performance)

(Applause)

MR. AHMAD: Thank you. Thank you.

Saline Punh on the tabla.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Thank you so much, Salman and Saline.

As I mentioned, Salman is also a medical doctor in addition to his other many talents.

Our next speaker, Zarqa Nawaz, while her parents, like Salman's parents, also had in mind that she would become a doctor. But as she says in her biography, she felt the best thing she could do for the Canadian health system was to not become a doctor.

But I think we can all be grateful that both of these very talented individuals deviated from the straight path their parents had previewed for them.

Zarqa is the creator of the hit television series, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, and she's going to tell us a little something about the part of an episode that we're going to see now.

(Applause)

MS. NAWAZ: To be fair, Salman actually

managed to get into medical school and do five years of it.

I have a four-year science degree and three attempts at applying to medical school in Toronto. Unfortunately, they have screening boards that have standards so that people that don't pass chemistry and physics. I don't understand what chemistry and physics have to do with getting into medical school, but I could never get those marks that were needed to cross over.

So my parents, of course, moved on to Plan B which is marriage because they figured: Hey, she can't get into medical school. What else is she going to do with her life?

And I was like oh, my God. So what I decided to do was apply very, very quickly into journalism school, which was the only other professional school that was still open after the rejection letter came in, and managed to squeeze my way in. It was through there that I realized I had this untapped artistic potential in me that had never

been taken seriously because I was always trying to figure out physics and as balls were rotating in the air, their interior mass. I don't know. I was always trying to figure out these calculations.

And then I got into journalism school, and this whole other world opened up to me, and I realized I had this latent talent that I didn't know anything about.

So when the CBC had asked me to come up with a television series idea, they say you write what you know. Having grown up in Toronto and then having moved to Regina, Saskatchewan, which is small city above Montana, a very small city of 100,000, after coming from the big city of millions of people and having to move to this small prairie town, I was this arrogant city slicker who thought she could teach people things that they needed to know in this little tiny, backwards, underfunded mosque in Regina.

I learned the hard way that just because you live in a more urban setting does not mean that somehow you're lesser than a city person. So this is

where the premise for the show came from.

The Imam is a big city slicker lawyer from Toronto who decides to become an Imam of a small backwards, underfunded mosque in the prairies, and he thinks he can teach the community a thing or two about faith and community, and they end up teaching him.

So we're going to take a clip, a 10-minute clip from a show called *The Convert*, and this idea came from my observation that although there's this perception that Muslims tend to be extremists, that there was this period in our mosque where the people who seemed more extreme were actually the white people who were converting and driving us all a little bit nuts in terms of their fervor to the faith. I thought it would be an interesting premise for an episode. It has gone on to either people love it or they feel that it was a bit too cheeky depending on your point of view, but we'll watch it, and then we'll talk about it.

(Applause)

(Television program clip)

(Applause)

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Well, before we get started, I know that the first question all of you have is where can I see the rest of that episode, and I do apologize. The answer is on YouTube. You can see all the episodes on YouTube.

Now I'm just going to ask a couple of questions of each of our guests, and then we will welcome questions from all of you.

Zarqa, it's a great program. That is really, really funny, and I know it has been a tremendous success in Canada. You're entering your third season. I'm wondering if you can give us a sense of how it has changed perceptions of Muslims maybe between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada and maybe also your thoughts on why it works so well in Canada and how would it translate here.

MS. NAWAZ: Can everyone hear me? Is this a microphone?

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Yes.

MS. NAWAZ: That's right. I took it apart.

Oh, well.

The most interesting comment someone made to me was I was doing an interview with American radio, an American radio station, and a man said that he couldn't look at a bearded man the same way again because of Baber. Although Baber in the show is a racist and an extremist and a sexist, but he's a father. He's a single dad of a daughter, and he's trying to raise her with compassion and understanding, and she doesn't see the religion the same way he does. She doesn't want to wear the headscarf. She doesn't want to practice at the same level that he does, and he is sort of forced to accommodate her, and as a result he becomes more of a three-dimensional, complex character than just your stock one-dimensional, strict extremist Muslim.

And strangely enough, when I created this character, he's like my nemesis in the Muslim community, yet he's become the comedic hero of the show. He's the most popular character probably of *Little Mosque* ,which I find really fascinating because

when we started the show I wouldn't have thought that would have been the character that everyone gravitated towards. But people love him. They bond with the Muslim community through this guy, and it's hard to explain why. You just don't know how characters in the sitcom will relate to people.

When the American man told me that he couldn't look the same way at Muslim bearded men as scary extremists again, it was a sort of a revelation for me because, to be honest, when I created the show I didn't have an agenda of humanizing Islam or Muslims. It was just a slice of life, of my experiences in the community that I was portraying. It's had so many ramifications throughout the world, that it's been quite fascinating for me.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: I think that's such a good point that you make, that it works because it's such a good story. We did a preview of the film with Peter Singer moderating, the film *Traitor*, a month or so ago, and some of the questions from the audience were things like: Well, but why didn't you include the root

causes of terrorism and why didn’t you contextualize it more?

Well, because it was an action movie, and it was a good story, and it was going to attract a wide audience that way. So there’s always this balance which I think you’ve struck brilliantly.

Salman, you know we’re all familiar with the cliché, Music is the Universal Language, but you have really made that your life work. Can you give us some examples from your experience of how you found that that really does work, that it truly is a universal language that can link people, who don’t even maybe know each other or like each other, together?

MR. AHMAD: Sure. First of all, I just want to thank Brookings and you, Cynthia and Stephen, for having me here tonight. I want all of you to give Cynthia a big hand. I love this jacket. This is an amazing jacket.

(Applause)

MR. AHMAD: She’s more a rock star than I ever hope to be.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: The profound Brookings collegial relationship.

MR. AHMAD: Music, a universal language. You know the city I was born in, Lahore, Pakistan, at the time I was born, it was a melting pot of all kinds of diverse cultural influences: Islamic, Hindu, Sikh, Western. I remember growing up and my uncles had the Ventures records: Walk, Don't Run; Wipeout; Flight of the Bumblebee. At the same time, I listened to Bollywood film music. Whenever there was a wedding in the family, there would be gavahs singing Islamic devotional music.

Then at that time, Lahore has always been the cultural capital of Pakistan and before Western Punjab, you had great ghazal singers and poets like Faiz Ahmad Faiz, a secular revolutionary poet singing poetry against the government, political poetry. So I grew up in that atmosphere, and for me it was natural to have all these spiritual and secular, diverse cultural influences around me.

When I was at the age of 11, my family moved

to Rockland County, New York, I was in a suburb cocoon where everybody in high school was in a band. That was something totally alien to me. So I got into a garage band called Eclipse. My first song list was in 24 songs which included Stairway to Heaven, Free Bird, all the songs of the seventies. So, without really knowing that this is theirs and this is mine, I just sort of took all this in, and it became a part of me.

Then later on, when my parents got very worried that he's going to become a guitar player, I was sent back to Pakistan to study medicine. I went to five years of medical school in Lahore, which was completely transformed from the city I was born in because we had military dictatorship, General Zia-ul-Haq in cahoots with the religious extremists, but who were now fighting a war against the Soviets up in Afghanistan. So they were heroes. All the sort of Taliban were the heroes. They were the freedom fighters.

I found myself completely stifled, and the only way I could express myself was to play my guitar

and to write songs, and the songs I wanted to write about were about the life that I saw around me. We had so many Afghan refugees, children without limbs, and poverty and fear and violence. So the music of Junoon is about spiritual uplift, social activism.

The song that you guys must have heard earlier, coming in, “Ring the Bells,” it’s a song that I’ve done with Melissa Etheridge. Melissa comes from Kansas, and I come from Lahore, the two heartlands of Pakistan and America. We just met as artists, and we jammed. We saw face to face in her home in L.A., and out of that came this cry for peace and cultural harmony, “Ring the Bells.”

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Thank you.

Zarqa, with my last question to you, I want to bring in another element of your work. You’ve also done a film called *Me and the Mosque*. In that film, as I understand it, you visited mosques and you interviewed religious authorities about the treatment of women in mosques, which you had some serious questions about. Why did you choose to do that in a

film and what was the impact of the film?

MS. NAWAZ: It was a really difficult decision to make, *Me and the Mosque*, because up to that point I had done comedy films about how Muslims were perceived badly by the media and how we were stereotyped.

But then we had this Imam come from, I think, Saudi Arabia who came to our mosque in Regina, Saskatchewan. In this little mosque, the women prayed behind the men, no barrier, no curtain, nothing, and we had access to light and air, the same as the men. And, he was quite incensed. He felt that this was somehow wrong and that we should be behind a barrier.

I remember not taking him too seriously, except some of the men did take him seriously. And, I came to the mosque, and suddenly there was a shower curtain contraption in front of the women, and we were expected to pray behind it. There was like a mini rebellion in our mosque, and we refused, some of us, and we prayed in front of it.

But it was just so catastrophic for me

because I grew up in a mosque. I was married in a mosque. My kids grew up in the mosque. The mosque was just a very central part of my identity, growing up. And, I couldn't believe that suddenly now I was considered somehow a pollutant in this environment in that I was suddenly made to feel very unwelcome.

I started talking to more female friends of mine, and they had similar experiences. Some mosques are more beautiful. They'll be up in balconies or these extravagant areas, but nevertheless they are not the same area as the men and thus will never have the same qualities as what the men would have.

And, I watched a documentary called *Half The Kingdom* about Jewish women who were complaining about the same thing in synagogues, that they weren't allowed to pray in the same area as the men and they were separated by curtains, and they had fought this sort of attitude.

I decided if they could talk about these issues in their community, then it was time for us to talk about the issues in our community because

although it’s true that Muslims are stereotyped and we have these images of us, at the same time, to be fair and honest, some of the problems that we have in our community we bring on ourselves, and we have to deal with those problems.

I know that people ask me. Some people were quite upset with me for making a documentary that was more or less airing our dirty laundry, but my counter argument was that non-Muslims would respect us more if we were open about our issues and where the origin of our problems come from than always saying that they don’t exist and we’re always maligned unfairly because some of these problems do come from essentially patriarchy -- men who control the power structures of mosques and religious institutions, which exists in every organized religion in the world, without exception. This is a universal problem around the world with any institution, any religious institution, even non-religious institutions.

And so, what I wanted to do was --

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Never heard of it.

MS. NAWAZ: What I wanted to do was prove to the Muslim community and prove to the men that this tradition of separating women physically did not come from Islam, that theology had been mixed up with tradition. But, in order to do that, you have to sort of speak the same language as the people in the mosques because otherwise you'll just be dismissed as someone who is just making secular arguments or someone who is a feminist and you're bringing foreign ideas into the community. The way to sort of win the hearts and minds of your Muslim community is to speak from the scripture itself, from the Qur'an and from hadith.

So, I went back, and I did the research, and I found Islamic scholars who were the top Islamic scholars in the world. I used their voices, and I used them to talk to these men and to argue the case that the way women were being treated was actually against the social justice that the Prophet had brought to Islam, had brought with Islam to women in the community.

In fact, every hadith that existed out there showed that the women, not only did they pray in the same area as the men, they could stand up and they could complain to the Imam about things that they heard that they thought were incorrect. There were hadith where the women actually would poke a man in the back and ask him to repeat what the Imam said because they couldn't hear. And, there are all these truths that the women were an integral part of the community, that they weren't behind a barrier or behind some sheet or some balcony, that they were actually in the main prayer hall, participating with the men in the political running of this community.

And so, when I brought the hadith and the Qur'anic ayahs forward and then made this documentary and sent it out, it was an interesting reaction. Because I had used the texts, the original texts themselves to make my point, there was almost no counter argument. I mean they couldn't come back and say, well, she's just being a feminist and she's just using Western thought, because I wasn't. I was

actually using the Qur'an and hadith as a way of fording the argument.

It was interesting. What I heard was that people started watching this documentary. It got put on YouTube, and it spread through the grassroots community. So it was hard for me to judge who was watching it and what was happening with it.

Then I was in an Islamic conference, and this Muslim man came up to me and said: We're building a mosque in Ohio, and we bought your documentary to watch, the women and the men together, so that we could discuss this issue and have a discussion about this issue over why this whole problem of men and women and where does this idea of separation and physical separation, come from.

What had happened was after Islam had spread from Saudi Arabia into other cultures over the centuries, it started spreading into cultures where really rich, the rich upper-class women used to cover their faces and be separated from the lower class. It was consider unworthy of them to be seen by the lower

class. So they were secluded, and they were kept in seclusion.

As Islam spread into these sorts of areas, they took those traditions and started incorporating them into regular, everyday culture. Suddenly, then it became improper for normal women or regular middle-class women to be seen by regular middle-class men, and then it sort of permeated down into the mosque community. That’s where this tradition happened.

Then people stopped questioning it, and in certain cultures like in Pakistan, when I talked to my mom in the documentary, women stopped going to the mosques because women were considered some sort of pollution. The really extremists felt that they were distracting the men.

It’s fascinating because there was actually hadith which said that there was a man who came to the masjid, and he would pray in the line closest to the women. As he went down in sujud, he would look at the women from underneath his armpit, right, on purpose because there was a beautiful woman who would come to

the mosque to pray. The Prophet found about this, and there's an ayah in the Qur'an which says God knows what the intention is on your heart for those who come to pray. I can't remember the exact chapter.

I remember reading this and going, oh, my God because the argument that was always given to me was, oh, beautiful women will distract men from their prayers, and thus they shouldn't be seen, and yet it happened. All those things that Muslims complained about that would happen if women came had already happened in the 7th Century and had already been dealt with in the 7th Century.

Women were not banned. The men were reprimanded and told to pray in the first lines and not pray in the back lines, so they wouldn't be distracted. The women weren't asked to leave. The men were told to control themselves and not gaze at women in that way, that it was improper.

And, it was funny. There was one hadith where the men were so poor they didn't have shirts long enough to cover themselves. So they would be

short, and they didn’t have underwear. When they went down in sujud, their private parts were exposed to the women. The women would complain to the Prophet, going, we don’t really need to see this when we’re in prayer. So they tried to rectify it by giving cloth to the men.

But I mean every excuse that you can think of that would have justified separating the men from the women with a cloth or not having women come existed at that time, and yet there was never a solution that was based on separating the women or eliminating the women or putting some barrier up, so they couldn’t have access visually to the hadeeb.

So it was fascinating. When we did all this research, we could come up with counter arguments to other arguments of why it was better for the women to be in some locked area away from the men. Ultimately, if you take a woman away from the prayer space, you take away her access to the prayer hall. You can’t hear the same. You can’t see the same. You cannot participate in the same way, the moment that you’re

not there in the same place.

I think the damage that has been done to the mosque communities around the world because of this attitude is very self-evident when you go to countries where women don't go anymore. They don't feel a part of the congregation anymore. And so, this was the purpose of this documentary.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: It's fascinating. I'm just going to extrapolate that if you had done your research -- and you're obviously very right on the mark in research -- and used it to publish a paper, a policy paper in a journal, the kind of thing we're all supposed to do here, you probably would not have reached that man in Ohio, and you wouldn't have the same kind of impact that you have with this documentary being distributed virally through the internet. So that's very impressive.

And, you raise another point that's really key to artistic impression. That is you mentioned there was some objection because this was seen as self-criticism -- as self-criticism. Well, that's, of

course, the power of artistic expression because the artists are the ones. I say in the paper, they're the canaries in the coal mine of free expression. They're the ones who are out there, always out there criticizing society, looking straight at what's going on and speaking honestly about it -- in Solzhenitsyn's words, speaking truth to power.

And, Salman, that's something that you have written about and acted on, the idea that art disturbs authority and can sometimes have a real role in political situations, and you've inserted yourself as an artist-activist in some very precarious political situations. Can you tell us about that and how your music has had an impact there? I'm thinking of Kashmir, but also some issues involving Pakistan.

MR. AHMAD: You know, I think I find myself growing up as an artist in a place where there are so many issues: religious extremism, lack of freedom, military dictatorship, nuclear standoff with your neighbor, India and Pakistan. One part of Pakistan, East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971. So sectarian

violence, poverty -- if you grow up in that kind of environment, you have to really be a robot not to be affected by what you see.

So when I graduated from medical school, I made a conscious decision that I was going to pursue as a career, and the music I wanted to make wanted to be sensitive to the environment around me.

Then you think you're going to play for three or four people, but when you saw the music actually doing the power of music, as John Lennon says or Bob Dylan from the sixties, it has the power to transform society, to transform people, to bring people together. I saw that in my life.

I'll give you a couple of snapshots, the latest of which was this year in May where we played the first ever rock concert in Kashmir, in Srinagar. Now, in Srinagar, as you know, there's been violence. There's been just no music for young people for 20 years.

When we went and played there for the South Asian Federation, which is a collection of

nongovernmental organizations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal, the militants there had said to the people: If you go to this concert, we're going to bomb you. We will catch you in the streets. We know who you are.

And, thousands and thousands of kids jumped over barbed wire. They paid no attention at all to the militants, and they came to this concert.

I have to tell you, at the edge of the Dal Lake, just picture this: The Himalayas surrounding us, the edge of the Dal Lake, this beautiful scene and thousands and thousands of kids singing louder than we were playing. It was, for me, the power of music.

This 13-year-old came and said, she said: I've been listening to "Saeein" -- it's one of our Junoon songs -- all my life, and I never thought I'd get a chance to see this live. What it is, it's a dream come true, and we just want peace in this land.

For that snapshot there, for those two hours, you saw what can happen. Music can't change the world. It can't change policy. But what it does,

it opens doors. I think that’s where presidents and prime ministers and policymakers need to see the power of the artist. The artist opens the doors, and then you have to take that opportunity.

Another snapshot is in Pakistan, I met a woman called Shagria Gohl, whose two teenage children told me about their mother was living with HIV and AIDS. When I met her, she appears like this really powerful, strong, happy, positive person.

She told me a story which was that her husband died of AIDS. Her whole neighborhood wanted her out, her children out of the neighborhood. They wanted to burn their house down. They wanted to burn the children’s toys, the linen, the beds.

And, she just put her foot down and said: I’m not leaving. My children aren’t leaving. We’re going to stay here, and I don’t want any other South Asian woman to go through what I’m going.

She started an AIDS nongovernmental organization which is the number one AIDS NGO there, and she so inspired me that I wrote a song called “Al

Vida" which means farewell, farewell to AIDS, and did a video around her story.

Now, here's the power of music video. You put that on MTV India, and thousands and thousands and millions of college students see that, and they're able to begin a conversation about HIV and AIDS, something which is taboo. Talking about safe sex, you wouldn't have that conversation around the dinner table in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India.

So that's why I'm drawn to the fact that the music is much more than just entertainment and in the age that we're living in.

I was just at the Google Headquarters, the Zeitgeist event. Everyone says that we're faced with multiple crises. The next 10 years will determine the next 10,000 years. So, in this time, as artists, as policymakers, as business people, as politicians, we need to collectively think what kind of world do we want to leave our future generations. Yes.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much.

Now we're going to turn to our audience for

any questions that you might have for any of us. We have roving mics. So just raise your hands, and we will bring the mics to you.

MR. AHMAD: Sally Quinn.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Yes, Sally.

QUESTIONER: Salman, are you going to sing "Ring the Bells" for us tonight?

MR. AHMAD: Well, Melissa --

QUESTIONER: It's a fabulous song, yes, and we need to hear it. Isn't it out this week?

MR. AHMAD: Thank you, Sally.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: We don't plan questions here. We're very spontaneous.

QUESTIONER: I'm being your PR person tonight.

MR. AHMAD: "Ring the Bells" is a song that I recorded with Melissa Etheridge this year, and we were talking at her home in L.A. about what we can do as artists.

You know we're talking about the U.S.-Islamic Forum and the relations between Muslims and

Americans. As I said earlier, she comes from Kansas. I come from Lahore. She's an American lesbian rock star. I'm a Pakistani American Sufi rock star. What we do with this, sort of this notoriety, and we came together, and we did this song called "Ring the Bells".

I want you to go to a web site called RingtheBellsofPeace.com because we think not just a song; we want to do a campaign, RingtheBellsofPeace.com. We want to do a global campaign to reach out to those people, get a critical mass of people who say: Yes, peace and positive change is possible in our world. And we will say no to fear. We will embrace hope, and we can change our world.

So that song, I will sing for you when Melissa is with me because she would be very unhappy if I did it without her.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Okay. We'll have to figure that out. We'll figure it out.

We have a question over here and then over

with Judith.

QUESTIONER: Hi.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Would you mind introducing yourself? Why don't you stand up and introduce yourself?

QUESTIONER: Yes. Hi. Sana Butayeff .

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Could you speak up a little bit?

QUESTIONER: Can you hear me?

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Now we can.

QUESTIONER: I read a little bit of --

AMB. SCHNEIDER: You have to speak up again. Sorry.

QUESTIONER: I don't work well with dynamic microphones, but I will try.

You mentioned earlier something about U.S. funds helping artists in the Muslim World to promote their work. That's a great idea, of course, but I think there is also a need for the Muslim World to contribute to that. I mean we know, for example, it goes both ways. Maybe an exchange, I mean the U.S.

can provide the knowledge, the technology, the know-how in marketing, distribution and everything, but I think the Muslim World also has a role to play, especially rich countries.

I know they are trying. Most of them are trying to diversify their economy. They have excess of oil and gas, and I'm sure the media and entertainment for the youth, not only their population but all around the Muslim World, can be something we could probably contribute to.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Well, thank you. Thank you for that question and observation.

I think you're absolutely right, and actually there are some very exciting things going on, particularly in the countries that do have a lot of wealth. Amazingly, they are choosing to spend it significantly on culture. This is true in the Emirates in particular. Abu Dabi and Dubai, both of them have huge cultural programs, and they are increasingly involving collaborations with the United States.

Here, I'll put a little plug for what comes out of the U.S.-Islamic World Forum. There's a very large partnership between the Abu Dabi Cultural Authority and a film production studio in Los Angeles. I'm not sure if it's publicly announced yet, but it is happening, and the two people met each other in our arts and culture group in Doha. Regrettably, we haven't figured out how to get finder fees yet, but we're working on that.

And, there is going to be the largest music festival ever, and it's going to be a real cross-cultural international music festival with people, exactly the kinds of combinations you talk about, playing together. That's from two people who were introduced in the Middle East at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum.

So I completely agree with you. These things have to be. They have to cross-fertilize. It's no good for us, or anyone else, just to throw money in one place. The value and certainly the value here comes from America experiencing more of the

cultural products from that part of the world. That is, of course, a huge challenge because we have a market-based cultural economy, and what sells is what comes here.

I would argue that in the future we need to be more strategic about even our cultural market economy, and we maybe need to put some money into what is distributed outside the United States and put some money, public money, into what comes into the United States because market forces alone aren't enough.

Judith?

QUESTIONER: Thank you. First, a quick comment to Cynthia.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Judith, would you mind introducing yourself?

QUESTIONER: Judith Gifford .

There's a lot of money in the rich Arab States, to respond to what you said, being spent on culture, but it's primarily being spent on Western culture, bringing Western museums, Western stars, Western orchestras and so on, and that's good. We

think it’s fine. But I think there needs to be equal attention to their own culture or the various cultures that come together in that part of the world.

The other thing that I wanted to say, I have a little trouble because most of my Muslim friends have criticized me. So I’ve stopped using the term, Muslim World, because we don’t say Christian World, Jewish World, Hindu World, Buddhist World.

I wonder if it wouldn’t be more accurate or more respectable or respectful to say Muslim communities or Muslim countries because it’s the only religion that we really refer to as a world. But you and I can talk about that maybe in Abu Dabi in two weeks when we’re going to be there.

I wanted to say to Zarqa and to Salman that last February, in Saudi Arabia, there was a concert. The composer was French, the musicians were European and Arab and other Muslims from various places, and it was a combination of Western and Oriental music. It was attended by both men and women, and the women were semi-separated, not really. It was in Jeddah.

And, I happened to see the governor of the region the next day, and he was absolutely thrilled because nobody criticized. He called the king after the event and told him that it had been a great success, people enjoyed it and there was no criticism, no protest, nothing in the papers. So that was a small step for toward what you're talking about, and I think what you've said is very important.

Zarqa, a quick question: Have you had an approach from any of the Arab satellite stations to air your *Little Mosque on the Prairie*?

MS. NAWAZ: It's a good question. I think primarily the people, the countries who have bought *Little Mosque* are Europe. It's been Europe that's been primarily interested in the show.

I think the show would probably be too difficult for a Muslim country to handle because the conservative element would misunderstand the show, because culturally this is a show based very much upon North American Muslims and how we practice Islam here. I think that there would be a worry that the

conservative element would think that we're making fun of Islam or making fun of Muslims, and there would be backlash.

Even in North America, when I talk to Muslim organizations, there's an element of the community that still think that somehow I'm doing something blasphemous against Islam or against Muslims. It's important to understand this is the first sitcom that was done about the Canadian Muslim experience, and the world, particularly Muslims, we're not ready for it. We didn't give them baby steps, like do a sitcom first about, say, a family in a living room or something like that. We went straight to the mosque and straight to the Imam and Islam. So it was like this huge shock.

I think, in retrospect, I was very, very, very innocent going into this project in terms of what the community reaction would be because I remember everyone would keep going, oh, you're so brave and you're so this and you're so that.

I had no idea what they were talking about,

right. To me, I was Islam. I respect my religion. It's very important to me. I wouldn't do anything that would offend myself.

We had to work on the network and work on the writing in terms of making sure. I mean I would say this is probably the most problematic show we've made in terms because prayers are something that are very sensitive to Muslims, and it took them a while to understand that if people don't pray properly. I acknowledge the criticism with this particular episode. It's valid because I can see where some people would be offended, but it was one of the earlier episodes, and we were learning through the process. We've put in safeguards since then with consultants and internists who can be there because I can't be there all the time.

But it was a huge shock to the Muslims because they didn't know who I was, right. I mean every television show about Islam or Muslims, there's some sort of offensive element to it. And so, they thought that maybe this was just another one of those

shows, and it took us a while to win people over.

By the second season, people understood that this was a show primarily showing us a slice of life in the Muslim community. There were no bad intentions. Now, by the third season, people who are open-minded acknowledge that, and we have our sustained popular base. But at the beginning, it was difficult to convince people to give the show a chance and not be taken by some episodes where there were a few issues that had been problematic.

Television shows, even non-Muslim television shows, you have to give a chance for the show to live and to breath and to find itself before it manages to win over an audience and continue. Like if you think about Seinfeld, how many years, the network gave that show a long time before it found itself and found its ratings and found its audience and then became a very powerful show in the cultural milieu.

Unfortunately, networks aren't quite as patient these days. Within the first six or seven episodes, if you don't have the ratings, you're

cancelled. So we were very fortunate that the ratings that came out with *Little Mosque*, we had 2.1 million which would have been the equivalent of 20 million people in America. That would have been like *American Idol* or something. That's how high the ratings were.

So the ratings were so high that CBC hadn't had ratings like that in 15 years, like it literally changed the popularity of this network, because you have to understand CBC is like PBS. It's 100 percent government funded by taxpayers' dollars. It's not private.

And so, every year there's a debate: Should we continue to put taxpayers' money into this network? It doesn't have a hit. It's a waste of money. It's a sinkhole. Then suddenly this show comes, and it's a huge hit nationally, internationally.

I think Canada probably is the only country in the world that could have made a show like this, in which you would have had a successful and multicultural immigration policy or Muslims were successfully assimilated into the country.

Economically, financially, educationally, they were at par with the population.

I grew up in Canada. I didn't have a chip on my shoulder. I was allowed to practice my faith. Thus, I was able to make a comedy whereas if you see Muslim shows from, say, Europe or England you'll notice that they will be shows like *My Son, the Fanatic* or *East is East*. They're about very angry Muslims who have problems with their community and their faith.

Because I didn't grow up with a chip on my shoulder, I grew up as a Muslim woman who had a great time practicing her faith, had a great time being Canadian, didn't really see a problem with my identity and meshing the two worlds together. So sort of all those elements came together in Canada.

We were separated from 9/11. It didn't happen in Canada. We didn't have that association. So I think it was a unique experiment that came together. Only in that country, that could have happened in the world. So it all came together at the

right time, at the right moment.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Judith, while we're getting the mic, I just want -- go ahead and pass it around -- to speak very quickly. I'm happy to talk to you anytime on terms. I haven't figured out a good way to have the term without it taking up a whole paragraph, but I'm always open to ideas.

Just, I would actually, even though you know much more about this region than me, disagree with you about the funding on Western art. I mean you look at the new Islamic Museum in Doha, it's all Islamic art. And, in Abu Dabi, the Museum on the March of Man which is an anthropological museum based on Berbers, but it's about nomadic people, contemporary art. It's Islamic contemporary art. And Dubai, the Museum on Muhammad in Dubai.

So that's what I thought too when I heard about the Guggenheim, but as I've learned a little bit more I've been very impressed with the way those two places, Dubai and Abu Dabi in particular, are using their money to establish museums that are relevant to

the people there but not only about the people there but that also have a more global impact.

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm Stephen Stern .

In the time after 2001, September 11th, there was one impulse going on in North America among lots of people that we needed to understand Islam. It was something that there hadn't been much awareness of in the country. Then this was overwhelmed by other kinds of responses and conflict and chasms opening up here with Muslim communities and around the world.

Could you speak about what opportunities it opened up for you to express ourselves or speak about how it might have stifled opportunities?

AMB. SCHNEIDER: I'm going to ask you guys both to make your answers a little shorter, so we can fit in more of the questions.

MR. AHMAD: Well, I just learned a new word in Mandarin last week. The word, crisis, in Chinese, in Mandarin has two characters. The first is danger; the other is opportunity.

As you ask, after 9/11, there was mass

confusion. You know. A communication breakdown.

I feel, as a Pakistani American, that if we had good leadership in the United States, post-9/11, we could have actually brought the Muslim World and the United States far closer.

Why I say that and I take a little exception with you saying that Canadians are unique, Canadian Muslims are unique.

MR. AHMAD: The Muslim American community is a huge asset for the United States. They're the most integrated Muslim community living in the West. They're affluent. They're educated.

I think, Sally, *Newsweek* took out a cover story on "Islam in America." It came out last year. If you read that, it looks at, wait a minute, why are people afraid to look at the Muslim community because both Islam and America do have a common denominator which is diversity, individual freedom, social justice, equality. So it should be such an easy conversation.

Why is there this sort of -- I mean in this

political campaign, for example, there’s this not even secret, but that Barack Obama is a secret Muslim, and everybody is trying to hush everybody up. Us Muslims know that he’s not a Muslim. We think he’s a very cool American Christian, and we want to vote for him, yes.

But the fact is that there is a political advantage to divide the community. I think, in the long term, it doesn’t serve the national security interests of the United States because the 2.5 million to 3 million or 6 million Muslims all living in the United States, they have families all over the Muslim World who they are in touch with every day. So those are the people who are natural cultural ambassadors for the United States, who need to be sort of championed really, because the American Muslim can be a spark for the rest of the Muslim community in the world.

So, for me, as a Muslim American, I took the opportunity. I teach a class one day a week at Queens College. I have a mini Planet Earth of students who

are dying to know about Muslim arts and cultures, and it just grows. I was supposed to do that one semester, but now I've signed on, I think, forever. It really gives me so much back.

It's this dialogue, and I think that's what we need to be -- Muslims and Americans need to be in dialogue with each other.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Zarqa?

MS. NAWAZ: Absolutely, that's why *Little Mosque on the Prairie* is a success because that interest and that curiosity and the intrigue existed.

Making a television sitcom a successful television sitcom is extremely difficult. We have a 95 percent failure rate. Hollywood, the amount of money it throws into sitcoms every year just to see 95 percent of their product fail. It's unlike any industry in the world. I mean can you imagine if that existed for any other industry?

I mean failure is the norm. Success is rare, maybe 5 percent. I would say even less than 5 percent of what actually gets produced ends up being

successful. So to have a show like this about a minority community where we don't even have white leads, to have a television show that doesn't have white leads, that are all minority, about a Muslim community in the middle of nowhere, dealing with these issues and then for it to be a ratings success, it was unheard of.

That's what they say about successful television sitcoms. They're an accident. No one predict. If anyone in Hollywood could predict success, they would always make a product that would do well. But they throw everything out there, and then they see what audiences respond to, and nobody knows what people will do.

If you look at every successful comedy show -- *Friends*, *Cheers*, *Will and Grace* -- the original network had passed on these shows. They didn't believe in them. They passed it on. Some other network picked it up and, lo and behold, *CSI*, *Lost*.

There's a book called *Desperate Networks*, and it goes through every hit that happened in that

particular year like *Desperate Housewives*, *Lost*, *CSI*. All the networks that had originally bought the pilots passed on those, and then some other network picked up, and they became hits for some other network because their network didn't believe in those shows. That's how much they knew. Then it comes back, and it's an embarrassment for the network when they sold the show that ends up becoming a huge franchise for somebody else, like *CSI*.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: We're familiar with this. We did an event with *Aliens in America* last year. It didn't survive.

MS. NAWAZ: The fact that *Little Mosque* succeeded is a miracle in itself because it goes against all the grain. Nobody wanted to do a television show with a minority in the lead and about issues that are unique like this.

And, the fact that it succeeded, I think, is because of what you're saying. There was this incredible curiosity, and that was the opportunity that we had.

The disadvantage is it will probably never be seen in America because of 9/11. Because of 9/11, they don't want this show on the air, because of the incredible anger and hatred and racism against Muslims. That's our disadvantage, what's happened after 9/11 is that we can't get this show on the air in America because they won't take a chance on a show like this, because it's too much about faith and religion.

I've been to the networks. I'm working with them to create show, and what I hear over and over again is: We do not want a show about Islam or religion. You can do a show with Muslim characters in it, but the theme cannot be this, right.

So I'm like, okay, and that's sort of the challenge that I have now is how do I create another show for an American network that has the Muslim element in it but doesn't deal with faith and religion in the same way because those are issues that are really important to me.

And so, it's a challenge for me as a

creative artist because I don't want to just do a show that doesn't have any meaning or resonance for me personally, because everything I create has to mean something and it has to resonate somehow in my life and in my community and have some sort of deeper sense to go out there and change something about the world. Through this challenge that I'm facing, how do I do that in America without so-called selling out? So that's sort of the challenge I have.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: Steve, I'm going to use your question to conclude. I'm sure our panelists will be happy to take your question up here, but I'm afraid we're going to have to end.

Can you make it very quick because we really have to end? Okay. You guys have to answer very quickly.

QUESTIONER: Actually, it goes on the point of selling out. My name is Steve Senna. I guess, for me, I'm just concerned we have government-sponsored culture everywhere, and I think the issue of credibility, and perhaps you could speak to this.

Generally, culture permeates from the bottom-up. When you have it coming from the top-down, that's generally not the most expressive. You're not going to get the diversity of messages and things like that.

So I don't really know what my question is. I'm kind of conflicted about this, and I can't really articulate this doubt that's inside me, but maybe you could speak to that. Thank you.

MR. AHMAD: I had the same conflicted unarticulated feeling in my heart when Brookings got in touch with us because I was like: We're artists, and you guys are think tanks, and you make policy. How do we fit together?

So, first of all, we have never been given any brief by Brookings that this is the plan. They've let us. They've given us a platform to speak openly with other artists, writers.

I think the other thing which Brookings addressed, which I think the political leadership didn't, was that we need to build a dialogue. There

was a communication breakdown, a complete communication breakdown. Through this U.S.-Islamic Forum, we've come across different people. Not all of them, I agree with, but I go there at a place where I can listen to their views and they can listen to my views.

So I think that this relationship of artists and writers with Brookings, it's something that we have to sort of keep looking at, sort of readdressing. But right now, it's really important for me as an artist -- I think I'm sure for Zarqa as well -- to be given this platform to talk about what we think about art and culture. It's important.

MS. NAWAZ: I'm not sure if that question was addressed to me, but it was good that CBC was government-funded because no private network in Canada would have made *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. It was too risky, and we needed a network that was funded by taxpayer money, that wasn't dependent on commercial revenue because they wouldn't have made it. It was too risky.

It was their mandate in Canada to represent regionality and the minorities and make sure that everybody in the country was represented properly. That's why they went after the show when it was pitched whereas other networks wouldn't have. So sometimes having a government-funded network helps you as an artist because when it's too risky.

Because television is such a commercial venture, if you can't make money, no one is going to actually put money into it. Sometimes you need a government-funded network which doesn't depend on commercial revenue to survive because they're willing to take a chance on you. They can't afford to do it. Thus, they did, and it became a huge hit for them, thus bringing in, ironically, revenue, much needed revenue into the system. So you don't know.

I mean I don't know if you're criticizing government-funded networks, but if you are, that's my point.

AMB. SCHNEIDER: I just want to say I don't want to mislead you. I was never suggesting that

government should create culture and should be deciding what it's going to be. It's purely funding.

There is exactly, as you put very eloquently, Zarqa, there's a place for the private sector and there's a place for the public sector, and there will always be things that will not occur by market forces alone, that you need the public sector to provide funding, not determine content.

I'm going to end by answering Steve's question by saying what was missing in the post-9/11 period. I think you can imagine what I'm going to say with all this need for dialogue. What was missing was any kind of support for doing it through creative expression, through arts and culture, and you can see how effective our artists are as messengers. It was a great loss which we can hopefully rectify in the next year.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public # 351998
in and for the
Commonwealth of Virginia
My Commission Expires:
November 30, 2008