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He says: "We were also, amazingly, the prime source of information for people in Iran itself because their networks were being stymied. People who were in Lebanon and Syria who couldn't get to their news sites went to me. My colleagues Patrick and Chris, we took eight-hour shifts around twenty-four hours. . . . And in one of the more iconic moments when Neda [Agha-Soltan, a bystander at the protests] was shot by a government sniper and fell to the ground, I got this staggering picture on the blog. We were among the first to broadcast it within minutes of it occurring. Now that's to bring a moment in a revolution instantly to a global audience of millions . . . it was totally an organic process in which we were essentially a filter and I think it was a breakthrough moment for the media."

For Sullivan, blogging is a democratic as well as a journalistic phenomenon. In 2002 he wrote in the *London Times* that "what bloggers do is completely new—and cannot be replicated on any other medium. It's somewhere in between writing a column and talk radio. It's genuinely new. And it harnesses the web's real genius—its ability to empower anyone to do what only a few in the past could genuinely pull off. In that sense, blogging is the first journalistic model that actually harnesses rather than merely exploits the true democratic nature of the web. It's a new medium finally finding a unique voice.

"Stay tuned as that voice gets louder and louder."<sup>1</sup>

Here are some other thoughts from Andrew Sullivan:

### **On patriotism:**

It's not the same thing as nationalism. It is not that your country is always right. . . . I think at some level it is simply loving—and I mean that in a deep sense—the culture, tradition, constitution, and people of the place you call home. In a way I must say I have two patriotisms—of the country I came from and the country I'm still trying to become a citizen of. And patriotism, yes, does mean sometimes dissenting from one's country's leadership, but I think it's too facile to say it's the highest form. I think another equally valid form is supporting your country when the

chips are down, even when it isn't perfect, even when it does make mistakes, because it's yours.

### **On keeping the republic:**

America is actually in I think a quite extraordinary crisis right now—spiritually, politically, and economically. I don't think it's been this acute since maybe the late 70s or 60s. . . . I do think people have to understand if they are not there the discourse will be captured by someone else. And you have a responsibility—I've lived long enough to understand that. And it's easy to insulate oneself and delude oneself into thinking it doesn't really matter or I don't have to do something—but in fact you do.

One of the ways this really struck home for me was, personally, in the late 80s, early 90s, the AIDS crisis. I realized if I didn't help these people who were dying no one would. . . . And then when I contracted it, and thought I was given a few years, I sat down and wrote [his book] *Virtually Normal*, because I wanted to leave behind a contribution to an argument [about gay rights]. . . . I had nothing to lose because I thought I was going to die. But why should I have had to get to that point? So imagine that you have a couple of years left on this Earth, what are you waiting for?

1. Andrew Sullivan, "A Blogger's Manifesto," *Sunday Times of London*, February 24, 2002.

**Source:** Andrew Sullivan talked with Christine Barbour in August 2010.