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U.S. DIPLOMACY IN THE AGE OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER:

AN ADDRESS ON 21ST CENTURY STATECRAFT

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PICCONE: Good morning, everyone. Thanks for coming on this chilly morning to Brookings. My name is Ted Piccone, I'm a senior fellow and deputy director of the Foreign Policy Program here. And we're very pleased to bring you all together for what I think will be a very interesting discussion about U.S. diplomacy in the age of Facebook and Twitter, and what it means for 21st century statecraft.

U.S. foreign policy goals are largely enduring and consistent from administration to administration, but the operating environment is changing rapidly. New non-state actors emerging at the local and global levels and networking across borders is exploding for those who can read and access the world wide web. And it raises a host of challenging questions for diplomats, politician, and organizers as we think about how to use these new tools of the 21st century.

And to help us look at that issue, we're very pleased to have Alec Ross with us, senior advisor for innovation at the U.S. Department of State. You've sent he bio, I hope, when you came in. Alec has spent years working on these issues as both a non-governmental activist working out of his basement on issues of digital divide. Then working on political campaign for President -- then candidate, now President Obama. And then invited by Secretary Clinton to help her in the State Department with shaping U.S.

policy on how to use new technology in service of America's diplomatic and development goals.

Alec will give us a presentation from the podium and then will engage in a conversation that I'll moderate, and I'll ask Kristin Lord to start off with a set of questions.

Kristin Lord is a fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies -- I'm sorry, this is interesting. The bio here reflects Kristin's time when she was here at Brookings and Kristin in now the vice president for research at the Center for a New American Security, and remains a non-resident fellow here at Brookings Foreign Policy. A long-time expert on public diplomacy and very well versed on these issues, so we look forward to hearing her comments.

So, without further ado, I will ask -- and then we'll engage in a Q&A with all of you here. I'll ask Alec to come on up.

MR. ROSS: Thank you. Good morning, everyone. So I'll say working in a basement is the most fun you never want to have twice. And while we did get started in a basement, thankfully it wasn't mine. We did actually grow into become the world's largest digital divide organization -- so the basement period was short, but memorable.

But good morning and thank you all for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you this morning. I want to particularly thank

Strobe Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution for his invitation to speak here. Strobe is a friend and important resource to the leadership of the State Department and someone who we lean on heavily for wisdom. I also want to acknowledge a relatively new appointee of the Obama Administration, the President's nominee to be chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Walter Isaacson.

I'm here today to talk about 21st century statecraft, which is based on a frame that was so compellingly laid out by Secretary Hillary Clinton about our living in an increasingly interconnected world and the implications of that in our statecraft. I'll speak about just one aspect of 21st century statecraft, specifically the role of connection technologies. And when I say connection technologies, I mean things such as Internet, SMS -- which is text messaging, social media, and mobile applications.

And the question that Secretary Clinton put to me and to others in the leadership of the State Department is, if in the 21st century technology can contribute to both the globe's promise, as well as its peril, how can we harness it in service of our diplomatic and development goals. And I would argue that our ability to practice 21st century statecraft is made possible essentially by two things.

First, new very technology savvy leadership from President Obama and Secretary Clinton. And, second, what we can learn from a

teenaged tin toy maker in Togo, the story of which is this. I have a dear friend who works at the World Bank and she travels regularly to Togo, which is a very small country in West Africa with a per capita GDP of less than $900. And every time she goes to Togo, she goes to the same village and the same street corner and visits the same young man, who always has two or three toys on display. And she buys one of them. These are the toys made out of scrap metal.

And the last time she went there, she went up to this young man and he said, madam, every time you come to my country, you come to my village and you come visit me here and you buy one of the two or three toys I have on display. In the future, why don't you just e-mail me and commission what you'd like. And if you have a SmartPhone, like me, you can take a picture of the image, send the file over the network. The breakthrough innovation here is connectedness.

When the teenage tin toy maker from Togo is connecting to the global marketplace using global networks, we are past the tipping point. And we have the opportunity in our statecraft to seize the opportunity created by the proliferation of connection technologies. These technologies are truly the platform for communication, collaboration, and commerce in the 21st century. They're connecting people to people, people to knowledge, and people to the global marketplace.

They devolve processing power to the individual and allow those individuals, particularly in the developing world, to connect to tools, information, and resources that they were unable to connect to as recently as five years ago.

I do want to be clear about one thing, though. I don't take a utopian view of technology. I don't believe you can just sprinkle the Internet on a foreign policy challenge and get a good outcome. That point of view is naïve and it's wrong. Make no mistake, technology can contribute to both the promise and the peril of the 21st century. What is clear, however, is that this technology and the global connectedness it creates is at the core of the exercise of power in today's world. And while these technologies are new, the correlation between access to information and power is not.

For example, the Catholic church -- my people -- were able to keep not just spiritual hegemony, but also intellectual and political hegemony for a period of centuries because it literally controlled access to the written word. It controlled the handwritten texts and used that as its basis for authority. What changed this was the invention of the printing press in the 15th century. It is absolutely not a coincidence that after the invention of the printing press, we saw the phenomena like the Protestant Reformation, the very beginning of the Age of Enlightenment and, therefore, the splintering of the Roman Catholic church's intellectual, political, and spiritual hegemony in

Europe.

So the point is that while technology is new, the correlation between information and power is anything but new. So what is the State Department actually doing to use these new connection technologies to engage and empower our interlocutors in new and different ways that are consistent with our foreign policy goals. I could give literally dozens of examples of things that we have begun since Hillary Clinton became our Secretary of State.

I'll give just two examples. First, in Mexico we are committed to helping the Mexican government with its efforts to reduce violence that is being fueled by narco traffickers. More than 12,000 people have been murdered in Mexico since President Calderon began the government crackdown against the cartels. And, according to our estimates, more than 2,500 people this year alone -- just in Ciudad Juarez -- have been murdered through narco related crimes. So, one year -- one calendar year, 2009 -- more than 2,500 people killed in one city. And that compares to El Paso over the border, which has seen a grand total of one drug related homicide.

One of the characteristics of this violence is a culture of impunity and the fear of retribution, which is now keeping Mexican citizens from reporting crime and thereby depriving the police and security forces their most important asset, which is citizen based intelligence. And so, to

create a safe, anonymous outlet for crime reporting, the State Department is developing a powerful public/private partnership between government, the telecom sector, and NGOs.

And here's how it works. People, even in the lowest income barrios of Mexico by and large have cell phones and they text message like crazy. The system that we're setting up lets people send text messages to a free short code, and that message then goes to a central office that's administered by a trusted NGO. The NGO then anonymizes that report -- they strip out the personally identifiable information -- and, in real time, NGO then maps that report onto a public-facing website. On to what will be or what will act like sort of a Google map.

Within a certain period of time -- we're negotiating this, it'll be a short period of time -- the Mexican police or security forces then need to be on-site. And whatever they find, they then must report back to this central office about what happened, and that information is then mapped back to the publicly accessible website. Hey, you're right, that was a drug house and we found three drums of black tar heroin. Hey, we went to the corner where there were reports of gang activity, but there were no signs of gang bangers.

The idea here is to create more transparency and accountability in combating crime. And to allow Mexican citizens to be able

to anonymously report crime without fear of retaliation. And we're able to do this, you know, not just because Secretary Clinton has focused on bringing in a technology savvy team, but also because of our very active engagement in the hands-on involvement of the private sector, who's involvement in this makes it possible.

A second example can be seen in our work leveraging increasingly ubiquitous and sophisticated mobile applications. I'm pretty new to government. I came to work at the State Department in April, and the day that I came to work, the estimate for the number of mobile handsets that were on the planet was about 4.1 billion. It's now December, I've been at the State Department all of 8 months -- there are now and estimated 4.6 billion mobile handsets on the planet. So just in the 8 months that I've been at the State Department, we've seen a more than 10 percent increase in the number of mobile handsets on the planet. That's more than half a billion. And 70 percent of those are in the developing world.

One recent World Bank study reported that for every 10 percent increase in a country's adoption of mobile technologies, there's a corresponding .8 percent increase in its GDP. And as a way to provide some context to that, .8 percent of America's GDP is about $113 billion or roughly the equivalent of the GDP in Kuwait.

So, when the teenaged tin toy maker in Togo is using a mobile

handset to connect to the global marketplace, and when we go from 4.1 to 4.6 billion mobile handsets in the course of eight months, we are past the tipping point. The world is not changing, the world has changed. And I saw this myself when I recently got off a U.N. plane in East Congo -- and that's actually -- this image right here is from Goma, in the Eastern Congo. And in this region, the per capita GDP is $184 and what that means is, there's about 50 cents of economic output per person, per day. And when the U.N. plane that I was on landed in East Congo, my Blackberry chirped to life with a choice of three different wireless networks.

And so, in a place of some of the most severe poverty on the planet, about 40 percent of the people are already using mobile phones. And so the opportunity -- we aren't creating this dynamic, this is a marketplace dynamic. And so the opportunity as we perceive it at the State Department is to use this access as a way of connecting people to information and resources that will economically or educationally empower them. And a key example is our effort to bring mobile banking into places of severe poverty and corruption.

It is worth noting that mobile banking is actually not an American innovation, it's a Kenyan one. It's an African innovation. And in Kenya, a country of about 38 million people, 7 million people are using mobile banking. And in 2008 there were about $1.3 billion worth of transfers

in Kenya through mobile banking.

In many places, including Central Africa and South Central Asia, there simply aren't and are not going to be bank branches on Main Street, the likes of which we know in the United States. So the telecommunications industry innovated and created a system of mobile payments using cell networks and it's now the preferred way of paying for a taxi in Nairobi.

Remarkably, one study showed that the household incomes of people using mobile banking in Kenya have increased by 5 to 30 percent. And we at the State Department are now playing a role encouraging the spread of mobile banking. We helped bring it to Afghanistan, as a way of paying for police and security forces, as well as to reduce corruption and inefficiency. And we are now playing a role connecting and convening marketplace experts with telecoms and regulators in Africa, to help these countries enter the economic mainstream and realize the kinds of benefits that we saw in Kenya.

Recognizing the economic significance of innovations like mobile banking, and supporting it, is a hallmark of 21st century statecraft.

I do think, though, it's also worth examining the downsides of these technologies and the negative consequence of their increasing ubiquity. While technology is an important driver for economic well being

and for connecting us more easily with markets and with each other, it is also the case that hostile governments and bad actors use these tools and they use them for harm. Connection technologies are shaping political movements for ally and enemy alike.

Hezbollah uses the web and targets youth for recruitment in Internet cafes in South Beirut. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and other hostile actors, use the Internet -- particularly Internet video -- for both recruitment and intimidation. Sex traffickers use the Internet to market women who have been sexually enslaved. These technologies are just as easily used by bad guys as by good guys.

Connection technologies also provide an enormous amount of transparency and access to information that wasn't previously possible. And while this allows for unprecedented levels of economic and educational progress, it also equips bad guys with information they can use to ill effect. I mean, speaking personally, I have more than 175,000 followers of Twitter, and that's a fantastic distribution channel, but I also know that not all of those 175,000 are cheerleading for the United States of America. And I'm consigned to actually being pretty careful about the information that I share over it.//

Social media. Social media allows people to organize in ways that were never before possible. Previously, protest movements were

organized in basements and through whisper campaigns, or through instruments like Samizdat. And these things, while often times effective, they did limit the movement's reach and effectiveness. Today's media allows people of like mind and interest to connect in ways unbound by distance, while requiring a close personal relationship. And nothing demonstrated this ability to connect and organize more than Barak Obama's Presidential campaign, where rock star innovators like Joe Rospars, Megan Phillips, and Chris Hughes, pioneered new ways for people to connect to the political process and to self-organize. And now, social media is being used all over the globe to help people organize and engage politically.

On the downside, the transparency within these social media networks also allows for bad actors to monitor and manipulate activity. There are well documented examples of how authoritarian governments use these networks to monitor dissent. And that dissent often times results in imprisonment and death. These networks tilt toward openness and that openness puts people at real risk if their anonymity is compromised.

An example of this duality can be seen in Iran. Many people who were surprised by the ferocity of the Iranian election, and its aftermath, were surprised because they did not yet understand the power of connection technologies in the political sphere. During the campaign, Mousavi used Bluetooth, SMS, Twitter, and 6,000 technology savvy volunteers as the

backbone of how he organized his campaign. In the election aftermath, these technologies were used by what turned into a largely non-hierarchical -- this is an important point -- a largely non-hierarchical and leaderless digital infrastructure that organized resistance strategies and shared up-to-the-second updates.

It was also through connection technologies that what happened in Iran got the world's attention. Many people now recognize the image of Neda as the galvanizing image of Iranian protest. The reason this image took hold globally in the first place is because the death of a young woman named, Neda Agha-Soltan was captured on a cell phone. It was then e-mailed out to people in the Diaspora, who got it to Western networks, where it became viral. While these examples from Iran are compelling to many around the globe, it's important to make clear that just as these networks were used to organize -- as well as to galvanize the outside world -- they were also monitored and manipulated by government forces. The same openness that allowed sympathizers in, also let in those that sought to end the dissent and punish the dissenters.

So we clearly can't take a sort of kumbaya approach to connection technologies. They can and are being used by our enemies, like al-Qaeda, and by authoritarian regimes. But I think that this, more than anything else, makes the case for our own aggressive engagement on

global networks. We need to raise our own game. We can't curl into the fetal position because bad guys are becoming smarter about how to use technology. It just creates an imperative for us to be smarter ourselves.

People who think that we ought to hunker down and slow down our own use of these tools because of the inherent risks may as well click their heels together and say, there's no time like 1955, there's no time like 1955. Times have changed and those changes require pivots in our statecraft.

Look, if Paul Revere were alive today, he wouldn't have taken a Midnight ride from Boston to Lexington, he would have just used Twitter. And the lantern hangers would have helped make it viral by re-tweeting.

The imperative to engage does not mean that we should not be thoughtful or strategic. It means that our global networks are an increasingly important playing field for foreign affairs in the 21st century. To not engage is to let Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, and other bad actors run circles around us, and we can't allow that. America is the home to technology fueled innovation. We're the home of Google, of Twitter, of Facebook, of Apple, and of scores of other companies that are fostering innovation in the digital age and we need to leverage our homegrown expertise to make sure we are making the highest and best use of these tools.

So, in conclusion, what excites us at the State Department is

not the technology itself, but how it can be applied to foster good governance, combat corruption, and to advance our diplomatic and development goals. It's important to remember that technology is just a tool and that it can be used just as easily by bad guys as good guys. And our challenge now that we are past the tipping point of global connectedness, is to harness it for good.

We have spectacular leadership at the top in President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton, and I hope you will see more and more progress from those of us working on the front lines to help steward Secretary Clinton's vision for 21st century statecraft. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. PICCONE: Bear with us while we get miked up here.

Thank you, Alec for that fascinating presentation. It shows, you know, that bringing what sometimes feels like a very futuristic kind of scenario down to the ground, and also acknowledging that we are in the future, as we speak. And yet, I can think of many, many questions and implications of what this means for our security, for our interests in promoting democracy and human rights around the world, for issues of civil liberties and privacy. There are a host of challenges as we look at this new frontier, and I'm sure we'll get to that in the course of the conversation.

I'm going to ask Kristin Lord to make some comments to get

us started.

MS. LORD: Great. Thank you, Ted. Thanks to Alec for joining us today and thanks to Brookings for having me. It's great to be back. Before I get started, I just wanted to ask Alec a question. I didn't -- I've never heard this phrase connection technologies before and I wondered if that included buttons and Velcro, as well?

But I wanted to say, before I talk about the use of these technologies on foreign policy -- my job as a discussion today is to try and raise some difficult questions. To try and be a little bit provocative, but actually I want to underscore that I'm a big supporter of the use of these technologies. I think they're extremely important. The future is now, today. We're going to have to keep adapting to use these technologies, so please --

MR. PICCONE: So that's the prelude to your tough questions?

MS. LORD: These are the prelude of my questions, and so now I'm supposed to let Alec have it a little bit, but I'm coming at this from a background of being generally supportive.

So let me turn to a few questions that I have that I hope will spark a discussion. The first one is, what are you doing in the State Department to ensure that people don't use these technologies too much?

As powerful as they are, is there a risk that people use these technologies because they're exciting and new -- even in circumstances where boring old radio announcements, or billboards, or open air meetings would actually be more effective? I mean, keeping in mind that three-quarters of the world doesn't have access to the Internet, that 28 percent of Afghanistan is -- only 28 percent is literate -- you know, it's really hard to send a text message that will get read if only 28 percent of your adult population can read.

And so, taking the question a step further, do you ever fear that the use of these technologies can become an end in itself? And I ask this because of my own personal experience working at the State Department where -- this was a few years ago -- I heard exuberant discussions of the use of podcasts, and I know that sounds really quaint right now, and at that time that was the latest and greatest whiz-bang technology to hit the Harry S. Truman Building. And people were really applauded and excited, you're using podcasts, that's great.

But often absent from those very discussions were questions like, well, what was the content of what you were saying? Who did the message reach? Was it reaching the people you intended it to reach? And was that -- was the podcast the best way to reach that group of people with that message?

So I think that, you know, sometimes people can get really

caught up and I'd be curious to hear your reactions to how your striking the right balance between using what's new and exciting and using boring old standbys?

And, also, if you can reflect on the resources. Sometimes I think it's easier to get money to do the hot new thing than (inaudible).

MR. ROSS: So --

MS. LORD: Do you want me to lay them all out first, and then you --

MR. PICCONE: Yeah, why don't you continue, Kristin.

MR. ROSS: I'll do my best to remember them all.

MS. LORD: All right, good.

MR. ROSS: Actually, I'll answer the ones I want to answer.

MS. LORD: All right, good.

(Laughter)

MS. LORD: But he -- I think he'll leave you his e-mail address, so you can e-mail him with the ones that he doesn't answer.

And then the second question is, the great value of social networking or connection technologies is that they allow multidirectional conversations. They're not just one-way broadcasts that allow person A to communicate with audience B. But that also means that the State Department has to accept that it will lose some control of the narrative. And

the State Department I know doesn't embrace the idea of losing control of the message and there are some extremely good reasons for that.

And I want to give an example. The State Department did something I think that was very innovative and well intentioned and, ultimately, had a good outcome, which is -- they had a competition for people who created their own democracy videos. You know, what democracy means to me. They were uploaded, people could vote on which ones they liked. At one point, I was following this, I was interested, I thought it was a good idea, but because it wasn't controlled by the State Department, it was controlled by the users, which is the point.

The day I happened to go on the site and see the most watched video, it said -- under a State Department logo with an American flag, a video that said this is what democracy brings and it had a picture of Hitler and a mushroom cloud. And don't feel really good about that, even though I embrace the idea of openness and discussion and First Amendment rights and freedom of speech.

I see that there's a challenge there about how do you both have a platform and real engagement for an open debate, but also not appear -- not give a platform for voices that, you know, you really would rather not give a platform to and also not appear to endorse ideas you don't adapt? And also, how do you see the State Department adapting its culture

to deal with this very loose environment where you don't control the message? What steps do you take to ensure that communications efforts of a vast, far-flung organization have the desired impact, also? And don't result in some kind of cacophony? So that's a second set of questions?

The third set of questions is exactly what you were talking about, the perils and promise of what I call "global transparency." I wrote a book with that title a few years ago, so I agree exactly with the view that Alec just laid out where these are technologies that can produce incredible good things that can empower individuals and organizations to have just tremendous effects that we've never seen before in human history, to the greater global good.

But they also, as Alec also said, can have tremendously negative consequences. They can give platforms to people who incite to violence, who foment ethnic hatred, who foment religious hatred. And so I'm wondering as you're thinking about your role, I do think sometimes there's a discussion about how these technologies help to spread good messages and stimulate debate, but there is this dark side. And I wonder how, in a role like yours, and at the State Department, you think about coping with not just what we know people in the National Security sphere would call the offensive side. But how do you think about the defensive side, as well? And how do you balance the good and the bad? And when you're actually

spending taxpayer dollars to build networks and promote the use of social networking technologies, how do you think about the unintended consequences of those investments?

And then the last question I'll ask is a little bit impertinent. Which is, what are you doing to put yourself out of a job? Ideally, we would have a State Department where the use of technologies would be spread across the Department, around our embassies -- we would be adapting to new technologies, so we would move on from podcasts to start using Twitter, and things like that that. And we would do that in an appropriate way, but it's not just knowing the technologies. It's being able to understand how different communities are using different technologies in different ways in different parts of the world, and that's a huge challenge.

I mean, I don't know if you can verify a story I've heard, but I heard -- you know, one of the great successes of the Obama administration use of these technologies so far, was in Ghana and in Cairo, where they really engaged a lot of people to have dialogs around the President's speech. But I also heard that in Egypt, people received text messages and ended up paying for those messages because their particular plans meant that they had to pay when they received messages. And, you know, you need a lot of knowledge to just sit in the State Department and understand that an 18-year-old Egyptian who you want to engage for all the right

reasons, is suddenly going to have to pay a higher bill out of their allowance or their part time job money because they got this message from the United States.

So, those are the questions that I'd like to start the conversation with. But I'm sure many of you have great questions as well to add.

MR. ROSS: Great. Well, I will try to respond without giving another 20-minute speech. And, you know, obviously you raised many, many questions and I'll just -- I'll sort of walk through them a little bit, recognizing that, you know, without speaking for 20 minutes I can't respond to all of them.

So as to the first point of -- about whether we need to worry about whether we use these technologies too much and at the exclusion of what could be called more technologically appropriate to the local environment, I would say we have the exact opposite problem.

The problem we have right now is we are still bound by what I would call a broadcast or analog age approach to communications and engagement. So, I think that if you actually look at the degree to which people use connection technologies and then, you know, cross mesh that against the resource base in the human capital base of the State Department, I think you'd see that we are misaligned right now where we've

gone a long way to go in terms of increasing our use of the Internet In terms of our increasing these proliferation of digital platforms that are out there.

So we've got -- I hope that by the end of the second term, we'll have to be asking ourselves that question. But as of right now, I think we are very long way from that.

Another question you asked about was sort of technology as an end unto itself. And I think that's a really good point to make, because I think a lot of people are -- you know the expression for it is the titillation of technique. So a lot of people are really into sort of what the latest gizmos are. They care more about sort of the gizmo than they do the actual development or diplomatic outcome.

And speaking personally and speaking for the Secretary of State, you know, that absolutely -- you know, that just cuts across the grain of what our focus is. So, if you -- you know, my own roots for engagement in the space of blending technology with social and economic good, is actually 15, 16 years old dating back to my time as an inner-city schoolteacher through Teach for America before the first commercially available Web browser.

And one of the things that I saw as I was teaching 38 kids in an overcrowded 6th grade classroom was that, there was something about this generation of young people where they had a very natural affinity for

technology. And I thought that that was a tremendous asset upon which we could build programs for these young people in very low income communities.

And so my own initial approach in entering into the technology world and blending it in the community development space after my time in inner city classrooms was all about what are the actual ends that this technology can produce.

You know, I personally don't have a technical background, and I'm never a first adopter of technology. You know what's much more compelling to me is, what these technologies can actually produce. So if you go back to my remarks, you know, one of the things that most excites me about the proliferation of mobile handsets is, the correlation it has with increased GDP.

The correlation it has with connecting people in historically low-income, isolated marketplaces and allowing them to connect to global marketplaces.

And in terms of the State Department, you know, we are by our very nature -- you know, we are the building of the striped-pants diplomat where from the time of Thomas Jefferson to near present day, our statecraft has been a relatively stable thing. And while there were things while you were at the Bush administration, you know, some unsuccessful

forays into things like podcasting and what have you, I think that what happened under the Bush administration and among some of your colleagues was, having an interest in the technology perhaps, but perhaps not marrying it effectively with the diplomatic and development goals.

And then sort of to skip to the last question. About what am I doing to work myself out of the job. If I talk long enough, I'll probably talk myself out of a job.

But this is a very serious question. And, my approach to that is this. We need to systematically embed innovation inclusive of technology-fueled innovation into our diplomacy -- into our diplomatic, and into our development agenda. And during the period of the presidential transition when I was on President Obama's transition team and I was thinking about the place where I could make the highest and best use of my own experiences and skills, what I looked toward was a space where I believed there was the greatest absence of innovation and there was the least degree of leverage of the application of technology. And that was in our foreign policy sphere.

And since -- and Secretary Clinton, who is truly the godmother of 21st century statecraft, sufficiently valued the need for us to integrate innovation and technology into our statecraft that what she said was, I'm not going to bury it. I'm going to put it in my office. And the reason why I'm not

running a bureau, the reason why I'm not -- you know, I don't have the word "technology" in my title or, you know, working on -- and I'm working on a technology strategy is driving towards the point that I think you made implicitly, Kristin. Which is that we need not have a technology strategy, but what we need to do is integrate technology into our foreign policy strategies.

And so whenever anybody asks me, do you have a technology strategy at the State Department, I say no. We have a non-proliferation strategy, we have a counter-narcotic strategy, we have a good governance strategy, we have a development strategy. And within that then, we'll apply some of the tools of the 21st century.

MR. PICCONE: Great. Well, thank you both Alec and Kristin. I just wanted to pose a couple of additional thoughts or questions, really, in terms of some of the macro challenges.

And one that comes to mind is this digital divide. And it's also maybe a generational divide, as younger -- as you said, younger generation is much more attuned to the new technologies.

So, is the U.S. government in terms of, say, its development aid policy do anything to make that a priority to try to close that gap in terms of use of or provision of computer, cell phones. Even issues of energy access. I mean, that's obviously a very practical problem. If you live in a village and you don't have any access to a plug, what are you going to do?

MR. ROSS: Yeah, no, I'm really glad you brought up the digital divide. I mean, what I did for the eight years proceeding going into government was, focus precisely on that issue.

Kristin cited one statistic about how more than 70 percent of the globe don't have access to the Internet. What I would qualify that by saying is that technically, what that means is that more than 70 percent of the globe hasn't adopted broadband and broadband as defined by a terrestrial connection. Meaning, DSL cable, fiber-based broadband.

And, one of the things that I've learned both from my experience having built the world's largest digital divide organization as well as the dynamics that I've seen just in the eight months on the job is that the device of choice in the developing world is different than what I know.

I mean, I am one who -- you know what? I like my desktop computer. I also of course have got, you know, an iPhone and a Blackberry and a laptop, but in the developing world, it's increasingly the case that that mobile phone is the platform, and that is the way in which the "digital divide" is being closed.

And so when I got off that plane in Goma in the Congo, where again it had a per capita GDP of $184, and I had a choice of 3 different wireless networks, those were data-enabled wireless networks. So, when I got off the plane, I was able to take out my phone and I was able to send

and receive e-mail. I was able to go to the Internet over my phone.

What I wasn't able to do was, go to somebody's house and plug a laptop into a DSL connection. And so, I just want to qualify that the digital divide, the access to technology is a very dynamic space. and what we're seeing is that the device types are evolving and the way in which we are used to accessing technology in the United States might look very different in low income places abroad.

In terms of what the Obama administration is affirmatively doing in this space? First of all, I'm very excited about the nomination of Raj Shah to be the head of USAID. And, you know, I'm very hopeful that at USAID is -- within USAID as well as more broadly within the government, we can do things to affirmatively bridge the digital divide.

A lot of the time that is not necessarily -- that does not necessarily mean taking out our checkbook and writing checks on behalf of the American people, to "give broadband" to people abroad. I think it oftentimes means two things.

Number one, it's helping bring the large scale infrastructure that can then allow for market forces to succeed. So one of the things that the United States government did actively partner on and engage on, which I think was enormously successful, was the underwater sea cable that recently went live down the east coast of Africa.

Now, our having played a leadership role on that, then, catalyzes broadband access through east Africa. And I think does so in a way more effectively than our, say, you know, giving out vouchers to poor people saying, hey, go get broadband.

The second way in which I think that we can play a role helping to close the digital divide is our -- is to actually focus on the application and not the technology. If you go to a low income person in Africa and you say, hey, you really should connect to the Internet, you know, you very well might get a blank stare.

If, however, you say, how would you like to be less reliant on cash so that you aren't constantly shaken down on every street corner for a bribe and so that you can feel safe walking the streets and you don't have your entire net worth tied up in what's in your mattress, now you've got their interest.

And so we aren't talking to them in this case about mobile broadband, we're talking about mobile banking. Which just so happens to be built on 21st century networks. So actually talking about education. Or health. Or financial services. The actual goal. And then developing programs which can help seed that market, I think, will actually be more effective than historic give people a computer, give people a broadband connection approaches to bridging the digital divide.

MR. PICCONE: All right. Let me take the liberty of one more following question. But I was good on the upside. On the downside, the crime side. Which is another way of talking to people about why these technologies matter in their daily lives.

But, you know, in the Mexico example, I can imagine a lot of mischief caused by people who are trying to set up their enemies and reporting a lot of these tips anonymously and then running the police around on wild goose chase -- I mean, there are a lot of -- what are you all thinking about as how to prevent some of that misuse.

I also wonder about issues of cyber security. I mean, think about our whole infrastructure is increasingly dependent on these technologies. That might be too much --

MR. ROSS: Sure.

MR. PICCONE: -- to take on. And maybe outside your brief --

MR. ROSS: Yeah, I'm going to punt on cyber security, if you don't mind.

MR. PICCONE: That's fine.

MR. ROSS: Because again, people don't want to sit through another speech.

MR. PICCONE: Right.

MR. ROSS: But, the whole -- it's a really risky business, as

you pointed out. The Cuba example is another one where we've just seen an AID contractor arrested for handing out cell phones and obviously, the people who are receiving this kind of assistance are taking a lot of risks. And the ones in the middle of providing it.

Are we clearly explaining to our partners on the ground -- and I hope we are -- they don't know it already. The kinds of risks they're taking on.

So, yes. Let me speak to the Mexico example for a second. So, in effect the system is just like 911. So in the same manner in which people can manipulate 911 and send police on wild goose chases so, too, can they use text messaging.

And the reason why 911 has now become something that we can all rely on is because there are safeguards built into the system. And you know what? If somebody's going to rob a house and they phone in something to 911 saying -- that sends the police off in another direction, you know, they can do that in the United States and Washington D.C. as easily as they can in Mexico using a text message.

So there's nothing about our programs in that specific case that are at all riskier than anybody making a 911 phone call here. If there is abuse, it's actually very easy to track it. Because even though the information is being anonymized and scrubbed of publicly identifiable

information at the central office level, at the central office the thumbprint's going to still be there. In the same way in which if somebody's going to make a fake call to 911, they're not going to call from their living room. Because they're then going to get caught.

So, if anything the advances in technology are allowing us to keep up with the concerns. That's not to say they're foolproof. There are no foolproof solutions. And I don't have a single silver bullet in my six shooter. But what we do have are promising technologies that we think can mitigate against problems where like in this case, the historic way for people to report crime in Mexico is to go to the cop on the corner or to walk up the literal, proverbial steps of the police station house and that's what's really dangerous right now.

And so part of what's important here, too, is to bring in the best minds from the private sector. We all know that Barack Obama enjoyed enormous success from the technology community. And one of the things that that community now wants to do is say, look, we can write checks, we can cheerlead for you. But, you know, how can we make the highest and best use of our skills. And so what we are doing very actively is, where there might be a lack of capacity at the State Department, we're using the very best minds to help us problem solve some of these things.

Because, frankly, some of the diplomats at the State

Department are not who you want architecting and engineering schematic for creating an anonymous text messaging program in Mexico.

MR. PICCONE: Very good. Well, why don't we turn to you all and see if we can get some questions. I see a hand in the way back and there's a microphone.

Please identify yourself and.

MS. KINSNER: Good morning, my name is Katherine Kinsner. And I'm a program manager for the International Youth Foundation. And I work on their project Youth Action Net where I manage the virtual footprint, so a lot of what you're talking about, Alec, is very familiar.

I find this conversation very fascinating to follow, not least because I was the child of a diplomat in the '70s and '80s, and it's a very different State Department that I'm witnessing today as well as the technology itself.

Related to that, the State Department has launched the exchange's connect community, which is built on Ning. They're using YouTube, they're using a lot of these kind of free, open channel networks and platforms. And one in the NGO community that we're struggling with around social media and new media is, measurement and evaluation.

It's very easy when your intervention is around employability or

education or health. Whether it's face to face or mobile. You can have numbers, you can have reporting data against that. But how do you measure influence, and how do you measure engagement. Is it how many re-tweets -- and I think we all know that's kind of a false indicator. As you mentioned, you have 100,000+ followers on Twitter, but what does that really mean.

So I'm just curious whether there's been internal conversation around how to develop those metrics and where that conversation might be at.

MR. ROSS: Yeah, thank you. That's a great question.

I should say from the outset that my own personal focus oftentimes is, it's much less on public diplomacy than on education, economics, counter-radicalization. You know, some of these kinds of things.

So, in terms of how do you measure the effectiveness of your measuring over social networks, I think -- you know, there are -- the instrumentation for that is evolving. I'm not sure, frankly, that it's been nailed yet. But, neither do I believe that the measurements for effective messaging over broadcast, radio, all of these other things. I think that they themselves are exceedingly imprecise as well.

I mean, the historic way for measuring these sorts of things is polling. So, a lot of what we did post-Cairo, post-Ghana, and some of these

sorts of places where we would measure things like participation rates, we would measure favorability, un-favorability rates using conventional metrics like polling.

But I do want to give the very strong disclaimer that public diplomacy, I think, is a very small part of the totality of technology and innovation. And frankly, it's a small part that I tend not to put a lot of my own personal time into. We have good people at the State Department, most notably Judith McHale, who is the CEO of Discovery. When she wakes up in the morning, she thinks about this and she drives this.

I think that the use of technology for messaging is sort of the most obvious way in which we can apply it. And a lot of where I think that we need to focus a lot of our attention is in those things that are somewhat less obvious. You know, i.e. economic empowerment.

But, it's a good question and I apologize I don't have the perfect answer for you. But, that's because I don't think there's the perfect solution for it.

MR. PICCONE: Here in the front middle.

MR. FARU: Manjuan Faru from Freedom House.

Just have a question in some particular country where it's very -- like you'd call them, the dictatorship or very harsh environment. And we saw a lot in the recent speeches at the State Department, there is a lot of

focus on new technology and Web 2.0 programs. A lot of people and especially human rights activists, democracy activists, and these particular countries who are thinking this is a way to open engagement with our countries and you work on democracy and human rights in a way that will not bother these governments, because the government are really have hands in the technology and Facebook or blocking Facebook or You Tube and all that.

So, it was a bit message that the human rights activist and democracy activist in like Syria, Tunis, Morocco, were afraid that the State Department is not -- it's trying to find ways to work on human rights and democracy without bothering the regimes.

MR. ROSS: That's a very interesting and compelling observation that you make there. I mean obviously whenever we put forward human rights messaging, we're very -- you know, we -- it has to be balanced, it has to be thoughtful, it has to achieve the right balance. A lot of our allies don't have human rights records that we agree with entirely. You know, I would look back -- I mean, let's have a measure of humility here for a second. I mean, I don't think the United States is -- over the last eight years has necessarily been at its proudest moment in terms of its own record on human rights.

And so, when you engage in this space you've got to be very

careful. And what we can't just do is point fingers at every -- at every nation with whom we have some differing point of view. And so I think that you're going to -- you will continue to see balance from this administration. And I think that a lot of what we've seen recently which I think contrasts somewhat with our predecessor administration is, first of all we need a measure of humility on this issue. And secondly, I think part of how we're trying to produce change is through engagement.

Again, how do we empower rather than overpower in some of these dialogues, but it's a very important point that you make.

MR. PICCONE: In the middle in the back?

In the middle -- sorry. To the left, of my left. Your right. Yes.

And why don't we take a couple of questions before we reply, if you don't mind.

MS. WONG: Hi, I'm Cynthia Wong with the Center for Democracy Technology. I think it's really great to hear you guys talk about leveraging technologies for good. And that's one thing we definitely promote at CDT. But we think it's only one part of the strategy. And the other part would be promoting Internet policy all over the world that actually makes sure that Internet and communications technology stay free for the free flow of information.

And this is happening all over the world, including in western

democracies, to give an example. Australia is now going to mandate ISP filtering for good purposes, of course, but it also raises a lot of questions about speech and transparency and that kind of thing.

And, right now, Italy is actually prosecuting four Google executives for a video that was posted by a user, and that could actually imperil a lot of the platforms for speech that, you know, we've been relying on Web 2.0.

So my question for you is really, you know, what is the strategy to address that part of the problem. You know, promoting good Internet policies that actually increase the flow of information.

MR. PICCONE: Great. And, let's take a couple more. Here in the front.

SPEAKER: Hello. I'm Laurie Dunham with the Bertelsmann Foundation. And leading our work to set up a task force with innovative individuals and actually foreign ministries in other countries that are starting to struggle with this exact same issue.

Two questions. One, I see the possibilities on the economic development side, and on the corruption transparency side and how it's easy to kind of launch some initiatives in those areas early. It seems to be one of the most difficult challenges will be to bring this into the diplomatic work, the regular statecraft work.

So, my question is, what will be some of the milestones and cases you'll be looking to in your first year or two. You know, are you picking three or four countries to start targeting work in this area, or is it going to be reactive.

My second question -- sorry, my memory is actually a little faulty this morning. Is, it seems that a lot of this work is based on the importance of the role of the individual. And, how will that be a tool that can be brought in to the deliberative process of policy of government rather than just on the sell end?

MR. PICCONE: Okay, so good Internet policies, milestones, and this last question.

MR. ROSS: Got it. So, let me speak first to the issue of Internet policy.

You know, I think that Barack Obama has always been at the cutting edge in terms of the Internet policies that he puts forward. And, you know certainly during the campaign I think he went very far in articulating a very powerful domestically-focused set of Internet policies. And those are being seen through right now to great effect at the Federal Communications Commission. At the Department of Commerce, and elsewhere.

And what's now taking place is, we're beginning to define, you know, what we believe some of the global Internet policies should be. And

you can break these down into an even number of silos. And each one is complicated in its own right.

So, first let me speak to the issue of telecommunications. So, in terms of telecommunications policy and smart Internet policy, a big area of focus of our at the State Department is to try to share best practices in places where bad Internet policy has stifled access to telecommunications.

So let me give you a couple of -- let me give sort of an interesting contrast. Somalia and Ethiopia. You know, one might immediately guess that Somalia -- the very fragile state -- would have low access to telecommunications and that Ethiopia would have far better. Point of fact, it's the exact opposite. More than 75 percent of the people in Somalia now have mobile phones that are data enabled, and in Ethiopia, basically the only way that you can connect to the Internet is at the Sheridan.

And so, what then is smart Internet policy. From the United States perspective. Smart Internet policy from the United States perspective is to go to Ethiopia and say, okay. These are the policies you have in place, which literally make it impossible to deploy networks. Here are some of your peer nations, here are best practices, let's see how you can apply them. And so, a big focus for me -- and I think for the State Department is, how can we unravel some of the very bad Internet policies that are out there that are inhibiting network deployment, particularly in the developing world.

As to other aspects of Internet policy, I think that we need some -- I think that we need to establish some bilateral and multilateral agreements on issues, for example, cyber security. So, I don't know how much it was noticed, but on Friday we announced what I think is going to be a very important engagement. It's between the United States and Russia and it's specific to the subject of cyber security.

So what's taken place to this point is, every nation has sort of done its own thing. And nations -- we've sort of played this cat and mouse game globally in terms of whose doing what, in terms of what's acceptable behavior. And even within the community of allies, there are very different notions of what's acceptable and what's good. And part of what we need to do is we need to take the issue of cyber security from being something that's not spoken about in the light of day and certainly not in strategic dialogues or meaningful bilateral, multilateral conversations and surface them.

Going to the question about, you know, key benchmarks for the State Department in terms of sort of our internal use of technology and how we can apply it within our statecraft. We have a team -- I think it's about 15, 16 people now, which we call our eDiplomacy unit. And, they were there previously -- you know, they were there under the Bush administration. And what we have tried to do -- and these are smart, active, engaged people who have sort of been outliers within the State Department. And what we're

trying to do now is take that unit and really empower it within the Department.

More broadly, however, though looking at an enterprise that has tens of thousands of people and, you know, more than 10 billion dollar budget. Part of what you have to do is you have to make systematic change. And so one of the things that we are focused on is Foreign Service Institute reform. Where we have terrific leadership, but knowing that literally everybody who becomes a foreign service officer, everybody who goes out to a foreign post has to pass through the Foreign Service Institute, it's actually this very powerful acculturating instrument.

And so, we believe for example that people shouldn't become public affairs officers if they aren't exceedingly sophisticated in new media. And so, integrating new media as a core criteria into pubic affairs staffing in the same manner in which we don't send people to Venezuela if they don't speak Spanish. Are the kinds of reforms we're making at the institute level. Also, within the QDDR right now, which is the Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review or something to that effect. This is -- Kristin would know better than me. But it's about a year long engagement that's really a very important strategic planning effort for the Department. And I'm not going to get down in front of any of the findings, but a lot of what you ask about in terms of how do you then systematize and how do you then benchmark, you

know, how effectively we're integrating this into the Department will appear as products of this QDDR.

But just to sort of pick one out, I would say as a benchmark I would say within two years, we should not have a single public affairs officer go abroad without having been certified and being savvy in new media.

MR. PICCONE: Kristin, did you want to come in?

MS. LORD: Yeah, I have a couple of comments.

With respect to this issue of Internet freedom and protecting dissidents and democracy activists who want to and need to use the Internet increasingly in order to do their work, I think we really need groups like yours now. Because I actually predict this is going to become a much harder fight in the next couple of years.

And the reason is because of cyber security. Cyber security is becoming a tremendous concern, it's reached the highest levels of the Defense Department in terms of being perceived as a major threat. Cyberspace is used for criminal activity is having profound economic costs, and one of the solutions that's discussed about is to authenticate users. Because if you authenticate users, then you can -- you know who you're deterring, you know who you can track down, you know who you can -- you have a better chance of being able to head off crime, capture criminals and so on.

But, the very acts that will help protect us against criminals and terrorists and foreign governments who want to use the Internet in order to attack our security and our economy also are going to make it very, very hard to protect the anonymity of dissidents and democracy activists.

So, this is going to be a really difficult but important issue over the coming years. And the fact that we don't share the same norms about Internet freedom that many of our closest allies do, things are acceptable -- censorship that's acceptable in Europe, for instance, that we don't consider acceptable here. I mean, this is going to make this challenge extremely difficult.

So, unfortunately, bottom line prediction, this is only going to get harder and more important in the next -- now for the next several years until we shake this out.

With respect to the second question about the roles of individuals and how do you bring them into the deliberative process. I don't think you'll ever see a U.S. government that's trying to sort of run polls about what policy should be. But, I do think that this administration is uniquely sensitive to the idea that in order for policies to be successful, you need to factor into the policymaking process how policies will be received.

Because unless you balance the costs and the benefits of particular policy choices, you can't make good policy decision.

And the fact that the administration really understands this means that I think they have the opportunity to use some of these platforms and technologies in order to get a better understanding of where there is likely to be shared support for initiatives, where there is likely to be opposition. Whether it's worth it for the United States to fight despite opposition, where there are opportunities to build support, because we see that if we do things just slightly differently we actually can build a coalition behind it.

Given the Obama candidate's use of the Internet in order to mobilize coalitions of supporters, I just see tremendous opportunities for this administration that has this mindset in its DNA to use this in order to have better foreign policy success. So, I see it less in terms of bringing people around the world into the deliberative process, and more in terms of thinking about it -- I think the President has a -- he has a community organizer's view of the world that can be brought to foreign policy. And these are tools that can help him, potentially.

MR. PICCONE: We promised to end the program at 11:45. And we're just about there. So, I'm going to ask you all -- unless you have any final comment -- to join me in thanking the panel. I think we're going to have a challenging period ahead on this issue.

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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.

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