

**Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University
and the Center for Arts and Culture**

**Meeting on Cultural Diplomacy
April 30, 2003 - Washington, DC**

**Introductory Speech
“Cultural Diplomacy Best Practices”
by Thomas Pickering**

THANK YOU FOR THE KIND INTRODUCTION. I'M PLEASED AND DELIGHTED TO BE HERE. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT SUBJECT, PARTICULARLY IN THESE DAYS OF CONFLICT AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM.

I'D LIKE TO TALK TODAY ABOUT THREE ISSUES. ONE IS THE IMPORTANCE I ATTACH TO CULTURAL ORIENTATION AND TRAINING IN THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE. SECONDLY, I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT AREAS OF IMPORTANCE IN CULTURAL RELATIONS AND HOW THE ACADEMIC SECTOR, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE GOVERNMENT CAN COOPERATE IN IMPROVING OUR PROGRAMS IN THESE AREAS - - PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE LONGED SUFFERED FROM SERIOUS BUDGET CUTS. BEFORE I WIND UP, I WANT TO GIVE A COUPLE OF EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE CULTURAL PROGRAMS FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS AN AMBASSADOR WORKING OVERSEAS.

WE ARE ALL AWARE OF THE CONCERNS SHARED WIDELY IN THIS COUNTRY THAT OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IS NOT EFFECTIVE ENOUGH. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THAT EFFECTIVENESS.

EQUIPING OUR DIPLOMATS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, LANGUAGE SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING OF FOREIGN CULTURES IS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR SUCCESS. SIMILARLY, POLITICAL APPOINTEES IN THESE AREAS SHOULD ALSO HAVE THESE ATTRIBUTES. IF NOT, THEY CAN OFTEN BE ABLY ASSISTED AND GUIDED BY FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS WHO DO.

CYNTHIA SCHNEIDER, WHO HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN ORGANIZING THIS CONFERENCE, IS ONE EXAMPLE OF A POLITICAL APPOINTEE WHO WAS SUPERBLY EQUIPED TO ASSUME HER OFFICE AS AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS. AN EXPERT IN DUTCH ART HISTORY AND FLUENT IN DUTCH, SHE MADE WITH EASE THE TRANSITION FROM ACADEMIC LIFE TO DIPLOMACY. HER BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE AND HER KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING ALL SHOWED HOW EFFECTIVE SHE COULD BECOME.

SIMILARLY, EXCELLENT TRAINING IN THESE AREAS IS IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO MAKE THEIR LIVES AND PROFESSIONS AS DIPLOMATS. OVER THE YEARS I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF LANGUAGE AND THE UNDERSTANDING IT BRINGS ONE OF THE CULTURE, WAY OF THINKING AND APPROACH OF A FOREIGN SOCIETY.

NEEDLESS TO SAY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, PARTICULARLY UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF SECRETARY ALBRIGHT AND NOW SECRETARY POWELL, HAS BUILT AND ENCOURAGED ENLARGEMENT OF THESE ACTIVITIES. THEY WILL PAY DIVIDENDS IN THE FUTURE AS WILL THE SECRETARY'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE THE EMPLOYEE STRENGTH OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND HIS EFFORTS TO ENLARGE THE BUDGET.

OVER THE YEARS I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE, AS AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT CULTURAL DIPLOMACY PLAYS IN THE SUCCESS OF OUR EMBASSIES OVERSEAS.

THERE ARE NOW MANY AREAS WHERE WE CAN IMPROVE THIS PROCESS.

FUNDING HAS BADLY DECLINED. THIS FUNDING IS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT TO MAKING SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS. THERE ARE ALSO OPPORTUNITIES, HOWEVER, FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AND FOR STRONG COOPERATION FROM THE ACADEMIC AND MEDIA COMMUNITIES AMONG OTHERS.

BUDGETARY IMPACTS OVER THE YEARS HAVE BEEN REAL. THE THEORY WAS THAT IN TIMES OF STRAIGHTENED BUDGETS, WE OUGHT TO CUT PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY IMPACT OR SUPPORT ACCESS TO FOREIGN LEADERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES. I CAN'T QUIBBLE WITH THE PRIORITY, BUT IT DID MEAN THAT WE LOST A GREAT DEAL IN OUR EFFORT TO INFLUENCE NEW, UP AND COMING LEADERS, FUND EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAMS AND FOCUS ATTENTION ON EXCHANGES AND PROGRAMS IN THE AREAS OF THE ARTS. WE HAVE PAID A SERIOUS PRICE FOR THIS - ONE OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE SAVINGS.

AS A RESULT, OVER THREE AND ONE-HALF DECADES WE SAW A REAL DIMINUTION OF OUR EFFECTIVENESS. IN THE 70s AND 80s, AS AMBASSADOR, MOST OF THE LEADERS I DEALT WITH HAD BEEN EDUCATED ON EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH THE UNITED STATES SPONSORED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS. IN THE 90s AND BEYOND, THIS HAD BEGUN TO DIE OUT. THE INVESTMENT WAS CLEARLY WORTHWHILE. IT NEEDS TO BE CONTINUED AND STRENGTHENED.

RECENTLY, AN ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS TAKEN A LOOK AT A NUMBER OF AREAS WHERE INITIATIVE SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, INCLUDING FROM THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SIDE.

THEY BEGAN WITH SUGGESTING AN AGGRESSIVE AND SUSTAINED EFFORT TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.

THEY ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF VISAS. WITHOUT AN EFFECTIVE VISA PROCESS TO BRING AND WELCOME PEOPLE TO THE UNITED STATES, WE CAN ONLY IMPACT PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES. SINCE 9/11, WITH REAL JUSTIFICATION, THE VISA PROCESS HAS BEEN TIGHTENED.

HOWEVER, IT NOW OPERATES IN WAYS THAT HAVE BEGUN TO INHIBIT OUR LONG-TERM EFFECTIVENESS TO REACH OUT TO AND BRING TO THIS COUNTRY FOREIGN VISITORS OF GREAT INTEREST TO US. THIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES, A PLACE WHERE WE WANT TO REINFORCE OUR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE PEOPLE THAT TERRORISM IS NOT THE ANSWER.

IF THESE COUNTRIES ARE BECOMING THE BREEDING GROUNDS FOR TERRORISM, WE NEED TO BE THERE ON THE SPOT, FINDING WAYS TO BRING UNDERSTANDING AND INDEED FRIENDSHIP TO THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE WANT TO PROCEED AGAINST US IN VIOLENT WAYS.

WE CAN BEGIN THE IMPROVING VISA ISSUANCE PROCESS BY EASING UP ON THOSE WHO HAVE HAD MULTIPLE-ENTRY VISAS FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND DONE US NO HARM OR NOT ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES INIMICABLE TO THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

WE ALSO NEED TO SPEED UP VISA PROCESSING. SINCE THE STATE DEPARTMENT MUST CONSULT MANY OTHER AGENCIES, THEY TOO NEED TO ALSO SPEED THEIR ABILITY TO REVIEW VISA APPLICATIONS. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS MAY BE ONE ANSWER TO MAKING THIS HAPPEN.

FINALLY, THOSE WHO HAVE TO BE QUESTIONED AND FINGERPRINTED MIGHT HAVE THIS DONE ABROAD AND NOT BE "WELCOMED" HERE BY LONG WAITS AND INTERROGATIONS

THESE AND OTHER CHANGES WOULD BE MOST VALUABLE.

THE COMMITTEE ABOUT WHICH I SPEAK FOCUSED ON A NUMBER OF OTHER AREAS.

ONE OF THESE WAS IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING ABROAD.

THIS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE IN MUSLIM AREAS, BUT ALSO ELSEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD.

PERHAPS WE COULD ENGAGE WITH OUR FRIENDS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD, THE UK, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, INDIA AND SO ON, TO WORK TOGETHER IN THIS PARTICULAR AREA.

THERE IS GREAT INTEREST IN AND A THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ENGLISH. IT IS INCREASINGLY THE LANGUAGE OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE AND BUSINESS.

SIMILARLY, THERE IS A STRONG INTEREST IN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY IN HIGHER EDUCATION, AND IMPROVING AND STRENGTHENING AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS ABROAD.

EVERYTHING FROM BUSINESS EDUCATION TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WOULD HELP ENORMOUSLY IN BRINGING TO OUR FOREIGN FRIENDS KNOWLEDGE OF THIS COUNTRY.

SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO ATTRACT STUDENTS TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES BY STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL ADVISING CENTERS IN U.S. EMBASSIES ABROAD.

PERHAPS THE PRIVATE SECTOR COULD ALSO PLAY A ROLE HERE.

DEDICATED PROGRAMS, INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM, MIGHT FOCUS ON COUNTRIES OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES.

IRAQ PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENDOW AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM THAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT FOR BOTH OF US FOR THE LONG-TERM FUTURE. AT THE END OF THE BOXER INCIDENT IN CHINA IN THE LATE 1890s, THE CHINESE PLEDGED COMPENSATION TO A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHOSE NATIONALS WERE AFFECTED. THE U.S. WISELY USED THE COMPENSATION OFFERED BY CHINA TO SET UP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS FOR CHINESE TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES.

WE SHOULD LOOK NOW AT THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY TO SEE WHETHER SOME SMALL PORTION OF IRAQI OIL REVENUE MIGHT NOT BE DEVOTED TO INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FOR IRAQ. OTHER COUNTRIES MIGHT PARTICIPATE TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY WERE PREPARED TO SHARE SOME OF THE EXPENSES.

I HOPE ALSO THAT THE FULBRIGHT AND OTHER SIMILAR PROGRAMS WILL IMPROVE THEIR FUNDING POSSIBILITIES BY WORKING ON ENDOWMENTS FOR KEY COUNTRIES. ONE IDEA MIGHT BE TO SUGGEST TO THE CONGRESS A 10% ANNUAL INCREASE OVERALL

IN THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM, TO BE DEVOTED COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY, TO THE BUILDING OF AN ENDOWMENT. IN 10 YEARS, A SIGNIFICANT ENDOWMENT WOULD BE ACCUMULATED EQUAL TO CURRENT SPENDING ON FULBRIGHT PROGRAMS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. THIS WOULD NOT PRODUCE SELF-SUFFICIENCY, BUT SOME OF THE MONEY MIGHT BE USED TO LEVERAGE AND CREATE INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, ALL OF WHICH COULD BE GIVEN TAX ADVANTAGES BY THE UNITED STATES.

IN ADDITION, THERE IS A FEELING OF AN IMPORTANT NEED FOR MORE MULTI-LINGUAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT BOOKS AND MAGAZINES OFFERED BY U.S. PUBLISHERS, AND GIVEN TAX BREAKS FOR SHIPMENT COSTS, COULD BE OFFERED TO RESOURCE-POOR FOREIGN SCHOOLS WITH AN INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

WE ALSO SHOULD APPROACH OUR GREAT MEDIA OUTLETS (CNN, MSNBC AND OTHERS) WITH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS TO SEE WHETHER IN FACT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO RUN MORE SHOWS ON THE UNITED STATES OF CULTURAL INTEREST TO INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES.

OVER THE YEARS, AMERICAN CULTURAL PROGRAMING HAS PROVED ENORMOUSLY VALUABLE.

ONE EXAMPLE IS A SERIES OF AMERICAN SCHOOLS ABROAD WORKING IN THE AREA OF ARCHEOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND. THESE INSTITUTIONS HAVE BENEFITTED IN THE PAST FROM SUPPORT FROM THE CONGRESS UNDER THE AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS ABROAD PROGRAM. THIS SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED.

IN MY OWN DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCE, I'VE RUN ACROSS MANY ACTIVITIES OF GREAT VALUE. INDEED IN SOME OF THEM, I'VE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MY OWN PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION.

IN THE MIDDLE 1970s IN JORDAN, THE UNITED STATES WAS UNDERTAKING AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT SERIES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, OFTEN INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION. ONE INVOLVED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A POTASSIUM EXTRACTION PLANT NEAR THE DEAD SEA, USING THE PLENTIFUL POTASSIUM SALTS IN THAT BODY OF WATER TO CREATE A POTASH FERTILIZER INDUSTRY FOR JORDAN. THE AREA ALSO CONTAINED IMPORTANT ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS, FROM THE EARLY BRONZE AGE - - 5,000 YEARS AGO.

JORDAN, AT THE SAME TIME, WAS DEVELOPING ITS ARCHEOLOGY AT AN EXTENSIVE RATE, OFTEN IN COOPERATION WITH AMERICANS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS. INDEED, THERE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AN AMERICAN CENTER FOR ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN JORDAN WHICH SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES BY AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGISTS.

THE CENTER APPROACHED ME IN CONNECTION WITH THE PLANT, AND OTHER ROAD AND DAM CONSTRUCTION IN JORDAN. THEY SUGGESTED THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SURVEY AND SALVAGE ARCHEOLOGY PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION AT COST.

AT ABOUT THAT TIME, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES WAS BEGINNING TO TAKE HOLD.

AS A RESULT, WE MARRIED THE TWO INTERESTS.

IN CONNECTION WITH NEW FOREIGN PROJECTS, WE GOT AID TO FUND THE NECESSARY ARCHEOLOGICAL REVIEWS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION OF THE UNITED STATES. WE ACCEPTED THE OFFER TO PROVIDE THE LABOR AT COST OF THE SURVEY AND OTHER ACTIVITIES FROM THE AMERICAN CENTER IN AMMAN, JORDAN.

THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY HAS CONTINUED. IT ALSO LED TO ADDITIONAL AID FUNDING OF ARCHEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF JORDAN.

IN THE LATE 1960s IN TANZANIA, THE EMBASSY WAS THE BENEFICIARY OF A REMARKABLE VISIT BY A THEN LARGELY-UNKNOWN AMERICAN DANCE TROUPE. ALVIN AILEY CAME WITH A NUMBER OF HIS TALENTED PERFORMERS.

HE TAUGHT US IMMEDIATELY THE VALUE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY. HE TOLD US HE WANTED TO SPEND MORE THAN HALF OF HIS TIME WITH TANZANIANS, LEARNING LOCAL DANCES, OBSERVING THEIR ACTIVITIES AND SPEAKING WITH THEM FROM VILLAGES TO THE UNIVERSITY.

HE BROUGHT TO TANZANIA HIS OWN CREATIVE, LIVELY AND DYNAMIC INTERPRETATION OF MODERN AMERICAN DANCE.

THE LINK-UP WAS A PHENOMENAL ONE. ALVIN AILEY AND HIS DANCERS LEARNED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT ABOUT AFRICAN DANCE. THEY BEGAN TO INCORPORATE THE AFRICAN IDEAS IN SOME OF THEIR PERFORMANCES.

AFRICANS LEARNED AND UNDERSTOOD THAT MODERN AMERICAN DANCE WAS AN OPEN, VITAL, EXPRESSIVE AND ENORMOUSLY IMAGINATIVE WAY TO CONVEY IDEAS AND EMOTIONS.

MANY YEARS LATER IN RUSSIA, WE HAD THE BENEFIT OF A VISIT UNDER A UNITED STATES CULTURAL PROGRAM OF THE ALVIN AILEY DANCE TROUPE. WHILE THE INSPIRATION FOR THE TROUPE, ALVIN AILEY HIMSELF, HAD UNFORTUNATELY PASSED ON IN THE MEANTIME, ONE OF THE GREAT DANCERS WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM TO TANZANIA MANY YEARS BEFORE, JUDITH JAMESON, WAS IN CHARGE OF THE TROUPE.

NOT ONLY WERE RUSSIAN AUDIENCES THRILLED TO SEE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN MODERN AMERICAN DANCE, BUT SHE RECALLED WITH PLEASURE AN INTERESTING VISIT MANY YEARS BEFORE TO TANZANIA WHERE THEY HAD BEGUN TO LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT A TRADITIONAL FORM OF AFRICAN EXPRESSION.

CULTURE CAN ENCOMPASS MANY THINGS. AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY HAS AN EXTREMELY WIDE REACH.

AND TO WIND UP – A SLIGHTLY OFF-BEAT STORY.....

EACH AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IS ENCOURAGED TO CHOOSE THE ARTWORK DECORATION FOR HIS RESIDENCE FROM COLLECTIONS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND COLLECTIONS THAT ARE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

IN MORE THAN A HALF -DOZEN EMBASSIES AROUND THE WORLD, MY WIFE AND I HAVE HAD A PARTICULARLY VALUABLE EXPERIENCE IN FINDING ART TO MEET OUR TASTE AND TO SUIT THE RESIDENCE AT HAND. IT ALSO HELPED TO PROVIDE A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO AMERICAN ARTISTS OF ALL PERIODS AND GENERATIONS TO FOREIGN AUDIENCES, MANY OF WHOM HAVE NEVER BEFORE SEEN THESE STANDARD BEARERS OF AMERICAN CULTURAL INTEREST AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN ONE CASE, WE CAME CLOSE TO DISASTER. I WENT OUT TO EL SALVADOR IN THE MIDDLE OF 1983 AT A TIME WHEN A GUERRILLA CONFLICT AND AN IMPENDING WIDER SCALE WAR WERE WIDELY KNOWN AND FEARED.

THE IMPACT HAD EVEN EXTENDED TO THE ART IN EMBASSY'S PROGRAM. OUR FRIENDS, THE CURATORS, WHO HAD WORKED WITH US AT PREVIOUS POSTS, DREW BACK. THEY SAID NO ONE WOULD LOAN US ANYTHING SINCE IT COULDN'T BE INSURED UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY DID SAY THAT SEVERAL DONATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT HAD LEFT THE DEPARTMENT THE SOLE OWNER OF SOME WORKS OF ART. WE COULD CHOOSE FROM AMONG THESE. YOU COULD PROBABLY IMAGINE WHAT SOME OF THE GIFTS WERE LIKE!

IT WAS PRETTY SLIM PICKINGS, BUT NEVERTHELESS WE FOUND SOME THINGS THAT WE LIKED. WE WENT TO A SMALL EMBASSY RESIDENCE WITH UNUSUALLY LOW CEILINGS FOR THAT KIND OF A BUILDING.

ONE OF OUR CHOICES, BORROWED BEFORE WE HAD ACTUALLY SEEN THE RESIDENCE, TURNED OUT TO BE TOO TALL FOR THE SPACE SELECTED.

I SOLVED THAT PROBLEM IN AN UNORTHODOX WAY. IT WAS A MODERN AMERICAN PAINTING. I DECIDED WE COULD TURN IT ON ITS SIDE, CHANGE THE METHOD OF HANGING AND ENJOY THE PIECE IN ITS NEW LOCALE.

WE DID SO. IT HUNG IN THE SPOT FOR TWO YEARS. MANY PEOPLE REMARKED TO ME ABOUT HOW MUCH THEY LIKED THE COLOR COMBINATION AND THE ARTIST'S TREATMENT OF THE PAINTING.

NO ONE EVER NOTICED THE ARTIST'S SIGNATURE IN THE UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF THE PAINTING. I DECIDED TO NEVER TELL THE STATE DEPARTMENT OR THE ARTIST ABOUT HOW WE HANDLED THIS WORK!

LET ME CLOSE BY REPEATING A FEW OF WHAT I WOULD CALL A SERIOUS HOME TRUTHS ABOUT THE NEEDS TODAY.

WE'RE ENGAGED AS NEVER BEFORE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. THE WAR ON TERRORISM AND THE WAR IN IRAQ HAVE SEEN TO THAT. WE ARE IN DANGER OF OPENING WIDER RIFTS OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY, AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, CAN HELP US CLOSE THOSE. THERE ARE MANY INVENTIVE WAYS IN WHICH THIS PROCESS CAN GO FORWARD. SECRETARY POWELL'S CONTINUED SUCCESS IN PERSUADING THE CONGRESS TO INCREASE ITS FUNDING FOR THESE PROGRAMS AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHOULD HELP AND LEAD THIS.

STRONG ALLIANCES AND RELATIONSHIPS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, ACROSS AMERICA IN MANY AREAS OF CULTURAL INTEREST HERE AND ABROAD SHOULD ALSO HELP TO REINFORCE THESE EFFORTS.

THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF THE CULTURAL IMPERATIVE.

EVEN MORE, MANY PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN CUT BACK AND EVEN ELIMINATED NEED TO BE RE-EXAMINED FOR THEIR VALUE FOR THE FUTURE.

THE NEW MEDIA NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED. WORLDWIDE TELEVISION PROGRAMMING OF THE UNITED STATES PROVIDES ONE SUCH OPPORTUNITY.

EVEN MORE, THE WEB AND THE INTERNET AND THEIR CAPABILITIES BRING TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY A THIRST FOR AND INTEREST IN AMERICAN AND OTHER CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND SATISFY THESE INTERESTS.

IN EACH OF THESE AREAS, OUR COUNTRY LEADS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY -- REACHING OUT AND LEARNING, AS WELL AS EDUCATING. THESE ARE BUT SOME OF THE MANY APPROACHES THAT WILL MAKE THIS PROGRAM AND ITS USE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST.

THIS CONFERENCE COMES AT AN UNUSUAL TIME AND A MORE WELCOME OPPORTUNITY COULD NOT BE ENVISAGED.

I COMPLIMENT THE ORGANIZERS AND PARTICULARLY CYNTHIA FOR HER LEADERSHIP IN MAKING IT HAPPEN.

I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COMMENTS, CRITICISMS AND QUESTIONS AND THANK YOU FOR THE CHANCE TO BE WITH YOU AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY JUST A FEW WORDS ABOUT MANY OF THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN THIS AREA WHICH HAVE BEEN ON MY MIND FOR SOME TIME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

Thomas Pickering is senior vice president of International Relations for Boeing. In a diplomatic career spanning five decades, he served as U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation, India, Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. He also served as U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs under Madeleine Albright.