

## Global Journalist: An International Perspective on the 2003 California Governor's Race

**Abstract:** This August 8, 2003 program had host Stuart Loory speak with three international journalists to learn how the 2003 California governor's race, which notably included then-candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger, was being covered internationally.

**Host:** Stuart Loory

**Guests:**

- [Hans de Vreij](#)
- Henry Niglasi (ph?)
- [Ashok Malik](#)
- Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva

**Producers:** Sarah Cayton, Yusef Catiango

**Director:** Pat Akers

**Mentioned:** Netherlands, president bush, arnold schwarzenegger, united states, country, india, election, california, dutchwar, africa, america, politics, recall, brazil

**Runtime:** 28:30

**Stuart Loory** 00:03

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says mid-Missourians -- indeed most Americans -- are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism. As a nation, we are perhaps more preoccupied with the recall of Governor Gray Davis in California these days and the possible election of a new governor than we are with Iraq, where Americans are dying almost every day. Liberia where a civil war still goes on after the exile of President Charles Taylor, or other serious events throughout the world. 135 Californians are running for the job, including actors, primarily Arnold Schwarzenegger known throughout the world. A smut magazine publisher, a conservative columnist, and a few established politicians. There has never been anything like it in our country. The ballot will be long and complicated. It may take more than a month to count all those ballots and determine a winner if the people really want to oust Gray Davis. How does the rest of the world look at this extravagant exercise in citizens democracy? Do they care at all about what is going on here, either in California or with the upcoming presidential election campaign when George W. Bush has to stand again before the voters next year. Do they care about what's going on in the United States? To discuss American politics from afar today, we have assembled a panel including Hans de Vreij economics editor of radio Netherlands in the Hilversum, the Netherlands. Henry Niglasi (ph ??), senior editor for Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation in Lusaka, Zambia. Ashok Malik, senior editor of Indian Express in New Delhi, India, and Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, deputy editor in chief of Valor in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Welcome to all of you. Gentlemen, I

would like to ask each of you starting with Hans De Vreij in Netherlands -- how does your region of the world look at this very strange election in California?

**Hans de Vreij** 02:30

Well, I think most people here tried to concentrate on the lighter side of the issue. You mentioned the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the smut magazine publisher, and our US correspondents tend to focus on that particular issue, rather than see it as, you know, a truly political thing and try to explain the workings of California politics. I mean, everybody here knows Arnold Schwarzenegger. And just yesterday, it was on the national news here that Californians can't watch home movies featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger during the election, or to see his movies in the cinemas. Those are things that are striking here.

**Stuart Loory** 03:18

And they they seem to think that Californians are being disadvantaged because they cannot watch Schwarzenegger's movies on television?

**Hans de Vreij** 03:29

I don't think anyone thinks that. Well, I think anyone who has a very big urge to see Arnold will find his or her way to see it anyway.

**Stuart Loory** 03:39

You betcha. The problem there, of course, is that if the movies are shown and they are hours long, then the television stations would have to give equal time presumably to each of the 135 candidates.

**Hans de Vreij** 03:54

That's correct, that's how it was explained here too.

**Stuart Loory** 03:59

Henry Niglasi, what about in Zambia? Or if you can talk about it, Africa generally.

**Henry Niglasi** 04:08

Yeah, just like Hans de Vreij said, I think the Zambians also don't really expect much. I mean, last night when Arnold Schwarzenegger's stories, know, we had a detailed report about him that he is contest. But they really do not understand like, what's going on, what are these elections about. But since Arnold Schwarzenegger is a world star, so Zambians are like 'Oh, he's -- he's participating in elections. Is he going to win?' So the interest comes up because of Arnold being a TV star, I mean a movie star. And then the American media itself because sometimes we have, we have some channels here in Zambia, channels from America. We find that even these TV channels in America that we we transmit also concentrate much on Arnold Schwarzenegger. They are like (unintelligible). So people have to contest this election but it's like Arnold Schwarzenegger's coming out like the main man this election. So, if I find that the viewers are interested to know what the actor is doing and, and that. But not the other candidate as such.

**Stuart Loory** 05:16

Ashok Malik in India?

**Ashok Malik** 05:20

The view from India is not too different from that in Zambia or the Netherlands. Obviously, interest in these elections has gone up exponentially with the entry of Arnold Schwarzenegger, who's a sort of a name across the world. Two other aspects I'd like to focus on here, the constitutional system of recall... that has most people are a little confused here. Because we have a Westminster model of government. We do not have a system of recall. And that has sort of aroused some intrigue, and it's got people thinking. They aren't too sure how it works. And as for when you spoke about Arnold Schwarzenegger's films not being shown on public television. India has a history of very colorful elections. All sorts of candidates get into the fray. Actors, businessmen, movie stars. In one election I covered two years ago there was a magician who would show tricks while campaigning for votes. Most of these candidates are not serious candidates. More often than not they lose. But we do have a similar rule here about not showing films of movie stars who are running for Parliament or running for our version of the Senate. And you can't show their films during the campaign on public television.

**Stuart Loory** 06:55

You know you say that people in India are confused with the procedure of recall. I have to say that people in the United States are confused with that also, because not every state has a recall mechanism. This was voted into law in California many years ago when times were much simpler. And generally, it is a mechanism that was designed to give the voters, the people, the opportunity to replace politicians who were acting dishonestly or in some way not doing their job properly. This is the only time it's ever been used, as far as I know, certainly in California, or anywhere else in the United States for a gubernatorial candidate or for a governor of the state. And it seems like from afar, I am not in California, I am in the Middle West. But it seems that this is more a political thing by politicians who were disappointed because they lost the election to Gray Davis than by any sense of malfeasance. But let me not dominate this. Carlos, what about in Brazil?

**Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva** 08:35

Well, of course this circus atmosphere has also been very much shown in our media. But I think that this last aspect that you have just mentioned, the recall as a possibility of the people to interfere more in the political process is also something that has been emphasized in the Brazilian media as a positive aspect of all this process. I think that many people here believe that, like the propositions that have been voted in many states in the United States lately, this is a kind of more directed democracy being put in motion.

**Stuart Loory** 09:18

So I think there is no question that this really is an exercise in people's democracy. And it is probably the, the ultimate exercise as far as electoral politics are concerned. But as we see from this in a modern age, with television and mass communication so highly developed, it can really go out of control. And I think we probably have a procedure being used in California that is, is

going to be very difficult to bring under control in a meaningful way. Is there, is there any mechanism like this, that any of you know of... Hans de Vreij in the Netherlands?

**Hans de Vreij** 10:19

Well, Stuart, I must confess that, you know, Dutch politics are no way comparable to US politics. We don't have governors. We have no states, which have a certain degree of independent politics in certain issues. And the only recall you can have here of a member of Parliament or a member of the government will be when he or she will suddenly be found to have a criminal record or things like that. And also, I must admit that Dutch people in general, you know, they're not really interested in local politics in individual US states. Unless it's, you know, for some reason it attracts a lot of attention by the mainstream media. And of course many people are also watch CNN, many newspapers use the international news wires of AP and Reuters and what have you. So if something very remarkable happens, okay, people read it or watch TV about it. But otherwise, people here tend to look more at what's happening in Washington -- Washington, DC that is -- than what's happening in other states.

**Stuart Loory** 11:31

Right, there is really not much reason why people around the world should be interested at all in in American local politics or statewide politics. And yet on the other hand, California, by itself has the fifth largest economy in the world and it's, it's obviously a very important player throughout the world. Particularly in the Pacific and East Asian region. But I think as, as all of you pointed out, what's happening here is that Arnold Schwarzenegger, by entering this race, has brought worldwide interest to it. At least I get that from everything all of you are saying.

**Hans de Vreij** 12:25

If I may react Stuart -- Hans de Vreij in the Netherlands -- California may have a very big economy, but that's not perceived as such in the outside world. I will give you a concrete example. The Netherlands is the number three foreign investor in the United States of America. That doesn't mean that so you know, American media, consequently pay a lot of attention to what's happening here in the Netherlands.

**Hans Devrey** 12:48

That's, that's absolutely correct. Although the United States did pay a lot of attention to last year's election in Brazil. Carlos, tell us a little bit about how all of that is working out and how is your new president working out?

**Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva** 13:08

So far so good, Stuart. The President, as you know, is a former steel union leader. And he was a very controversial in the country for the last 20 years. He tried three times, four times to become president. And he did at the end of last year. And he has been very cautious, very conservative in terms of economy. And I think he has been very able to solidify his political position in order now to start the reforms that will make this country probably more just and less unequal.

**Stuart Loory** 13:51

There, there was great concern in this country that he was, as far as we were concerned, going to be too socialist, too left wing. How has that worked out?

**Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva** 14:06

That's not true. Really. He's a party, of course, he is a party that's more to the left than to the center, but he himself has never been a socialist or a communist or any anything of the sort. There are many people who support him that are so but most of the party is not. And he has been showing that he is a very able politician, at least so far, and he has been winning up the trust of whole country. I think that so far, nobody has any complaints about his government.

**Stuart Loory** 14:45

Okay, I we have to take a break now. This is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Laurie. We'll be right back. Welcome back to Global Journalist. You may listen to this program again, ask questions or make comments by going to [www dot global journalists dot org](http://www.globaljournalists.org) or in Mid-Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Before the break, we were talking about local politics in this country and particularly the recall election in California. But now, I would like to talk a little bit about the developing presidential election. It seems as if in this country, we are almost constantly involved in a presidential election campaign. And now the the election is about a year and three months off and George Bush will have to stand for re-election. And I would like to try to get some idea how George Bush is viewed in various parts of the world. Carlos, would you like to start with Latin America?

**Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva** 16:07

Yes, President Bush is not the most popular president that the West has had in terms of Latin American appreciation. Indeed, the feelings of anti-Americanism has, have been surging very much in the whole subcontinent since he took over. President Clinton was very popular and still is, but not President Bush. I think that most Brazilians by far do not trust him and think that he is a real threat to the security of the whole world.

**Hans Devrey** 16:44

Why was President Clinton so popular?

**Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva** 16:49

I think that he had, at least he expressed some concerns about inequality, about the globalization process, and there was a kind of affinity between him and former President Cardoso of Brazil. President Clinton was seen as a person who cared about the poor, and about the less developed countries. And President Bush is not seen as that.

**Stuart Loory** 17:18

Henry Niglasi, how about in Zambia and Africa generally.

**Henry Niglasi** 17:23

I don't know if it's to do with American policy of... maybe the parties that come into into ruling. Let's say that the democrats in Africa are viewed as leaders who are more willing to assist Africa, unlike the Republicans. I can give an example of President George Bush right now. He's supposed to play a role of the Big Brother, you know, in the world, a superpower. But what is something is like, he's being viewed as a bulldozer, you know? Someone who is taking advantage maybe of his country's economic power. You know, he's like creating more enemies all over the world in the process. Look at the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction stage. What is happening now is... all we're seeing is the Saddam family is being pursued and those are still with Saddam. The Americans themselves are dying. The Israel-Palestine issue, not much has come up from their -- the roadmap is still dealing with... like, America is not putting much effort to push Israel. So what I can say much here is that there is more that President Bush has to do for countries, I mean continents like Africa. What, what goes on more often is that we don't have much from from President Bush from the American policy itself. Foreign policy. You'll find that most Africans expect more from America, but they get little of that aid money which was promised. Most people you talk to now think maybe the man who pledged just divert to Africa from the Iraq War, to make them believe that despite that, America still comes to aid and help them. But it's quiet now we don't deal with money that hasn't been approved and somehow not much of it is coming to Africa. So we've asked people and they said "Ah, America was just doing that pledge the money to fight it, just to divert attention. So the Iraq War, which made America sort of friends in Africa." So all he did was to say, I'm going to give money to Africa.

**Hans Devrey** 19:24

Okay, because he... Sorry to interrupt, but let's move on now. Ashok Malik.

**Ashok Malik** 19:34

Well, I have a somewhat different view from India. I would say, George Bush is perhaps the most popular republican president ever in India. Now, I realized it's an enormous statement to make. And it's got a lot to do with India and very little to do with Bush. Because five years ago, India elected its first right wing government after about a half century of center-left governments. And as you... three years after that Bush came to power and America too moved further right than Clinton. And certainly the political mood in India is more geared to the right -- appearing to the right -- than it has been for the past two decades or so. It's never been this right. And there is a certain empathy with Republicans, as opposed to with sections of Democrats. And Clinton was enormously popular here. He came here, charmed India, he was a great communicator. And I guess that people have a great regard to him as well. But then he wasn't a conventional Democrat. Sort of. He was to the left of the Democratic Party he was, but he occupied the center of sort of American politics as it were. He was to the right of the democrats. And that is a position India, Indians are generally comfortable with because it is the enormous support for the US war on terror simply because we've had our own problems with... you could call them militants or terrorists depending on which side of South Asia you're located in. But these are people with bases in Afghanistan and very much the same reason America has taking on. And there is a certain empathy here and a certain support for the war on terror. So Bush is more popular here than in, than is say Europe.

**Stuart Loory** 21:38

Yeah, my guess would be that what is going on in Afghanistan gets a lot of coverage in India.

**Ashok Malik** 21:47

Absolutely.

**Stuart Loory** 21:50

Are Indian people satisfied with how things are going in Afghanistan?

**Ashok Malik** 21:54

Well, they wouldn't want the Americans to move out because it's... there is a certain equilibrium in Afghanistan, which is a very tenuous equilibrium, but there is a certain equilibrium all the same. But American, enormous American presence in Afghanistan and the form of troops and money and wherewithal is the guarantee of that stability. The moment you remove that, it's gone. I mean, you'll be back to, to chaos. So certainly people here are looking to a long term American presence in this part of the world.

**Stuart Loory** 22:32

Hans de Vreij, before the war in Iraq, the United States, was involved in deep disagreement with what was called here, old Europe. Has any of that changed since the war?

**Hans de Vreij** 22:51

Well, I don't think the Netherlands would want to be associated with what US officials termed as old Europe. What happened was that the (demos?) did support the war in Iraq. It was a very typical Dutch careful formula. We supported the war politically, but not militarily, not militarily. What did happen, however now is that the Dutch have sent some 1100 troops, mainly Dutch Marines, under British command to replace U.S. troops in the (house?) of Iraq. What we have also seen in some polls is that once the war had effectively ended, more Dutch people in all sense about 50% supported the war, as opposed to the majority that opposed it before the war actually started.

**Stuart Loory** 23:48

And Bush himself, has this reflected in his popularity in the Netherlands?

**Hans de Vreij** 23:56

Well, it's been noted here that in the United States itself, for President Bush's popularity is decreasing markedly so. I, you know, on a personal note, I would say that each and every country gets the president it deserves. Here in the Netherlands. I mean, you know, we're a small, very affluent, very rich country. We are very liberal politics, what you will call left wing in the United States, we would call, you know, middle of the road here. And what's left wing here would probably amount to revolutionary over in the United States. So, typically, prior to the last election 2000, more than three quarters of Dutch people in a poll were in favor of the favor of the Democratic candidate Al Gore, and even Al Gore, if you were to transport him here to Netherlands would be, well, sort of a center politician, not, nothing left wing. So that's where we

stand. And I should also add that you know Netherlands is a very very loyal member of the transatlantic community and the transatlantic ties will survive President Bush or whatever president will exist for some time to come.

**Stuart Loory** 25:14

And how is the feeling in Germany and France toward President Bush and the United States viewed in the Netherlands or.. are the leaderships in those countries criticized in the Netherlands at all?

**Hans de Vreij** 25:30

I think it's a discern between the position of France and that of Germany. France is always trying to play leadership within Europe, you know, within the 15 nations that make up the European Union, which is not a political union as such. It's not the, you know, we're not the United States of Europe. Germany is a different case. And I think many people were sort of offended here by the way that the American administration treated the German government for opposing the war without the due resolutions by the UN Security Council. I mean, after all, we're you know, we're all part of a Western club of democratic countries. And you should appreciate that not all of us countries have exactly the same opinion. I witnessed during the last G8 meeting -- that's, you know, the seven richest countries in the world plus Russia -- the G8 Meeting. American efforts to sort of iron out the differences between the US and France and Germany. That wasn't very successful as such, but I think, you know, as time passes by, the difference tend to be, become less sharp, and it's business as usual.

**Stuart Loory** 26:38

All right. Hans, if there is anything more you want to say, maybe, maybe talk about what does President Bush have to do to improve the reputation of the United States in Europe?

**Hans de Vreij** 26:54

That's a very difficult question, Stuart. You know, I'll leave it up to the US government to decide for itself. I think what offended people really, here was the way the issue of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Me too as a journalist, I covered economic subjects, but also have some experience and knowledge in that particular field of weapons of mass destruction. And I truly believe that the US had a strong case that those weapons were there and were ready to be used. Well, lo and behold, they weren't. And that's, that puts the credibility of information emanating from the US intelligence community somewhat in a different light.

**Stuart Loory** 27:31

Yeah, I'm sorry to say we are out of time. Our guests today have been Hans de Vreij, Economics Editor of Radio Netherlands in Hilversum, the Netherlands. Henry Niglas, senior reporter for Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation in Lusaka, Zambia. Ashok Malik, Senior Editor of The Indian Express in New Delhi, India. And Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Valor in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Our director is Pat Akers, and our producers Jusef Colyango and Sarah Catan. For all, I'm Stuart Loory. Global Journalist will be back next week.