

## Charlie Rose talks to Silicon Valley leaders about political protectionism

Tom Abate, Chronicle Staff Writer  
 Friday, October 12, 2007

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS FONT SIZE: - +

Sliding into political protectionism is the biggest threat to innovation in the United States, leading Bay Area thinkers said Thursday in interviews with talk show host Charlie Rose before a live audience at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Auditorium.

### IMAGES



View More Images

### GET QUOTE

Enter Symbol GO

Symbol Lookup

### MORE BUSINESS

- Asia stocks sink as layoffs add to global gloom 11.17.08
- Top salesmen for financial bailout face grilling 11.17.08
- Kodak sues Samsung, LG over camera patents 11.17.08
- Residents return to devastated LA mobile home park 11.17.08

The event, organized by TechNet, represents the fourth time the bipartisan high-tech lobby has worked with Rose to provide local live audiences for what will air as two separate episodes of his eponymous PBS show later in the year.

Rose spent the first hour or so asking Silicon Valley leaders such as Cisco Systems CEO John Chambers what the United States must do to encourage innovation, while the second hour allowed venture capitalist John Doerr and others to make the case for investing in green energy.

Rose opened each of the segments to questions, giving the audience of several hundred a chance to challenge the optimistic tech executives on issues like income inequality, and to add observations such as the importance of using sex appeal to address energy issues.

The first session was a paean to globalism, as Chambers, joined by fellow panelists John Chen, chief executive of the software firm Sybase, and Laura Tyson, the UC Berkeley professor who once was a Clinton administration adviser, agreed with Rose that technological innovation is now so thoroughly internationalized that no nation can afford to secede from the so-called flat world, a term taken from the pro-globalist book by *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman.

"There is always a danger of slipping into a more protectionist environment," Chen said at one point in response to a question from Rose that painted the global tech industry as the golden goose and asked what government could do to hinder or help it keep laying golden eggs.

Tyson projected current globalizing trends into the future and onto the map - which today is marked by national borders that may be less relevant in a 24/7 networked world.

"Over the next 50 years, a much more multilateral or cooperative global government" could arise, she speculated, because cross-border economic agreements will make more sense than "flat governments."

Chambers focused many of his remarks on the global competition for talent, and the necessity for the United States to refocus its investment on education, particularly in math and the sciences. At one point, he said "Seventy-one percent of the engineers in Cisco in Silicon Valley are of Asian descent."

Rose asked about U.S. immigration policy, giving tech leaders a chance to air their pleas to be allowed to hire more college graduates from abroad under the H-1B visa program, and prompting Tyson, recently returned to Berkeley after a stint as dean of the London School

MOST COMMENTED MOST READ MOST E-MAILED

- Bay Area demonstrations condemn Prop. 8
- Brown, Prop. 8 forces urge court to hear suits that would toss measure
- Trends beyond black vote in play on Prop. 8
- Are you an idiot to keep paying your mortgage?
- Families in shock over Silicon Valley slayings
- Congress debating auto industry bailout
- 4 Napa Valley college students die in crash

From  
The GRUBB Co.

---

**BERKELEY**  
2 BR / 2 BA  
\$799,000

---

**MONTCLAIR, PIEDMONT AVE, CITY OF PIEDMONT**  
4 BR / 3 BA  
\$1,395,000

---

**MONTCLAIR, PIEDMONT AVE, CITY OF PIEDMONT**  
5 BR / 4 BA  
\$1,795,000

---

**OAKLAND, PIEDMONT**  
3 BR / 2 BA  
\$3,500

---

**MONTCLAIR, PIEDMONT AVE, CITY OF PIEDMONT**  
3 BR / 3 BA  
\$1,195,000

---

**MONTCLAIR, PIEDMONT AVE, CITY OF PIEDMONT**  
3 BR / 1 BA  
\$875,000

---

**BERKELEY, KENSINGTON**  
3 BR / 1 BA  
\$860,000

---

**DOWN, BERKELEY**  
5 BR / 4 BA  
\$30,000

---

**MONTCLAIR, PIEDMONT AVE, CITY OF PIEDMONT**  
3 BR / 2 BA  
\$789,000

---

**BERKELEY, KENSINGTON**  
3 BR / 2 BA  
\$899,000

---

[See more from this broker](#)

[About Top Homes](#)

### HOMES



**Ving Rhames' mission: to sell Brentwood house**  
 My all-time favorite award-show moment came in 1998 when best-actor winner Ving Rhames gave his Golden Globe to fellow...

- Return all keys or landlord can make you pay
- Mortgage rates drop for second week
- Investment groups resist mortgage changes

[Search Homes >](#)

### CARS

of Business, to tout the immigration policies of the United Kingdom.

"They are bringing talent in," she said.

But two questions from the audience evidenced some skepticism toward the tech execs' mantra that the rising tide of globalism will lift all ships. "If we have such a talent shortage, how come we have so many college grads working at Starbucks?" asked venture capitalist Elton Sherwin, 53. Minutes later, 40-year-old Joseph Hentz, chief executive of a Palo Alto equipment resale firm called Superex, asked whether a trend toward income inequality that seems to parallel tech advances would end up killing innovation.

Tyson said the question assumed a false exaggeration, that college grads do better over time, and that parents and national policy should encourage students to seek degrees in science, engineering and math. She also said the danger from income inequality would be political in that "if the middle (class) feels itself at risk," that could weaken support for globalism and embolden protectionists.

When the second panel on green energy returned to the stage after a break, Rose, with a bit of folksy charm to put the audience at ease, drew attention to the fact that he was barefoot.

"I can't talk without taking my shoes off," he said adding, "that's what comes from growing up on a farm."

Along with Doerr on stage were Sun Microsystems chief executive Jonathan Schwartz, Larry Brilliant, executive director of the philanthropic Google.org, and John Melo, chief executive of Amyris Biotechnologies, a firm that hopes to use microbes to turn plant waste into replacements for gasoline.

But several times the panelists dwelled on the green guy who wasn't there - former Vice President Al Gore, whose film won an Academy Award for his global warming documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," and is rumored to be a candidate for a Nobel Prize.

At one point when Rose asked the panelists how the world had gotten into its current energy fix, Doerr, ever quick on the quip, said, "because of 800 votes in Florida."

But the panelists agreed that one of the drivers of the global warming problem was the rapid industrialization of nations like China, which must burn coal to fuel their growth. Brilliant lauded China for "lifting 300 million people out of poverty," an accomplishment he called greater than the building of the pyramids. The problem, he said, is that there are more than 600 million more Chinese waiting to make the same leap.

Insofar as energy conservation is a partial answer to the green crisis, an observation by one audience member suggested that sex appeal could help save the day. Golden Gate University marketing Professor Michal Ann Strahilevitz told the audience about a male friend who had bought a Ferrari several years ago while going through a divorce. But he recently sold it, she said, to buy a Prius.

"He thinks he's sexier in a Prius," she said.

*E-mail Tom Abate at [tabate@sfgate.com](mailto:tabate@sfgate.com).*

*This article appeared on page C - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle*

[PRINT](#) [E-MAIL](#) [SHARE](#)

### Comments

Submit

Characters left: 1000



#### Get a sneak peek of this year's Auto Show

On Nov. 22, the San Francisco Chronicle|SF Gate.com 51st Annual International Auto Show is coming to town. And, as usual...

- Silver Caddy has been the family car since '65
- RV owners turn gas guzzlers green
- Car Gallery: Submit photos of your ride!

[Search Cars >](#)

#### JOBS



#### List of layoffs posted on SFGate

Employment security is becoming Topic A as the economy continues its downward spiral. Seemingly every day brings news of yet another ...

- Radio Waves
- FACE TO FACE: Mark Wood
- TheStreet.com shuts San Francisco office

[Search Jobs >](#)

#### ADVERTISERS



### Daily Dish

Lindsay flour-bombed by 'animal'; Simon, ex talk split.



### Pete Newell Dies

The famed basketball coach led Cal to its only NCAA title. He was 93.



### Jackie Speier's Jonestown Horror

"I'm 28 years old, and I am about to die." 2nd of series.



Subscribe to The Chronicle

**Advertising Services:** [Place a Classified](#) | [Advertise in Print](#) | [Advertise Online](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Today's Print Ads](#) | [Public Notices](#)  
**Reader Services:** [Home Delivery](#) | [Subscribers](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Buy Photos](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Corrections](#)  
**Company Info:** [Contact Us](#) | [Hearst Corp.](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Chronicle in Education](#) | [Events & Promotions](#) | [Submissions](#)

© 2008 Hearst Communications Inc.

