

**EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH AMERICA'S IMAGE
ABROAD: ARE THEY WORKING?**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND OVERSIGHT
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EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH AMERICA'S IMAGE ABROAD: ARE THEY WORKING?

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND OVERSIGHT,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:35 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William Delahunt (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. DELAHUNT. This hearing on the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight will come to order.

On behalf of my friend and ranking member, Mr. Rohrabacher, I would like to welcome our witnesses here today. You might, obviously, note that Mr. Rohrabacher is not with us. He has had a death in the family, and he will be unable to attend. He is flying back to California, and our prayers are with him.

This is one in a series of hearings our subcommittee is holding on how the United States is viewed from abroad. As members of the subcommittee know, I have begun these hearings by discussing a report in a 2005 transmission or transmittal letter by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office. In that report, the GAO noted—and this language is taken directly from the transmittal letter—that “recent polling data show that anti-Americanism is spreading and deepening around the world and that some fear this threatens American national security because it can increase foreign public support for terrorism directed at Americans, impact the cost and effectiveness of military operations, weaken the United States’ ability to align with other nations in pursuit of current policy objectives, and dampen foreign publics’ enthusiasm for U.S. businesses’ service and products.”

Now, we have heard in previous testimony that globally and in many European and Latin American countries support for United States military actions and favorable ratings for the United States, in general, have fallen since 2003 to all-time historic lows. Of course, there are exceptions to this trend, and we learn that, in sub-Saharan Africa, the picture is more positive.

All of us share this concern about what these trends mean for the United States. Last week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the State Department and Foreign Operations held its own hearing on public diplomacy programs that featured a prominent discussion of these polling data that I find so troubling.

Absent major changes in our foreign policy initiatives, what is our Government doing to deal with this erosion of respect and prestige for the United States?

Well, today, I am pleased that we have Mr. Jess Ford with us, the Director of GAO's International Affairs and Trade Team. He has led GAO's recent evaluation of public diplomacy programs, and today, we will be discussing the reports in which he and his staff have analyzed.

Lisa Curtis is our other witness. She is the Senior Fellow at the Heritage Foundation's Asian Study Center, and has a very impressive resume.

Before introducing in a more ample fashion Ms. Curtis and Mr. Ford, let me turn to see whether the vice chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Carnahan, wishes to make any opening statement.

Mr. CARNAHAN. I would, indeed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I want to really reiterate my thanks to the chairman and the ranking member for holding this comprehensive series of hearings on America's image abroad. The results of these hearings, while not surprising, provided very powerful evidence that we have severely damaged our standing around the world.

As we all know, a strong image of America abroad functions as a central tenet of U.S. foreign policy. Our efforts to rebuild that image should be strongly supported, and I believe that this strategy should be wide-ranging. As a college student, I had a great opportunity to study abroad in England. I am a strong supporter of these types of student exchanges. I think they can go a long way to really enhance our relations, and I am reminded of a quote from one of our famous Missourians, Mark Twain, on travel. He said, "It is fatal to bigotry and narrow-mindedness all foes to real understanding." So I think that can be a powerful tool.

I am curious to hear from Ms. Curtis. You mentioned international exchanges in your written testimony regarding various State Department programs. I would be very interested to hear what we can do to enhance and to even expand those kinds of programs, and of course, these programs and others could not be fully implemented unless we have a coherent public diplomacy strategy.

Mr. Ford, I would touch on just one aspect of your written testimony. You indicate that the 2005 GAO study found the State Department's efforts to engage the private sector in public diplomacy have been met with mixed results. I would be interested to hear what you believe should be contained in such a strategy.

So, again, thank you all for being here today. I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. Carnahan.

Now let me more formally introduce our witnesses.

As I indicated, Jess Ford is GAO's Director of International Affairs and Trade. Since 1973, Mr. Ford has worked extensively in the national security and international affairs area at the GAO, directing numerous studies on U.S. national security issues, public diplomacy, foreign assistance, counternarcotics, border security, and foreign affairs management. Mr. Ford received a bachelor's degree in political science from Hiram College and a master's degree

in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He is also a graduate of the National War College.

Ms. Curtis is a senior associate at the Heritage Foundation. She focuses on analyzing America's economic security and political relationships with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Before joining the Heritage Foundation in 2006, she was a professional staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where she served as the lead expert of South Asia for some 3 years. From 2001 to 2003, Ms. Curtis served as senior advisor in the State Department's South Asia Bureau. Previously, she served in the CIA as a political analyst on South Asia. She also served 2-year stints as a political officer to the U.S. Embassies in Islamabad and in New Delhi from 1994 to 1998.

Why don't we proceed first with Mr. Ford. We have a tendency to be very informal. We do not use the gavel, so please take your time, and let us have a full discussion and dialogue, and we look forward to your testimony.

Mr. Ford.

STATEMENT OF MR. JESS T. FORD, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE, U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Mr. FORD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee. I would like to have my full statement entered for the record. I am going to summarize it.

I am pleased to be here today to discuss GAO's work on U.S. public diplomacy efforts. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, polling data have generally shown that anti-Americanism has spread and intensified around the world and that many groups have concluded that this trend may have harmed U.S. national security and business interests. U.S. public diplomacy activities designed to counter such negative sentiments are largely divided between the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees U.S. international broadcast operations. In the past 4 years, we have issued a series of reports on U.S. public diplomacy efforts. Currently, at the request of the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we are reviewing how research is used to inform and direct U.S. Government efforts to communicate with foreign audiences, and we hope to issue a final report on that later this summer.

The key objectives of U.S. public diplomacy are to engage, inform and influence overseas' audiences. The State Department's Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs oversees an annual budget of nearly \$800 million, which funds activities of program bureaus in Washington and activities of nearly 700 public diplomacy officers located in 260 overseas posts. Program efforts include academic and professional exchanges, English language training, information programs, and news management activities. The board for broadcasting operates and oversees all of our international broadcasting efforts aimed to support U.S. public diplomacy objectives. The BBG manages a budget of approximately \$650 million that funds seven discrete broadcast entities, such as the Voice of America and the Middle East Broadcasting Network. They

broadcast in 57 foreign languages to 125 media markets around the world.

Mr. Chairman, you asked us to discuss key findings from our reports that we have issued over the last several years, particularly our Government's public diplomacy strategy and challenges faced in implementing activities in the field. Today, I will talk about the reported negative consequences various groups have associated with rising anti-American sentiments, the strategy, planning, coordination and performance measures issued related to U.S. public diplomacy efforts, and key challenges that hamper agency efforts.

Public opinion polls of foreign audiences have generally shown that negative attitudes toward the United States continue to rise. For example, the Pew Global Attitudes Project has found increasing anti-American sentiment throughout the world. Numerous experts, policymakers and business leaders have identified a variety of potential negative consequences of this growing anti-Americanism. According to these sources, anti-Americanism may have a negative impact on American economic interests around the world, the ability of the United States to pursue its foreign policy goals and succeed in foreign military operations and the security of Americans at home and abroad.

Although we cannot draw a direct causal link between negative foreign public opinion toward our country and specific outcomes in these areas, it is clear that growing anti-Americanism does not help U.S., the United States, achieve its economic foreign policy and security goals. Therefore, U.S. public diplomacy efforts which seek to counter this negative foreign public opinion have a critical role to play.

Key problems identified in our prior reports include a general lack of strategic planning, inadequate coordination among agencies, and problems with measuring performance and results. Beginning in 2003, we reported that the Government lacked an interagency communication strategy. Today, such a strategy still has not been released. Although, State Department officials have informed us that they anticipate it will soon be released by the White House. We also reported that the State Department did not have a strategy to integrate its diverse public diplomacy activities. State has begun to address this shortcoming beginning in 2005 when the current Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy developed a strategic framework to focus State Department efforts focusing on three main goals—first, to offer foreign publics a vision of hope and opportunity rooted in U.S. values; secondly, to isolate and marginalize violent extremism; and third, to nurture common interests and values.

The State Department has not issued guidance on how its associated public diplomacy activities will be coordinated to achieve these goals. We also reported that overseas posts generally lacked important strategic communication elements, such as identifying core messages and target audiences to meet our public diplomacy goals. Key steps in developing a more strategic approach include defined core messages, identifying target audiences, developing detailed communication strategies and tactics, and using research and evaluation to inform and redirect efforts as needed.

Last month, we also reported on challenges in publicizing U.S. foreign assistance that may result in missed opportunities to increase public awareness of U.S. foreign aid activities overseas. We recommended that the State Department develop a better strategy to publicize our U.S. foreign assistance activities. We also recommended that the State Department develop more rigorous ways of measuring effectiveness to better document the impact of our public diplomacy efforts. The State Department has indicated that it will respond to these recommendations and take steps to achieve this goal.

Regarding our international broadcasting operation, we have noted that the Board of Broadcasting Governors launched a new strategic approach in 2001. It included a focus on the U.S. War on Terror. BBG made this support tangible through several key initiatives, including the creation of Radio Sawa and Alhurra T.V. Network, which is run by the Middle East broadcasting network. While these are noteworthy attempts to help turn the tide of negative opinion in the Muslim world toward the United States, our August 2006 report on the Middle East broadcasting network recommended that they make several changes to the way they conduct surveys and in enhancing their methodologies to improve the accuracy of their audience research.

We have also reported that the State Department and the BBG face multiple challenges in managing and implementing their programs overseas. In September 2003, and in subsequent reports, we reported that the State Department faced problems, including insufficient numbers of public diplomacy staff, insufficient time to conduct public diplomacy activities overseas and shortfalls in staff with the required language skills. For example, in May of last year, we reported that about 15 percent of all of the State Department's worldwide public diplomacy positions were vacant. Most recently, the State Department has informed us that the situation has actually grown worse, and they currently have 22 percent vacancies in their public diplomacy positions.

We also reported that public diplomacy officers overseas were burdened with administrative tasks and had less time to conduct public diplomacy activities outside the Embassy. Officers told us they rarely had time to strategize, plan or evaluate their programs. This problem is compounded at posts with short tours of duty, which include many in the Muslim world. We reported last year that the average tour of duty in a Muslim majority country was 22 percent shorter than in tours in the rest of the world.

We also reported that the State Department continues to experience significant shortfalls in foreign language proficiency in countries around the world. We reported this problem was particularly acute in Muslim countries where 30 percent of language-designated public diplomacy positions were filled with officers without the required language proficiency. For Arabic language posts, we noted that 36 percent of language-designated public diplomacy positions were filled with staff that was unable to speak Arabic at the required level. State has taken steps recently to address this problem by enhancing its training activities, but these shortfalls still exist.

Finally, we reported that the security concerns have forced Embassies to close publicly accessible facilities and curtail certain pub-

lic outreach efforts, sending unintended messages that the United States is unapproachable. The Department has attempted to compensate for the lack of public presence in high-threat posts through a variety of means, including the use of small-scale external facilities—they call them “American corners”—and expanding Embassy speaker programs.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening statement. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. Ford.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ford follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 1:30 p.m. EDT
Thursday, April 26, 2007

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

**Strategic Planning Efforts
Have Improved, but
Agencies Face Significant
Implementation Challenges**

Statement of Jess T. Ford, Director
International Affairs and Trade



GAO
Accountability Integrity Reliability

Highlights

Highlights of GAO-07-795T, a testimony to the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Why GAO Did This Study

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, polling data have generally shown that anti-Americanism has spread and deepened around the world, and several groups have concluded that this trend may have harmed U.S. interests in significant ways. U.S. public diplomacy activities undertaken by the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), which totaled almost \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2006, are designed to counter such sentiments. Based on our prior reports, this testimony addresses (1) the negative consequences various groups have associated with rising anti-American sentiments; (2) strategic planning, coordination, and performance measurement issues affecting U.S. public diplomacy efforts; and (3) key challenges that hamper agency activities.

What GAO Recommends

We have made a number of recommendations in the past 4 years to the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the BBG to address strategic planning issues and administrative and staffing concerns. Both agencies agreed with our recommendations and have made some progress in implementing them.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/gettr?GAO-07-795T

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4128, fordj@gao.gov.

April 26, 2007

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Strategic Planning Efforts Have Improved, but Agencies Face Significant Implementation Challenges

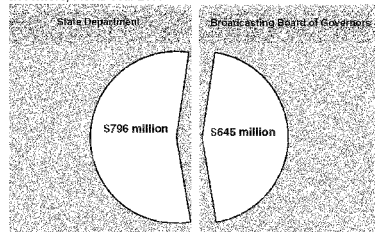
What GAO Found

Numerous experts, policymakers, and business leaders have identified various potential negative consequences of growing anti-Americanism. According to these sources, anti-Americanism may have a negative impact on American economic interests, the ability of the United States to pursue its foreign policy and military goals, and the security of Americans worldwide.

Our reports and testimonies have highlighted the lack of a governmentwide communication strategy, as well as the need for an integrated State Department strategy, enhanced performance indicators for State and the BBG, and improvements in the BBG's audience research methodology. We also reported in March 2007 that U.S. foreign assistance activities were not being consistently publicized and branded, and we recommended that State help develop governmentwide guidance for marking and publicizing these efforts. State has responded to our recommendations and has taken actions to develop a more strategic approach and measure the effectiveness of its programs. Likewise, the BBG has adapted its strategic plan to include additional performance indicators and is beginning to address our recommendations to adopt management improvements at its Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).

Nevertheless, State and the BBG continue to face challenges in implementing public diplomacy and international broadcasting. State has shortages in staffing and language capabilities, and security issues continue to hamper overseas public diplomacy efforts. For example, in 2006 we reported that State continued to experience significant foreign language proficiency shortfalls, particularly at posts in the Muslim world. The BBG faces challenges in managing a disparate collection of broadcasters. Also, MBN faces several managerial challenges involving program review, internal control, and training.

U.S. Public Diplomacy Resources for State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2006



Source: State Department and BBG.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here today to discuss GAO's work on U.S. public diplomacy efforts. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, polling data have generally shown that anti-Americanism has spread and intensified around the world and many groups have concluded that this trend may have harmed U.S. national security and business interests in significant ways. U.S. public diplomacy activities designed to counter such negative sentiments are largely divided between the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).¹ In the past 4 years, we have issued a series of reports on these agencies' public diplomacy efforts (see enclosure). At the request of the ranking minority member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, we are currently reviewing how research is used to inform and direct U.S. government efforts to communicate with foreign audiences. We plan to issue a final report this summer.

The key objectives of U.S. public diplomacy are to engage, inform, and influence overseas audiences. State's Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs oversees an annual budget of nearly \$800 million, which funds the activities of program bureaus in Washington and the activities of nearly 700 public diplomacy officers located at more than 260 posts around the world and domestically. Program efforts include academic and professional exchanges, English language teaching, information programs, and news management activities. The BBG, as the overseer of U.S. international broadcasting efforts, aims to support U.S. public diplomacy objectives by broadcasting fair and accurate information, while maintaining its journalistic independence as a news organization. The BBG manages a budget of nearly \$650 million that funds multiple discrete broadcast entities that broadcast in 57 foreign languages to 125 media markets around the world.

Mr. Chairman, you asked us to discuss key findings from the reports we have issued over the past several years, particularly regarding our government's public diplomacy strategy and the challenges faced in implementing these activities in the field. Today, I will talk about (1) the negative consequences various groups have associated with rising anti-American sentiments; (2) strategic planning, coordination, and

¹The U.S. Agency for International Development participates in U.S. public diplomacy efforts by seeking to tell America's assistance story to the world. The Department of Defense has established an office to provide military support for public diplomacy to better coordinate its communication activities with those of the State Department.

performance measurement issues affecting U.S. public diplomacy efforts; and (3) the key challenges that hamper agency efforts.

As part of our reviews of public diplomacy, we have met with officials from the Department of State, the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Broadcasting Board of Governors. We have also observed U.S. public diplomacy efforts in a range of countries including Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, and Pakistan; conducted a worldwide poll of public diplomacy officials in 2003 and more limited surveys of field activity in recent reviews; and have met with public diplomacy counterparts in the United Kingdom and Germany. Finally, we convened roundtables of key agency staff and experts on public relations and the Muslim world to obtain their key insights and recommendations for improvement. The work used to support this testimony was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Summary

Public opinion polls of foreign audiences have generally shown that negative attitudes toward the United States continue to rise. For example, the Pew Global Attitudes Project has found increasing anti-American sentiment throughout the world. Numerous experts, policymakers, and business leaders have identified a variety of potential negative consequences of this growing anti-Americanism. According to these sources, anti-Americanism may have a negative impact on American economic interests around the world, the ability of the United States to pursue its foreign policy goals and succeed in foreign military operations, and the security of Americans at home and abroad. Although we cannot draw a direct causal link between negative foreign public opinion toward our country and specific outcomes in these areas, it is clear that growing anti-Americanism does not help the United States achieve its economic, foreign policy, and security goals. Therefore, U.S. public diplomacy efforts, which seek to counter negative foreign public opinion, have a critical role to play in supporting U.S. interests.

Key problems identified in our prior reports include a general lack of strategic planning, inadequate coordination among agency efforts, and problems with measuring performance and results. Beginning in 2003, we reported that the government lacked an interagency communications strategy. Four years later, a strategy still has not been released, although State officials told us that this will happen soon. Last month, we also reported on challenges in marking and publicizing U.S. foreign assistance that may result in missed opportunities to increase public awareness of U.S. foreign aid activities. Accordingly, we recommended that State

develop strategies and establish interagency agreements to better coordinate and assess the impact of U.S. marketing and publicity programs. We also reported that State did not have a strategy to integrate its diverse public diplomacy activities. State began to address this shortcoming in 2005 when the current Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs developed a strategic framework to focus State's efforts on three priority goals: offer foreign publics a vision of hope and opportunity rooted in basic U.S. values, isolate and marginalize violent extremists, and nurture common interests and values. However, State has not issued guidance on how its assorted public diplomacy activities will be coordinated to achieve these goals. In addition, posts' public diplomacy efforts generally lack important strategic communication elements found in the private sector, which GAO recommended that State adopt as a means to better communicate with target audiences. Key steps in this approach include defining core messages, identifying target audiences, developing detailed communication strategies and tactics, and using research and evaluation to inform and re-direct efforts as needed. Finally, we and others have recommended that State develop more rigorous measures of effectiveness to better document the impact of its public diplomacy efforts. State has taken several steps towards this goal, including establishing a centralized office to better coordinate and direct the collection of performance data. Regarding the BBG, we have noted that the Board launched a new strategic approach in 2001 that included a focus on supporting the U.S. war on terror. The BBG made this support tangible through several key initiatives, including the creation of Radio Sawa in 2002 and the Alhurra TV network in 2004, which are run by the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN). While these are noteworthy attempts to help turn the tide of negative opinion in the Muslim world toward the United States, our August 2006 report on MBN recommended that several steps be taken to correct methodological concerns which could impact the accuracy of its audience research data. MBN continues to evaluate possible solutions to these concerns.

We also have reported that State and the BBG face multiple challenges in managing and implementing their public diplomacy programs. Several embassy officials indicated that insufficient numbers of staff and the lack of staff time for public diplomacy activities hinder outreach efforts. To help address these concerns, the Secretary of State has repositioned some staff to posts with the greatest perceived shortages; however, significant shortfalls remain. In May 2006, we reported that approximately 15 percent of State's worldwide public diplomacy positions were vacant. Updated information provided by State shows that this problem has worsened and approximately 22 percent of such positions are now vacant. We reported

that the State Department continues to experience significant shortfalls in foreign language proficiency in countries around the world. In our May 2006 report, we noted that this problem is particularly acute in the Muslim world, where 30 percent of language-designated public diplomacy positions are filled by officers without the level of language proficiency required for their positions, thus hampering their ability to engage with foreign publics. State has taken steps to address language deficiencies by bolstering its language training activities. In addition, security concerns have forced embassies to close publicly accessible facilities and curtail certain public outreach efforts, sending the unintended message that the United States is unapproachable. The department has attempted to compensate for the lack of public presence in high threat posts through a variety of means, including the use of small-scale external facilities. The BBG faces the primary challenge of managing a disparate collection of multiple discrete broadcast entities. In addition, MBN faces several managerial challenges involving program review and evaluation, editorial oversight, internal control issues, and staff training.

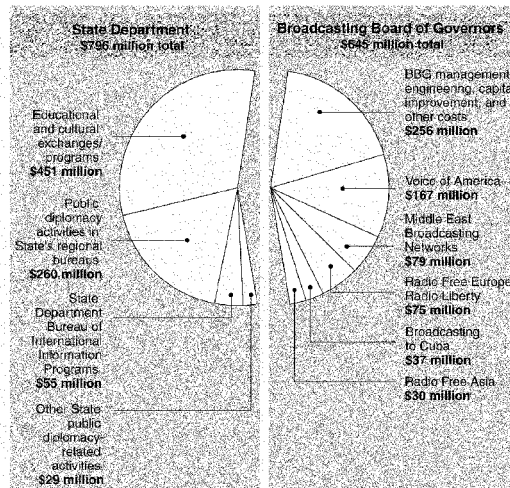
Background

The key objectives of U.S. public diplomacy are to engage, inform, and influence overseas audiences. Public diplomacy is carried out through a wide range of programs that employ person-to-person contacts; print, broadcast, and electronic media; and other means. Traditionally, the State Department's efforts have focused on foreign elites—current and future overseas opinion leaders, agenda setters, and decision makers. However, the dramatic growth in global mass communications and other trends have forced a rethinking of this approach, and State has begun to consider techniques for communicating with broader foreign audiences. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, State has expanded its public diplomacy efforts globally, focusing particularly on countries in the Muslim world considered to be of strategic importance in the war on terror. In May 2006, we reported that this trend continued with funding increases of 25 percent for the Near East and 39 percent for South Asia from 2004 to 2006.

The BBG supports U.S. public diplomacy's key objectives by broadcasting news and information about the United States and world affairs and serving as a model of how a free press should operate. The BBG manages and oversees the Voice of America (VOA), Radio/TV Marti, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio Farda, Radio Sawa, and the Alhurra TV Network.

As shown in figure 1, State and the BBG spent close to \$1.5 billion on public diplomacy programs in fiscal year 2006.

Figure 1: Key Uses of U.S. Public Diplomacy Budget Resources for State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2006



Source: State Department and BBG.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

Widespread Concern Exists about the Impact of Anti-American Sentiment

As others have previously reported, in recent years anti-American sentiment has spread and intensified around the world. For example, the Pew Global Attitudes Project has found that the decline in favorable opinion of the United States is a worldwide trend. For instance, favorable attitudes toward the United States in Indonesia declined from 75 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2006 and from 52 percent to 12 percent over the

same time period in Turkey. While individual opinion polls may reflect a snapshot in time, consistently negative polls may reflect the development of more deeply seated sentiments about the United States.

Numerous experts, expert groups, policymakers, and business leaders have expressed concerns that anti-Americanism may harm U.S. interests in various ways. In its 2004 report on strategic communication, the Defense Science Board states that "damaging consequences for other elements of U.S. soft power are tactical manifestations of a pervasive atmosphere of hostility." Similarly, the Council on Foreign Relations has claimed that the loss of goodwill and trust from publics around the world has had a negative impact on U.S. security and foreign policy. Anti-American sentiments may negatively affect American economic interests, U.S. foreign policy and military operations, and the security of Americans.

Anti-Americanism May Have Negative Effects on U.S. Economic Interests Around the World

According to *Business for Diplomatic Action*,² anti-Americanism can hurt U.S. businesses by causing boycotts of American products, a backlash against American brands, increased security costs for U.S. companies, higher foreign opposition to U.S. trade policies, and a decrease in the U.S.'s ability to attract the world's best talent to join the American workforce. Additionally, a report from the Princeton-based Working Group on Anti-Americanism³ generally echoes the possibility that anti-Americanism may harm U.S. business interests in these same areas.

Further, as reported by the Travel Business Roundtable during previous hearings before this subcommittee, the U.S. travel industry has reported significant declines in the U.S. market share of the worldwide travel market and a decline in overseas visitors to the United States since 9/11. Further, the State Department's 2003 report on *Patterns of Global Terrorism* recorded 67 attacks on American business facilities and 7 business casualties. In 2006, the Overseas Security Advisory Council noted that more threats against the private sector occurred in 2006 than in 2004 or 2005 in most of the industries it reports on. Finally, the Working Group

²Incorporated in January 2004 by interested private sector leaders, *Business for Diplomatic Action* seeks to counter anti-American sentiments that can harm U.S. business interests by helping to coordinate the outreach efforts of U.S. multinational companies.

³This working group is part of a larger effort called "The Princeton Project on National Security," which was established by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 2004. Members of the project come from the government, academia, business, and the non-profit sector.

on Anti-Americanism also indicated that threats to American private property and personnel working overseas have become constant in some regions, especially the Middle East, and have resulted in significantly increased security costs.

Anti-Americanism May Limit Ability to Pursue U.S. Foreign Policy

According to the Defense Science Board, the Brookings Institution, and others, anti-Americanism around the world may reduce the U.S.'s ability to pursue its foreign policy goals, including efforts to foster diplomatic relationships with other foreign leaders and to garner support for the global war on terror. For instance, in October 2003, the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World reported that "hostility toward the U.S. makes achieving our policy goals far more difficult." Specifically, according to a paper from the Working Group on Anti-Americanism, foreign leaders may seek to leverage anti-American sentiment in pursuit of their own political goals, which may then limit their future support for U.S. foreign policy. As these leaders achieve personal political successes based on their opposition to the United States, they may then be less likely to support U.S. foreign policy going forward.

Further, the 9/11 Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, and others have reported on the possibility that anti-Americanism may also serve as a barrier to success in the global war on terror and related U.S. military operations. Specifically, the 9/11 Commission report of July 2004 stated that perceptions of the United States' foreign policies as anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and pro-Israel have contributed to the rise in extremist rhetoric against the United States. Further, the Council on Foreign Relations has argued that increasing hostility toward America in Muslim countries facilitates recruitment and support for extremism and terror.

Anti-Americanism May Be Linked to Decreased Security of Americans Around the World

The Council on Foreign Relations also has identified potential consequences of anti-Americanism on the security of individual Americans, noting that Americans now face an increased risk of direct attack from individuals and small groups that wield increasingly more destructive power. According to State's *Country Reports on Terrorism* for 2005,⁸ 56 private U.S. citizens were killed as a result of terrorism incidents in 2005. The Working Group on Anti-Americanism suggests that there is

⁸Beginning in 2004, the State Department replaced its *Patterns of Global Terrorism* reports with annual publications titled *Country Reports on Terrorism*.

some correlation between anti-Americanism and violence against Americans in the greater Middle East but notes that the relationship is complex. For example, they note that while increased anti-Americanism in Europe or Jordan has not led to violence against Americans or U.S. interests in those areas, it does seem to play a role in fueling such violence in Iraq. Other factors, such as the visibility of Americans overseas, particularly in Iraq; the role of the media in supporting anti-Americanism; and the absence of economic security may also contribute to this violence.

While all of the topics discussed here represent areas in which anti-Americanism may have negative consequences, the empirical evidence to support direct relationships is limited. As such, we cannot confirm any causal relationships between negative foreign public opinion and specific negative outcomes regarding U.S. interests. Despite the fact that we cannot draw a direct causal link between anti-Americanism and specific outcomes in these areas, it is clear that growing negative foreign public opinion does not help the United States achieve its economic, foreign policy, and security goals, and therefore U.S. public diplomacy efforts, which seek to counter anti-Americanism sentiment, have a critical role to play in supporting U.S. interests throughout the world.

**Strategic Planning,
Coordination, and
Performance
Measurement Remain
Areas of Concern**

Over the past 4 years, we have identified and made recommendations to State and the BBG on a number of issues related to a general lack of strategic planning, inadequate coordination of agency efforts, and problems with measuring performance and results. Among other things, we have recommended that (1) communication strategies be developed to coordinate and focus the efforts of key government agencies and the private sector, (2) the State Department develop a strategic plan to integrate its diverse efforts, (3) posts adopt strategic communication best practices, and (4) meaningful performance goals and indicators be established by both State and the BBG. Currently, the U.S. government lacks an interagency public diplomacy strategy; however, such a plan has been drafted and will be released shortly. While the department has articulated a strategic framework to direct its efforts, comprehensive guidance on how to implement this strategic framework has not yet been developed. In addition, posts generally do not pursue a campaign-style approach to communications that incorporates best practices endorsed by GAO and others. State has begun to take credible steps towards instituting more systematic performance measurement practices, consistent with recommendations GAO and others have made. Finally, although the BBG has added audience size as a key performance measure within its strategic

plan, our latest review of MBN's operations call into question the potential value of this measure due to various methodological concerns.

**Government Lacks an
Interagency Public
Diplomacy Strategy**

In 2003, we reported that the United States lacked a governmentwide, interagency public diplomacy strategy, defining the messages and means for communication efforts abroad. We reported since then that the administration has made a number of unsuccessful attempts to develop such a strategy. The lack of such a strategy complicates the task of conveying consistent messages and therefore increases the risk of making damaging communication mistakes. State officials have said that it also diminishes the efficiency and effectiveness of governmentwide public diplomacy efforts, while several reports have concluded that a strategy is needed to synchronize agencies' target audience assessments, messages, and capabilities.

On April 8, 2006, the President established a new Policy Coordination Committee on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications. This committee, led by the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, intends to better coordinate interagency activities, including the development of an interagency public diplomacy strategy. We have been told this strategy is still under development and will be issued soon.

The U.S. government also lacks a governmentwide strategy and meaningful methods to ensure that recipients of U.S. foreign assistance are consistently aware that the aid comes from the United States. In March 2007, we reported that most agencies involved in foreign assistance activities had established some marking and publicity requirements in their policies, regulations, and guidelines, and used various methods to mark and publicize their activities. However, we identified some challenges to marking and publicizing U.S. foreign assistance, including the lack of a strategy for assessing the impact of marking and publicity efforts on public awareness and the lack of governmentwide guidance for marking and publicizing U.S. foreign aid. To better ensure that recipients of U.S. foreign assistance are aware that the aid is provided by the United States and its taxpayers, we recommended that State, in consultation with other U.S. government agencies, (1) develop a strategy to better assess the impact of marking and publicity programs on public awareness and (2) establish interagency agreements for marking and publicizing all U.S. foreign assistance. State indicated that the interagency public diplomacy strategy will address assessment of marking and publicity programs and will include governmentwide marking and publicity guidance.

Private Sector Engagement Strategy Not Yet Developed

In 2005, we noted that State's efforts to engage the private sector in pursuit of common public diplomacy objectives had met with mixed success and recommended that the Secretary develop a strategy to guide these efforts. Since then, State has established an Office of Private Sector Outreach, is partnering with individuals and the private sector on various projects, and hosted a Private Sector Summit on Public Diplomacy in January 2007. However, State has not yet developed a comprehensive strategy to guide the Department's efforts to engage the private sector.

State Has Established a Public Diplomacy Strategic Framework but Lacks Implementing Guidance

In 2005, the Under Secretary established a strategic framework for U.S. public diplomacy efforts, which includes three priority goals: (1) offer foreign publics a vision of hope and opportunity rooted in the U.S.'s most basic values; (2) isolate and marginalize extremists; and (3) promote understanding regarding shared values and common interests between Americans and peoples of different countries, cultures, and faiths. The Under Secretary noted that she intends to achieve these goals using five tactics—engagement, exchanges, education, empowerment, and evaluation—and by using various public diplomacy programs and other means, including coordinating outreach efforts with the private sector. This framework partially responds to our 2005 recommendation that State should develop and disseminate a strategy to integrate its public diplomacy efforts and direct them toward achieving common objectives. State has not yet developed written guidance that provides details on how these five tactics will be used to implement the Under Secretary's priority goals. However, it should be noted that the Under Secretary has issued limited guidance regarding the goal of countering extremism to 18 posts selected to participate in a pilot initiative focusing on this objective.

Posts Lack a Campaign-Style Approach to Communications

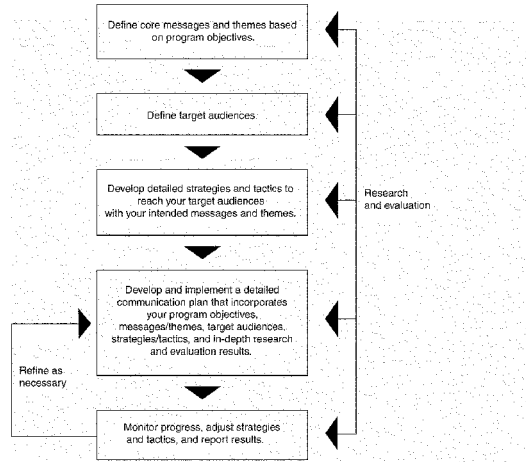
We have recommended that State, where appropriate, adopt strategic communication best practices (which we refer to as the "campaign-style approach")⁴ and develop country-specific communication plans⁵ that incorporate the key steps embodied in this approach. As shown in figure 2,

⁴In contrast to State, we believe that these key elements have been largely adopted by both the Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development to help guide their thematic communication efforts directed at foreign audiences.

⁵Prior to 1999, when public diplomacy efforts were managed by the former U.S. Information Agency, detailed communication plans were developed on a country-by-country basis. These plans included details on core messages and themes, target audiences, and research on key opinion leaders, audience attitudes, and the local media environment.

these steps include defining the core message, identifying and segmenting target audiences, developing detailed communication strategies and tactics, and using research and evaluation to inform and re-direct efforts as needed. As noted in our May 2006 report, our review of public diplomacy operations in Nigeria, Pakistan, and Egypt in 2006 found that this approach and corresponding communication plans were absent. Rather, post public diplomacy efforts constituted an ad hoc collection of activities designed to support such broad goals as promoting mutual understanding.

Figure 2: Key Elements of Campaign-style Communication Efforts



Source: GAO.

In a recent development, 18 posts participating in the department's pilot countries initiative have developed country-level plans focusing on the

countering extremism goal.⁷ These plans were developed on the basis of a template issued by the Under Secretary that requires each post to provide a list of supporting objectives, a description of the media environment, identification of key target audiences, and a list of supporting programs and activities. We reviewed most of the plans submitted in response to this guidance. Although useful as a high-level planning exercise, these plans do not adhere to the campaign-style approach, which requires a level of rigor and detail that normally exceeds the three- to four-page plans produced by posts in pilot countries. The plans omit basic elements, such as specific core messages and themes or any substantive evidence that proposed communication programs were driven by detailed audience research—one of the key principles embodied in the campaign-style approach. In the absence of such research, programs may lack important information about appropriate target audiences and credible messages and messengers.

**State Is Making a
Concerted Effort to Better
Measure Program
Performance and Impact**

Based on prior reports by GAO and others, the department has begun to institute a more concerted effort to measure the impact of its programs and activities. The department created (1) the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources within the office of the Under Secretary; (2) the Public Diplomacy Evaluation Council to share best practices; and (3) a unified Public Diplomacy Evaluation Office. The Department established an expanded evaluation schedule that is designed to cover all major public diplomacy programs. The department also has called on program managers to analyze and define their key inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact to help identify meaningful performance goals and indicators. Finally, the department recently launched a pilot public diplomacy performance measurement data collection project that is designed to collect, document, and quantify reliable annual and long-term outcome performance measures to support government reporting requirements.

⁷This exercise has now been broadened, and posts around the world are developing similar country-level plans targeting their key public diplomacy objectives.

BBG Has Strategy for International Broadcasting, but Audience Data May be Misleading

In 2001, the BBG introduced a market-based approach to international broadcasting that sought to “marry the mission to the market.” This approach was designed to generate large listening audiences in priority markets that the BBG believes it must reach to effectively meet its mission. Implementing this strategy has focused on markets relevant to the war on terrorism, in particular in the Middle East through such key initiatives as Radio Sawa and the Alhurra TV network. The Board’s vision is to create a flexible, multimedia, research-driven U.S. international broadcasting system.

We found that the BBG’s strategic plan to implement its new approach did not include a single goal or related program objective designed to gauge progress toward increasing audience size, even though its strategy focuses on the need to reach large audiences in priority markets. The BBG subsequently created a single strategic goal to focus on the key objective of maximizing impact in priority areas of interest to the United States and made audience size a key performance measure. However, in our August 2006 review of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, we found that methodological concerns call into question the potential accuracy of this key performance measure with regard to Radio Sawa’s listening rates and Alhurra’s viewing rates. Specifically, we found that weaknesses in the BBG’s audience surveys create uncertainty over whether some of Radio Sawa’s or Alhurra’s performance targets for audience size have been met. We recommended that the BBG improve its audience research methods, including identifying significant methodological limitations. The BBG accepted our recommendation and has informed us that it is currently considering how it will do so.

A Number of Internal and External Challenges Hamper U.S. Public Diplomacy Activities

Public diplomacy efforts in the field face several other challenges. Beginning with our September 2003 report on State’s public diplomacy efforts, post officials have consistently cited several key challenges, including a general lack of staff, insufficient administrative support, and inadequate language training. Furthermore, public diplomacy officers struggle to balance security with public access and outreach to local populations. Finally, the BBG’s disparate organizational structure has been viewed as a key management challenge that significantly complicates its efforts to focus and direct U.S. international broadcasting efforts.

**Insufficient Staff and Lack
of Staff Time Hinders
Public Diplomacy
Activities**

Although several recent reports on public diplomacy have recommended an increase in U.S. public diplomacy program spending, several embassy officials stated that, with current staffing levels, they do not have the capacity to effectively utilize increased funds. According to State, the Department had 887 established public diplomacy positions (overseas and domestic) as of March 31, 2007, but 199, or roughly 22 percent, were vacant. Compounding this challenge is the loss of public diplomacy officers to temporary duty in Iraq, which, according to one State official, has drawn down field officers even further. Staffing shortages may also limit the amount of training public diplomacy officers receive. State is repositioning several public diplomacy officers as part of its transformational diplomacy initiative. However, this effort represents shifting existing public diplomacy officers and does not increase the overall number of officers, which we have noted were generally the same in fiscal years 2004 and 2006.

In addition, public diplomacy officers at posts are burdened with administrative tasks, and thus have less time to conduct public diplomacy outreach activities than they did previously. One senior State official said that administrative duties, such as budget, personnel, and internal reporting, compete with officers' public diplomacy responsibilities. Another official in Egypt stated that she rarely had enough time to strategize, plan, or evaluate her programs. These statements echo comments we heard during overseas fieldwork and in a survey for our 2003 report. In that survey, officers stated that, although they manage to attend public outreach and other functions within their host country capitals, it was particularly difficult to find time to travel outside the capitals to interact with other communities. This challenge is compounded at posts with short tours of duty, including many tours in the Muslim world, as officials stated that it is difficult to establish the type of close working relationships essential to effective public diplomacy work when they are in country for only a short time. In our May 2006 report, we reported that the average length of tour at posts in the Muslim world is about 22 percent shorter than tour lengths elsewhere. Noting the prevalence of 1-year tours in the Muslim world, a senior official at State said that public affairs officers who have shorter tours tend to produce less effective work than officers with longer tours.

To address these challenges, we recommended in 2003 that the Secretary of State designate more administrative positions to overseas public affairs sections to reduce the administrative burden. Officials at State said that the Management bureau is currently considering options for reducing the

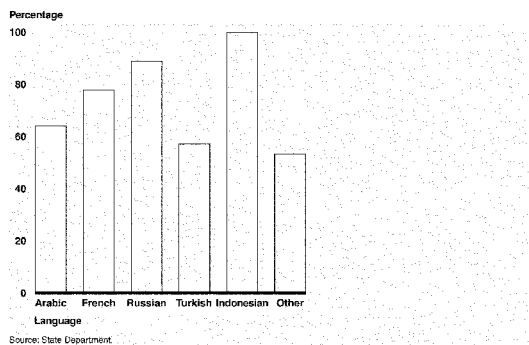
administrative burden on posts, including the development of centralized administrative capabilities offshore.

Language Deficiencies Continue, Especially in the Muslim World

In August 2006, GAO reported that the State Department continued to experience significant foreign language proficiency shortfalls in countries around the world.⁸ Our May 2006 report noted this problem was particularly acute at posts in the Muslim world where Arabic—classified as a “superhard” language by State—predominates. In countries with significant Muslim populations, we reported that 30 percent of language-designated public diplomacy positions were filled by officers without the requisite proficiency in those languages, compared with 24 percent elsewhere. In Arabic language posts, about 36 percent of language-designated public diplomacy positions were filled by staff unable to speak Arabic at the designated level. In addition, State officials said that there are even fewer officers who are willing or able to speak on television or engage in public debate in Arabic. The information officer in Cairo stated that his office does not have enough Arabic speakers to engage the Egyptian media effectively. Figure 3 shows the percentage of public diplomacy positions in the Muslim world staffed by officers meeting language requirements.

⁸GAO, *Department of State: Staffing and Foreign Language Shortfalls Persist Despite Initiatives to Address Gaps*, GAO-06-894 (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 4, 2006).

Figure 3: Percentage of Filled Language-Designated Public Diplomacy Positions in the Muslim World Staffed by Officers Meeting Language Requirements (as of August 2005)



State has begun to address these language deficiencies by increasing its overall amount of language training and providing supplemental training for more difficult languages at overseas locations. State has also made efforts to ensure that its public diplomacy staff receive appropriate language training. For example, State's Foreign Service Institute recently offered a week of intensive media training for language-qualified officers that provided guidance on how to communicate with Arabic-speaking audiences.

Embassies Must Balance Security and Public Outreach

Security concerns have limited embassy outreach efforts and public access, forcing public diplomacy officers to strike a balance between safety and mission. Shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, "Safety is one of our top priorities...but it can't be at the expense of the mission." In our May 2006 report we noted that security concerns are particularly elevated in countries with significant Muslim populations, where the threat level for terrorism is rated as "critical" or "high" in 80 percent of posts.

Security and budgetary concerns have led to the closure of publicly accessible facilities around the world, such as American Centers and Libraries. In Pakistan, for example, all American Centers have closed for security reasons; the last facility, in Islamabad, closed in February 2005. These same concerns have prevented establishing a U.S. presence elsewhere. As a result, embassies have had to find other venues for public diplomacy programs, and some activities have been moved onto embassy compounds, where precautions designed to improve security have had the ancillary effect of sending the message that the United States is unapproachable and distrustful, according to State officials. Concrete barriers and armed escorts contribute to this perception, as do requirements restricting visitors' use of cell phones and pagers within the embassy. According to one official in Pakistan, visitors to the embassy's reference library have declined to as few as one per day because many visitors feel humiliated by the embassy's rigorous security procedures.

Other public diplomacy programs have had to limit their publicity to reduce the risk of becoming a target. A recent joint USAID-State report concluded that "security concerns often require a 'low profile' approach during events, programs or other situations, which, in happier times, would have been able to generate considerable good will for the United States." This constraint is particularly acute in Pakistan, where the embassy has had to reduce certain speaker and exchange programs.

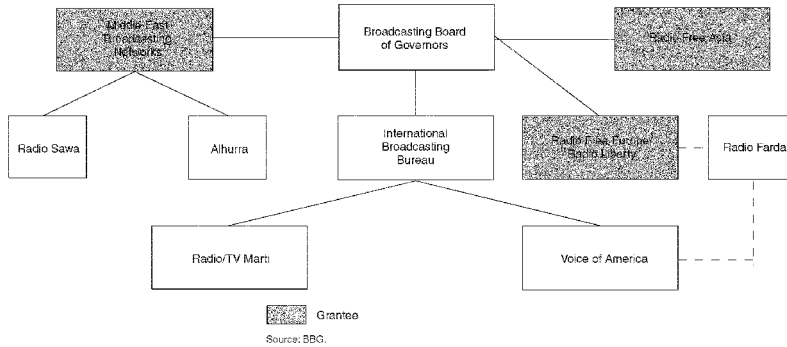
State has responded to security concerns and the loss of publicly accessible facilities through a variety of initiatives, including American Corners, which are centers that provide information about the United States, hosted in local institutions and staffed by local employees. According to State data, there are currently 365 American Corners throughout the world, including more than 200 in the Muslim world, with another 31 planned (more than 20 of which will be in the Muslim world). However, two of the posts we visited in October 2005 were having difficulty finding hosts for American Corners, as local institutions fear becoming terrorist targets.

Disparate Structure and Management Concerns Challenge the Broadcasting Board of Governors

The Broadcasting Board of Governors has its own set of public diplomacy challenges, including trying to gain large audiences in priority markets while dealing with a disparate organizational structure that contains multiple discrete broadcasters (see fig. 4). As noted in the BBG's strategic plan, "the diversity of the BBG—diverse organizations with different missions, different frameworks, and different constituencies—makes it a challenge to bring all the separate parts together in a more effective

whole.” As we reported in July 2003, the Board hoped to address this key challenge through two primary means. First, it planned to treat the component parts of U.S. international broadcasting as a single system with the Board in the position of actively managing resources across broadcast entities to achieve common broadcast goals. Second, it intended to realign the BBG’s organizational structure to reinforce the Board’s role as CEO with a host of responsibilities, including taking the lead role in shaping the BBG’s overall strategic direction, setting expectations and standards, and creating the context for innovation and change.

Figure 4: Organization of the BBG



Note: RFE/RL and VOA jointly produce Radio Farda, a Persian language service broadcast to Iran.

In addition, in 2006, we found that MBN, which received \$79 million in funding in fiscal year 2006, faces several managerial and editorial challenges that may hinder the organization’s efforts to expand in their highly competitive market. While MBN has taken steps to improve its process of program review and evaluation, it has not yet implemented our recommendations to improve its system of internal control or develop a comprehensive staff training plan.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have at this time.

**Contact and Staff
Acknowledgments**

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4128 or fordj@gao.gov. Individuals making key contributions to this statement include Audrey Solis, Assistant Director; Michael ten Kate; Eve Weisberg; Kate France Smiles; and Joe Carney.

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Mr. DELAHUNT. Ms. Curtis, would you please proceed.

STATEMENT OF MS. LISA CURTIS, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, ASIAN STUDIES CENTER, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Carnahan, for inviting me here today to speak about this important issue. It is really an honor to be able to share my thoughts on U.S. efforts to improve our image abroad. I will briefly summarize my written statement and ask that my full statement be included in the hearing record.

Recent polls show the image of the U.S. is declining throughout the world and that large majorities of Muslim populations believe the U.S. seeks to undermine Islam as a religion. Defeating terrorist ideology requires that we dispel such negative perceptions of America and that we engage more actively and deliberately with the Muslim world. While we may never change the minds of murderous terrorists who despise America and its democratic ideals, we should reach out to those Muslims who do not support violence against Americans, but who still may have mixed feelings about the U.S. and its role in the world.

Shortly after the attacks on 9/11, it became clear that merging the United States' information agency into the State Department in 1999 had damaged overall U.S. public diplomacy efforts. The merger cut valuable resources for programs and resulted in an undervaluation of the mission of public diplomacy in supporting U.S. national security objectives.

The Bush administration has sought to address the shortcomings of U.S. public diplomacy over the last 5½ years with some positive results. However, much work lies ahead. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes, has moved forward with developing a unified strategic communications apparatus, but progress has been slow, and she will have to persevere in her efforts to corral the disparate efforts. Hughes' office also has had some success in boosting the role of public diplomacy in our overall diplomatic and security policies, but this also has proven to be a bureaucratic challenge.

The most notable progress in developing a coordinated communications effort has been the establishment of a rapid response unit that follows newscasts around the world and offers talking points on breaking international news to counter the negative media stories about the U.S. in the Muslim world and elsewhere.

The administration also is moving forward with efforts to build closer public-private partnerships. In early January of this year, the State Department held a major conference with senior U.S. executives to discuss the issue of improving the U.S. image abroad. The conference generated several ideas such as making public diplomacy actions a corporate officer's responsibility and encouraging businesses to become part of the local community. One private sector participant at the conference noted that U.S. private-giving to developing countries exceeds \$70 billion annually. Most of the world is unaware that Americans are providing this level of aid.

While strategic communication is an important element in influencing foreign populations' opinions of America, it is equally important to promote deeper, more frequent cultural engagement, peo-

ple-to-people exchanges, and targeted development assistance programs to assert America's soft power. The United States response to the South Asia earthquake in the fall of 2005 and its positive impact on Pakistani attitudes toward the United States demonstrates that humanitarian assistance can influence popular views of America.

I visited Pakistan, shortly after the earthquake, to attend the international donors' conference, and I saw firsthand the appreciation of the Pakistani people for America's rapid and robust response to this monumental disaster. The U.S. Chinook helicopters that rescued survivors and ferried food and shelter materials to the affected areas became the symbol of America's helping hand. Polling shows that our response to the earthquake doubled the percentage of Pakistanis with favorable views of the United States, from 23 to 46 percent, from May to November 2005. In a similar vein, the United States response to the tsunami disaster had a positive impact on public opinion of America in Indonesia.

Engaging with civil society and local religious leaders on issues such as human rights, political and economic reform and religion in society also will build greater understanding and help defeat misperceptions of the U.S.

Twelve years ago, as a political officer serving at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, I participated in the USIA-sponsored program to bring together American women who were Islamic scholars along with Pakistani female lawyers, human rights workers, and NGO leaders to discuss the role of women in Islam. I felt then and even more so now that it was one of the more worthwhile activities I was involved in as a diplomat. The U.S. has an important role to play in facilitating these kinds of international exchanges with civil society leaders. The State Department should encourage officers' initiation and participation in such programs on a broad scale. We clearly have our work cut out for us.

Recent polls tell us that opinions of America have declined markedly to all-time lows in some countries, but the polls also show that the U.S. has opportunities to engage with the Muslim world on shared values. A recent Gallup poll, for example, shows that Muslims generally admire the West for its advanced technology and democracy and admire their own societies for their respect for Islam and its teachings and its own family values. In January 2007, 57 percent of Americans reported not knowing much or nothing about Islam. Although, perhaps, not the role of the State Department, it seems clear that we as a Nation need to learn more about the Islamic faith and get to know and respect its traditions and practices. The Gallup poll also concluded that Muslims and Americans generally agreed on the need to control extremism. We need to continue to raise the status of public diplomacy as a key element in fighting Islamic extremism and protecting U.S. national security. Under Secretary Hughes has made progress on this front by empowering ambassadors to speak more frequently to the media and by including public diplomacy as a key job element in senior State Department officers' evaluations.

There has been resistance to these efforts within the State Department, which has led some outside experts to conclude that a separate public diplomacy entity like USIA needs to be reestab-

lished. The transformation of the State Department may take some time, but in the end, it may be more beneficial to have a large corps of public diplomacy, savvy diplomats and an integration of U.S. foreign policy and strategic communication. We also need to clearly link the mission of USAID and the role of development and humanitarian assistance to our core national security objectives, and we need to ensure closer coordination between USAID and the State Department.

Congress should also consider establishing a semi-government entity to conduct public opinion research in individual countries to allow us to tailor our messages to different audiences and to give U.S. public diplomacy efforts a solid factual foundation. Although several nonprofit organizations do this kind of work, it would be useful to have an agency that would be responsive to government tasking and whose staff could interact closely with government officials.

So, in conclusion, I believe that, in order to isolate and defeat extremist ideologies, we need to focus more U.S. foreign policy attention and resources on soft power strategies that seek to win support from moderate Muslims worldwide. Right now, the score clearly is not in our favor, and results are unlikely to come quickly. However, with a sustained and focused strategy, we should begin to see the fruits of our labor in the years to come.

Thank you. That concludes my remarks.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, thank you, Ms. Curtis.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Curtis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. LISA CURTIS, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, ASIAN STUDIES CENTER, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss U.S. efforts to improve our image abroad. It is an honor to address this Subcommittee on such an important issue and to share my thoughts on how we might improve our public diplomacy efforts in the years to come.¹

The attacks of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath have renewed Washington's focus on the importance of reaching out to foreign audiences, particularly within the Muslim world, in order to boost support for U.S. values and policies. During the Cold War, U.S. policymakers understood the importance of the tools of public and cultural diplomacy in foreign policy. President Ronald Reagan defined public diplomacy as "Those actions of the U.S. government designed to generate support for U.S. national security objectives."²

Recent polls show the image of the U.S. is declining throughout the world and that large majorities of Muslim populations believe the U.S. seeks to undermine Islam as a religion.³ Defeating terrorist ideology requires that we dispel such negative perceptions of America and that we engage more actively and deliberately with

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² Juliana Geran Pilon, *Why America is Such a Hard Sell: Beyond Pride and Prejudice* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), p. 220.

³ Steven Kull, "Muslim Public Opinion on U.S. Policy, Attacks on Civilians, and Al-Qaeda," worldpublicopinion.org, April 24, 2007.

the Muslim world. While we may never change the minds of murderous terrorists who despise America and its democratic ideals, we should reach out to those large segments of Muslim populations that do not support violence against Americans, but who still have mixed feelings about the U.S. and its role in the world.

Efforts to Improve Public Diplomacy

Shortly after 9/11, it became clear that merging the United States Information Agency (USIA) into the State Department in 1999 had damaged overall U.S. public diplomacy efforts by cutting valuable resources for programs and undervaluing the mission of public diplomacy in supporting U.S. national security objectives. The Bush Administration has sought to address the shortcomings of U.S. public diplomacy over the last five years, with some positive results. However, much work lies ahead.

In the early days following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush Administration responded to the gaps in our public diplomacy strategy by putting in place an Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Charlotte Beers, who had spent her career in the private sector as a well-renowned marketing expert. The White House also instituted regular White House-run inter-agency strategic communication meetings. Three years later, as opinion polls showed America's reputation continuing to plummet worldwide—and former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld asked his famous question about whether America was capturing and eliminating more terrorists than it was creating—the soul-searching to develop a better U.S. public diplomacy campaign continued.

In September 2004, the Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics released the “Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication.” The report concluded that the U.S. needed to transform its strategic communications efforts through a Presidential directive to “connect strategy to structure” and improve interagency coordination. The report called for greater government-private sector collaboration and the creation of an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan Center for Strategic Communication.⁴ In April of 2003, The Heritage Foundation released a report titled, “How to Reinvigorate U.S. Public Diplomacy,” which included recommendations that the Administration and Congress restore public diplomacy's independent reporting and budget channels that were lost during the USIA/State merger in 1999 and return public diplomacy currently dispersed among other State Department bureaus into one public diplomacy hierarchy.⁵

The Bush Administration has made several attempts since 9/11 to streamline the public diplomacy bureaucracy and tighten strategic communications. Given the myriad and diverse public diplomacy efforts of the U.S. government, however, this has proved to be a far more difficult task than anyone originally expected. In January 2003, President George W. Bush formally established the Office of Global Communications (OGC) to facilitate and coordinate the strategic direction of the White House and individual agency efforts to communicate with foreign audiences.⁶ One year ago, President Bush established a new Policy Coordination Committee on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication led by the State Department Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. This Committee is responsible for coordinating interagency activities, unifying public messaging, ensuring all public diplomacy resources are supporting the messages, and ensuring every agency gives public diplomacy a high priority.

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes has moved forward with developing a unified strategic communications apparatus, but progress has been slow, and she will have to persevere in her efforts to corral the disparate efforts. Hughes' office has also had some success in boosting the role of public diplomacy in our overall diplomatic and security policies, but this also has proven to be a bureaucratic challenge.

The most notable progress in developing unified messaging efforts has been in the establishment of a rapid response team that follows newscasts around the world and offers talking points on breaking international news to rebut negative media stories about the U.S. in the Muslim world. The State Department has also tasked 15 overseas posts to develop country-specific communications plans to better focus efforts to counter terrorist ideology.

⁴ Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, September 2004. pp. 1–3; 7, 8.

⁵ Helle Dale and Steven Johnson, “How to Reinvigorate U.S. Public Diplomacy,” *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 1645*, April 23, 2003, at www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/bg1645.cfm.

⁶ General Accounting Office, “U.S. Public Diplomacy: Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy,” April 2005, GAO-05-323.

Funding for public diplomacy is increasing, and will likely continue to do so as we ramp up public outreach, foreign exchange, and scholarship programs, as well as public diplomacy training for State Department officers. The State Department requested almost \$1 billion for public diplomacy efforts around the world for fiscal year 2008 and increased public diplomacy spending in the last two years in key regions like the Middle East (25 percent) and in South Asia (nearly 40 percent).⁷ The State Department has also revived the Fulbright Scholarship Program, but experts say it will take time to re-establish its effectiveness, since it had been so grossly under-funded throughout the 1990s. The State Department created the Global Cultural Initiative last year to coordinate all government-backed art, music, and literature programs abroad and increased the number of participants in State Department educational and cultural programs to nearly 39,000 this year.⁸

In early January of this year, the State Department held a major conference with over 150 participants, including senior U.S. executives, to discuss how American companies can help improve the U.S. image abroad. The conference represents a significant step in meeting a key recommendation raised by the General Accounting Office in May, 2006, which called on the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to promote the active engagement of the private sector beyond international exchanges.⁹ The conference included intensive breakout sessions to generate specific ideas on how the U.S. private sector can get involved in public diplomacy. Recommendations for U.S. businesses with operations overseas included making public diplomacy actions a corporate officer's responsibility; becoming part of the local community through employee volunteerism; greater engagement with responsible non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and creating "circles of influence" through relationships with organizations, chambers of commerce, journalists, and local business leaders.¹⁰

During the conference, James E. Murphy, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of Accenture, reported that U.S. private giving to developing countries exceeds \$70 billion annually. This includes gifts from foundations, corporations, private organizations, and individuals. Most of the world is unaware that Americans are providing this level of private and corporate giving to developing countries.

One example of effective private-public partnership to address the most pressing international problems is the U.S. corporate response to the devastating South Asia earthquake on October 8, 2005. Shortly after the earthquake—which killed over 74,000 people and displaced tens of thousands—U.S. private sector executives from GE, UPS, Pfizer, Xerox, and Citigroup agreed to lead a nationwide effort to raise awareness and resources to help survivors of the earthquake rebuild their lives and communities. The group has raised over \$100 million for the earthquake victims.

The State Department's recent establishment of the Office of Private Sector Outreach to engage and work with businesses, universities, and foundations on public diplomacy issues should also help to identify opportunities and implement various projects that foster cooperation between the U.S. public and private sectors in their overseas missions.

Expanding U.S. Soft Power

While strategic communication is an important element in influencing foreign populations' opinions of America, it is equally important to promote deeper, more frequent cultural engagement, people-to-people exchanges, and targeted development assistance programs to assert America's soft power. In a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said it well:

Moreover, this war cannot be won by arms alone; "soft" power matters. In these ways, our current struggle resembles the Cold War. As with the Cold War, we must respond globally. As with the Cold War, ideas matter as much as armaments. And as with the Cold War, this war requires our patience and resolve.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has become more involved in public diplomacy after the 9/11 Commission reported to Congress that some of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign aid had very strong anti-American sen-

⁷Jess T. Ford, "U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Persistent Challenges," testimony Before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, May 3, 2006, page 2.

⁸Karen Hughes, testimony to the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, U.S. House of Representatives, April 19, 2007.

⁹Jess T. Ford, "U.S. Public Diplomacy Efforts."

¹⁰U.S. Department of State, "Private Sector Summit on Public Diplomacy: Models for Action," January 9, 2007, pp. 12, 13.

timent among their populations. Establishing a State-USAID Policy Council and a Public Diplomacy Working Group has helped USAID to establish closer ties with the Department of State to publicize America's humanitarian and development aid initiatives.

The U.S. response to the South Asia earthquake in the fall of 2005 and its positive impact on Pakistani attitudes toward the U.S. demonstrates that humanitarian assistance can influence popular views of America. I visited Pakistan to attend the International Donors' Conference on November 19, 2005, as a staffer for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and saw first-hand the change in the Pakistani population's views of the U.S. because of our rapid and robust humanitarian response to this monumental disaster. Even our harshest critics admitted that America had come through for Pakistan at its greatest hour of need. The U.S. Chinook helicopters that rescued survivors and ferried food and shelter materials to the affected areas became a symbol of America's helping hand.

The U.S. response was well-coordinated among the State Department, Department of Defense (DOD), and USAID. DOD established mobile medical units in remote areas of the Northwest Frontier Province and makeshift schools in the badly affected capital of Azad Kashmir, giving the Pakistanis a new perspective on the U.S. military and demonstrating U.S. interest in the well-being of the Pakistani people.

Polling shows that U.S. earthquake relief efforts doubled the percentage of Pakistanis with favorable views of the U.S. from 23 percent to 46 percent from May 2005 to November 2005. This figure had dropped to 27 percent by 2006, however. Similarly, the U.S. response to the tsunami disaster had a positive impact on public opinion of America in Indonesia. Favorable views of the U.S. went from 15 percent to 38 percent. The point is that providing humanitarian assistance is not only an act of goodwill, it can reflect positively on the U.S. image in the region where people are benefiting from the aid.

Engaging with civil society and local religious leaders on issues such as human rights, political and economic reform, and religion in society also will help build greater understanding and help defeat misperceptions of the U.S. Twelve years ago as a Political Officer serving at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, I participated in a USIA-sponsored program to bring together female U.S.-based Islamic scholars and Pakistani female lawyers, human rights workers, and NGO leaders to discuss the role of women in Islam. I felt then—and even more so now—that it was one of the more worthwhile activities I was involved in as a diplomat. The U.S. has an important role to play in facilitating these kinds of open exchanges and in supporting human rights, democracy, and economic development at the grassroots level. The State Department should encourage officers' initiation and participation in such programs on a broad scale.

Recent Polling

We clearly have our work cut out for us. Recent polls tell us that opinions of America have declined markedly—to all-time lows in some countries—over the last few years. Some of these polls have revealed additional information for consideration. Recent polling on views of the U.S. role in the world released by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, for example, shows that most countries reject the idea of the U.S. as pre-eminent world leader; however, majorities in these countries still want the U.S. to participate in international efforts to address world problems. At the same time, this poll showed that many publics view their country's relations with the U.S. as improving.

A recent Gallup World Poll, "How Citizens of the U.S. and Predominantly Muslim Nations View Each Other," shows that Muslims generally admire the West for its advanced technology and democracy and admire their own societies for their respect for Islam and its teachings and their own family values. In January 2007, 57 percent of Americans reported "not knowing much" or "nothing" about Islam. Although perhaps not the role of the State Department, it seems clear that we as a nation need to learn more about the Muslim faith and get to know and respect its traditions and practices. The Gallup World Poll also concluded that Muslims and Americans generally agreed on the need to control extremism. The polling shows that not only do we need to think about the messages we are sending to the Muslim world, we also need to search for practical ways to engage with it and to build upon our shared values.

Moving Forward

The worldwide polls revealing declining support for America are discouraging. But polls change. And with the right public diplomacy strategies and with perseverance, ingenuity, and decisiveness in asserting U.S. soft power, the U.S. can begin to win

support from moderate Muslims. Our message needs to be unified and consistent with our actions or it will not be credible. To improve U.S. public diplomacy, we should:

- *Continue to raise the status of public diplomacy as a key element in fighting Islamic extremism and protecting U.S. national security.* Under Secretary Hughes has made progress on this front by empowering Ambassadors to speak more frequently to the media and by including public diplomacy as a key job element in senior State Department officers' evaluations. There has been resistance within the State Department bureaucracy to having officers spend more time on public diplomacy activities, which has led some outside experts to conclude that a separate public diplomacy entity like USIA needs to be re-established. Given Under Secretary Hughes' steady progress in raising the mission of public diplomacy at the State Department, it may be too early to make a decision in this regard. The transformation of the State Department may take some time, but in the end, it may be more beneficial to have a large corps of public diplomacy-savvy diplomats and an integration of U.S. foreign policy and strategic communication.
- *More clearly link the mission of USAID and the role of development and humanitarian assistance to core national security objectives and ensure close coordination between USAID and State Department on programming for aid projects.* The bureaucratic stove piping of resources has often made us our own worst enemy. The establishment of a new Director for U.S. Foreign Assistance at the State Department and new initiatives to address the lack of strategic focus in our assistance programs are steps in the right direction. This bureaucratic reorganization should strengthen, not diminish, the role of U.S. assistance in foreign policy. While officials in Washington will set the aid priorities, they should incorporate input from USAID staff that possess detailed knowledge and insight into civil society in recipient countries. If we are trying to reach out to these communities and build support for American values and policies, we will have to break down bureaucratic barriers that inhibit efficient communication and operational cooperation between the State Department and USAID. As we seek to promote democratic and economic reform, USAID should play a prominent role in the planning and implementation of projects aimed at reaching all levels of society.
- *Consider establishing a semi-governmental entity to conduct public opinion research in individual countries to allow us to tailor our messages to different audiences and to give U.S. public diplomacy efforts a solid factual foundation.* The Intelligence and Research Bureau of the State Department has conducted limited public polling and there are several credible non-government entities like Zogby International, the Pew Research Center, and WorldPublicOpinion.org that conduct international polls on a regular basis. However, it would be useful to have a semi-governmental agency that would be responsive to government tasking and whose staff could interact closely with government officials.
- *Re-establish the once-popular American libraries in city centers to supplement our efforts to reach people through the internet and electronic media and reinvigorate the book translation program.* Foreign interlocutors have emphasized their positive experiences visiting the libraries in the past and the strong impression these experiences left with them about America. Libraries could help reach audiences that do not have access to the internet and offer a traditional forum for reaching out to the local population. The Bush Administration should also revive USIA's once-robust book translation program, which now operates sporadically and mostly in Spanish. Expanded offerings on U.S. history, economics, and culture should be directed at essential target audiences in Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, Russian, and Chinese and involve private foundations and industry in donating and distributing materials.
- *Revitalize U.S. international broadcasting leadership and recommit resources and funding to Voice of America.* Members of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) have at times been inefficient in their decision-making and focused more on their own pet projects instead of providing policy guidance to staff directors. Congress should consider making the BBG more of an advisory body and granting executive power to a chairman who would be responsible for strategic planning and implementation of international broadcasting programs. Although the BBG increased America's presence over Arab airwaves by creating Radio Sawa and Al-Hurra TV, it did so by taking resources from

the Voice of America. As a result, U.S. programming in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America now lacks content, lively discussion, and airtime.

If we are to isolate and defeat the extremists' hateful and totalitarian ideologies, we will need to focus more U.S. foreign policy attention and resources on soft power strategies that seek to win support from moderate Muslims worldwide. Right now the score is not in our favor. However, with a sustained and focused strategy, and with some patience and perseverance, we should begin to see the fruits of our labor in the years to come.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me just note the excellent presentations that both witnesses made.

I want to first compliment Mr. Ford and his team from the Government Accountability Office for a thoughtful and thorough analysis of what the problems are and what has to be addressed, and let me also note for the record that the GAO took notice of the efforts that were made by the Department of State and that some progress has been made, and I think that is important because I want to, for the record, indicate that we are aware that the Department of State is making an effort, and I guess the question facing Members of Congress is how can we assist them to continue to address the problems as enumerated in the GAO report.

I would commend this report as necessary reading for everyone who is concerned about American foreign policy. You know, oftentimes, reports such as this particular report go unnoticed. It is the subject of one hearing. There are recommendations, but most importantly, it gives us data to reflect on so that we, those who have to make decisions, policy decisions, can move forward.

Ms. Curtis, I have to tell you, not frequently, do I find myself in almost total agreement with somebody from the American Heritage Foundation, but your testimony, probably because it echoes what my own opinions are, is right on the mark; your recommendations are, I think, very worthy of serious consideration, and I am sure that members of the committee will review both of your written testimonies and take note, and hopefully at some point in time, there will be an action plan based upon the GAO analysis and your recommendations.

Before I call on my vice chairman and friend from Missouri, Mr. Carnahan, let me note that, as I mentioned, our ranking member, Mr. Rohrabacher, is unable to attend today's hearing.

Mr. Carnahan.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This has really been, to me, an enlightening and fascinating series of hearings that I hope we can learn something from, but I guess it is startling to me—and I guess, if I could summarize the way I have digested these hearings, you know, it appears that back in the 1990s, we had fairly high levels of support around the world, but we have seen recently, even from our neighbors—Canada and Mexico—where those support levels have flipped to be negative. Our traditional allies in Europe, again, switched to be negative, particularly in the Middle East.

With regard to the polling, when you dig into it, besides the numbers changing to be at historic low levels of opinion about the United States, there still seems to be a reservoir of good feeling toward Americans as people, and there tends to be a reservoir of good feeling about America's values as they perceive them.

Where the disconnect, I think, seems to be is where the perception is that perhaps we are being hypocritical in not following those values. There is a perception out there that, perhaps, we have acted too unilaterally in some of our foreign policy activities versus being perceived as engaging more cooperatively or jointly. There is widespread concern about reports of torture and secret prisons and not standing up for human rights and following the Geneva Convention or the rule of law, and those are the kinds of things that—when they see that disconnect between what people perceive as American values that we are not following, I think that really drives down what they think of us.

So, I guess, to put this in the form of a question, that is kind of the way I perceived a lot of this information, but I guess my question would be: Is public diplomacy alone sufficient to really address this or are some of these perceptions around the world really just going to drown out a lot of the good actions that we are taking? That is my first question.

Secondly, I would like to get your comment on the success of some of our allies and things that they have done in conducting public diplomacy that we might learn from, best practices, if you will, in terms of things we can learn and to improve upon what we are doing.

Mr. FORD. If I could comment, I will try to comment on both of your questions.

Let me begin with, to the extent we can comment on whether public diplomacy by itself can change global opinions, clearly, we have not done the research to draw that necessary causal relationship, but we do believe, from the body of work we have done that the public diplomacy activities that our Government does employ overseas to the extent that they are well thought out, they are targeted at an audience that we want to try to influence in some manner. To the extent we do a good job of that, we have a better opportunity to potentially change people's attitudes.

I think there is another issue related to changing behavior which is different than changing someone's opinion. You mentioned what our allies have done, and although we have not studied U.S. allies in any depth, we have had several meetings with, for example, the Brits, regarding some activities that they have been involved in in public diplomacy, and one of the things they are attempting to do with their public diplomacy activities is focus on trying to influence behavior on the part of the countries and populations that they are concerned about.

I believe our efforts, at least from a strategic point of view, do not specifically mention trying to change behavior. They really focus more on attitudes, but I think it is something that is definitely worth having a discussion about, and I think that, certainly, the State Department should be—to the extent they have not already, they should be talking to our allies about some of the concepts they have, because we want to do something that is going to make a difference, and at this point, it is hard to see from the polls that we are making that much of an inroad in terms of changing negative perceptions.

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you.

I think I would look at it slightly differently in that we have to confront those elements who are trying to harm us. 9/11 changed everything in that regard, and I think that requires us to redouble our efforts on public diplomacy exchanges, foreign assistance, all of those soft power elements that I mentioned in my testimony. So I think the polls are devastating. We obviously do not like what we are seeing in terms of world opinion of us, but we cannot allow our policies to be driven by these polls either, because we do have extremist elements that our public diplomacy efforts could never reach. Frankly, they will be targeting us no matter what, and so we have to deal with those elements in a certain way.

I just want to give one example on that front, and I talked about Pakistan and how our earthquake relief really had a tremendous impact on views of America. However, 3 months later, in January 2006, there was a strike on the Pakistan border areas against al-Zawahiri. Unfortunately, the overall attack was not successful in getting the target, and it did have a negative blowback on the Pakistani population, and some of the figures in terms of the goodwill that was built up by the earthquake relief dissipated. So it is a challenge. I am not going to say it is not a challenge, but I think it is just a call for us to redouble our efforts to show this is not a war against Islam for sure. This is a war to protect national security interests of the U.S. and to prevent the next 9/11.

In terms of allies and best practices, I will just note that I know the Germans have their private organizations—their public-private organizations—that are deployed overseas that focus on human rights. They have a lot of dialogue. I remember, from my time in Pakistan, being fairly impressed with some of their foundations that they have that were engaging seriously on human rights issues. So perhaps we have something that we can gain in that respect.

Of course, not an ally, but if you look at China and what it is doing across the world, particularly in Africa, it is just very much engaging, and I think you even see this in areas like Southeast Asia where we are hearing from countries in Southeast Asia that the Chinese are just much more prevalent, much more available, you know, even for meetings in conducting diplomacy and just engaging in general. So I think we can do a lot more just in terms of sending diplomats—senior diplomats—and engaging in these areas.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Would the gentleman yield?

Because there are only two of us here, we can make this a much more informal format, and I think Mr. Carnahan and I can benefit from your expertise.

You mentioned China, and you know, I do not want to call them an adversary, but clearly, there is a competitive relationship between the United States and China. Several weeks ago, there was an article that appeared in *Newsweek* that I found particularly illuminating in terms of what the Chinese are doing, and what I really appreciated about your testimony, Ms. Curtis, is that the focus is on engagement. That soft power is so critical, not just simply to put us in a position to avoid violence but to further our own national interests whether they be commercial, cultural and specifically security. We find ourselves in a rather difficult position now where

our European allies are having passionate debates about whether to cooperate with the United States, whether it is anti-missile defense or whether it is the extension of leases for military bases. I do not want to get into a discussion about those, but what I see happening—and I will try to elicit a response from both of you—is that, with popular support eroding, particularly among democracies, what we find is that the support that we need in terms of dealing with terrorism is at risk. Yet, here we find the Chinese all over the planet. Just let me read—and I am going to ask that this be entered into the record, this particular article in the April 9th, 2007 edition of *Newsweek*. I think it is entitled “Beijing’s Big Charm Offensive”:

“Ordinary people across the planet now view China more warmly than they do the United States. Polls taken by the Program on International Policy Attitudes and the BBC show that the majorities of people in most countries today consider China to be a more positive influence and less of a threat to international peace than the United States.”

I mean, can one imagine those findings 10, 15, 20, 25 years ago? The world has changed, and I dare say that it does put at risk our commercial opportunities, particularly when one thinks of China:

“To get a feel for the new agenda, consider foreign aid. A recent study by the World Bank found that China will soon become the largest lender to African countries. Last year, it granted such states at least \$8 billion, more than double what the United States had provided in 2004, the most recent data that we have available. Beijing is already reaping the benefit of this attitudinal change in traditional high-power terms.”

I agree with you. We do not craft our policy initiatives simply because of polling data, but if we are not aware of them, then we are operating in the blind, if you will, and we can make mistakes, and I think it is really critical to be aware of world opinion vis-a-vis our policies.

Consider this about China: This summer, it plans to hold joint military exercises with a number of Southeast Asian nations, cooperation once unthinkable for United States allies, such as Thailand and the Philippines, a direct result of Beijing’s charm campaign. I mean, this is a fascinating article, and I will presume that it is valid, but I think it underscores our need to examine the analysis by the GAO and to take appropriate measures.

There is one other thing that I know that Mr. Carnahan is interested in, and I am going to try to find it here.

“Beijing is also taking advantage of Washington’s tightening of visa restrictions on foreign students since 9/11, which have thinned their numbers. China plans to establish 100 Confucius institutes, Chinese language and cultural programs of foreign universities over the next decade. In December, the Chinese leader promised that China would train some 15,000 African professionals over the next 3 years and announce there are 4,000 scholarships for Africans to study in China.”

Mr. Carnahan.

If my comments elicit any further response from either one of you, feel free. We will just have a conversation up here.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Before we do that, with your indulgence, I will just sort of tack onto that.

The chairman and I were at a conference recently with some German members of Parliament, and to really, I guess, put the icing on the cake here, there was a poll that came out during that time period, among German citizens, that they viewed the United States as a bigger threat to their security than Iran. As the chairman mentioned, some of the highest officials in the country expressed some frustration with wanting to engage with the U.S. on a number of different issues, but because of the backlash with their constituents as to how unpopular the U.S. was now, it made those things very difficult.

So we have seen really practical impacts at the governmental level, but also, I think that spills over into the economic, military, security interest. So I just wanted to add that on, but that is a very practical side of that that we saw just a few weeks ago.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If my friend would yield—and again, staff just provided me this particular data.

While Africa is providing scholarships for 4,000 students, the United States' funding for fellowships and grants to foreign students worldwide is 3,000—3,000. I mean—and I am not trying to assess the blame, and I do not think Mr. Carnahan is, on any particular administration. I just think it is time for a real thoughtful analysis of where we are going and whom we are going to be able to influence in a positive way. I mean, we are spending \$9 billion or \$10 billion a month in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just imagine what we could do in terms of influencing future leaders, both among the political elite in foreign countries as well as in the business world.

That was one of your recommendations, Ms. Curtis, and I think that we ought to seriously consider taking a hard look and maybe asking the GAO to assist us in taking a look at the various programs that currently exist in terms of attracting foreigners to come to this country to study, to learn the real American values and to go back and be our ambassadors or our interlocutors with their own native populations.

Ms. Curtis.

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think your last point is absolutely correct, and I think part of the problem has been with the visa process and some of the problems that foreigners have had when they have traveled to the U.S., and unfortunately, some of these problems have happened to very senior leaders, so we are hearing that people are deterred from traveling to the U.S., and I think this is one reason why we need to expand the visa waiver program. As you know, there are about 27 countries that are part of this, but we should figure out ways to expand the program to other countries—South Korea, Chile, India—just to name a few countries. This is something that we at the Heritage Foundation feel is very important, so we would be very supportive of any efforts to work toward expanding the visa waiver program, because we do believe that this program actually raises the bar in terms of other countries' visa programs and,

therefore, makes travel safer for everyone, but it also is a public diplomacy issue, as you say.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, again, Mr. Carnahan alluded to the exchange that we recently had with members of the German Bundestag and other public officials and private citizens in Germany, and they were pleading with us to expand the visa waiver program to all E.U. countries because it was particularly embarrassing to them and had become quite controversial that some European countries that were part of the European Union, for some reason, would not qualify under the visa waiver program, and I think that is an important statement.

Mr. Ford, can you amplify?

Mr. FORD. Well, I can talk a little bit about the visa waiver program based on some work we did last year, but it focused on the security vulnerabilities in that program, which is a little bit contrary to the direction that you are headed.

My view is, based on the work we did last year, if we are going to expand the program, we need to close some security gaps we have currently, in the current program that we have, which is with the members we have now. So, you know, in that work we did last year, we had several reports—excuse me—recommendations to the Department of Homeland Security to close those gaps, and if they have done so, then the concerns we have reported on—

Mr. DELAHUNT. But then I think it is important—and you know, I have no doubt because, as Ms. Curtis indicated, it is necessary that we take whatever actions are appropriate to protect ourselves, but I find myself getting very frustrated when, for several years now, the other committee that I serve on—Judiciary—which has jurisdiction over immigration, continues to press the Department for engagement with these nations about working out a compatible biometrics passport, and nothing is happening.

Yet, in the meantime, we are hearing this polling data coming in. We had a hearing just recently that indicated a sharp decline in the number of overseas visitors coming to our country that amounted in a single year to the loss of \$43 billion to the American economy. It just does not make sense. We are not utilizing our resources in an effective and efficient way.

I would be interested if the GAO would take a good look at those programs dealing with foreign students' coming to this country. It is tough to put your arms around it, so to speak. It does not appear to be centrally located.

Is there data that is available to tell us how many slots there are? What is the amount of funding that is available to support these kinds of programs?

I think that would be very useful. I think that there are some of us who are willing to take a rather significant initiative in expanding them to a magnitude which would really, I believe, make a huge impact not only now, but far into the future. I mean I believe these are kind of the soft power aspects of foreign policy that, hopefully, will allow us to avoid the exercise of hard power, which certainly, in the end, does not accrue to our long-term benefit.

Well, let me go on with a series of other questions here.

Mr. Ford, I was dismayed by the finding in the report that over one-third of public diplomacy positions in the Arabic-speaking na-

tions were filled by Foreign Service officers who did not have the requisite language skills.

Has State made progress in terms of filling those needs, and if they have not, what steps are planned? What, if you know, would be the amount of dollars that would be necessary to ensure that, if we are going to do something about public diplomacy, we will have a people who have the basic skills necessary to communicate? Because public diplomacy is about communication.

Mr. FORD. What I can say is we know that the Department stepped up its training efforts to expand language capabilities for their officers. What we do not know is whether they have fully implemented some other suggestions we made to them, based on a report we did last spring, that suggested that they needed to take a hard look at their recruiting efforts, to look at the kind of people that they recruit, that they recruit the people who already may have the requisite skills in the hard languages, and the hard languages that we reported in our report were Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, and Farsi.

In terms of whether they have been able to close the gap from last summer, we have not seen any of the most recent data from them, so I cannot answer that question directly in terms of whether or not, as to the total number of officers who have met the requirement, that gap has closed or not, but I can say that they have stepped up training, and they have indicated to us that—

Mr. DELAHUNT. Is it a problem of funding?

Mr. FORD. Well—

Mr. DELAHUNT. Are there sufficient resources being devoted to this, but it is an absorption issue?

Mr. FORD. Well, I do not know the answer to that to answer that directly. I mean, the State Department has asked for an increase in its budget for 2008. They have asked for an increase in the public diplomacy budget. I believe they are asking for another \$200 million above this year's level, but I do not know to what extent those monies will be used to close the gap with regard to foreign language.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me ask you just a procedural question as far as the GAO is concerned.

Once you conclude a report, in terms of the follow-up, is there an ongoing communication between you and, in this case, the Department of State to ensure that there is some progress being made as far as your recommendations are concerned?

Mr. FORD. Yes, sir, there is.

What we do is, about every 6 months, we follow up with the agencies we make recommendations to, and we try to find out whether they have actually implemented them. We have a process in GAO where we track that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Do you communicate that—when it is at the request of, say, a Member of Congress—to our staff, to our congressional staff?

Mr. FORD. We can share that information with you. Sure. No problem.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I would think it is a good practice to communicate it back to that Member or to the congressional staff if that is where the request came from.

Mr. FORD. Yes. Actually, the way the process works is, when we make a recommendation to an executive branch agency, they are required, within 60 days, to notify Congress of what action they are taking. So they should be formally telling Congress, first of all, what action they are going to take.

For us, however, we want to see whether the action actually does occur because, in many cases, they say, "We are going to do something. We have not actually completed it." So we usually do not close our recommendations until we have some affirmation and validation that they have actually taken the action.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Ms. Curtis, any observations?

Ms. CURTIS. Yes. Mine is a little bit different but slightly related, and I made this recommendation in my written testimony about expanding our book translation program. This used to be a huge program, but my understanding is that it is not receiving the funding that it should be, and it is just not being done, and these are books that show who America is, you know, the Constitution or any books that demonstrate who we are being translated into those key languages—Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi. This is something that, like I said, I recommended in the written testimony.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In your testimony, you also referenced the now defunct USIA, and you recommended that we pause and monitor the new approach in terms of public diplomacy. You know, I am not really sold on the current structure, and again, this is no reflection on any individual—Secretary Hughes or anyone in the Department—and maybe it is just too complex at this point in time and too fractured an approach for most people and, clearly, most Members of Congress to be able to follow.

You know, the old USIA—I lived in Europe in my distant youth, and it was a place where you could go; you could relax, and you could communicate with foreigners who came there. It just does not seem to be there anymore.

Mr. Ford, you probably do not want to comment or—

Mr. FORD. Well, I cannot comment about whether we should create another USIA, but I will say, based on our field work from the work we have done, that, you know, we are losing our presence in many countries overseas. As to our libraries, our American centers in a lot of countries, we have had to close those because of security or other reasons, and all of those were created under the old USIA mantra back in the 1990s, even before the 1990s.

So there are certain—you know, in terms of engagement, we talked a little bit about our engagement overseas. We need to get our folks out of the Embassies and out and talking to the people we want to influence.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But we have this catch 22 where we have security concerns.

Mr. FORD. It is an issue. It is an issue, and we know of cases where we just do not have a presence in parts of countries that we are trying to influence, but I mean, the State Department is trying to get around that by creating—

Mr. DELAHUNT. Corners?

Mr. FORD. Yes, what they call "American corners," which are small offices with Internet access and things like that, but there is a sentiment also that they should try to go back and find a way

to create some of the mechanisms that we had in the past—the libraries and things like that—because the information they have at State with regard to the impact of those organizations indicates that they all had a positive influence on the people who used them.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yet, at the same time, the GAO report indicates that almost a fourth—I think it was 22 percent—of public diplomacy positions were vacant.

Why? Did anyone offer an explanation as to why they were vacant? I do not know if you have had a chance to read the GAO report, Ms. Curtis, but why would it be vacant?

Ms. CURTIS. I am not sure about that. I had actually heard in some of my interviews with the State Department that more junior officers were interested in going into the public diplomacy cone. Now, I do not know if it is because of security reasons that some of these posts are not filled, and even though people want to be public diplomacy officers, perhaps because of family reasons, they cannot be posted somewhere that is dangerous or that does not allow families to also be in those posts.

Yes, sir. You mentioned that, in my testimony, I do call for the reestablishment of the libraries. In my meetings with folks overseas, they mention this. They say, “Why don’t you have those libraries anymore?” I remember going in there, doing my studies, and you know, it had a very favorable impression on them, and so this is something that does come up, and that, I think, is missed.

In terms of the reestablishment of USIA, I think there is a genuine debate on this because public diplomacy efforts throughout the Government are so disparate, and there are so many different efforts happening whether it be in the Department of Defense, USAID, the State Department. However, what I would say is, even though it has taken a long time—you know, there have been a lot of different iterations, and the Bush administration has tried many different forums to sort of bring these efforts together—I do think that and I have found in my research that we are getting there.

I think Under Secretary Hughes has taken some good steps, and she is starting to get those elements together. It is not perfect; maybe it will never be perfect, but I think she has been able to take the kind of steps that are unifying our message.

Another issue that came up in some of my interviews with the State Department was they are considering establishing—or I think they are going to establish a counterterrorism communication cell where they are going to bring in different elements, different analysts from different agencies so that we can think more carefully about our public response to events such as, say, an al-Qaeda message or a videotape or something.

So I think these kinds of efforts are being taken, and they are being looked at very seriously, but change takes time, and so I think what we have to consider is do we want to separate out a whole other organization and then have that organization just be dealing with the problem or take the problem and make sure that everybody is more sensitized to it, provide the training that is necessary, and have public diplomacy be a core part of the job as a diplomat. So I think that is the issue that we need to consider.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And I think you framed the issue well. I am just not—you know, I will take some hope from your statement that the

trend at least is moving in the right direction, but I am very conflicted because, if you sit on the Foreign Affairs Committee, to try to put your arms around public diplomacy leads you on so many disparate roads that it is tough to get a comprehensive look.

If we had a USIA today that was the core of a public diplomacy initiative and also had authority and oversight, if you will, of other executive branch agencies in terms of what they were doing in terms of public diplomacy and coordinating message, I think it would simplify it for those of us who do not deal with it every day, but have a responsibility to make decisions in terms of funding. I mean, I believe that it is so important. I have serious disagreements on the policies, the foreign policies, of this administration. At the same time, I think that there is the potential to work around the edges in terms of enhancing our public diplomacy and communicating to the rest of the world that we are not really what they think we are at this particular moment in time, particularly when we have competitors out there—China being the most obvious example—and other nations. I think you or Mr. Carnahan alluded to what the Germans are doing. As we continue to decline, it is not just a question of popularity and feeling good. It is a question of real legitimate national interests being jeopardized, but I think you framed it well.

How do we address the security concerns? I mean, the idea of corners is fine. You know, when I think of a street corner, you know, I think of a poolroom or something, but we cannot send our diplomats there if we are going to put their personal safety at risk. I mean that is a significant conundrum that we have. Let me go back.

You are confident about that—was it a 22–23 percent vacancy at the time you conducted your analysis—

Mr. FORD. That is the percentage.

Mr. DELAHUNT [continuing]. That is vacant?

Mr. FORD. I asked the State Department to update their vacancies for this hearing, and they came back with that “22 percent” number. Now, when we reported it last summer, it was 15 percent, so it has gotten worse.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That I find disturbing, and I can understand if there are concerns about personal safety and personal security, but you know, we can operate. We can add on, if you will, public diplomacy officers or Foreign Service officers whose primary responsibility is public diplomacy elsewhere in the world.

I mean, I think that Representative Carnahan alluded to the fact that this negative image of the United States is—we are talking today about the Islamic world, but Ms. Curtis, we had testimony here that we are in bad shape everywhere with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa.

You know, John Zogby was here to testify about attitudes in Latin America. I mean, you know, there is an 82–83 percent disapproval rating for President Bush. Now, I say that not to take any solace in a partisan way, because it is impacting our Nation and our ability to deal in the world. So it is not just exclusive to the Islamic world. There are the numbers coming out of Europe, from the Brits, from the Canadians, even from my own ethnic group—that is the Irish. We are in big trouble when we start to slip behind

China, you know, in Ireland. That is what is inexplicable to me, the 22-percent vacancies, when we need to get out even in those nations where there ought not to be a particular concern about personal safety. As everyone knows, there is no crime in Ireland. No.

Any comment Ms. Curtis?

Ms. CURTIS. No. I would just come back to the need for exchange programs that Congressman Carnahan had raised, and you know, I am a South Asia specialist, so I look at this in terms of the Muslim world predominantly and what we need to be doing there in terms of countering the extremist elements but yet, reaching out to the moderate Muslim community. I thought it was very interesting.

WorldOpinion.org just came out with a new poll that showed that the majority of populations in major Muslim countries like Pakistan, Indonesia and some others—that basically, large numbers did not support violence against Americans. However, they did support some of the goals of al-Qaeda. So this is something that we need to be looking at in terms of we do not want to lose those segments of the population, and we need to really focus on those segments of the population that we can still influence and build bridges with, but like I said, my focus is mainly on the Muslim world and South Asia.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me put another question to you because, last week, we had a very interesting, fascinating hearing regarding renditions, and the former chief of the bin Laden unit for the CIA, Dr. Scheuer, testified. It was interesting, and I had taken some time and read some of his opinions, and they are contrary to what we hear.

What I am concerned about is—and I note it in your testimony, and I am trying to find it now, of course—“while we may never change the minds of murderous terrorists who despise America and its democratic ideals.” I think that has become a mantra. If we say it often enough, it has some validity, and this is digressing a bit, but Dr. Scheuer would say that is hogwash, and here is what he had to say:

“Americans’ bipartisan leaders fail to accept that we are at war with militant Islamists because of our policies in the Muslim world, not because of what we think or what we believe.”

In your experience in Asia, in the Islamic world, would you agree or disagree? He lists five policies that he suggests are the grievances of Osama bin Laden in that extreme fundamentalist segment of the Islamic world—the presence of United States and Western troops on Arabia, the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, United States support of Israel and its indifference to the Pakistanis, maybe even Palestinians, United States support of nations that oppress Muslims such as Russia, and political pressure on Arab states to keep oil prices low.

His conclusion was they do not care about our values necessarily. It is about our policies.

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I think in the testimony—

Mr. DELAHUNT. By the way, I want to be clear. He was the minority witness. He was the Republican witness, so this is—

Ms. CURTIS. But perhaps I did not make it clear.

What I had said in the testimony is that we are never going to convince certain elements. They are going to be anti-American no matter what, and I think probably—he is not here, so we cannot ask him, but I think Dr. Scheuer would probably agree with that, that al-Qaeda's elements are not going to change their attitude. So our public diplomacy efforts are not geared toward them. They are geared toward the moderate Muslims who may disagree with some of our policies, and you gave a fairly long list of some of those policies.

But as I mentioned earlier, I think we need to redouble our public diplomacy efforts, and I do think it will help over the longer term. I want to point out also that—you know, you talked about the different policies. Al-Qaeda has attacked President Musharraf, the President of Pakistan. We may not see eye to eye with President Musharraf on all issues. Certainly, he has not been straightforward about some of those issues, Arab-Israeli, et cetera, but it shows that there is not a whole lot of rhyme or reason, and they are willing to attack, conduct horrific acts that—you know, we are not going to change some of those people.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And I do not want to digress too much. I want to be fair to you because you did not come here to testify on this, but since you have expertise in the area and you talked about, you know, President Musharraf, his response would be we support tyrannies in the Middle East, despots in the Middle East, and I have no doubt that he would incorporate the Musharraf government as a nondemocratic government, one that only responds to violence and force in terms of treating its citizens in a way that is acceptable, if you will, to that fundamentalist Islamist group. Bin Laden's understanding would be, you know, let the Americans have their freedoms, we do not care, but we do not want them to impose their policies on us. That was his position. I am not saying it is my position.

But I am going back again, and I am sure that that represents a tiny fraction of the Muslim population clearly, but you mentioned, and it is really what provoked this conversation that we are having, a poll that was done, I think, by Mr. Kull that you just referenced. It said that, while they abhor violence, they tend to agree with al-Qaeda, and if al-Qaeda is articulating their disagreement with American policies, I would think that what we need in terms of public diplomacy is a full explanation of those policies.

For example, Israel is a democracy, and we align ourselves with Israel, because we share democratic values; we respect diversity in religion, and we believe that no people, no race should be persecuted or persecuted because of adherence to a particular religion, in this case, Judaism.

I mean, I guess what I am saying is, when we talk about message, we have got to make sure that we are responding to those who would do us harm or to those who would disagree with us in a way that understands what their logic might be in terms of their relationship with the United States and with the West.

Ms. CURTIS. I think you are right, and I talked about the need to reassure the Muslim world that we are conducting some of these operations—I will talk again about the attack on al-Zawahiri's hideout in the Pakistan border areas—not because we are against

Islam as a religion, but we are trying to protect our own national security, and it seems evident to us, but clearly, based on these recent polls, for some reason, it is not being understood in the region, and I am sure there are a variety of reasons for that, but I think we probably could do more to demonstrate over and over at different levels that we are taking these actions to protect our own national security. We have no problem with the Islam religion, itself, but it is about protecting Americans.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I agree.

Mr. FORD. Yes, I would like to comment if I could.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Sure.

Mr. FORD. The comment I would like to make has to do with having a good understanding of who you are trying to influence, and one of the issues that we have seen in our work is the extent to which we are doing in-depth research in the populations that we are trying to influence and have an understanding of where they are coming from.

Most of the experts who we have talked to indicate that we have a tendency to express our values and ideals from our perspective and with no real in-depth understanding of where others are coming from, and many of the experts we have talked to indicate you need to know that. You need to know where others are coming from if you want to come up with a better approach on how to deal with them and how to try to have a common ground, a common understanding. I think one of the issues here is whether or not our Government is devoting enough research in this area to really have that understanding.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I think that is an excellent, excellent point and that is maybe what I was trying to express to Ms. Curtis earlier. I mean, we have got to understand al-Qaeda, and we cannot just—we all do it. We all fall in the trap of “they despise our values.” I mean, I hear the President say “they hate us because of our values.” Well, that is not what these polls reflect. I mean, the polls reflect, I think in some respects, that they respect our values. I daresay most of the world admires what we say we stand for, but they are disappointed because—as it is, I would suggest—we often fail to meet our own standards, and that creates a certain level of hypocrisy. We talked about terrorism. Yet, today, in Miami, there is a man who is walking free who allegedly, according to our own information, is a violent terrorist and most likely was involved in the bombing of a Cuban airliner back in 1976.

What does the world think of us when we talk about terrorism and the need to deal with it in a way that protects us, and yet, the perception is we are protecting that individual because he is an ardent foe of Fidel Castro?

We stand for the principle whether we like the individual or not. I mean, we talked about the rule of law, and once we become inconsistent, we open ourselves to the charge of hypocrisy. I mean, I find that disturbing.

I was unaware, just to again go to Ms. Curtis—and offer any comment that you want, Mr. Ford. I never realized that the Fulbright scholarship program had dissipated, but in your statement, you say, “The State Department has also revived the Fulbright scholarship program, but experts say it will take time to reestab-

lish its effectiveness since it has been so grossly underfunded through the 1990s.”

Can you expand on that?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I think, just to emphasize the point, yes, it is getting revitalized, and that is very positive, but we are going to have to continue to move forward in that revitalization effort because it is such an important part of public diplomacy efforts.

So, again, I think it is just making sure that our public diplomacy efforts have the resources, the funding that they need, the encouragement from Congress as well as others in order to continue to move forward and to empower public diplomacy, which for a long time was given the shaft. People did not see the importance of it, I think, throughout the 1990s. So, anything we can do to bring all of the programs back up and give them the prominence that they need and deserve in our foreign policy, I think that would be the point.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I have requested the GAO and Mr. Ford to take a look at in a holistic way—and it does not really require, hopefully, an extended, exhaustive effort.

What do we have in terms of programs, fellowships, scholarships to this country?

Let me make the same request to you. I think it would be a wonderful project for the American Heritage Foundation. For me, it is a priority. It is not necessarily, you know, chic. It will not produce immediate results, but I think it is something we can talk about. I think we can go around and talk about the fact that we are concerned about foreign public opinion, and maybe we have made some mistakes. I mean I will note, in the 1990s, it was the Clinton administration. So I mean this is not an effort to launch any kind of partisan attack on the Bush administration. This is, I think, separate and distinct from the policies of each administration. Although, public diplomacy ought to be a policy. It appears to be the offer, if you will, of American diplomacy. I think we are learning the hard way.

The testimony of Mr. Ford I think was very telling. Everyone was telling us, you know, you are losing. You are losing opportunities. I know business is making decisions in terms of either—where they are going to relocate.

You know, we hope to do a hearing on the issue of where students are going. Because we are finally back to where they were—it might be up 3 or 4 percent, but they are going a lot of other places—Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Europe—and in huge numbers, and we are going to lose—

And I think this is something that both Republicans and Democrats are—the more we talk about it—I am hearing from my colleagues there is a legitimate concern, and it would be great if a respected conservative foundation such as American Heritage would take this on. It would give us, I think, credibility. I think there is an opportunity at this particular moment to do something about this that really flows from your recommendation and from what we are learning from the analysis and the study by the GAO.

I was really stunned, by the way, by your—I don’t know if you are aware of this, Mr. Ford, \$70 billion from—annually that the

U.S. is giving to developing countries. I mean, how do we leverage that?

Ms. CURTIS. If you and I are stunned by it, can you imagine—the rest of the world doesn't realize this much aid is being given by the American private sector.

Mr. DELAHUNT. How do we brand that? Any ideas?

Mr. FORD. That is a good question. We have looked at the U.S. effort to brand our assistance, not donations from the American people through whatever means they may donate them. But I can tell you, from the government's perspective, we don't have a consistent policy in the way we publicize our foreign assistance; and, as a consequence of that, there are lots of missed opportunities out there as far as foreign publics even knowing that we are providing the assistance.

And I am struck by—I think it was a report from a couple of years ago—where we went to Egypt where we have been providing over \$1 billion every year for the last—since the Camp David Peace Accords, that someone in the Embassy told us that less than 15 percent of the population even knows we give foreign aid money there. That is just for the government's foreign assistance money. And the other \$70 billion that the American citizens are sending overseas through their own means, I have no clue as to whether or not that is well known or not. I suspect it probably isn't.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Any other examples other than Egypt?

Mr. FORD. Well, that was the one that was most telling in terms of an actual case where they mentioned that. In our most recent work, we had a number of more detailed examples where we had provided a form of training or an education, rebuilding schools or something along those lines, and the local population wasn't aware of it.

Now where we have made a conscious effort to advertise our assistance, such as when we assisted the tsunami aid in Indonesia in 2004, where our Government made a very conscious effort to publicize that, that had significant impact in terms of turning around a negative attitude toward America, at least in the short-term. Now that has gone back a little bit. But our Government made a conscious effort to advertise through the media and lots of other means. There was a lot of publicity, a lot of visibility. The Indonesian population saw that, and it had a positive effect.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I noted that. I noted that policy.

Ms. CURTIS, how do we take that \$70 billion that American corporations are providing and brand it? I mean, we are Madison Avenue, but we are not doing a very good job in terms of communicating that.

Ms. CURTIS. I think in some ways we are just waking up to this whole issue of not getting credit for some of the assistance that we are providing.

Mr. DELAHUNT. The Chinese are doing a pretty good job.

Ms. CURTIS. I think our Government is, you know, waking up to the issue; and I think the fact that the State Department held this public-private partnership meeting in January, which I understand was very well attended, that is a very good effort. One might argue we should have done this sooner—

Mr. DELAHUNT. I don't mean to interrupt, but you have got to implicate the Congress into this. And, to be perfectly honest, I have never met Secretary Hughes; and if you don't have congressional support or at least awareness I don't think it is going to be effective. Because you need the resources that I think Congress is prepared to provide.

And has organized labor been brought into this, Mr. Ford?

Mr. FORD. I mean, again, we haven't studied outside of our Government funds, but I would agree that we can do a better job of engaging overseas. And I will acknowledge the State Department has made an effort, not recently, to engage the private sector not only with the meetings they have had there but they set up an office there, a specific office just to do that, to engage with the private sector and try to leverage them. And a lot of the experts that we talked to said this is something that is a long-standing thing that we should have been doing a long time ago.

So I have to give them credit for now starting to do that.

Ms. CURTIS. Getting back to the Pakistan earthquake relief efforts, shortly after the earthquake, it was October 8th; and I think 3 weeks later, the government, the State Department requested that the U.S. private sector get involved to help raise funds. It was a difficult time. We had had our own Hurricane Katrina just a month before. So it was a difficult process.

But five senior executives from five major U.S. companies got together, agreed to launch a program to raise awareness in the U.S. and to help raise money and target that money; and they have helped raise over \$100 million at this point.

So that was a very good, clear example of the government getting the private sector involved to help with the severe international problem. So I look to that example as something that we should look at. You know, there doesn't need to be a disaster to start these kinds of efforts to bring the private sector in.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It works.

I guess what I am saying, suggesting—and, again, I think this would be a worthwhile undertaking for NGOs, for think tanks that are located right here in Washington, the Heritage Foundation should join up with—whether it is Brookings or another large foundation—to explore these efforts. We are generally here overwhelmed with an array of issues that we have to address, usually in a crisis environment, and don't have time to focus. But there is a role there for organized labor.

Speaker Pelosi has elevated—in fact, has taken somebody from the staff of the full committee to deal with the appropriate utilization of parliamentary exchanges. I mean, I can tell you firsthand that I think exchanges among legislative bodies are very, very positive.

Myself and several other members were visited today by members of the Venezuelan National Assembly. I was instrumental in an effort that dissipated, but now we are in the process of making an effort to restore it. It was called El Grupo de Boston. It was a diverse selection of parliamentarians from both the Venezuelan National Assembly and the U.S. Congress, and it was a mechanism for dialogue.

We know the tensions that currently exist between the executive branches, but that is something that I dare say—that is another setting at the table that has to be explored if we are going to, I believe, look at public diplomacy in full measure. And we don't have the time or the resources to do it. I applaud the administration for convening that public-private meeting, but it has got to be sustained over a period of time. I mean, I know that—I am sure that Secretary Hughes is busy, but I think it is an appropriate role for organizations such as the Heritage Foundation to take a look at the recommendations or the analysis of the GAO and, with their own experience, expand on it, make it a bigger dinner table.

Ms. CURTIS. They have been writing on the issue of public diplomacy.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Bring us together. They have nice offices over there. We can find our way over. Select some key players and develop a prototype.

I mean, we have got to shift into action at that point in time and we have to, in my judgment, expand the dollars that are necessary or we are going to continue to erode in terms of world opinion and threaten our national security interests. All of our national interests, not just our security.

To you, Ms. Curtis, there has been resistance within the State Department bureaucracy to have offices spend more time on public diplomacy activities. How bad is the resistance, and how can we deal with it?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I don't have any numbers or figures or percentages. I just know that it is an issue. And, again, one wouldn't think that, 5½ years after 9/11 and looking at some of the policies that you had talked about earlier, that this would still be an issue. But my understanding is that it is, and I think there may be a lot of different factors contributing to this.

One is sheer time constraint. Our diplomats overseas are very busy with—whether it is responding to the latest terrorist attack, the political crisis going on, most of our Embassies are overstretched, and they are very busy. So I think that is an issue. So, again, resources, staffing.

But also there—it is a culture as well that their primary goal, political or economic officers feel, is to report; and traditionally the evaluations of their performance as an officer is based on their reporting.

But what I think we need to do is in addition—I think Secretary Hughes is trying to do it. She is making media appearances, for example, be part of the evaluation process, particularly for ambassadors, which is great. But I think we need to go even further and make involvement by our political and economic officers in exchange programs.

I mentioned to you something I had gotten involved in 12 years ago but felt was very worthwhile. So I don't have a good sense for how much our political and economic officers get involved in these kind of exchange programs or how much they are involved with getting out with the civil society and fostering discussion and open exchange, but my sense is they are probably not doing enough of it. So part of it is cultural and will take just continuing to spotlight

how important these issues are. But part of it is also sheer time constraint.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I appreciate the time constraint. I have tremendous respect for our Foreign Service Officers. I have been in some tough places. They have a tough job.

But I fear sometimes that they talk to the same people all the time. It is the ones you talk to, you are getting the same feedback, and you think you are out there. We have got to get out there. And that is a cultural shift, and we have got to pay them more money. I mean, you have got to put it out there. I mean, we have to value their service with appropriate compensation, particularly when they are making sacrifices.

Mr. Ford, have you—I know you serve public diplomacy offices. Do you have any—would you care to offer any comments?

Mr. FORD. Yeah. We did serve a public affairs office. It has been a while. I think we did it in 2003 in our first report. We canvassed, I believe, 75 officers overseas.

Really, the purpose of our survey was to get an understanding of some of the things you just mentioned. How frequently they can get out of the office, how much of a burden they had in terms of trying to do all of the different tasks there either the ambassador was asking them to undertake during the day or things coming from Washington. And, frankly, the survey showed that a large number of them felt that they didn't have enough time to go out and conduct public diplomacy activities outside the Embassy. Many of them felt they were overburdened at the time because of all of the administrative tasks and things like that that they have to do on a day-in, day-out basis.

So even though that survey is a little old—and, anecdotally, in subsequent trips to Embassies, we heard this from several officers. So it is an issue.

And as I mentioned earlier, we are short a number of people—the number of slots are—haven't been all filled, and they have some folks there that haven't been trained yet sufficiently in a language to effectively communicate even if they do go outside the walls. So these need to be addressed so we can optimize the people we do have out there.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think that is where it is at. We can't do this on the cheap. We just cannot do it on the cheap. And when you think of the alternative, the alternative is unacceptable. And you think of the human losses and the waste of dollars that is currently occurring, at least in my opinion.

Ms. CURTIS. And we need to think about the priorities as well. Like I said, building in the evaluation process, the importance of engaging with civil society, participating in these kinds of programs, not just the meetings with the minister. So I just wanted to emphasize that point.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think that is very true.

I was attracted into government because of President Kennedy. I was young then—kind of young then. And that same kind of—that spirit of idealism and adventure and the need. He was an inspiring figure. And the initiatives such as the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, we need to recapture that. But we have got to be realistic, too. We can't ask people to do—

you know, we can't give them too many tasks so that none get done well.

And I really believe this is a resource issue. I know what we need is let Mr. Ford and his team to go out and to give us a true assessment of what the costs are, rather than to worry about OMB and the bean counters. And I say that respectfully, because I would rather spend \$50 billion on soft power so that we don't have to spend a trillion to support a military and go to war and lose American lives. I mean, that is the choice not just in terms of this moment but in terms of our future.

As long as we are the superpower, there is always going to be a crisis on the horizon. And I would rather do the up-front investment and send the young Americans out to preach peace than to send them to war.

I suggest, as part of this kind of initiative, it is recapturing that spirit of the libraries. As a young student, you go and sit and meet some foreigners over a book in a very human way and you connect in that fashion. But we can't do this on the cheap, but we need—but nobody, even—nobody has got the capacity to tell us really what the needs are, because everybody is constricted by, well, you can't spend more money. Well, you know what? We are borrowing money now from the Chinese to fund a war in Iraq. That just doesn't make any sense at all.

That is why I would love to send out Mr. Ford and his team to run the numbers and come back with what I am sure would be a very significant figure so that we can take the kind of initiatives that we are talking about.

Do you have planes to catch or do you have other commitments?

What to me is the greatest mystery of all is the broadcasting. I mean, if anybody can explain that to me, then that is a tutorial I would like to have. I mean, the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the Voice of America and over here you have—there doesn't seem to be any coherence on how effective is it. I look at your report, and there is no way to determine what return on the investment that we are getting. There is no methodology.

I have a particular concern about TV Marti. It is a TV in search of an audience. I have been to Cuba on a number of occasions. I haven't just met with government officials there or dissidents. I have walked along the streets and gotten to know a lot of people. Nobody has ever seen it, and yet we are spending millions on it.

And now it comes down to Radio Marti, and what are we doing? We are outsourcing it to some hard line radio station in the private sector down in Miami. I mean, does this make any sense at all?

And, again, I am focusing on Cuba. I know it is a very sensitive issue to a lot of people and all of that. But let us just talk about it in terms of effectiveness. I mean, what do you do with this? Do you have to blow it up first, the BBG or whatever they are called, and kind of start afresh? Maybe I am overstating the case.

Ms. CURTIS. Sir, in my written testimony I had made the suggestion that we think about a different set-up. Considering the importance of the issue of public diplomacy and the mission that the Broadcasting Board of Governors has, I think we do need to think about whether the decision-making process, as it is, is really the most effective, or whether we would like to have a chairman with

more executive authority and have the governors be in more of an advisory role.

Because I do think that decisions have not been always handled in the most efficient manner and that there has been a tendency to adopt pet projects rather than having a clear, strategic focus and making that clear to the other staff.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I noted that in your testimony, and it—like I said to you at the beginning, just all of your testimony, I thought, was brilliant. It was insightful. Because I agreed with just about everything you said.

Ms. CURTIS. Just to point out, the Heritage Foundation has been supporting this for a long time. If you go on our Web site, there are papers going back to 2003 making these kinds of recommendations on public diplomacy efforts. But I am very happy—

Mr. DELAHUNT. Maybe we should make it an advisory council so we can get input from stakeholders. I don't have a sense of it—I know there was some gentleman that got involved in some controversy. I don't know if he is still there or not. But there is no identifiable individual in our Government that one can look to and hold accountable. What is happening?

I get different reports, you know, in terms of the Middle East, MBN, I think it is. I mean, it was so simple during the Cold War. It was the Voice of America and, you know, Radio Free Europe. I mean, are we capable of structuring a simplified—I mean, Mr. Ford, I reviewed your testimony and looked at the schematic. It is dizzying. I can't follow all of the angles. It is beyond my capacity. There has to be a better way.

Mr. FORD. We tried to simplify it for you.

Mr. DELAHUNT. There are so many lines.

I mean, again, I would recommend—I know, Mr. Ford, that is not GAO's role, but I would hope that, again, because you happen to be here, Ms. Curtis, if the Heritage Foundation could sit down with, you know, AEI or Brookings or Center for American Progress, just examine it and come to Congress with something that was coherent.

We are wasting taxpayer dollars that could be used, in my judgment, much more effectively to explain America. I don't necessarily think we have to communicate a message. I think what is best is if foreigners could see C-SPAN and see how we argue passionately and how we disagree and yet somehow we move an agenda forward that hopefully, on occasion, is positive and constructive. I think that is the message that we want to send. We have the capacity to disagree and be angry, be disappointed, but not indulge in any violence. Isn't that really the fundamental message that we want to deliver in terms of democracy?

This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:35 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

