

**Testimony of David E. Morey
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The Honorable Christopher Shays, Chairman

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished representatives, good afternoon. I'm David Morey, founder and CEO of DMG, Co-Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relation's Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy and Adjunct Professor of International Affairs at Columbia University.

My company, DMG, specializes in developing and executing communications and marketing strategies for some of the world's best corporations—Microsoft, The Coca-Cola Company, Verizon, McDonald's, Nike, Visa, Procter & Gamble, Texas Pacific Group and many others. It grew from our experience in advising insurgent political campaigns around the world, and from another company we helped create in the 1980s, the Sawyer-Miller Group, a pioneering think tank of global economic democracy. Our lucky job was managing winning presidential campaigns of Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, Kim Dae Jung in South Korea and Vicente Fox in Mexico, among other world leaders.

This was a remarkable learning experience—because the dynamics of democratic change around the world were and are driven by a remarkable

revolution. It's a revolution that has changed literally everything within the grasp of human endeavor: Politics, business, education, entertainment, science, the arts, media, culture, warfare and national security. It's the information revolution. And today, it's this revolution that forms the context in which America must communicate in a transformed world.

This information revolution, in fact, ensures the rules of leadership and communications have completely changed. The old rules are over. Moreover, it ensures that successful leaders must think and communicate not as an "incumbent"—big, bloated, change-resistant and defensive-minded—but rather as an "insurgent"—mobile, agile, pro-change and offensive-minded. Make no mistake: This is the age of insurgent communications—and we in America must understand and play by these new rules as we articulate our values, policies and ideas to the rest of the world.

Mr. Chairman, over many years, United States public diplomacy has been neglected and is now in a state of serious disrepair. Today, resentment, rage and deep misunderstanding of the U.S. and its policies are widespread. Hostile propaganda and systematic information campaigns harmful to American interests are directed at the U.S. and its allies by many countries, non-state organizations and individuals. Clearly, the September 11 attacks and the war against terrorism are defining events in our relationship with the world and in the nation's public diplomacy.

Today, the seriousness of this challenge is measurable by frightening polling results—in many cases, fueled by widespread propaganda spewed by America's enemies. For example, even before the war in Iraq, polls showed 88% of Saudi Arabians and 82% of Jordanians had a favorable opinion of Osama Bin Laden—higher approval ratings than President George W. Bush.

Surveys such as this, and the recent Pew Center study, show a widening opinion gap between America and its strongest allies on issues that include the war on terrorism, violence in the Middle East, trade policy and the war in Iraq. Even allowing for the effect of policies and politics, public diplomacy is broken now—at just the time we most critically need effective communications about the United States. Ironically, the nation that literally invented the information revolution has been flat-footed when it comes to its own communications.

These and other realities demand nothing less than a new public diplomacy paradigm. The challenge is not simply to adjust U.S. public diplomacy—but rather to revolutionize it. We must redefine the role of U.S. public diplomacy: From the way we tie it to foreign policy objectives to the way we formulate a comprehensive strategy to the way we recruit and train public officials to the way we define U.S. diplomats' missions.

A fair question to ask is why the U.S. should care about what the rest of the world thinks. The answer: 9/11 changed forever a way of thinking in the U.S.—in many ways, forcing America from any tendency toward isolationism. Today, it is a truism to say the world has become increasingly interdependent. Ironically, as this world's only superpower, the U.S. remains vulnerable as the terrorists' only super target. Terrorist attack against the homeland makes clear that America's national security cannot rest on favorable geography, military strength and economic power alone. It depends on a long-term process to shape an international environment that builds credibility and trust and serves our interests.

Today, however, we must recognize that U.S. foreign policy has been weakened by a failure to include public diplomacy systematically in the policy making process. Past examples of misunderstood policies include rejection of the Kyoto treaty, the treaty to ban anti-personnel land mines, the agreement to create an International Criminal Court and the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty. The point here is not that these are flawed policies or that foreign public opinion should drive policy. Rather, it is that foreign attitudes can affect the success or failure of policies, the willingness of allies and others to join coalitions and the depth and breadth of support for American interests and values.

Across different Administrations, on many issues, strong disagreements and misunderstandings have existed between America, her allies and other nations. How we explain and advocate policies matters. In the 21st century, the world is becoming more democratic. People are influencing what governments can do more than at any time in history. And policies and negotiated agreements will succeed only if they have the general support of opinion makers and the masses—and only if public diplomacy is a central consideration in all policy decisions.

In fact, public diplomacy should be a powerful asset in pursuit of America's interests around the world. It is central to national security—and must be involved, to borrow Edward R. Murrow's famous phrase, in the "take-offs and not only the crash landings." In today's information age, it is simply not enough to explain our national policies only to world leaders. America's problems surely are in the streets of foreign capitals. Moreover, because the campaign of hate and misinformation against the U.S. is concerted and coordinated, it is time for street smart public diplomacy to counter America's enemies.

So, Mr. Chairman, it is hard to dispute that public diplomacy is broken and in need of a new strategic direction, new ideas, new approaches and new energies. The Council on Foreign Relations report and a string of subsequent analyses by politically divergent groups—such as the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, the Defense Science Board, the Djerejian Commission, The Center for the Study of the Presidency, Heritage, CSIS and the GAO—all conclude that public diplomacy's status quo is absolutely unacceptable. But where do we best go from here? What are the priorities? And what are the strategies, tactics and structures we need to win?

In short, our Council on Foreign Relations Task Force believes the answers are that we must do three things urgently: **prioritize**, **revolutionize** and even **privatize** public diplomacy.

First, we must **prioritize** public diplomacy through a new National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) to garner public and private sector attention. And we must centralize it strategically by upgrading and further empowering the White House's Office of Global Communications and the Policy Coordinating Committee on Strategic Communications through creation of a Public Diplomacy Coordinating Structure (PDCS), led by the President's personal and cabinet-level designee.

Moreover, we must increase public diplomacy funding and enhance key areas such as field staffing, exchanges and U.S. international broadcasting via the Middle East Radio Network and the new Middle East Television Network, al-Hurra. And we must embark upon a series of State Department reforms to significantly improve strategic and structural effectiveness—including instituting a "Quadrennial Public Diplomacy Review", modeled on

the Quadrennial Defense Review, to help create and empower a culture of long-term strategic planning, measurement and success.

Second, we must **revolutionize** public diplomacy by augmenting traditional "one-way" mass communications with an increasingly customized "two-way" dialogue. This means, for example, investing in public diplomacy's future by forming an "Independent Public Diplomacy Training Institute" to help the public sector recruit and **train** a new generation of foreign affairs professionals who can better take the conversation of what America stands for out into the world.

In fact, properly trained government officials who understand the critical role of public diplomacy in foreign policy must be given sufficient latitude to engage directly with the media in their respective regions, develop proactive and grassroots communications programs and react to rapidly changing events.

While it has improved, the State Department must further expand and upgrade its public diplomacy training. Last year, this training included only a two-week training seminar for new ambassadors, with only a small amount of time devoted to public diplomacy. For new Foreign Service officers, for example, only one hour of a seven-week entry-level course was devoted to public diplomacy. Furthermore, Foreign Service officers entering the public diplomacy field itself were not actually required to participate in a three-week public diplomacy tradecraft course.

Another example of revolutionizing our public diplomacy approach involves public opinion **research**—because effective persuasion begins with careful listening. So we must increase both the amount and effectiveness of our public opinion research around the world to improve our ability to listen and engage in dialogue. Specifically, the U.S. Government, through the State Department, spends approximately \$7 million annually on foreign public opinion polling. That kind of investment does not even cover the research costs of many U.S. senatorial, gubernatorial and other campaigns. Moreover, perhaps a dozen foreign nations spend more than \$7 million annually on researching perceptions of their countries inside the U.S. And the U.S. private sector spends \$6 billion annually on overseas public opinion and market research.

Recent White Houses have organized well-funded and highly effective public opinion research operations for their own domestic purposes. Similarly, in the area of global attitudinal research, it is critical that additional moneys be allocated, techniques and methodologies modernized and intra-governmental coordination improved. We must utilize the most cutting-edge qualitative research to shape effective quantitative research. Moreover, this upgrading of research efforts should assist in evaluating various programs' effectiveness so adjustments can be made where necessary. And, very importantly, it should help us find and use innovative methods to support voices of moderation.

A final example of revolutionizing public diplomacy involves dramatically expanding the State Department's multi-language **Internet** websites, streaming audio and video and web-based communications. Given the automatic discounting by listeners and viewers of state-sponsored radio and television, and the higher credibility levels the Internet breeds among an important "early adopter" group, web-based communications must play a significantly more important part in our mix of public diplomacy tactics. Such communications provide relative bang for the buck.

Third, we must explore ways to **privatize** public diplomacy—including creation of a new entity or "Corporation for Public Diplomacy." This new entity should require little governmental involvement. Its purpose: Attract superb private sector talent, techniques and people from U.S. corporations and the research, marketing, campaign management, non-profit and other fields. Moreover, this new entity could attract and apply private sector "best practices" in areas such as public opinion research, cultural and attitudinal analysis, segmentation, data base management, strategic formulation, political campaign management, marketing and branding, technology and tactics, communications and organizational planning, program evaluations and studies on media trends.

We all know innovation and adoption of the most modern methodologies and technologies do not easily happen inside large governmental bureaucracies. Rather, such innovation happens further out in the periphery—out away from centralized and highly regulated entities. Thus, a Corporation for Public Diplomacy could be a constant recruiter of these innovative communications and communicators—seeking the best from

every part of the arts, education, religion, media, science, and, importantly, seeding worthwhile and independent projects.

Furthermore, this new private entity might mobilize independent views and alternative spokespeople such as mullahs, popular figures, American Muslims, Arab-American firefighters and police officers, sports figures, business leaders, scientists, healthcare leaders, writers, academics, entertainers, etc. These sources can communicate effectively American and family values and religious commitment and, in so doing, supplement and reinforce the U.S. Government's public diplomacy initiatives.

Our Task Force concluded, then, that America's image and perception abroad and the function of public diplomacy itself are in a state of crisis—given significant entrenched negative opinions, challenges among even our allies and the diminished level of credibility of government-sponsored communications. Put simply: Our Task Force believes public diplomacy will deliver far more bang for the government buck if there is a much expanded role for the private sector. And we have several reasons for this firm conviction:

First, the U.S. Government has traditionally targeted foreign officials as its audience abroad and must inevitably observe diplomatic protocols in communicating with these counterparts. Often, U.S. diplomats feel quite constrained when it comes to making public statements explaining U.S. policy—diplomats are often expected to clear their speeches, for example, with Washington. Independent messengers can be more agile in their ability to target and engage varied audiences.

Second, private sector participation in public diplomacy adds, to some extent, a “heat shield” that can be useful when tackling controversial issues that might have negative political or diplomatic repercussions.

Third, it is important to communicate America's belief in democratic and open debate—the give and take of a culture that thrives on legitimate critiques and, at its best, admits weaknesses and uses truth as the most powerful form of public diplomacy. Carefully selected private messengers can engage in debates that the U.S. Government might often shrink from for fear of political backlash.

Fourth, the U.S. Government is unlikely to attract a sufficient number of truly creative professionals who can utilize the most cutting-edge media or communications technologies. Furthermore, media or entertainment spokespeople may be more likely to cooperate with private sources, such as NGOs, than with an effort directly funded by the U.S. Government.

We therefore recommend creating an independent, not-for-profit “Corporation for Public Diplomacy” (CPD). Moreover, we believe the experience of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is highly relevant and propose launching a four-month study to create a somewhat similar entity as a focal point for private sector involvement in public diplomacy:

The CPB is not part of a cabinet-level department and is therefore somewhat independent of direct political influence. This structure permits the CPB, as a corporation with tax-exempt status under Section 501C3 of the U.S. tax code, to receive private sector grants, which have been substantial. The CPB has a seven-member board of directors appointed by the President; four directors come from the President’s party, and the other three must be of the opposing party

The CPB has been deeply involved in the establishment or support of such programs as *Sesame Street*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, Bill Moyers’ documentaries and American Playhouse. Many of the most widely acclaimed public television programs would likely not have arisen nor flourished had they been the sole prerogative of the U.S. Government.

In an analogous structure, an organization or foundation such as the Corporation for Public Diplomacy would likewise seek to leverage private sector resources, creativity and flexibility. It could receive private sector grants and, again, attract media and personalities that might be less willing to work directly with U.S. Government agencies. Moreover, its proposed structure takes advantage of the fact that private media often communicate American family values, religious commitments and the merits of democracy more effectively than do government officials. Groups such as the Advertising Council and others should be enlisted to help the CPD.

In projecting America's messages we must be especially mindful of something every good salesman understands—if you do not trust the messenger, you do not trust the message. I believe strongly that we can avoid this problem by using private sector partnerships and new approaches such as a Corporation for Public Diplomacy. The public-private messengers will be especially effective among Muslim and Arab Americans who seek to build bridges and improve cross-cultural relations, but who might sometimes be reluctant to work for the U.S. Government, or who may be dismissed by foreign audiences if they are seen to do so.

Finally, a CPD would be well-positioned to support or provide programming and content for independent, indigenous new media channels—i.e., satellite, Internet, radio and TV networks—or think tanks focusing on important domestic issues within Muslim and Arab countries.

In sum, Mr. Chairman, public diplomacy is in crisis due to several decades of neglect and the changing nature of the challenge of protecting America's national security. Today, therefore, we must invest in both public and private sector initiatives; we must mobilize strong leadership and imaginative thinking and planning. And we must upgrade the role of public diplomacy to serve as a strategic instrument of foreign policy—because reformed and re-energized public diplomacy is as important to national security as political, military and economic power. In the end, reformed and re-energized public diplomacy can save the lives of America's military personnel and innocent civilians here and abroad. And it can help protect and preserve American values and interests in an increasingly dangerous world.