

**U.S. Global Leadership Coalition  
Tribute Dinner  
July 17, 2012**

**Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)**

MR. CLYDE TUGGLE: And it is my great honor to pay tribute to Senator Lindsey Graham, one of the more extraordinary champions in Congress for our nation's international affairs program.

Senator Graham has a well-deserved reputation as a leader willing to tackle the tough issues facing our nation. He is a recognized authority on defense and foreign policy, having built a distinguished career in the Air Force, and who is one of only three senators serving in the National Guard or Reserves. His military background makes him one of the most compelling voices for why our nation must continue to invest in foreign assistance. As the new ranking member of the State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee, he has joined Senator Leahy in assuring America provides the leadership and resources that are so necessary to fostering a more peaceful and prosperous world.

From Iraq and Afghanistan to the unfolding events of the Arab Awakening, Senator Graham has never shied away from fighting to ensure that America has both the military and civilian tools necessary to keep America safe. Earlier this year, he led a group of senators to Africa to gain a greater appreciation for the link between our global health and economic development programs and our national interests.

Senator Graham, on behalf of our vast coalition, we thank you for your tireless leadership, for helping to keep America safe by ensuring a strong commitment to America's leadership in the world. With your efforts, there is no doubt our future is bright. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking an outstanding champion, Senator Lindsey Graham. (Applause.)

MS. CAROLYN MILES: Let me again just read the inscription: The U.S. Global Leadership Coalition salutes Senator Lindsey Graham for his vision, leadership and unwavering commitment to elevating development and diplomacy and strengthening the U.S. international affairs budget. Thank you again.

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC): Thank you very much. Thank you all very, very much, appreciate it. (Applause.) I've got one goal in the world, it's every child can buy a Coke if they want to – or a Pepsi. (Laughter.) But a couple observations and we'll get on with hearing the real talent of the night, Colin and Madeline. The world is screwed up. I'm dying to hear how you would suggest to fix it. So – (laughs) – but I really appreciate both of you coming. And as Pat said, you all been great supporters of this account.

In terms of the award, I am confident I do not deserve the award. But I'm also confident I don't deserve half the crap I get, so it – (laughter) – kind of levels out I guess. (Applause.) So take it where you can get it. (Laughs.)

Senator Leahy mentioned the House. Kay Granger – Kay, are you here tonight? She is the chairman – (applause) – of the Foreign Ops Subcommittee, which is a hell of a lot harder than being in the Senate. So she's swimming with sharks over there. And I really appreciate her guts, for lack of a better word.

Pat Leahy, we cancel each other's vote out 99 percent of the time. Get this on the tape, because – in case this is played back home. (Laughter.) But I could not have asked for a better partner – and I hope to switch jobs with him next year and be chairman myself, but – (laughter) – but Pat has been involved with the account for years. Him and Tim are great to work with. And it really is tough here at home – South Carolina, Vermont, you name it. There are a lot of people out there in America hurting. We have high unemployment. We've got a lot of problems to solve here at home. And people are right to ask us about how we spend their money. But the one thing about Senator Leahy, he has made it as easy as possible for a conservative Republican to support this account. And I really do appreciate that. (Applause.)

Now, the question needs to be asked, why would a Senator from South Carolina want to be the ranking member of the Foreign Aid Subcommittee? I ask myself that. If you have any ideas, pass them on to me. (Laughter.) Let me tell you what drove me to want to partner with Pat. I have been involved with the military, not nearly the record – you know, I've been a military lawyer. The only people that really ever wanted to kill me were my own clients. (Laughter.) But Colin Powell has been a hero for many years. But the highlight of my life has been wearing the uniform of our nation as an Air Force officer. And I know how hard it's been on our men and women in the military since 9/11.

But to our men and women in the State Department and USAID, you need – how about a round of applause for them? (Cheers, applause.) You face the same dangers as our men and women in uniform, and you're armed with something other than an M4. You're armed with the idea of what America represents. I think in many ways the men and women in this room tonight – business people, military leaders, the NGOs of the world – that you are al-Qaida's worst nightmare – (applause) – and you represent the best hope of mankind.

You know, if I do what Senator Thurman, my predecessor, was able to do, I'll have 46 more years to serve. (Laughter.) I'm going to miss y'all guys. (Laughs.) My first – I'll get married in 10 years and have my first child when I'm 68. (Laughter.) So I got a lot to look forward to. (Laughter.) But I don't really know what awaits me politically, but I do know this, that while I'm in the Congress and while I have the privilege to represent the great people of South Carolina – like Tony Beam – and I cannot tell you how important Tony Beam has been to Lindsey Graham. He is a Christian radio personality in Greenville, South Carolina. And when I go on his show, we have a very good discussion about why America should be involved in the world, and why it's OK for the foreign aid account to exist. And to Liz – Liz rocks. (Applause.) You do just a – you do a terrific job.

But the reason I wanted to be on this subcommittee and to be Pat's partner, I realize that we're not going to be able to kill enough terrorists to make the world a safer place. And I refuse to give the continent of Africa over to the communist Chinese. We're going to fight for Africa. (Applause.) We're going to create opportunity for American businesses in Africa. We're not going to exploit their resources; we're going to help their people. And one of my heroes – (applause) – and it will be to our benefit.

One of my heroes is George W. Bush. I'm sure he made his fair share of mistakes, but the one thing I can tell you above all else he got right was America's role in the world when it comes to Africa. So President Bush, thank you very much. (Applause.) You will be my role model in terms of how I engage this account.

Finally, it is 1 percent of the budget, but that's still \$50 billion. Do you know how long it takes for the average working person to generate enough taxes to send \$50 billion to Washington? For some people it takes – a lot of people all their lives. So, yes, it is 1 percent of the budget, but it is real money coming from hardworking people.

And here's what I believe about these people – liberal, conservative, moderate, vegetarian, libertarian – (laughter) – I believe that one thing that unites conservatives and liberals and moderates is the view of who we are as a people. And our goal is to explain to the American taxpayer that we take every dollar you send to us seriously when we spend it through the foreign operations account. And as Pat said, we need to hold governments more accountable. We need to hold our own government more accountable. And our USAID director has been a breath of fresh air. Thank you very much, Raj. (Applause.)

But here's the story Lindsey Graham is going to tell to the tea party, to the Chamber of Commerce. Ronald Reagan said: It is Americans – America's destiny to shape the future of the world, not have the world shape us. I believe that. I believe that it matters what happens in Afghanistan because 9/11, if nothing else, has taught us it matters. And Pat, when some young woman is being killed in a soccer stadium by a bunch of thugs, it's only a matter of time before that affects us.

So let's get involved. Let's stay engaged. And here's the story that I want to tell, that every dollar we spend will be managed as well as possible. We will make our fair share of mistakes, but the biggest mistake of all for America is to withdraw and turn the world over – (applause) – to people with the darkest vision of mankind.

To the NGOs here tonight, to the faith-based community, God bless you. Your works and deeds are being recorded as I speak, in heaven. To the American taxpayer, I can assure you that this 1 percent is doing a lot of good throughout the world, that there are babies alive today who would not have made it, except for America. There's clean water in places that have never known it before. There's a schoolhouse that exists because of the American people.

And to the American people, this will pay more dividends to our country in the future than any single thing we could do, because I do believe we've been blessed by God. And the

way to stay in His good graces is to spend our money wisely in the cause of mankind. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MS. MILES: Thank you, Senator Graham. Thank you, Senator Leahy. I think I'm not going to mention my vegetarianism. (Laughter.) It seems to get lumped in with some other interesting things. But on behalf of everyone here tonight, we express our deep gratitude again to both Senators Leahy and Senators Graham for their leadership and support for our international affairs program.

I now want to invite everybody to enjoy dinner. We'll continue the program with Secretaries Albright and Secretary Powell in a little while. Thank you. (Applause.)

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