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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND THE BATTLE OF IDEAS: WINNING THE HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE GLOBAL WAR AGAINST TERRORISTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND THE BATTLE OF IDEAS: WINNING THE HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE GLOBAL WAR AGAINST TERRORISTS

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[There were no Documents submitted.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Questions submitted.]

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND THE BATTLE OF IDEAS: WINNING THE HEARTS AND MINDS IN THE GLOBAL WAR AGAINST TERRORISTS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, July 11, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:46 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. SMITH. I think we are going to go ahead and get started, if we could have everybody take their seats, actually. Sorry, we should more formally greet the witnesses. I apologize for that. It is just that we have votes coming up here imminently. So I wanted to try to hopefully get our opening statements in and your opening statements in, get as much as we can in in the short period of time that we have.

Thank you all for joining us. I particularly want to thank Representative Thornberry for his interest in the subject matter and our strategic communications efforts on the war on terror.

And it is something that has been of particular interest to this subcommittee, which basically is the ideological battle that is attached to the military battle. And I think that we really need to focus more on that in our government.

And we cannot possibly win the battle that we are fighting by simply killing every terrorist that we see. This is a battle of ideas as much as it is a military battle.

We have to get to the point where people don't want to follow al Qaida, don't want to sign up for their ideology and commit those violent acts. If it is a game where we are simply trying to always stop them before they get to us, it kind of puts us on a treadmill that is picking up speed constantly. That is not something we can succeed at.

We need to get our broader message out there. And, without question, we have the better message. Al Qaida represents a violent, totalitarian ideology that is simply trying to subjugate people under the guise of religion, which really has very little to do with what they are talking about. It has more to do with control. You know, we have seen what the Taliban did in Afghanistan—not something that people are signing up for.

We, on the other hand, offer a message of freedom and opportunity. I think we have the better message in any culture, be it the West or the Muslim culture or wherever. We have the ability to deliver a message that offers a better way.

As strongly as I feel that, I also feel that, at this point, we are by and large losing a public relations (PR) war to Osama bin Laden in far too many parts of the world, even in some cases with our allies, who have shown reluctance to jump on full-bore with our effort. For one thing, they don't even like the fact that we call it the global war on terror, and I tend to agree with them. I think there would be a better way to phrase this, in terms of how we pull people together. And certainly within the Muslim world, America is not popular. We are not winning the battle there.

So what we want to find out today and look forward to your testimony is, you know, what are we doing to improve that message? What is the message that we are trying to send out?

And of particular interest to me is who is in charge of it. Because there are a lot of different pieces here: The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has a role, the Department of Defense (DOD) has a role, the State Department has a role, various different White House agencies, the Counterterrorism Center. Who is in charge? How are we delineating that message?

Because, to some degree, this is something that all politicians understand: Develop a message and deliver that message. That is what we did to get here—on a much smaller, less dangerous scale, I might add. But it is a basic communications message, saying that we all understand and we want it to work better than it does right now.

It is a major, major commitment of this committee. And I know it is also a major commitment of my ranking member, Mr. Thornberry, who has worked on this extensively.

And with that, I will yield to Mr. Thornberry for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, RANKING MEMBER, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I appreciate your comments. But I agree with everything you said.

One of the reasons I am so interested in this is because I think it is so critical to our country's security. We obviously face a determined, ruthless, adaptable enemy who uses terrorism as a tactic. But we will not defeat that enemy with military power alone. We have to engage in the battle of ideas, and we have to engage successfully.

But the reason I am so motivated about this is because I know of no one who thinks we are doing so successfully, or maybe even competently, at the current time. And there have been study after study, report after report, that talk about how important it is, and yet we seem to be a lumbering bureaucracy, moving to be slightly better. But as you point out, in too many parts of the world, I am afraid, we are losing.

My view is that you have to begin with an understanding of the enemy, a deep understanding of the enemy, and then develop specific approaches to then address that understanding, to delegitimize his view of the world, offer an alternative, and then have effective methods and perseverance enough to actually implement what you are trying to do.

And I think that is what brings us to this hearing.

Mr. Chairman, strategic communications—one of those words that gets slapped around—some people think it means we ought to hire better PR people. Some people say that it is better slogans, more effective commercials on television or radio. I think it is much more and much deeper than that.

I have an article in my written statement from a colonel who used to be with Central Command (CENTCOM), who describes it as synchronizing public diplomacy, public affairs, public relations, outreach, information operations, psychological operations, so that you get the right message to the right audience in order to help shape perceptions.

As you mentioned, that does not mean that it is the job of one department of government—or, in my view, it is even government alone. I think we have to bring in the considerable expertise of the private sector to help do it.

But the point is, we have to do it. We can't fight this battle with bullets alone. And I think we have to do a lot better.

Defense Science Board study in 2004 said that "strategic communications is a vital component of our security. It is in crisis and must be transformed with a strength of purpose that matches our commitment to diplomacy, defense, intelligence, law enforcement and homeland security." That is what motivates me, Mr. Chairman, to try to put more light on it.

I appreciate very much the witnesses and the work they have done in this area. And I am especially looking forward to their suggestions on what we can do in Congress to help give it the same strength of purpose that matches our commitment in those other areas.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thornberry can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

With that, I will turn to our witnesses. We have three this morning: Dr. Amy Zalman, the Honorable Franklin D. Kramer and Dr. Linton Wells.

We will start with Dr. Zalman, who is with SAIC but has written, taught and done considerable research in the area of strategic communications, particularly focused on the Muslim world.

And I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Dr. ZALMAN. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. You can go ahead and get started. I think we can get through. There are a few a minutes before we have to go.

STATEMENT OF DR. AMY ZALMAN, SCIENCE APPLICATIONS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION (SAIC)

Dr. ZALMAN. Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, thank you for the opportunity to present my observations on strategic communications today.

As Bill Natter pointed out in his introduction to the session, my written testimony speaks primarily to the question of strategic communications content.

It has been an American objective to tell our story to the world. There has been less focus to date on what that story really is and how to construct it so that others want to listen and participate in shaping its ending.

The 2007 U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications lays out a number of ways in which American voices are about to be amplified throughout the world. But what are these voices going to say that makes people want to keep listening? Is it enough to recite lists of American good works, no matter how true? Is more necessarily better?

Potentially, but not inevitably. Indeed, new efforts are as reasonably doomed to failure as some of those of the past five years if, in my view, the U.S. does not take seriously the need to reaffirm its understanding of the simple: what it means to tell a story.

What is a story? A story is a structured way of telling events and of making sense of what happens to us. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. Individuals tell stories; so do collectivities.

When I think of stories, I think, of something that we tell. But at the collective level, stories also tell us. They tell us who we are, what we believe and idealize, who is one of us, who is an outsider, how to behave and how not to behave. This is their strategic function.

We are not only shaped by the stories we inherit, we also contribute to them: what we tell our children, how we celebrate, what we valorize, what we think of as right and wrong, and how we behave. Through these activities, we participate in story-telling.

Community stories do not so much have endings as they do proposed futures. This, I think, is where strategic communications takes place: at that point between present and future.

Communications that are designed to influence can be inserted into that moment, so that we shift one future and propose an alternative. But we insert into a story that is ongoing, not into a vacuum and not into an entirely new place.

From this, a few thoughts: One, strategic communications does not take place in a vacuum. Everyone already has a story. When people turn away from American messaging efforts, it may not always be a sign of hostility, but rather, it is a sign that they don't need someone else's story, they already have their own.

I think we may better understand past failures and future possibilities if we simply grasp that there are already other stories in existence.

Two, a story must be credible. This has, of course, been said ad infinitum in the past five years. But I would like to explain what I think "credibility" means when we think of communications in terms of stories.

In this case, "credibility" does not mean either scientific veracity nor necessarily verifiable authority. What it means is the ability to identify with a story and, in fact, with characters in a story, to look up and go, "Wow, I see something that resembles someone like me doing things that I think would be good and right to do."

What this means for strategic communications is it has to be built out of ingredients and values that people already have. They cannot come from outside. They must come from inside an existing community, for people to be spoken to.

And three, listening remains the most important task before the United States. The opportunity to gain from listening to others has not yet been as well-exploited as it could be.

Here is one way we may use listening. Take our best ideals, find out, listen for, go and actively unearth what those terms already mean to others. What is your idea of progress? Where in your history are there events or processes that you would cast as democratic? What is your vision of your future? What is the meaning of the best universal ideals in your idiom?

I am hopeful that knowing these and having some facility with using them in the idioms of others is the beginning of being able to communicate truly well.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Zalman can be found in the Appendix on page 32.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kramer, I think we will go ahead and give you a chance to get your testimony in, as well, before we have to go vote. So I will keep my introduction of you short, so that you can speak. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANKLIN D. KRAMER, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Mr. KRAMER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. Thanks for the opportunity to be here.

I won't belabor the point that each of you have made, that, although we are an information superpower, we are not winning the war of ideas. I think that is the basis for this hearing.

And I won't belabor the point, though I believe it deeply, that we have a very good, really an excellent, story to tell. So the question is, why aren't we winning?

And we are not winning despite the fact—and I think the committee has some hearings planned—that the United States government does communicate. So what is the problem?

Well, one thing is it is a complex world out there. There are many other messages. There are multiple cultures; there are multiple audiences. Actions, especially violent actions, speak louder than words. And it is a difficult problem to find the right messengers and the right mechanisms to get our story across.

More specifically, a lot of what we do in the U.S. is what I would call mass messaging. And mass messages are good, if the audience is ready to listen, if they are already tuned into the channel. But it is not for the people who haven't tuned in yet, not for the unconverted.

So, for example, if you have a Presidential address on the Middle East, naturally it goes to the American people. But in Jakarta or Islamabad, it is heard differently. It is in the wrong language. It is covered differently. The people come with different preconceptions.

The U.S. also, because we have multiple interests, has multiple messages, so it is hard for us to focus. We are the superpower. We are always going to have multiple messages. So we have to deal with that problem, because with multiple messages comes lack of clarity, overlapping. So we have to think about differentiation, audience segmentation, ways to get our point to the right people.

And those right people, if you will, the target audience—although I am not sure that is precisely right, because the audience participates; it is a two-way street—they do live in their own context. They already have multiple messages coming in to them. And so, some of those people really don't want more information. Some will only take information that is congenial to their attitudes already.

And there are a lot of, if you will, anti-U.S. channels out there already. There is a very recent Radio Free Europe study which points out that both the Sunni insurgency in Iraq and al Qaida make a great deal of use of communications. They do so through Web sites. And those are amplified by Arab media.

And the real point that they made—and this is a quote—is that there is a real demand for this in the Arab world. So people are listening for those anti-U.S. messages, and we have to recognize that and overcome that.

Even for those who want to listen when we put out a message, they may hear it differently than we intend it to be heard. It is because, again, they come with their own culture, their own attitude, their own preconceptions. And so, exposure, if you will, is not enough all by itself.

If you put that in the U.S. context, a Rush Limbaugh listener is not going to be much persuaded by Michael Moore and vice versa. So it is not enough just to increase the flow of information. You have to think about how to make the information effective.

Well, you also have to recognize that our actions have consequences. Many people have said—it is a truism—actions speak louder than words. So our policies, their impact, make a big difference. And you have to cast the words in light of the actual policies.

And we have to recognize that opposition entities like al Qaida will take those policies and use them for their own purposes. The al Qaida narrative, which, briefly, is that the West is attacking the Muslim world, they draw heavily on what is going on in Iraq to support their narrative. It is not true, but it is how they use the activity.

So what do we do? Well, I have eight suggestions for the committee.

The first is I think we need a substantially greater focus on other cultures and other societies. We need to be able to more clearly differentiate our audiences. We need to figure out who are, if you will, the influencers in those societies.

In the book, "The Tipping Point," Malcolm Gladwell talked about what he called mavens who validate messages, connectors who link messages, the link persons, and salesmen who sell messages. And whether or not that is the exact right set of categories, there are influential people in society, and we need to look to them and talk to them and get them to talk in their own society.

We also need to think about how to make a message effective. For example, do you focus on individual values, or do you focus on group values? It is different in different societies.

What is the role of religion in messaging? If you look at a Sunni insurgency message, it is wrapped in religious metaphors. What should we do? We need to at least think about that.

As implied by that, my second point is we need more experts—more experts focused on culture, more experts focused on geography—who are working in the communications world. We need to be able to build what I would call a societal map for communications.

And to those experts, we need other disciplines: marketing, psychology and expertise in the use of T.V. and Internet and radio. Those are multiple disciplines. They are not taught in basic training. They aren't taught in advanced training. And they are not taught in foreign service school. So we need to think about how to bring those kind of people in.

I would not suggest we don't have any; that would be a mistake. But we don't have enough. And we need to expand that.

We also need to think about the fact that multiple theaters require multiple message campaigns. Indonesia, which is part of the Muslim world, is not the same as Pakistan, which is part of the Muslim world; is not the same as Egypt, which is part of the Muslim world. We need to think differently about how to get our messages across in different places. We need a regional and focused kind of approach.

As is implied by all that, we need more resources. I would strongly suggest that we look hard at the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) and their various T.V. and radio stations, increase there; the State Department's public diplomacy budget. We need to do a lot more with respect to the Internet, Web. The Government Accountability Office has said that our embassies are very poor at sending out messages. We need to increase their capacity. We need more regional efforts——

Mr. SMITH. I apologize, sir. Unfortunately, we have to go vote. We are down to a couple of minutes here. So I will stop you on your fourth point, and we will have four more when we come back.

It is going to be about 45 minutes before we come back, for which I apologize. But——

Mr. KRAMER. We know where the cafeteria is. [Laughter.]

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

Mr. Thornberry and I, certainly I think we will—other members of the committee who are probably over there voting now will be back. And we look forward to hearing the rest of your testimony, and yours as well, and asking questions.

So we will be back as soon as we can.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. Well, thank you for your patience. We will go ahead and get started again. I am pretty sure that Mr. Thornberry is coming back in just a second. And, you know, I mentioned it to a few other members. See if we get a few other folks here.

But, Mr. Kramer, I believe you were in the middle of——

Mr. KRAMER. I was working my way through my points, as it were. I think I had made four, so let me just make four more and get off the podium here.

The fifth point I would make is that we need to take a long-term as well as a short-term view. Especially in the DOD, there is a tendency to be short-term. And it is understandable, because you have to deal with the consequences of violent actions. But what we are really talking about is changing attitudes, and attitudes change over time.

And just, again, to use an example, think of the difference in attitudes toward cigarette smoking in the U.S. It took 30 years. It takes time. And we need to have information activities that are long-term.

The department, the DOD, for example, runs something called the Southeast European Times. It is in nine languages. It is an information site. Or it runs another one called Magharebia. It is in three languages. All those are are news sites and information and analysis. They are not going to solve the problem today. But they are that background kind of information that gives you a possibility.

The sixth point I will make is that, although it is true and I certainly subscribe to the fact that facts speak louder than words, it is possible to explain facts. And I think we really need to increase both the training and the resources for our combat forces to help them in this arena.

It is good, and the committee's work with Special Operations Command (SOCOM), which runs psychological operations. It is good what strategic communications (STRATCOM) does. But when you are in counterinsurgency, you are in stability operations, it is really the folks on the ground who are doing it. So that is your brigade, your battalion, your company, your platoons.

And they need, of course, to get to the center of gravity. The center of gravity is the people. That means they need to be able to communicate. And they really don't have sufficient—I wouldn't say none at all, but they don't have sufficient training. They don't have sufficient resources. They don't have sufficient capacities when they go in. So I think that is awfully important.

The seventh point I would make is that we really need to use much more greater use of a partnership approach with allies and partners. If you are a business, you simply would not go into another country without a local advisor or a local partner or a joint venture or something like that. You would know you would be lost.

And we need to have that, what I would call, fingertip feel for the country. And you get that when you have deep, local knowledge. Now, Americans can get that of countries, but you have to live there, work with them and the like.

It is not a Washington approach; it is a in-country approach. And we actually do it on the military side. And we even do it on the diplomatic side. We need to do it on the communications side.

And the last point I would make is that, although I think this hearing and others I know the committee is holding is enormously valuable, it would be terrific if the Congress as a whole could take, what I would call, a comprehensive look at strategic communications.

I mean, you have the jurisdictional set of issues. But, you know, by and large, you get along well with one another. And so you have got what the department is doing. You mentioned in your opening statement what State is doing and the BBGs. Putting that all together and figuring out whether we have enough real resources in the program.

You know, as a benchmark, if you are a beer company in the U.S., you would probably spend no less than $100 million a year selling your beer. You know, a car company, the same way. So if you put that together, you know, with the number of beer companies, the number of car companies, you are talking real money.

If you look at the recruiting budget we have for the DOD—I think this is right—it is about $4 billion a year. Shouldn't we be thinking about putting real money and resources into strategic communications?

And with that, let me close. And I appreciate the opportunity to testify, and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kramer can be found in the Appendix on page 40.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Dr. Wells, who is the Force Transformation Chair and Distinguished Research Professor at the National Defense University.

Dr. Wells.

STATEMENT OF DR. LINTON WELLS II, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

Dr. WELLS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Congressman Thornberry. I appreciate the chance to be here at this really important topic. And I want to emphasize I am here in an individual capacity.

Certainly, effective communications, strategic communications would be essential to winning the "Long War" just as they were in the Cold War. And it has been pointed out, in this area, facts, which include actions, speak much louder than words.

I think there are four areas where we ought to focus on doing a better job. And one is communicating the nation's commitment to its core values. Second is reaching out to those who share our ideals. Third is supporting those who struggle for freedom, and then countering those who espouse hate and oppression.

An objective of strategic communication, in fact, the ultimate measure of success, is the way it forced the advancement of U.S. policies. And this is achieved by influencing foreign audiences to take action that either support U.S. interests or to cease action that damage them. And the point here is that the success of strategic communication alone does rest with the government actions by themselves.

There is no doubt this is very hard to achieve. You have to synchronize a whole series of messages. And Mr. Kramer just talked about messages and delivery mechanisms have to be aligned within the government. You have to link actions across organization, nations and cultural lines. You have to understand the impact on foreign audiences.

And this is compounded by the rapidly changing information environment that relatively few people actually have experience in working with.

On the other hand, the Nation does have a number of enduring advantages which ought to stand us in good stead in the long-term competition, which is what we have to focus on.

First of all, it is the nation's openness; the opportunity it is perceived, I think, mostly in the world as providing; and importantly, the ability to learn from our mistakes. And so, a core issue, as Dr. Zalman has mentioned, is how to describe these qualities in ways that are important to people around the world and in ways that matter in their lives.

The U.S. Government has done a number of things working to improve its strategic communication performance. And one I would commend to you is, as soon as the minutes come out, there is actually, as we speak, a two-day strategic communication symposium going on at National Defense University.

It was kicked off this morning by Newt Gingrich. Admiral Giambastiani spoke, Karen Hughes spoke, Deputy Secretary England is speaking tomorrow. And it is a serious effort of looking at the way we address it and reflects, I think, the increasing importance that people are putting on this.

As was cited at the end of May, the National Security Council issued the National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications within DOD last September. Deputy Secretary signed out a roadmap for the execution of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). And in the last two months, actually, there has been a lot of progress on implementing and executing that roadmap.

That said, we still have a long way to go, and one of the key areas is definitional. The Defense Department has a definition of strategic comms, but it is not fully accepted across the interagency. So I would submit, until we agree on the definition of what we are doing, we are not necessarily going to align with the efforts.

On the other hand, there does seem to be agreement that this is—Congressman Thornberry said that strategic communication actually is a process. And it is a process that links together a whole batch of other things, from public affairs to public diplomacy. Some parts of information operations, very importantly in the third world, visual information, and finds that target, and makes it available to foreign audiences.

The issues are broader than just definitional. We need to integrate and synchronize our actions, while promoting cultural and organizational change across at least DOD. And the point is these are transformational changes; this is not a modest bureaucratic change. And it needs to be treated with that level of seriousness.

In addition, though, as you look at these U.S. Government things, this is a messy business. The information environment is very complicated. And a lot of this is going to happen from the bottom up, not from top-down, coordinated actions.

And so, again, as we pointed out, the glut of information in this new environment means that an information source has to be perceived by the audience as credible and trustworthy in order to cap-

ture their attention. We need to understand how to make our information competitive in that environment.

And I think it is critical that decision-makers understand the impact of these sorts of changes.

One related area where the Defense Department is starting to make progress is in the sharing of unclassified information outside the boundaries of the defense enterprise with several military partners who may or may not have security clearances. We have typically focused at sharing classified information within the department. We need to reach out, communicate, collaborate, translate, engage with these partners.

This is not just a governmental effort. Strategic communications is much broader than that. There are many, many, many more messages delivered around the world about our nation every year through advertising, entertainment, through government channels.

Unfortunately, those messages are not always positive. We need to understand how to deal with them. On the other hand, there have been effective advertising campaigns. There are people who know how to do this. We need to be able to tap into them.

Ultimately, it is important that people perceive that U.S. actions are advancing their interest, not just our own. And the facts have to be coherent with words and also need to provide hope to the population in their terms for things like jobs.

So finally, there are no simple ways ahead. We have to match means to ends with just a few thoughts.

First of all, we have to define the values, the visions, the metrics, the strategy and the programs clearly and assess the probability of success honestly.

Second, these processes need to be made more agile, decentralized and local. Again, a single integrated, top-down process will not work.

We have to do a better job at understanding the intended audience, their culture, their language, their history.

We have to be realistic about the cause of anti-Americanism and realistic about our ability to change this in the near term.

We have to leverage new technologies in ways that allow much greater interaction, not just transmission but interaction, with audiences.

We have to recognize that total control is not possible. I heard a very good description this morning that we need to train our people and trust them, rather than trying to manage and supervise them continuously.

But in this context, then, people need to be allowed to make mistakes. And if I were to ask for one area from the Congress, is to allow our people the ability to make those mistakes without being necessarily hung out to dry when they make them.

We have to work to align the U.S. with the public in the areas we seek to reach. Dr. Zalman, I think, made this point very well. How do we fit into their story and their idiom?

And finally is the question, as Mr. Kramer said, of resources, especially, I think, in priority for exchange programs. As Under Secretary Hughes will point out, exchange programs are life-long commitments. We have actually begun summer camps for 8- to 14-

year-olds recently in order to begin that bonding as soon as possible.

Language training, cultural awareness, for DOD the unclassified engagement, and something else to remove the obstacles to allow our processes to be more nimble.

Just a simple example: The DOD benefited enormously last year from the conference language in the authorization bill that allowed information and communications technologies to be included as part of rudimentary construction and repair when the department is doing humanitarian civic assistance.

I mean, amazingly, it had been interpreted by a number of judge advocates general that you could rebuild a hospital destroyed by an earthquake but could not put any wiring in that could connect that hospital to the Internet to become a teaching hospital or something.

The committee's language clarified that. And the removal of that impediment has been a big help to us.

In terms of resources, what I am told, last year the funding for public diplomacy was about $800,000 a year, with another $700,000 for exchange programs.

Two-point-nine million dollars was available for public opinion research, which, in the standards of the U.S. political campaign, even is small. So I echo Mr. Kramer's point. If you look at our advertising budgets, certainly we need to be able to be serious about this.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Wells can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Several questions. There is the first question in terms of the structure and how we are getting this message out.

Imagine, for the moment, that in this meeting we came up with some great idea for how we wanted to, you know, do strategic communications, either the message or how we were delivering it. Who would you go see in the Federal Government? Who would be the person or the agency or the area that is overseeing this, in your view, as you have observed our efforts?

Dr. WELLS. Well, clearly, I think the responsibility in the government is assigned to Under Secretary Karen Hughes in several hats. One is as the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. But she also shares this policy coordinating committee (PCC) on the National Security Council (NSC) of Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication.

DOD has stood up something called the Strategic Communication Integration Group, or SCIG. And this came out of the roadmap from the Quadrennial Defense Review. There is an executive committee of that made up of people from public affairs, from the joint staff, from Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. And several of those are members of this interagency PCC.

Mr. SMITH. And does Karen Hughes's shop sort of oversee that, as well? Or is that separate?

Dr. WELLS. The DOD SCIG reports to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, but clearly through the PCC, which is the interagency mechanism that is coordinated with Karen Hughes.

Mr. SMITH. Great. And how would you evaluate, at this point, the performance? How are they doing? What could they be doing better?

Dr. WELLS. So I think—let me see. I think there is progress being made, and there is particularly progress in the last of couple of months, and it is a little bit too early to say.

If you look at our performance since 9/11 candidly, sir, I would say it has been very poor. If you look at the current vector, there are at least some hopeful signs.

Again, this morning at this symposium, Under Secretary Hughes was talking about three main thrusts, and one was the exchange programs. Another was on communicating better, finding the mechanisms, how you get our people out to talk on Al Jazeera in Arabic to Arabic languages, how you get the embassies more engaged from the, you know, region. And then what they call the diplomacy of deeds, which is a focus on the things we are doing with public health and the comfort deployment, Central America——

Mr. SMITH. Disaster relief——

Dr. WELLS. Disaster relief. The Pakistan earthquake was a success, and the tsunami was a success. Again, Defense is looking at making influence operations sort of a major operational line of warfare, along with maneuver and intelligence and logistics. And if you get to that, then you are assigning it a priority that, you know, it has not previously had.

So I think the attention and the vectors are right. It remains to be seen whether we can execute along these vectors.

Mr. KRAMER. Could I jump in on that?

Mr. SMITH. Certainly.

Mr. KRAMER. You know, they just put out the National Strategy for Public Diplomacy. You have it because Bill was the one who actually sent it to us. If you look at it, it is hard to quarrel with the document, but it is a nascent document.

Mr. SMITH. Right.

Mr. KRAMER. And the whole point here—and Dr. Wells made this point—is we haven't done well up to now. We are still in the organizational stage. And actually getting the messages out is very, very difficult.

I go back to the point that the Government Accountability Office made about the posts. I mean, they are the people out on the front line. And if you look at what comes out of the embassies themselves, it is pretty poor, not because they are unintelligent people, not because they don't care, but they don't have the training, they don't have the resources, and they have other day jobs.

So we really have a long way to go. So I would say, you know, heart is in the right place, but the execution is pretty limited.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

I have more questions, but I will yield to Mr. Thornberry for his questions.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Dr. Zalman, would you answer the question that we have been discussing: How well are we doing now?

Dr. ZALMAN. Yes. Well, I am encouraged by this event. It seems to me that from the 2004 strategic communications document that came out to now, there is a leap in sophistication and in recogni-

tion of the thing that I call "story" but other people talk about in other ways.

So that two or three years ago, the entire Middle East did look like a big, kind of, one geographic and one, kind of, conceptual unit to people looking out. And now, on a regular basis, it is recognized that people speak different languages, that they need to be addressed differently, and that, as a matter of fact, they need to be addressed in different ways.

And I suppose that part of that reflects the experience that people have now had on the ground and speaks to the need that you just spoke to, to have processes that come from the bottom up.

But clearly, American opinion, the opinion of the world of the United States, remains generally in decline.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Part of my frustration is we are six years after 9/11 and we are still grappling with beginning steps to wage the kind of struggle that we are in—on other than the military, which I don't mean to diminish.

And part of the difficulty is, as you all have described, it is a cumbersome process that goes across government agencies. And so, you may have an NSC coordinating committee, but that is not exactly the best way to implement communications at a time when so much of it is over the Internet and happens in a matter of seconds.

And I think it was you, Dr. Wells, that talked about the importance of training our people and trusting them to be more nimble. Because if you have to get a press release approved through the bureaucratic process, you are way behind already in a time when things happen so quickly.

Some people have suggested that, in order to kickstart this issue, that a new organization needs to be created. Now, that is a typical, you know, suggestion that comes: When in doubt, rearrange the boxes. But let us see if any of you all have any opinions about that.

And I guess the argument would be United States Information Agency (USIA) has been, you know, bandied about. Obviously, there is not the resources, not the emphasis on training there needs to be for people in our embassies or others.

So a new organization that can focus better on strategic communication might not be as threatening as having the Department of Defense be in charge of strategic communications—some other agency out there.

Anybody have an opinion about that?

Mr. KRAMER. I will take a shot at it, yes.

First of all, I think it is fair to say that the Office of Public Diplomacy itself is, you know, something of a new organization, Karen Hughes's office. And it got started with great difficulty. As you recall, there was a prior Under Secretary who had a lot of problems.

I think there are a lot of different ways to play it. But I would say that, wherever you put it, you have to have a lot more people and a lot more resources.

And one easy way to do it sometimes is to create a, you know, kind of a joint task force. The NCTC, National Counterterrorism Center, is an example of a new organization that was created by melding some capacities from old ones, but they put them in a sep-

arate place, so they can really focus and so that they would have the responsibility.

And I would think that there is some argument, which is one of the reasons why I encourage the committee to really look at this comprehensively, to create, if you will, an NCTC-like organization to focus on influence.

I don't think the Department of Defense can, in any way, shape or form, be in charge of strategic communications, but it will necessarily be involved in that. And so will the State Department, and so will the posts.

So when you create a new organization, you have to recognize that you are still going to have people out in the field who have great involvement. And I guess, you know, that is the argument, about how do you put this all together.

As Dr. Wells said, you have a lot of players here. If you try to do it from a top-down point of view only, then it is going to just kluge up the system. You will get clogged arteries. So you really do have to trust people below you.

But you could have some greater nimbleness, I think, and some greater focus, including by this body, you know, by the Congress, for resources if you had a central point.

Dr. WELLS. One of the points that Under Secretary Hughes made this morning—because this was asked of her. And she said, "Look, nothing is going to happen in the remainder of this Administration. So the question is, what to do next?"

But an advantage that her structure has is that it is part of the policy planning process at State, whereas at least there was a perception that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was a distinct entity that was communicating a message, but none the—and something that has been discussed a lot is that strategic communication needs to be part of the overall campaign plan from the beginning of the policy planning, not just reacting to events as something goes on.

And so there is an argument, at least, that whatever entity you would want to set up, whether it is independent, ought to have this kind of link back into the planning process.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Let me touch on another area. The Defense Science Board study that looked at this recommended creation of an Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) or some entity that would facilitate private-sector expertise being used. I mean, you think about the resources in this country that are available for people who want to figure out a message, tell a story and communicate that story. It is unbelievable.

Part of what got me into this is a person who fits that description ended up volunteering his efforts in other countries. And he would like to make a greater contribution. He doesn't want to be a GS–11, but he is looking for a way to contribute.

Talk to me a little about your view as to how we can tap into this expertise that exists in the United States in the national interest, but in a coordinated way—not everybody doing their own.

Dr. ZALMAN. I have a small comment to make about this, because I actually worked in a very direct way a couple of years ago on a private-sector effort that was intended to produce materials for dissemination in the Middle East. And one of the problems was that,

despite very good intentions by all involved, it ended up being very difficult to have them informed by necessary cultural expertise.

So, very sophisticated and good materials produced by people who knew what they were doing were created. But there was a really complicated disconnect between people who understood the place and the region into which they were supposed to be put and the creators.

And clearly, there are solutions to this, but I think that they can't be spontaneous ones, or they should be considered in advance of these sorts of projects.

Mr. KRAMER. You know, whether it is an FFRDC or not, I mean, I couldn't agree more with that point. It really is an interdisciplinary requirement.

I mean, you have got the message-makers, if you will, the marketeers. And I am not sure who you were speaking about, but we certainly have fabulous marketers in the U.S. And they are very sophisticated, take advantage of psychological studies and the like. But they know the culture, so they don't even have to think about that. Then you have people who know the culture, and we have people who, well, do know the culture, but they are not the marketers.

And then there actually is an expertise on the use of the medium: T.V. or Internet or radio. And they are all different. So if you are a radio person and not a T.V. person and you are not an Internet—I mean, you can be, but they are different. So I think you really need to have all three put together.

Now, whether you use an FFRDC or not, open question. But I would make the point that Dr. Wells made before, that you really also do need to connect into the policy people, because if it is not connected to the policy, you are just lost out there.

I mean, one of the difficulties that contractors always have if they have a, I am going to call, the statement of work. And, you know, they are in good faith. And they work to the statement of work. But in the meantime, the policy is changing, things are happening and the like. And it is hard for them to be as flexible.

So having the capacity to be inside the government while you are trying to have this agility is, I think, enormously important. FFRDCs have that, to some extent.

Dr. WELLS. I would think that one would perhaps be better focusing on the commercial world rather than the entertainment world. And I say this only because—and I am speaking with absolutely no personal expertise in the area. But there have been a number of very successful campaigns for U.S. products that have been sold in the third world or in foreign markets. But there have also been a lot of very successful television shows and cable whatever which are wildly popular but convey the U.S. in not necessarily the view we would like to see the U.S. conveyed in.

And so, at least when you have the economic incentive to wind up with the product being sold and the intent that you are trying to deliver, there is that feedback mechanism that may not be the case in a purely entertainment environment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Dr. Zalman, I think you make a very good point about narrative, and particularly in the Muslim world, the

narrative that stretches back centuries, which we are not used to thinking in those terms.

I am interested to know, in your interactions, have you found places in the U.S. Government you think that have a good understanding that there is a narrative stretching back hundreds of years, and that we have to take that into account in what we try to do?

Dr. ZALMAN. I want to understand your question. Do you mean, are there examples in our own——

Mr. THORNBERRY. What I am really trying to understand is to what extent—my view is that there are pockets of deep understanding in the government but that it is not very widespread and that often this understanding of a long historical narrative, which plays a much greater role in other cultures than it does in our own, that understanding does not translate always into policy decisions or into communications.

And I am just curious as to your experience, what you have found in dealing with government entities, positive and negative.

Dr. ZALMAN. Instead of addressing length of historical experience, I might use the concept of stakeholder. Who understands the concept of what it means to actually be engaged as a stakeholder?

And I would say, to that end, I would have to think a little bit more about where there are institutional pockets, because I think that they exist. And I would like to get back to you on that. But in terms of individual, I see them everywhere.

And I will use myself as an example. I am a stakeholder in an old American story that goes back to the 17th century. I think of my past as starting at Plymouth Rock. That is not a reflection of the truth of my family, which arrived much more recently. But I engage and am a stakeholder in perpetuating this history.

And I think it is very possible to easily make people working in the government and these institutions simply self-conscious holders of their own experience, and that that is transferable, that that is a kind of portable framing.

And it can be said in a more sophisticated way than I just did, if necessary.

Does that answer the question?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes. I think it is just a challenge for us, because there are some differences in culture. And, as you said earlier, you can't look at everybody who speaks Arabic as one monolithic thing, or all the Muslim world as one monolithic thing, and all we need is a glitzy commercial to go out there and say how great we are, and it is going to translate into any degree of effectiveness.

Dr. ZALMAN. Right.

Mr. SMITH. Could——

Dr. ZALMAN. But you——

Mr. SMITH. Go ahead.

Dr. ZALMAN. But you can go out and go, why is this contemporary community—whether it is a national community or a segment of a national community—why are they, say, stakeholders or engaged in a certain historical narrative of themselves? And then you can speak to that.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. I want to follow up and ask a little bit about exactly what the attitudes are about America out there.

And we all have our answers for it. I mean, there is widespread agreement that, particularly in the Islamic world but even more broadly, opinions about America are worse now than they were pre–9/11 and certainly fading in the last, you know, 20 or 30 years. And it has been a rather precipitous drop.

An example I think I have used before this committee before is I remember reading Thomas Friedman, "From Beirut to Jerusalem," talking about when the Marines showed up in Beirut. And I read this book post–9/11 and was just staggered by the fact that when the Marines showed up in Beirut, the reaction was very positive in Lebanon amongst the Muslims as well as the Christians. There was the feeling that if America is there, things must be getting better. And this is 1983. Hard for me to imagine too many places, you know, certainly in the Islamic world, where some Marines could show up at this point and have that same reaction.

And certainly, you know, day after 9/11, there was a certain amount of sympathy for us out there that we seem to have lost in the last five or six years. And I think, you know, certainly I have my answers for how that came about. But it is three people who track this stuff.

And, I mean, this is a starting point. If we are going to change these attitudes, what are the attitudes? How did they come about?

And I understand that, oh, it is probably different. There is a full history in Pakistan. I just got back from a trip there. And I have a much better understanding about their attitude toward us that go back to stuff that happened in the 1960's and elsewhere. It varies from country to country. I get that.

But in the broad category, or if you want to take it down to a specific, you know, why are we having such trouble winning this PR war? What are we doing? What are the reactions? What are the feelings that people have toward us? How can you sum up the reasons for the anti-Americanism that we are talking about?

Dr. WELLS. You know, there are two broad arguments. And I know you know this. They come in the category of "they hate us for what we are" and "they hate us for what we do."

In the "hate us for what we are," I think that is limited to a very, very small group of what I would call militant radical, you know, al Qaida types. They hate us—and I don't even know they "hate" us is the right word—but not with us for what we do goes a lot more to policies and a view that our policies are not advancing their interests.

And there are certain hot-button issues in that world which, whether we choose to believe it or not, do seem to make an issue. One, obviously, is the Middle East peace process, which has stalled for a long time now. Another was not so much necessarily the invasion of Iraq, but the fact that it has gone very poorly. So the consequences are difficult.

But, you see, when we go into different parts of that world—you have been to Pakistan. You know the relief effort got widespread approbation. The relief effort with respect to the tsunami got widespread approbation. There are certainly places where we are able to work very capably.

So I think that, and in my opinion—and I defer to my colleagues here at the table if they disagree—I do think that our broad message, which we all talked about—you know, democracy, freedom, human rights, social openness, economic opportunity—really still resonates broadly in their world, but they are not sure that we mean it.

And I think the last thing I would say is I think we have to do a lot more listening. I think that was mentioned by each of the other speakers. If you want to understand the Middle East, it is good to drink a lot of tea. You know, it is a metaphor, of course. But it is good to sit and talk and listen. And they have a lot to say.

Mr. SMITH. And one specific aspect of that, you mentioned that, I think the perception is that America impacts the rest of the world. You know, we just do because of our size and scope in a variety of different ways. And the perception is largely that we are impacting it in a way that is negative to the rest of the world.

And one of the concerns that I have had—you know, obviously within our foreign policy, within our military policy, we are supposed to pursue our own interests. This is a point that Mr. Bolton, amongst others, have made about the process of the United Nations (UN) and other international institutions. But in so doing, if that is our message, and we are more invested in winning over the rest of the world and most other countries—if that is our message that basically we are out there trying to pursue our own interests, we fundamentally undermine ourselves.

There has to be some piece of that message that says we want to do good for you as well. And I think we have really lost that; because I think post–9/11 there was that attitude of we have been wronged. Therefore whatever we do is justified. And I think that has sort of accelerated some of the trends out there of people feeling like that U.S. is not particularly interested in what is in the best interests of Pakistan or Iraq or any other country out there.

And, you know, if we are serious about winning the hearts and minds, we have to sometimes put our, you know, short-term interests—one of you mentioned short-term versus long-term—put our short-term interests on the back burner and desire to pursue that long-term interest of how we get the rest of the world to view us in a more positive way.

Dr. Wells.

Dr. WELLS. I think a couple things. First of all, the words are important. And I was looking about a year ago to co-author an article with a Jordanian businessman on the use of information communications technologies for promoting opportunities in the Arab world for employment. And in the course of this, democracy came up.

And he basically came back very quickly and said, "Please let us not use that term in this article, because it has a connotation in the Arab world that is not necessarily advantageous to the image that America wants to promote. If you want to say participatory government to enhance people's opportunities or things like that, that would be terrific. But the phrase democracy in and of itself has a cache associated with it."

And the second piece is historically, anytime we have a dramatic imbalance of power, whether it is Britain's role as a balancer of

continental powers, over there is an inherent tendency of the others to form coalitions to restore that balance. And so, whatever our message, all that does is make our environment more complicated and more difficult to restore the image. I think that is just a natural consequence of international relations we need to take into account.

And the third, as somebody pointed out at the symposium this morning, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union in many respects was almost an ideal enemy. One could point to the KGB. One could point to this and say well, them versus us. You know, clearly this is the way most people would want to go. We don't have that clear-cut opponent now. Again, it is a much more difficult environment for us to make the case.

So I think irrespective of what we do versus what we are, there is an environment there that complicates our ability to get our positive message across.

Mr. SMITH. And, Dr. Zalman, I want to ask you one additional question. In your prepared remarks, you talked about not trying to, sort of, create our own narrative to counter existing narratives in the places we are trying to persuade, but sort of feed into the narrative, which I think makes a great deal of sense; because you are then, you know, feeding into cultural understandings that are already there, instead of—I mean, there is a limit to what marketing can do. You can't come in and, you know—you really can't sell iceboxes to Eskimos, cliche notwithstanding. So I think that is a good idea.

Can you expand upon that particular idea, an example of how we could do that to better promote ourselves?

Dr. ZALMAN. Sure. I am going to borrow one from the paper that I provided you before.

A couple of years ago, there was a very big flap over an article that showed up in *Newsweek* and found its way to Pakistan about a Koran having been thrown into a toilet at Guantanamo Bay. This led subsequently, or was structured as we narrated it, to have led to very big demonstrations across the Islamic world.

Mr. SMITH. Turns out I don't think it actually happened, by the way. But it was just a side note.

Dr. ZALMAN. It actually was explained to me by one of the—anyway——

Mr. SMITH. Correct. Yes.

Dr. ZALMAN. That is not exactly what happened.

Mr. SMITH. Right.

Dr. ZALMAN. But it actually—it doesn't matter.

Mr. SMITH. It doesn't matter, no. I agree with you on that point. But——

Dr. ZALMAN. So the official response to this was two-fold. One was the United States respects Islam. We wouldn't do—we respect other religions. And the other one, hopefully was so negligent, but that is the reason why I can't remember it right now. But there was not a very big response.

But if you looked and examined, as I had the opportunity to do then, to where this started in Afghanistan, there were actually a number of local responses. For example, a local sheikh who said, wow, this is in Afghan. We don't behave this way. We don't protest

in this way. There is foreign provocation here. They were responding to a local set of circumstances between Afghanistan and Pakistan. There was an official response from Hamid Karzai, who said wow, look at this incipient democracy. This is so great. We have protests now.

There was a response among the population to other events, Abu Ghraib, et cetera. And they weren't really responding to something that was Islamic per se but to a story about human rights on a universal human rights and a series of events that had led up to that.

I think that there were ways probably, if those stories had been available and had been followed at that time, that more acute and precise responses coming from the State Department and perhaps elsewhere could have been made that would get at what was actually being said and would hook into some of the ways in which local populations were themselves already addressing the situation.

Mr. SMITH. Instead of trying to go——

Dr. ZALMAN. Yes.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. No, this is wrong——

Dr. ZALMAN. Right.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. "America would never do such a thing." You could sort of feed into it and find narratives that fit with the need to narrative. That is a great example.

And then one final question in terms of policy. And I am trying to get an idea for, you know, getting outside the messaging for the moment. And, again, policy-wise if there were two or three things that we could change, from a policy perspective, that would then help us deliver the message, because I am mindful of the fact that—I have a great example from my brief career in the legal field. Looking at a case one time with an attorney who warned me before we started that we had some bad facts—which, I love that. "It is not that we are going to lose. It is not that we are wrong. We just got some bad facts. We got to work on those."

Well, we have some bad facts at the moment, you know, in terms of the U.S. effort, particularly in the Islamic world. You know, certainly that is what is going on in Iraq.

But there is a whole, you know, phrasing of the "global war on terror." There is the whole tendency of American policymakers to use the words "Islamic terrorist." I mean, to my mind, in this whole battle, you know, we ought to keep the word "Islam" out of how we describe al Qaida. It gives them credibility in the Islamic world that we shouldn't be doing.

But I also stopped at Great Britain on my trip. And we talked about the global war on terror, old phraseology. Is that the right way to do it?

You know, if you had just two or three policy things, if you are the messenger, we say to you, "Okay, go out there, sell America to the Islamic world," you come back to us and say, "Okay, I can do that, but you have to help me with a couple of things. Here is a couple policies that I think you ought to change to help us with that messaging."

What are the things that you would point toward?

Dr. WELLS. I think one of the points Under Secretary Hughes made this morning was that she is actively working to eliminate

the religious terminology in the U.S. Government pronouncements—to make them religion-neutral.

And so I think that is very close to what—in fact, she said she has taken to calling a lot of the suicide bombers and whoever "death cult"—the point is their only message is death—and leaving out the Islamic whatever.

Mr. SMITH. I think that is a great idea.

Mr. Kramer, Dr. Zalman.

Mr. KRAMER. I think you have to jump into some of the really difficult issues in a more effective way.

One is, I think that if you want to have good messages, you have to be thought of as a partner. If you want to be a partner, you have to have a partnership. And I think we need to think hard about how to create partnerships with specific countries and the perception then of the partnership with the Arab world as a whole.

There is a lot of economic difficulties—not in every state, because some of them are fairly rich, but in quite a number. And we might look hard at expanding our capabilities there in the economic arena. It is not an easy sell, I am sure, to the American public. Foreign aid has never been an easy sell. But I think——

Mr. SMITH. Well, it should be. I mean, following up with something Mac said earlier, we talked about how we haven't put the resources in, except for the Defense Department. We talked about how, you know, by and large, from a military standpoint, our military has been successful in Afghanistan and certainly they were successful in Iraq in toppling Saddam Hussein. We have targeted a large number of al Qaida members successfully. You know, but the public diplomacy piece hasn't been so good. And you can look at, you know, Defense Department budget, State Department budget over the same period. And it is not hard to see. So I think that resources point is very well made.

And whether it is an easy argument for the American public or not, we have to make it. You know, it is just as important, arguably more important, in keeping this country safe that we upgrade our public diplomacy and our commitment to the rest of the world, in terms of the support you are talking about, as it is that we, you know, better fund our troops to fight the war.

Dr. WELLS. Second point I would make is I am fully in support of what is being done for the expected exchange programs and various other interactions with other publics. The difference is I would probably increase it by about 10 times.

And I would certainly look hard at reducing some of the visa requirements. You know, we have put them on for good reasons. There are people who are out to harm the United States, no question about that. But at the same time, we have reduced some of the flow into this country. And I think we need both increased flow out and more flow in.

Now, that is a long-term kind of activity. In my government service, I had the International Military Education and Training Program, IMET, underneath me both times. And that is also a long-term activity. And it was dollar-for-dollar, universally thought of as, essentially, the most valuable thing we did. I think these exchange programs have the same potential. And I think they ought to be substantially, substantially increased.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Zalman.

Dr. ZALMAN. I want to draw on one of the very good ideas I heard at a conference recently that I referenced in the written testimony at the East-West Institute on violent extremism and stopping it or forestalling it. And that was that U.S. officials and policymakers are not seen as condemning all forms of extremism equally. And there is a perception globally or elsewhere that there is a real selective condemnation of that violent extremism committed by Muslims and by Islamic actors.

And so, there should be attention to making sure that they both do and are seen condemning extremism wherever it takes place and by whichever parties, perhaps especially in the realm of religious actors or actors saying that they act in the name of religion.

Mr. SMITH. You answered all the questions I had.

Mac, do you have anything further?

Well, thank you.

Dr. WELLS. May I respond just to Congressman Thornberry's question earlier about the source of expertise in the government?

I think one of the truly spectacularly successful uses of, really, anthropology in support of government policy was the World War II set of studies that went on in Germany and Japan that sort of led to Ruth Benedict's Chrysanthemum and the Sword and the decisions to retain the emperor and really an understanding of Japanese culture that wouldn't have been in place without that.

And that was not something you would find within the government, even within the foreign service officers who had served out there, but actually went out to anthropologists and academics and brought that expertise together.

So this would, sort of, argue either for the, sort of, ad hoc task force or focused task force that Mr. Kramer talked about you might bring together for particular purposes. But that would be my thought on that.

Mr. SMITH. Is there anything else? No one else?

Again, thank you very much. It turned into a longer afternoon than you expected, and I appreciate your patience in sticking with us.

And last, I would like to stay in touch. We are going to be working on this for quite a while, and your expertise will be helpful to us in the future, I am sure.

So thank you for testifying today and for your time.

Mr. KRAMER. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

[Whereupon, at 5:03 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 11, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 11, 2007

Subcommittee Chairman Adam Smith
Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee
Hearing re: Strategic Communications

July 11, 2007

"Good afternoon. Today the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities will hear from witnesses on Defense Department strategic communications and comparative ideas in the fight against global terrorist networks.

"The stark reality of the fight against al-Qaeda and related groups is that we cannot simply kill enough terrorists to win the war. This is a battle of ideas, of our ideology versus a violent, totalitarian ideology aimed at gaining power under a veneer of religious devotion. Unless we defeat the idea, we will not defeat the threat.

"If our efforts to contain the growth of terrorism are to have hope of success, we have to win the hearts and minds of local populations. Our strategic communications have to put forward our values and counter the appeals of terror networks. In so doing, we can build support for our efforts and undermine local support for terrorist groups. These communication efforts would ideally work to reinforce and support the indirect action component of our special operations forces' work.

"Right now the fight against the ideological underpinnings of terrorist networks is not going particularly well. Among other factors, our military engagement in large swaths of the Muslim world has fed the propaganda machines of our enemies and provided fertile ground for terrorist recruitment and fundraising. We have not effectively countered their key messages.

"It is my hope that our witnesses can shed some light both on our current efforts and on improvements we can make to our strategic communications strategy. In particular I am interested in learning to what extent these and similar efforts by the State Department, the White House, and others inside our government are executed in a coordinated way, and who is responsible for coordinating them.

"I want to thank our witnesses for their time today. I look forward to hearing their thoughts on this crucial component of our struggle against the spread of terrorism."

Statement of Ranking Member Mac Thornberry
House Armed Services Committee
Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee
Hearing On Strategic Communications and Comparative Ideas:
Winning the Hearts and Minds in the Global War Against Terrorists

Mr. Chairman:

When put in context, the subject of this hearing is incredibly important for our country's security.

We face a determined, ruthless, adaptable enemy that uses terrorism as a tactic to advance their agenda.

We will not defeat this enemy with military power alone. We must engage them -- and engage them successfully -- in the battle of ideas.

But, I know of no one who argues that the United States is being successful, or even competent, in fighting this ideological battle. As one author noted last year,

"A raft of studies and reports over the last several years by a variety of official, semi-official, and independent bodies from across the political spectrum has told a broadly similar story of institutional ineffectiveness, lack of strategic direction, and insufficient resources." Carnes Lord, Losing Hearts and Minds? Public Diplomacy and Strategic Influence in the Age of Terror, 2006, pg. 5.

We must do better, or many, many people will suffer for our failure.

Again, Mr. Chairman, a number of books and articles have been written on this subject. One book, called "Winning the Long War," put it this way:

"Winning the long war is all about winning the struggle of ideas, destroying the legitimacy of a competing ideology, and robbing the enemy of the support of the people. Such an effort implies some essential tasks: 1) understanding the enemy; 2) de-legitimizing its view of the world; 3) offering a credible alternative; and 4) demonstrating the will to prevail in the long conflict. . . . Long war strategy has to understand the enemy and do battle with its ideas." James Carafano & Paul Rosenzweig, Winning the Long War, 2005, pg. 174.

And that brings us to today's hearing.

Strategic Communication is not marketing; it is not simplistic slogans; it is not simply looking for better ways to tell the world how good we are. Strategic Communication is deeper and more sophisticated than that. It is how we communicate with -- and thus relate to -- the rest of the world.

"Strategic communication synchronizes actions that include public diplomacy, public affairs, public relations, outreach, information operations, and psychological operations. Strategic communication is the overarching concept that unifies and focuses the right message to the right audience with the intent to shape perception." Col. Dale C. Eikmeier, "How to Beat the Global Islamist Insurgency," Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2005.

It is an enormous job that involves the collaborative work of all elements of our government -- from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce to the Intelligence Community and the judicial system. But success also requires that we capitalize upon the knowledge, expertise, and skills of those outside of government to expand the reach and effectiveness of our message.

We must ensure that we have an effective strategy and organization in place to make headway in this very difficult struggle. We must be able to understand the ideology of our adversary, develop the right message to counter it, communicate our message effectively within the cultural and historical context of the target population, and assess the results. We must also have the required determination and patience to allow our message to bear fruit.

As a Defense Science Board study noted in 2004, "Strategic communication is a vital component of U.S. national security. It is in crisis and must be transformed with a strength of purpose that matches our commitment to diplomacy, defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security."

I look forward to hearing the testimony of these experts as to how to best take real steps forward in this important struggle.

Statement of Dr. Amy Zalman
Before the
House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities

Strategic Communications and the Battle of Ideas:
Winning the Hearts and Minds in the Global War against Terrorists
July 11, 2007

Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present my observations on strategic communications in the Global War on Terror. I would like to emphasize at the outset that the views expressed herein are my own, and are not intended to reflect those of my current employer, Science Applications International Corporation. Nor are they drawn on work performed on that firm's behalf. They are based on my experiences as a practitioner in the field of U.S. strategic communications in the War on Terrorism, and on my pre-existing research on the Middle East and the history of East-West cultural relations.

I have structured the remarks that follow to reflect my conviction that a two-fold approach to strategic communications is necessary: (1) The United States must *amend the conceptual frameworks* that structure its communications efforts, so that they accurately reflect the 21st century global communications environment, and (2) We must simultaneously *act* in ways that reflect and promote our grasp of the communications environment as it is, not as it once was nor as we wish it could be. The need both to think differently and act differently may seem self-evident: it goes essentially without saying that ideas without corresponding actions, like the proverbial tree falling in a forest, generally go unheard.

It is equally true that even well funded actions are likely to be ineffective if ungoverned by good and accurate ideas. This Subcommittee's recent allocation of increased resources for indirect warfare is a good and necessary step, but it is one that will be taken most surely and usefully within a framework that comprehends the changes that the globalization and democratization of technologies and ideas have wrought in the last two generations. With this in mind, I submit for consideration four areas in which current frameworks may be reconceived, and of possible actions that flow from them. For more detailed background or explanations, please refer to the attached supplementary articles.

1. Defining the Conflict: War of Ideas / War against Terrorists

Current Framework: ***The United States is engaged in a bipolar battle against one monolithic "ism" (like Nazism, or Communism). This "ism" is an extreme expression of Islam opposes exactly the values the U.S. embodies: modernity, globalization and freedom. There are potential millions waiting to take up arms in its name, and for this reason, pre-emptive cultural 'strikes' against civilian populations are required.***

Although the phrasing here is mine, the sentiments are explicit in current American military doctrine.[1] This framing has damaged the American cause. The insistence that there is one bipolar conflict primarily with Muslim extremists encourages many to believe the U.S. is engaged in a war against Islam. The projection of millions of adversaries pitches the U.S. into a defensively aggressive stance against those who are not necessarily enemies. Moreover, the bipolar framing is reminiscent of the Cold War and—by assigning "globalization" to the West--misstates the participation world over of both violent extremists and everyday people in the processes of modernity and globalization.

Potential Framework: ***The United States opposes and will take action to forestall violent extremism, and violent expressions of opposition to basic human rights and freedoms. It is particularly concerned to address a widening surge of anti-modern sentiment and opposition to civil society, whether spoken in an Islamic idiom, or another. Millions of potential adherents of security education, material well-being and civil and religious freedom are at the ready. As a global leader, the U.S. must state goals and act to encourage these future allies in progress, in an idiom they understand.***

Potential Actions:

(1) Continue to seek refining the language, and thus the framework, through which this conflict is expressed, with the understanding that language creates the world, as much as it reflects it. Steps like that taken by the Committee today in naming the conflict a "war against terror*ists*" rather than the abstract "terrorism" are the kinds of thoughtful framing of which more are needed.

(2) Explicitly respond to and condemn all expressions of violent extremism, including those taken in the name of other religions, whether Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, or another.[2]

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[1] They can be found in the *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* and in *A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities (Washington, D.C.: Army Strategic Communications, Pentagon, 2004).*

[2] This idea properly belongs to the collective of participants at the EastWest Institute conference, "Towards a Common Response: New Thinking Against Violent Extremism and Radicalization," held June 14, 2007 in New York City. More information is available on the website: http://www.ewi.info/.

(3) Resist the outmoded Cold War bipolar framework that suggests there are only two ideas, Islam and 'the West." Bipolar phrasing feeds anti-U.S. sentiment. It makes the U.S. sound arrogant and belligerent to those listening elsewhere. It also feeds the idea the U.S. is engaged in a war against Islam. This conflict takes place in a complex, polyphonous world, where multiple, intersecting ideas, histories and potential futures exist, and clash. It may even be said that this conflict expresses the search for a world in which multiple ideas can mutually co-exist

(4) Minimize the global sense of conflict and antagonism by investigating the intention and meaning behind anti-American sentiment in specific contexts. In some contexts, anti-Americanism is a kind of code that is likely to contain a variety of local antagonisms and frustrations, distilled to a simple "death to America" formula. Respond to claims that the U.S. is out to harm Muslims with meaningful responses that comprehend *why* that is believed, and what else is at issue.

(5) Respond with specifics to grievances when expressed among foreign communities. Pay attention as well to the hopes of other communities. Listen to and learn the terms within which other communities express values and notions of security, freedom, democracy, and the history of their experiences of those processes, in order to respond accurately to those experiences, and find areas where goals can be shared..

(6) On a slightly different note, approach enemy disinformation campaigns by seeking to understand the conditions that make disinformation plausible. Propaganda, as well as conspiracy theory, always tells a story. Long-term approaches to communications must seek to disrupt the collective cognitive conditions that make that story plausible. Counter-messaging or denials are stop-gap communications that do not treat root causes.

2. The Communications Environment

Current Framework: ***The communications environment can be controlled.***

This belief descends from the era of state controlled mass media. While states are far from irrelevant, their current dominance has been eroded by satellite television, the Internet and mobile phones with texting capabilities. The U.S. interest in exploiting new technologies to communicate will be fruitfully accompanied by a deeper grasp of how these technologies contribute to altering how people's self-perception, and their ability to construct identities and collectivities in new ways. Moreover, control over

the communications environment that could once be achieved by, for example, eradicating or infiltrating physical infrastructure, is not likely to be effective.

Proposed Framework: ***The communications environment can be influenced, through transparent, strategic participation in global flows of openly available information.***

Potential Actions:

(1) Structure communications policies and projects to accommodate the reality that full control cannot be achieved.

(2) Maintain the moral high ground by demonstrably valorizing open communications flows, the democratization of communications technologies, and the access it affords previously unheard populations.

3. The Approach to Cross-Cultural Understanding/ Training

Current framework: ***Cultural information is quantifiable data. Its accumulation indicates knowledge and power: the more information collected about adversary populations, the better prepared we are for communications combat. We are engaged in a cultural arms race, and it is important to stockpile nd be able to deploy cultural information to overwhelm and silence other cultures, as necessary.***

By way of supplement to the above, consider he Department of Defense dictionary of military terms definition of culture: "A feature of the terrain that has been constructed by man. Included are such items as roads, buildings, and canals; boundary lines; and, in a broad sense, all names and legends on a map." This definition lingers on in the general understanding of culture as a concrete attribute of the battlespace.

Proposed Framework: ***Culture is a story. Each community, or people, tells such a story: of who we are, where we came from and where we are going. We transmit values and proper behavior through our stories, which we tell in our founding myths, our ritual practices and our actions. Culture is not a closed, concrete thing, like a weapon. It is more like a river that flows through space and over time, intersecting other stories and other histories and futures. Cultures cannot be obliterated, but they can change and do change course over time. Each of us receives and contributes to the story of who we are, as a group.***

Here is a definition of culture that I have found useful when thinking about strategic communications, from American literary critic, Dr. Andrew Delbanco:

> ...[H]uman beings need to organize the inchoate sensations amid which we pass our days—pain, desire, pleasure, fear—into a story. When that story leads somewhere and helps us navigate through life to its inevitable terminus in death, it gives us hope. And if such a sustaining narrative establishes itself over time in the minds of a substantial number of people, we call it culture.[3]

I especially like this definition because it reminds me that we are active participants in shaping our stories. We identify with and tell those that give us a sense of continuity into the future.

Potential Actions:

(1) Recognize that people are dynamic participants in culture, and structure strategic communications accordingly. We all tell, as well as receive, the stories that are our culture. This means: telling the American story to people who already have their own story is not a useful strategy. Inviting others to invest their hopes, and existing sense of past and future, in a shared dialogic narrative, is a more winning strategy.

(2) Design military cultural training programs with processes to help troops and others with close contact with adversaries record and transform their learning about other cultures into generalizable and actionable communications strategies.

(3) Attend to framing and organizing cultural information, as well as accumulating it, in military training programs and lessons learned repositories.

(4) In public diplomacy efforts, work with existing narrative flows—through space and over time—to influence the stories of others, instead of creating counter-narratives, or dams, that will lead simply to a responsive counter-force.

(5) Recognize that the U.S. is a participant, not only a director, in the global story. Our story is porous, and tributaries open into it, not only out of it. The story of others will be our story too, so we must take care to shape one whose ending we like.

4. Understanding Adversaries, Winning Hearts and Minds

Current Framework: *"Know the Enemy."*

Sixth century military strategist Sun Tzu may be the most often cited general of the last five years. In particular, his caveat that in war it is crucial to know the enemy graces the introduction of many good

[3] Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 1.

articles and studies about how to approach current adversaries. There is, as well, a search for both successes and mistakes in U.S. military engagements with other cultures in the past century as a place to learn lessons. The instruction to "know the enemy" currently drives strategies, resources, and education and training to increase cultural understanding of enemies.

Proposed Framework: *Know Ourselves*

Interestingly, Sun Tzu may also be the most misquoted general of recent years. Here is the entirety of what he had to say about the strategic function of cultural knowledge: "It is said that if you know your enemies *and know yourself*, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles." We do not know ourselves, in this conflict. This fact is in evidence in the United States' sinking global reputation, and the failure to demonstrate to the rest of the world that something like a coherent American idea is alive and well. More to the point in this context, is the fact that self-awareness is lacking in battlefield strategic communications. The warfighter who has not been given the tools for self-reflection on his/her behavior, identity and communications styles is in no position to understand those of others, nor to make necessary strategic communications decisions. This kind of insight is not a luxury, but a necessary tool, especially for combatants who may be thrust into several distinct cultures in as many years, and who will have to rely on generalized insights about how to 'read' cultures and respond to them, instead of specialized area or linguistic knowledge.

Potential Actions:

(1) Include a focus on self-reflective frameworks in military training and education, as well as public diplomacy initiatives, in the interests of building the self-conscious understanding that the U.S.,and its individual citizens, also have a culture/s, that we are being watched and judged, and that we can make judicious choices about how to frame our communications efforts.

(2) Incorporate specific educational initiatives where relevant to raise consciousness about how Americans frame Middle Eastern, especially Muslim Arab cultures. One example: the belief that "they" are not modern. This is not an academic point of interest: it has produced serious missteps in calculating extremist communications, as well as broader cultural expressions. Good communicators are self-conscious about their own frames, so that they are not controlled by them and can manipulate them.

(3) It has been proposed to me by a member of the military that existing diversity programs (designed to create acceptance and understanding of the diversity within our own ranks) may offer useful platforms for diversity training that goes further afield.

(4) Fund and promote the transformation not only of our military hardware, but the cultural knowledge, imaginative thinking and ethical faculties of our citizens, so we are prepared to understand and make good judgments in a world that is itself transforming rapidly.

Statement of Federal Government Contracts

In accordance with Rule XI, Clause 2(g) of the rules of the House of Representatives, Dr. Zalman submits the following statement on work performed on federal government contracts in the past three years:

(1) 2005. New York based partnership Oryx Communications (owned in partnership by Zalman), teamed with the Lincoln Group (Washington D.C.) to bid on and create strategies and products for USSOCOM strategic communications contract. The origininal IDIQ contract was valued at maximum $100 million over the life of the contract. Oryx Communications contributed original product proposals for prototype development in response to Task Order 1 issued by the Joint Psychological Operations Support Element, for which it received approximately $45,000 USD. (Oryx Communications has since bee dissolved)

(2) February 2003 – January 2005. Independently contracted as a foreign media strategist with The Rendon Group (Washington, D.C.) on contracts awarded to USCENTCOM and USSTRATCOM. Projects/ analyses were also undertaken for other customers, including the Navy, AIA and other customers.

Statement of Franklin D. Kramer
before the
House Armed Services Subcommittee
on
Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities
July 11, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify this afternoon, which I am doing in my individual capacity, on the topic of "Strategic Communications and the Battle of Ideas: Winning the Hearts and Minds in the Global War Against Terrorists." I would like to discuss three points with the Committee.

First, the communications context in which the battle of ideas arises.

Second, the obstacles that face the United States.

Third, what we should be doing to be more effective.

The United States is an information superpower, but despite this, as numerous surveys have shown, its global image and international influence have badly declined. Strategic communications, properly utilized, can make a difference because the very fundamentals of United States policy inherent in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—democracy, the rule of law, individual rights, economic freedom, and societal openness—have a broad appeal throughout the world as reflected in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which has been adopted by most countries.

But in the battle of ideas—as the Committee puts it for "hearts and minds" in the global war against terrorists—there are many obstacles to the acceptance of those fundamental ideas in a way that supports U.S. policy. The obstacles include the complex international environment, in which messages and events beyond those focusing on terrorism have significant impact; the multiplicity of cultures and differing audiences to which communications must be addressed; the extensiveness and significance of contending or alternative messages; the overwhelming impact of facts, particularly in the context of violent, war-type situations such as Iraq and

Afghanistan; and the complexity yet importance of utilizing appropriate influential messengers and message mechanisms. It is in dealing with those considerations that United States strategic messengering often fails.

The United States Government does make a concerted effort to communicate. As the Committee plans to hold comparable hearings with official witnesses, let me only list a few channels to give context, including White House and departmental public affairs offices; the State Department's public diplomacy office including the websites it operates; the Broadcasting Board of Governors with its multiple television and radio services; and the Department of Defense's numerous networks and websites. In short, there are a great number of communications from the USG on the air, over the Internet, and in face-to-face contacts, but the overall strategic communications effort obviously is not succeeding as well as we would like. There are several reasons.

First, a good deal of USG communications is "mass messaging"—simply because the U.S. has many interests and many audiences. Mass messages are a good mechanism for communicating to those who are ready to listen. But to those disinclined to do so—for cultural, policy, or other reasons—mass messages are unlikely to have significant impact. As an example, a Presidential address on Middle East issues necessarily will be tailored to the American public, as it should be since we are a democracy and the American public is the President's prime audience, but the speech will not have the same impact in the Middle East for reasons including the language in which it is delivered, the nature of the coverage it receives, the prior inclinations of the audiences, and the multiple other messages those audiences are receiving.

Second, the United States does have multiple interests so it regularly is sending multiple messages. Those multiple messages sometimes arise because of multiple policies—and the task of bridging multiple policies often can result in the reduction of the clarity of messages. Again, to pick a Middle East example, the U.S. positions with respect to the Middle East Peace Process often fail to persuade numerous Arab audiences. We hold our positions, including support of Israel, because we think they are correct but we should not fail to recognize that not all think them persuasive and that affects the impact of our messages.

Third, in the target audiences—those whose "hearts and minds" we wish to affect—there are also obstacles. To begin with, those audiences already live in a context, and already have multiple communications reaching them on a daily basis. Some will be disinclined to take more information, and some will only take information already congenial to their prior attitudes. For many such persons, the multiple channels, stations, and web sites in the Middle East that are anti-U.S. will crowd out the U.S. messages. For example, as a recent Radio Free Europe study demonstrates[1], both the Sunni insurgency in Iraq and Al Qaeda make very substantial use of communications both directly on websites and through "amplification" by providing content to television, radio and other web sites. These insurgent media are popular in the Arab world and "reflecl[t] a genuine desire for th[e] message."[2]

Additionally, and very importantly as an obstacle to reaching audiences, people interpret the same information differently—affected by what they know and feel—so that simple exposure to information is often not sufficient to cause a change in attitudes. To put this in the U.S. context, the Rush Limbaugh listener is not likely to be persuaded by Michael Moore, and vice versa. Thus, who presents the information and in what context is enormously important. Simply increasing the flow of information is often not sufficient to make information be received with the desired effect (though the opposite—the absence of an adequate flow of information, including its repetition--surely will undercut a message).

Fourth, and this is implied by much of the foregoing, when there is significant opposition to our policies and actions, even the best communications will not be able to overcome the substantive differences. More subtly, however, when there is opposition to our policies, such as is broadly true in the Arab world with respect to our actions in Iraq, opposition communicators in other areas, such as extremist groups like Al Qaeda, will try to use that opposition as a basis of support for their positions. Thus, the Al Qaeda narrative that the Muslim world is "under attack" from the West relies in important part on the ongoing violence in Iraq. A change in policy on Iraq—as is obviously a key issue right now in the United States—will have a potential impact on our own broader strategic communications

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[1] Kimmage and Ridolfo, "Iraq Insurgent Media: The War of Ideas and Images" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2007).
[2] Id. at p.3

narrative. Of course, what the change actually may be and how it is implemented will be importantly consequential.

In light of the foregoing, let me make eight suggestions as to what can and should be done to make U.S. strategic communications more effective.

First, and perhaps most importantly, there needs to be a greater focus on the nature of audiences and of the societies and cultures into which messages will be delivered. In the first instance, we need to be clear as to who are our message recipients. There likely will be a difference among messages to populations at large; to those who are sympathizers toward terrorists; to those who are active supporters; and to those who are terrorists themselves. Moreover, those varying audiences might well be reached by different types of communications—for example, television for broader audiences; websites for potential terrorist recruits. In this context of the importance of differentiated messaging, a further very important consideration needs to be an understanding of the types of persons who have influence with the message recipients and the types of contexts in which that influence will be most effective. In the book, "The Tipping Point," Malcolm Gladwell wrote of "mavens," who validate a message, "connectors," who link different persons and groups, and "salesmen," who sell the message. In cross-cultural strategic messaging, we need to understand who these "influencers" are and how to reach them.

In that regard, we also need to understand what types of messages will be effective. There needs to be focus on both what is being said and on how it is being said. Considerations will include whether the culture is such that the message should focus on individual values or on group values (relevant societies differ); whether negative messaging will work; what is the role of religion—and a myriad of other similar questions.

Second, and implied by the first, we need to increase the number of experts in geographic and cultural arenas, including a much greater expertise in languages. Such expertise can help build a societal/cultural "map" of "influencers," key communications nodes, and cultural communications patterns to guide strategic communications. To these cultural experts, we need to add experts in psychology and marketing who can help generate messages and communications that are effective. Finally, we need experts in the use of communications techniques like television, radio, the Internet, cell phones, etc. In short, an interdisciplinary approach is required.

Third, we need to realize that while we may have a consistent base message, we will have multiple theatres in which it will be presented. Those areas will differ significantly from one another—and one should expect that, to be effective, messaging will likewise differ. To use an example, the society, culture and influential persons in Indonesia are significantly different from those in Pakistan, and they are each significantly different from those in Egypt. It is also worth noting that the Internet has created coherent, non-geographic communities. There are numerous studies and reports on the Internet's effectiveness in transmitting messages that sympathize with, support, and recruit for terrorist efforts. We need to include the Internet as a focused arena for our own strategic communications.

Fourth, we need to give greater resources to the overall strategic communications effort. Expanding the capacities of the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the embassies and other outlets of the State Department would be enormously valuable. As noted, the Internet is a key mechanism. The State Department does run web sites, but a much broader and more multifaceted Internet strategy—both globally and regionally—would be highly desirable. The General Accountability Office has found that while embassy posts are supposed to have a strategic communications plan, they are generally ineffective with little focus and not enough resources.[3] Enhancing the USG capabilities is a critical requirement.

Fifth, we need to encourage long-term efforts as well as short-term responses. It is possible to change attitudes over time—but it takes time. As an example, consider the American attitude toward smoking which has changed significantly over the last 30 years. In the battle of ideas, we are seeking a long-term change—and so we need to adopt long-term policies. As examples of useful approaches, the Department of Defense websites, Southeast European Times (presented in nine languages) and Magharebia (presented in three languages) that provide news, analysis and information are productive long-term approaches that will not affect attitudes immediately but can have significant consequences over time.

Sixth, we need to appreciate the dictum that "facts speak louder than words." As noted above, some policies generate significant opposition and

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[3] General Accountability Office, "U.S. Public Diplomacy, State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communications elements and Face Significant Challenges" (May 2006).

strategic communications are not panaceas that can overcome all real world actions. But even at the implementation level, we need to focus on the communications consequences of actions. In the wartime conflicts we now find ourselves in Iraq and Afghanistan, the impact of violent activities will very significantly change the views of the world not only of those immediately impacted but of those who are indirectly affected and those to whom those impacts are communicated. Every battle commander in these irregular wars soon finds out that the communications battle is critical—because the center of gravity for success is the population. But all too often, our commanders have to learn this on the ground. Especially in this globalized world of instant communications, tactical actions can have strategic consequences. Much increased support for training and resources for communications will be critical elements of effective counterinsurgency and stability operations. Again, by way of example, in David Galula's classic "Counterinsurgency Warfare," there is extensive discussion of the crucial importance of communications--to one's supporters, to the population at large, and to the opposition. We need resources and training for our people on these issues—and it also needs to be undertaken, not only by DOD, but in a joint DOD-State context.

Seventh, we should not expect to be successful at strategic communications acting solely on our own. Rather, we should use an alliance and partnership approach, both to expand our capacities and to increase our effectiveness. In the business world, it would be the rare American company that would seek to enter another country without the guidance and support of local business, whether as partners, joint ventures, or advisors—and often all three. In military and diplomatic arenas, we recognize our allies and partners as enormous sources of strength. In the strategic communications arena, we need likewise to develop those alliances and partnerships both to shape our own messages and to support theirs.

Eighth, and finally, it might well be worthwhile for Congress to review the overall structure of, and resources devoted to, strategic communications. The Committee's hearings should produce valuable insights, and there have been a number of studies on public diplomacy. I have noted already my belief that increased resources should be devoted to strategic communications including additional focus on the Internet—and I would provide those promptly, but a longer term look as to the appropriate capacities and organizations in this highly globalized information world deserves a thorough analysis. A comprehensive review which included all

governmental capabilities—including State and Defense—might help produce a more effective overall strategic communications strategy.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to further discussion with the Committee.

Disclosure Statement
Of
Franklin D. Kramer

While I am appearing individually and am not representing any entity other than myself, I have had individual contracts with the U.S. Government and do work with companies that have government contracts and wanted the Committee to have that information:

Individual contracts as research fellow focusing on information and information technology:

National Defense University, Department of Defense, FY 2007--$108,000
National Defense University, Department of Defense, FY 2006--$108,000
National Defense University, Department of Defense, FY 2005--$96,000
National Defense University, Department of Defense, FY 2004--$78,987

Lockheed Martin—I am on the Lockheed Martin Strategic Advisory Council and provide consultant advisory service to the company. Lockheed is the largest defense contractor to the United States Government and has other significant contracts with the government.

CNAC Corporation—CNAC Corporation operates the Center for Naval Analysis, a federally funded research and development center, for the Department of the Navy, and has other contracts with the United States Government. I am a Senior Fellow for CNA and provide advisory services to the corporation.

Liquidity Services, Inc.—I am on the board of LSI, which operates an Internet-based surplus property disposal business for both commercial and governmental customers. LSI has contracts with the Department of Defense to dispose of DoD surplus and scrap

Atlantic Council of the United States—The Atlantic Council is a nonprofit organization which runs numerous programs generally focused on international security issues facing the United States. I am on the Executive Committee of the Council and chair the Committee on Asia and Global Security. The Council has contracted with the United States Government, and I chaired a study on overseas basing which the Council did for the United States Navy.

George Washington University—I am a Capstone Professor at GW's Elliott School of International Affairs and teach a course on "DoD and Winning Modern War."

Anser Corporation—I was, but am no longer, on the board of Anser which operates the Homeland Security Institute, a federally funded research and development center, for the Department of Homeland Security, and has other contracts with the United States Government, including the Department of Defense.

Changing World Technologies, Inc.—I was, but am no longer, on the board of CWT and providing consulting services. CWT turns organic waste into oil, fuel gas and mineral products. CWT has a plant in Missouri and a pilot plant/research facility in Pennsylvania. CWT has received grants from the United States government for the operation and development of its business.

In addition, I have received honoraria for speaking at programs run by the National War College and by the intelligence community.

Statement by

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Before the
Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities

House Armed Services Committee

On

"Strategic Communications and the Battle of Ideas: Winning the Hearts and Minds in the Global War against Terrorists"

July 11, 2007

Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today, which I am doing in my individual capacity, on the important topic of "Strategic communications and the battle of ideas: winning the hearts and minds in the global war against terrorists." I would like to discuss four broad areas with the Subcommittee:

- The importance of strategic communication[1] and the need to synchronize deeds and words.
- A summary of U.S. Government strategic communication initiatives, limitations, challenges and successes.
- The importance of non-governmental actions in strategic communication.
- Some ways ahead.

The Importance of Strategic Communication

Effective strategic communication will be essential to winning the Long War. Just as the Cold War was won through ideas, persistence, and national commitment, so will ideas, and the way we communicate them be central to the outcome of this conflict. But in these communications, facts (which include actions) speak much louder than words.

The United States needs to do much better than it has in communicating its commitment to the Nation's core values, reaching out to those who share our ideals, supporting those who struggle for freedom and countering those who espouse hate and oppression. In many parts of the world, regard for America has declined to dangerous lows.[2] As one person asked: "How can the country of the Declaration of Independence, Madison Avenue and Hollywood be losing the war of ideas to people who think it's rational to cut other people's heads off?"

"The objective of strategic communication - and its ultimate measure of success - is the advancement of U.S. policies. This is achieved by influencing foreign audiences to take actions that support U.S. interests or to cease actions that damage U.S. interests."[3] As such, the success of strategic communication is affected by more than government actions alone.

[1] The U.S. government typically refers to strategic communication, without an "s."
[2] Some go further, arguing that: "U.S. strategic communications is in a state of crisis," citing the overwhelmingly negative views of the U.S. by majorities in key Muslim nations as referenced in surveys such as the annual Pew reviews of public opinion survey trends. See, for example, Charles Balck, "Strategic Communications Paper," draft 2.0, Jan 2007, p. 3.
[3] Balck, op cit., p. 2.

There is no doubt that effective strategic communication is very hard to achieve. Messages and delivery mechanisms must be aligned within the U.S. government; messages and actions must be linked across organizational, national and cultural lines; cognitive impacts on foreign audiences must be understood and adjusted. The difficulties are compounded by the rapidly changing information environment where distributed means of communication make it almost impossible to control the messages that are being delivered to any target audience.

Nevertheless, America has a number of enduring strengths that ought to be advantages in the future struggle for ideas. Among these are the Nation's:

- Openness
- Opportunity, and
- The ability to learn from our mistakes, and to acknowledge it when we don't live up to our principles.

A core issue is how to describe these qualities in ways that are important to people around the world and in ways that matter in their lives.

U.S. Government Initiatives

The U.S. government has been working to improve its strategic communication performance.

At the end of May, the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) of the National Security Council (NSC) on Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy issued the "U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication."[4] It laid out three strategic objectives for America's public diplomacy and strategic communication with foreign audiences:

- America must offer a positive vision of hope and opportunity that is rooted in our most basic values.
- With our partners, we seek to isolate and marginalize violent extremists, who threaten the freedom and peace sought by civilized people of every nation, culture and faith.
- America must work to nurture common interests and values between Americans and people of different countries, cultures and faiths across the world.

Similarly, within the Department of Defense (DoD), the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DepSecDef) signed out the Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap last September that specified actions and designated lead agents to implement strategic communication objectives identified during the 2006

[4] Issued May 31, 2007. The PCC is chaired by Karen Hughes, who also is the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).[5] In particular, the QDR's recommendations support efforts by the Department of State to "improve the integration of information as a vital element of national power." Moreover, the quarterly updates to the Congress on the QDR reflect the establishment of a Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG) and an Executive Committee to oversee it.[6]

Despite these steps, there is a long way to go. The first step of getting alignment across the government will be hard enough. For example, DoD uses the following definition for Strategic Communication:

> Focused United States Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.

However, since 2004 at least 10 definitions or descriptions of strategic communications have been listed on the INTERNET. Some are straightforward, like David Kilcullen's: "The ability to counter the insurgents' messages through words and deeds."[7] Other descriptions are more complex. In fact, there seems to be wide agreement that strategic communication is a process that links together many different kinds of activities, from public affairs, to public diplomacy, to some kinds of information operations, to the use of visual information, across many parts of the U.S. government, primarily focused on foreign audiences. It is continually being refined. However, without an agreed definition of what's meant by strategic communication and public diplomacy it will be harder to implement

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[5] 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communication (SC) Execution Roadmap, dated Sept 25, 2007, OSD 13697-06.

[6] The SCIG has been established to recommend, coordinate, and oversee DoD strategic communication initiatives and plans. The SCIG consists of senior representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Staff, Military Departments, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM). Other DoD organizations and representatives of other U.S. Government departments and agencies are invited as appropriate. An Executive Committee, consisting of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), the Director of the Joint Staff, and the Director of Strategic Communication (Joint Staff), provide oversight and guidance to the SCIG Secretariat director. Several representatives from the Executive Committee also attend the inter-agency PCC. The supporting SCIG Secretariat is also established and is tasked to ensure products from OSD, the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commanders, and the Military Departments are coordinated and synchronized across the Department. The SCIG is facilitating the development of strategic communication plans for two priorities approved by the DepSecDef: "Educate coalition and domestic audiences on Iraq strategy," and "Counter al Qa'ida and Taliban in Afghanistan."

[7] Cited in Hon Eric Edelman, Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), remarks at the State Department, 12/12/2006 http://www.defenselink.mil/Utility/PrintItem.aspx?print=http://www.defenselink.mil/Tra...

them effectively, and it's not clear that a single inter-agency definition has been accepted.

The issues also are broader than just definitional. A quarterly update to Congress on the QDR stated that accomplishing the roadmap requires: "integrated and synchronized action while promoting cultural and organizational change [DoD-wide]."

- These are transformational changes, and need to be treated seriously.
- Experiences in other areas suggest that improvements in the ability to engage with external partners must be pursued in parallel across several fronts:
  - Capabilities must be built to develop, coordinate and deliver messages. This requires inter-disciplinary and language skills that may not align well with any single part of the U.S. government.
  - Social networks will be needed to engage effectively with appropriate audiences.
  - Changes in policy, doctrine, TTP (tactics, techniques and procedures) will be needed to guide operations, training and education so that the activities (especially by military) can be executed at appropriate levels without having to refer too many issues to higher authority.
  - Funds must be available to facilitate rapid and effective operations.
  - Sometimes legal changes may be needed—the Department benefited greatly from last year's authorization conference report language that allowed information and communications technology (ICT) capabilities to be incorporated into rudimentary construction and repair activities when DoD elements are engaged in humanitarian and civic assistance activities. Because of this, for example, a hospital damaged by an earthquake now can be rebuilt with internet connectivity, which had previously been prohibited. If this hospital can become a more effective facility as a result of that connectivity, the upgrade can contribute to the kind of outcomes strategic communication desires.

Strategic communication often is conducted through campaigns composed of "a defined set of actions and messages aimed at a target audience and purposively coordinated to generate specific effects."[8] Such campaigns require at least six actions:

- The change agent must understand the intended audience.
- Specific, achievable and measurable objectives must be articulated.
- The campaign must be directed toward specific audiences, recognizing that messages to one group may be received simultaneously by others, sometimes with quite different effects.

[8] Balck, op. cit., pp. 13-14

- Messages must be crafted that the audience finds compelling.
- The message must be relayed through a messenger that is seen as credible and likeable by the recipients.
- A feedback loop must be cultivated to evaluate the campaign's effectiveness.

However, there are important aspects of strategic communication in today's information age that are messy, "bottom-up" (vice "top down"), and difficult to orchestrate.

Since the end of the Cold War, the information environment has undergone revolutionary changes resulting from advances in technology and the proliferation of new media.[9] Desktop publishing, the INTERNET, plus cable and direct satellite television and related developments have led to massive flows of information emanating from an ever-expanding number of sources directed at a mass, global audience on a 24/7, real-time basis. Moreover, widely accessible, cheap and pervasive new ICTs like cell phones with cameras and video, WiFi hubs, iPods and similar devices promote an explosion of user-generated and interactive content. Collectively they enable the rapid dissemination of ideas, stories and images from around the world. These ICTs help citizens and media outlets circumvent the government censors and media monopolies that have long stifled the free flow of information in many societies.

This glut of information means that an information source must be perceived as credible and trustworthy to capture an audience's attention. Consumers will seek out their preferred information sources, and the INTERNET in many areas is seen as a more trustworthy source of information because it is very hard to censor. The Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes, understands this dynamic. In contrast to the Cold War environment when the goal was simply to penetrate closed societies with information, the competition today centers around winning attention and credibility in a hostile, crowded and highly competitive information environment.[10]

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Ambassador Eric Edelman made some important remarks at the State Department last December.[11]

> Ironically, crafting an all-of-government strategic communications strategy for today's threat is both enabled and complicated by new technologies in the internet age. Traditionally, our comparative advantage in warfare has

[9] See, for example, Dan Gillmor, *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism By the People, For the People* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc., 2006). Also Balck, op. cit., p. 4
[10] Karen Hughes remarks to the Pacific Island Conference of Leaders, May 8, 2007.
[11] Hon Eric Edelman, USD (P), remarks at the State Department, 12/12/2006, op. cit.

> been technology. Communications technology has enabled a network-centric approach to warfare that gives us greater battlefield awareness than ever before. At the high end of the conflict spectrum it has enabled us to win spectacular victories on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan, in the major combat phases. On the other hand, the enemy is also enabled by technology. At this lower end of the conflict spectrum the advantage in use of these technologies may shift to our enemies. (emphasis supplied) … Counter-terrorism expert, Audrey Cronin, observes that the INTERNET is facilitating a "cyber-enabled mass mobilization" of such enemies….

In any case it is critical that decision-makers understand the impact of these technologies. As David Kilcullen has noted, every combat action sends a political message, nearly instantly. These effects cannot be ignored, but the press of short term communication demands also must not be allowed to overwhelm the long term strategic approach.

A key element of long term strategic communication is "strategic listening." It is not enough just to "deliver the message." Most approaches recognize that listening and influence analysis are critical prerequisites to effective communications strategies. However, insights from various meetings held over the past to years suggest that effective strategic listening includes:[12]

- Receiving without judgment – seeing what's there, adapting, and finding ways to connect.
- Being willing to relinquish control, moving from strongly held positions, and co-creating.
- Making use of "user-generated content."
- Sustaining involvement in an area. Public diplomacy and strategic communication demand a long-term focus and flourish best when policies are not driven by the agenda of the moment. In some cases, trying to take credit for an outcome may be detrimental to the ultimate objective of a stable, prosperous environment that does not support hateful ideologies. However, this "arms-length" approach can be especially hard for governments where pressing, tactical, near-term needs threaten to dominate long-term strategic initiatives.

These concepts are hard to fit into a top-down framework of "agreed on" messages.

The National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication does, in fact, include long term proposals, including an emphasis on student exchange programs, English language training and the education of girls and women. People-to-people programs foster life-long connections, as DoD also has found with many of its international military education and training efforts.

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[12] Richard P. O'Neill, The Highlands Forum, briefing dated January 16, 2007

There have been some long term successes. By all accounts, the campaign against the Abu Sayef Group (ASG) and other militant radical Islamic groups in the southern Philippines has been effective through low-profile U.S. approaches in support of local leaders and the Philippine government. This has been characterized by long-term engagement on the ground, the development of local knowledge, and close cooperation with local peers whose messages are trusted and respected by the people of the area. The emphasis on long term engagement and building the capacity of partner nations in the stand-up of the African Command (AFRICOM) also reflects an understanding of the new environment.

A related area where DoD is beginning to make progress, but needs to do better, is in the sharing of UNCLASSIFIED information outside the boundaries of the DoD enterprise with civil-military partners who may not have security clearances. Such partners include aid organizations, indigenous security forces, non-governmental organizations, local governments, commercial firms and local populations. Without effective engagement with such groups in a wide range of scenarios, the U.S. CANNOT achieve the social, political and economic goals for which the military forces were committed. Thus, the ability to share UNCLASSIFIED information with these partners is not a "nice-to-have" adjunct to the kinetic phases of warfare, but needs to be a core part of the national strategy from the beginning of planning efforts.

Non-Governmental Activities

Strategic communication is broader than the U.S. government. Many more messages about the U.S. are delivered around the world through advertising and entertainment than through governmental channels. Regrettably, those messages are not always positive. A year and a half ago I was in a North African country where there was an "American Channel" on the local cable. The shows were drawn from popular television and movies, seemingly chosen for their portrayals of fast lifestyles and edgy behavior. Suffice to say that the America that was portrayed on that channel bore little resemblance to the country that I know and, in many respects, would not have been an attractive role model for the local audiences in the host nation. I have no idea what to do about this. I'm certainly not advocating censorship of media or entertainment. But we should not kid ourselves that these are positive images.

On the other hand, there have been effective advertising campaigns that have portrayed American products in ways that have resonated effectively with diverse audiences around the world. There are people in this country who know how to communicate strategically with selected audiences. It is important that we tap into them.

The American Muslim community could be a source of significant strength as an example of a religious people who can practice their faith while they are integrated into the mainstream of American society.

Ultimately it is important that people perceive that U.S. actions are advancing their interests, not just our own. Facts must be coherent with words and also need to provide hope to the population, such as jobs. We have to recognize that our way of planning and our solutions will not always be the right ones, and that local inefficiencies may be preferable to externally imposed approaches, however optimal those might be in our environment. The success of micro-cap financing and private sector development models like those laid out in C.K. Prahalad's "The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid"[13] suggest alternatives to traditional aid approaches that can reduce instability through broadly based economic development. Such efforts support the fulfillment of the U.S. National Security Strategy objectives to encourage global economic growth and to expand the circle of development. To these ends they support the goals of strategic communication.

Ways ahead

There are no simple ways ahead. Strategic communication is enormously important, but ends need to be matched to means, limitations need to be recognized, and metrics need to be designed to evaluate progress (whether a project is begun as a bottom-up venture, or a top-down one). Some basic principles follow:[14]

- Define strategic goals clearly and assess the probability of success honestly.
- Make strategic communication approaches more agile, decentralized, and local. Clearly the U.S. government must be organized enough to minimize discordant messages, and clearly there are important themes to emphasize, but top-down approaches will not always work in the present and future information environment.
- Understand the intended audience, as well as the potential impact on other listeners of the messages designed for that audience
- Be realistic about the causes of anti-Americanism and also realistic about our ability to change this in the short term.
- Leverage new technologies that allow much greater interaction with audiences.
- Recognize that the basic approach should be long term, realistic, and humble—total control is not possible. Short term issues can't be ignored, but focusing on them will not necessarily achieve the long term objectives.

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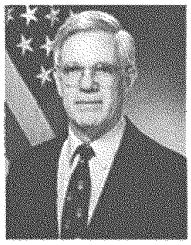
[13] C.K. Prahalad, *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits* (Philadelphia: Wharton School Publishing, 2006)
[14] Balck, op cit., p. 18

- Recognize that public diplomacy and strategic communication serve policy and that the goal is the effectiveness of policy.
- Work to align the U.S. with the public in the areas we seek to reach (emphasize that people everywhere have similar long term goals, and that we do not consider foreign audiences as "the enemy"). Some have suggested that Arabs be thought of more as constituents than an audience, or a "target."
- Promote open media. It is important to make room for moderates.
- Focus from the first on how to achieve the desired effects.
- Provide adequate resources. Prior to the significant increases recently allocated to public diplomacy, average funding levels were about $800 thousand per year, plus some $700,000 for exchange programs. Another $2.9 million was available for public opinion research, which seems small by the standards even of a U.S. political campaign. Resources for strategic communication should be proportional to the potential benefits.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to discussions with the Subcommittee



Linton Wells II

Force Transformation Chair and Distinguished Research Professor

Dr. Linton Wells II serves as the Force Transformation Chair and Distinguished Research Professor at the National Defense University. He is in the Center for Technology and National Security Policy.

From August 1998 until June 2007 he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in Networks and Information Integration (NII) and its predecessor, Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C3I), including some two years as the Acting Assistant Secretary and DoD Chief Information Officer. From 1991 to 1998 he was in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) most recently as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Policy Support).

In twenty-six years of naval service, Dr. Wells served in a variety of surface ships, including command of a destroyer squadron and guided missile destroyer. In addition, he acquired a wide range of experience in operations analysis; Pacific, Indian Ocean and Middle East affairs; C3I; and special access program oversight.

Dr. Wells was born in Luanda, Angola, in 1946. He was graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1967 and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and oceanography. He attended graduate school at The Johns Hopkins University, receiving a Master of Science in Engineering degree in mathematical sciences and a PhD in international relations. He is also a 1983 graduate of the Japanese National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo, the first U.S. naval officer to attend there.

Dr. Wells has written widely on security studies in English and Japanese journals. He co-authored Japanese Cruisers of the Pacific War, which was published in 1997. His hobbies include history, the relationship between policy and technology, scuba diving, and flying.