



Beyond the Headlines
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News Coverage of Foreign Affairs and National Security

Jill Abramson: *The New York Times* substituted for religion in my family; if *The Times* said it was true, it was the word. I would never ever in a million years be at *The New York Times* except for my pal Maureen. Those are just a few of the many friends who are here. I'm especially happy to be joining Elisabeth, and talking about foreign affairs and *The Times*' international coverage, because most of you know we've just decided to become the international *New York Times* everywhere. So the IHT [*International Herald Tribune*], we owned and was a great anchor for our overseas coverage, but now it's all going to be *The Times*. And all the journalists who work both in Europe and in Asia are now *New York Times* reporters and editors, and I am their boss! [*Laughter.*] I'm very excited about that because, as Elisabeth said, I was very involved in pushing for the integration of our current newsroom and our digital operations, and now pushing that same kind of one-newsroom in voice, which really enhances the quality of *The Times*, and showcases in a great way the work that Elisabeth and I do. I think this is a very exciting step, and I'm very focused on all of the changes we need to make to make the whole thing fit under *The New York Times*. I feel very lucky to be with all of you today, and I'm very much looking forward to chatting with my great friend and very esteemed colleague, Elisabeth. [*Applause.*]

Elisabeth Bumiller: Jill gets asked a lot of questions about advertising—is the paper going to survive? We're not going to do that much today. We're going to talk about foreign coverage, which is a great change. So the first question is: *The Times* has close to—has 35 full-time foreign correspondents [and] 17 bureaus. It's one of the biggest international newsgathering operations. Because of the financial challenges right now, has there been any cutback at all in foreign coverage? I think I know the answer.

Abramson: The answer is no. [*Applause.*] People are always surprised when I say [that] our newsroom is exactly the same size as it was ten years ago. And, while we have had some voluntary buyout and very few layoffs, the one place that I've never touched is the foreign staff. And I just think having boots on the ground everywhere—we've shifted because of the demands of the news. We've taken people from one place and reassigned them to another in some cases. But there's a reason that, in the paper, the A section begins with international news. It's really the heart of our newsroom, and the heart of our reports. So sort of over my dead body would we reduce that, and remember that I said that! [*Laughter.*] We've actually benefited so much. It pains me that a lot of our competitors have cut back their foreign bureaus and their correspondence. But their loss in many cases has been our gain. I mean, some of the greatest talents now are with us. I've delighted this weekend Andy Higgins' coverage of the Cyprus mass. He is someone who goes back with me to *The Wall Street Journal*. That was only for a short time. It was an incredible honor to get to work alongside of Tony Shadid, who came to us from *The Washington Post*. So, you know, we actually have been hiring and not shedding.

Bumiller: Along the lines of what happened in Syria, can you talk about how you balance the need for—the imperative for coverage in war zones and conflict areas with the safety of journalists? I know *The Times* has been through an awful lot in the last decade, with kidnappings and death. It really is a tense situation.

Abramson: I would say this is the—for me personally—this is absolutely the hardest part of having this job. My heart is very often in my throat. And before anyone goes into Syria, I require right now—because that obviously is one of many very dangerous places where we have journalists working—I require a pretty extensive memo from Joe Kahn, our foreign editor, outlining—it’s sort of a cost-benefit analysis of the risks of wherever in Syria a correspondent is going versus what the urgency and reward of the journalism is. I spend a long time asking questions, and making sure that the news reason outweighs the safety issue. And you know, I think it weighs on me in particular because I worked for ten years at *The Journal*, and one of my best, best friends there was Dan Pearl. And really, he became a foreign correspondent there because of me. He worked—I was the Deputy Washington Bureau Chief. He and I had done a lot of stories together, and he asked me—he said, “I had had interest in New York. They’re talking about sending me to our London bureau.” He’d never covered foreign affairs. And he, I think, expected me, because I was such a creature of Washington, to say don’t, you know, you’d be crazy to leave. But you know, I said to him—and the words kind of haunt me—I said, “You gotta take the shot. It’s a great opportunity.” And I know that it was, and he did fabulous work, but that has somewhat haunted me. And then we went through the seven months of David Rohde being kidnapped in Afghanistan. And then—you know, hardest of all was Tony’s death, coming out of Syria into Turkey, and having to call his wife and other relatives. So it weighs on me. And I really don’t sleep very well now when I know we have someone in Syria. I just spent a lot of time with our North Africa Middle East team at a regional meeting in Istanbul. We were there for four days, talking about coverage. And I worry horribly about all of those people, but they do such fabulous work, and I do think *The Times*’ role in covering international affairs is irreplaceable. I just want to make sure that every single time someone is going into danger that it is really for an urgent, news-worthy reason.

Bumiller: Let me just follow up: Have you ever told a correspondent no?

Abramson: Have I ever—yes. I have. I told Tyler Hicks, who had been with Tony. He wanted to go back, and he is a fantastic photographer and a big friend of mine. He wanted to go back into Syria, and I told him no at the point he asked because he had become too recognizable and easily identified. And you need smugglers to take you in at the border. And I just worried, you know—he’s enormously tall and enormously handsome [*Laughter.*]—that everyone would know who he was, and that it wasn’t safe.

Bumiller: Let me ask you about the national security coverage, which occurs more often in Washington. If you could talk about the constraints we face a) in gathering the information and b) in pressure from whatever administration is in office to not print, or to take stuff out. How do you balance those two realities?

Abramson: Well, I definitely feel like I am a grizzled veteran, and as are you. [*Laughter.*] There are requests that come for us to either not publish or hold back certain details from sensitive national security stories. And again, it’s the same kind of balancing test that I was just talking about, where I certainly don’t and I don’t think any editors of *The Times* take such requests casually. We always approach them seriously, and give the White House or the CIA or the Defense Department—whoever has these concerns—a chance to voice them. We hit the brakes a little bit so that you do it really thoughtfully. But I found, over time, that in assessing situations all through the two Bush administrations and now all through the two Obama administrations, I’ve had to handle those requests. And really—I think, more than really believing that the national security will be harmed, it has often been that political embarrassment is attached to us publishing something. I always remember that Erwin Griswold was the solicitor general when the Pentagon Papers case was argued. The reason why *The Times* was enjoined at one point from continuing to publish on the Pentagon Papers was because the Nixon White House said publishing them would irrevocably harm national security. And one year after, Griswold stood up before the Court and made that argument in a speech here in Washington—he said he actually didn’t know of anything in the Pentagon Papers that harmed national security. So I always have that in my head when I’m engaged in these discussions.

Bumiller: Before I get to these very good questions here, let me just ask one, since it's the Women's Foreign Policy Group. I don't know how you'd answer this. What have you brought differently to *The New York Times* because you are a woman executive, a female executive, as opposed to a man? Do you have any sense of how that has made a difference in the way the paper runs? Or not?

Abramson: Of course it does.

Bumiller: Well, I know. [*Laughter.*] So how so?

Abramson: Well I mean, if you look at the news masthead of *The Times* right now, it's half women. It never has been anything approaching that. I've made sure that a lot of capable and wonderful women have been promoted. I just appointed—it seems amazing that this would be so but—the first culture editor who is a woman, I just appointed. And there are quite a few others. Sometimes the publisher looks at me—he's a great champion of women, obviously, made me to this job—but sometimes he looks at me with that [look of], "is something funny going on?" [*Laughter.*] And all I say to him—because obviously Nick Kristof, one of Maureen's colleagues and a good columnist—I just look at him and I say, "half the sky, Arthur, half the sky." [*Laughter.*]

Bumiller: I was actually meaning in the news coverage. Do you think it makes a difference?

Abramson: I don't, really. I mean, my taste in stories—and this has been true going back to Tommy's days of not hanging up on me at *Legal Times*—is [that] the story that I'm always interested in is the story behind the story. Like why something happened, who said what. And that is my wiring, but I don't actually think that that's gender based. I don't. But that is always why I'm pushing people. [*To Elisabeth.*] You know because you've been a victim of that, to push for the details that really show and not tell, like not all in *The New York Times* authority voice. But I don't actually think that has much to do with being female.

Bumiller: Okay, to the questions—this is a good one. How has your coverage of China been impacted by the hacking of *The Times*?

Abramson: It's been affected a lot. First and foremost, two of our really great China-hands—two correspondents whose visas were on the verge of expiring—their visas hadn't been renewed, so they're handling coverage in Hong Kong right now. And, to tell you the truth, I haven't applied for one recently, but I'm very doubtful that I would get a visa to go there at this point. So that creates difficulty—it certainly hardly cripples our coverage, but I would say there have been definite penalties put in place after we ran those terrific stories that David Barboza wrote about the wealth acquired by some of the most prominent Chinese political families. And I would say that the most memorable phone call that I've gotten since I've been executive editor was the day after David's first story ran. Arthur Sulzberger, Jr. called me and said, "Jill, *The New York Times* is under cyber attack." I felt like, what am I supposed to do, dive under my desk? [*Laughter.*] But so began the hacking, was the very next day.

Bumiller: This is from Pat Ellis. If you could set up any new foreign bureaus, where would they be and why? Would you have to close others?

Abramson: I would love to have more in Latin America. We have a big bureau in Mexico City, and bureaus in Venezuela, and we have a correspondent that goes back and forth between São Paulo and Argentina. But I would love to have more; I just think it's a very vibrant part of the world. Parts of Latin America are economically growing so quickly, and struggling with legacy issues like poverty. Every time that I've actually gone to travel a bit with our correspondents there, it just seems to me there's a story everywhere you look. And that would be true of Africa as well, because even though we have three full-time bureaus there, it's never enough. So I would put—definitely put—more, and we may yet put some more people in Cairo.

Bumiller: I can remember when my husband, Steve Weissman, who's here—we were in Delhi.

Abramson: I've heard of him. [Laughter.]

Bumiller: Formerly of *The New York Times*. We were in Delhi in the 1980s and there was one correspondent, and now there's what, three? four? So that's another part of the world.

Abramson: Yeah, we have a whole blog in India called *India Ink*, which has original coverage and aggregate—quality journalism is not in plentiful supply in India, sadly. But we aggregate the best there is. And it's for an Indian audience, but it has a large following among American-Indians living in the US.

Bumiller: Here's a question from Maxine. How do you deal with the new world in which politicians aren't reluctant to take on the news media directly? Where's Maxine? I think I know what you mean, but specifically...

Maxine Isaacs: Well, taking on the media now is viewed as a political advantage, and I think there used to be just a little bit more strength. I think now it's sort of open fire.

Abramson: Well, it depends. What's different now is—from when I first came to Washington—is [that] *Fox News* didn't exist when I first came to Washington. The media itself is very invected by politics in many ways, but I don't feel that our access to political figures has been curtailed in a sizable way. And I'm proud that one of the changes that I brought about in this job is absolutely refusing to give any political figures, or anyone in the business world or any sources, quote approval. I hadn't realized the degree to which that had just become total common practice here. And we don't do it, and I don't notice our coverage suffering for it. [To *Elisabeth*.] But you could maybe address the question?

Bumiller: Just as an editor the last couple of weeks, I have been stunned by what the White House does. I had no idea. The White House—I didn't know this was going on—they'll say, "well you can have this story but it has to have home page play by 8 p.m." It's like what, is this a *Vanity Fair* cover or something? She wants the cover? [Laughter.] So I just had no idea. And the other thing you get is, I remember calling—this is right before I left the defense beat—calling the White House about the Hagel nomination. And I asked a question, and she gave me an answer that was perfectly reasonable. And I said, "Oh great, I'll use it," and she goes, "No, no, I'm off the record." I said, "What?" She said, "I have to get approval." And she then emailed me back some completely anodyne quote that had nothing to do with the question or the story. I mean, that's what they do. I actually want to ask a question here. Is this the worst administration in terms of secrecy or not, and what to do?

Abramson: It's extremely, extremely secretive. And I think most of you know the Obama administration has instigated six criminal leak investigations. That is more of them than every administration before Obama combined. I think that has had a very chilling effect on some of our most sensitive intelligence sources, and certainly has made the work of our reporters more difficult, and is something that I deplore.

Bumiller: Here's another cheerful question. Compliments on the best news media site, but is print media dead? [Laughter.]

Abramson: Print media is not dead by any means. And there are plenty of people—I'll just talk about, you know—*The Times* situation is kind of especially blessed in that there are over 850,000 readers who have subscribed to home delivery of *The Times* for two years or more, at which point we consider them hopelessly and forever hooked. [Laughter.] We also, I think two years ago to this day—I think this is the actual birthday of our digital subscription plan—we have added 650,000 paying digital-only readers. So circulation at this point actually outstrips advertising in terms of our revenue base. That's a very healthy thing right now for *The Times*. And I love nothing more, even as we make this digital push and international push, than being in the quiet car this morning, just paging through both *The Times* and

The Journal. And yes, I also had *The New York Post*, my guilty pleasure. It's the most pleasurable time you could have. [Laughter.] And as usual, Maureen Dowd actually always had the best line about the paper, and she said it a long time ago. She said simply about *The Times*, "It's the best time you can have for a dollar." [Laughter.]

Bumiller: Okay, moving on—this is sort of history. How difficult was it covering Iraq and Afghanistan at the same time? This is from Theresa Loar. You were bureau chief, as we mentioned, during those two wars, Washington bureau chief. Well, and then the managing editor.

Abramson: I think that is a diplomatic phrasing of the question—how did I feel and how do I feel now about our coverage leading up to the war in Iraq?

Bumiller: Actually, that's another question. You're so used to answering that one. Why don't you cover that one—the lessons learned from the run-up to the Iraq war?

Abramson: The lesson learned from that was a very difficult one. *The Times* was not alone in learning a lot—you know, brandishing on the front page and the lead of the paper column stories that were erroneous, and were alarmist about WMD. The lesson I learned as bureau chief [was that] I think I didn't enough have my ear cocked. There were in real time dissenters, especially analysts at the CIA, who had huge doubts about the eminence of an active WMD program. The biggest voices in the media here in Washington, whether it be the networks, or *The Times*, or even *The Washington Post*—we were listening more closely to the louder, echoing voices of Bush administration officials, and a number of Iraqi defectors, who for years had been promoting stories about biological, chemical. And then *The Times*, I think, won the sweepstakes for the single worst story, which was about the aluminum tubes, suggesting right before the war that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear program. And right after *The Times*—we ran that in a lead position on a Sunday—you had Condoleezza Rice and Dick Cheney talking about mushroom clouds, right on the eve of the war.

In the Washington bureau at that point, reporters like Jim Risen actually were writing stories about the CIA analysts who had doubts. But Jim's stories would—the Washington bureau or bureau chief doesn't get to decide where or when stories run. And his stories tended to often be held for a long time, or get placed on page A10, where these other stories like the aluminum tubes were leading the paper. Our first public editor, Dan Okrent—his description was, "the alarmist stories were loud symphonies and the stories questioning WMD were played as quiet as a lullaby." And that's true. It has made me, as an editor, skeptical of all claims, whether they're about Iran or—I always want to know who the sources are, and how many there are. Because, in the case of the run-up to the Iraq war, what you had was a really insidious echo chamber where these kind of wacky Iraqi defectors—many of you will remember the name Ahmed Chalabi—they were in Washington talking to the leading government officials. So when reporters who worked in the Washington bureau were calling, having talked to the defectors to get confirmation of their stories, the government officials were confirming these same, wrong, out-of-date stories. So it was a real insidious echo chamber, and the big thing I learned is I certainly don't feel like that could ever happen again—but to be ever on watch for that.

Bumiller: I was about to ask, how does that affect our coverage of Iran, but you answered the question. On another topic, how has the increased use of stringers, or local journalists overseas, influenced our coverage of conflicts? Take that any number of ways.

Abramson: You know, I'd be interested in what your answer is to that, because my perception is it hasn't. We've always had stringers, both in the US and abroad.

Bumiller: You can't function without them.

Abramson: You've been reporting more recently than me, so you answer.

Bumiller: How has it affected us?

Abramson: Talk about how important and irreplaceable they are.

Bumiller: Well, you need them. First of all, you need the interpreters; you need them as fixers to pave the way to be able to talk to people. Overseas, the last time I did it without embedding with the military—which is a whole other issue—it was a long time ago in Kosovo in 1999. When I was a metro reporter, I was dispatched over to Albania to cover the refugee crisis on the border of Kosovo. And while I was there, the NATO bombing campaign stopped, and all my refugees went back into Kosovo, so I had to go with them. [*Laughter.*] And I did a story about rape as a war crime. But at that time, I remember, I went to Tirana, the capital of Albania, and hired an interpreter. And I couldn't function without her. This is an example how *The New York Times* has not cut back on foreign newsgathering. I remember going up to the—we had an office then where we would go up and get cash for overseas trips, because you needed to pay in cash. I remember they just handed me \$4,000 in cash in 1999. I thought, well I guess *The Times* really is serious about this, and off I went. I used it to pay interpreters and drivers, and someone who drove us then into Kosovo after the bombing campaign stopped. And then I worked with the interpreter and that driver, and then a baker who helped me out. So that's an example. Now the Kabul bureau there, the freelancers, are—you couldn't function without them because they're more longstanding members of the bureau. And they are actually partly reporters and some of them are quite good.

Abramson: Have you spent time in the bureau there? Yeah, we both have. And when I was talking about being a worry-wart—the people who take the biggest risks are actually the foreign nationals who work for *The Times*. In Afghanistan, terrible things happen to a few of them. And we're incredibly lucky that these people want to risk their lives in the service of quality journalism. Which, when you sit down and have a smoke with them in the Kabul bureau, that's really what drives them to do what they do.

Bumiller: It's a universal concept, being a journalist. But the other thing is that they also get recognized. I mean, their names are in the paper as contributors, they often get by-lines now, but sometimes...

Abramson: Sometimes they can't have their name in the paper because it's too dangerous.

Bumiller: Okay, this is from Pat again. What are the challenges in covering evolving stories such as Syria, and chemical weapons, Benghazi? The idea that the whole world is blowing up at the same time, I think, and how does *The Times* handle that with limited access?

Patricia Ellis: Like in North Korea, Benghazi.

Abramson: The last story that I remember where we were really limited, and it felt very important that our reporters couldn't be out on the streets, was really [during] the Green Revolution days in Iran. That was a giant story, and we were wholly dependent on either social media or the very few... Our main stringer there, she even felt it wasn't safe to go outside—that she was known as a *New York Times* person. So that story is the one where I remember the biggest constraints, and feeling actually like we had our hands tied a bit. Other than that, we sometimes have to cover things from a regional base, that isn't in the country that's blowing up. But I sat and had a long talk with Adam Nossiter—our foreign correspondents come on home leave usually around once a year—and Adam is in Africa, and he's been covering Mali pretty much full-time for two years. He said it is him and two other full-time correspondents, and then just people parachuting in and out. And he can't now go into the north at all; it's too dangerous. But our coverage is so informed by the fact that, for the past two years, he's covered every aspect of the crisis there. So while he can't be on the scene, when I'm sure it will blow up again, he writes from such authority from the south, and you make those kind of accommodations.

Bumiller: This is from Olivia Snider, from the Women's Foreign Policy Group. Are there special measures taken to ensure the safety of women journalists in conflict zones, or where there's violence?

Abramson: There are. I mean, we require all of our correspondents who are in war zones to go through security training, and prepare for being kidnapped and whatnot. And that's men and women. I think what is interesting and different for women, and was something I thought about a lot when I went to Kabul two years ago, is the decision of, [is] it's safer for some correspondents there who are women to go around covered. And Alissa Rubin, who is our bureau chief there, recommended when I came that I should do that. And I did it some, but then Carlotta Gall, who is just the most fearless, fabulous, coolest foreign correspondent ever, she's lived in Afghanistan for years and years and years—she goes around in chino pants, and a man-tailored shirt, and that's it. Her sleeves are covered. And she would look at me like, "ridiculous!" [*Laughter.*] So there are interesting decisions that the men don't really, to the same degree, have to think about that. It definitely—Alissa took me, for instance—one of the unforgettable places we went—she took me to a women's shelter in Kabul. There are actually three of these. The women, how they get to these places; it's incredible. It's heart-breaking too because the women there are completely covered. It's hard to tell how old someone is, when they're completely covered. But all of them spoke in the voices of girls. When I asked them how old they were, and a number of them were there with children—15, 16. They were young. But Alissa and I would never have gotten these women to talk to us if we hadn't been completely covered.

Bumiller: On another topic—this is from Tom Korologos—take us through the mental gyrations of going from an old, pardon the expression, pencil, pad, print journalist, to a computer-digital editor. I guess you talked a little about that, but I guess Tom wants to know about the difficulty, if it's changed the way... Twitter, and other social media, how much that has changed the way we cover the news.

Abramson: Are you on Twitter?

Bumiller: Yes... [*Laughter.*] I don't tweet enough. I read it. I use it as a news source, as a newsfeed.

Abramson: Right. To the degree, I'm a total campaign junkie, and when at [*Inaudible.*] and elsewhere. I have a Twitter account, although it's been very dormant for a very long time. You had to be on Twitter to follow the campaign. The candidates themselves make announcements about anything newsworthy going on. It first appears on Twitter, so you'd have to want to be out of touch not to pay attention to both Twitter and Facebook. They are news providers. So that's definitely different. Probably the main thing that has made changes for everyone is just on deadlines. Elisabeth and I both were used to the rhythms of the newspaper, and when the last edition of the newspaper went to bed. I can still—like, at quarter of nine every night, even though I'm up at New York, I always think, oh the Washington copy has to be up by quarter of nine, because that was the final deadline. I'm perhaps going to make her irritated, but there's one and only one Washington exception to that, and that is my friend Maureen. But notice that you have never read white space. But that's gone with the wind. Now the deadline is every minute of every day. But you would still find that we still have a page one meeting every afternoon at four. And there is incredible special care given to the front page of the newspaper, and the photographs, and the six stories that go on [it]. So other editors might give you a big digital first speech, and I think our digital news report is amazing, and the best there is. But there's something really special and important about making up the paper. And on the first day of the Supreme Court decision—you know the arguments on Prop 8—I was on the phone to Adam Liptak, literally telling him exactly—we ran pictures of the justices and quotes at the top—like exactly what I wanted the quotes to be. Because that's important. That was going to be what everybody saw. It's the same but not the same.

Question: Do you trust Twitter and Facebook?

Abramson: Well, not completely. And we don't run any comments that are un-moderated, so there's always an editorial process that checks that people who are commenting are giving us their real identities. You have to be very careful with what you pick up on social media. Especially where a number of news organizations fell down on the job is—like reports that Gabby Giffords had been killed first started spreading on social media. So it can be nefarious as well as incredibly informative.

Bumiller: How does working on news coverage with this White House compare with previous White Houses? Not working on news coverage with, you don't really work with the White House. We would like to think we don't. [Laughter.] I mean I guess, compared to the Bush White House—you were talking about the secrecy and the leak investigations. So you knew the Clinton White House and the Bush White House.

Abramson: I mean, I would say it's an odd thing, but when I was Washington bureau chief, and then managing editor, and now executive editor—[I would say] that oddly the Clinton White House and the Obama White House are the most...I'm just going to use the word complaining. They're much more frequent complainers about *The Times* being either too tough on them, or claiming that there are errors in stories that turn out not to be. You know, more frequent than the Bush White House did. Of course, the Bush White House had its own techniques. Some of you may remember a favorite story of mine from that period was in *The Week in Review*, and it came after *The Times* was literally banished from Dick Cheney's plane. [Laughter.] So, you know, they all have their ways...

Bumiller: Desperately seeking Cheney, right. Rick Lyman—the story was that, I was just going to mention it the other day because Rick Lyman was given the unpleasant task of having to—well you know since time began, *The New York Times* has covered the president, the two presidential candidates in the campaign, and the two vice-presidential candidates. Well, in 2004, we were kicked off Cheney's vice-presidential campaign plane, but we were going to cover him. So Rick Lyman did it by commercial flight and rail car. [Laughter.] It was a great story, just about desperately seeking Cheney.

Abramson: The other thing I remember about the Bush White House is that, though they did not complain frequently, the most frequent complaints I got were from Karen Hughes about this fabulous column that Elisabeth wrote called *White House Memo*. I don't know how you got what you got.

Bumiller: I never knew she complained that much. [Laughter.]

Abramson: Because it was not my style to share. [Laughter.]

Bumiller: Okay, so last one, how much responsibility do you feel as a first, and a role model?

Abramson: You know, I desperately don't want to screw up. [Laughter and Applause.]

Patricia Ellis: Well that is a great place to end what has been an absolutely fabulous event. I just want to thank Jill so much for taking the time to come down from New York, spend a little time with us, and engage in this important conversation. I want to thank Elisabeth so much for her great questions, and all the rest of you for your great questions. And I wanted to thank Ann Korologos for arranging for us to be in this beautiful place. So let's give them all a round of applause. [Applause.] This is just a small token of our appreciation to you, and it is for your commitment to advancing women in the news business, and news coverage of foreign affairs at *The Times*, so thank you so much! [Applause.]