

Opening Statement of James K. Glassman
January 30, 2008

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Hearing on Nomination as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy
and Public Affairs

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

On October 1, 2003, the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, mandated by Congress and chaired by Ambassador Edward Djerejian, produced a powerful report that concluded, “At a critical time in our nation’s history, the apparatus of public diplomacy has proven inadequate.”¹

The report pointed to our “unilateral disarmament in the weapons of advocacy that has contributed to widespread hostility toward Americans and left us vulnerable to lethal threats to our interests and our safety.”²

I was one of the 13 members of the Djerejian Group, and it is not hard to sum up our conclusions: get serious and strategic about public diplomacy, rebuild the institutions, modernize them, provide interagency leadership and coordination, increase resources, get the President and the Congress fully behind the effort.

That was 2003. Times have changed. There is today a broad, bipartisan consensus that soft power, smart power, public diplomacy – that is, the arsenal of persuasion -- are absolutely critical to counter and defeat the violent extremists who threaten America and the freedom of people around the world.

The will is there. The President and Congress are more engaged. Many of the recommendations of the Djerejian Group have been adopted over the past two years under Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Under Secretary Karen Hughes – not only programs but what the report called a “culture of measurement,” a rigorous examination of how well public diplomacy is “moving the needle” – that is, enhancing understanding and changing minds.

The rebuilding is well underway. Indeed, I believe that American public diplomacy, after a bipartisan period of neglect in the 1990s, is now poised to move *beyond* the successes of the Cold War, beyond anything envisaged by the Djerejian Group.

¹ *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World*, Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, Oct. 1, 2003, submitted to the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, p. 8.

² *Ibid*, p. 13.

This is the background, Mr. Chairman, for today's hearing. I am honored by the nomination of President Bush and the support of Secretary Rice, and I seek your confirmation as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

I am proud to introduce my wife, Beth Glassman. Much of the rest of the family is far-flung: my daughter Zoe Miles and her two children, Violet and James, live in New Orleans; my daughter Kate Bennett and her daughter Tess live in Las Vegas; and my stepchildren are in college: Michael Rocks at the University of Virginia and Hilary Rocks at Vanderbilt. My mother is nursing a knee injury. I want also to recognize the support of my stepmother, Betty Glassman; my brother and sister, Peter and Betsy; and my uncle, Bernard. My father Stanley, who died in 2005, would have loved to have seen this day.

I also want to take this time to thank Senator Lieberman for his kind introduction. I have been an admirer of Joe Lieberman even before he was elected to the United States Senate. He is a man of principle and vision.

Just eight months ago, this committee and the United States Senate confirmed me as chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees taxpayer-funded international radio, television, and Internet networks. This remarkable electronic platform, built over 65 years, now directly touches the lives of 155 million people each week in 57 languages.³ In Arabic alone, BBG radio and TV broadcasts reach 35 million people – more than 10 times as many as were reached in 2002. In recent months, our broadcasters have provided a lifeline to people seeking the truth in such places as Somalia, Syria, Burma, North Korea, Russia, Cuba, Tibet, and Pakistan.

As just one example, one in every five Iranians watches VOA Persian television at least once a week. U.S. taxpayer-funded broadcasting beams seven hours of TV a day into Iran, including a popular call-in show that allows Iranians to talk directly with American policymakers and Iranian exile dissidents. Taken as a whole, U.S. international broadcasting – including such venerable institutions as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty -- is our largest single civilian public diplomacy program by far.⁴ If I am confirmed, I will, of course, step down as chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, but I will remain on the board as the Secretary of State's representative.

In addition to my service on the Djerejian Group and on the Broadcasting Board, I have spent nearly 40 years as a professional communicator – a writer, publisher, editor, TV public-affairs show moderator, and website host. I have founded two media businesses

³ See http://www.bbg.gov/bbg_aboutus.cfm

⁴ The budget of the BBG is greater than that of all educational and cultural exchange programs supervised by the State Department, but the total public diplomacy budget of the State Department is greater than that of the BBG by about \$200 million for fiscal 2008.

and rejuvenated two others. My respect and admiration for *this* institution was nurtured during the time I was editor of Roll Call, the congressional newspaper, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Additional preparation came from a deep immersion in the world of ideas, which began when I was publisher of The New Republic and president of The Atlantic Monthly and continued through my 11 years in the think tank world, at the American Enterprise Institute, where I am now a senior fellow and editor of AEI's magazine of economics, The American.

If I am confirmed, it is my intention to focus on three areas: 1) leading the war of ideas, 2) building on our current public diplomacy strengths in educational and cultural exchanges, and 3) bringing fresh and vital technologies to bear on all of our efforts.

Lead the War of Ideas: The war against Al Qaeda and other extremist threats to peace, freedom, and justice is not only military. It is a war of ideas. Secretary of Defense Gates made just this point when he extolled "soft power" in a lecture at Kansas State University in November.⁵ As the 9/11 Commission put it: eliminating Al Qaeda requires "prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism."⁶

In this war of ideas, the White House in April 2006, gave the State Department – and specifically the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy – the lead. The Under Secretary is charged "leading our strategic communications efforts to promote freedom and democracy and to counter extremism."⁷

If I am confirmed, this will be the main focus of my attention: the war of ideas – perhaps better expressed as global ideological engagement. "Al Qaeda," as Michael Doran, a scholar of Middle East politics at Princeton and now a Pentagon official, has written, "is the ideological organization par excellence."⁸ The organization disseminates its messages through mass media and the Internet, and our job is not merely to explain and advocate American values and policies but to counter the disturbingly persuasive ideology of the enemy.

Let me give you an idea of what we are up against. A poll last April by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a project of the University of Maryland, found that about four out of five respondents in Muslim nations surveyed agreed with the proposition that the

⁵ Robert Gates, Landon Lecture, Nov. 26, 2007. See <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199>

⁶ *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), p. 363.

⁷ Stephen Hadley, Memorandum, "Establishment of the Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications Policy Coordination Committee," April 8, 2006.

⁸ Michael Doran, "The Pragmatic Fanaticism of al Qaeda," *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer, 2002), p. 187. Quoted by William Rosenau in *The McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook* (2005), p. 1132.

goal of the U.S., in its global policies, is to “weaken and divide the Islamic world.”⁹ Roughly two-thirds of those polled in Muslim countries said that a U.S. goal was to “spread Christianity to the Middle East.”¹⁰

A Pew survey found that 80 percent of Indonesians were “very” or “somewhat” worried that the U.S. could be a military threat to their country.¹¹

Where do such notions come from? Straight from the doctrine that is at the foundation of Al Qaeda ideology.

The fact that so many people adhere to these beliefs is testimony to the effectiveness of the radicals, who, as Mary Habeck, a historian at Yale who now is with the National Security Council, writes, comprise a “faction – generally called ‘jihadi’ or ‘jihadist’ – [that] has very specific views about how to...return Muslims to political power and what needs to be done about its enemies, including the United States. The main difference between the jihadis and other Islamists is the extremists’ commitment to the violent overthrow of the existing international system.”¹²

Certainly, the many millions in the Muslim world who believe that the U.S. seeks to destroy their religion do not themselves adhere to jihadist ideology. But that they buy into major tenets of the ideology presents an enormous challenge to our national security.

How do we counter such notions? How do we counter the widespread misperception that America does not allow mosques on its soil? Or that we are not a religious or family-oriented people? Part of the answer lies in ideological engagement – directly entering the conversation to confront lies and distortions with truth. At the time of the Djerejian Report, that was barely happening. Now, the efforts is gaining momentum, through institutions that Ambassador Hughes inaugurated, like the State Department’s media hubs in London, Brussels, and Dubai, which rapidly deliver voices that advocate for U.S. policy on Arabic and other important international media, and the Digital Outreach Team, which began engaging with Arabic Internet sites in November of 2006, and expanded to include Persian and Urdu sites in December of 2007.

⁹ WorldPublicOpinion.org, Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland, “Muslim Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al Qaeda,” April 24, 2007. A press release summarizing the study began, “An in-depth poll of four major Muslim countries has found that in all of them large majorities believe that undermining Islam is a key goal of US foreign policy.” See

<http://worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brmiddleeastnafrica/346.php?lb=brme&pnt=346&nid=&id=>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “America’s Image in the World: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project, Testimony of Andrew Kohut, Pew Research Center, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, March 14, 2007.

¹² Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology in the War on Terror* (Yale University Press, 2006), p. 4.

What makes the current war of ideas so difficult is that jihadist ideology is built on a religious base -- which means that non-Muslim Americans are not the best messengers in countering its appeal. As President Bush has said, "The war on terrorism is not a clash of civilizations. It does, however, reveal a clash inside a civilization, a battle for the future of the Muslim world. This is a struggle of ideas, and this is an area where America must excel."¹³

Ideological engagement is the job, of course, not only of the State Department. Other agencies of government are hard at work. If confirmed, my intention will be to coordinate closely with these agencies and with our allies – especially in Europe, where the traditions of the Enlightenment and critical thinking were born and where the extremist threat today is intense.

Build on the Foundation of Exchanges: Another way to counter the ideas of the extremists is personal engagement through educational and cultural exchange programs. Funding for these programs has more than doubled since fiscal 2003¹⁴ – and with good reason. Exchanges are the crown jewels of public diplomacy. We are fortunate that a talented Iranian-born American, Goli Ameri, has been nominated by the President to head these programs as Assistant Secretary of State.

We should never forget that, to the rest of the world, education is America's great brand. In my preparation over the past few weeks, I have learned that the total number of international students in the United States is on track to rise to a record high in the 2007-2008 academic year. This is big news, and welcome.

We will also look for new ways to spread the benefits of educational and cultural exchanges to less advantaged youth to study in the United States. In particular, we will work to fulfill the President's vision to expand the Partnership for Latin American Youth, a program which will increase access to English language teaching and provide thousands of young people in our own hemisphere a greater chance to study here in the United States.

Bring New Technologies to Bear: The truth is that ordinary Americans are superb citizen ambassadors. They live our values: generosity, tolerance, compassion. The problem is that the vast majority of people in the world have never met an American. The challenge is how to amplify our exchange programs. Research shows that the Fulbright program is highly effective. Through video technology and the Internet we can magnify the life-changing experiences of nearly 7,000 Fulbrighters and 2,000 Flex and YES high school students who come here each year so that such experiences are shared not simply by the families and friends but by millions.

¹³ The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2002. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss9.html>

¹⁴ From \$244 million in fiscal 2003 to \$501 million in fiscal 2008.

New technologies also will play a larger and larger role in the war of ideas, through innovations such as the Digital Outreach Team.

After I was nominated, I read a great deal in the press about my job. People speculated on what I would do to burnish America's image, to increase our popularity ratings – as if the United States were a brand of soft drink or an entrant in “American Idol” seeking global votes.

Let me offer a different perspective. Public diplomacy's role is to help achieve the national interest by “informing, engaging, and influencing people around the world.”¹⁵ It is a tool, a means, to achieve specific ends. One of those ends –the first goal as defined by President Bush's National Security Strategy in March 16, 2006, is “promoting freedom, justice and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity.”¹⁶ And why do we do that? Not just for moral reasons, but because free governments, since they are accountable to their people, tend not to attack other free nations. “Peace and international stability,” says this National Security Strategy, “are most reliably built on a foundation of freedom.”

What does all this have to do with popularity? It matters that people in other parts of the world trust us and respect us. Their leaders are sensitive to public opinion, and when we ask nations to support our aims in the world – to send troops, to impose sanctions, to assist in humanitarian relief – those nations are more apt to respond if their publics are favorably disposed toward the United States.

On the other hand, isn't it better that more and more people in the Arab and Muslim world today reject suicide bombing as a tactic¹⁷ – even if their love for America has not necessarily increased?

I have spent a good deal of time since my nomination in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the data on attitudes toward the U.S. I met for two hours with Andy Kohut of the Pew Research Center and have conferred with experts at the State Department and read practically all the surveys. Here are some conclusions:

1. Animosity toward the United States is real, and it must concern us.

¹⁵ Changing Minds, *Winning Peace*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁶ The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2006. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/intro.html>.

¹⁷ “Islam and the West: Searching for Common Ground,” Testimony of Andrew Kohut, Pew Research Center, before the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, July 18, 2006. For example, in Jordan, the proportion saying that suicide bombing against civilian targets is “often” or “sometimes” justified dropped from 57 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006. See <http://pewglobal.org/commentary/print.php?AnalysisID=1009>

2. Different countries have different views of the United States. In Africa, Japan, and India, for example, most people favorably disposed toward the United States.¹⁸ In much of Western Europe and nearly all the Arab and Muslim world, they are not.
3. Much of the animosity is not deep. Even people who say they dislike us want to have strong bilateral relations with us, and attitudes are not set in stone.¹⁹ As Secretary Rice said last year, The United States is “still the place where people like to send their kids to school, where people want to start a new life. Sometimes we overstate the degree to which America is not popular, even if sometimes our policies are not.”²⁰
4. The animosity of foreigners has three sources:
 - a. They understand that we are a powerful nation and will ultimately set policies with our own interests in mind, but they believe we do not listen to them, do not act as a reliable partner, and do not respectfully take their views into account.²¹
 - b. In the Arab and Muslim world, especially, they have major misconceptions about America, our aims, and our policies. Remember the examples I cited before, such as a belief that we want to supplant Islam with Christianity in the Middle East.
 - c. They disagree with our policies, especially our presence in Iraq and what they see as our bias in the matter of Israel and the Palestinians.

The first two sources of animosity, I believe, we can address effectively through public diplomacy. We can listen better and more respectfully and through exchanges, information programs, and ideological engagement, we can address and rectify the lies and misconceptions.

As for policy: Edward R. Murrow, when he was USIA director, famously said that public diplomacy should be in on the takeoffs, not just the crash landings.²² In other words, public diplomacy should have a place at the table, to advise policymakers of the potential reaction of foreign publics to policies. But never, in my view, should global public opinion polls determine the foreign policy of the United States.

¹⁸ For example, proportions of those with favorable views of the United States, according to a June 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project Survey, were 88 percent in the Ivory Coast, 80 percent in Ghana, 59 percent in India, 61 percent in Japan, 30 percent in Germany, and 21 percent in Egypt. In Nigeria a majority of Muslims views the U.S. favorably.

¹⁹ See, for example, a study conducted between Nov. 30 and Dec. 5 by Terror Free Tomorrow: The Center for Public Opinion and D3 System. It found that 40 percent of respondents in Saudi Arabia had a favorable opinion of the United States, compared with just 11 percent in May 2006. See <http://www.terrorfreetomorrow.org/template.php?section=WN>.

²⁰ “A Resolute Condoleezza Rice,” by Maria Bartiromo, BusinessWeek, July 23, 2007. See http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_30/b4043101.htm

²¹ This is the finding of many surveys. For example, in the June 2007 survey cited in the footnote above, respondents were asked how much the U.S. “takes into account the interests of countries” like yours in “making international policy decisions.” The total proportion answering “not too much” or “not at all” was 79 percent in the Czech Republic, 75 percent in Turkey, 79 percent in South Korea, and 61 percent in Chile.

²² See <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/murrow/snow.htm>.

Can we do a better job explaining our policies? Yes. Will those policies be universally embraced? No.

In the early 1980s, the U.S. and our allies agreed on the placement of cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. It was a decision that was aggressively opposed by much of Europe's public opinion, but it was a policy that helped bring down communism.

Consider Muslim Americans. A Pew study in May found that foreign-born American Muslims, by a 70 to 3 percent majority, have an unfavorable view of Al Qaeda.²³ By 78 to 18 percent, they are happy with their lives in America. They are optimistic, by a four-to-one margin, that a way will be found for Israel and the Palestinians to coexist. In all of these measures, Muslim Americans differ not only from Muslims in the Middle East and much of Asia but from Muslim immigrants in Europe.

Yet American Muslims, by a margin of more than six to one, say that the war in Iraq was wrong. That compares to a split of roughly 50-50 at the time among the entire U.S. public.

In other words, Muslims in America embrace U.S. values and participate actively in U.S. society, yet they differ with other Americans and with the U.S. government on policy. That is to say, policy is *not* the determining factor in their view of America. This is precisely the condition we should strive for in the world. People in other countries will not agree with our policies all the time, but we want them to have an accurate picture of those policies and the motivations behind them, and we want the disagreements to be constructive.

Since I was nominated as Under Secretary on December 11, many friends have congratulated me and perhaps just as many have offered condolences. They were half-joking, I suppose, in their reference to how difficult this job must be.

Public diplomacy requires seriousness, dedication, imagination, and hard work, but no condolences are in order. This is a position for which I have prepared all my life. My focus will be leading the war of ideas, building on the strong foundation provided by Karen Hughes, especially in the area of educational exchanges, and bringing new technologies to bear, in large part to amplify the effects of our programs.

The task ahead is to tell the world the story of a good and compassionate nation and, at the same time, to engage in the most important ideological contest of our time – a contest that we will win.

²³ These results and those that follow are from “Muslim Americans: Middle-Class and Mostly Mainstream,” published by the Pew Research Center on May 22, 2007. See <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/483/muslim-americans>

In closing, I want to thank the men and women working in the area of Public Diplomacy around the world. This includes our Foreign Service Officers, Civil Service Colleagues, and Foreign Service Nationals. I am honored to have you consider my confirmation and I look forward in working closely with the Committee and your staff. Thank you.