

Written Statement of Irwin Steven Goldstein
Nominee for Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Chairman Portman, Ranking Member Coons, Members of the Committee – thank you for inviting me here today.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Tillerson for placing their confidence in me. I've spent the bulk of my career helping senior leaders in government and in the private sector tell their stories. Now, to have the opportunity to help America tell its story to the world is the honor of a lifetime.

My spouse, Bill Popeleski, is here with me today and I could not do this without his love and support. I am also grateful to my father, Bernard Goldstein, who set an example of civic engagement through his involvement in our hometown of Nashville; and my late mother, Sandra, who I'm sure is smiling down today.

I would also like to thank the men and women who have previously served as the State Department's Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. I hope to build on their successes to enhance the mission-critical work of the State Department's global public diplomacy team.

One of the benefits of a career in communications is the opportunity to speak with people from all walks of life. Every day on the news, we see stories of people who, in their own way, give back to their country and endeavor to make the world a better place. Those who seek to undermine America do so by spreading misinformation about our people and our objectives. We can fight these efforts by inspiring the world with our shared humanity and our great compassion.

Vast numbers of children are orphaned by disease and war. Their caregivers may feel a bond with Americans like Jody Thompson, a police officer in Poteau, Oklahoma, who adopted a malnourished boy named John, whom he rescued from an abusive home.

Where children with disabilities are treated as second-class citizens, their parents can find strength and hope in Americans like Sonja Robinson and Mikey Brannigan. A few years ago, Sonja, a well-respected coach, moved across the country to train Mikey, who has autism. Mikey, with Sonja's support, recently won two golds and a silver at the Para World Championships.

Sonja and Jody exemplify how we live out our ideals at home, and it's these same ideals that motivate us to be a source of hope around the world.

We need to tell this story.

We need to show how America is leading the fight against AIDS and malaria, in places where these diseases take their deadliest toll.

We need to show how America is bringing educational opportunity to girls and boys in nations where schooling is still seen as a privilege and not a right. From textbooks to scholarships to coding academies, America is empowering the world through education.

We need to show how America is often the first nation to provide aid when disaster strikes. Through government agencies such as USAID, through our robust private sector, and in our own capacity as individuals, Americans ease suffering and help rebuild lives in every corner of the globe every day.

To tell these stories, we must ensure that the State Department is using every tool available, and can harness the power of new technologies as they develop. Consistent with the President's budget and the Secretary's priorities, we should aspire to have a digital and technology profile that rivals the best companies in Silicon Valley. And in an era when people everywhere have access to vast information sources, we must speak to people where they listen.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's very talented career officials to ensure that we are speaking with one clear, consistent, and compelling voice. Where we see evidence of success, I want to build on it and scale it to other parts of our mission. With the right structures in place, we can respond more rapidly and with greater clarity to events anywhere they unfold.

I also want to ensure that we're doing everything we can to combat the radical ideologies that threaten Americans at home and abroad. I feel this deeply, because I have seen firsthand the heartbreak that occurs when a malign force takes root and diplomacy fails to stop it.

In January 2002, when I led communications for Dow Jones, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl was kidnapped while on assignment in Pakistan. For weeks, we worked round-the-clock to bring Danny home. It fell to me to tell his parents

how their son died. Danny's death was a stark example of the personal tragedy that lies in the wake of every terrorist act.

As our diplomats and servicemembers lead the battle against extremism on the political and military fronts, the State Department's public affairs team must engage on the information front.

The Global Engagement Center is working aggressively to win the war of ideas that underpin terrorism. That must include addressing the entire eco-system of thought that justifies and supports killing civilians for political ends, as well as intervening against those people who are likely to commit violence. We need to continue working with our inter-agency colleagues and the tech companies that produce the platforms where terrorists recruit and cultivate followers. We must also remain flexible and agile as trends change and as our enemies adapt.

The State Department has a broad remit. And in all of our efforts, I look forward to continued engagement with this committee and with your colleagues in the House of Representatives. The way we conduct our affairs is itself a demonstration of the power of our ideals. Bringing diverse ideas and people together in common purpose has been a hallmark of America for nearly 230 years. It is an example that can inspire hope in others.

Thank you again for inviting me to speak with you today.