

## **Opening Statement of Senator George V. Voinovich**

### **Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia**

#### ***“A Reliance on Smart Power – Reforming the Public Diplomacy Bureaucracy”***

**September 23, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening today’s hearing to discuss how we can improve the effectiveness of our nation’s public diplomacy efforts.

As a Member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I have had the opportunity to see first-hand the success and failure of our efforts to win the hearts and minds of the world’s citizens. I remain concerned that our public diplomacy is arguably at its lowest point in history. As a nation, we simply must do a better job communicating our policy objectives and actions on the international stage. The solution to this challenge does not rest solely with the State Department, however. Nor does it lie with the creation of a new government entity.

Mr. Chairman, you and I have worked on some concrete tools to improve our public diplomacy, such as reform of the Visa Waiver Program, combining security enhancements while also facilitating legitimate travel by some of our closest allies.

Now, we must work to ensure the State Department has the leadership capacity, resources and people necessary to do the job we’ve asked them to do. Our men and women in uniform can no longer be responsible for foreign assistance and messaging. Secretary Gates’ July 2008 call for increasing our investment in the capacity and readiness of the State Department was welcome news on this front.

Congress has the benefit of a number of thoughtful reports and recommendations to improve our global engagement, including the recent report by the Commission on Smart Power and the forthcoming report by the American Academy of Diplomacy. The Commission on Smart Power emphasized the fact that our success in public diplomacy depends in large part on

building long-term, people to people relationships. Given the short-term duration of our hardship posts, I am concerned about the ability of our Foreign Service Officers to cultivate the relationships necessary to carry our message forward.

According to the American Academy of Public Diplomacy, the number of State Department personnel responsible for public diplomacy is 24 percent less than in 1986. The Academy outlines a plan to meet this shortfall, which includes a focus on training. The Academy also recognizes the need to more effectively use the Internet to win the hearts and minds of broader audiences. The Committee's oversight work on radicalization shows that much work remains to be done in this area.

Congress must recognize its responsibility by making careful choices among the many domestic and international funding priorities to ensure the State Department has the tools necessary to meet new realities and emerging challenges. Our budget situation demands that we allocate scarce resources to areas where the United States can achieve the greatest return on investment. I look forward to the testimony today and to learning from our witnesses their recommendations on the most responsible path forward.