

MEDIA TRANSCRIPTS, INC.

41 WEST 83rd STREET NEW YORK, N.Y. 10024 (212) 362-1481

PROGRAM

Intelligence Squared U.S.
Hollywood has fueled anti-
Americanism abroad

BGT NO. .

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Hi, my name is, uh, Bernie Weinraub and I'm the moderator of this, uh, panel. And, um, uh, first of all, I want to say something that I've wanted to say for many, many years, and that's to, uh, please turn off your cell phones and beepers. [LAUGHTER] And unwrap all cellophaned items, because, uh, there's, there are, um, microphones all around here. And, um, this is going to be broadcast over, um, NPR. Um, so we have to sort of unwrap any kind of cellophaned items and candy and all that stuff. Um, and it would ruin the mood to hear cellophane. Um, uh, and I, I've been asked to have people come down forward, uh, but I guess you guys are okay. Um, I want you guys to, um, get your questions ready for the Q&A after the opening statements and not to be shy about asking the panel anything, anything that you want to ask. Um, if you want three by five cards to write your questions down, um, the ushers will hand them out. Um, now I'm pleased and happy to introduce the man responsible for this debate and all the other debates, Robert Rosenkranz, who will make some opening remarks. [APPLAUSE]

ROBERT ROSENKRANZ

Well, good evening and thank you all for being here. I'm Robert

Rosenkranz, Chairman of Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Forum, which is an initiative of the Rosenkranz Foundation. I'm here with Donna Wolfe, our Executive Producer, who has, been with me from the creation of this series. This is the fourth debate of our, uh, fall season. There are going to be four more in, in the spring and probably an even expanded program next year. We're thrilled that WNYC is, uh, recording this series of debates, producing them as radio programs, which through the good offices of NPR, are distributed nationally to a majority of the largest radio markets in the country. Um, we also value the sponsorship of *The Times* of London and I especially want to thank our moderator, Bernie Weinraub, who I will formally introduce momentarily, as well as the extraordinarily able group of panelists who are the true stars of tonight's evening. Let me begin by saying what's to, what tonight's debate is not. It is not, Resolved: Movies Should Be Censored and Their Export Restricted. It is not, Resolved: George W. Bush Has Fueled Anti-Americanism Abroad. Rather, it's about the connection of two pretty clearly indisputable facts. First, that the American entertainment industry, Hollywood, has been highly successful in creating a product with deep appeal for a global audience. Those, like myself, who have a commitment to free markets and free expression would be hard put not to say, Two cheers for Hollywood. But why not three cheers? Well, because billions of

people around the world get their primary impressions of American life and culture from our movies and television shows, which leads us to a second indisputable fact -- a rising tide of anti-American sentiment, particularly in Europe and the Middle East. It's challenging for us as Americans to understand why the world so often views us differently from the way we view ourselves. With that in mind, the motion tonight is intended to explore what relationship exists, if any, between these two phenomenon. Content aside, is Hollywood's dominance of global entertainment perceived as a hated form of cultural imperialism? Does the content of Hollywood films and television, taken as a whole, reflect a distorted picture of American life? And does this picture matter in terms of the rise of anti-American sentiment? Well, let's see what the evidence shows. I'd now like to introduce our moderator for the evening, Bernard Weinraub. Bernie became, began as a copy boy at *The New York Times*, served abroad for *The Times* in Saigon, London, New Delhi and Washington. In 1990 he moved to Los Angeles, where he's been covering Hollywood for *The New York Times* until his retirement about a year ago. Uh, he recently wrote a play, *The Accomplice*, which will open in New York in March 2007. So I'm happy to be able to plug that. And I'm very pleased now to, uh, hand the evening over to Bernie. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Thank you. Thank you. The one, um, thing that I've been told that I forgot in the introduction is, um, because we're going to be on, on NPR, um, we've gotta sort of, I guess, fake it a little bit and we have to a lou...a loud round of applause for NPR and for the radio broadcast. [LAUGHTER] So, please, a round of applause. [APPLAUSE]

MAN

All right, whoo.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Great. Um, let me give you a brief rundown of the evening. First, the proposer of the motion will start by presenting their side of the argument. The opposition will follow. Each person will get a maximum of eight minutes and we'll go and back from one side to the other. When all six speakers are finished with their opening remarks I'll open the floor to brief questions from the audience. Third, when the Q&A is complete each debater will make a final statement lasting not more than two minutes each. Fourth, during the closing arguments ballot boxes will be passed around for voting and you'll put in either the for piece, the against, the against piece or the whole ticket if you still don't know which side you favor. If anyone doesn't have a ticket ballot an usher will get you one at the appropriate moment. [CLEARS THROAT] Fifth and last, after the clo...after the final closing argument is made,

uh, statement is made, I will announce the results of the audience vote and tell you which side carried the day.

[00:07:17:13] I will now introduce the panel. For the motion, which is, "Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad" – author, commentator, news ana...analyst and law professor, James Hirsen. [APPLAUSE] Now, I'm, I'm going to break my impartiality here -- and I'm not going to do this with anybody else -- except to say that James Hirsen, whom I do not know, has a very unusual sidelight to his background. [SOMEONE CHUCKLES] Because prior to him becoming, you know, uh, very prominent on FOX News and all that stuff, um, he worked as a pro...professional musician and for a number of years was a keyboardist for one of the most legendary groups of all times, and one of my favorites – and, uh, it goes way back – The Temptations. [CHEERS & APPLAUSE] So...

MAN

All right.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, that's the big surprise of the evening. [LAUGHTER] Next, um, the art critic, essayist, social commentator and co-editor and publisher of *The New Criterion*, Roger Kimball. [APPLAUSE] Resident Scholar at the American Ent...Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Joshua Muravchick. [APPLAUSE] Against the motion, the Executive Director of The Creative

Coalition, a social and political ad...advocacy organization for the arts and entertainment industry, Robin Bronk. [APPLAUSE] The film producer, director and political activist, Robert Greenwald. [APPLAUSE] And writer of fiction, non-fiction and screenplays and Chairman of the Graduate Program in Screenwriting at UCLA, Richard Walter. [APPLAUSE] Um, now for the motion, um, let's call up Roger Kimball. [APPLAUSE] [PAUSE]

ROGER KIMBALL

Good evening. I'd like to, uh, thank Mr. Weinraub and Bob Rosenkranz, uh, Dana and all the IQ staff, IQ2 staff, um, for organizing this event and keeping alive the tradition of civil discourse and debate in New York. Um, it's, it's a tradition that is, uh, unfortunately, uh, fallen out of favor in recent years. Um, now, contemplating the motion before us, that Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad, I have to admit that when I first contemplated this I thought of the cartoon strip *Calvin and Hobbs*. Maybe some of you know this strip. I'm thinking in particular of that, that, uh, cartoon whose first frame shows the little Calvin – he's six years old, quite a demon – hammering, furiously, nails into a board. And then in the second frame Calvin's mother runs into the room, screaming, Calvin, what are you doing to the coffee table? In the third frame, Calvin looks up with a look of extreme bemusement on his face, saying, Is that a trick question? [AUDIENCE RESPONSE] Now, we all know that

Hollywood in its current incarnation, uh, boasts a, a large quotient of anti-Americanism. Uh, the names Matt Damon, George Clooney, Alec Baldwin, Barbra Streisand, Michael Moore, Susan, Susan, Susan Sarandon – the, the list goes on and on. We also know that anti-Americanism is alive and well in the world today, alas. Now, what is the connection? I want to be clear about what the resolution before us – a resolution, by the way, that I, I hope you will support. It is that Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad. This is, this is where it gets tricky. This is not a referendum about the Bush Administration, the war in Iraq or any, uh, evils, real or supposed, of American society. It is a resolution about the effect of Hollywood movies and the Hollywood mindset on this phenomenon of anti-Americanism abroad. Now, the first thing to note is that anti-Americanism is what we might call a hearty perennial. It does not need Hollywood to thrive. It has a long pedigree, born of wealth and power. One thinks of Pericles and what he had to say about, uh, the way in which distinction bred envy, envy bred resentment and resentment, if not checked, bred hatred. Athens, in her day, was cordially hated. Rome, in her day, was cordially hated. So was the British Empire. As the authors of that great satire, *1066 and All That*, reminded, remind us, after the first World War America emerged as what they called top nation. So it, it assumed the mantle of Great Britain's, uh, pre-eminence and it also has

passed the scepter, uh, as it were, of the world's antipathy. And that has been something that's been pretty constant from that time on. There have been intervening moments of gratitude, after 1918, for example, after 1945, for example. But basically then the world slips back into disliking us. Um, so that's, that's no, uh, just a kind of common reality which we, which we live with. That's one form of anti-Americanism. In our, in the current form, anti-Americanism, I think, was born domestically of the Sixties. It's a product in part of what the literary critic Lionel Trilling called the adversary culture of the intellectuals – um, fed by the Vietnam War, fed by the radicalism of the Sixties. We all can remember the students demonstrating in the street, spelling America with a K and so on. Um, something more radical happened abroad. But this is not new either. You go back to the Carter years. There are plenty of people chanting in the streets, down with the great Satan, death to America, burning American flags. Same thing in the Reagan administration, same thing in the Clinton administration. The same thing in both Bush administrations. Hoards shouting "Death to America" is always, seems always to be with us. So anti-Americanism, domestic and foreign, is like a, a kind of rank garden. It thrives. Hollywood merely supplies a layer of what you might call fructified, fructified manure. Anti-Americanism abroad would exist without Hollywood, just as cancer would exist without cigarette smoke.

But Hollywood tends to make the malignancy worse. And it does this I think in two ways. One way is what we might call cultural anti-Americanism. By making so many trashy, vacuous movies, Hollywood uh, fosters a view of American life that is really at odds with the reality of American society. It um, shows this society to be largely sex-obsessed, violence-obsessed, a society shot through with cynicism about its founding institutions. And by and large portrays a decadent society in love with nihilism. That's one way in which Hollywood fuels anti-Americanism abroad, by portraying America as a society that has lost its soul.

Another way and perhaps a more virulent way, a more political way, is the way Hollywood, by attacking those institutions of American life uh, shows America to be a bankrupt, corrupt, venal, savage uh, mercenary society. Um these, this side of Hollywood really sort of took off I think in the 1960s during the Vietnam War. Is there a Vietnam film uh, that shows America as anything other than a horrible, savage, misguided society? Maybe one or two. One thinks of the Hanoi Hilton but of course that was instantly savaged by critics. Stanley Kaufman, for example, dismissed it as filth. By and large I think any movie that deals with American society from the 1960s on deals with all of the institutions of American life as something not to be admired but to be disparaged. When was the last time you saw

the president of the United States in a movie portrayed in a favorable light, or the military? It's very rare that this happens. Oliver Stone, I think summed up what, what Hollywood is like now when he says "We have become the enemy." Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad to such an extent that for example, German schoolteachers show *Bowling for Columbine* by Michael Moore as an accurate portrayal of American society. One thinks, for example, of the movie *Syriana* which blends incomprehensibility with anti-American animists to an extraordinary extent. Charles Krauthammer said that this movie could have been scripted by Osama Bin Laden and I believe that movies like this, that the general spirit of Hollywood today actively fuels anti-Americanism abroad. And I hope that you will support that motion. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, against, we have Richard Walter.

RICHARD WALTER

Thank you. You hear it all the time: Hollywood films are corrosive, destructive, decaying. You hear it all, all the time. You hear it from our noble opponents here and you hear it in right-wing talk radio shows. I guess that's a redundancy if ever there was one. Um I just wonder if it, it worries our friends even just a little bit to find themselves in lock step agreement with Osama Bin Laden. The fact of the matter is there are a lot of bad movies

out there. There are also a lot of bad paintings, a lot of bad sculpture. You know, most art sucks, excuse me. But here in New York, I stopped in at the Metropolitan Museum, my favorite museum in the world. And I didn't see one work of art that wasn't worthy. And you get the impression in museums that all art is fantastic, is beautiful, is wonderful. When in fact, for every one of those paintings at the museums, there are thousands, indeed tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands that just don't deserve to be there. With film, because it's contemporary, even more so in, in television, with television, we don't have the time to do the culling and the selecting where the best kind of falls away, drops away. People like to look back at the forties and the thirties and say, why don't they make great films like they did back then? The fact is they made a lot of lousy movies back then as well. I think in 2060 they'll be saying, why don't they make great films like they did back there at the beginning of the new millennium? We hear about sex and violence in films as if this was invented by Hollywood. The fact is, dramatic narrative has always been brutal, always been ugly, always been bloody and sexual. Oedipus Rex, he kills his father. You know what he does to his mother. He pokes his eyes out with jagged, rusty spikes. Medea murders her own children in a jealous rage against her philandering and faithless husband Jason. Uh, not just the Greeks but Shakespeare. I'm talking

now about the greatest, most venerated, most honorable, the most loved dramatic expression of all time. Hamlet ends up with nine corpses on the stage. We counted them up in class. Some of them had been run through on swords, some of them had been poisoned. Macbeth kills his own king who is a guest in his house, and he does it out of pure ambition, out of pure greed. Richard III killed his own nephews who were boys, nine and eleven years old. Um, this was not invented by eleven Jews at Paramount Studios a couple of weeks ago last Thursday. This is the way dramatic uh, expression operates. It's all about conflict, and uh, you know nobody wants to see the village of the happy nice people. Rational discourse, even handed discussion has its place, for example right here. But art is not it. Certainly dramatic art is, is not it.

Now what you hear about Hollywood all the time is crass commercialism, all they care about is, is making money. Oh Hollywood just obsesses about the bottom line. Now, Hollywood care about the bottom line? Of course it does, but what business doesn't? That's not unique to the entertainment business. The dry cleaner at the corner has to make the bottom line. The insurance business has to meet the bottom line, manufacturing, uh, construction. If you don't make the bottom line, you're out of business. Everything stands on the bottom line, that's why it's

called the bottom line. And Hollywood's interest in the bottom line is no different from any other business enterprise. And it's interesting to me that people who consider themselves conservatives and very pro-business, not what I believe is America's greatest business, which is information and entertainment, which is what I mean when we talk metaphorically about this thing uh, called Hollywood. So really there is, there's absolutely nothing unique to that. I think what the problem is has a lot to do with the fact that we are so now inundated with images. We see so much media everywhere you go, even a man at a urinal, excuse me again, will see advertising. I've even seen digital screens. Um, a guy my age has plenty of time, let me tell you [LAUGHTER] to look at all of that stuff. And we can't tell any longer the difference between what's real and what's not. There's no more East and West. You go to Beijing and you can be in, in uh, you know, at Banana Republic and J. Crew. There's no more men and women, that is to say, women do what men used to do and vice versa. Uh, no more renters and landlords. I know there are but in another generation it was, it, it, it was like that. Now it really, for many of us, maybe most of us in this room, it is not. I think people can't tell the difference any longer between images and the actual things that the images represent. I was approached by a boxing, the management for a boxer, a very famous prizefighter. It doesn't matter who it is, his initials are

Evander Holyfield. [LAUGHTER] And they wanted him to move into an acting career and they were looking for material because I see a lot of new screenplays by a lot of new writers. And they wanted, they warned me though, they cautioned me that he considers himself a very religious man and a role model for young men and therefore he refuses to be seen in a movie that depicts him as causing damage, as causing harm to anybody. A prizefighter. I mean he's made, he's made his living, he's achieved his fame, he has a management team that's able to approach the professor because he has literally beat men into unconsciousness with his fist. And this is not a diatribe against the fight game. God forgive me, I love a great prizefight. In Los Angeles, it's now impossible to, it's illegal to own a lookalike replica handgun. You can't tell if it's real or not. It could be used in a crime. A real one that can actually blow your brains out is absolutely legal. I, I hold this up to you as an example of how people no longer can tell the difference between symbols of things and the things that these symbols represent.

And likewise, lets look to anti-American sentiment abroad. What could be causing that? It couldn't be the ruinous policies of this recent administration. It's got to be Hollywood movies. So much easier to, to believe that. I must tell you I've traveled all around the world, I'm privileged to travel all the world and, and to lecture

on screen writing issues and talk to film development corporations. And we are very much loved all around the world. I had the privilege of teaching Masters classes last spring in Paris and London and imagine my good fortune that I could stand in front of you and actually truthfully pronounce that, that sentence to you. And in the lobby of the conservatoire in Paris, there are two dozen posters of movies all around the room. And this is in mean old America-loathing France. And twenty-one of the movies are Hollywood movies, are American films. Only three of them were French films. The truth is we are loved all around the world for our, our film. The films show that we're an open society. Do we want to go back as Jim suggested in the piece that I read to the good ol' days when everybody was white and women knew their place? I don't think so. Thank you very, very much.

[APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, now for the motion, Joshua Muravchick. [APPLAUSE]

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

I was going to tell you a great joke to start off with but there's not enough time, so just laugh please. [LAUGHTER] I want, I'm going to start off with a movie that I enjoyed very much and that made me laugh a lot, uh forty ideas ago. But I think it symbolizes a great deal of the problem which we're speaking about, and that was the movie *Dr. Strangelove*. The thesis of that movie was that

the American nuclear arms and American armament in general was not driven by any real danger to our country but was rather driven by the militarism, chauvinism, paranoia of American officials, even with some bizarre root or connection in Nazi Germany. And this film in fact symbolized a thesis about the Cold War and America's role in it that was believed by many Americans, but even more by foreigners, and that was propagated again and again by Hollywood films, namely that the two parties to the Cold War were equally guilty, equally afraid of one another. They were like two scorpions in a bottle. Unlike most historical interpretations, this was one where we're able to find out at the end the truth of falsity. That is, we found out it was utterly false. We found this out in 1989 when there came to the fore in the Soviet Union a ruler, Gorbachev, who no longer wanted to wage Cold War against United States. And the moment that he stepped forward and was prepared to solve the issues of which we were at odds and to uh, and to stop being competitors, the Cold War ended instantly because it never was an equally two sided war. It was a war of offense on the other side, aggression on one side and, and defense on the other. A uh, a point that was consistently misrepresented by Hollywood.

Still worse than that kind of moral equivalence that you could see again and again in films were people who, whom there were many

in Hollywood. And uh, whose ideas were represented in many films, that said in fact, we were the bad guys. And the good guys in the Cold War were the Uncle Joe Stalin and the Soviet Union and his heirs, the emblematic figure of this view of the world was Lillian Hellman, who was a Communist but pretended not to be. And who uh, and who in fact even once, wrote a film called *Song of Russia*. And the film *Song of Russia*, Mr. Walter, was exactly a film portraying a village of the happy nice people. Except this village of the happy nice people was a collective farm which in fact in reality was a form of uh, death dealing slave labor. But brought to the screen in Hollywood as a kind of a, a Brady Bunch lifestyle, speaking Russian. This, but Hellman was far from alone in this. In fact the view that supported the other side in the Cold War was widespread in Hollywood. And in fact, a subsequent mythology was created and is perpetuated to this day by Hollywood about the reaction against this support for the other side in the Cold War. That is, we hear a lot about and we still to this day, hear about the Hollywood Ten who have been presented in one after another Hollywood film over the decades, including this decade as ten idealistic, humanitarian liberals who were persecuted by the authoritarian state of the United States with the consistent obfuscation or outright denial of the now documented fact that all ten of these Hollywood Ten were Communist Party members, and were themselves engaged in a

collective effort to blacklist and suppress people who were anti-Communist and prevent them from advancing their careers in Hollywood.

But you don't have to love Stalin to hate America, and in a later era we got people who made famous and popular Hollywood films that hated America without loving Stalin, of whom the emblematic example is Oliver Stone, who created these various films of paranoid fantasies, purported to be actual history. And, and one of which the murder of President Kennedy was a coup plotted by Vice President Johnson, and another which has implied that the murder of President Kennedy was in fact carried out by President Nixon or inspired by President Nixon.

Elsewhere, Mr. Stone has told us that the murder of the President's brother, Robert Kennedy, was carried out by the FBI. And when you look around the world and see in places like the Middle East the kind of paranoid, bizarre theories about 9/11 or other things that go on in the world, these are things that I think in all likelihood are fed and encouraged by these very popular presentations in American films, by the likes of Oliver Stone, which in fact are just as far fetched as the theory that four thousand Jews didn't show up to work at the World Trade Center on 9/11. As I said, Mr. Stone parades as if he's a historian. Other Hollywood film makers are much more modest and don't

pretend to be making anything other than entertainment. And yet if you watch the uh, the thriller genre in recent years, you see that there's a kind of set pattern that reappears again and again and again. That is, well as you go along in the film and you find out who is the real evil force at the inner sanctum behind the bad guys in the film, it is invariably the CIA. The Pentagon, the President, some aide to the President, or American multinational corporations. This uh, uh, this uh, current, this genre being epitomized recently by *Syriana* that was referred to. But I think the best representation of that is by the remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*. *Manchurian Candidate* was a film in the fifties which showed someone being manipulated and brainwashed and used for diabolical purposes by the government of Communist China, of Mao Zedong. In the twenty-first century version of *The Manchurian Candidate*, it's no more Mao Zedong, it's some multinational corporation vaguely reminiscent of uh, Halliburton or the Carlyle Group. So here we have a new sensibility, that is on the one hand, we have this evil Halliburton, Carlyle, whatever people who have actually done such terrible things as gouging on contracts that they have fulfilled with the US government. And clearly this is supposed to be more horrible to us now in our new modern sensibility than the government of China of Mao Zedong.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Josh, it's time.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

I didn't hear you say one minute.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

I said one minute before.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

Um, alright my, I'm sorry I didn't hear you. My closing had to do with the clown prince of anti-Americanism, Michael Moore. But I'll save it for the question period. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

I said one. Um, okay against is Robin Bronk. [APPLAUSE]

ROBIN BRONK

I wanted to take ten seconds of my time for a nod to my esteemed colleague, Mr. Kimball for the ex-, due expression that I hope that we can all take with us, fructifying manure. And I will try and use it in every one of my speeches. Has Hollywood fueled anti-Americanism abroad? Where's the evidence that we should be asking this question at all? Yes, there's a lot of anti-Americanism, yes Hollywood exists. But where's the connection? What's the cause and effect? We have the peoples, we have people's responses to why they've become anti-American in the past few years. None of them mention Hollywood. What's the problem with the data? Now if you were to posit Hollywood as the

problem, even though there is no data to support this thesis, what would be the tipping point? In other words, Hollywood has been around since the early twentieth century. Anti-Americanism has peaked in recent years. And in a way we last saw during the Vietnam War. Would anyone wish to argue that Hollywood has fundamentally changed in the past six years? What films would you point to, to support the contention? Well if you didn't like *Fahrenheit 911*, what about *Flight 92* and the spate of extremely patriotic movies that have recently come out? *Men of Honor*, *Thirteen Days*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Patriot*. Well of course Hollywood releases lots of different kinds of films. But where has any reputable study anywhere found a direct tie between the kinds of films being produced at the given moment and a rising anti-American sentiment around the world? In fact, the opposite appears true. Hollywood is frequently what appeals to foreigners about America, even those who detest our foreign policy. It's called show business. Hollywood Studios are owned by global multinational conglomerates whose goal is to maximize their shareholder value. They do this by trying to produce a product, a product that will appeal to the widest possible audience. To do this, they must do their respective best to appeal to the most broad marketplace, here and abroad. And unless you believe that Hollywood is run by a conspiracy, then all Hollywood is doing is reflecting the values of the people to whom it seeks to appeal.

Now if you would argue, again, absent any data or evidence of any kind, that this somehow increases the incidence of anti-Americanism, then what you're really arguing is that American values and the values of the global marketplace are the cause of anti-Americanism. And if that's the case, and I would contend that it's not, then you're really objecting both to capitalism itself and to the way that Americans like to think of themselves as citizens and consumers. That sounds kind of anti-American to me, and moreover, it sounds like you're shooting the messenger. In America against the world, how we are different and why we are disliked, based on ninety-one thousand interviews conducted in fifty nations from 2002 to 2005 by the Pew Research Center, the authors write that "while the first hints that the world was becoming troubled by America came soon after the election of George W. Bush, and that whatever global goodwill the United States has in the wake of the September 11th attacks appears to have quickly dissipated after the Iraq invasion. Favorable opinions had more than slipped. They had plummeted." And it's grown worse since May when that was published. The most recent Pew finding showed that favorable opinions of the US had gone from eighty-three percent in 2000 to fifty-six percent in 2006 in Britain, seventy-eight to thirty-seven in Germany, sixty-two to thirty nine in France. When one looks at the results of these

surveys, you see tremendous international opposition to the War in Iraq and America's policies on global warming. If you speak with foreign leaders, you hear genuine concerns about specific aspects of US foreign policy, the refusal to agree with the Kyoto Treaty and global warming. The withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, the War in Iraq, difficulty getting visas to visit the United States. Perhaps I'm looking at the wrong polls or talking with the wrong foreigners. But I've yet to hear anyone mention *Everybody Loves Raymond* reruns as the fuel feeding the anti-American fire raging across so much of the globe. And that's leading the whole world to, I was going to say that word but I guess I can't say that word since this is on NPR but that's a different uh, subject. Taking to that place down below in a hand basket. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Thank you. Okay now um, for, we have James Hirszen.

JAMES HIRSEN

Now that Pew Poll that uh, was cited by Robin, uh, I have to say has some statistical problems because in terms of France, Germany, and Britain, they over-sampled the Muslim population, sampling them at levels close to fifty percent. And that accounts a great, for a great deal of the change. When considering this motion, whether you're going to support it, the real question is whether the America that you see in the generic Hollywood that

constitutes television shows and movies and music, is the same America that we all live in and work in. I mean what if your only glimpse of the United States was the latest report of Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, and Paris Hilton and their boycott of underpants? Um in nations around the globe, there are lots of people who have never been to the United States. Now Richard Walter has traveled the world and he said he was privileged to do so, but there's lots of people that have not. And they've never come here, they've never met you. And so their only impression is the export of the pop culture by the Hollywood community. And that includes all of this product. It includes television, and music, and movies. Uh, an appearance on *The View* by Danny DeVito. And once upon a time, as Richard Walter alluded to talking about the thirties and forties in Hollywood, there's a nickname for this, it's called a Golden Age. It's for a reason because iconic images were sent around the world, images of Henry Fonda, images of Clark Gable, images of John Wayne. And the world fell in love with America, and they fell in love with those Hollywood images. And there was a, a set of values. There was optimism and there was courage. And there was unshakable belief in freedom, and unshakable belief in fairness. To, to show you how much it shifted um, in the period, is it, John Wayne who was made into the symbol of America by director John Ford, the cowboy was rugged and independent and gallant and true. We

move forward to 1969 when the first film that was X-rated wins the best picture. Uses the name cowboy, it's *Midnight Cowboy*. And here the cowboy's profession is relegated to that of a male prostitute. The cowboys uh, follow in the long way. But things continued in what Roger Kimball called the cultural anti-Americanism. Since the 1960s, that what people see around the world is an America of extreme violence, of rampant crime, of unapologetic narcissism, of licentious exhibitionism, and self-loathing. And this is misshapen. It's distorted. It's a place where even Tony Soprano would run to his therapist. And look at rap lyrics. I mean rap lyrics...not all of it, but a lot of it, have themes of assaulting women, dealing drugs, killing the police. In many cases—well, actually, *almost all cases*—women are described either as female dogs, or garden utensils. [LAUGHTER] And the—and the export of this pop culture has increased. Um, multiplexes were built in Europe, and, uh, the, the exports have gone up to a level of 40—to 50 percent of film box office, is on foreign shores. That includes the films that my colleagues brought up, uh, *Syriana* and Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* which has been very popular in the Afghan case. Um, America's recent film exports, though, took the idea of artistic license in relation to violent scenes to a whole new level. We have a whole new genre of films that are doing big box office abroad, and they deal with nothing but...sadistic, senseless, sickening torture. I'm

talking about films like *Hostel*, which did \$33 million abroad, the *Saw* series, there's three of them, they did \$160 million abroad. These films, *Hostel's* plot is a group of young people who are traveling, who are taken prisoner by an organization that allows businessmen to torture and kill for entertainment. There's no plot. And they lead our neighbors abroad to believe, that America is deviant, and despicable and violent. It's no wonder that, we have, uh, heard this nickname of Israel as "the little Satan" by some of the people we're fighting against, and they call us "the great Satan." As a matter of fact, uh, Robin referred to studies...this isn't a poll but it certainly is an event when, right after 9/11 one month later, angry mobs went to the local cinemas, and burnt down five of them that contained American films. I guess they gave it a thumbs-down. The, uh...the, the other aspect of Hollywood that's very disturbing, is the way representatives of free enterprise are depicted. Business people, executives, and corporations. Um, you know, I—I would expect that in a town that, that writes scripts that every once in a while we'd see, uh, a corporate executive as a villain. But it's almost always that way. Oliver Stone made *Wall Street*, named his main character Gekko, and he extolled the virtues of greed. In *Syriana*, as, um...you know, uh, my colleagues have brought up, which, by the way, George Clooney used the Charlize Theron formula to win an Oscar. That's you pack up the—pack on the pounds and then

pick up an Oscar. And in, in that film, there's a business executive with a suit that explains anti-Americanism. Explains the reason America is successful, he says, "Corruption is why we win." Hollywood hasn't even left their remakes alone. When they remade *The Fugitive*, all of a sudden they have to have a pharmaceutical corporate as a co-conspirator with the one-armed man that was not in the original television show. Uh, my colleague, uh, Josh brought up *The Manchurian Candidate*. Which inexplicably changed the villainous totalitarian government, into a corporation. The Manchurian Corporation, what do they manufacture?

BERNARD WEINRAUB

One minute.

JAMES HIRSEN

So apparently in Hollywood wealth is taken for granted, it's a zero-sum game, a finite pie, where if one person wins, then another loses. Uh, last year, there was a remake of a famous American symbol. Superman. And Superman has always been associated with the phrase, "Truth, justice, and the American way." And if you went to the film, you noticed, there was no American way, or it was taken out. And maybe that's because, Hollywood has manufactured a new American way that does not fit with either truth, or justice. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, and Robert Greenwald. [APPLAUSE]

ROBERT GREENWALD

Thank you. Somehow it seems that, um... our panelists, some of our panelists have the notion, that the only America people around the world see, is the one in movies and television. Do they truly believe, that these people all over the world are idiots and morons, who have no idea what is going on with this horrific war? Do they really believe that over and over again it's a Hollywood movie, rather than the killings, the terrorism, the bombings...the friends, the relatives, the relatives that people know, who are being...subjected...and dying in this horrific situation? Do they really think that an hour in front of a TV set counters all of the news, and all of the TV reports, and all of the paper reports? Truly hard for me to imagine. Does Josh really think that the war that he advocated for has less of an effect on people than watching a movie? Or that if we follow his lead and go to war with Iran, that that will in any way...any way do anything but continue to destroy the country that we love? The country that Oliver Stone loves? The country that Michael Moore loves? The people in the community in Los Angeles who love, we may disagree with them, but the notion that we say they hate America, is one I personally find disgusting. Let me go back to 9/11 for a minute. We all remember...I was not in New York,

many of you were here, the terrible time, the tragedy. And then this amazing, amazing outpouring, around the world. Embracing us. Supporting us. Offering help to us. The spectrum of countries who came forward and wanted to be with us at this time was truly something to behold. We know it from the information, we know it from the news sources, people I'm sure here have individual stories, when you would call somebody from another country and what they would say and how they would reach out to us. And then that changed, right? And then to use the Pew study which we can argue about endlessly but I think you're totally wrong on the over-sampling issue. To use the Pew study again we saw, after the Iraq war, a big drop, right? Turkey went from 52% of the country supporting us to 12%. Britain, our ally, 83% to 56%. And Jordan from 20% to 1% had supported us, and now, over a period of years were no longer. Well, I'm absolutely sure that the reason for that was *Ocean's 11*. [LAUGHTER] That's exactly the reason, or maybe it was *Shrek*, no, I think maybe it was *Shrek*, that caused that terrible fall-off to happen. That really would explain the statistical drop, right? I mean, it makes perfect sense. This was a war of choice...that our country went into. The world was opposed to us in the world—in this war of choice. Now people can argue we still should've done it. But we know the world was opposed to this war of choice. We invaded, we went in, we occupied a country in

the Middle East with oil resources. And now, Pew study again, in 14 out of 16 countries, a majority think the world has been made less safe because of that war. I'm sure that those facts are due to *Spider Man*. There's no question that that must have been the reason that people changed their thinking. Or maybe it was in *Men in Black*, I think that probably would've made the case more effectively. The war goes on, it continues, the polling numbers around the world continue to get worse and worse for the country we love, for the country we care about. America is not trusted around the world. And as a patriot, that's a terrible, terrible thing. And that's not because of any fantasy TV program. That's not because of a trashy, crappy, awful movie that Hollywood's made and...I've occasionally made some of those movies. That's not the reason and we know that and I think any rational, sensible, thinking person knows where that comes from. It comes from reality. Hollywood is fantasy, gentlemen. Hollywood makes up stuff. But there's a reality out there that trumps any kind of bad screenwriter, or salacious material, there's a reality that's facing people all over the world, day in and day out. And we have to look at *that* reality. We have to embrace and deal with the truth of what's in front of us. This is a diversion. This is, uh, it's not—it's beyond shooting the messenger. This is trying to find some simple little answer, rather than looking at, *truly*, a terrible, terrible situation, which is going to take us amazing years and

time and effort, to overcome. Which is this rising and increasing tide of anti-Americanism. And the United States says we're not in favor of the World Court. And it refuses to sign the global warming agreement. And we hear about Abu Ghraib. And in Britain, 41% of the country says the US is a greater threat than Iran. This is not because of Barbra Streisand. This is not because of Sean Penn. This is *not* because of the *Happy Feet* movie. I think that, we must remind ourselves over and over again, what Hollywood does, is fiction. Let's make sure that we understand that, let's put fiction its proper place, yes, it can have some influence on people, yes, you can get annoyed at seeing somebody who's not acting properly. Yes, you can get turned off if there's free sex or materialism. But is that the reason, compared to this extraordinary situation, again, a war of choice, and a war where we've not been able to convince the world for any of the reasons—

BERNARD WEINRAUB

One minute.

ROBERT GREENWALD

We've not been able to con—remember, we went to this war, the world's opposed to us, all kinds of reasons, and we've not been able to convince the world of any of those reasons. Whatever the reasons of the moment are, from the weapons of mass destruction or Al Qaeda's connection to Saddam or democracy. And we think

Hollywood is in any way causing the rise of un-Americanism? It, in many ways, defies logic, and defies reason. So...I urge all of you to vote your rational selves, not to vote a Hollywood fantasy scriptwriter who might make up a notion, that yes, some silly movie was going to affect people all over the world, rather than what's going on today. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, I want to thank everybody on, um...on my right and left. And, um, I'm now ready to announce the results of the pre-debate vote. Um, and I got a look at it while you all were talking and this is as...this is like the 2000 Florida vote, it's very, very close. [LAUGHTER] Before the debate—this is before the debate. 40% of you voted for, 35% against, but 25% don't know. So there's a lot of "don't knows," okay? Now...we're now ready to begin the Q&A portion of the program, and, and I'll call on the questioners. I have one question. As the moderator I have the right to at least one question, but I have one. And I have a question for one of the people on my right. Just one of them, you can answer. The five biggest films overseas abroad in the last 20 years, maybe longer, 25 years, are... *Titanic*, *Star Wars Episode 1*, *E.T.*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *Lord of the Rings*. [LAUGHTER] None of these, obviously, are, I mean, are political, none of these...have a point of view that could be construed as anti-American. How do you... how do you construe that given the argument of...of films causing

anti-Americanism?

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

I'd be glad to respond to that.

ROBIN BRONK

Go ahead.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

Uh— [LAUGHTER] Uh, the proposition here is not that all films, uh, are anti-American. But the fact is that one that you didn't mention that may not have been among the five biggest sellers but that's tremendously influential in Europe is Michael Moore. Michael Moore at one given moment, was the author of, uh, three books out of the top six on the best-seller list in Germany, number one, two, and six, these books that were based on, on— or that... repeat the themes of his movies which, uh, I laughed when I heard Robert Greenwald say that, that, he loves his country. Let me give you a sample of Michael Moore.

“Americans are possibly the dumbest people on the planet, in thrall to conniving, thieving, smug assholes. We Americans suffer from an enforced ignorance. We don't know about anything that's happening outside our country, our stupidity is embarrassing.”

And Michael Moore has achieved the stature of a cult figure in Germany, and, and immense popularity, I think Germany is probably the country where he's most popular, but all around Europe he enjoys a, a, uh...a popularity near that dimension.

[And why? Because he is seen as the American voice for hating America, for everything that's wrong and disgusting, stupid and idiotic in our country. So he says, uh, you know, "I agree with the National Rifle Association when they say guns don't kill people, people kill people. Except I would alter that say, guns don't kill people, Americans kill people. And we are the only country that does this, and we do it on a personal level in our neighborhoods and within our families and schools and we do it on a global level," close quote. Uh, this is a man who berates us for ignorance who apparently has never heard of, uh, Iraq, Palestine, Bosnia, Somalia, Congo, Rwanda, Russia, Chechnya, et cetera. So, uh, it may well be that the most popular films in America and abroad, that are produced by Hollywood, are films that are not political at all. But, um, but there are plenty of films that are political, and those go in one direction, and contrary to Mr. Greenwald who says what Hollywood does is fiction, Michael Moore presents himself as doing fact, as presenting documentaries. And he even has a team of lawyers and fact-checkers and threatens, publicly, repeatedly, to sue anyone, uh, who dares to challenge or contradict or impugn him, so, uh, I'm hoping his lawyers are listening, I'm ready.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, let me just, um, let's start with, um— [APPLAUSE] Let's start with the questions. Um...yes, Miss.

FEMALE QUESTIONER

Thank you, I—I have a question for those against the motion. I want to put a finer point on the question itself and the way you’ve addressed it. One, um—the question isn’t whether Hollywood was *responsible* for the anti-Americanism abroad, the question is whether it has fueled that anti-Americanism. And we’re seeing a lot of movies coming out of Hollywood that use stereotypes. It used to be Russians and Communists during the Cold War. Now we have almost cartoon-like Arabs and Muslims in the movies. Do the panelists against the motion feel that that adds to anti-Americanism abroad generally.

RICHARD WALTER

Well, I’ll speak to that, I think, uh, no, I don’t believe that that fuels anti-Americanism. Movies like Michael Moore’s movie, and I think Michael Moore is an overfed, underloved narcissist, I’m not a fan. Uh, but when people abroad look at a movie like that, what they see about America is that America’s a place where people can be critical of the—of their own nation. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Um—

RICHARD WALTER

I—I—

BERNARD WEINRAUB

I’m sorry—

RICHARD WALTER

I sponsored a—I try to cut down on some of my activities but I could—as a Jew and as an American I could not turn down the Fulbright Commission when they asked me to, uh, sponsor an Egyptian scholar, I had to reach out to my Arab Muslim brother, particularly at this time, don't you think. And what he loved about America was its ability to, uh, be critical of the administration, he said if people spoke that way of Mubarek they would be... disappeared, or off the street. American films, uh...they extol, essentially, the American dream, and what is the American dream, the American dream is a certain materialism to be sure, nothing wrong with that. People who can't get the basic material, food, clothing, shelter for themselves, for their children, they will listen to any tyrant, any dictator. We've seen dreadful, dreadful history, uh, throughout history and especially the last 100 years, testifying to the truth of that proposition. So a certain materialism's okay and people across the world, they, they just love what they see, they love the material stuff that they see in, in Hollywood films, but more to the point... Hollywood films extol the notion of the American dream, and what is the American dream. It's the notion that if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to get educated, in this country you can do anything. You can move up from your lowly station and achieve anything if you're just willing to again get educated and, and, uh, and work real

hard. Now people will tell you on both sides that that's a hoax, that's kind of like the lottery designed to, uh, let people, uh, imagine they can do things that they can't, but I must tell you from my perch at UCLA and in Hollywood, I see people break through every day, you'll hear that it's about connections, who you know. That's bunk, I know really well-connected people who cannot get arrested in Hollywood and I see absolute fresh faces break through every day. Like it, don't like it, there're so many myths, so many hoaxes about Hollywood, one of the biggest among them, is that it is not a meritocracy, it's all about connections. The fact is that Hollywood is a remarkably democratic place, and truly a meritocracy, people succeed on the basis of their talent, on the basis of their ingenuity and their, their discipline, and it's a great credit to this nation, I think it's the greatest industry that we have. [APPLAUSE]

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

One sentence in reply, we were encouraged to break in. Uh, Richard, it may be perfectly true that in some authoritarian countries, if they see a film, an American film that is viciously, uh, hostile to the American government, they say, oh, in America they have free speech, I wish I did too, that— that—that point is valid, but I was talking about Europe. And they have just as much free speech in Europe and France and the UK as we have here. And when those audiences, uh...eat up what Michael

Moore is offering, they're not sitting there saying, oh, isn't this wonderful, there's free speech in the United States.

ROBIN BRONK

Joshua—

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

Okay—I'm sorry, go on.

ROBIN BRONK

Joshua, you *scare* me. I mean you're, you are scaring me.

[APPLAUSE] And, and that's fueling my anti-Americanism right now. [LAUGHTER] But—

BERNARD WEINRAUB

And just to add, and just to underscore what one of the questioners said, and that is that if you're supporting the motion, the motion is not seeking the sole causative factor of America, uh, anti-Americanism. It's saying whether it's fueled. And also it doesn't say that motion pictures are the sole cause. We're talking about generic Hollywood, which includes the export of the pop culture, which includes television and music, et cetera. It's the entire pop culture and what we're depicting as an American image.

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] So are you asking for a, uh, a completely whitewashed export, export? So we should all go back to the days of June Cleaver and, and promote the wear – maybe we

should all be wearing pearls and vacuuming. Is that, is that what you want?

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Well, I think it's been, it's been clearly defined that the motion we're debating has nothing to do with censorship. As a matter of fact – and I applaud –

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] It's not clear. He's asking for censorship.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] [UNCLEAR] No, no, he's not.

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] He's saying, Censor things that I don't agree with.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] No, we're asking for responsibility.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] I didn't say anything about that.

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] Of course you are.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] When did I say that? What did I--?

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] You don't, you, you don't want to have Michael Moore have a voice or, or, or anyone else that you don't seem to agree with.

ROGER KIMBALL

[OVERLAP] Josh did not say that.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] That's not true. I mean, that's, that's nonsense. I didn't say anything like that.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

And you know, and you know what? I think, I think we can have some questions.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] I, uh, uh, I don't, I don't want to censor him, uh, but I want to pour my own, uh, uh, contempt on him. And I want to expose him for what he is.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Well, you know –

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] Well, make a documentary and pour your contempt on him.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Uh, you know, I think we have some questions for –

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] Well, I'm not a filmmaker. I'm, I'm a, uh, writer and a speaker. So I'm here speaking.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Yeah, but, uh, Robin --

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

[OVERLAP] And, and I'm exposing Michael Moore for what he is.

[LAUGHTER]

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

[OVERLAP] But Robin, you're scaring me.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay, let's have some questions. Um, sir.

WOMAN

Here, right here. Right here, sir.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Oh, I'm sorry. Uh --

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] Uh --

BERNARD WEINRAUB

He, and after, this man after him.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] I, I think I'm going to, uh, uh, yield the floor to the gentleman down there, as the two questions that I was going to ask have both been debated and, and talked about already.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, this, this gentleman over here.

WOMAN

Sir, here you go.

MALE QUESTIONER

Uh, most of what I've heard tonight, if you'll pardon me, has not had a whole lot of intellectual rigor attached to it.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay. [APPLAUSE]

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Whoo. [BOOS IN BACKGROUND]

MALE QUESTIONER

I heard some very salient points from both sides. I think Michael Moore, how can I say, as a professional documentary, uh, I'm going to say, maker really should go some place else because there are people that misconstrue what he says. But he follows, he doesn't lead. Okay? I think that we've had people abroad for a very long time. It's those people that have created impressions about how we behave, what we do, what we care about. I think, uh, Paul Theroux made a point in, uh, one of his last books, *Traveling in the Third World*, where he said something about people don't hate Americans. People hate our government.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Boo.

MALE QUESTIONER

Okay, I think that movies basically follow, okay. And there's been something out there for a long time. It's not Hollywood. It's every industry we've got that's out there that's exporting a certain way. And those are the problems. And it's not, if you will, industry

generic.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay. But do you have a question for any, any of, any of us?

MALE QUESTIONER

Well. [LAUGHTER] Sorry, sorry. Yes. I would say, other than, uh, sorry Robin, that, uh, I haven't heard anything really supportive, other than sort of broad innuendo, okay, uh, about this and that. I think that it's all connecting.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay. Alright, okay.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] And I'd like to hear some really more, how do you say, substantive facts about how we proceed.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay. I, I hear you. Um, sir, down there. [PAUSE]

MALE QUESTIONER

Thank you. Um, I hope I'm not, uh, rendering this to be redundant when I say that as, um, someone who is not American I can confirm that, uh, Hollywood has fueled, uh, anti-Americanism abroad. Um, growing up in, uh, in Europe I, um, I sense an extreme cynicism on the part of, um, of, you know, my, my, uh, my peers, um, in the sense of the smugness, um, with which American represents itself. I mean, I --

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Uh, but do you have a question?

MALE QUESTIONER

Yes, I do. And, uh, and what I'd like to, to, to ask is that, is, uh, what do the members of the panel feel about, uh, the makeup of the panel in the sense that there are, are conservatives who were saying that, you know – who, who I agree with, essentially. But at the same time, um, I am ex...extremely kind of like, um, disillusioned with American foreign policy and the war, particularly. And, um, and I wonder why there's such a demarcation of, um, of opinion. Um, I, I agree with James Hirsen in the sense that, um, you don't have, you know, Hollywood is not the, the only factor. But at the same time, um, it, it is a factor. But, um –

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay, yeah.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] I won...I won...I just wonder what people have to say about that.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Well, we've, we've sort of covered that. You know, that, how, it, it's Hollywood and it's, um, policy. We, uh, yes sir.

WOMAN

Sir, here you are, sir. Hand that over to him, please. [PAUSE]

MALE QUESTIONER

Yeah, I have a question for Mr. Greenwald. I was, uh –

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay.

MALE QUESTIONER

...impressed that you in some, took advantage of your political activity and your personal feelings about the war. You didn't mention one part of it, and I don't know why, and that, people seem to be frightened to mention – and that is our support for Israel. My son just got back from Jordan, where he's doing some work on Middle East policy. And he said he was shocked how radicalized Jordan had become in the last month, that they, they have their hatred for us because of our support of our support of, quote, "the little Satan." The European countries feel the same way. And when they belittle and undermine American policy and look at our motion pictures as an example of our lives it just furthers their hatred for us. And they don't know why we're supporting Israel at the expense of their nation. Now we know why.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

All right, but what is that, you say, let me just, uh, uh –

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] Yeah.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Just, uh, what does that have to do with Hollywood?

MALE QUESTIONER

Because he was making statements as a political activist that he brought this, uh, business about the war in when they were talking about motion pictures.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Right, okay.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] So my question is, I think there's a big part of it that's being overlooked here – is that our support of Israel, which I fully support, is a large part of the hatred of America today.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

All right, but let's, okay, let's, let's just stick – Uh, I appreciate that, sir.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] Okay.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] But let's just stick to the issue of Hollywood and Hollywood's impact on, you know, foreign, uh, on abroad and what impact it has, either positive or negative, and, you know, um, let's stick to has Hollywood, Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad. Has it or has it not? Yes sir.

MALE QUESTIONER

Well, to your point – and to go back to the point this lady made, uh, which was the, I thought the most intelligent comment that anybody's made so far – which is that the, uh, [SMALL APPLAUSE] the side against has, um, distorted this entire, uh, debate by, by moving off the "Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad" issue to the war. We are not discussing the impact of the war. The war has its own impact. We all know that. But for you to, to de...deflect that, uh, into this, this, this main issue, I think is not really meeting the point of the debate. And therefore by definition you lose. [LAUGHTER]

RICHARD WALTER

Well, I, I, I quite disagree.

MALE QUESTIONER

[OVERLAP] You're not arguing the, you're not arguing the point.

RICHARD WALTER

[OVERLAP] Uh, I don't think it's fair at all what you say, respectfully. Uh, we're, we know there is a rise around the world, uh, in anti-American sentiment. Um, we're arguing that's it not, not, uh, Hollywood fueling that. Aren't we allowed to say what we think, uh, just might have something to do with that? Can anybody doubt, [SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE] if you read the papers, what it is that, uh, that, that fuels this – these wrongheaded and disastrous policies that represent the opposite of the American ideal and the American tradition?

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

Yeah, but there was a lot of anti –

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] If, if it was, if it was a le – If it was a court case and Hollywood was being tried as, you know, the guilty one for the crime we're saying, No, we know who the guilty one for the crime is. We know what that guilty is and it's the war. There's no, no question about it. I understand your point and we could parse the words. What does fuel mean? How much fuel? But I actually think it's much more substantive to go to the real, the real question -- or the real question behind the question, from my point of view, maybe not yours – and say, Here is why anti-Americanism is being fueled a...abroad. We know the reason.

MAN

[OVERLAP] Yes, but that --

ROGER KIMBALL

[OVERLAP] Yes, but that would assume that, that anti-Americanism is a new phenomenon. It's not. We've had it – No.

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] No, not new. But the numbers are – Uh, there's no – Do you doubt that the numbers are increasing?

ROGER KIMBALL

[OVERLAP] Yes, I do. I do.

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] Since – Wait a minute. You don't think since the Iraqi War that it's not increased?

ROGER KIMBALL

[OVERLAP] Well, I, I, I can –

JAMES HIRSEN

[OVERLAP] [UNCLEAR] [UNCLEAR]...that it's not increasing numbers because you questioned whether we could debate the statistics.

ROBERT GREENWALD

Yes, and I've got the...[UNCLEAR]

JAMES HIRSEN

[OVERLAP] The Pew poll, um, yeah, okay. Good. [LAUGHTER]
The Pew poll sampled –

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] I got, you got your copy, I got mine.

JAMES HIRSEN

...sampled, uh, nine hundred and two people in Great Britain. Four hundred and twelve of them were Muslim. Nine hundred and five in France, four hundred were Muslim.

ROBERT GREENWALD

That's...

JAMES HIRSEN

Nine hundred and two in Germany, four hundred and thirteen are Muslim. That does not reflect the percentages of the

populations in those countries. That poll, that poll is statistically invalid. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Um, well, let me get this. Yes sir. I'm sorry.

JAMES HIRSEN

[OVERLAP] Well, wait, wait, wait. I, I want to get in on this, please.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

Because, uh, the, the two, the two people in the audience, uh, nailed this point more, uh, most clearly. It is, it is not a court case. This is not a crime in which there's one victim and one perpetrator. We're talking about attitudes in the world that involve, uh, hundreds of, of millions or billions of people. And there are many causative factors. And I don't know what it is about the word fueling that you don't understand. But the question here is whether Hollywood is one of those factors. And the very simple, uh, uh, you, answer to your effort to put this all on Iraq is that there was a lot of anti-Americanism in the world, uh, before the war in Iraq. There was a lot of anti-Americanism in the world before Bush was elected President. There was a Gallop poll, uh, of the Muslim world, taken, uh, a year before the war in Iraq, that – but after the war in Afghanistan, in which

larger numbers of the respondents, uh, said they thought that, uh, that 9/11, the attack, the terrorist act of 9/11, was justified, than thought that our attack on the Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan, uh, was justified. And you can go back, uh, uh, to the Nineties when we were discussing enlarging NATO and there was a huge, uh, uh, outpouring of, uh, of, uh, anti-Americanism in Europe, afraid that the perpetuation of, of, uh, of NATO would be, as the French Foreign Minister put it, a Trojan horse to, to keep the Americans in control, uh, of NATO. This anti-Americanism comes from many reasons. It comes from some policies that we may think are wrong or, or Iraq or what have you. It comes from other policies that fewer people, uh, in this room would disagree with, as this gentleman pointed out, uh, from our support for Israel. Uh, I spend, uh, a lot of time in the Middle East. And when you talk to Middle Easterners they have two grievances against America at this moment and the war in Iraq is number two. It's our support for Israel that's, uh, that's number one. And, uh, the, the issue of, uh, the fact is that we're not going to be able to conduct ourselves in the world according to any policies without making some people angry, some people dislike us and so on. The question that we're talking about tonight is whether the fare that Michael Moore and Oliver Stone and, uh, the, the other, uh, uh, Hollywood opinion shapers are putting out to the world, uh, contributes to and compounds that.

ROBERT GREENWALD

The, the, yeah. Well, let me respond. First of all, you did see the sentence here. I know you did not intentionally leave it out – which is clearly marked, “Sample is weighed to be representative of the general population. “ So you’re not just quoting the first – Let me finish.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

[OVERLAP] No, I understand that it says that. But look at the percentages.

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] So you’re not just quoting – So I understand --

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

But look at the percentages.

ROBERT GREENWALD

Okay, but it says that. You got the percentages from here and it says, We know the percentages are too large and like good statisticians did, we adjusted for it. But let me go back to the substantive point, cause you’re just wrong on that one.

[LAUGHTER] The substantive point is, I think, goes back to what Bernie said. Yes, Michael Moore has three best selling books in Germany. But it doesn’t compare to *The Titanic*, *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, *Pirates...and Lord of the Rings*. It’s not even close. And how do we make the case that those movies that are loved around the world, they’re embraced around the world, that people

fight to get in and see around the world – how do we say that is fueling anti-Americanism?

ROBIN BRONK

And, and your –

ROGER KIMBALL

[OVERLAP] We don't. Nobody says that.

ROBIN BRONK

[OVERLAP] And, and your question is – and what we're saying is –

ROBERT GREENWALD

[OVERLAP] So you're agreeing with us. Thank you.

ROBIN BRONK

No, Hollywood is not a factor, is not a significant factor. Yes, there are many reasons. I mean, it could be the proliferation of trans fats across the world. There are many reasons. But Hollywood is not the most significant reason why anti-Americanism is growing around the world.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

All right, let's get some questions. Um, uh, uh, yes sir.

ROBERT SIEGEL

Hi. Uh, I have a question for James Hirszen and, uh, Dana Wolfe said I should identify myself as Robert Siegel of NPR.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

[OVERLAP] Okay.

ROBERT SIEGEL

I'll be actually hosting the radio, uh, broadcast of the debate.
[APPLAUSE] And my, my question is, in the schema between the, the heroic golden age of Hollywood and the modern cynical age that you've drawn, uh, where would the movies of Frank Capra fit? That is, in *It's a Wonderful Life*, uh, there's the fact that a banker and real estate developer is clearly villainous and evil, even though we know in real life in the decades since that time – he's, he's been the more efficient actor in the economy who has prevailed over the sentimental profligate S&L, which is heroic. Was that, was that a movie that fanned anti-Americanism at the time by, uh, presenting business in a negative light, or for that matter, was *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, which made a great deal out of big time corruption -- a movie that fanned anti-Americanism? Or are we more sensitive today than we were then to the images of us on the screen?

JAMES HIRSEN

Okay, good question. I think it's the degree of specialization that Hollywood has had in villainizing and demonizing the representatives of free enterprise. And why, and why do I even talk about free enterprise? Because America in the world represents the greatest experiment in free enterprise in the history of man. I mean, Western civilization generally – and America specifically – is an aberration in human history. And

part of the whole class warfare concept, really, is to make success something that you should feel guilty for. And you see this theme running through. And it, and it's, and it becomes more prevalent when Oliver Stone names a character after a lizard. It becomes more prevalent when we have this series of movies where the plot line involves the evil corporation and the crusading worker or journalist, or single mother with a push-up bra. It, it, it's the same pattern but what it does is, it takes away from a great part of this country. Instead of something that could be told which is sort of the entrepreneurial cowboys in this country, going back to the luminaries like Thomas Edison to national treasures like Steve Jobs. Who creates prosperity around the world through innovation that is fostered by a system that didn't happen by accident. I think that that, that is a significant and more subtle point of anti-Americanism though I, I say it's not exclusive to the period after the decline of the studio system in the sixties. But then again, Frank Capra also made films, a series of films called *Why We Fight* that were made specifically during a time of war to bolster our side and demoralize their side. Instead today, as we brought up with *Syriana* and other films of that ilk, films are being made to bolster their side – [OVERLAPPING VOICES] and to demoralize our side.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

We have time for one more question, okay? Uh, that gentleman

over there. [INAUDIBLE] I'm sorry. God um, lets make it, sorry, lets make it a woman. Okay, the lady over there. Five what?

FEMALE QUESTIONER

Five men and one woman and every movie you've mentioned has been produced and directed by men. We are fifty percent of the population and I would appreciate us being represented.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay, is there another question? [LAUGHTER]

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

I want to answer that. If every movie I've mentioned was produced by a man, it just shows that women are not guilty for uh, for fueling anti-Americanism.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Miss.

FEMALE QUESTIONER

I was just going to ask the same question that he did, only about the best years of our lives, the great movies from the thirties or forties, was it?

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Right.

FEMALE QUESTIONER

I mean, what has been the change? What's changed since then that's made our attitudes so completely different?

ROGER KIMBALL

And the, the short word is the 1960s. I mean why is it that today you can never hear the word corporation? This is now, it's, it's synonymous with evil. And if you prefix the word corporation with multinational, it becomes kind of the, the epitome of all evil. Why is that? I mean sure there were plenty of movies in the past that may have represented this or that businessman, this or that politician as corrupt or evil, but now it's always the case. I mean some of my colleagues mentioned movies that, where they've changed the plot. I mean, and I'll just mention one more, *The Bourne Identity*. In the book, the bad guy was Carlos the Jackal. In the movie, it's the CIA and this is consistent. I mean it's just every kind of thriller that you see these days uh, the United States government, the United States military, the United States commercial enterprise. It's always presented as somehow corrupt, venal, savage.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Alright we have one more question from this gentleman –
[OVERLAPPING VOICES].

MALE QUESTIONERS

Obviously artists always have an obligation to their countries, but are you really going to sit here and compare Frank Capra's obligation to an America that had been attacked at Pearl Harbor and was threatened by a Nazi menace with the obligation of an

artist today who's facing a war that was effectively picked and is uh, demonstrably going nowhere during the same time frame that it took to win all of World War II?

MALE QUESTIONER

Well actually I, I think that um we now face um, a, a faux that is maybe the most dangerous we have faced since the Battle of Leponto. [OVERLAPPING VOICES] I guess he wants you to answer that.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

It's time folks. And now um, ladies and gentlemen, it's now time to vote. And – [OVERLAPPING VOICES]. We vote and as they vote, you do closing. Is that correct?

MAN

Yeah, don't vote yet.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

As you vote, as they vote, you have your closing, okay? That's the rule. So um, it's time to vote. So um, if you want to vote for the motion, tear off "For" from the top, from the top, and put it in the ballot boxes that are going around. If you're against, tear off "Against" and put it in the ballot box. If you're, um, undecided, put in the whole thing. If you need a voting ticket, the ushers will give it to you. Uh, and while we're doing this, uh, we're having final remarks from the panelists. Beginning with a side opposing the motion, the first person who's going to speak will be Robert

Walter.

RICHARD WALTER

Richard Walter.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

I'm sorry, Richard Walter. [OVERLAPPING VOICES] I'm sorry, Richard Walter.

RICHARD WALTER

Now Hollywood takes on corporations because it's David and Goliath. I have nothing against the corporations, I'm a free enterprise capitalist myself. And um, the reason they uh, these, these stories treat them the way they do is because it's the little guy versus the, versus the big guy. Nothing new about it at all. You know American film is world film. Films made outside the United States, only one in ten will be shown outside the country of its origin, but all American films are shown outside the country of their origin. Some as you know are, are shown only outside the country of their origin. That is to say, they can't win domestic distribution deals and instead are released on cable and direct to video. What can explain this? The answer is the quality of American film and I also I believe the diversity of American films, the immigrant heritage of the American uh, nation and of the American film business in particular. When you look at American films, you're looking at the world because you're seeing people of every race, of every creed, of every persuasion. American films

are the single biggest export in the nation. They contribute more affirmatively to the reduction of the unfavorable balance of trade. They are a blessing upon us and should be celebrated by people who really love this country, who really consider them to be patriotic, rather than constantly besmirching them and caviling about them.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Thank you. Okay, for, Roger Kimball.

ROGER KIMBALL

Well I remember when I was in uh, high school. My Jesuit teachers would drum various things into us. And one saying they had was "Never deny, seldom affirm, always distinguish." It pains me to observe that the speakers against this motion tonight seem to be unable to appreciate that the motion does not say that Hollywood causes anti-Americanism. It is not a referendum on the Bush administration or the war in Iraq. It simply says that Hollywood fuels anti-Americanism abroad. It seems to me that um, my team has supplied numerous examples of how this, how this happens. And we could certainly spend the entire night providing examples. One of the people on the opposing side remarked on the remarkable outpouring sympathy for the United States in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Well I, I would, and then its quick evaporation. Um I would say that that outpouring of sympathy was basically a version of sentimentality lodged upon

the United States in its you know, unusual posture as victim. As soon as the United States began standing up for itself, that sympathy vanished. And I think that tells us a lot about the world opinion and how we can depend upon it. But in terms of Hollywood which is really a mindset, as James Hirszen said, it's not just the movies. It's really, we're talking about a way of looking at the world, pop culture in general. I think this is a mindset that has given up on America in many ways, given up on those traditional virtues. James mentioned free enterprise but there are many other things. Individual liberty, belief in the, in the future, really. And –

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Roger.

ROGER KIMBALL

Done? I will finish then, or stop. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Okay uh, against, Robin.

ROBIN BRONK

Um I guess the only thing I can say is that if American movies uh, bred anti-American sentiment, I'm not sure why Iran and North Korea don't have compulsory Sunday matinees. [CHUCKLES], [APPLAUSE].

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Uh, okay, for. Joshua Muravchick.

JOSHUA MURAVCHICK

Uh, in her earlier remarks, Robin said that there's no scientific proof, no reliable study that Hollywood is responsible for encouraging anti-American sentiment. That is absolutely true. There's also no reliable study, no proof that any other factor whatsoever causes anti-Americanism. We have this phenomenon of anti-Americanism. There are many things that contribute to it. And uh, we, we don't have any science of anti-Americanism to tell us exactly which. I think common sense tells us that some, the kind of work of someone like Michael Moore which is so tremendously popular in Europe contributes to that. And when we have Robert talk about that house in moment after 9/11 when the world all loved us, uh, that moment was symbolized by a headline in *Le Monde*. Which translated, said "We are all Americans now." And that was repeated here many times. However if you get *Le Monde* and read the essay, the essay was brimming with anti-Americanism, saying you know this attack is a terrible thing but it's what the Americans deserved for the way they attempt to dominate the world. Uh, and as for the likes of, of uh, Oliver Stone, I'd just like to share with you an anecdote. Last year, I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Ramallah. I was one of only two Americans there. There were hundreds of Palestinians talking among themselves. And one, Hani al-Hassan, who had been a member of Arafat's cabinet, gave

the sort of keynote address, a history of the Arab-Israel conflict. And he said, in the early 1960s, President Yasser wanted to end the conflict with Israel so he sent a letter to President Kennedy telling him how that could be done. President Kennedy sent him back a letter saying, yes I agree, and this was all about to be consummated when the Zionists assassinated Kennedy. And uh, I sat there stunned in my seat, but how would I explain to young Palestinians who have seen the, the likes of Oliver Stone's uh, paranoid fantasies about what happened to Kennedy, uh, that uh, Hani al-Hassan's uh, it's just implausible.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Joshua. Thanks very much. [APPLAUSE] Against, Robert Greenwald.

ROBERT GREENWALD

Well it's slightly off subject, but I want to know why Josh was one of only two Americans at this conference. Now I am scared for our country and the impression they get, and have somebody over there who advocated for the war and wants us to bomb Iran. But going back to the primary subject, lets not confuse bad movies or even critical movies. The assumption here is, if it's a movie critical of something in the United States, therefore that will fuel anti-Americans. Not true, not accurate. To use Jo-, to use Josh's words, common sense can tell us that many people all over the world and many people here have seen movies that are critical.

That does not turn you into anti-American. And I would argue that the movies, the popular movies, the ones that are being seen in overwhelming numbers, as Bernie helpfully provided this list, far outweigh – and if we go back to the, the woman's question about fueling, you know I don't want to get into technical what is fuel and what's not fuel. But lets say for a moment, *Titanic*, *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, that's building tremendous goodwill which would [UNCLEAR] and therefore there would be no fuel for the couple of incidents which might possibly, on a given day, encourage somebody to be against us. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

And for, James Hirszen. [PHONE RINGING] Please.

JAMES HIRSEN

Um -

BERNARD WEINRAUB

James Hirszen.

JAMES HIRSEN

Yeah I mentioned uh, you know I, I live close to Los Angeles and I love Hollywood, but I love America more. And uh, I'll tell you, Richard Dreyfuss, who used to speak differently about America until he went on a campaign to teach civics and he read some himself, has called this country a miracle. And the innovations and advancements that we've had here were because of a system where for the very first time, rights and powers were viewed as

implanted in individuals. And some of those were transferred, pursuant to a social contract we call the Constitution, to a government. That had never happened before. Um this motion is, is about free speech. And uh, to address an audience member who asked about responsibility today, the responsibility is greater for two reasons. One is because of what Thomas Freedman calls the flat earth. Because Hollywood exports more instantly, and two is because of the greater war. We were attacked in the city, it was the greatest attack on continental soil in our history. The greater war continues, even many of those who opposed the war in Iraq are still cognizant of the fact that there is a war on terror. The reason I, I had asked you to vote for the motion was simply to raise awareness that this output of pop culture coming out of Hollywood matters. And it's not only for our domestic consumption, it's being consumed by the world, it shapes the way they view us. And Hollywood ought to use its power to help America prosper. I mean in that way, in the world's eyes, they'd be a winner. [APPLAUSE]

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Well I, I want to thank the debaters and the audience for their good work. And before I announce the results of the audience voting, I want to take care of a few things. I would like to invite you all to return next year for the Fifth Intelligence Squared US Debate on Wednesday, February 7 here at the Asia Society. The

motion to be debated is “America is too damn religious.” The debate will be moderated by the co-director of the Fordham Center on Religion and Culture and *The New York Times* columnist, Peter Steinfeld. An edited version of tonight’s Intelligence Squared US Debate can be heard locally on WNYC AM, AM820 on Friday, December 22nd at 2PM. Copies of James Hirszen’s *Hollywood Nation: Left Coast Lies, Old Media Spin, and New Media Revolution*, Roger Kimball’s books, *The Long March* and *The Rape of the Masters*, and Richard Walter’s *Screenwriting: The Art, Craft, and Business of Film and Television Writing*, are for sale upstairs in the lobby. Finally after the debate, please be sure to pick up a copy of tomorrow’s edition of *The Times* of London, along with a special subscription offer for IQ2 US patrons. And now the results of the debate. After the debaters did their best to sway you and the question was, Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroad, you voted thirty-five percent for the motion, fifty-nine percent against the motion – [APPLAUSE]. And six percent don’t, did not know. Which means that those against the motion carried the day.

MAN

Turned it around too.

BERNARD WEINRAUB

Congratulations. And congratulations to everybody and thanks very much, thank you. [APPLAUSE]

Media Transcripts, Inc.

PROGRAM Rosenkranz Foundation- Hollywood has fueled anti-Americanism abroadPage 67.

[END OF TAPE]