

Helping hands in HOLLYWOOD

President Bush impressed by efforts

LOS ANGELES (AP) — While some entertainment industry members remain uneasy about their role in the war on terrorism, a White House adviser said President Bush is encouraged by Hollywood's contributions so far.

"Because of television, Afghans can sit in the Middle Ages and keep tabs on the 21st century. Unfortunately, this optical miracle only works one way. On Sept. 10, how much did the average American know about Afghanistan, or the Muslim world in general?"

— Mort Rosenblum
AP special correspondent

But he also feels strongly it's not his role to dictate content or condone censorship, adviser Mark McKinnon told a panel discussion Wednesday night at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

Addressing industry uneasiness about two meetings between White House and Hollywood officials in recent weeks, McKinnon said Washington went into the conferences unsure about what course to take.

Concerns about heavy-handed government action were fanned by media, McKinnon and others on the panel said.

"They were just ready to bite," McKinnon said of the news media's reactions to the closed-door meetings.

As it turned out, McKinnon said, Hollywood was way out ahead of us in trying to do what it could to aid the effort.

"All we're trying to do right now is say fantastic. Thank you," McKinnon told a panel that included NBC Entertainment President Jeff Zucker

and "The West Wing" creator Aaron Sorkin. Bryce Zabel, TV academy chairman and panel moderator, suggested the industry remains confused, however, about what exactly Washington wants, especially after government officials said movie and TV content were not issues.

"So what was discussed?" Zabel asked. "How to get 'Harry Potter' DVDs to the USS Carl Vinson?" "There are a thousand projects" flourishing that will come to fruition in the near future, McKinnon said.

Other panelists mentioned the possibility of public service announcements and good-will tours as part of Hollywood's work.

Zucker said that despite much speculation that the events of Sept. 11 would have a profound effect on the content of movies and television shows, that hasn't happened.

"It's a good story to believe the entertainment world changed after September 11. It makes good copy, but so far we're not seeing that," Zucker said. "There's no increase in the number of shows that have anything to do with September 11."

Sorkin said the impact of Sept. 11 will clearly be seen in the future, however. His show addressed the terrorist attacks in the first episode of this season.

"It's impossible that this somehow now isn't going to become part of the bloodstream of what we put on television," he said.

Another panelist, writer-director Paris Barclay ("NYPD Blue," "City of Angels"), said he is continuing to go his own way.

"I'm not thinking about what the government wants me to do," he said.

He said he is examining what he sees as a lack of American tolerance and brotherhood.

Zabel read an e-mail from one scheduled panelist who was unable to attend, AP Special Correspondent Mort Rosenblum, who has been on assignment in Afghanistan.

"Because of television, Afghans can sit in the Middle Ages and keep tabs on the 21st century," Rosenblum wrote. "Unfortunately, this optical miracle works only one way. On Sept. 10, how much did the average American know about Afghanistan, or the Muslim world in general?"

children saw their friends getting gifts at Christmas and felt left out. We wanted to maintain our identity but also fit in with everyone else at Christmas time," Strickland said.

Candles fill churches as people gather to sing hymns and celebrate. John Stewart, a junior geography major, said this is one of his favorite parts of Christmas.

"I love going to the midnight candle service with my family," Stewart said.

With countless festivities and traditions around the holidays, remembering the true meaning of Christmas is important, said Abbey Allison, a junior food science major.

Kristal said the main difference in Christianity and Judaism is that Christians believe their Messiah, Jesus Christ, has come, whereas Jews are still awaiting their Messiah, and that makes a difference in the holiday celebrations.

Strickland said he feels that at this time of year, people need to be educated on the different religions and the differences between them. He said that many do not know the meaning behind Christmas.

"I think that the holiday of Christmas has become commercialized and people aren't educated on the true meaning behind it," he said.

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"All throughout childhood, my parents always told me there was more to Christmas than the gifts. I am thankful for Jesus Christ, not only at Christmas, but all year long," Ateek said.

Robert Strickland, a senior kinesiology major, said he and his family celebrate the traditions of Hanukkah but, unlike Christmas, it is not the Jewish religion's real gift giving holiday.

"The holiday of Purim, which is in February, is when we give gifts. Gift-giving started for Hanukkah because the Jewish

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