U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Briefing on U.S. Public Diplomacy and the War of Ideas

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MR. WOOD: Good afternoon. We have here today Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs James Glassman. He's going to talk to you about U.S. efforts – public diplomacy efforts in the war of ideas. So without further ado, I'll turn it over to the Under Secretary.

Please.

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Thanks. Thank you, Robert. Two weeks ago, I had the privilege of giving a briefing to the President and the Vice President and several others from the White House on the state of the war of ideas. So there seemed to be some interest in my discussing this with you, so let me just talk about it for a while, and then I'll just take your questions.

First some background, and then I want to talk a little bit about structure and strategy and programs. In public diplomacy, we have the same objectives as the rest of the U.S. Government's foreign policy and national security actors. The top goals are to reduce the threat to America and to promote freedom. In public diplomacy, we do that by understanding, informing, engaging and influencing foreign publics. And our tools are images, words, and deeds.

While official diplomacy is aimed at officials – our Secretary of State talking to their foreign minister – public diplomacy is aimed at publics – our officials and often our publics engaging with their publics. So a simple breakdown of public diplomacy puts our work into three categories: first, telling America's story, explaining our policies and principles to the world; second, engaging in cultural and educational exchanges in battle-tested programs like the Fulbright fellowships; and third, fighting the war of ideas, which is what I want to talk to you about today.

The first category, telling America's story, is mainly about us. The second category, exchanges, is about both us and them. And the third, the war of ideas, is mainly about them. Over the past four months, we have shifted our focus and emphasis to the war of ideas, but we are not neglecting the first two categories, traditional public diplomacy. This is where we spend, by far, the majority of our money. Exchanges are our crown jewels and they have increased significantly under this Administration, and they have helped to boost U.S. respect and trust abroad. Just as an example, we just had one hundred – we have now, actually, one hundred international visitors from a hundred countries who are here to observe the U.S. elections and learn about the U.S. system. They're going out to five states, five battleground states, and they'll also be spending time at Harvard and talking to academics. They're here for two weeks.

In 2006, the President designated the Under Secretary to lead the interagency – primarily, State, USAID, Defense and the intelligence community – in the war of ideas, and that has been my focus. In the war of ideas, our core task is not to fix foreigners' perceptions of the United States, but to isolate and reduce the threat of violent extremism, not with bombs and bullets, of course, but with words, images, and deeds. And as I said, it's about them, not about us.

We were very good at the war of ideas during the Cold War. But after the Berlin Wall came down, the war of ideas was also largely dismantled, as was public diplomacy in general – in bipartisan fashion, I should add – over the 1990s. For example, USIA was merged into the State Department. A number of public – the number of public diplomacy officers fell. Radio Free Europe was cut back. Funding for ideological engagement dried up. When George W. Bush became President, there was no war of ideas strategy to speak of and no infrastructure. Today, as this Administration prepares to leave office, a strategy, a platform, and a new way of doing business are in place, ready for the next administration.

Briefly about the structure. We've reorganized. State has the lead and chairs the Policy Coordinating Committee on Strategic Communications with a National Security Council representative as vice chair. This PCC, as it's called, reports up to a deputies and then to a principals committee with the President on the top. The Global Strategic Engagement Center, or GSEC, which is a new interagency group of people from State, Defense, and the intelligence community, is our day-to-day strategy and operations center. The National Counterterrorism Center plays a key role in analysis and support, and we have a new apparatus to coordinate and de-conflict the covert activities that are the job of the intelligence agencies.

Everyone on our team knows the mission – it is to create a global environment that's hostile to violent extremism – and we do that in two ways. First, we confront and undermine the ideology that justifies and spurs the violence; and second, we divert young people from the path that leads them to violent extremism. We cut off the flow of recruits. As an example, Pakistan – we recently completed a new war of ideas plan for Pakistan, done in a relatively short time and the work of an interagency team. Our major objective is to get – is to amplify the Government of Pakistan's message that the terrorist threat is a serious one, an existential one, and that the war against violent extremism is Pakistan's war, as its president has said.

There are many other programs. There are many programs in Pakistan. Just one is a – the first project ever to help reform madrassas to teach critical thinking and universal values such as tolerance. We also – there's also a very interesting program that does fictional radio broadcasts, broadcast by young people, kind of little plays that illustrate important values. And in both of these very simple projects, we support the work of NGOs. We don't participate ourselves in these kinds of works – of work.

This shows what we're doing. In one country, Pakistan, the war of ideas is global, and technology can empower global networks that promote freedom, democracy, and anti-violence activity. Yes, our enemies use technology as well. Al-Qaida uses the internet to indoctrinate and teach violent techniques, and young people can play Hezbollah video games built on fantasies of killing Americans. But in general, violent extremist groups cannot adapt their approach to the new web 2.0 social networking technology that is sweeping the internet, technology that stresses democratic interaction. Al-Qaida does not want to expose its ideas to criticism.

We are latching onto the latest U.S. privately-developed technology – Facebook and Google, for example – against the violent extremists. Our belief is that the private sector understands how to use this technology to connect with millions of people far better than we in government understand it. We are hitching a ride on their fast-moving train.

I recently came back from Colombia, and in Colombia, a small group of young Colombians, without government assistance, used Facebook to build a movement that put 12 million people around the world into the streets on February 4th, including 1 million in Bogota alone, in demonstrations against the FARC, a violent extremist group that has terrorized that country for more than 40 years. The movement helped accelerate desertions from the FARC, and those demobilizations, as they're called, will exceed 3,000 this year.

We are acting as a facilitator to speed the use of the same techniques – again employed by foreign citizens, not governments – to build movements against violence in other Latin American nations, in South Asia, the Middle East, in Europe, and elsewhere. Globally, we have dozens of such projects, and we use the State Department's greatest asset, our network of embassies and consulates, to develop an understanding of what is wanted and needed on the ground. For example, we're creating a global network that connects women opposed to violence organized on the MADD or Mothers Against Drunk Driving model in the United States. This network encourages women, many of whose families and neighbors have been victims of violence, to stand up and oppose violence in their own communities. Women are agents for change.

We are backing the project for the future of the Middle East, which is convening the best minds to launch a mainstream think tank in the Middle East region. We are funding a program to promote radio call-in shows in Tanzania that feature mainstream imams. Another key battleground for the war of ideas is Europe, and some 20 million Muslims live in Western Europe. We're engaged in amplifying mainstream Muslim voices to push back against violent extremism, and we're building coalitions of young Muslim technology engineer – entrepreneurs and offering positive alternatives to Europe's Muslim youth.

Many of our traditional public diplomacy programs aid in the war of ideas. A good example is English teaching. In practically every country in the world, people want to learn English, which they and their governments associate with upward economic mobility. Even in tough neighborhoods in Yemen, our Access Microscholarship program is teaching teenagers English after school, 44,000 of them right now around the world. Teaching English does not simply mean imparting words, but ideas.

Is the war of ideas working? It's our strong belief that al-Qaida contains the seeds of its own destruction, and as we saw in Al Anbar province in Iraq, we can hurry that process along by amplifying the story of its violence against women, children, and fellow Muslims, the story of its – and the story of its former adherents turning against it. One dramatic change over the past few years is that favorable opinion toward Osama bin Ladin and Muslim nations has plummeted, as has support for suicide bombing.

We can't take credit, of course – all the credit for these declines. These attitudes are the ones we seek to change along with the behaviors that follow from them. It's more important today in the war of ideas that support for the violent extremists fall than that support for the United States rise. And in fact, the favorability of the United States has risen in 80 percent of the countries in the most recent Pew Global Attitudes survey.

Here is our ultimate goal: a world in which the use of violence to achieve political, religious, or social objectives is no longer considered acceptable; efforts to radicalize and recruit new members are no longer successful; and the perpetrators of violent extremism are condemned and isolated. The difference between 2001 and 2008 is that the structure, the strategy, and the programs and the will to achieve this goal are in place and in operation. For the future, the challenge will be to scale up to meet global threats and opportunities. Thank you.

So we'll just entertain questions from the floor. Yes.

QUESTION: I have a couple of questions, actually. Firstly, in all those things that you mentioned about public diplomacy, you didn't mention one of the things that the U.S. Government spent, kind of, billions of dollars since its inception to use, and that's your kind of Middle East broadcasting – Radio Sawa and Al Hurra. I mean, that was supposed to target, you know, kind of extremist ideas and have a – you know, put forward a message of freedom and democracy. So I was kind of curious about that.

And then I'm just kind of curious about – I mean, you talk about the war of ideas, but, you know, what is the war of ideas? It seems as if you're talking – you talk about your three pillars of cultural exchanges, you know, putting out the message of America, and then the third is a war with the people that you're trying to reach. And I'm not sure if the word "war" is going to be misconstrued in the region, that you're having a war of ideas with people. I mean –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Right.

QUESTION: Don't you think it's, you know, more of an exchange of – an exchange of ideas? Because I really feel as if, the more that you talk – I understand the war on terrorism, but ideas shouldn't be about a war. Isn't it, you're supposed to be listening to the other side and they're supposed to be listening to you and it's supposed to be a free flow of ideas?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I agree –

QUESTION: I just –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: No, no, let me just address the last point first. I agree with you the war of ideas is not the best phrase here, and I have – and previously, I have entertained substitutes and I continue to. We sometimes use the term "global ideological engagement." We have the GSAC, which is the Global Strategic Engagement Center. We do – other parts of the government sometimes talk about ideological engagement.

The way I talk about war of ideas is really in juxtaposition with a war of bombs and bullets. In other words, there is a war, there's a struggle, against – let's call it in general terms violent extremism. We do that sometimes with bullets, but we also do it with ideas. So that's what the war of ideas is.

But I take your point. And one of the things that is a problem is that the kind of Manichean view of the world, the sort of, you know, you're either like us or – say the violent extremists, or you're an enemy, is one that we don't accept and that we don't promote. I mean, our view of the world is that there are many wonderful opportunities – wonderful, productive paths for people to take. And there's one path we don't want them to take. And we don't have any – you know, we're not shy about saying that we want to destroy – people talk about brand – we want to destroy the brand that promotes violent extremism. We do that.

QUESTION: I understand. But if I might just press you on this, I mean, in this country, ideas are sacrosanct. There's the freedom of expression. There's the freedom of ideas. And when you talk about using Facebook and Google and all these things to launch a "war" – I mean, aren't you –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: We're not – I understand what you're saying. We're not using Facebook to launch a war. Absolutely not. In fact, what we're using Facebook for is to invite exactly what you're talking about, which I tend to call the – maybe too grandiosely – the grand conversation. We want a conversation. We spend a lot of time working as a facilitator or a convener. I mean, I'll give you one interesting example – I think it's interesting anyway – called the – our Democracy Video Project, where with nine private sector partners, including NBC Universal and New York University and a number of high-tech firms, we have launched a contest where people around the world will send videos and actually post them on YouTube, on a special part of YouTube, that will compete to win in this contest. And the subject is "Democracy Is…"

Now, frankly, we don't control this at all, which is kind of an unusual thing for a government to be doing. You know, the winner could be someone who has a video that is – that opposes U.S. policy, let's say, in the Middle East. So that's the kind of thing we're doing. We actually want to encourage this conversation because we think – we have the confidence to think that, in the end, the values that people will move toward are the values that I think are universal.

Let me address your first question, because I think it's important and there may be some misconceptions. I used to be the chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors. The BBG is emphatically – was created by Congress in 1999 as an independent agency. It's not part of the State Department. I continue to sit on the Board as the Secretary of State's representative among nine governors. So it's not a State Department institution.

And when you say that the BBG or that the Middle East broadcasting was set up to target extremist ideas, that's not quite right. The BBG was set up – I'm sorry, the Middle East broadcasting was set up under the same kinds of journalistic constraints and values that Voice of America was set up in 1942. And the idea was to tell the truth as any other journalistic institution would do and not – in fact, the mandate of BBG institutions, in fact, is not to advocate or to push U.S. policy. Now, U.S. policy does get explained, but it's not – that's not our job. That's our job at the State Department.

Al Hurra and Radio Sawa were started 2002, 2003. At – before they were created, the only way that U.S. international broadcasting reached Arabic-speaking populations was through VOA Radio, with an audience of about 2 to 3 million per week. The audience now – the combined audience of Sawa and Al Hurra is 35 million a week. So it's been a huge increase. Has Al Hurra – does Al Hurra have farther to go? Absolutely. Does Radio Sawa? Absolutely. And by the way, billions of dollars have not been spent on this. Maybe that's unfortunate, but the budget of Al Hurra is about $80 million a year. The combined budget of the two, Al Hurra and Sawa, is a little over $100 million a year.

So – and you know, and they're succeeding. They're young. Voice of America has been operating for 66 years now. Al Hurra and Sawa have been operating for a short period of time. And it is a – it's definitely a competitive market, especially in television. Radio Sawa is the largest Arabic language radio network in the world, and you know, I'm proud of what they've done. I'm proud as a board member. And – but as I say, it's not part of the State Department.

QUESTION: Can I ask you dumb question on BBG? Are there nine governors right now?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: No. Unfortunately, there are not.

QUESTION: Well, what exactly –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: And I can say from this podium that I think that's quite unfortunate that there are not.

QUESTION: Well, yeah, what's happened? I mean –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: What's happened is that there are currently six governors. I have not – I was not – I have not been replaced as chairman. And I think it would be a good idea if the Senate would approve the entire slate of governors who are up there waiting to be approved.

QUESTION: Yeah, do you have any idea when that might happen –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I do not.

QUESTION: – as time draws down?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I do not. Unfortunately, it's not up to me.

QUESTION: Well, I mean, how badly has that hurt the BBG's efforts?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I think that it's definitely – has definitely been a detriment. Not a severe detriment, but as time goes on, it'll be – it will be worse. And for this reason: The BBG is an unusual institution in government in that it doesn't have a CEO, it doesn't have a head of agency; the board itself, the governors themselves, are the head of agency. So they're very, very active. It's not like a typical board of directors of any sort. And with six, rather than nine, and without a chair, that is a problem.

QUESTION: Let me ask, just like – I'm going to ask a broader question that – I think that Elise may have been trying to get at this, but I'm not sure. And that is, in this war of ideas, as you're out there on the frontlines of it, do you not find that what bothers people – foreigners – about the United States is not the idea of the U.S. or the idea of democracy, but it's your specific policy? Every single time that there's been a study or a report commissioned about how the U.S. can improve its image abroad, that always comes out to be the number one thing that people have – take issue with. And that is that it's not the message or how you deliver it, it's the actual policy that the rest of the government – that the government is actually going and – is carrying out. Do you not find that until you address the policy differences and unhappiness with the policy that this war is unwinnable?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I think it's a little more complicated than that. I am – I have read deeply into the literature on this subject, and let me tell you what my conclusions are. I think there are really – when we talk about America's image – and by the way, we don't believe that in our war of ideas activities, or a lot of them, the image of the United States is a major detriment in our success. In other words, we work with a lot of countries and a lot of people who don't agree with us, who don't agree with our policy in Iraq, don't agree with our policy toward the Palestinians and Israelis, but they face a very severe threat, the same threat that we face, in some cases much worse. And so in our two-pronged strategy, which is pushing back against the ideology and diverting young people, they're completely with us. They're doing very much the same kinds of things, sometimes in concert with us, usually not, but they're doing the same things.

But America's image is important. And my conclusion is there are really three reasons that, in some parts of the world – now, I want to stress the some – that in Africa, for example, the United States is very, very well liked, in much of Asia the United States is well liked, in countries like India, Japan, South Korea. The main locus of animosity toward the United States is Europe, or much of Europe, and the Middle East, as well as some other majority Muslim countries.

And I think there are three reasons. One – and it's not just I think, this is the research that I've seen. Number one, people understand that we're kind of the big guy on the block and that ultimately we, like very other country, you know, like Portugal, like Finland, like Indonesia, will follow our own national interests. I mean, that's – they understand that. But what they don't like is their perception that we don't listen to them and don't respect their views before we formulate what are our own policies. And whether that's a valid criticism or not, it's out there and we need to address it, and we have been addressing it.

The second problem is, I think, that we haven't done a great job of explaining some of our policies and principles. And for example, I think that the single most pernicious misperception that's out there, an extremely dangerous misperception, is that the United States and the West, for that matter, are out to destroy Islam and replace it with Christianity. And when you look at the surveys in Muslim countries, you see 80, 90 percent of the people agreeing with that statement. Now, that's a statement that we need to do a better job of refuting.

Finally, there are policies, and absolutely there are people around the world who disagree with our policies. And in the end, we are not going to take a global vote about particular policies. But there's no doubt that there are consequences when people oppose your policies. And one of those consequences is you are reduced, let's say, in their respect and in their trust.

We take a long view, and a lot of what we do to improve the image of the United States is long term, is – are things like the Fulbrights. You know, we bring 50,000 people to the United States on exchanges every year. These programs were cut back severely in the 1990s, and I think we have felt the effects of those cutbacks today. I think that's another reason why favorability of the United States has declined.

Yes. Sorry.

QUESTION: Just to follow up on what Matt was saying, you know, both candidates running for president have pledged that as soon as they get into office, one of the first acts they'll do is shut down Guantanamo Bay prison and remove those detainees to U.S. prisons. And that's – and they both argue that they want to do that in order to improve the image of the United States. Are you saying that such an act such as – Guantanamo has become a symbol of anti-Americanism around the world – are you saying that that's irrelevant, that that's not really going to impact the image of the United States as much as these, you know, things you're doing such as amplifying –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Shutting down Guantanamo?

QUESTION: Yeah.

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Will that impact the image of the United States?

QUESTION: Yeah. Well, in some cases –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: In my personal view, no, it will not. I don't think it's going to affect the image of the United States. But let me just say this, the President of the United States said two years ago that he would like to close Guantanamo. I've been to Guantanamo. I can tell you that the images that you see, which are generally from March of 2002 of the guys in the orange jumpsuits with the cages, those don't reflect the reality of Guantanamo today. But more important than that, of the 800 people who have gone to Guantanamo during its history, 550 of them have been released. And it is the objective of this government to release quite a few of the people who are there now.

And you've seen what happened with this Uighur situation. Our government believes that we're not going to release people under circumstances where, if they go back to the place they're released to, they're going to be tortured or killed, or that they will be released and go back onto the battlefield, or that they certainly can't be released to countries that won't take them, and there are many of those. So simply saying, oh, we're going to shut down Guantanamo, that is not as easy as it sounds. And as I said, it's the policy of this government. The President of the United States said I would like to shut Guantanamo down.

Yeah, do I think that – just in answer to your first question, do I think that would have much of an effect? The – Al-Qaida has done a really, really good job – and you know, you can read the manual – in exploiting Guantanamo for their own purposes. And I think that exploitation is largely complete. I mean, people can still point to it, but I don't think it'll have a major effect on – you know, on the image of the United States.

QUESTION: Well –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Now – and also, let me also say this. I think there is a serious question – and when we talk about grand conversation, we're trying to encourage this conversation about what do you do when you pick up someone on a battlefield who is out to kill you – there's no doubt about that – as a detain – you hold that person as a detainee? Now, certainly, mistakes were made early on in the process by which people were detained and brought to Guantanamo, but we face this problem going forward. What do we do with them? Do we, you know, summarily execute them? Do we send them to a U.S. prison? Do we treat them as a conventional POW? Do we hold them for a specific number of years and release them? These are not easy questions, and most of the critics of Guantanamo don't even pretend to address these issues, which we need to address.

QUESTION: So – and just to follow on that in terms of the –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Sure.

QUESTION: I mean, well, what about – a lot – there's been a lot of commentary that if the United States were to elect an African American as president, that that would do a lot to change the image of the United States, more so than – I mean, you know, I think it's been written – and more so than all the public diplomacy programs put together by the State Department. Do you see that that would have any symbolic impact, or is that just an ephemeral thing that would be quickly forgotten?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: I guess I really – look, I think it's a great thing for the United States – I'm not endorsing a particular candidate here.

QUESTION: Oh, no, I wouldn't –

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: But I think it would be a great thing for the United States to elect an African American. I think it would be a great thing for the United States to have a woman as vice president or as president. And I think that would be beneficial to the United States.

I – but I also believe very strongly, and I've – and this is not just a belief. I mean, I see it in action. We've seen it in action all year. The world is really excited about the American election. I mean, as I said, we have a hundred observers here and that's only the tip of the iceberg, the number of people that we have brought to the United States. And they're excited about it, certainly partly because of – that we have an African American as the Democratic nominee. We almost had a woman as the Democratic presidential nominee. We have a woman as the Republican vice presidential nominee. We have a guy who was a POW for five and a half years and who was essentially thought to be completely out of the race on the Republican side. It's an exciting race and it's a critical time. So I think that's why people are interested in this election.

MR. WOOD: We have time for two more questions. Nina and Kirit.

QUESTION: Yeah, could you give to me a few more concrete examples of the kinds of programs that you are implementing? For example, what's your digital outreach team? What do they actually do?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: Sure. The digital outreach team was a program that was started by my predecessor, Karen Hughes, and we've expanded it. But it's a great program. And we have a small number – we'd like to have a larger number – of people who go onto the internet, into chat rooms, onto popular websites, onto blogs in some cases, and talk about American policy, correct mistakes that are being made, and refer people back to factual documents. They identify themselves as working for the State Department. They do this in Arabic, in Farsi and in Urdu, and we're considering a few Russian language members of the digital outreach team. So it's – I think it works very well. That's one of the things we do.

MR. WOOD: Kirit.

QUESTION: I just wanted to ask you about – there's this raid that occurred in Syria over the weekend and the U.S. Government has refused to talk about it all, which has left basically a void the conversation; the only voice out there is the anti-American voice. How much does that really hamper the efforts that you're trying to do when it comes to trying to explain U.S. policy and then sell it to a population in the Middle East that has clearly had an anti-American slant to it?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: You know, look, there are reasons that we can't talk about certain things, so – and I understand that. Let me make a general comment and not a comment about this particular alleged raid. And my general comment is that the more we talk about what's going on in the world and our role in it, the better. The more transparency, the better. We are trying to, ourselves, in public diplomacy, not dictate to people, not preach at people, but in fact encourage a broad conversation.

And I just mentioned Guantanamo. I mean, one of the programs that we're supporting is a moot court presentation in Kuwait, where people will discuss this issue of detainees: How do you deal with detainees? You know, I think a lot of the discussion of Guantanamo has been just severely caricatured, and it involves serious questions. There are a lot of people inside government and out who feel that the best policy for the U.S. Government is not to talk about Guantanamo at all, and I disagree with that. But I – but certainly, there are military operations, there are certain kinds of activities that, you know, we can't talk about, and that makes sense.

QUESTION: I mean, but – in cases where – just to follow up, I mean, in cases – this is not the first time. I mean, there have been, you know, rocket firings into Pakistan on a regular basis. This is, you know – that have fed this kind of anti-American sentiment. And there's no U.S. official voice in this discussion. I mean, it's only an anti-American voice from the other side, whether it's the other government, the Taliban, the – or whatever group that's been targeted by it. I mean, doesn't that hamper your

efforts?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: You know, as I said, I think that broader discussions of these issues – of issues, in general – as I'm making a general comment, not about Syria – are good, are better, not worse. But you know, let me also speak generally about military action. You know, I mean, military action against violent extremists has and continues to have a solid strategic base. There's a reason behind it. I mean, we used military action in Kosovo and in Bosnia that was quite beneficial to Muslim populations. I think simply to say, you know, there's something terrible about military action – yes, it'd be nice if you didn't have to employ it at all, but sometimes it's important to employ.

And also let me – let me also make a general comment about something I talked about earlier in a different context, which is the flow of foreign fighters and recruits into these critical areas. I mean, we push back using our tools, which are the war of ideas and – but there certainly is a valid role for military tools. And these are – you know, these are serious threats that the world faces, and what we try to do is use ideas to push back, but there's absolutely a role for the military.

MR. WOOD: Last brief question right here. Yeah, go.

QUESTION: I have two quick questions. The first one concerning – do you have a specific apparatus to measure how much progress have you achieved in your efforts? That's the first. The second is an elaboration on my colleague's question concerning the policies. I'm – I have come from the region – very fresh from there – and whenever you ask anybody in the region, "Do you have anything against the U.S.," he says, "Against the people, no. But against, the U.S. and the policies, yes, I have a lot, especially against the U.S. policy towards Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli issue."

So don't you think that your efforts will be a kind of beating about the bush, while the same policies are still being applied?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: No, I don't think that our policies are beating around the bush or peripheral in their effects. And when you ask, you know, how do you evaluate or is there evidence that the policies are working, it's very hard to measure because there are other factors that are moving a particular needle. But as I said earlier, there is absolutely no doubt – and you can look at the Pew data and there are other data over the last few years – the support for al-Qaida and similar violent extremist groups throughout Muslim nations, among Muslim people, has been declining and declining in a dramatic fashion. And that's – and that is true for particular tactics, like suicide bombing – big declines.

Now, there's no doubt that one of the major reasons for this is the actual personal experience that people are now having with the brutality, the wanton brutality of al-Qaida and similar groups, you know, Amman, you know, what's happened in Morocco, what just happened in Islamabad. So there is personal experience. But as I said earlier, I think these groups contain the seeds of their own destruction, and part of our job is to amplify it, is to get that word out. And I think the word is getting out. So exactly how much credit we or any other organization that's trying to promote the understanding of the truth about these violent extremist groups, you know, how much is owed to us and how much is owed to their own violence, it's hard to say. It's really hard to say.

QUESTION: Their policies?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: You know, as far as policies are concerned, look, you know, in the early 1980s, the United States, with cooperation from European governments, moved missiles into Europe that much of the European population was very much opposed to. We thought it was the right policy at the time, and it turned out to be the right policy. I think it was pretty – it's pretty clear that it played a major role in the fall of the Soviet Union.

We absolutely recognize the – you know, the views of people in the Middle East and elsewhere about our policies toward the Palestinians and the Israelis. I mean, we are – we're proud of those policies. And this President is the one who enunciated the two-state policy, which is now supported by virtually every country in the world. And so – but we understand that there are different views out there and – but – and we're taking those into account, but we're not going to change our policy for that reason. You can't put that kind of policy to a global vote. But can we make progress in other fronts? Absolutely. And I believe that we are.

QUESTION: Just quickly, how much money are you spending? How much money is this, like, initiative of the war of ideas? Can you quantify it?

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN: It's not much. I will say that much.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

MR. WOOD: Thanks, guys.

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