

To: NSC Principals  
From: Karen Hughes  
Date: October 11, 2006  
Re: Thinking "bigger"

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While our embassies say reaching young people is a priority, most of our traditional public diplomacy programs do not effectively engage young people, particularly those in the 8-14 year age range that cannot travel to the United States. Today's young people are also unique in that – unlike their parents – many have been socialized into a society saturated by satellite TV, mobile phones, and the Internet. Young people use this new technology in novel ways as well, to not only acquire information, but to express themselves and demonstrate their autonomy from authority figures.

**1. Launch an Education Initiative for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** Feature a major after-school learning center and summer camp English-language program in countries with large Islamic populations in Near East and central Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

This would allow us to reach young people with a skill they want, a skill that improves their opportunities in life while opening a window to a wider world of knowledge and information. An after-school program bypasses traditional curriculum debates and accusations that America is trying to "dictate" or "impose," yet also introduces critical thinking skills that young people may not get in their own schools or madrassas. Elements to include:

- Summer camps and after-school learning centers for 8-14 year old girls and boys, in priority locations overseas where other U.S. investments and electronic media will enhance success.
- Provide through these summer camps and after-school centers a safe and secure environment for instruction in English language learning and other language skills, as well as instruction in well-recognized opportunity building skills for children such as computer and financial literacy, math and science, and healthy living, while conveying democratic values through the process. The centers will be professionally staffed by local instructors the USG has trained and by American volunteers drawn from ECA exchange programs, Embassy families, and the private sector.
- Use higher education in new teacher development to support the new initiative, building on the Secretary's U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education.

- Resource camps and after-school centers through partnership among USG (Peace Corps, Ameri-Corps or similar programs to help "staff" the camps), the private sector, and partner governments, with bi-national governance and program direction similar to the Fulbright Commissions. Military personnel could help construct/operate them. (successful models in Russia and Morocco)
- Launch first in the Near East and expand thereafter to East Africa, South and Central Asia, and to Southeast Asia.
- Integrate these efforts into the broader U.S.G. development strategy and into overall governance and economic reforms.

**2. Commit to a major medical diplomacy initiative.** A global initiative, launched as a sustained commitment to eradicate preventable diseases, such as malaria, would provide an umbrella for USG and private sector programs already underway or launched in support of the initiative. The US is doing a tremendous amount to contribute to the better health of people around the world, but as with our development assistance, it is not well publicized.

Could include: Health and Human Service teams stationed in countries to work with governments on major disease problems, locate military training of medical personnel in key areas with clinics for local populations, Veteran Affairs "Go Teams" to work with countries to inoculate citizens.

**3. Dramatically increase sports exchanges.** Throughout history, sports have played an important role in the social, political and economic lives of peoples and nations. Sports are a shared cultural passion that provide the vehicle for bringing people together across the divisions of region, politics, race and religion.

Could include: Expand the Sports/Public Diplomacy Envoy program to be kicked off this month with announcement of figure skater Michelle Kwan's participation. Have President ask major sports franchises to commit to send a certain number of high-profile players in off-season. Partner with major sporting goods companies such as Nike to donate goods to support our overseas sports initiatives. Build high-profile sports diplomacy exchanges around the 2008 Beijing Olympics to capitalize on the world's attention and the unique gathering of athletes (to include major events in the lead-up, particularly the Women's World Cup and first NFL game in China in 2007).

**4. Expand the Global Cultural Initiative (GCI).** On September 25, 2006, First Lady Laura Bush launched this comprehensive initiative to coordinate, enhance and expand America's cultural diplomacy efforts worldwide as a platform for engagement and understanding. Builds upon and mobilizes the vast talents and resources of America's cultural community through partnerships with U.S. government and private sector cultural agencies and institutions. Through initial partnerships with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the American Film Institute (AFI), the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH), the National Endowment for the Arts

(NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the State Department will be able to combine, build upon and call attention to the vital work of government agencies and the broader cultural arts community

With additional funding in the amount of **\$10 million**, could support projects that will send American cultural figures abroad to work with youth, especially disadvantaged and disabled (VSA); bring cultural visitors to U.S. for mentoring and building partnerships with U.S. cultural institutions; and expand dramatically traveling music groups, performing arts and visual arts initiative grants, museum and community partnerships; and the open competition (arts).

**5. Major Youth Engagement Initiative:** Target youth and their social networks using all available technological means (satellite TV, mobile phones, and Internet) to counter ideological support for terrorism in key regions. Empower young people to become civic actors in the initiative and empower them as the most credible interlocutors to engage vulnerable youth from the slums and refugee camps and draw them out of isolation. Promote not only through people-to-people initiatives, but also via digital, audio, and visual means that increase youth access, diversify their perspectives, and provoke a questioning of the status quo, while challenging them to seek answers through new and exciting forums that we support. Types of programs that could be included: on-line counseling programs; youth-focused TV and Radio programming; education on substantive use of the internet linked with serious expansion of internet access; and peer-to-peer interactive and media programs focused on philanthropy, education, and substantive recreation.

#### **6. Public Diplomacy to Counter Insurgency in Iraq.**

- Substantially expand the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs "Micro scholarship" program and establish a special scholarship program targeted at youth in key "disadvantaged" areas in Iraq, such as Sadr City or Anbar Governate. Reaching hundreds of students would have a real effect, in terms of an expression of American good faith and make a qualitatively different future available to Iraqi youth.
- Create a fund to support media projects by Iraqis, such as documentaries, short films, animation, audio-visual productions and other media material that would show Iraq's reality to pan-Arab and pan-Islamic audiences. These programs would demonstrate the US supporting Iraqis presenting their own reality in all its complexity and contradiction.
- Revive book publishing in Iraq as a way to fill the intellectual vacuum and provide a tangible expression of support to hard-pressed Iraqi intellectuals and moderates, influence political thinking in Iraq and the region, stimulate Iraqi business capacity, and promote democratic values and processes.