For seven inspiring days, business leaders, heads of state, academics, journalists, and people of all stripes came together to talk, think, learn, debate, and inspire action at the 2008 Aspen Ideas Festival. Labels — and the divisions that often come with them — were put aside in place of civil discourse across oceans and aisles. And conversations begun in festival sessions were continued during walks across campus, over meals, and late into the evening.

The Power of Ideas

The Institute's fourth Ideas Festival, held June 30–July 6, 2008, was everything its predecessors had been — provocative, captivating, and stimulating — and much more. The widest range of voices yet came to Aspen for this very special week, a small sampling of which you'll find in this special feature. President Bill Clinton extolled the need for global philanthropy. US Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff explored the space for reasoned leadership — situated in between the extremes of complacency and hysteria — in protecting the country. Dalia Mogahed, executive director at the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, gave attendees a look at the battle for the future of Islam. And rising star Cory Booker inspired the crowd with candid reflections on his challenging role as mayor of Newark, New Jersey.

"The good thing about ideas is when you can translate them into action," said Institute CEO Walter Isaacson to an audience of more than 750 people on the festival's opening night. "It could be a truly grand idea like justice, or an important new one like a carbon footprint, or even a very specific idea like microfinance. But they all have the power to change the world."

The following pages merely scratch the surface of the Festival. *For much more, including an extensive library of audio and video coverage, visit* **www.aifestival.org**.

Left Page: Damian Woetzel teaches a ballet sequence. Above: Double bassist Edgar Meyer offers a musical interlude between conversations, *The Atlantic* Editor James Bennet and *Washington Post* editoral writer Jonathan Capehart discuss the future of media, and Hindu philosopher Swami Parthaswarathy explores the question, "Who am I?"

Photos by Dan Bayer

Walter Isaacson, Colin Powell, and Sam Nunn

Michael Brands

Seeking Common Ground

REPUBLICAN GEN. COLIN POWELL AND DEMOCRATIC SEN. SAM NUNN CONSIDER AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, IRAN, AND THE FUTURE

Gen. Colin Powell and Sen. Sam Nunn, CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, join Institute President and CEO Walter Isaacson, for an exploration of the strengths, and weaknesses, of US foreign policy. The following are excerpts from their conversation:

Colin Powell: Afghanistan is going to be a more challenging problem for us than Iraq is. Iraq will resolve itself, I believe, under Iraqi leadership. It is not going to be the kind of democracy that people have been dreaming of. It will be something far from that. But it will be theirs to determine.

Afghanistan, I think, is a much more serious problem because you have to look at it in the context of Pakistan, and the situation there has deteriorated. The tribal areas are wide open now for infiltration back and forth across the border, and I don't see Pakistani forces or Pakistani political authorities getting a handle on that. And we have a serious drug problem in Afghanistan. We have corruption in the government. The government is not extending its control throughout the country, and al Qaeda is regrouping, the Taliban is regrouping, and they are attacking us in an asymmetrical way now, which is harder to deal with. The stakes are higher in certain ways, because NATO is involved, our European allies are involved, and so if they start to lose faith in their ability to create a more stable Afghanistan, then we're going to be in real trouble.

Walter Isaacson: What do you think about Iran now? Do you think we should be engaging Iran diplomatically more forcefully?

For full festival coverage, visit **www.aifestival.org.**

Sam Nunn: We've got a process going on with our European allies, and whatever we do has to be in coordination with them, because we have to have cooperation for not only Europeans, but also Russia and also China. We cannot take the military option off the table, but it ought to be on the very back part of the burner, because it's not a good option, and being in Afghanistan and Iraq like we are, engaged around the globe, any kind of military action against Iran — we'd pay a serious price for it. But it cannot be completely off the table. I do think we ought to be talking to the Iranians. But it ought to be in coordination with the process that's ongoing now. It shouldn't be a unilateral American move. It ought to be in close coordination.

One thing is if we ever do have to take a lot of tougher sanctions, if we can get the world to go along, it is very important that we lay the foundation of having done everything we could do. Whether it's diplomacy, direct conversation, putting all the cards on the table, playing with all of them, we need to lay that foundation before we either take stronger economic action or also, in a final analysis, last resort, have to take some military action. I do believe that keeping the Iranians from being a nuclear power is enormously important. I put that in the "vital" category, and I use that term very, very seldom. But it's vital because of what's going to happen in the region. There are 10 countries in that region that have already applied to the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, for assistance in developing a nuclear program. All of them are saying it is for peaceful purposes. But if we have a proliferation of highly enriched uranium, it's going to be awfully hard to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"I think the world has had about all the preaching from America they want right now, and I think we've got to show by example." — Sen. Sam Nunn

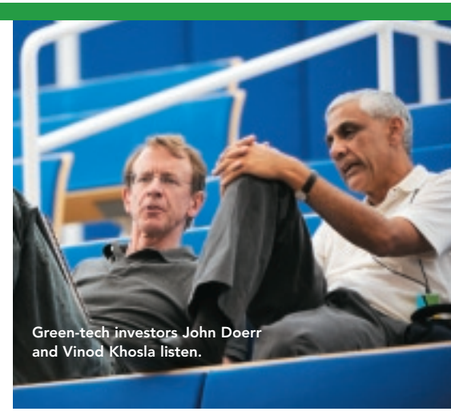
WI: Do you think we could just turn the page, though, and open up a dialogue with Iran?

CP: Yes. We were having a dialogue with Iran in the early years of the administration. It was low level, it was low key, it was in conjunction with our allies in places like Geneva and elsewhere, and we weren't trying to solve all the problems of the world. We were trying to begin a dialogue with Iranians. You remember when they had the terrible earthquake in Iran? We sent American personnel in there to help with that, and I was trying to see if that could lead to a dialogue. But the administration chose to stop these options at dialogue. I think it was a mistake, and I think we should have continued the dialogue. Our European friends are dialoging with them now, every day, and we participate through them in that dialogue. I don't think you can have a dialogue with somebody when you put a pre-condition out there that asks the other party to give you what you want before you have talked to them about it.

WI: Twenty years from now, India or China, what'll be the most successful economic model?

CP: China has a strategy that's very clear. Four parts: One, keep selling to us and the rest of the world. Two, keep getting investment. Three, develop a middle class that will start to consume their own products. And fourth, we've got 700 to 800 million peasant farmers that are going nowhere. We've got to get them off the farms. We've got to create new cities. We have got to create an infrastructure for those new cities, industries for those new cities, and then we have to educate these people in order to be contributing members in an industrialized society. That means more energy, but it means an investment in education. What is this going to do to our environment? What is it going to do to global warming? The energy problem is not going to be driven by speculators; it's going to be driven by massive demand coming up. And it's going to take massive changes for us to start dealing with this problem.

But on balance, when you look at it, America is not facing an existential threat any longer. In fact, there is no country out there who can present such a threat to us. And so, what we have to remember is, as we deal with the crises in Iraq and Afghanistan and Iran, and as we find a diplomatic solution to North Korea, and as we eventually find a diplomatic solution to Iran, America has a lot going for it. I always like to tell the people I speak to, don't get so wrapped up in, as Clausewitz called them, the immediacy of transient impressions that you overlook what we have accomplished, and the greatness that still is America and that lies ahead for America.



Green-tech investors John Doerr and Vinod Khosla listen.

Michael Brands

SN: In the Cold War, we knew what our vital interests were. But I think we've lost track of what our vital interests are now. If we just follow the media, they do their job, but they basically follow the vivid types of interest. They don't follow the vital. We've got to have a national discussion about what our vital interests are … weapons of mass destruction, making sure that none of the materials get in the hands of terrorists — I think that's of vital interest. I think the environment is. We have to add water and food to any economic model. Both of those are being affected in huge ways by the energy situation and the environment. We need a discussion about what our national interests are.

When we get through discussing those, I think we're going to discover that most of the things we consider vital require Russia to work with us and also require China to work with us. Neither one of them are democracies. But during the Cold War did we have all democracies working with us on these major problems? No. Look at NATO. We had at least four countries in NATO that were not democracies. We're all for democracies, but I think we've got to get in a frame of mind that we understand people are going to watch what we do as a model much more than us preaching to them about where they should go. I think the world has had about all the preaching from America they want right now, and I think we've got to show by example.

THE 2008 ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL

Sandra Day O'Connor

Former US Supreme Court Justice **Sandra Day O'Connor** came to the 2008 Festival with a mission: to impress upon the audience the desperate need for civics education in America. "Two-thirds of Americans can't even name the three branches of government, let alone say what they do," she lamented in a conversation with former US Solicitor General **Ted Olson** and Yale Law Professor and Institute trustee **Stephen Carter**. "Half the states have stopped making Civics, Government, and American History a requirement for education. I think this is devastating." One especially alarming consequence of this national ignorance, she argued, is the increased politicization of judges and the judicial process — which she sees as truly dangerous to American democracy as a whole.

Her ideas for reversing the trend? Increasing education across the spectrum in the structures and processes of American government, from comprehensive civics curricula in schools to innovative video games that actively engage young people in their democracy.

Michael Brands

Sarah Jones

Michael Brands

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"Everywhere around the world, you'll find that there are kids with a lot of goals, and we have big dreams as you do, and we hope only that you will be able to find it in your hearts [to hear] about their goals and their voice. You may not be able to see us, or you may not be able to experience what we experience.

"But if you can imagine that we also have the hope that, no matter our different ways of speaking or our different accent, or our different skin color, but I am your daughter, and I hope that when you see a photograph on the CNN that you will not only just look away, you will realize that that frame, that photograph that you see, it is a mirror. When you look in that mirror, you should see yourself reflecting me; no matter the color, no matter the difference, but I am your daughter."

*— Playwright **Sarah Jones** in character as "Anna," a 13-year-old from Kenya*

Actor, playwright, and Institute trustee **Anna Deavere Smith** moderated a moving and inspirational evening discussion, "Against All Odds," featuring young people from around the world who have survived incredible adversity. They included **Lovetta Conto** (pictured, with Smith), a 15-year-old Liberian girl who tearfully told the audience her harrowing story of growing up in a refugee camp in Ghana. She also talked about her dreams of becoming a fashion designer, starting with projects like the dress she was wearing and the necklaces she makes from found bullet casings.

Michael Faas

Chef and organic food pioneer **Alice Waters** talked with *The Atlantic* contributing editor **Corby Kummer** about the development of her influential all-local and organic upscale Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse, as well as her current crusade: integrating the growing of food with education in American schools — a project that she has dubbed the "edible schoolyard" — which takes aim at childhood obesity while also cultivating respect for the process of food production as well as for its results. "We have to take the emphasis off those celebrity chefs and shine the spotlight on the people in this country that are producing the food for us. ... We have to treasure them, really treasure them," she urged. "And the way that you can do this is by making a decision every day on what you buy and giving your money right to them. When I go to the farmer's market, I'm making an investment in the environment, I'm investing in the culture, I'm investing in my community ... It really is the truth that this is how you build community. It's not by telling people to take care of each other. It's by having something that you're exchanging that really enriches your life."

Alice Waters with *The Atlantic* contributing editor Corby Kummer

Michael Faas

Jamie Dimon and Charlie Rose

Dan Bayer

Jamie Dimon, JPMORGAN CHASE CEO, TALKS CANDIDLY WITH PBS HOST CHARLIE ROSE

In a special Festival session and live taping of PBS's "The Charlie Rose Show," host **Charlie Rose** spoke to **Jamie Dimon**, the chairman and CEO of JPMorgan Chase and one of the world's most powerful financial minds, about the economy, banking, management, the rise of China, and the essence of good leadership. The following are excerpts from their conversation:

Charlie Rose: Before we talk about all the things that make people herald you at this moment, give us the sense of how you see the economy? Where are we? Where is it going?

Jamie Dimon: You know, I think the economy is virtually unfathomable, to tell you the truth. It is so complex. You can look at a microcosm like housing or corn or something like that and figure it out. But the global economy, the strength of consumer sentiment, businesses, India, China, Europe, the fact that trillions of dollars go around the world every day, it's hard to tell.

There are big pluses; there are big minuses. So I think there are a lot of imbalances we have to sort out. A lot of smart people think it will settle out nicely. I think it's possible. I think there's a chance they will not sort out that nicely. We have to get braced for much tougher times.

CR: You think we have not hit bottom?

JD: I hope we have hit bottom, but I don't know that for a fact. At JPMorgan, we try to prepare for all kinds of weather. We aren't guessing what the weather is going to be like. I have never seen anybody really try to pick the true inflection point of the economy, when it is going to start growing, what makes it stop growing or stop shrinking, et cetera. I just want to be prepared. …

Obviously, some big financial companies are suffering. But we don't really know how bad it's going to really get out there yet. And it is really jobs. At the end of the day, what is really important is jobs for the average American. … The average American has more wherewithal to take a downturn as long as they don't lose their job. We haven't seen big job losses yet, and that's hard to predict. There is no leading indicator. If I was going to keep an eye on one thing, that is the thing I would really keep an eye on.

CR: Let's talk a minute about how this happened and how much do we blame Wall Street. Because everybody looks at the market, the bull market, at leverage, and the evaluation of risk, and they say smart people should have known it was going to come to an end. … What was the reason?

JD: At the end of the day, absolutely, the institutions that lost the money should blame themselves. They shouldn't blame anybody else. And certainly not the federal government.

CR: But was something wrong with the Wall Street culture?

JD: Some firms are taking a tremendous amount of risk. There is a legitimate question [if] there were misincentives that pushed people to take risk.

CR: Take me to your 52nd birthday. It's in the evening. And you are celebrating and you get a phone call. Who is on the other end?

JD: I tell people, buying a house and buying a house on fire are two different things. … Remember that day, when we signed that piece of paper, we bought someone else's 350 billion dollars of assets. And honestly, that was all we could do. There was nothing else we could do. We wouldn't have done it. And the issue wasn't the price at two or ten dollars. In any event, that was a very low price. The issue is, was there enough margin for error such that I can go to my shareholders a week later and a year later.

CR: Do you worry about the rising power of the Chinese?

JD: I think it is in humanity's interest that China does well. They have their own issues — about 800 million people living at a dollar, two dollars a day. They have done a pretty damn good job trying in their own way, and they are not going to do it our way, to make that country do well. We want a peaceful rise in China, and it could be better for everybody. … I know that one day we will be competing heavily with Chinese companies, Indian companies, and so that is in the back of my mind. But that is not going to hurt the American economy, as long as we continue to do well. … China can't do well if the United States is really sick, and they know that. We have a symbiotic relationship — that is what complex economies become. China doing well is good for our economy. They are doing it in their way, and if you put me in their shoes, I would want to lift up my people, too. I would want to do it in a way that is good for my country. They are doing a pretty good job at it.

"At the end of the day, absolutely, the institutions that lost the money should blame themselves. They shouldn't blame anybody else. And certainly not the federal government." — Jamie Dimon

JD: I spoke to [Treasury Secretary] Hank Paulson and [Federal Reserve Bank of New York President] Tim Geithner and at one point [Federal Reserve Chairman] Ben Bernanke. But the real question was what would happen if Bear Stearns went bankrupt. … Unlike the bankruptcy of a factory, where you continue to produce and the courts figure out how to split up the debt and equity and who gets what, you would have had an implosion. People the next day would have grabbed on to hundreds of billions of dollars of collateral that would have been sold on the street. People would be quitting. Bear Stearns would have no revenues. It would have been like an implosion of a financial company, not even like a commercial bank. And so the objective was, you know, to do something to, I thought, really to get the weekend.

CR: How did you come to two dollars a share?

CR: Define leadership for me.

JD: I don't think there is one form of good leadership. I think you've all seen lots of them. And it's not whether you are a great speaker or totally brilliant or something like that. IQ is important, but I think EQ is more important — your emotional skills to people. Why is it some people walk in a meeting and you are really happy they are there? When they speak up, they have clarity. They have good thinking and good communication. And they know they are going to check with all the other people they need to check with.

So there are all these emotional skills. There is also passion. There's a work ethic. There is character. I would add the ability to act, which means you have to have fortitude. The thing that I think people fall down the most on is that they don't act. I mean, honestly, if at certain levels I have to teach you integrity, I really don't want you there. We can't afford that. I want people to see their own true north. What is leadership? It's all those things put together.

CR: What ought to be the debate about the economic health of this country going forward? And what ought to be in the inaugural speech and what ought to be in the first 100 days of a new president on the economic frontier?

JD: Well, I think the new president has to be prepared for dealing with a serious downturn. If we don't get our hands around this energy issue, we could severely damage the future health of the United States. But the president also has immigration. They have a long list of stuff.

In the financial world, we need rational policy. … Corporations are under so much pressure and say-and-pay, transparence in governance — I'm in favor of most of that. I think we're as transparent a company as you can possibly get. But we are forcing capital private. Maybe everyone will be private, but there's no say-and-pay, no transparency. … We're making decisions that are forcing outcomes that may not be the outcomes we want. ♠

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Dalia Mogahed

Who Speaks for Islam?

Michael Brands

TWO LEADING VOICES DEBATE POWER, VIOLENCE, AND MODERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH

In a wide-ranging exchange with *The Atlantic*'s Jeffrey Goldberg, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies Executive Director **Dalia Mogahed**, and **Irshad Manji**, director of the Moral Courage Project, answer one of the most important questions of our time: Who speaks for the world's billion-plus Muslims? The following are excerpts from their conversation.

Jeffrey Goldberg: Where do power and authority come from in Islam?

Irshad Manji: Islam started off in a very Protestant mode, though Protestantism came many, many centuries later, with Muslims having a direct relationship to God. And for all kinds of political reasons, reasons that in fact have corrupted the spirit of Islam, we now are inundated with clerics who call themselves authentic and everybody else inauthentic. We do, as Muslims, invest far too much authority in what we believe, not know, is the wisdom of the mullahs and the imams, and that is why while it is true that not anybody can issue a fatwa, it still has to be emphasized vigorously that all Muslims have the right and indeed the responsibility to exercise independent thinking in ways that make sense to their lives.

JG: You find that most Muslims even after 9/11 reject violence. And you find that for those who embrace extremism are drawn to that not because of edicts of the religion or the theology of their religion, but because of the political actions of the West.

Dalia Mogahed: Those who told us that 9/11 was completely justified and have unfavorable opinions of the United States, who we call politically radicalized, their justifications for that position are purely political in nature. Not a single one of the respondents cited a verse from the Quran, for example, to explain their position on 9/11 being justified. In contrast, those who said it was not justified, that it was wrong — they were citing the Quran. They were explaining their moral objection to terrorism many times as a moral objection rooted in faith. What we find in our research is that it isn't so much theology that motivates a sympathy for terrorism but a distorted political ideology, and what is even more interesting is if you really analyze Osama bin Laden's rhetoric, what you find is his religious language is quite superficial. He starts out his statements praising God, he ends them by praising the Prophet, and in the middle you have essentially a very postmodern political revolutionary ideology.

JG: Is George W. Bush right when he says Islam is a religion of peace?

DM: As a Muslim, I don't like Islam being called a religion of peace because it is a religion of life, of balance, of guidance for a wide variety of facets of life, and to label it a religion of peace is to reduce it to a very defensive mode. And it is to reduce Islam to constantly being on trial, proving itself rather than, for a change, helping people understand what Muslims can actually contribute, not just why they are not a threat.

JG: How relevant is it that the Prophet Muhammad, the most admired man in Islam, led his life as a warrior?

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Irshad Manji

Michael Brands

DM: In the words of Olivier Roy, what is important isn't what the Quran says. What is important is what Muslims say it says, because the Quran is not a human agent that goes out and flies airplanes through buildings. People do that. And so we have to understand how it is understood by Muslims, who are the human agents that are going to go out and act. The way you find out is by asking Muslims what they believe, and when we do that we find that Muslims are no more likely, in fact in many cases less likely, than non-Muslims to approve of violence. … From a Muslim point of view, the fact that Muhammad fought wars is not understood as a reason to militarize, but instead [as] a very important example of how one should behave when they are in a position where they must fight a just war, because just war is a concept that transcends the Abrahamic faiths. … We, as Muslims, because the Prophet had to fight wars, have very strict rules about how to conduct a war.

"There is sufficient ambiguity within the Quran that we can rethink many passages in the context in which we now exist." — Irshad Manji

You can't chop down trees, you can't kill animals, you can't poison wells, you can't target civilians.

JG: What is a moderate Muslim?

IM: You often hear self-described moderate Muslims say, the next time a Muslim group takes responsibility for a kidnapping or a bombing or a beheading, "Islam has nothing to do with this." The problem here is not just that this statement is dishonest, but worse, such a statement is dangerous, and it's dangerous because in their denial, self-described moderate Muslims in effect — not intentionally, but in effect — hand over the ground and the opportunity for theological reinterpretation to those with already malignant intentions. In effect, moderate Muslims say to the would-be abusers of power, you guys get to walk away with the show. We're not going to come back at you with bold and competing reinterpretations of the very verses that these terrorists have used to justify their violence. And the reason we can't come back at you with bold, competing reinterpretation is that if we did, well, we'd be acknowledging that religion really does play a role. And since the Quran is perfect, and it is we Muslims who are imperfect, we can't go there.

Reform-minded Muslims say, hold on, we have to go there. Just as liberal Christians and liberal Jews have reinterpreted the violent verses in their

Scriptures, we must do the same for our Scripture. And what that means is taking the Quran out of the seventh-century tribal capsule in which even many moderates have left it and update the interpretations for a 21st-century pluralistic context. Whenever I make this case to Muslims, the first challenge I hear is, you are saying that we need to rewrite the Quran. Not at all. … But there is sufficient ambiguity within the Quran that we can rethink many passages in the context in which we now exist.

DM: The bold reinterpretations of the verses that talk about violence have already occurred. They occurred with the terrorists. … The original, classical interpretation is the one the moderates, if we are calling them that, are using to, in fact, respond. … The danger of fixing what is considered not broken, i.e. the classical understanding of Islam, is that once we open the door of reinterpretation of verses that have already been clearly interpreted to not promote violence, as understood by the vast majority of Muslims who would consider themselves traditional or orthodox and not reform-minded, this process of ijtihad of the non-licensed gives credibility to those who interpret those verses today in an unorthodox way to justify violence. … The real battle going on in the Muslim world is not a battle over the soul of Islam. It is the battle about the road to reform.

IM: One of the ways that Muslim women in Southeast Asia, thanks to the Grameen Bank, which is the bank that Muhammad Yunus started to give loans to the poorest of the world's poor, have been using or interpreting the Prophet Muhammad's life is by reminding their husbands that the Prophet Muhammad himself was married to a wealthy self-made business woman for whom the Prophet worked for many, many years. She was his boss, and so my dear husband, if you are going to be a pious Muslim man, you won't just grow a long beard. You will be very open to letting me work for myself. That is a big idea that the next US administration, whoever leads it, ought to be considering very seriously.

As for reform within the Muslim world and among Muslims, ijtihad is Islam's own tradition of critical thinking and independent reasoning. While it is true that you simply cannot let anybody issue a fatwa, it is equally true that if you leave a theological interpretation only to a very thin and rarified layer of elites, then all we are doing is cementing or reinforcing this pattern of submissiveness — not of submission — of submissiveness that we Muslims have had to God's self-appointed ambassadors for the last several hundred years. ♠

"I have my whole life believed that technology properly applied is the leverage that gives people wealth, stability, happiness, and raises the bar in every generation."

— Inventor and tech pioneer Dean Kamen

Dean Kamen

Dan Bayer

Ari Shavit

Dan Bayer

Leading Israeli journalist **Ari Shavit**, a popular columnist for *Haaretz* newspaper, offered insights on the Middle East and especially the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in several conversations. Talking with *The Atlantic*'s **Jeffrey Goldberg**, he reflected on Israel's successes and failures on the occasion of its 60th birthday, as well as its future. He also talked candidly about American power and strategy as seen from his part of the world, offering stark assessments of attitudes toward the US in his region and serious warnings for the future as well as bits of pithy humor: "The great tragedy — or sin, if you will — of American policy in recent years was the simplistic idea that if we send the Marines, then we send McDonald's, everything is solved."

Philanthropist **Eli Broad** talked about his current priority, overhauling American education, on a live taping of WNYC radio's "The Brian Lehrer Show," which also featured US Secretary of Education **Margaret Spellings** and Secretary of Commerce **Carlos Gutierrez**. "We used to be number one in graduation rates, now we're number twenty-one among industrialized nations," Broad said. To tackle this crisis, he emphasized six major areas of focus which together could make the American education system great: more learning time, better teaching, stronger American standards, public school choice, new vocational and technical education opportunities, and holding mayors and our local elected officials accountable for their education-related policies. "The American people do not understand," he said. "We have to dramatically improve public education. Parents are much too satisfied with their children's education. … We don't get it!"

Eli Broad

Michael Brands

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Hope for World's Poor

FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON ON PROGRESS IN AFRICA AND MORE

Michael Brands

In an Ideas Festival conversation with **Jane Wales**, Institute VP of Philanthropy and Society and Clinton Global Initiative chair for poverty alleviation, 42nd President of the United States **Bill Clinton** opened up about Zimbabwe, leadership and progress in Africa, and his good friend **Nelson Mandela**. The following are excerpts from their conversation.

Jane Wales: Mr. President, the elections in Zimbabwe. After weeks of targeted violence, what should the world do in response?

President Bill Clinton: Now, we don't have a lot of options. I think the first thing we have to do is to get more African leaders to do unambiguously what Nelson Mandela did at his 90th birthday party celebration in London the other day, and condemn it in no uncertain terms and say [President Robert Mugabe] ought to go.

I think there are only two potentially acceptable alternatives: One is he ought to go, and the other is, if that's not going to happen, they ought to form a unity government and make the man who should be elected president the prime minister. He is no angel, but nobody is in politics. Make him prime minister and let him run the affairs of the country as the majority of the Zimbabweans clearly want it.

But I get why historically the South Africans have been reluctant to go after Mugabe: because he was the hero of the anti-colonial movement, because he was steadfast, and his loyal support of the African National Congress during the whole time Mandela was in prison. So it was a big thing for Mandela to publicly criticize him on the occasion of his 90th birthday. …

This was a country that could have been Africa's breadbasket — totally destroyed by people for selfish ends of power and money. So I think that we need to keep the heat up. I don't think that there are military options, if that's what you're asking me, at least, right now. And I don't think the precedent has been set for that in international law.

JW: What is the role for philanthropy and private investment in a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe, and to help bring back its talented diaspora?

BC: Well, first of all, keep in mind when most people think about Africa in America — I bet you if you say, what are the first two words that come to your mind when I say Africa? they would say Zimbabwe and Darfur. But the African continent hasn't been enjoying the economic growth as a continent of 5 percent or more for the last two or three years. Several countries have done much better [than others]. I work in a lot of those countries. We have a remarkable development project in Rwanda and Malawi where we — in the areas where we work — we've more than doubled agricultural productivity, established new markets. We're going to be able to get through this tough time.

And some of the best work we've done in Africa has been helping farmers who are really smart get the seeds that are of quality, get affordable fertilizer, do the other things that will help them to organize their otherwise considerable talents and feed themselves.

But first you've got to get the politics right so people can go in there. I do think that, as long as they are willing to let NGOs in, humanitarian assistance should continue, but you're not going to be able to have sustainable growth until the current situation is different.

JW: You mentioned microfinance, and that's become a $4 billion industry around the world. What is the role of financial services, those small- and medium-enterprise funds, to provide insurance to reduce risk, to provide help for savings and build assets?

BC: A lot of these countries could be growing 7, 8, or 9 percent a year if they had more investment and some more capacity at the government level. One of the reasons I like to go in with our foundation and work with governments is that I'm always trying to help build systems so that if something happens to me, or if our foundation can't work anymore, or whatever happens, the capacity of people through organization will be greater.

Intelligence and effort are evenly distributed. Organization, opportunity, and investment aren't. Very often, the biggest problem is organization. Systems are more important than any of us think. We are sitting here and you are going to be able to listen to me drone on because you have every confidence that those fans will not go off in the middle of this encounter.

You would be shocked if the lights went out or the mics didn't work anymore. And those of us who work in the poorest countries of the world [know that] there are people who are just as smart as we are, who are working harder than we do everyday, who can't take any of that for granted.

> **"Intelligence and effort are evenly distributed. Organization, opportunity, and investment aren't."** — President Bill Clinton

It is a terrible thing to have hundreds of millions, even billions of people living their whole lifetimes … where they — every day — have to get up not sure if there is a predictable set of consequences for the efforts they're willing to undertake.

Every time I go anywhere to do anything, doesn't matter what the subject is, climate change or health care or whatever, I try to think of some kid that's just as smart as I was when I was that age. We need to give that child an arc of predictability for his or her effort.

JW: Nelson Mandela turns 90 in a couple of weeks. He is someone with whom you've been extremely close over the years. What has he meant to you personally?

BC: He really did give up his freedom, almost a full third of his life so that everybody could be free, including his oppressors. He paid as high a price as you can pay without getting killed for it to prove that freedom has to be a universal commodity.

And then, he governed in a way that was consistent with what he said. Everybody knows, for example, that he invited his jailors to his inauguration. Not as many people know that he put the leaders of all the groups that oppressed him into his cabinet. And keep in mind, he was elected with two-thirds of the vote, so he did not have to do that. There is no constitutional system in the world that would have required him to do it.

The second thing he did, which is very important in the Mugabe case, is to show us that you don't have to be in office to do public service. And he did it in his later years when no one would have blamed him if he had retreated to that amazing game preserve he has up there.

And the third thing he did was to show us all how to live. That's the thing he meant most to me about. The day he was released for the last time — and you may all remember that it was beautifully staged for television, early on a Sunday morning in the United States — he took one long last walk down a dusty road, went through a gate, and then got in the car and rode away.

Later, I said to him, now tell me the truth, I know you are a great man, but you are also a great politician. And you did the right thing, getting all those people in your government. But when you were taking those last steps, didn't you really relive those 27 years, and didn't you hate them again? He said, "Sure I did — for a moment I did." He said, "I felt anger and hatred and fear. And I realized that if I kept hating them once I got in that car and got through the gate, I would still be in prison. So I let it go, because I wanted to be free." This is a universal lesson that all of us have to keep struggling with in our lives.

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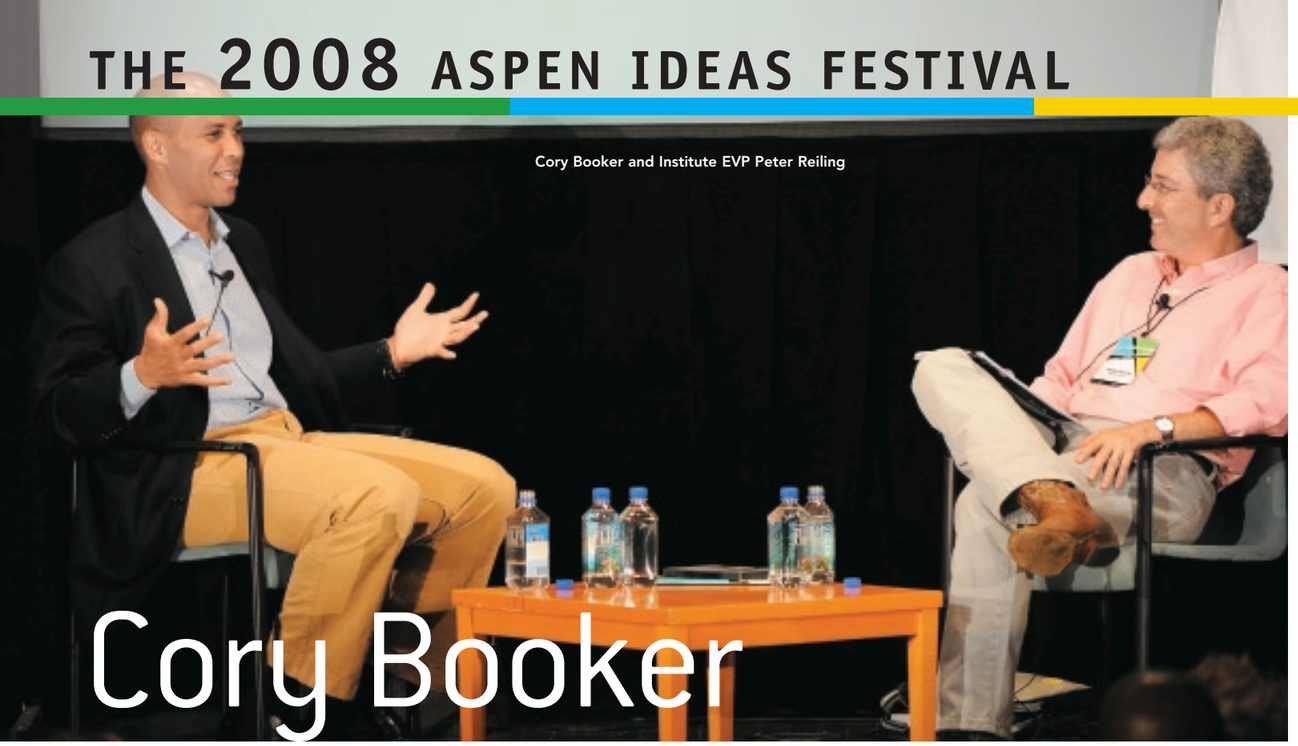

Cory Booker and Institute EVP Peter Reiling

Cory Booker

ON LEADERSHIP, THE CHALLENGES OF THE INNER CITY, AND OPTIMISM

In edited excerpts from a wide-ranging conversation, **Peter Reiling**, executive vice president of the Institute's Leadership and Seminar Programs and executive director of its Henry Crown Fellowship Program, and **Cory Booker**, mayor of Newark, NJ, and a 2003 Henry Crown Fellow, discuss leadership in inner cities, urban education reform, and lessons learned from defeat as well as victory.

Peter Reiling: What leadership lessons did you take away from the 2002 mayoral election you lost in Newark to a four-term incumbent?

Cory Booker: The campaign brought so many themes to the fore about race, about poverty, about inside-outside, about urban America in general. It really was a clash of generations. I had grown up wanting to be loyal to the legacy I inherited as a black American, and here was a mayor who was trying to, in every single way, make me out to be not how I identified [myself]. It was one of the most difficult experiences of my life. So, lessons out of that — probably more lessons than I got in any victory in my life. It was probably one of the best gifts to me in the long run, and it showed me, number one, the power of the people I wanted to serve. It showed me the power of my city and the resiliency of the people there, and it also told me I would be betraying everything I claimed to stand for if I wanted to leave, if I gave up and didn't stay in the fight. I learned everything from real practical politics, how to run campaigns, to the largest spiritual lessons of life, that the greatest goals or the greatest ambitions you have will never come easy. They're worth a sacrifice. You're going to fail, you're going to fall on your face, but the most important thing is to continue the fight and continue the effort.

For full festival coverage, visit **www.aifestival.org.**

Dan Bayer

PR: You could have easily walked away from Newark. Why did you decide to stay?

CB: Two things: One is the people who sacrificed for me, and then the second thing is I really think that the frontlines of the fight for the American dream exist in inner cities. Every issue we've talked about this weekend plays out in probably even more dramatic fashion in the streets that I work and have the privilege of serving. So for anybody who is ambitious, who wants to try to tackle the most challenging problems of America — this is the place to be. You're really in the crucible, you're really in the center of it all, and you really have a chance to make an impact in those areas. Many of us often get so obsessed about a position and not a purpose. I was offered some great positions. They were wonderful titles and wonderful things, but they didn't resonate with my core purpose.

PR: What's your vision today for Newark?

CB: I feel more optimistic about the city of Newark than I did even before I was brought in. Emerson said, "What you have within, that only can you see without." If you see no angels, it's because you harbor none. I try every day to get up and not be overcome by the immediacies or the urgencies of what I see, and I try to have those angelic eyes. When I jog, especially, I just let myself fantasize about what I really see, and so I see the city in America that sets the national standard for returning safety and security, which should be fundamental in America, but it is not.

PR: Half of Newark's eighth-graders fail language proficiency tests. Three out of four fail math tests. What do you do about that?

PR: How do you deal with entrenched interests?

CB: Talking about it, describing it, fretting about it, pulling out your hair does not solve it. You got to get into the very ugly, messy world of politics, which at its best Madisonian ideal is a conflict of ideas, and you got to push, fight, scream, struggle, and be in the mix. Some of the only organized opposition against me in Newark is the teachers' union. I'm courageous enough to stand up and tell the truth about what it's going to take to change public education, especially urban education in America. People fought charter schools, for example, and some charter schools should be fought. Ultimately, they are schools of accountability, and we protect failing charter schools in cities all around America that we should not protect. They should close if they are not educating children. But, ultimately, some of the best innovation we've seen in America right now is coming from our charter schools, because they're pointing out things that are ridiculous.

"If we do the same things we did yesterday and expect different results tomorrow, we're fooling ourselves. ... At the end of the day, we as individuals have to decide, what are we going to do differently and how much more are we going to give? Will we ever live up to those who came before us?" — **Mayor Cory Booker**

CB: America has sold itself short in this. We think we can educate people in urban areas, or overall, for a 21st-century economy in an 18th-century or 19th-century manner. We tolerate things that are ridiculous, that no American would buy into. It's absolutely ridiculous that in the legislature in Newark, the radical concept that teacher tenure should be linked to student performance gets defeated. Millions and millions of dollars which should be going to children are being sucked up by people we can't fire. Newark has got to confront this, and this is what we're trying to do — shake things up in the city. I'm involved in a battle to get more influence over my schools.

Michael Brands

Most of us probably buy into this idea that time is the constant in education, and achievement is the variable. So you all go to school the same amount of hours in a day, the same amount of days in a week, same amount of months in a year. That's ridiculous. What these incubators of innovation around America have done is said that's crazy. Turn that on its head: Make achievement the constant, and time the variable. I'm not an ideologue when it comes to education. I'm more like Malcolm X: "By any means necessary." Whatever works, let's just do it. There is no one model anymore.

PR: Any big ideas you heard at the Ideas Festival that you can take home with you and put to use?

CB: It's good to come to the mountain top. It's good to exchange ideas. It's a necessary part of change, but it's not sufficient. I've enjoyed those speakers who have challenged us to leave here and be different. If we do the same things we did yesterday and expect different results tomorrow, we're fooling ourselves. A few speakers really appealed to this idea of America that sustains generation after generation, this idea of collective sacrifice. I wonder about my generation. We're giving more, we're volunteering more on college campuses than we've ever done before, but I'm just not satisfied. Great problems necessitate great sacrifice. You cannot think we're going to deal with global warming, inner-city education, the AIDS pandemic by talking about them or by debating them. At the end of the day, we as individuals have to decide, what are we going to do differently and how much more are we going to give? Will we ever live up to those who came before us? I can't say that I can match my parents' courage sitting at a lunch counter and not lifting my fist at somebody who just bashes my head in time and time again. I know I'm not to be called to that level of courage, but at least in my daily work, or with my own money, or whatever it is, I can try to give some tribute to the courage that got us to this point. ♠

Michael Chertoff and Jeffrey Goldberg

Are We Safe?

US HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY MICHAEL CHERTOFF

Dan Bayer

In a Festival conversation, US Secretary of Homeland Security **Michael Chertoff**, opened up to *Atlantic* national correspondent **Jeffrey Goldberg** on what his department has done since September 11, what can and can't be done, and whether US citizens are really safe. Excerpts from their conversation follow.

Jeffrey Goldberg: You were talking about your performance during Katrina and you said, "There are things I could have done or said a little bit better. I was not a politician. You need to visibly and tangibly show people you care." Now that's all true, but isn't it a little beyond that as well? A full day went by when the levees had failed, but you didn't know that the levees had failed. Isn't that the case?

Michael Chertoff: There's no question that one of the big problems in dealing with Katrina, probably the largest catastrophe this country has ever experienced, is the lack of ground truth about what the facts are. One of the first things we did when we looked back at Katrina was to build a capability to send our own people into a disaster area with video cameras and communications so we could get an accurate picture of what was going on. There's nothing worse for a decision maker than trying to make a decision about what is required when, on the one hand, you have people on the ground telling you one thing; on the other hand, your television is telling you something different, and even the televisions are inconsistent.

As everybody who has been in a battle has learned, or everybody who has been in a catastrophe has learned, the number one requirement is you've got to have the ability to get eyes on the problem and to the truth about what's going on.

JG: Why wasn't the military simply mobilized to run in there? We've heard that Donald Rumsfeld rejected that idea, and I'm wondering if you fought with him on this question and how badly did you lose?

MC: The biggest challenge in dealing with any kind of domestic emergency is the role of a military. My takeaway from Katrina was, frankly, you're always better off using the military sooner rather than later in an emergency. But almost all the governors in the country have a different point of view, and there was a great push after Katrina by many of the governors to say we don't want you to send the regular army in here.

If you look at the legal authorities that currently exist on the books, it is remarkably difficult for a president to have the legal ability to send troops into an emergency situation. You are really right at the razor's edge of what the limit of the law is. One of the things we haven't fully explored is do we need to retool and reengineer some of our legal authorities to use the military in the case of a truly epic catastrophe?

Prior to Katrina, the system for planning between the civilian authorities and the military authorities was very weak. They really didn't plan together, and therefore it was a cumbersome process, even when the military was authorized to assist, to actually be able to translate the requirements into a particular action item that the military had to undertake. After Katrina, we fully, or almost fully, integrated our planning processes. As they say, we exchanged hostages. We sent some of our planners to the military; they sent some of their planners to us. We now have literally dozens and dozens of prearranged mission assignments, which we can turn on in a moment's notice.

JG: When I got to National Airport the other day, I walked up to a very crowded TSA line without having ever been inspected before I got there, and it struck me that this is not something that could happen in Israel or many European airports. There is a checkpoint before you even got on to airport grounds. Then there's a checkpoint when you get out of your car. … What is ultimately the point of taking your shoe off and putting shampoo in a little Ziploc bag if there's so many obvious ways to disrupt aviation security?

MC: If you are asking me, is there any way to protect a person from taking a bomb into a crowded location and blowing it up, the answer is no, unless you want to live in a society in which every public space is like the airport. You could reverse the question and say to me, well, in that case, if I could die in a mall or die in a movie theater maybe we shouldn't protect airplanes at all. Maybe we should simply get on an airplane. We won't bother to inspect your baggage; we won't bother to check you against the watch list. If the plane blows up, the plane blows up. I think the answer may very well be that the amount of damage you can do on an airplane with an explosive of a certain size is significantly greater than the same explosive in a public space. That always takes you into an ugly conversation about, well, why do you worry about 1,000 people being killed, but you don't worry about ten people being killed? And the answer is that's ultimately what buying down risk is about. You have to look at the consequences. We are, frankly, willing to invest more to protect 1,000 people than to protect ten people.

In the end, one of the most common arguments I face is this one: Since you can't protect everybody perfectly, why are you protecting anybody at all? That is the classic version of the argument that the perfect is the enemy of the good. Under that theory, we shouldn't have seatbelts and airbags because a seatbelt and airbags will not protect you if an 18-wheeler collides head on with your car. It's not a perfect protection, but it will still protect you if you are in a garden-variety accident.

Managing risks doesn't mean eliminating risk. It means buying down the risk, starting with the highest risk first and bringing it down until you come to the point that society believes it is no longer cost-effective, and we are at a tolerable level of risk. That's really what homeland security is about.

JG: Your department is new. It has never undergone a presidential transition. Come December, what advice will you give either President McCain or President Obama on how to make your department better and how to make the security of America better?

MC: If I was going to give you a high-level piece of advice, it would be this: We are going to live with risk for a very long period of time, whether it's natural disasters, whether it's terrorism, whether it's al Qaeda, whether it's Hezbollah, whether it is violence south of the border in the northern part of Mexico, and we need to develop a set of tools and a set of principles that we are all comfortable with that are somewhere between complacency and hysteria, that recognize that we have to reduce our risk. That means we have to be prepared to make some sacrifices, but it also recognizes that we can't eliminate risk, and we can't over-promise elimination of risk. The hardest job my successor will have is not to allow policymaking to get pulled one way or the other depending on what the new story of the day is or yesterday's public event was, but to have a disciplined idea of what the high risks are and a disciplined plan to get those reduced as much as possible within reason. ♠

"We are going to live with risk for a very long period of time, whether it's natural disasters, whether it's terrorism, whether it's al Qaeda, whether it's Hezbollah, whether it is violence south of the border in the northern part of Mexico, and we need to develop a set of tools and a set of principles that we are all comfortable with that are somewhere between complacency and hysteria." — Sec. Michael Chertoff

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THE 2008 ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL

Dan Bayer

"When a society acknowledges its wrongdoing, as happened in America and across much of the West [in the 1960s], they become, sadly and probably unfairly, stigmatized with the very sin they've confessed to. Today in America, white Americans are stigmatized as racists. They carry this stigma: They constantly are under pressure to make sure they live, and speak, and talk, and everything, in a way that proves the negative — that they're not racist.

This, I think, is one of the biggest forces in American life: this terror of living under [the stigma]; ... if you use the wrong words and you slip up, you can ruin your whole career, as we've seen happen to many people in recent years. This terror puts whites in, I think, a very difficult situation."

— *Race relations scholar **Shelby Steele**, Robert J. and Marion E. Oster Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University*

Dan Bayer

Author and *New York Times* columnist **Tom Friedman**, author of the new best-seller *Hot, Flat and Crowded*, urged the audience to step up to the huge challenge of dependence on fossil fuels and the climate change their use has wrought. In a passionate talk, he lampooned ubiquitous books and magazine articles with themes like "10 Easy Ways To Save the Planet" and called upon Americans to wake up and understand the enormity of what needs to be done. "There is one word you should never use for this project, and that's 'easy.'" Right now, he said, "We have a country full of green hobbyists — nothing close to a green revolution." ♠

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