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Changing the Nature and Scope of Public Diplomacy

Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
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Under the direction of Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, public diplomacy has become a national security priority that is now viewed as central to the work of America's diplomats worldwide. Under Secretary Hughes aggressively expanded public diplomacy and international communications programs, won increased funding for them, and initiated numerous innovations and institutional changes, including the following:

- A new Rapid Response Unit now constantly monitors international broadcast media and the Internet and informs American policy makers with a concise daily report of what is driving world news from the Middle East to Latin America, and then provides our U.S. position on those issues to an email list of several thousand senior officials, from Cabinet secretaries to military commanders.
- A new Counter-Terrorism Communications Center staffed with experts from different agencies develops culturally sensitive messages to undermine and discredit terrorists.
- The Bureau of International Information Programs has been transformed into a high-tech hub with web sites in English and six foreign languages, a digital outreach team that counters misinformation and myths on blogs in Arabic, and a new video production unit.
- The private sector is more involved in public diplomacy than ever before. More than \$800 million in public-private partnerships has been leveraged for programs from disaster relief to education and health care to a new video donated by Disney to welcome international visitors. And at a private sector summit earlier this year at the State Department, the business community developed 11 specific recommendations to get American businesses more involved in public diplomacy.
- English-language programs have been dramatically expanded; including a new youth engagement program that reached more than 6,000 young people ages 8 to 14 with English-language teaching, sports, computer activities and leadership training. Learning English gives young people a marketable skill and opens the window to a wider world of knowledge.
- New Regional Media Hubs position language-qualified Foreign Service officers in the major regional media centers of Dubai, Brussels, and London to articulate America's policies and values on television, radio and print media.
- Among programs to expand outreach to Muslim audiences is a new "Citizen Dialogue" initiative that sends Muslim Americans abroad to engage with Muslim communities across the world.

- New partnerships reach out strategic audiences, including a business women’s mentoring collaboration with FORTUNE Magazine’s most powerful women, and an international journalism training partnership with the Aspen Institute and 12 American communications schools, to teach professional standards of objective reporting and inform journalists about America.
- Outreach to women has been significantly expanded with the launch of a breast cancer initiative in the Middle East and the creation of networking summits between business women from the U.S. and across the Middle East.
- A new partnership with U.S. higher education helped attract a record number of international students to study in America and reversed the trend of decline that began in the years after September 11. Issuance of student visas set an all-time high of 591,000 in 2006 and U.S. delegations traveled to Asia and Latin America to encourage students to come to America to study.
- Participation in education and exchange programs--people-to-people diplomacy--has grown from 27,000 in 2004 to nearly 40,000 today.
- People-to-people exchanges with Iran were restarted after a 29-year lapse. American wrestling teams received standing ovations in fall 2006 in Iran--and in spring 2007, an exhibit of the new generation of Iranian artists opened to acclaim in Washington D.C.
- As Secretary Rice’s representative on the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Under Secretary Hughes helped recruit new leadership for the BBG, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty ,and the Voice of America, and worked to set a strategic direction for U.S. Government broadcasting.
- The flagship Fulbright academic program is at record highs of 2,822 grants to visiting students and 1,300 grants to Americans for international study. Fulbright grants in Iraq and Afghanistan were resumed for the first time in two decades.
- A new Global Cultural Initiative was launched in partnership with groups like the Kennedy Center and American Film Institute to foster more cultural programs and exchanges, which remind audiences across the world that despite differences of language or culture or policy, we share a common humanity.
- Sports programming is being dramatically expanded in partnership with America’s professional and college sports communities to reach out to young people in a way that also teaches life skills of team work, discipline, and respect for one another.
- A new Public Diplomacy Envoy program enlisted Olympic skater Michelle Kwan and baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. to represent America overseas.
- America’s public diplomacy outreach has been strengthened based on recommendations from more than 30 studies of U. S. public diplomacy--including the development of a new National Strategic Communications Plan, the first inter-agency communications plan ever approved for use throughout the federal government.

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