

**AFTER A TIMELY INTELLIGENCE SQUARED U.S. DEBATE,
NEW YORK AUDIENCE WEIGHS IN ON THE PROPRIETY OF
RACIAL & RELIGIOUS PROFILING AT U.S. AIRPORTS**

Former Homeland Security Director Michael Chertoff among the Debaters

NEW YORK – November 23, 2010 –Intelligence Squared U.S. (IQ2US), the Oxford-style debate series, an initiative of The Rosenkranz Foundation, hosted a debate last night on the motion, *U.S. Airports Should Use Racial & Religious Profiling*. Given the recent news of stepped up TSA security procedures at airports, the debate was well-timed and shed light on the complications around keeping America's skies safe. At the debate's conclusion, the side arguing in favor of using racial and religious profiling in airport screenings won the debate, though the crowd at NYU's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts was closely divided.

At the beginning of the evening prior to the debate, 37% of the audience agreed with the motion, *U.S. Airports Should Use Racial & Religious Profiling*, 33 % were against it and 30% were undecided. After the debate, the side arguing for the motion had moved more of the audience members to their position; they ended up with 49% of the vote, 40% were against the motion and 11% remained undecided.

The evening's winning team included Robert Baer, an author and former CIA case officer assigned to the Middle East; Deroy Murdock, a syndicated columnist with Scripps Howard News Service and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution and Asra Q. Nomani, an author and former *Wall Street Journal* reporter and co-director of the Pearl Project.

On the other side arguing against the motion was Hassan Abbas, Quaid-i-Azam professor at Columbia University and senior advisor at Harvard's Belfer Center; Debra Burlingame, sister of Charles Burlingame III, the pilot of American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001; co-founder of 9/11 Families for a Safe and Strong America and Michael Chertoff, former secretary of Homeland Security from 2005-2009; former federal judge and federal prosecutor.

Among the debate's highlights:

“Let me emphasize that we do not advocate letting airport security personnel cater to their own personal ethnic or ecclesiastical biases. Instead, we want the TSA and others to recognize that the current threat to passengers and airliners comes almost exclusively from one source, and we all know what it is, young males between about 18 and 35 who practice a fundamentalist strain of the Islamic faith, and generally hail from the Middle East, as well as largely Muslim nations in Africa and South Asia. There are exceptions to this profile, but they're quite rare indeed.” – **Deroy Murdock**

“The problem with using racial and religious profiling is it takes you down a road to looking at people who you don't need to look at and avoiding looking at people that you should look at. The fact is it would be an engraved invitation to al-Qaeda to recruit exactly the kind of people who don't fit the profile...” – **Michael Chertoff**

“I do come from a Muslim family. I am brown, for radio audience members who can't see me. My father has Mohammed in his name. He's 80-some years old, but he gets pulled at the security checkpoint. And still I stand before you and I say, profile me. Profile my family. Profile my father because inside of our Muslim community, I fundamentally believe that we have failed to police ourselves.” – **Asra Nomani**

“Don't forget that within the Muslim world in United States and all around the world, there are people among the Muslims, majority, mainstream, who are fighting extremists. Don't just lump all of them together by just your one policy choice. Don't isolate them. Don't lose the hearts and minds. So yes, do profiling, but don't lump everyone together. That will be something exactly opposite to all what this great country stands for.” – **Hassan Abbas**

“I would prefer if we had the opportunity and we had the intelligence to base all of our profiling on behavior, tickets, flight lists, the history of people, digital databases, credit checks. But right now, this country does not have that capacity to run an algorithm through every single flight that comes into this country....Nor can it even keep track of the people that are in this country. And this forces the police and TSOs to fall back on a very primitive unattractive weapon. But it's the only weapon we have at this point until our intelligence gets better.” – **Robert Baer**

“For those of you sitting in this audience who are neither Arab looking nor South Asian looking, I ask you to contemplate, think back the last time you were at the airport if you were ever pulled out of line when you didn't expect it and you hadn't said or done anything wrong and maybe even treated a little preemptory way because the airport recently maybe an unexpected engagement that was quite unwanted and maybe even by your definition quite humiliating... I ask you to consider what it would be like to experience that every time you go to the airport on every time you fly. – **Debra Burlingame**

John Donovan, correspondent for ABC News Nightline, is moderator of Intelligence Squared U.S. debates. Dana Wolfe is the executive producer.

To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S. please visit: <http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org>

This debate will air at 7PM and 11PM on Bloomberg Television on Wednesday, November 24. It will also repeat through the holiday weekend at various times including evenings at 8PM and 10PM. To find Bloomberg TV in your area, please visit <http://bloomberg.viewerlink.tv/>

ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED U.S.

Launched in September 2006, the goal of Intelligence Squared U.S., an initiative of the Rosenkranz Foundation, is to raise the level of public discourse and promote a realization that, on contentious issues, those who challenge the conventional wisdom have intellectually respectable and often persuasive viewpoints. We encourage citizens to “Think Twice” about their opinions and participate in the conversation, and we provide a forum for balanced discussion that transcends emotion and ideology. Through an annual series of between 10 to 12 live Oxford-style debates, IQ2US brings together experts and audience around public policy and cultural issues. IQ2US debates air on the Bloomberg Television network and are heard on more than 220 NPR stations nationwide.

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Contact:

Eileen Murphy

917.913.2233 | eileen@eileenmmurphy.com

www.intelligencesquaredus.org