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## Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays August 23, 2004

In the war against transnational terrorism, we are losing ground on a crucial front: the battle of ideas. Words, not just weapons, fuel revolutions; and the language of political liberty and economic opportunity can inspire the victory of life over death, faith over fatalism, and progress over stagnation throughout the Muslim world.

The next generation of terrorists can be stopped with books rather than bombs, if we help empower and mobilize the moderate majority with the vocabulary of hope.

Public diplomacy – the cultural exchanges, educational programs and broadcasts used to convey United States interests and ideals to foreign audiences – helped win the Cold War. But, according to the State Department's Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, "The United States today lacks the capabilities in public diplomacy to meet the national security threat emanating from political instability, economic deprivation and extremism...."

In the rhetorical arms race for the hearts and minds of the Muslim world, some ask how the most technologically advanced nation on earth is being outgunned by a movement largely based in caves.

In our previous hearings on public diplomacy, witnesses described a lack of strategic coherence in U.S. efforts to communicate with global audiences. Successful Cold War structures have been stripped bare and scattered throughout a State Department bureaucracy with other priorities. Since September 11, 2001, the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors have increased the reach and frequency of communications on U.S. policies. New, more aggressive approaches seek to counter anti-American stereotypes and caricatures dominating the news cycles.

But the 9/11 Commission found those efforts still inadequate to meet the threat. They called for "short term action on a long-range strategy" to compete as vigorously on the ideological battlefield as we do on the military and intelligence fronts. The Commission recommended a clearer message in support of the rule of law, human rights, expanded opportunity and political reform. And they said we needed to expand regional satellite broadcasting and rebuild scholarship, exchange and library programs targeted to young people.

The Commission's call for reinvigorated public diplomacy adds urgency to the debate already underway over the appropriate mix of U.S. communication tools. Some say mass audience programming based on popular music and other modern advertising techniques lack necessary depth. Others say the old, more academic methods targeting societal elites will not reach the larger body politic. The Commission calls for expansion of both approaches.

So we meet this afternoon to examine those recommendations more fully, determine which can be done by the executive branch alone and which require legislative implementation, and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of public diplomacy as a tool against future terrorist attacks.

We are aided in that discussion today by Governor Thomas Kean, Chairman of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Commission member Jamie Gorelick, and two other panels of extremely qualified and experienced witnesses. We thank them all for participating and we look forward to their testimony.