



Confirmation Hearing

Margaret DeB. Tutwiler, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

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Chairman Lugar, Senator Biden, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

I, like hundreds of U.S. Government officials, experienced September 11 and all that has come afterward from the perspective of living and working overseas. As you know, I was living in Morocco, a strong ally of the United States and a nation of 30 million where, regrettably, like many nations today, far too many of their citizens have a different view of the United States than we would either want or desire. Much of what I learned about our country, from listening, engaging and inter-acting with Moroccans from all walks of life, was troubling and disturbing. I would never have known how our country is really viewed, both the positives and the negatives, had I not been serving overseas for the last two turbulent years.

It is neither an all good nor all bad picture. Just as our public diplomacy has numerous components and is complex, so too is the view of the United States overseas. There is much that is respected and admired about our country – much – and yet, regrettably, we have lost some of the respect that was part of past generations. We all know that we as a nation have a problem, one that must continue to be seriously addressed by all of us, both governmental and private sector.

We are all trying to figure out how best to fix the situation in which we find ourselves. In my opinion, it would be fair to say that through both Republican and Democratic Administrations alike, we have not been as focused and engaged as we all now know we should have been.

We have done, and continue to do, a very good job of government-to-government work. We continue to do a fairly good job with the elites and opinion leaders. However, where we have not placed enough effort and focus is with the average person – the non-elites – who today, much more so than in the past, have a very strong voice within their countries.

In the short time that I have been back and preparing for this hearing, I have become more familiar with the numerous programs, activities, and efforts the State Department employs in the areas of public diplomacy and public affairs. I can attest to the fact that many of these programs do as they were intended to do – educate and inform citizens in other countries about our country, its people and policies. We, of course, can do more, and we need to ask ourselves each day, "Does this program or this activity go to the bottom line, not of making people like us, but of maintaining and in some respects re-gaining respect?"

In my opinion, this can only be accomplished by continuing to tackle this complex situation on numerous fronts. There is not one magic bullet, magic program or magic solution. It does not exist. What does exist is a recognition that we did not get into this situation overnight, and we will certainly not get out of it overnight.

What will get the job done over time is a collection of our efforts and activities, which are engaging,

inter-active and focused on deliverables that inform and educate. We have for decades been in the field, giving as Americans so generously do, yet tragically, in too many instances the recipients of our good will have little if any idea of our assistance and participation in their nation. The example of the Japanese Opera House in Cairo receiving more recognition than years of U.S. assistance in Egypt, cited in the Public Diplomacy Advisory Group for the Arab and Muslim World's recent report, is regrettably not only true, but true in too many other countries as well. It certainly was true in Morocco.

In addition, we need to do a much better job of listening. I have served in two Administrations in Washington and one from overseas. As much as we would like to think Washington knows best, we have to be honest and admit we do not necessarily always have all the answers. Our government officials out on the front lines do have good solid ideas, which further understanding and nurture our country's image. We should be more active in soliciting, and more open to receiving, their suggestions. We should more carefully listen to people in other countries and be more sensitive to explaining ourselves in ways that resonate in their communities.

I believe we can get out of the situation we find ourselves in by prioritizing and focusing our efforts. We can do this with an attitude of openness to new approaches and a non-bureaucratic response to letting go of those activities and efforts that no longer work for us in the 21st century. There is no quick fix. However, there is every reason to believe that together all of us can and will contribute to reversing this situation.

People overseas continue to admire our basic values and freedoms, our technology skills, our educational system, our medical capabilities and our business and management models. We know that young people listen to our music and watch our movies. We all know that, if given a chance to come to the U.S. or given a visa, there is little if any hesitation. There is much that is respected about America and Americans, and yet we have to acknowledge that there are those whose sole reason for getting up everyday is to destroy our way of life, either violently or by negatively influencing their communities about us. We must remember that they are a minority and do not represent their nation anymore than Timothy McVeigh represented our nation.

If confirmed and given the opportunity to continue to serve President Bush and Secretary Powell, I will do what I can to contribute to the overall effort of trying to prevent any further deterioration of our nation's image, of trying to find a way to more forcibly articulate and defend our policies, of trying to find focused and effective ways to explain ourselves to foreign audiences and, finally, trying to find ways to insure that the activities we undertake are measurable.

These have been, and remain, historically challenging times. I am very confident that just as in all such challenging times, we Americans will find a way. We make mistakes along the way, but ultimately we will succeed in solving both minor and major problems. Public diplomacy is but one tool in this effort, an important tool that has and will continue to contribute to the overall solution to the problems we face.

With your permission, I would respectfully submit that any and all programs that are inter-active, that have an American engaging with a foreigner or foreign audience is of real benefit. Whether in person, through a video conference, a press conference or a business meeting, each exchange program is of enormous value. I know first hand from talking to participants when they returned to their own country. Each trip a Member of Congress or your staffs take, each Administration official who travels overseas, each American teacher who teaches English overseas, each American corporation that invests overseas - hires and trains a local, each book we publish in a native language, each radio broadcast, each scholarship granted, each computer given, each internet hook-up, each hospital bed or wheelchair given, each tree planted, each tutorial, each training program - it all should and must go to the bottom line of making not only a difference in the recipient's life but, as an American, it must make a difference first and foremost for our country, for today and for future generations.

Thank you, and I would be more than glad to answer your questions.
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