

**Statement by  
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**“The 9/11 Commission Recommendations on Public Diplomacy:  
Defending Ideals and Defining the Message”**

**House Committee on Government Reform  
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and  
International Relations**

**August 23, 2004**

Chairman Shays and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting us here today to testify on the recommendations of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. Your subcommittee has long been interested in public diplomacy, and I welcome the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Mr. Chairman, the findings and recommendations of the 9/11 Commission’s Report present challenges for all of us. In the realm of public diplomacy, the report calls on us to define our message and ourselves, to stand for a better future, to defend our ideals and values, and to offer opportunity to youth.

We know that our greatest strength lies in our values. Whether as a new nation struggling for independence more than two centuries ago or now, when we have all the privileges and burdens of a global power – the heart of the American message to the world is one of values. We also understand that if we do not define ourselves, others will do it for us.

Following September 11, 2001, in discussions with the Administration and Congress, and in conjunction with our embassies, the Broadcasting Board of Governors and others, we began to move forward with a strategy for America’s public diplomacy. The foundation of our public diplomacy strategy is to engage, inform and influence foreign publics in order to increase understanding for American values, policies and initiatives. Through traditional programs and all the tools of technology, involving both the public and private sectors, we are communicating the principles and values that underpin our policies and define us as a nation. At

the same time, we are working to increase mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and those of other countries.

After 9/11, we redirected funds to enable us to move quickly and reach beyond elites to strategic communities comprising young people, religious leaders, as well as the universe of people responsible for the education and development of young people – “youth influencers” from education ministers to classroom teachers to clerics, coaches and parents. We developed programs to reach people of good will, moderate groups working for the development of tolerant civil societies, journalists, women’s groups, local leaders, clerics, community activists and more.

We have communicated our policy message through daily press briefings and public outreach by our missions around the world, as well as through our expanded web presence, speakers and publications. And, we communicate America’s message through more than statements and speeches. In fact, one of the most powerful components of our public diplomacy programs are the 80,000 Americans who are reaching out to host our more than 30,000 academic, cultural and professional exchanges annually. We are working with 1,500 public-private organizations to improve lives in communities throughout the world. We know that one of our great assets in public diplomacy is the American people themselves, as they really are, not as they are caricatured. Programs that bring Americans and foreign citizens in direct contact can and do have tremendous positive impact.

We have formed partnerships with local institutions overseas, media and NGO’s and others to extend our reach. We are funding English language programs, the language of opportunity for young people worldwide and, in the process, conveying information about U.S. society and values.

We continue to seek new ways to maintain important connections at a global grassroots level. For example, at a time when security concerns can constrain our ability to engage, one of our programs, American Corners provides a unique opportunity to maintain our involvement.

Media in all of its forms, from the Internet to print and broadcast, is an important component of public diplomacy. Our investment in training for journalists and cooperative television provides influential professionals with an entree to American society, where they can see for themselves how media

in a free society works and observe for themselves that America is a free country with citizens of many faiths worshiping in their own way and coexisting equally. In other words, they can see how a civil society enhances the lives of all its citizens.

The vast majority of people around the world, including people in the Arab and Muslim world, share our values of freedom, human rights, opportunity and optimism, but many do not recognize America as champion of those values. We must compete to get our message across in an increasingly crowded and difficult competitive information environment, and Mr. Chairman, we do compete. We are working with the U.S. Agency for International Development to ensure recipients of our assistance recognize that assistance does come from the American people. The new Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) on Muslim Outreach will strengthen coordination with the Department of Defense and other agencies. Our websites in Arabic and other critical languages communicate values as well as policy. Our partners in broadcasting, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, are dedicated to this objective.

Mr. Chairman, I believe our public diplomacy efforts are working in the right direction but there is a need to do more.

The Commission recommends that we work with moderate Arabs and Muslims to develop an “Agenda of Opportunity” built around education and economic development, a critical component of public diplomacy outreach. The report also advised that we must “rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope.” It is only through education and true communication that, as the 9/11 Commission Report puts it, “a moderate consensus can be found.” We began to address this challenge, immediately following September 11, 2001, but this is not the work of weeks or months. It is the work of years and generations.

As a government, we must commit to a long-term and sustainable investment, engaging with people of good will at all levels of society, and especially to youth and those who influence youth. We must commit to increasing the numbers of people who can experience America beyond the headlines and misconceptions, through a visit to the U.S., interactions with Americans in their own country, through American Centers and through print and broadcast media and the internet. We must demonstrate our many

positive values as a society – such as rule of law, civil society, women’s rights, religious tolerance and freedom of the media – to as many foreign individuals as possible, so that they can be advocates within their own countries for a civil and sustainable future.

We welcomed the 9/11 Commission Report as it has affirmed the many important steps we have taken since 9/11, including refocused funding to priority regions, especially the Middle East and South Asia, which now account for 25 percent of all Department funding for exchanges. Through our International Visitor and other public diplomacy programs, we have prioritized themes such as religious tolerance, ethnic diversity, the value of an independent media, NGO management, civil society and governance, elections and educational reform in the Muslim world. We have also increased our foreign journalist tours and television cooperative productions in these regions. The primary audiences are young student and political leaders, women and journalists.

We launched CultureConnect, the cornerstone of our cultural diplomacy, a program that selects American men and women who have achieved prominence in literature, the performing arts, sports, and other areas and serve as Cultural Ambassadors overseas with a focus on non-elite youth. We have also launched Citizen Diplomats, another new initiative, that allows everyday Americans the opportunity to share their skills and expertise with people in other countries. We are also sending 900 American speakers to foreign posts each year; and have held over 450 digital video conferences.

Public Diplomacy Officers from our South Asia and Near Eastern Affairs Bureaus were on the ground immediately following the military campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Our 30 public diplomacy officers in Iraq constitute the largest public diplomacy operation in the world. By the end of FY 2004, the International Visitor Program will have developed a range of programs for Iraqi mayors, educators, spokespeople, NGO representatives and women. Throughout the world, and especially in the those countries with significant Muslim populations, our public diplomacy staffs are focused and working to reach those communities with an American message of hope and opportunity.

In the wake of 9/11, we began to produce a stream of print and electronic materials describing for foreign audiences, in their own languages,

the events of 9/11 and the need to fight against those who have committed or wish to commit terrorist acts, as well as the achievements made in that struggle, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq. More than 3,000 articles on terrorism have been published in the daily Washington File since 9/11. In the year following 9/11, the increase was 250 percent.

The Bureau of International Information Programs' (IIP's) print materials in Arabic are used by our embassies who share the material daily with press, academic, political and economic contacts either directly or indirectly through targeted mailing lists. The materials are available to foreign publics directly on the internet on our IIP sites, which receive over 3,100 page views per day. Also, over 1,200 Arabic users have signed up independently to receive our material each day on the Arabic listserv. Use is monitored and reported through our embassies in weekly reports citing placement of Arabic material from IIP's Washington File.

We have established Arabic websites: Our USINFO Middle East web page, <http://usinfo.state.gov>, is linked to 470 other Arabic sites. Since 9/11, we have quadrupled the number of pages that we have been producing in Arabic. Before 9/11, we translated 3,000 to 4,000 words per day; now we translate between 12,000 and 15,000 per day. Our policy focus on the region, the President's vision for Middle East peace, policy emphasis on the proposed Middle East Free Trade Area and Middle East Partnership Initiative provide new material for daily Arabic translation. Critical audiences identified by our Missions abroad include government officials, scholars, university professors, researchers, media representatives, and self-selected listserv recipients. Our statistical reporting on Arabic language web sites indicates that 85% of our web users are based overseas with more than 50% from the Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Kuwait and Syria as leading users.

Since 9/11, we have also increased by one-third our Arabic translation staff and opened a Persian language capacity. In May of 2003, we opened a Persian language website, engaging Iranian youth and youth influencers. Working with the Coalition Provisional Authority and the new Embassy in Baghdad, we introduced Arabic papers on the "Principles of Democracy" to inform Iraqis as their new government is shaped.

One of our most visible and effective public diplomacy tools is American Corners. A visitor to an American Corner, which can be housed

in a university or an office building, finds computers, books, magazines, and information about life in the United States, our government and our culture. More than 140 American Corners are now in operation around the world, and our goal is to establish another 60 this year, with an emphasis on the Muslim world. In South Asia and other regions, our missions continue to operate American Centers – significant community institutions that serve as platforms for public outreach and as models of shared commitments to models of educational excellence.

Under the Bureau of Public Affairs (PA), both the Foreign Press Centers for print and radio and Office of Broadcast Services for television have increased substantially the number of journalist tours to our country, and 50 percent are with journalists from Arab and Muslim-majority countries. Since 9/11, the Foreign Press Center has included in its programming a set of special briefings specifically designed for Arab and Muslim media, including briefings by senior-level officials like Secretaries Powell, Rumsfeld and Ridge, as well as Dr. Rice. During this time, there has been unprecedented access by the foreign media to U.S. Government officials.

After 9/11, we created the Media Outreach Center in London, which is actively reaching out to Arab media in London, many of which have wide exposure throughout the Middle East.

Television and video products continue to be powerful strategic tools for bringing America's foreign policy message to worldwide audiences. PA has engaged international audiences with television pieces and documentary productions through television Co-Ops – filmed domestically by foreign broadcasters – and reverse Co-Ops in host countries. We are helping Arab and Muslim journalists produce balanced reports and documentaries on topics from policy to culture. We continue to produce “good news” stories on reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan that American and foreign news editors have incorporated in their programs, and we are distributing Department-oriented videos to foreign media outlets worldwide. We have purchased the re-broadcast and educational rights to over 100 commercial documentaries showing America's government, society and values for broadcast on the American Embassy Television Network. The most popular series has been the American history program, “Freedom: A History of the U.S.” The other most requested titles include “American Cinema”,

“Searching for the Roots of 9/11 with Thomas Friedman” and “Frontline: Muslims.”

Nearly every post in every region of the world has requested tapes and reported on the exceptional results. For example, two Indonesian stations broadcast the 26-part series “Framework for Democracy,” a documentary series about the reality of how a democratic government works. A Chinese audience viewed “Hollywood and the Muslim World,” raising the confidence that peaceful resolutions could be achieved between the Muslim world and the U.S.

To measure the effectiveness of our video products, we have partnered with *NewsMarket*, an internet-based worldwide video distribution service, which markets and distributes our products to more than 2,000 broadcasters and news agencies worldwide and provides routine monitoring and placement reports.

Our public diplomacy bureaus, in partnership with our regional bureaus around the world, have worked together to allay fears about domestic security and to educate foreign travelers about the revamped US visa process through the “Secure Borders, Open Doors” campaign, an interagency effort involving the Department of Homeland Security and others as well as State. Features of this initiative include a special website – [www.unitedstatesvisas.gov](http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov) – promotional materials and speaking points. Other materials on changes in our visa policy have been developed and promoted, with an educational video to be released in six languages this fall.

The Middle East Partnership Initiative, funded at almost \$250 million, fosters reforms to expand political participation and increase the economic and educational opportunities available to the people of the Middle East and North Africa, with an emphasis on opportunities for women and youth.

Within our broad programs in the Arab and Muslim world, we have as a strategic priority a focus on younger audiences within these regions. Following September 11, 2001, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) launched Partnerships for Learning (P4L), which directs ECA exchanges towards youth and youth influencers in the Arab and Muslim world to build long-term sustainable relationships. P4L is based on the premise that if terror is the common enemy, education is the common value. The ultimate goal of P4L is the establishment of close and sustained

partnerships with other nations that help provide young people with quality education and opportunities in life that will deter them from despair and hate.

Since FY 2002, ECA has dedicated over \$40 million dollars to this new initiative. In FY 2005, ECA has requested an additional \$25 million for P4L, which would increase funding for the P4L initiative to over \$65 million. All of this will go to the Arab and Muslim world.

With this funding, we have initiated our country's first-ever government-sponsored high school program with the Arab and Muslim world. Last year, we had 170 students living with American families and attending U.S. high schools. This year, we will have 480, including students from Iraq and Afghanistan. By the 06-07 school year, we plan to have 1,000 high school students from the Arab and Muslim world studying side-by-side with our youth. This program was made possible through the volunteerism of hundreds of Muslim-American host families.

We have also created a new, undergraduate program specifically targeted at the non-elite, gifted young men and women from the Arab world who would otherwise have no opportunity for foreign study and first-hand exposure to the United States.

Under P4L, we also resumed the long-suspended Fulbright programs in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have directed \$3.1 million to fund a microscholarship initiative for English language instruction to more than 3,400 youth from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Muslim world. In July 2003, we also initiated a monthly Arabic youth magazine, "Hi", which now is available throughout the Arab world and has led to an interactive "web-zine" that last month attracted 30,000 visitors and well over 700,000 page views. What we are actively doing dovetails exactly with the recommendation from the 9/11 commission that our scholarship and exchange programs "reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope."

There is much more that needs to be done, and we are working now to put in place initiatives that I believe will strengthen public diplomacy for the years ahead.

The need to improve oversight and coordination of public diplomacy was identified in the report from the Public Diplomacy Advisory Group for the Arab and Muslim World, the “Djerejian Group.” A specific recommendation in this and other reports was the establishment of an Office of Policy, Planning and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs within the Office of the Under Secretary. We have identified people and resources necessary to create this office, which will assist the Under Secretary in developing a wide-ranging strategic vision for public diplomacy, oversight for resource allocation, and performance evaluation capacities that previously did not exist. I know public diplomacy performance measurement has been a concern, and though many public diplomacy activities are difficult to measure, I am pleased that this new office will be taking on this important task. Subject to a congressional notification letter, we hope to have the office up and running by September.

Another recommendation of the Djerejian Report was to reinvigorate an interagency Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC). We have done that, concentrating initially on Muslim outreach. I am now co-chairing this PCC, with the NSC, and we are examining ways to engage and support potential allies, opinion leaders, NGO’s and youth influencers such as religious leaders, teachers and journalists in countries worldwide with significant Muslim populations. Our challenge is to move beyond quick-fix solutions to improve America’s image, to create long-term sustainable relationships among people of good will at every level, especially in emerging and strategic communities.

Working with the Department’s regional bureaus, the PCC has requested and received reports from our embassies on their specific strategies for Muslim outreach, the programs they are implementing which are working and those programs not yet in place they believe would be effective. Embassies are already heavily involved in Muslim outreach. The PCC will help us to take a broader view of the challenges and develop strategic approaches that can be applied to specific countries and regions.

Another priority endeavor is our engagement of the private sector in public diplomacy. Secretary Powell, an advocate of public-private partnerships, has asked the Office of the Under Secretary to take the lead in engaging with the private sector in support of a wide-range of programs and initiatives. We launched the first Sister Cities International Partners for Peace Initiative between Iraq and the U.S., an initiative announced by the

First Lady at the G-8 Summit. We worked with private sector partners to support the performance of the Iraqi National Symphony at Kennedy Center, and we are working with the Wheelchair Foundation to establish a new Middle East initiative to donate thousands of wheelchairs to Iraq, Morocco, Jordan, Oman and other areas in the Arab world.

Our outreach to the business community taps into America's strength: volunteerism. To enhance the scope of current programming and deliver our country's strategic public diplomacy and public affairs messages, we are working with the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and the U.S. Department of Commerce and have reached out to U.S. corporations and associations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center for Corporate Citizenship, the Business Roundtable, National Foreign Trade Council, Business for Diplomatic Action, Council on Competitiveness and the Young Entrepreneur Organization. We are evaluating corporate stewardship and corporate social responsibility trends demonstrated by U.S. companies throughout the Arab and Muslim world and working to expand our outreach to complement and highlight America's generous private sector contributions.

Interagency coordination is active, as described earlier with regard to the PCC, in addition to other interagency working groups. I would also like to note that the Department continues its close working relationship with the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Secretary Powell is a board member, and I represent him at the board meetings in my role as the acting Under Secretary. The 9/11 Commission's report commends the BBG for its new initiatives to reach out to the Arab and Muslim world. Radio Sawa and Radio Farda, along with the Middle East Television station Alhurra, and the new Urdu and Indonesian VOA services are reaching broader audiences with innovative and unbiased programming. Because of these initiatives, our country is now being presented in a much more honest context in regions where our media presence is vital.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, September 11, 2001 was a wake-up call for public diplomacy as for all of America. In the almost three years since that horrendous day, we have channeled much of our public diplomacy program toward the Arab and Muslim world. We are developing new programs and refining our strategy, and I believe we are making progress. Recent steps, including our new Office of Policy, Planning and Resources as well as the new Policy Coordinating Committee, will contribute

substantially to our ability to carry out our mission and meet the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and others. We are undertaking a new, comprehensive process of measurement to determine that our strategy and programs are effective.

As we continue to work toward a more robust and effective public diplomacy effort, we welcome the interest and continued support we have received from the administration and Congress. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to discuss public diplomacy with you today, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

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