

JOHN SHATTUCK: Good evening, and welcome to the John F. Kennedy Library. I'm John Shattuck, CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation, and on behalf of our Board of Directors, Tom Putnam, our Library Director, and all our colleagues, I'm delighted to be able to introduce tonight's special all-star forum. Let me start by thanking the institutions that make our forums possible – our lead sponsor, Bank of America; as well as The Boston Foundation, Boston Capital, the Lowell Institute, the Corcoran-Jennison Companies, and our media partners, the Boston Globe, NECN, and WBUR, which broadcasts all Kennedy Library forums on Sunday evenings at 8.

We often make it a practice to introduce our forums with a few words from John F. Kennedy. Tonight I can't imagine a more appropriate invocation than the following passages from President Kennedy's Inaugural Address, passages that carry a message powerfully restated in different words last week by President Obama: "Let the word go forth . . . that the torch has passed to a new generation of Americans – unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation . . . is committed . . . at home and around the world. Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to battle, though embattled we are – but as a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war."

The enemies of human rights are tyranny, poverty, disease, and war, and the people of Haiti have been plagued for centuries by all of them. Haiti is the second oldest independent country in the Western Hemisphere. It was born in 1804, in the shadow of the French Revolution, and grew out of a slave rebellion against the brutal French colonial elite. The country's founding father was Toussaint Louverture, the leader of the rebellion, who cast himself as Haiti's Napoleon. After declaring Haiti's independence, Toussaint sent a letter to Napoleon, whom he addressed: "From the first of the Blacks to the first of the Whites." All too soon the revolution in Haiti was brought to a bloody end,

and for the next two hundred years the country was ruled by tyranny and war, and dominated by poverty and disease.

My own experience with Haiti was as a human rights official during the Clinton Administration. I was involved in planning and implementing an effort by the U.S. and the United Nations to restore Haiti's first democratically-elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been deposed by a violent military coup. I spent many days with many heroic people, and came to identify with their struggle to bring about a change that Haiti can believe in. That struggle continues today, and each of the speakers here on stage has had a deep personal involvement with it. As we celebrate the inauguration of a new American president who represents the kind of change we can all believe in, our panel will help us apply President Obama's great rallying cry, "Yes We Can!" to the struggle of one of America's oldest allies and closest neighbors.

My friend Paul Farmer began his lifelong commitment to the people of Haiti more than 25 years ago, working with villages in Haiti's Central Plateau and then, while he was a medical student, founding a rural health complex that now includes a hospital and a series of clinics and schools that have pioneered the treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS for hundreds of thousands of Haitians. Paul Farmer is one of the world's foremost strategists for combating disease in conditions of extreme poverty. Working with the World Health Organization, Partners in Health and the Open Society Institute, he has developed treatment programs across the globe -- in Haiti, Rwanda, Peru, Russia, Azerbaijan, Latvia and Kazakhstan. Paul's relentless work on behalf of the world's poorest populations has been recognized with many awards and honors, including a MacArthur "Genius Award," and he is the subject of the best-selling 2003 book by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World*. Paul, it's great to welcome you back to the Kennedy Library.

[applause]

Like John F. Kennedy, Ted Williams and Dustin Pedroia, Matt Damon is a guy who makes us all proud to be from Boston. [laughter and applause] And prouder still, no doubt, are those who, like my daughter, attended Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, across the river, in the late 1980s when Matt was there, launching his trip to stardom from the CRLS stage.

We all know Matt as the Oscar-winning screenwriter and costar, along with his high school friend Ben Affleck, of *Good Will Hunting* and so many other great films like *The Departed*, *The Good Shepherd*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Ocean's Eleven*-- we've all got our favorites, and they could go on and on-- so many, that it's easy to lose count.

But, what many people may not know about Matt Damon is that he's a human rights activist who has championed the cause of some of the world's poorest and most depressed people. Along with George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Don Cheadle, who also spoke from this stage, Matt is one of the founders of Not on Our Watch, a campaign to stop the crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Last September, he visited Haiti after a series of devastating hurricanes had brought flooding and destruction that severely worsened the conditions of poverty and disease from which the Haitian people are struggling to emerge. Matt teamed up with Haitian singer Wyclef Jean, working with the U.N. and the World Food Program to draw attention to the crisis and helped raise more than \$100 million dollars for the 800,000 Haitians devastated by the storms.

He's modest about what he does for human rights, and has said that "I would rather people were listening to politicians than actors about this. But the politicians aren't talking about places like Haiti." Matt, it's an honor to have you here with us today.

[applause]

Linda Dorcena Forry is one of Boston's rising political stars, with deep roots in the Haitian-American community. Her parents came from Haiti to Dorchester and worked hard to raise their children in the Uphams Corner neighborhood a few miles from here, where Linda grew up. After earning her degrees at Boston College and Suffolk University, Linda began her career as a legislative assistant in the State Legislature, then moved to city government, where she became chief of staff in Boston's Housing and Neighborhood Development Departments.

And, in 2005, she scored a major surprise victory over a strong field of candidates, competing for the State Legislative seat formerly held by the legendary House Speaker Tom Finneran. Like Barack Obama, Linda Dorcena Forry has demonstrated a leadership style that reaches across the lines of race and class. [laughter and applause] There you go - And creates unity out of division.

[applause]

I know her father-in-law is here somewhere. He's just getting thrilled by that. Last year, Linda gave a stirring speech here at the Kennedy Library to Bostonians from all parts of the world who were being sworn in as new citizens, telling them about her own connection to her family roots in Haiti. And last fall, after the election of President Obama, Linda called on the new administration, in an article, to change the course of U.S. policy toward Haiti, so that Haiti, once again, will become a foreign policy priority for the United States. Thank you Linda for returning to our stage.

[applause]

And I forgot, her husband is here, too. So he's even more proud. Bill.

Our fourth panelist is Brian Concannon, a human rights lawyer and director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. Brian has worked with the International Lawyers Office in Port-au-Prince to investigate and prosecute the many violent crimes that were committed by paramilitary agents and gangsters working for the Haitian military regime that overthrew President Aristide in 1991.

In February, 2004, Haiti was struck by yet another military coup. And Brian started working, right away, to document this latest wave of human rights abuses. He's also been involved in creating a human rights training program for Haitian lawyers. And he was a Brandeis International Fellow in Human Rights Intervention and International Law. Welcome to our stage, Brian.

[applause]

Our moderator tonight is Amy Goodman, who many of us know and revere, and the host of Public Radio's and Television's cutting-edge, award-winning public affairs program, *Democracy Now!* which began-- [applause]-- which began broadcasting in 1996, and now airs on more than 750 stations across North America.

In 2004, Amy published a book entitled *The Exception to the Rulers*. And that's exactly what she believes the media should be. "The role of a reporter," she says, "is to go where the silence is and say something." For going to places like Haiti, East Timor, Peru and Nigeria to report on stories ignored by the mainstream media, Amy has won many honors, including the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, the Polk Award, and the Overseas Press Club Award.

So please join me, again, in welcoming to the stage of the Kennedy Library Paul Farmer, Matt Damon, Linda Dorcena Forry, Brian Concannon and Amy Goodman.

[APPLAUSE]

AMY GOODMAN, MODERATOR: Well, it is a wonderful moment, right now, to be in a room of hundreds of people, talking about a country that rarely gets this kind of attention in this country. And what a moment. I mean, on November 4th, the world heaved a sigh of relief. It wasn't just-- [applause] -- It wasn't just a national election, it was a global event, a global phenomenon, Barack Obama, a global figure, the son of a black Kenyan man, a white woman from Kansas.

He's born in Hawaii, he moves to Indonesia, comes back, goes to school in California and at Harvard. And perhaps, most importantly, becomes a community organizer in the South Side of Chicago. [applause] Imagine-- Imagine that, now, parents around the world will be saying to their kids "Maybe you can be a community organizer, too! [laughter] And then maybe you could be President some day."

And to see Barack and Michelle Obama walk into the White House with their children, Michelle Obama, the granddaughter of a man from South Carolina, who came north in the Great Migration to Chicago, where they settled. She is the descendent of slaves, as her children are. To see them walk into the White House, a house built by slaves, it is a new age. [applause]

Now, today, we're here to talk about Haiti, and there are direct connections-- Haiti, born in 1804, as John said, of a slave uprising. It was not recognized by the United States for decades. Congress members, fearful that the slaves of Haiti-- or the New Republic of Haiti, born of a slave uprising, would inspire slaves to rise up in the United States. But

we are centuries later. And the possibilities for a new relationship between Haiti and the United States, well, ultimately, will be up to you.

And that's what we're here to talk about tonight, is the possibility of change and what it will take. So, I wanted to begin with Paul, with Dr. Paul Farmer, who has been in Haiti for many years, to start off by giving us the contours-- political, geographic of Haiti, what is happening today, and what you think needs to be done. We live in a globalized world. But, when it comes to information, we are very insulated in this country in getting information of countries around the world.

DR. PAUL FARMER: Thank you Amy. I would skip ahead to the very recent past-- and you're familiar with a lot of this-- But everyone has his or her own summation of what's going on in Haiti and what's gone on recently. But I think there are some things that are incontrovertible. For example, we know that between 1804 and 1990, Haiti never had free and fair elections. And we know that in 1990, and again on two other occasions, there were free and fair elections in Haiti.

And in each of those instances, with reliable unison, the Haitian majority voted for the same platform again and again. And some people have their way of describing this platform, but I would call it, basically, a very pro-poor people's platform for basic social and economic rights, the right to go to school, the right to not starve to death, the right to have medical care.

And these are ambitions that may be not so familiar to a lot in an American audience, you know, the right to go to school. You know, you could argue that's certainly a struggle that African-Americans had to wage in the 20th century, even. But for Haitians today, these are still very much, in addition to the right to vote and the right to free speech, these are also the struggles.

So unfortunately, on a number of occasions, these elected governments have been overthrown, are undermined and then overthrown. And I think that's something we should talk about tonight, how did that happen? Who was involved? And I would just close my comments by saying that I'm headed back there tomorrow.

And, you know what? I know that I'll hear what I usually do when I go to Haiti. I'll hear about things like getting kids back into school. January is, in some ways, the hardest month, January and September, when kids have to go back to school. What about medical care? What about access to clean water? What about finishing roads? And above all, what about jobs?

So, this same refrain is something that I've been hearing, now, for a quarter of a century. And I've learned a lot from Haiti and Haitians. And I hope that we can learn, as Americans, to learn how to respect Haitians, and respect their right to choose the people they want to lead their country.

MOD: But if you could talk more about the challenges that Haitians face right now, everything from healthcare, education?

DR. FARMER: Well, you know, if you look at the numbers on these issues, first of all, before I forget, the reason that Haiti was so devastated by these four storms last fall is because Haiti also faces an environmental and ecological crisis, which is tightly tied to the economic and political crises that I've mentioned.

But, if you look at the numbers, Haiti, our oldest neighbor, the health industries are bad, not enough kids are in school, high rates of illiteracy, and also high rates of privatization of schools and healthcare facilities. So, Haiti is-- It's not an accident, in my view. And I say this as someone who works with an NGO and works with church groups, as well.

It's not an accident that Haiti has the most privatized education system in Latin America, and also has the most people who are illiterate, because it's not a right to go to school. It's something you have to pay tuition, and get your books and your uniform and your shoes. And that really makes it very difficult for families living in poverty to say "I want my kid to go to school."

MOD: How did it all become privatized?

DR. FARMER: Well, you know, this has, unfortunately, been an enthusiasm of the elites in countries all over the world, to make things something other than a right, say, a commodity. But in Haiti-- I've worked in ten countries, and you can't really know ten countries well. And I feel like I know Haiti well, and maybe Rwanda and my own country.

But, of the ten countries in which I've worked, this is taken to the greatest extreme, this privatization. And it's really through public policies. And some of them, alas, have been championed by our own governments in the United States. Over the last eight years, for example, all assistance to Haiti, or the great majority of assistance to Haiti went through the private sector: NGOs, church groups, faith-based organizations. And very little of it went through the public sector, and without the public sector, how can you have public health, public education, public water?

So a lot of it has been policies, sometimes advocated by international financial institutions, sometimes by foreign governments, and tolerated by Haitian governments. But again, it's hard to know what Haitian governments would do if they were able to play out their time in office without being worried about being overthrown by some violent coup.

MOD: Matt, you went to Haiti in September after the hurricanes. Can you describe what you saw, where you were, what you experienced?

MATT DAMON: Yeah. I went with Wyclef Jean and some other people, a group, some people who are here tonight. And we went after the fourth hurricane rolled through. And it was almost indescribable. I mean, it was extreme poverty, which is people who are subsisting basically on a buck-twenty-five or less a day, I guess that's the definition. But, on top of it, was this other disaster. It was like a disaster on top of another disaster.

And it was basically, people were living in conditions that could only be described as inhuman. You know, I was there-- I think it was like a week or 12 days after the last hurricane. And people were still on their rooftops. It's just not something that-- I mean, the smell, everything-- everything about it was--

The first thing Wyclef actually said to me-- and he grew up in Haiti. And, we had to go in with the supplies that the U.N. was taking in. So, we hitched a ride on one of their helicopters. And, when we drove out of this little U.N. base, the first thing that hit us was this smell. And then we started to see people and the conditions in which they were living.

And this is what Wyclef said, is that as a Haitian man, coming back to his country, he said "This is not human. This is not a way human beings should live. Our animals don't live like this." And that was-- It's just not something, as an American-- I think it's very hard for us to relate to that kind of thing. And even I've traveled in the Third World a bit and seen, you know, extreme poverty up close on a number of occasions and a number of different countries. But, to see a natural disaster on top of that is indescribable, inhuman, I guess.

MOD: And where were you in Haiti?

MR. DAMON: In Gonaïves, which was this city that I think people probably saw on the news. And it was the city that had been completely cut off, because the bridges were all washed out. And so, CNN got in there. And, you know, it was the one where you saw people walking through in knee-deep and waist-deep water. The city was completely flooded.

The city lies in a flood plain. So it was the same city that got, in 2004, completely flooded. And thousands of people were killed by these floods, because deforestation is a big problem there. People cut down the trees because they need energy. That's their only source of energy. And they know all about deforestation, but they have absolutely no alternative.

And so, it's one of those things that Paul was talking about. It's a situation that's created by the situation that they live in. They're forced to kind of do this. And, as a result, that means, within the next four years, Gonaïves will certainly be flooded again in this way, because there's nothing to stop the mud and water from raging down the mountains. And, in this case, they got hit by a hurricane. So, the city was just completely underwater.

MOD: What were people asking you for?

MR. DAMON: People were asking for-- Wyclef, for those of you who don't know, Wyclef Jean is a very big huge music star, hip-hop artist. And he's a kind of musical genius who grew up in Haiti and came to America. And he really represents hope for a lot of people there, because he always comes back. And he is very active, going back and trying to start programs and help people, and try and keep Haiti in the news as much as he can.

So, to be with him, I mean, people were just literally clinging to the U.N. truck that we were on, hanging on. And, as we were leaving Gonaïves, just it wasn't even a rational thing. It was just "Let me just stay close to you for a little while longer." So one thing, I think, was hope. But, on a practical level, people were starving, and they needed food. And the World Food Program was there. They had enough food, but they were worried about doing disciplined food distributions, because people were so desperate that they were afraid the trucks were going to get torn apart, and that their workers were going to get assaulted or hurt, or there would be food riots.

I mean, I saw you the first-- before we went. And you had already been in Gonaïves, and you guys were doing food distribution, which isn't even what Partners in Health does. But that was kind of what the need was. And so, when we were there, I think it was a quarter of a million people in Gonaïves who didn't have food, you know, regular food.

And what the World Food Program had done was, I guess, they'd allotted kind of 600 lottery slots. And I don't know how they determined who won the food lottery. But families they deemed more insecure somehow than others received these numbers. And they would send the matriarch of the family out, about a kilometer away, outside of town, in the middle of the night. The distributions were done between one and three a.m. And these women would have to carry the food back and hope that they weren't robbed on the way home of their food allotment. It was absurd, really.

MOD: Linda Dorcena Forry, you are from a district where many Haitian-Americans live. You're the second Haitian-American in the State of Representatives here. How do you stay connected to Haiti?

LINDA DORCENA FORRY: Well, thank you, Amy. First, I want to thank the JFK Library for hosting us today. And it's an honor to be part of this panel. I'm first-generation American. My parents emigrated here from Haiti in the late '60s. And

growing up, you know, they taught us how to speak Haitian-Creole and how to stay connected with the Haitian community. I am now honored to represent the 12th Suffolk District, which has a large Haitian population. We know the Haitian Diaspora are really in three major cities or states. It's Miami, it's New York and it's Massachusetts.

And first of all, in terms of the hurricanes, with the structure-- and I think that is an important thing to discuss, in terms of hurricanes will happen in Haiti. And, as Matt mentioned, you know, getting the food distributed, I'm sure the roads were in horrible condition. So, when we are talking about how is it that we are going to help Haiti as Americans, and especially with President Obama and his Administration, it is very hopeful.

Because I believe that he understands the importance of Haiti, being so close to us here in America-- 600 miles from our shores, an hour and a half plane ride to Haiti. And it is something that we should care about. And I know that folks in this room do care about it. I see children, school groups that are here, that's done so much for Haiti, different churches. But I think, again, we have to look at how is it we are going to hold people responsible and accountable.

And Dr. Farmer talked about NGOs. There are several NGOs in Haiti. There's also the government, the Haitian government. And so, when we are talking about USAID, the European countries, Canada, IMF, IDB, when they are sending funds to NGOs, a majority of the money that goes into Haiti goes to NGOs. But, what is going to the Haitian government?

Again, as Dr. Farmer said, you know, we're talking about public health, public education, economic development, economic structure. But how do you do that? How is it that we could get the Haitian Diaspora to invest in Haiti? Well, we need a justice system. And I

know Brian has been working hard on that. I think, you know, I am connected in Haiti. My grandparents lived with us here, my grandmother.

But my great aunt, who lives with my parents, you know, she's in Haiti now. She goes during the wintertime. So she's there for six months, and she'll return. But, you know, we connect with her on the phone. And she gives us updates, in terms of what's happening, day-to-day, in Port-au-Prince. That's where she's located. And it's total chaos. And that's what she says to us, "It is total chaos." But she loves her country.

And so many people who have immigrated here love their Haiti. And one day, they hope to retire there. And so, it is our mission and our hope that, coming together, we will be able to figure out a solution in having the United States of America really approach Haiti in a more positive direction. Because over the years, you know, centuries, really, we have been involved, or the American government has been involved in Haiti.

But, has it always been in the positive light? No it has not. And so now, we have a chance to move in that direction. The Haitian government has put together a poverty reduction strategy paper in 2007 about "This should be the priority for Haiti." As Americans, or as people who are investing in Haiti, we shouldn't be cherry-picking where we're going to put our funds.

Let's take a look at this strategy and see. If it's infrastructure, let's focus on infrastructure. It's healthcare, if it's education-- But everything has to happen at once, at the same time, because I think Haiti is a place that needs everything to go into it. But it has to be accountability. It has to be about outcomes. It's not just sending money into Haiti and there's no follow-up, no one's going in to inspect. If someone's building a bridge, then is it built? And we're going to allocate money. But there needs to be inspection.

And for me, you know, being American and being Haitian-American, I am an American politician, I'm not a Haitian politician. But I am Haitian. And I care about Haiti because of my background and because of the population I represent. My district, like I say, that Haitian people will call me. But people all over the Commonwealth will call me, because I speak Haitian-Creole, to talk about the issues that they're facing or their families back home, and how is it that they could work on getting them here to the United States.

But again, for us, we need to focus on how are we going to stabilize Haiti, stabilize the people in Haiti, so they are able to provide a better life for themselves and their families. You know, that is the bottom line. You know, people immigrate here because there is no hope. But we need to work on trying to instill that hope. And I know the work that these gentlemen have done on this panel, you know, they've done so much to bring the spotlight on Haiti.

And I think that is critical, so people could take notice and realize this country that is right here next to us-- And, if it doesn't appeal to you because of the hunger and the death and the kids who are suffering, then if that doesn't appeal to someone, then let's look at it in terms of homeland security. It is so close to the United States. If we don't invest in Haiti, someone else will, another country will. So we need to help and really help with direction and helping Haiti move.

MOD: What about the disparity and how Haitians are treated when they attempt to come into this country, and how Cubans are treated when they attempt to come into this country?

MS. FORRY: Yeah, it's huge. I mean, that should be the first thing that President Obama does.

MOD: Can you explain what happens?

MS. FORRY: Basically what happens, that Haitians will get on a boat on the shores of Florida, or a Cuban family- you all remember Elian Gonzales. Remember the little boy? But they will come here, the Cubans will land-- or they're even in the middle of the ocean-- They will be accepted in Florida. They will have their family come and get them. Whereas a Haitian will be caught in the waters. They are turned right around back to Haiti. Or, if they make it to shore, they are thrown in jail for years. There are people that are sitting in jail in Florida because they are Haitian, and that is why. Whereas, the Cubans are let go to go meet and unite with their family.

So that is absurd. And I think that, under the former Administration, a lot of people, you know, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Haitian Diaspora and so many people came together to the Bush Administration and said "You know what? Let's grant TPS, Temporary Protective Status. Why can't we do that for Haitians? The hurricanes have hit Haiti. This is a devastation. These people are escaping for a reason, you know, and we need to give them protected status." Never happened under the administration, never happened.

MOD: Are you calling for that now?

MS. FORRY: I am calling for us to take a look at Haitians who are here, to take a look at how is it that we could give temporary status. Because Haiti is unstable, as Dr. Farmer will tell you-- and he's heading there tomorrow. And I know Matt was there during the hurricanes. I mean, it is unstable. And it is not safe.

And so, we need to figure out how is it that, when we put money into Haiti, and we talk about infrastructure, or we talk about job creation, we need to be able to help the Haitian people sustain themselves, helping the Haitian government help the Haitian people. If we could do that, people will not leave Haiti. If people have hope in Haiti, they will not leave

to come to the United States. It is a beautiful country. It *is* a beautiful country. And so, we have work to do.

[APPLAUSE]

MOD: Edwidge Danticat, the great writer, Haitian-American writer, wrote about her uncle who tried to come here, was put at the Krome Detention Facility in Florida, and ultimately died there.

MS. FORRY: Yeah, he did. He died there. And so, that is what people are facing. When we talk about the inequities, when we talk about, you know, just being from Haiti or being a Haitian person. But this is a time where we're going to change that. And everyone who is here together, working together, bringing people to talk about this little island that has-- you know, this little island 600 miles from our shores, I mean, it's so close. And we have an opportunity to do so much.

MOD: Brian Concannon, you're head of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. You work in Oregon. In 2004, I went with a small delegation, led by the Los Angeles Congress member Maxine Waters, the founder of TransAfrica, Randall Robinson, on a very small plane, but a very long ride, to the Central African Republic, where the Aristides had been dumped, once again pushed out of their country.

When we rode back on the plane, they had retrieved the Aristides, as the U.S. Government was threatening that they should not return to their country, to Haiti. President Aristide described to me the day, March, 2004, when he was forced out, when the U.S. Embassy representative went to his house. He said he was the victim of a modern-day kidnapping in a coup d'état supported by the United States.

You covered the first period when he was thrown out, 2001 to 2004. You've continued to deal with justice issues. What is happening, now, around issues of accountability and the atrocities that have taken place there?

BRIAN CONCANNON, JR.: Well going back, from 1994 until 2004 was Haiti's longest ever, really, only interlude of democracy up until that point. And we were using that period to make the justice system work for poor people. And one of the things we were doing was prosecuting prominent cases from the 1991 to 1994 dictatorship.

And it showed that democracy really works, because we were able to bring several prominent cases, one of the cases, it's called the Raboteau Massacre Case, it's one of the best human rights prosecutions anywhere in the Americas. We were able to convict the top military and paramilitary leaders. The highest ranked soldier ever deported from the U.S. to face human rights charges was deported in that case. And we were able to show that democracy works.

Unfortunately, in 2004, we were able to show-- Well, go back-- There's a Haitian proverb that says "The Constitution is paper, and a bayonet is steel." And that kind of describes most of Haitian history before 1994, where you've got the Constitution, "This is what the law says." And then whoever's got the gun says something else, and he wins. And we were trying to prove that proverb wrong, and we did for ten years.

In 2004, because our President did not like Haiti's President's economic policies-- incidentally, it's the economic policies that have failed us so badly-- [laughter] that they kidnapped him. And it was literally put him on a plane. Before that, though, they also-- and, as Paul mentioned-- undermined the democratic government through a development assistance embargo, which we called "Smart Sanctions," because they were really well directed at the Haitian poor by depriving them of food, education, healthcare and clean water. And they worked. People died, and it brought the government to its knees.

MOD: What was the program?

MR. CONCANNON: There was a whole series of-- it was a development assistance embargo, where the U.S. not only stopped all bilateral assistance-- so, U.S. assistance promised to the Haitian government-- but we also stopped other people, including the InterAmerican Development Bank and the World Bank. We said "No, you can't give Haiti any of this money." And, because the U.S. is the largest shareholder in those banks, that worked.

MOD: And why did they say that?

MR. CONCANNON: They gave a whole series of reasons. Some of them were political, some of them were economic. The basic problem was, as Paul mentioned, it was a government that was representing the poor and doing what the poor wanted, not what the United States wanted. And so, we needed to bring it to its knees. But we brought it to its knees, weren't able to actually overthrow the government. So then, that's when we did go in and kidnap the President.

When that happened--

MOD: You did that?

MR. CONCANNON: No, we as-- Well, we all did it. I did it, yes, because I was paying taxes to the government that did it. And we all were. And I think that's very important to understand, when you're talking about Haiti. The causes of Haiti's problems are complex. But one cause to most of Haiti's major problems is U.S. policy for the last 200 years. And I think that as Americans, we need to acknowledge that, and that that acknowledgement brings responsibility to do something about it. [applause]

But, to get back to your question, starting in 2006, democracy was again restored. It was interesting. When Paul was mentioning the democratic elections, he didn't mention the 2006 elections, which is, as being one of the democratic ones, I think it is ambiguous. I think there are lots of good things about it, especially the Presidential election. There are lots of ways it was not democratic, especially the parliamentary elections.

But Haiti has been kind of back into a democratic transition. You have a generally, considered to be an elected President. One of the problems is that the elected President-- and this is, when you're talking to people on the street-- they elected him, based on a very progressive political platform to provide healthcare, provide education, to establish the government services that we all fortunately take for granted in the United States.

And he's governing far to the right of that. And, in part of that, that's because he thinks he needs to please the people in Haiti that planned the last coup. But also, I think a large part of it is, he thinks he needs to please the United States. Hopefully what he needs to please the United States changed quite a bit on Tuesday. We'll find out. And I think it's extremely important for the Obama Administration to make a clean break.

You know, the Obama Administration has said, over and over, that it's time to make a clean break with the past, the failed past policies. And, rarely have-- nowhere else have the policies failed as badly as they have in Haiti over the last eight years. And I think the Obama Administration needs to step up to the plate and say "We're really changing things in Haiti," and to say, from the very beginning, that they are going to accept the democratically-elected officials of Haiti, whether they like those officials personally, whether they like those policies or not, we're going to say "We're respecting the rules of the democratic game."

And, if that happens, I think Haiti has got a great opportunity to move forward, just as it did from 1994 to 2004. And I can talk, from the justice standpoint. Paul can talk a lot of things-- Haiti was ahead of almost every other country on a lot of AIDS and infectious diseases. It had-- we take for granted-- and many of us breathed a sigh of relief on Tuesday-- when there was a transfer of power from an elected President to another elected President. Haiti, that's only happened twice in Haiti. That happened in 1996 and then again in 2001. And we need to make sure that happens again the next election and every election after that.

MOD: On that issue of justice in Haiti, and just the whole area of justice there, their courts, how does it operate now? And what do you think? How can they be supported in what they're doing?

MR. CONCANNON: That's a very good question, and a very important one. They say if you've got a hammer in your hand, every problem looks like a nail. And if you've got a lawyer's license, every problem looks like a legal problem. But, if you look at the roots of Haiti's problems, a lot of the roots do go back to the justice system. And even the hurricanes, which obviously you can't do a lawsuit against a hurricane coming in, but the damage from the hurricanes, Cuba got hit much worse by the hurricanes than Haiti did.

But damage was a tiny percentage of it because they have trees, because they have a civil defense. And one of the reasons why Haiti doesn't have trees-- and part of it's economic, that people are forced to cut down trees to eat that night-- but another part is legal. There are laws against cutting down trees. And you certainly can't enforce it against someone who's starving to death. But you can enforce it against commercial loggers, and it's not being enforced.

If you look at those buildings that collapsed, school buildings that collapsed in October-- And it was horrible. Over 100 school kids died-- That, to a large extent, is a failure of the

law. And so, the basic problem with Haiti's justice system is, for most of Haiti's history, over 350 years going back to the slavocracy, the justice system has developed to please whoever is in power, which was mostly dictatorships. And it tends to respond to whoever's got the guns and money, not the majority of people in Haiti who have neither guns nor money.

And, one of the things that we were able to do, again, between 1994 and 2004, was to force open the courthouse doors. You need to do quite-- I mean, we certainly did not change the system to become completely responsive, but there were lots of programs to train judges. There were programs to build up courthouses, to get them books, just kind of basic nuts and bolts things that make the difference between having a dictatorship justice system and a Democratic justice system.

And it really worked. Again, you know, we showed, as part of this showing, that "A bayonet is steel and a Constitution is paper," once that coup happened in 2004, all that work got erased. Everybody who was in jail legitimately got let out. And the jail cells were refilled with political prisoners because we had a dictatorship. And that was just going back to what the previous dictatorships had done.

And also, the dictatorship, this wasn't something that sort of just happened in a foreign country. We took Haiti's President out, and we put in a guy who was literally a talk show host in Boca Raton, Florida and a George Bush supporter. We said "Okay, you're prime minister, and you're running the country."

MOD: And he was-- ?

MR. CONCANNON: Gérard Latortue was his name. He's back in South Florida. And, as you mentioned accountability, I mean, there certainly is a need to prosecute him. There's also a need to go after-- and this is something that I know was controversial

throughout the Obama Administration, in terms of how much we're going to go after the Bush Administration, or people who were involved in criminal activity in the Bush Administration-- I think it's certainly important to go after the people in the Bush Administration who were involved in the kidnapping of President Aristide.

You know, there's certainly reason to say-- [Applause]-- A lot of people are saying "Well, we need to move on to do positive things, and we can't get mired in the past." The problem with that-- and this is certainly what everybody in Haiti is thinking-- is, if you don't punish people for acting illegally, they're going to do it again. And so, as long as those misdeeds go unpunished, people are going to do them again. [Applause]

MOD: There is a man who's here in jail, but not because of the number of people he killed in Haiti. Emmanuel Constant, who ultimately was really protected here under several administrations, and was imprisoned only because he got involved with a mortgage scam.

MR. CONCANNON: He was convicted of mortgage fraud. And actually, the irony of it-- and I spent years trying to get him deported so he could face justice in Haiti.

MOD: Define who he is.

MR. CONCANNON: His name is Emmanuel Constant. He was the head of FRAPH, which was the biggest death squad in Haiti between 1991 and 1994. And we actually convicted him in a case in 2004, and we spent all this time trying to get him back to Haiti to face justice. We convicted him *in absentia*. And it wasn't until he got arrested on a mortgage fraud, and he was looking at real serious time, that then the federal government came in, and actually the Department of Homeland Security came to his trial in New York, to his hearings, and said to the judge "Oh, we think you should give him this real sweetheart plea deal, where time served he gets to leave, so he can go back to Haiti."

And the only reason why they did it was because they knew that the Haitian justice system was no longer capable of retaining him. Fortunately-- and this is another good sign of grassroots pressure-- we worked with the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, which does a lot of great work on Haiti in other issues, to put political pressure, but also legal pressure.

We gave legal briefs and other information about what Mr. Constant had done in Haiti. And the judge agreed with us. He went against the recommendation of the Department of Homeland Security and the New York State prosecutor, and said "I'm throwing out this plea deal. We're going to trial." And he's now got, I think, a 12-year sentence, which should certainly give the Haitian justice system time to get ready to give him the welcome he deserves. [Laughter and applause]

MOD: He had been on the payroll of the CIA.

MR. CONCANNON: Yeah. The reason why he was protected was he had been on the payroll of the CIA. And, in fact, he was actually ordered deported in 1994. And Linda was talking about deportations of Haitians. Normally, before a deportation order ink is dry, the Haitians are back in Haiti. And this guy was allowed to stay for ten years because he was a CIA asset, because his death squad activities were actually done with the advice and the consent of our Intelligence community.

MOD: Paul Farmer, we talked about the deforestation. And people might think of that as just an environmental issue. But, can you explain, as people think of new policies towards Haiti, exactly how it got deforested? And tell us the story of the pink pig.

DR. FARMER: Ah, the pink pig, yeah. That came very late in the game, the pink pig story. But, you know, just before I go to that, I would like to say, you know, Haiti has

been being pillaged for a long time. You know, in 1492, the first European settlement happened in Haiti because one of those three boats-- whatever they're called-- Santa Maria, Nina, Pinta? [Laughter] -- one of them-- how did I do, John? Was that good? [Laughter]-- foundered off the shores of Haiti.

So, you know, after a while, we're talking about the establishment of plantations, including the much more extensive French slave plantations that happened after-- mostly after 1697. But, you know, massive deforestation of the lowlands began a long time ago, again, not-- The Haitians, by the way, who lived there before 1492, didn't even last a century. They all died. And there may have been-- There certainly were hundreds of thousands of natives there. We're not sure how many, because none survived.

And then, that's why the importation of people kidnapped from Africa, pretty startling reversal what happened in 2004 when we kidnapped someone from Haiti and dumped them in Central Africa-- But anyway, so this deforestation process was already an issue during the French colony. You heard things about declining soil. That's one thing about slave owners, they keep meticulous records. So you can read all about their fears about their soil quality. They didn't have too many fears for the quality of care they were giving to their chattel slaves.

And then, you know, after 1915, in 1915 the United States government invaded Haiti. Now, Brian and I, on Sunday, wrote a little op-ed in our local paper, *The Boston Globe*, as opposed to *The Boston Haitian Reporter*. [Laughter] So, we said that we invaded Haiti to get back a debt for CitiGroup-- Oh wait, CitiGroup's gone. Which one was it? Citibank, Lehman Brothers, CitiGroup, I get confused. [Laughter]

But some of the other justifications used at the time, one of them, my favorite one, was "The United States Marines were sent in to decrease German influence in Haiti."

[Laughter] And we pretty much had warships there all the time, from the late 19th century on to 1915. And then we just went in with the troops.

Now, the Haitians fought back. I grew up in Florida, which is a small state about an hour and a half from Haiti. [Laughter] And I never learned this stuff. You know, I didn't know that there was a resistance to the U.S. occupation. I didn't know there was a U.S. occupation in Haiti, for 20 years. FDR pulled the troops out in 1934. But the U.S. Marine Corps did an investigation of atrocities committed by U.S. troops in Haiti. And the head of the Marine Corps said "This is the worst thing that has ever happened in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. And I hope nothing like this will ever happen again."

Someone even won a Nobel Peace Prize for writing about the Haitian occupation, an American. So, it's been completely erased from our historical memory. But, from 1959, you know, someone-- I thought I was going to be a blogger. And then I realized that the good thing about blogging, people say, is that people respond to all your comments immediately. Well I finally did that, and I found it very unpleasant to have people respond to my comments. [Laughter]

So, one of my colleagues from Partners in Health showed me the very nasty comments that were written in response to Brian's and my editorial, which basically laid out the argument we just laid out here now. The United States has a major role in Haiti's travails. And we're American, so let's stop it. But the responses I saw were like "How dare you blame the United States for Haiti's problems?" We actually didn't do that. In our op-ed, we said "We've done some good things in Haiti too, and we could do more good things. Let's stop doing bad things."

Back to the pink pigs-- [laughter]-- You thought I'd forgotten that, didn't you, Amy? But you forgot, I've been on your show many times. I go around in circles, and I get right

back to where you left me. [Laughter] So the pink pigs-- And that was an eye-opener for me, not pink pigs in general, but these pink pigs.

I was 23 years old and was in Haiti. And I wanted to go to Haiti desperately. Not all through college, but for a long time, I'd been reading about Haiti, I had been applying myself in nerdy fashion-- This was before I did my action series, *The Bourne Ultimatum* and all that. [Laughter] So I was really hitting the books, learning Haitian Creole. And, when I got there, there was a threat of African swine flu, a threat. I don't think there was a documented case in Haiti, after we looked back. I can't believe you remember this. I wrote about this a long time ago.

But, at that time, under the Duvalier dictatorship, you know, we had enormous influence. Basically, the majority-- It's funny, Linda, you pointed out, and I did too, that during these last few years, we've given lots of aid to Haiti, but never through the government. But we gave plenty of aid to Haiti when the government was a dictatorship. That's when we ran all of our aid through the government. It's when they elected their own government that we said "No, we couldn't possibly give aid to the Haitian government."

And so, we were reigning supreme. And the United States said "Well, the U.S. pig industry is threatened by African swine flu. So we are going to have a program"-- which I remember, curiously enough, was called "PEPEDEP(?)." I love acronyms, you know. But we're going to kill every Creole pig in Haiti, every single one.

And, you know, I was living in rural Haiti, and I was 23 years old. And I was thinking "This is going to be bad." Because Haitians, the people I lived with, used the pigs as a sort of bank. To send their kids to school, they'd sell the pig, buy uniforms-- I told you they have to buy these things, uniforms, books, school tuition-- And, if someone died, to pay for the funeral. So the pigs were a big deal, in terms of where you put your capital.

And it was really-- I saw pig-related violence everywhere, PRV we called it. [Laughter] But I know I'm dragging this story out. So then, they were going to replenish the population. It sounds better in French-- you were going to repopulate the pig population, hence PEPEDEP. And we were enthusiastic. Some of my colleagues from Partners in Health, my Haitian colleagues who were already there, we were enthused. We wanted those pigs back.

So the local people were saying "We have to have pigs. We rely on the pigs. They're our banking system." And so, I said "Okay, we're going to help do this." So they brought in these Iowa pigs. They may not really have been from Iowa, but they looked like pigs might look had they been from Iowa. [Laughter] And they were-- I mean, they looked kind of like rhinoceroses that were pink. They were really big.

MOD: Princess pigs?

DR. FARMER: Princess pigs. And so, they said "Well, in order to get the pigs"-- this was all USAID, basically-- "You have to build a pig sty. And it has to have a cement floor." Now remember, we're talking about living in a squatter settlement where people didn't have cement floors. But, to get the pigs, we had to have a cement floor sty. And it had to have a tin roof. And then the pigs got hot, so you had to spray them with water. It was very complicated.

So we finally got the pigs. Are you sorry you asked me this question now? [Laughter] And then we tried to distribute them to community councils, because we grew the pigs into elephant sized pigs, because we had feed and we could do it, and the cement floor. And the Haitians were saying "You know, do you have to rub this in our face?" I mean, the way the Haitians said it is, "The pigs have better homes than Christians." That's what Haitians said.

MOD: And so the pigs died? The pigs died? They had to--

DR. FARMER: You trying to speed me up? Yeah, we distributed the pigs to local community councils to be jointly owned. This was our romantic-- You know, people could jointly own pigs. I didn't know you couldn't jointly own pigs. And then, the PRV started again, pig-related violence. And so, we eventually gave up. And Haiti-- my point here-- is a graveyard of failed development projects, a graveyard. And we've been involved in some. But we can make them better. We can make them smarter.

MOD: And losing their piggy banks, losing their support, they go into the mountains, and they cut down the forests.

DR. FARMER: -- the trees.

MOD: And that leads to--

DR. FARMER: And, you know, they can't send their kids to school. They don't have enough cooking fuel. There are some people here tonight from MIT-- talk about nerds. [Laughter] Anyway, they are helping us develop some alternative energy programs. But we need what Linda said-- We need serious support-- You have to do all these things at once, is what she said, which is right.

It would be great if I could go in, say, with my colleagues, "We're going to focus on medical care." And we can only focus on medical care if someone is focusing on deforestation and the justice system, etcetera. Otherwise, we get involved, as Brian and I have, in prison health. You know, we have to come together to do these things. So, we need to think about the trees, the pigs, the dogs, the cat--

MOD: I want to encourage people to write down questions, because they're going to be collected, to ask our panelists. But, on the issue of the NGOs replacing the governments, how NGOs operate in Haiti, and how you strengthen the government, Linda could you respond to that?

LINDA DORCENA FORRY: Okay. Well, I will respond. And then I'd love for Dr. Farmer and also Brian to respond as well, because they've worked in Haiti, and I have never worked in Haiti, okay, and to see it up close and personal. But again, it goes back to basics. If we are going to help the Haitian government help the Haitian people, then we need to be able to give them support.

And, as Dr. Farmer mentioned-- and I can understand where, before the U.S. government or the different funding organizations-- European countries-- didn't want to fund the government, because maybe of corruption. There was a whole thing of "Haiti is corrupt," in terms of the government.

DR. FARMER: Like Enron. [Laughter]

MS. FORRY: But now, we have a government that was-- You know, the people elected a President. It is pretty much a stable government. And so, the question is, why is it that, when the monies that are flowing into Haiti, the NGOs, that's fine. But a majority of the money should not be going to NGOs. It should be going to the government directly so they could work on public health, so they could work on the school system, so they could work on the judicial system when people are building schools.

And being Haitian-American, I have to say, as Haitians, we do think we know how to do everything, a little bit. Like even though you're not in construction, you'll think "Wow, [speaking Creole] [Laughter] I know how to build that school. I'm going to build that house." And it's like "Well, do you have a degree in architecture? Are you a

construction-- ?” You know, they're not. But yet, they're going to try to build something, whereas, the system, the justice system that could support that.

So, everything has to come together. And I think that, you know, not to take away from NGOs, but if we are going to talk seriously about Haiti, and if we are going to talk about moving it in the right direction and really helping the people who are there, helping the most vulnerable, helping the most needy, creating opportunities where, in terms of public education--

UMass Boston, for instance, is in a partnership right now with the State University of Haiti, working with the business program. Instead of bringing Haitians here to come to school here, it's really building the infrastructure in Haiti, giving the support. So, when they're taking the classes, you know, how is it? Are we creating leaders, creating opportunity? It's not just coming to the States, it's what is it that we're doing in Haiti that's going to allow people to stay there, to run Haiti, and to create a better place, a better place for people and their families?

And, you know, we have work to do. And I would say that-- Brian had mentioned this the other day-- When people would ask you a question, you know, “What are the two things they should invest in Haiti? What are the two things that should be done for Haiti? Give us two things, and we could change Haiti around.” And Brian would say “Well, it's like a car. It needs a steering wheel. It needs an engine. It needs brakes. It needs wheels. You could give a steering wheel. But, is the car going to go anywhere? You could give us an engine, but it's not going anywhere. So it needs everything.”

And working together, working on different pieces, it can work. And it is working, with the work that Dr. Farmer is doing, Matt and Brian, and the work we're trying to do with the Haitian Diaspora. \$1.2 billion dollars enter Haiti a year from the Haitian Diaspora, \$1.2 billion going to families, going to support different organizations. But really, it's

family. It's one-on-one, reaching out to your neighborhood. And \$1.2 billion, that is a lot of money.

And there is a lot of people here, the Haitian Diaspora, who want to invest in Haiti, who may want to go back and create a business. But again, it goes back to the judicial system. Folks in my family who live in Haiti, I have a cousin, my mom's cousin, bought land in Haiti, right, who was going to build a house. And that land has been sold ten times over, ten times, to ten different people, ten different deeds. He's building his house. People are coming up and saying "Wait a minute. This is my land. What are you doing?" So that is a problem. That's just an example of how much work needs to be done. But, you know, working together, I think we could get through it.

MOD: Matt, what are you doing since you've come back? Why had you decided to go down? I mean, what a difference it makes to have such a huge celebrity go to Haiti and bring attention to it.

MATT DAMON: Well it was funny. You know, we went down there, and we actually delayed our trip because of the final hurricane-- Hurricane Ike, it was the last hurricane was coming, had hit Haiti, but was coming. And remember, it hit the Gulf Coast. And we delayed our trip a day because, you know, CNN had all their guys in the red windbreakers. And they were all down there, like, doing their windblown shots. And we knew we would never be able to invade that news cycle.

So we waited until things kind of calmed down, and we went. And, as we were coming back from Haiti, everybody's BlackBerries on the plane started going crazy. Because it was September 15th, and Lehman had just failed. And so, you know, the whole purpose of Wyclef and my going down, I mean, obviously it was to do food distributions and whatever. But it's obviously to try to draw attention. And it's much easier to get on the

news if you're promoting a *Bourne* movie than it is if you're talking about people who are dying 600 miles away, for really unnecessary reasons.

And so, we came back, and it was very frustrating. I mean, we got on CNN. CNN International put us on, in a taped segment. But we probably got seven minutes of air time, of just trying to explain what we'd seen, in the frankest terms we could, to try to get some kind of spotlight on it. But we were really frustrated by it. So, on the contrary to feeling like a big star going down there, I felt like kind of a jackass, you know.

[Laughter] Because we came back, and we couldn't--

In fact, we did a radio interview-- no, we did a telephone interview on CNN from the Port-au-Prince Airport. They said "Oh, they've agreed to get you on." And so, we called in, Wyclef and I called in. And we were sitting there, and we had to listen to the first ten minutes of CNN before they put us on in their cycle. So ten minutes into the-- So we listened to the first ten minutes, and it was all about Hurricane Ike. And you could hear these people who were still down on the Gulf Coast going "There are yachts in the street. It is just-- I've never seen anything like this." [Laughter]

And to take nothing away, I mean obviously, people actually did die in Hurricane Ike, you know, here in America. But I just remember feeling, after what we had seen, and how horrible it really was in Haiti, that we just had very different yardsticks by which, you know, we measure disasters. And so, I don't know what the answer to that is. I mean, I emailed Paul at the time. And Paul said "Well look, all I got is a column in *The Nation*, you know, readership 1,500." [Laughter]

And this was true-- I mean, and it was really horrible down there. But, I mean, anyway, going back to the last thing, I mean, Paul said, the first night I met him, that what Haiti needs-- and, in keeping with what you were saying, Linda, is a Marshall Plan. That's really what it needs. And, in all the kind of extreme poverty work where they do all these

polls, people dying unnecessarily, and because they're extremely poor, doesn't actually move people.

The national security argument doesn't even move people. That was a new argument that came out post-9/11, that we were hoping would kind of get some traction. We said "Look, well, there's a Midrasah(?) right there. If you're not talking to them, they're going to be, you know--" And on the heels of all these kind of failing attempts to kind of garnish the fort, what they did find had some traction in their polling, was if programs are effective, then people will stay with them.

So, for me, it's just to try to find things that are working and try to put as much attention on them as possible, because people, I think, want to feel like-- They don't want to be told there's this problem that they can't do anything about. On the contrary, they want to be told that there is this giant problem, and they want to rise to the challenge of fixing it. And I think we find ourselves at a time when we have serious challenges here.

And so, perhaps that's going to be the movement and the challenge of Obama if he can actually really get people to answer this call. But I hope that, kind of, poverty here and issues here, in the addressing of those issues, the issues of extreme poverty, which is really a different and more incredibly horrible thing, could also be a part of that. I'm hoping that this kind of new hopeful and youthful energy is directed at those problems, because those problems are actually fixable. And there are practical, very practical simple solutions that do work, and they can work.

MOD: I know Danny Glover is making a film about Toussaint L' Overture, and in the United States sought funding, ultimately went to Venezuela, and then was criticized for that, but saying "Here, this country is so close to ours, and yet how little interest." You mentioned Lehman Brothers, Matt. Brian, you write with Paul in *Change Haiti Can Believe In*, in your op-ed piece, "We also need to invest in democracy. Three days'

spending in Iraq or two weeks' interest on the bank bailout could fund Haiti's entire government for a year." What would a Marshall Plan look like?

BRIAN CONCANNON, JR.: Well, I think before that, before we get to the economics, the first thing that we need to do is to make it clear that we're going to respect the Haitian government. And I think, as part of that, the second thing is that we would need to go along with their priorities. And, as Linda mentioned, there's the PRSP, which is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper that the Haitian government has put out. And certainly, the plan would be to finance that according to the priorities set by the elected Haitian government.

But beyond that, I think we do need to be generous relative to Haiti-- but it's not relative to anything else. You know, as you mentioned, it's a tiny percentage of either the war or the bailout package. And Haiti is a place where we can make a very little bit of honest U.S. help can make a huge difference, because it's a relatively small economy. There's a lot of people, but it's a small economy. It's close.

There's things that we've done that have worked. And, again, in the medical field, Paul has demonstrated it. We demonstrate it in the legal field. There's lots of good projects that have worked in Haiti. And I think we need to revive the programs that have worked, build the Haitian government's capacity to run their own programs, which is, in the end, the solution.

One of the things that the previous economic development and humanitarian aid has done is to treat only the symptoms and not deal with the root causes. And, you know, certainly people are starving. We've got to figure out a way of getting some food. But there's going to be a crisis tomorrow in Haiti, and there's going to be a crisis the next day. And people are going to be hungry again unless the root causes are addressed. And so, you

need to reduce-- You need to address the root causes. One of them is that the government doesn't have capacity. So, any U.S. aid needs to develop Haiti's own capacity.

The other is you have to treat the problem of inequality. One of the things, everybody is shocked when they get to Haiti-- you see Cirque de Soleil and other poor areas. It's obviously very shocking. And I don't know, Matt, if you went up to Pétionville, but you go up to Pétionville, and you see houses that are huge by the standards of anywhere in the United States.

And, if you drive around Haiti, there's people driving around in SUVs with chauffeurs, and then everybody else is walking or on tap-taps. And you just get this huge gulf, where you've got some of the richest people in the world and some of the poorest people in the world. And that's one of the things that we need to do, is to help the government close that equality gap.

MOD: Brian, this is a question from the audience. "Please put Haiti in the larger context of Latin American politics, especially given the wave of countries who've elected governments on their own terms, like Venezuela, Paraguay, Uruguay, etcetera."

MR. CONCANNON: That's a really good question, and it's a question that, fortunately, the answer is changing for the better. I think that one of the reasons why-- People always ask me, every time I speak, someone says "Why Haiti? Why are we doing this?" And one of the answers that I gave was it was kind of like this domino theory, that if Haiti was allowed to become a progressive, popularly-elected democracy, then other countries would start wanting that as well.

And I think that does explain why we invest a huge amount of money in keeping Haiti down. Fortunately, that cat is out of the bag. I think you do have progressive elected democracies elsewhere in Latin America, especially Venezuela and in South America.

And Venezuela has the money and is able to support other countries, including Haiti, that are going along that path.

And so, in a sense, it's actually almost impossible to kind of go back to our pre-2002 policies because, in fact, it has been demonstrated-- not by Haiti, but by other countries-- that progressive democracy can bring dividends to the people. And so, that's only going to help Haiti. It's going to make it harder for the U.S. -- It's going to give the U.S. less incentive to keep Haiti down. And Venezuela has, especially, been very generous in its support to Haiti; in terms of giving it discounted fuel, in terms of giving support for other bottom-up development efforts.

MOD: This is a question from Denise. "Given Aristide's exile in South Africa, he is the political face of the Haitian people. What are the chances he'll be permitted to return to govern Haiti and organize a government? And secondly, where did you get the land to build your clinics, hospitals, schools?"

DR. FARMER: That's for me? Well, I don't--

MR. DAMON: I'll take that one. [Laughter]

DR. FARMER: Yeah, get that. [Laughter] You know, the first question, I have no idea what are the chances. As I said before, the chances are generated, not just in Haiti, but here and Haiti. So part of that is going to have to do with local considerations in Haiti, and others, translocal, transnational considerations here. And then, I don't know if that's what Aristide wants. I don't know the answer to these things. Maybe Brian will.

MOD: Just a little background. When Aristide was forced out, when he came back to the Western Hemisphere, I think it was Rice and Powell who were threatening, saying he was not to return to this Hemisphere. Randall Robinson responded, "Whose Hemisphere?"

And the ambassador said not to come within 150 miles of Haiti. And he said “Whose country?” But he ended up going to Jamaica to pick up his girls, and then they went to South Africa. He’s since gotten, yet another degree in South Africa.

DR. FARMER: Yeah, he’s gotten a degree in African languages, a Doctoral Degree. And that’s with those strange clicks in the language. Now, when I say I don’t know what he wants, I know he wants to return to his home, like his children and wife do. But I don’t know the answer to that question about as a political leader. I can certainly say how I’d feel about returning as a political leader after being overthrown twice by military coups, but that’s me. And I’d like to hear what Brian has to say about that.

Now, it’s a great question about where we get our land for the hospitals. And it goes back to Linda’s point, the point that all of us have underlined. You know, back in the 80s-- and I think we could justify this, in looking at some of my colleagues-- we didn’t really want to work with the Duvalier dictatorship. Call us old fashioned. [Laughter] And so, we were working mostly with church groups and local community organizations. And so, the place where the big hospital that John mentioned is built, it’s built on church property.

But about ten years ago, we started doing what I think is a good exercise for NGOs-- this is Partners in Health-- and our local sister organization, *Zanmi Lasante*-- and saying “Okay, well we’re taking care of poor people who are sick, and that’s good. And we’re getting a lot of kids in the school, and that’s good. But what are we doing wrong? What could we do better?”

And we had tried to work with the government, the first elected government in 1991, but it was overthrown after about seven months. It was a very, very difficult and really deadly time. And then, when the constitutionally-elected government was returned, we started trying to work with them again. But finally, in 2000, we were very optimistic.

And, you know, a lot of us are still optimistic, in spite of all the bad things that have happened.

We said “We need to build a new kind of NGO, because there are so many NGOs and church groups.” I’ve been to a state in the southern United States-- I won't mention which one-- But they have two dioceses, two Catholic dioceses. And it’s close to Washington, and it’s southern. [Laughter] And they have a Democratic Senator they just elected. And they went Obama. Anyway-- And my mother is named after that state, maybe. [Laughter]

But anyway, so they have two dioceses. And, in those two dioceses, in one of them-- Catholic dioceses-- there are 80 parish twinning projects, with parishes, churches in Haiti, just in that one part of central Haiti. So you want to go and say “Hey, couldn’t we be greater than the sum of our parts?”

So, what we tried to do ten years ago, back to your point about land, is to say we’re only going to expand in the public sector. We’re an NGO. We are affiliated with a small community based college here in Cambridge, Massachusetts that you dropped out of [Laughter] and with a lot of church groups and community groups. But we’re only going to expand in the public sector.

So, when townsmen come to us and say “You know, we want Partners in Health to build a hospital for us. We’ll give you the land,” we say “No, give the land to the Ministry of Health and ask them to mandate that we come in and build infrastructure here and help work there.” And that’s been our MO. And that’s why I’m going back tomorrow, so that’s why we’ve been in and out of Haiti so much with our colleagues, is we’re trying to continue that model of rebuilding public infrastructure, taking care of sick people, and preventing illness, but also training lots of people.

And so, the land is owned by the people of Haiti, by the Republic of Haiti. And we believe that's how-- You talk about sustainability, it'll be sustained because it's owned, lock, stock and barrel, every bit of it, by the Haitian government and the Haitian people.
[Applause]

MOD: Brian Concannon, your answer on Aristide.

MR. CONCANNON: Sure. The legal situation is actually uncontroversial and pretty simple. The Haitian Constitution allows any Haitian to return. The government is not allowed to require anybody a Visa. And so, President Aristide has the legal right to return. And that legal right, obviously, as everybody's legal rights, should be respected.

Politically, it's controversial. And I think one of the interesting questions to ask, as an American citizen, is why is it controversial. If another country, if President Bush went out traveling somewhere and China decided "No, we don't think President Bush plays a constructive role in U.S. society. We're not going to let him return," I mean, I guess I might have some glee- I got to be a little bit honest. [Laughter]

But, after that got over, I mean, I would be outraged, because what does China have the right to say President Bush can't come back to his own country? And, when people start saying "Oh, it's a complicated situation about whether Aristide should return," I ask them, I said "Can you name"-- Oh, and President Aristide hasn't been charged or convicted of any crime-- I say "Have you ever-- Can you name me one country, in the history of the world, anywhere in the world, where an elected former President-- or anybody saying an elected former President shouldn't come back?" And no one's ever given me an example.

And it's just one of these things where there's all these rules that only apply to Haiti, and this is one of them. And it's hard to explain rules that only apply to Haiti without looking

at racism. And I think that [applause] -- I hope that the Obama Administration just takes a look at international law and the Haitian Constitution, and says "He's got the right to return. We don't have the right to dictate, to tell the Haitian government to violate its own Constitution. And so, that's our position on it."

Actually, one other quick question. Because I think the question I was asked said "Will he return to form a government?" And President Aristide-- in Haiti you're allowed two non-consecutive terms as President. President Aristide has had his two non-consecutive terms. There's an argument-- many of his supporters are arguing he should, because he spent a total of half his mandate in exile, that he should get those five years back. He has not made that argument. He has said he wants to return as a private citizen and not to form a government, or not to run as President.

MOD: Linda Dorcena Forry, do you have an opinion on this?

LINDA DORCENA FORRY: Again, it goes back to the Constitution. And so, if the Constitution states that, I don't see why he should not return back to Haiti. Now, in terms of him governing and running, that's a different story. I do think, as a Haitian person, he has the right to return home with his family. That's how I feel about it.

MOD: Matt, I won't ask how you feel about that, but I will ask you this question.

MATT DAMON: I'm stuck on the China not letting Bush come back. [Laughter] Sorry, sorry, I was lost in a moment of reverie.

MOD: Well, this is a question from Jeff in the overflow room. Can you speak to the duty of celebrities to utilize their influence to address worldwide inequities?

MR. DAMON: I think it's probably personal. I think an individual choice. I think it just depends on who you are. I feel like I should try to be a good citizen of my country and of the world. And, you know, I have this-- As Mr. Shattuck was saying earlier, I wish that it wasn't down to actors to try to get on CNN to shine a light on some of this stuff. But that's where we are right now. And it's within my sphere of influence. And I really do feel like it's a good thing and the right thing. But I can't say what the role of "celebrity," in general, is. I think it's a personal decision. Sorry, it's not a very exciting answer.

MS. FORRY: But I think it's great you're doing it, though. That's wonderful, because that is the key. We need people like Matt Damon and Wyclef Jean and folks who are out there in the mainstream, in terms of the actors or the musicians, to highlight Haiti and to put a spotlight on it, to show people that "Wait a minute, this little country-- Wait, people care about it, and we need to care about it." And so, thank you for that.

MR. DAMON: Thank you. [Applause] I actually came to speak on the panel tonight because I couldn't get a ticket. It was my only way. [Laughter]

MOD: Paul Farmer, the significance of people-- I know there are folks in the room, right now, who have supported you, and what that means for your organization, for Partners in Health?

DR. FARMER: Well, you know, I was thinking, as Matt was speaking, there's actually a group of musicians here tonight from Canada, which is-- I got to ask Sarah Palin- I think that's to the north of here. [Laughter] And, you know, they use their celebrity to help in a very pragmatic way. And so, I'm very grateful. And I agree, Matt, with what Linda said. It makes a big difference.

They have not only supported us with their celebrity-- And when I say support, the lead singer of this group-- I'm still a little bit bitter, because at 45 years old, I went to the first

rock concert of my life-- again, nerd. [Laughter] And it was theirs, when I got there-- maybe I was 46 when I got there-- they offered me ear plugs. [Laughter] But anyway, I rejected those.

But I noticed that the lead singer, who's an American, had written in Haitian Creole on his guitar "*Sak vid pa kanpe,*" you know, "An empty sack can't stand up." It's an anti-hunger slogan from Haiti. So there is this symbolic gesture, because so many young people listen to their music, or Wyclef's music, for that matter.

But then also, one of the things they did was to bring even much more pragmatic solidarity, which was to link their concert tour revenue, every dollar or every Euro of it, to Partners in Health. And, you know, I can't do that. I mean, I'm a great singer, granted. [Laughter] And I was particularly good in my acting career.

But, you know, we doctors, nurses, the people in this room from Partners in Health or procurement, you know, who maybe know how to-- We do know how to build hospitals. We do know how to build healthcare systems. You know, I've trained community health workers. But we can't-- We certainly can't survive in an economic circumstance like this one or after the hurricanes in Haiti.

We need something more than donors. What we need is supporters, because we want to create, in this town certainly, a community of concern. I think we have created a community of concern, and I think there are a lot of Partners in Health supporters here. That's what it means to me. It means not only that people are going to be more aware about Haiti and the need to do the things that we've talked about this evening, but also, people are going to make sure that good work with effects, as Matt said, with outcomes, is going to continue to be supported.

MOD: Talking about good works-- [applause] Gerard Lopez writes "I have acquired an orphanage in Opesh(?), Haiti. How would I go about building resources for 50 children in a small village?"

DR. FARMER: He acquired an orphanage? How do you acquire an orphanage?

MOD: I'm just reading the question. [Laughter]

DR. FARMER: You go down to EBay, like where Sarah Palin sold her plane? Alright, Sarah Palin jokes are over now. [Laughter] That's so 2008. How would you get what? Procure what? I was like in my own reverie--

MOD: Building resources for 50 children in a small village.

DR. FARMER: Well, you know, one of the things that I would caution-- first of all, I would be glad to talk about the pragmatics about building resources around school instruction, basic medical care, etcetera. That I'd be glad to talk about after this. But, one of the things that struck me is that there are a lot of orphans who aren't really orphans. They're really-- They're separated from a living parent, or even two, by poverty.

And so, these orphanages sort of-- they rise and fall with the economic tides. And that is troubling to me, because people think about that there must be tens of millions of orphans out there who need either a family or to be in an orphanage. I'm not so sure. You know, they may need to have food security in their house, or to be able to go to school, or not to be a child servant. And that's really a reflection, not of being parentless, but being very poor, being born to a poor family. [Applause]

I say that, you know, I have an adopted child. But I can count on two hands the number of children who I have seen, over the last 25 years, abandoned in Haiti, completely,

babies in any case. So, we need to be aware that one of the things that-- I mean, maybe what this person could do is to use that orphanage as an entry point to think very seriously about child survival, about poverty and inequality, and about making sure that kids do not have to be separated from their parents because of extreme poverty. And again, on the pragmatics of procurement and building and all that, I'll be glad to talk. But be careful.

MOD: Why is Haiti so much poorer than other Caribbean countries with similar natural resources or lack thereof? And the question goes on to say, why are there so many more Haitian immigrants to the U.S. than from other Caribbean countries?

DR. FARMER: Matt, you want to take that?

MR. DAMON: You want me to take it? [Laughter]

DR. FARMER: You know, I'll just start, because everybody here has something to say about that. So, to understand Haiti's dire poverty, you know, you do need to have a very-- I don't want to sound nerdy again, but you have to have a historically deep and geographically broad analysis. [Applause] Well thank you. Why didn't my thesis advisor applaud at Harvard when I did that? [Laughter] And my first book, which sold 12 copies, all of them found in my mother's closet in Orlando later? [Laughter]

MR. CONCANNON: The book *The Uses of Haiti*, which was the second book I read when I went down to Haiti in 1994, and it's still one of the best things I've ever seen written about Haiti. [Applause]

DR. FARMER: But back to this notion, which sounds so straightforward, historically deep and geographically broad. Do not believe, for a minute, that you can understand Haitian poverty without understanding the transatlantic slave trade, without

understanding the economy of France, the gorgeous cities of Bordeaux and Paris, built on the back of Haitian slavery. Don't think-- [applause]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

DR. FARMER: You're welcome, dear. [Laughter]

MOD: And, can you just comment that, despite that, Haiti had to pay an enormous debt to France for decades.

DR. FARMER: Yeah, never, in the history of the world, has anything so terrible or absurd-- and absurd, than encountered. So the Haitian people, who had been the majority of slaves, fight the greatest army in the world, Napoleon's, and then of course the Americans chipping in on whose side? Napoleon's. The French getting involved, the Spanish.

So, feedback, all of these armies, 80,000 people, men, set sail from Europe to retake Haiti. And 80,000 people failed miserably. The Haitians won their own independence, fair and square. And then, to have to pay for their own liberation, pay France \$125 germinal francs, is obscene.

MOD: Which comes to-- ?

DR. FARMER: Well, according to some economists, it comes to about \$20 billion dollars, adjusting for inflation. But it's a lot of money. And, you know, so historically deep, geographically broad, don't think you can understand Haiti's deforestation without understanding the American occupation or Haitian political structures post-1915, without looking at the U.S. occupation.

So, on and on it goes. And don't forget the role of racism. In the 19th century, why did the United States send no envoy to the only other independent nation in Latin America? And Brian's already mentioned, and Linda's already mentioned. So, to understand Haiti's dire poverty, it's really important to understand history and economy.

And why? Because what are the default explanations for Haiti's poverty? Haitian culture, Haitian psychology, Haitian cognitive deficits, Haitian attitudes, on and on the list goes. But it's a list that conveniently erases all of history, so that we don't have to see that we actually had a big role in making Haiti the way it is. [Applause]

MOD: In your line of work, Dr. Farmer, you must face many disappointments, frustrations and setbacks. What keeps you motivated to face another day's challenges? That question put to you by Boston teens.

DR. FARMER: By Boston teens? Like teenagers?

MOD: I think so.

DR. FARMER: None of your business. [Laughter] No, you know, I was going to say action movies, and you would think I was just saying that for Matt. [Laughter] But what-- Teens in Print? Oh, it's like an interview. So is that going into a public venue? Alright, well, you know, one thing I will say to you Teens in Print is be part of a team. You know, be part of a team like the team I'm lucky enough to be part of.

I'll give you a little example. I have members of my team here, tonight, and I'm very lucky to work with them. Also, working with thousands of people who can't be here because they could never get a plane ticket or a visa. But, when Partners in Health went to Africa to work in Rwanda, Lesotho and Malawi, who do you think went with us? The Haitians. Oh yeah, the Haitians went with us to help launch these projects.

So, if you want to keep motivated-- because there are lots of disappointments of Haitians: death, you know, a project that fails, or another coup, more violence. And I'm looking at one of my best friends, who was a student of mine many years ago. We were in Haiti during the last coup, and it was really violent and ugly, as the one before that had been. And it's very, very distressing. But work with a big team. Because, when you're working with a team, someone on that team will always be full of vigor and energy and optimism when you need it. That's my best advice. [Applause]

MOD: And, as we wrap up today, just a quick comment from each of you, because the other questions involve "Is there extensive microfinance opportunity in Haiti?" "How can you encourage our new Administration to lend a positive attention to Haiti?" "If the U.S. were to go into Haiti to jump-start improvements, what would you start with? Planting 10,000 trees? Bring machinery to pave roads? Offer teaching services? Is there a priority?"

I think there's a real desire, here, of people. And it's remarkable to see hundreds of people gathered to talk about this issue. Where do we go from here, at a moment when possibly, the door is not wide open, but it may possibly be open a crack? How do people kick it open?

MR. CONCANNON: Well first, as you mentioned at the beginning, Amy, you have a great opportunity with President Obama. But we also have a lot of other opportunities. Another one is in the legislature. And the last time we had a presidential transition, the head of the House Foreign Relations Committee was Jesse Helms. Now it's John Kerry. There's a lot of distance there. [Applause]

And people like John Kerry, they care about what people in this room think. The President cares. He's beholden like no President in history to grassroots organizations.

There are Obama house parties. There's a Obama@Change.org, Change.gov internet sites. If we all get on those, we go to house parties, and every time we're at an Obama house party, we say "What about Haiti?" If we call our representative and say "What about Haiti?" If we get on Change.gov and say "We support this for Haiti," we'll make that change. We'll be able to force that door open.

And I'd recommend two things that people do: one, stay informed; and two, stay engaged. And staying informed is not always that easy. I mean, Paul's written a whole book on misinformation on Haiti. But it's possible. Watch *Democracy Now!*, which we didn't have-- you weren't in 700 outlets in 2000. Now you are. There's great websites, Partners in Health has a website, www.gauge.org.

MOD: And they're watching right now.

MR. CONCANNON: And they're watching. And people are also watching from our website, www.haitijustice.org. There's lots of things you can do to plug in. Partners in Health, again, has lots of advocacy things you can-- there's whole things you can do to help. And it's both giving money, but it's also political advocacy.

We have a program, it's called Half Hour for Haiti, where once every other week we put out a concrete and informative action alert. It's something you can do to advance human rights in Haiti. There's lots of local organizations all over the country, where people can plug in to do Haiti work. And I think that, if enough people stay-- it doesn't have to be an awful lot of people; but, if we get some people to stay engaged and informed on Haiti, we really can make a clean break from the past.

MOD: State Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry.

MS. FORRY: I would reiterate the same thing Brian said. I think it is important, in terms of everyone who's here, to stay involved and stay plugged in. But it is about our congressional delegation, and reaching out and speaking to them, and saying it is important, when talking to President Obama, keeping it on the front burner.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful governor here, Governor Deval Patrick, who has a relationship with President Obama. And I have been in conversation with him regarding Haiti. And he is concerned, during the last four hurricanes that hit Haiti, wants to be involved, and figure out how is it that the United States-- and really, Massachusetts-- can play a part in helping out what's going on.

And in terms of Senator Kerry that you mentioned him, I actually mentioned it to him. He was here and held a roundtable around an economic stimulus package. And, when that meeting was over, you know, I grabbed him quickly to just mention Haiti and to put it on the front burner, just say "Don't forget Haiti." And he said "Nope, I am with you. We are not going to forget Haiti. I am actually going to work on bringing a delegation to Haiti."

And so, that is important. And Congressman Delahunt-- So that is key, reaching out to your elected officials, keeping it on the forefront, and getting involved. Because there are different programs, whether it's the justice-- what Brian's working on, Partners in Health, you know, Wyclef's program. I see Father Gerry Osterman here and the work that he does, you know. And so, there's so many things happening.

And so, it's staying plugged in, writing to your congressional people. So it's critical-- Not only your congressional people, but your local state representatives as well, and your state senators, saying this is important to you. Please make a call to the congressional folks. I see Senator Anthony Galluccio is here from Cambridge, who has a large Haitian delegation or constituency there, as well.

And so, it's all of us working together to say "We care about Haiti. We care about the people in Haiti. We care about the children. We care about the families. We care about the infrastructure." And, if we are putting money in USAID, IDB, IMF, all this money that's going in, we need people to be held accountable. It's our money that's going into Haiti. It's taxpayer money. We want to know what is happening with that money.

[Applause]

If it's building roads, let's build roads correctly. So when another hurricane hits-- and it will hit, because it is in the Caribbean-- when it hits, it will not be a mudslide going down the road. You know, there will be structure, and there will be sanitation, clean water, and a health system, and a school system where kids could go to school for free. That is all we ask for our children here in the States, is how do we provide quality education, quality healthcare, quality housing? And really going back to basics and supporting the Haitian government to help the Haitian people, putting people to work.

MOD: Matt Damon.

MR. DAMON: Yeah, I mean, I agree with something Brian was saying earlier, just about all the different things that the country needs, and that they all have to be-- and Paul was saying it, too, they all have to be done at the same time. So there needs to be kind of a coherent plan. But none of that will happen without what they are saying, people getting involved.

I think we are dealing with a President who is a grassroots organizer. He will listen. And it's about everybody getting involved and talking about it, and not letting it die. There'll be-- Actors will go out and try and keep it on television. But we need everybody. And we need to capitalize on this moment of incredible optimism. Because if we attack these problems with that optimism and enthusiasm, I promise you they can be solved.

MOD: And finally, Dr. Paul Farmer.

DR. FARMER: Well, you know, it's such a great list, a principled list, a list that goes from the small scale, what we could do individually, to the large scale, how we have to pressure our elected leaders. And so, I'm a very pragmatic guy. A lot of doctors are. But I want to say something kind of grand. And that is, I think there is nothing wrong with sentiments like compassion or even pity.

You know, going to Gonaïves, seeing people-- and I was there before Matt was describing-- stuck on their rooftops, if they were lucky enough to have a roof, I felt enormous pity and sadness, you know, and mercy. These are not bad sentiments. But something that we can marshal in ourselves, you know, certainly as a community of people from Boston, but as Americans, I think it's particularly important, is to marshal more noble and difficult sentiments like solidarity and respect.

Because, if we have solidarity with our oldest neighbors, the Haitian people, and respect for what they accomplished between 1791 and 1804, the Haitian people created modernity. They created the modern, the notion of what a human right, to not be a slave is. [Applause] And, you know, if we can respect their achievement and understand the plight that befell them afterwards as punishment for what they had achieved, then I think we can build real solidarity that will be very pragmatic. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

MOD: We want to thank you all for coming up, for coming out today. Everyone is going to stay around to talk with people for a little while. I want to thank WBUR for running this. Also, *Democracy Now!* will air excerpts. And you can go to democracynow.org to see all of our coverage of Haiti.

And, in that vein, I wanted to encourage you to remember how important the media is. Because when we talk about what you can do on any issue, the media are the most powerful institutions on earth, more powerful than any bomb, more powerful than any missile. The difference is, *you* can deploy it. You can challenge the mainstream media to cover the issues you care about, and support independent media, which is so often the first ones in these most difficult places, going to where the silence is.

Because the fact is, there isn't silence in those places. Many people are speaking up. There are just no microphones there to pick up the sound. So support your local independent media, whether it's public radio, public television, public access television. Tell people about internet sites that you find interesting. Blog about this. And remember that it's not just public media that are using the public airways. The networks are too. They don't own them, they are a national treasure. And you protect them by demanding that they cover the issues that are important to you. Thank you so much for coming out.

[APPLAUSE]