

\*REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY\*  
OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BILL DELAHUNT  
OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,  
HUMAN RIGHTS, AND OVERSIGHT, AT A HEARING TITLED:

*RELEASE AND REVIEW OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: "THE  
DECLINE IN AMERICA'S REPUTATION: WHY?"*

June 12, 2008

Last year the Subcommittee conducted a series of ten hearings on international opinion about the United States and its foreign policies. I am sure my good friend and ranking member Mr. Rohrabacher will agree that it was an exhausting, if not exhaustive, process. We heard from respected polling experts with data from every continent except Antarctica, and that was only because penguins are notoriously hostile to pollsters.

But seriously, there was a reason why I made this topic the subject of the very first hearing we held during my tenure as Chairman of the Subcommittee -- a reason why I have invested so much of the Subcommittee's time and effort in holding the ten hearings and preparing the report we are releasing today.

And that rationale is summed up perfectly in something written over 140 years ago about the importance of our national reputation to our ability to conduct a foreign policy worthy of our ideals.

As the end of the Civil War drew near, Ulysses S. Grant was thinking about what role the United States could play in international affairs. Here is what he wrote:

That nation, united, will have a strength which will enable it to dictate to all others, *conform to justice and right.*

According to biographer Charles Flood, Grant then contemplated "the limits of power, the good it could achieve if used wisely, and the dangers of using it in an immoral way." Grant concluded with these words:

Power I think can go no further. The moment conscience leaves, physical strength will avail nothing, in the long run.

The data presented to this Subcommittee during the ten hearings and compiled in the report we are releasing today show that the world thinks that our conscience has indeed left us, and that our physical strength has come to be seen not as a solace but as a threat – not as a guarantee of stability and order, but as a source of intimidation, violence, and torture.

As Grant feared, our strength has availed us nothing -- indeed its unilateral use has cost us much. We have dangerously depleted what Grant, who at the time he wrote those words was still a military commander, identified as our greatest source of international power -- our reputation for what he called conscience. I would substitute the phrase, “moral authority.”

In a second report the Subcommittee will address the complex issue of precisely what impact the decline in our international standing has had on our ability to conduct foreign policy and safeguard our national security and national interests. Today’s report, though, has a simpler, and a singular focus. This report seeks to establish a baseline of facts – data - perhaps not indisputable, but strongly suggestive -- about what has happened to our international reputation and why.

The report is being issued by all Members of the Subcommittee with the exception of my Ranking Member, so I propose to proceed today by reading the summary of the eight main findings, and then turning to Mr. Rohrabacher to summarize his views as included in the report, and then asking our witnesses, who have read both the report and his views, to comment on the findings and what they believe are their implications for our foreign policy and our national interests.

Here are the findings, in summary form:

1. *It’s true: U.S. approval ratings have fallen to record lows in nearly every region of the world. Generally positive ratings from the 1950’s to 2001 have moved to generally negative ratings since 2002. Approval ratings are highest in non-Muslim Africa and lowest in Latin America and in Muslim countries.*

2. *It's the policies:* *Opposition to specific U.S. policies, rather than to American values or people, has driven this decline. The key policies are: the invasion and occupation of Iraq; support for repressive governments worldwide; a perceived lack of even-handedness in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute; and torture and abuse of prisoners in violation of treaty obligations.*
3. *It's the perceived hypocrisy:* *Disappointment and bitterness arise from the perception that the proclaimed American values of democracy, human rights, tolerance, and the rule of law have been selectively ignored by successive administrations when American security or economic considerations are in play.*
4. *It's the unilateralism:* *A recent pattern of ignoring international consensus, particularly in the application of military power, have led to anger and a fear of attack that are transforming disagreement with U.S. policies into a broadening and deepening anti-Americanism, as suggested by the Government Accountability Office.*
5. *It's the historical memory:* *U.S. domination remains a potent image for long periods – and that image is used to discredit current U.S. policies.*
6. *It's the lack of contact:* *Contact with America and Americans reduces anti-Americanism, but not opposition to specific policies. Visitors to America -- particularly students -- and even their families and friends, have more positive views about America than non-visitors by ten percentage points.*
7. *It's the visas:* *Interaction with U.S. immigration and the visa process is a significant source of frustration with America. Muslim applicants in particular report that, customs officials create a perception that they are not welcome. This perception spreads across their communities through “horror stories” about travel to the United States.*
8. *It's the perceived war on Islam:* *The combination of all of the previous findings has created a growing belief in the Islamic world*

*that the United States is using the “war on terror” as a cover for its attempts to destroy Islam.*

Our witnesses today will assess those findings for us. I will introduce them shortly. Now, though, I recognize my distinguished Ranking Member for as much time as he desires.