



## **"AMERICA'S HOUSE DIVIDED"**

### **Intelligence Squared Debates Examines America's Two-Party System**

**Arianna Huffington & David Brooks Square Off Against P.J. O'Rourke & Zev Chafets to Debate: America's Two-Party System is Making America Ungovernable**

*Debate to broadcast on NPR stations nationwide and telecast on Bloomberg TV globally beginning February 21 at 9PM EST*

NEW YORK – February 16, 2011 –The latest round in America's premier debate series, Intelligence Squared Debates, pitted President and Editor-in-Chief of Huffington Post Media Group, Arianna Huffington and New York Times columnist David Brooks, against America's premier political satirist P.J. O'Rourke, and Zev Chafets, contributor to the New York Times Magazine and founding editor of the Jerusalem Report.

The controversial resolution at Intelligence Squared Debates' (IQ2US) latest intellectual matchup was the second in their themed season, "America's House Divided." The debate was moderated by ABC News Nightline's John Donovan.

#### **Key excerpts from the debate include:**

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

**"Basically, the two-party system is like a stale marriage. Democrats and Republicans need something to spice it up. They need to go on Craigslist and find a third party."**

DAVID BROOKS

**"So they're weird social creatures [politicians]. Nonetheless, I would say in general, they are better people than one would anticipate. Most of them are in it for the right reason, but they're stuck in a rotten system. They're stuck in our current two-party system which forces them to behave in ways that are worse than they are. It's a mind suck."**

P.J. O'ROURKE

**"Now, I would argue in favor of America's two-party system not because of America's two political parties but because America doesn't really have political parties at all ... Republicans and Democrats don't have ideologies. They just have these vague platform planks made of rotten wood of political expediency. If American party**

**platforms were backyard tree forts, you would not let your children climb in them. Anyone can join an American political party, even a witch!"**

ZEV CHAFETS

**"In multi-party systems, there are many people who also don't feel that they're represented by any of the parties. And I, having lived in a country [Israel] that has 14 parties, I can tell you that I didn't find any that represented me -- that's sort of an inherent problem of democracy. If you have a party that fits the taste of every person or every group of people, you'll have hundreds or a multiplicity of parties that makes it impossible to govern."**

For this specific debate, the audience not only voted on the resolution, but also identified their political party affiliation – Republican, Democrat, Independent – at the top of the evening. Before the debate, the IQ2US audience voted with the following:

- **46 %** of audience agreeing with the resolution
- **24 %** of audience against the resolution
- **30 %** undecided

After carefully considering the points, P.J. O'Rourke and Zev Chafets won the debate -- the team that moves the most votes at the end of the evening is determined the winner.

- **50 %** of audience agreeing with the resolution
- **40 %** of audience against the resolution
- **10 %** undecided

The showdown at NYU's Skirball Center in New York City (566 LaGuardia Place) put the leading public intellectuals in the limelight in front of a live sold-out audience of 800 for nearly two hours of heated debate.

To learn more about the debate and review a detailed breakdown of how Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in the audience voted pre- and post-debate, please visit our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/Think2Twice](http://www.facebook.com/Think2Twice)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S. please visit: <http://intelligencesquaredus.org/index.php/debates/america-divided-us-politics/>
- Bloomberg TV will air the debate on February 21, 22, and 23 at 9:00pm EST with additional repeats ongoing throughout the weekend. To find Bloomberg TV in your area, please visit: [www.bloomberg.com/intelligence-squared-debates](http://www.bloomberg.com/intelligence-squared-debates)
- NPR will air the debate on stations nationwide and provide podcast availability to download (need exact language from NPR). Please check with your local NPR stations for additional details or visit: [www.npr.org/intelligencesquared](http://www.npr.org/intelligencesquared)
- John Donvan, correspondent for ABC News Nightline, is moderator of Intelligence Squared Debates. Dana Wolfe is the executive producer.
- 2011 marks Intelligence Squared Debates fifth series and is themed, "America's House Divided." IQ2US' first debate of the spring season featured health care reform. Upcoming debates this season will focus on: clean energy, America's global

reach and immigration. IQ2US' 2010 fall season highlighted issues including: the treatment of captured terrorists, whether Islam is a religion of peace, big government, the war in Afghanistan and airport profiling.

### **ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES (IQ2US)**

Rethink your point of view with Intelligence Squared U.S. (IQ2US), Oxford-style debates live from New York City. Based on the highly successful debate program based in London, Intelligence Squared, Intelligence Squared U.S. has presented 46 debates on a wide range of provocative and timely topics. From global warming and the financial crisis, to Afghanistan/Pakistan and the death of mainstream media, Intelligence Squared brings together the world's leading authorities on the day's most important issues.

Since its inception in 2006, the goals have been to provide a new forum for intelligent discussion, grounded in facts and informed by reasoned analysis; to transcend the toxically emotional and the reflexively ideological; and to encourage recognition that the opposing side has intellectually respectable views.

The Rosenkranz Foundation initiated the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Series and continues to provide major support.

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