

**Statement for the Record by
Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale
before the
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights,
Democracy, and Global Women's Issues
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Chairman Kaufman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your invitation to appear before you this morning.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss with you the state of America's public diplomacy, the framework that we are developing to more closely align our activities with the nation's foreign policy objectives, and the challenges we continue to face.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge the legacies of my predecessors, several of whom testified before you this morning. In a span of just a few years, they put our nation's public diplomacy on a trajectory that laid the foundation for a new approach to public diplomacy for the 21st Century.

Throughout the past year we have witnessed the strong, energetic, and consistent commitment of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to public diplomacy. From the President's speeches in Cairo and Accra, to the many events that the Secretary has held directly with international audiences around the world, they have made public diplomacy an integral part of their approach to foreign policy. Both understand that engagement with global publics must be an essential part of our foreign policy apparatus as we pursue our policy objectives, seek to advance our national interests, and strive to ensure our national security.

The World We Face

The communications revolution that has rocketed around the world has had an impact on the attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations of people everywhere. Public opinion is influencing foreign governments and shaping world affairs to an unprecedented degree. In the past 25 years 40 new electoral democracies have emerged. This is a great triumph for our belief in the democratic form of government. As citizens in these countries exercise their rights, their decisions affect not only the future of their own countries but also the future of the United States and that of the rest of the world. In this context, our efforts to engage foreign publics through public diplomacy are more important than ever before.

Today, 45 percent of the world's population is under the age of 25. These young people —many of whom face enormous social and economic challenges— have come of age during a period of limited direct engagement with the United States.

They communicate in new ways and with tools which are constantly evolving. As we reach out to this new generation we must develop strategies to engage and inspire them. Increasingly our opponents and adversaries are developing sophisticated media strategies to spread disinformation and rumors which ignite hatred and spur acts of terror and destruction. We must be ever vigilant and respond rapidly to their attacks against us.

Women account for over 50% of the world's population and yet in too many parts of the world they lack access to education and fundamental rights. Countless reports and studies demonstrate that increased participation by women in the social, economic, and political lives of their countries results in more stable productive societies. We must continue to develop and deploy new programs to support and empower women as they seek to improve their lives and communities.

The global challenges we face today require a complex, multi-dimensional approach to public diplomacy. Our Government must develop new ways to communicate and engage with foreign publics at all levels of society. In doing so, we must do a better job of listening; learn how people in other countries and cultures listen to us; understand their desires and aspirations; and provide them with information and services of value to them. In essence, we must develop ways to become woven into the fabric of the daily lives of people around the world as we seek to create strong and lasting relationships with them.

A Strategic Approach for the 21st Century

We must act boldly and decisively to develop a clear, consistent, and comprehensive approach to public diplomacy. Over the past eight months we have undertaken a focused and disciplined review of the current state of public diplomacy and public affairs at the Department of State. As part of that review, we have consulted with individuals involved in public diplomacy here on Capitol Hill, at the National Security Council and the Department of Defense, and at all levels within the Department of State. We have also met with representatives of academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. I have traveled to embassies and consulates in Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia. And in October we hosted a global conference attended by all our Public Affairs Officers to ensure that we understood the needs of our Posts around the world.

This process showed that in significant ways our public diplomacy was working well to advance America's interests. But it also revealed a great degree of consensus about what needs to be changed to align it to current priorities and guide our efforts going forward. Last month, we began rolling out the results of our review: a new global strategic framework for public diplomacy that I believe will give us the focus and capabilities we need in the complex environment of the 21st Century.

The new framework rests on the core mission of public diplomacy to support the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives, advance national interests,

and enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world.

As part of our review we identified five strategic imperatives: to pro-actively shape global narratives; expand and strengthen people-to-people relationships; counter violent extremism; better inform policy-making; and, redeploy resources in strategic alignment with shifting priorities. Moving forward, we are taking steps to ensure that all our activities support these requirements.

First, in this information saturated age we must do a better job of framing our national narrative. We must become more pro-active and less reactive. We are bolstering our communications outreach—locally, nationally, regionally, and globally—to inform, inspire, and persuade our target audiences and to counter misinformation. We are working with our posts around the world to develop and implement targeted media engagement plans to both push positive stories and to respond rapidly to negative attacks against us. We will expand the role of our regional Media Hubs, and enhance their capabilities as digital engagement centers to ensure that we are fully represented in dialogues in both traditional and new venues for information and debate.

In December , I sent a cable to our Public Affairs Officers worldwide directing them to be more aggressive and strategic in their communications efforts. As an example of our new forward-leaning stance across the range of issues, our Embassies successfully changed the global narrative about our rescue and relief efforts following the tragic earthquake in Haiti. In support of these efforts, we are creating the new position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Media Support within State’s Bureau of Public Affairs to facilitate coordinated and high level attention to foreign media.

Second, we are expanding and strengthening people-to-people relationships—relationships based on mutual trust and respect—through our public diplomacy programs and platforms. In addition to growing our highly successful exchange programs, we are broadening the demographic base of those with whom we engage beyond traditional elites. We are using social networking and connective technologies such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to expand our reach and ensure that we are represented in new media and conversation spaces. Last year, in connection with the President’s speech in Ghana, we used a combination of traditional and new media to actively engage with millions of individuals across Africa. And in January, I participated in a Skype enabled video conference which allowed high school students in Boston to talk to their peers in Jalalabad.

We will continue to support programs that simultaneously advance U.S. national interests and offer desired skills to targeted audiences. These programs include expanded English language teaching and teacher training, collaboration and skill-building in science, technology, and entrepreneurship, programs designed to

provide women with the skills they need to advance within their societies, and, educational advising that promotes the broad array of education opportunities offered by US academic institutions.

We are evaluating opportunities to revitalize and establish American Centers and Corners as spaces for public engagement. And we are working with organizations across the country to expand our cultural programs to showcase the breadth and depth of America's cultural heritage. Recognizing that participants in our programs are among our best ambassadors, we are investing new resources both to enable us to remain better connected to alumni of our exchange programs and to enable them to better connect with each other so that they can build upon their shared experiences.

Third, we are expanding our efforts to respond rapidly to terrorist and violent extremist messages and proactively counter the narrative that has allowed them to disseminate misinformation and recruit new followers. In Washington and at our Embassies and Consulates overseas, we will aggressively harness new and traditional media to communicate U.S. perspectives and counter misinformation and disinformation. We will redouble our efforts to empower credible voices within societies. To do so, we will continue to provide tools and platforms for independent voices to expand their reach, and leverage partnerships to train religious and secular leaders with local influence in issues of development, health, and education.

Fourth, we are taking steps to ensure that our policies and programs are informed upfront by a clear understanding of attitudes and opinions of foreign publics. We are establishing the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy in each of the regional bureaus. These officers will be responsible for ensuring that a public diplomacy perspective is incorporated as part of senior policy deliberations and for coordinating all our public diplomacy initiatives throughout their respective regions. We are also strengthening our research and planning capacity. In doing so we will draw on the resources of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, media reporting from the Open Source Center, and others to provide us with the information and data we need for this critical task.

Finally, we are taking steps to ensure a strategic allocation of resources in support of today's foreign policy priorities. We are strengthening the Policy, Planning and Resource function within my office and we are reestablishing multi-year public diplomacy plans for all Posts. These plans will set forth our public diplomacy mission in the host country, analyze target audiences, inventory continuing and innovative tactics to achieve our goals, identify the resources necessary for success, and integrate realistic measurements of effectiveness. In Washington we will examine each plan to ensure congruence with our global objectives and allocation of public diplomacy resources in line with current priorities.

Coordination at All Levels

As we implement the new global strategic framework for public diplomacy, we have placed renewed emphasis on coordination both in Washington and overseas to ensure that our efforts complement and, where possible, reinforce the activities of other departments and agencies.

We participate in the National Security Council (NSC)-led Interagency Policy Coordination (IPC) process. The NSC brings together senior working-level stakeholders from across the interagency for a Strategic Communications IPC meeting on a weekly basis. These meetings address a wide range of issues including global, regional, and country-specific matters. They are designed to coordinate, develop, and de-conflict communications programs and activities across U.S. government agencies. My staff also takes part in a variety of other staff-level coordination bodies, including the bi-weekly Small Table Group at the National Counterterrorism Center.

The Global Strategic Engagement Center (GSEC), which is part of my office, is specifically chartered to support the NSC's Global Engagement Directorate. We are expanding and upgrading GSEC to strengthen its ability to contribute across a broad range of U.S. government strategic communications and global engagement activities. To head the new GSEC, I have recruited Ambassador Richard LeBaron, formerly our Ambassador to Kuwait and one of our senior-most Foreign Service officers. He will arrive on the job this summer.

We also enjoy a close and productive working relationship with our partners at the Department of Defense. I talk and meet regularly with my counterparts there on both specific programs and on broader strategic issues, such as potential rebalancing of the respective roles, responsibilities, and resources of State and Defense in the public diplomacy and strategic communications arenas. I recently visited General Petraeus in Tampa to discuss challenges and opportunities in his region of responsibility and how we can work more effectively with CENTCOM. I have also met several times with Admiral Olson of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to put our heads together on ways to improve current cooperation between State and SOCOM.

The New Approach: a case study --- Pakistan

Last summer, my office worked closely with our Embassy in Islamabad, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, USAID, and DoD to draft the Pakistan Communications Plan, a copy of which has been provided to the Committee.

The Pakistan Plan has four broad goals: expand media outreach, counter extremist propaganda, build communications capacity, and strengthen people-to-people ties. Our plan links elements of traditional public diplomacy with innovative new tools.

For instance, recognizing that extremist voices dominate in some of Pakistan's media markets, we instituted a rapid response unit and a 24-hour multilingual hotline for the Embassy to respond to attacks, threats, and propaganda from the Taliban, al Qaeda, and their sympathizers. This approach reversed a previous approach of not actively countering such propaganda. It has been an uphill battle but, as our voice gets more frequent play, the impact on the discourse in Pakistan's media has been noticeable.

As we strengthen our people-to-people ties with Pakistanis, our aim has been to increase positive American presence on the ground in Pakistan. To do this we are focusing on more exchanges, more presence, more Lincoln Centers, more face-to-face meetings with engaged citizens in Pakistan, and more non-official contacts between Pakistanis and Americans in Pakistan.

Secretary Clinton's October 2009 visit to Pakistan was planned and executed in coordination with the themes of our strategic plan. Her focus on issues of education, jobs, and reliable electric power responded to what we had identified as central concerns of Pakistanis. Her extensive series of public engagement activities carried out the Plan's emphasis on rejuvenating our personal, face-to-face diplomacy. Her visits to historical and cultural venues underscored American respect for and desire for partnership with the people of Pakistan. Perhaps the most telling moment came during a press conference during which Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi stated that the Secretary's visit had been a success precisely because it had manifested a "policy shift" toward a focus on "people-centric" relations. This was and is precisely our message.

While very few countries will require plans on the order of Pakistan, henceforth we will ensure that our public diplomacy strategic plans for each Mission incorporate rigorous strategic analysis to drive focus and coordination at the post level.

Mr. Chairman, let me say in closing that I believe this is a moment of great opportunity to redefine our relationship with people around the world and to build bridges of knowledge and understanding with people everywhere. In doing so, I believe we will improve lives and support our national interests. I look forward to working with you as we seek to achieve these goals.