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Announcement of Nominations of Karen P. Hughes as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and Dina Powell as Assistant Secretary of State For Educational and Cultural Affairs

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Benjamin Franklin Room

Washington, DC

March 14, 2005

(12:00 p.m. EST)

SECRETARY RICE: Good afternoon. In the last century, our nation advanced its principles, we debated our policies, and we welcomed dialogue. We did so on every continent and we did so with people of diverse cultures, creeds, races and religions. We spoke openly and candidly and truthfully and we were faithful to the tradition that open debate is the only antidote to closed minds. As a result, we achieved much success in the last century.

But the challenges of today are much different than the challenges of yesterday and when it comes to our public diplomacy we simply must do better. Indeed, one key conclusion reached by the 9/11 Commission was that our nation must improve how we engage with the rest of the world. President Bush has outlined the charge of our times. We on the right side of freedom's divide have an obligation to help those unlucky enough to have been born on the wrong side of that divide.

To meet this charge our nation must engage in a much stronger dialogue with the world. Sadly, too few in the world today know about the goodness and compassion and generosity of the American people. Too few know of our belief that every man and woman and child has value and that every voice has value. Too few know of our deep respect for the history and traditions of others and our respect for the religions of all. Too few know of the protections that we provide for freedom of conscience and freedom of speech. And too few know of the value we place on international institutions and the rule of law. Too few know, too, that American lives have been lost so that others, including Muslims, might live in freedom and that others might have a future of their own making.

The time has come to look anew at our institutions of public diplomacy. We must do much more to confront hateful propaganda, dispel dangerous myths and get out the truth. We must increase our exchanges with the rest of the world. We



must work closer than ever with educational institutions, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations and we must encourage our citizens to engage the world to learn foreign languages, to understand different cultures and to welcome others into their homes.

And to be successful we must listen. An important part of telling America's story is learning the stories of others. Our interaction with the rest of the world must not be a monologue. It must be a conversation. And as we engage in this conversation, America must remain open to visitors and workers and students from around the world. While we must never compromise our security, we must never close ourselves to the rest of the world. We need to look at the international community today and see the importance of openness.

Over and over in diplomatic meetings, I find myself at the table with leaders who were educated in an American university or an American college. Hundreds of current or former heads of state, cabinet level ministers and many other distinguished world leaders from government and business and education and the arts and sciences have participated in our International Visitor Programs. This is key to America's future, that our openness to the world is one of our strongest assets. I have said that the time for diplomacy is now. Well, the time for public diplomacy reform is also now.

Today, I am pleased to announce that President Bush intends to nominate Karen P. Hughes as the State Department's new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. Karen will have the rank of ambassador and, if confirmed, she will undertake a broad review and restructuring of our public diplomacy efforts. I can think of no individual more suited nor more suited for this task of telling America's story to the world, of nurturing America's dialogue with the world and advancing universal values for the world than Karen Hughes. She will be an outstanding leader of the fine men and women of the State Department who are devoted to these critical tasks.

My good friend Karen and I have traveled together with the President to many foreign capitals and she and I have worked closely on key foreign policy issues from Afghanistan to peace in the Middle East, from the President's efforts to combat HIV and AIDS to the President's agenda to encourage democratic reform and prosperity among many other issues.

Karen's communication skills and her foreign policy experience are certainly well known, but I believe the most important attribute that she brings to this job is her strong belief that almost anything can be accomplished when different people from different cultures join together to change the world for the better.

Karen knows the importance of education and she understands the power of ideas, and she believes strongly that we must mobilize young people around the globe to shatter the mistrust of past grievances and to foster a new spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

On a personal note, Karen has taken a deep interest in the status of women in Afghanistan. She helped lead the Administration's initiative to free Afghan women from the abuses of the Taliban. She has traveled to Afghanistan three times to work on issues of importance to citizens there. Karen, you're ahead of me. I'm traveling to Kabul for the first time this week. Karen has worked in her own community to raise funds to build a school for girls and boys in northern Afghanistan.

Karen has the spirit and the drive and the determination to take on this important mission during these important times and I'm honored that she is going to take on this new challenge.

I also want to announce today the President's intention to nominate Dina Powell as Assistant Secretary for Educational



and Cultural Affairs. Dina will serve as Karen's principal deputy and she will also have the title of Deputy Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy.

And Dina, be good to the interns in Educational and Cultural Affairs. I, myself, was an intern there in 1977.

As you know, Dina currently serves as Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel. What you probably don't know is that Dina is an Egyptian-born Arabic speaker who has served as an effective spokesperson for the President's policies here at home and abroad, particularly on the Middle East. As an immigrant who came to the United States as a young child, Dina knows well the promise of America and she will be an effective voice as we seek to reform our public diplomacy to meet the challenges of this new century.

Thank you very much, Dina. Thank you, Karen, for serving. And now Karen for a few remarks.

MS. HUGHES: Thank you so much, Secretary Rice. I thank all of you for being here. First I want to thank President Bush for once again giving me the great honor and privilege of having the opportunity to serve my country. We had a great working breakfast with the President this morning, Secretary Rice and I, and we talked about this moment of great opportunity for freedom and the important and vital role that public diplomacy will play in that effort.

Secretary Rice, thank you for your comments and for your confidence. Should I be confirmed, one of the great joys of this new assignment would be the opportunity to work for Secretary Rice and with the wonderful team of people that she is leading here at the State Department.

As I have traveled in recent weeks, I have heard Americans in airports and restaurants, and just this weekend at a small store in Brenham, Texas, talk about our new Secretary of State and how capable and intelligent and professional and poised she always is, and how proud they are to have her represent our country. And I certainly share those sentiments.

I thank Dina Powell for being willing to take on this challenging assignment with me. Dina shares my passion for public diplomacy and she has an immigrant sensitivity and heightened sense of appreciation for the opportunity that is really the essence of our great country. Should we both be confirmed, we will make a great team and we will build on the important work done before us by our friend, Ambassador Margaret Tutwiler, during her tenure here.

I see Ambassador Ed Djerejian is here. Ed, I want to thank you and so many other individuals and institutes and think tanks who have done such thoughtful and important work in the area of public diplomacy. Our country can certainly benefit from all of them.

One of my favorite aspects of my job at the White House that Secretary Rice mentioned was the opportunity to travel to so many foreign capitals and meet with leaders and people. I always tried to slip away to walk the streets and get a flavor of life. I remember an especially beautiful summer evening in Madrid and a wonderful, peaceful Sunday morning in Shanghai.

Along the way I also met so many outstanding employees, Foreign Service and career employees of the State Department, both working in embassies around the world and here in this building. They have devoted their careers and much of their lives to the service of our country. They have vastly more experience and certainly more expertise than I do, and I look forward to learning from them. If confirmed, I will seek and I will need their guidance and their ideas and their advice to make a difference. And I'm convinced at this moment, as the winds of freedom are blowing across the world, we have an



enormous opportunity to make an important difference.

If confirmed, I also look forward to working with Senators Lugar and Biden, Chairman Hyde and Congressman Lantos and other Members of Congress who have given so much leadership and thought to this very important issue of our public diplomacy.

I also want to thank my own family, especially my husband Jerry. As most of you know, I left Washington almost three years ago to spend more time with my family and to allow my son to attend high school during these critical years in Texas. Other than marrying my husband, that was the best decision I think I've ever made. I've treasured these years and now as we prepare to send my son Robert to college later this summer, I look forward to this new challenge, which my son pointed out is especially important for his own generation.

Secretary Rice mentioned my work in Afghanistan. During one of my visits there, I heard an old Afghan proverb that I think sets a good standard for our public diplomacy. The proverb counsels it takes two hands to clap. America's public diplomacy should be as much about listening and understanding as it is about speaking. And our message is much more likely to have impact among people of different countries when it is delivered with respect for their culture and their many accomplishments and with understanding of not only the reality of their lives but also of their dreams for the future.

I am eager to listen and to learn. Should I be confirmed, I plan to reach out to citizens and leaders of other countries who have important ideas to contribute and important perspectives that we need and want to hear. I grew up in an army family. I was born in Paris and lived overseas in Canada and in Panama. I learned to respect people of different countries and different cultures and I learned firsthand that America's policies can be interpreted differently in different places and from different perspectives. I view America's public diplomacy as a partnership for progress, an opportunity to work with other nations and peoples to replace oppression with opportunity, tyranny with tolerance, and ultimately to overcome hate with hope.

America has often struggled to live up to our own ideals and we have much to learn about becoming better citizens of the world. We must do a better job of teaching our children to learn about different languages, and cultures, and faiths. I believe education is a vital part of public diplomacy. Our future will only be peaceful if we teach all the world's children to respect and celebrate each other's differences. America's public diplomacy is neither Republican nor Democratic, but American, and it is not merely the purview of the R family here in Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the State Department. Every American who travels or works abroad or welcomes an exchange student or a visitor into their home, represents America to everyone that he or she meets.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my fellow citizens to share our country's good heart and our idealism and our values with the world. This job will be difficult. Perceptions do not change quickly or easily. This is a struggle for ideas. Clearly, in the world after September 11th, we must do a better job of engaging with the Muslim world. As the 9/11 Commission reported, if the United States does not act aggressively to define itself, the extremists will gladly do the job for us. And our public diplomacy efforts must also engage the wider world, from Europe to Latin America.

I cannot imagine anything more exciting than the opportunity to share the America I know with the people of the world, a country whose strength is our goodhearted people, a country where children, including my granddaughter, went door to door to collect money to help victims of the tsunami half a world away, where volunteers deliver meals to shut-ins and offer food to the homeless and visit prisoners, and where our government contributes billions to fight AIDS and improve basic services like water, electricity and health care that touch people's lives throughout the world.

Secretary Rice emphasized the time for diplomacy is now. Through greater use of today's technologies, the internet and

satellite television, through our vital people-to-people exchanges, through more creative public diplomacy programs, we will partner in common cause with other countries to defeat propaganda with truth, to send a message of solidarity to brave men and women who are taking great risks for their own freedom, to foster greater tolerance in a world too often torn by ethnic strife, to offer life-giving information and medicine to those with diseases, to offer life-saving help to victims of hunger and other national disasters.

I'll never forget visiting a literacy program overseas where young women were learning to read and I listened through a translator as a 13-year-old girl told me of her dreams of becoming a writer and her belief that women should be able to go to school and work and choose their own husband. And as I was leaving, the translator stopped me and said she wants to tell you something else. Please don't forget them, she said. Please help them live in freedom. Freedom is the universal hope of the human heart, instilled not by any country or government but by the Creator, who cares for each of us and wants us to learn to care for one another.

We are witnessing freedom's power across the world in the courage of the Iraqi people, who went to the polls despite threats against their lives, in the voices of people in Lebanon insisting on an end to occupation. I have watched President Bush make some very difficult decisions in the cause of freedom. Thanks to his leadership and his policies, we find ourselves at an amazing moment of opportunity.

As the President has said, our goal is not to impose but to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom and make their own way. By advancing freedom, we advance not only the cause of greater peace and security but also the cause of greater opportunity and a better life for all the world's people.

When I first went to work at the White House, I promised the President that I would always give him my unvarnished opinion. If confirmed here in the world of diplomacy at the State Department, I may occasionally have to add a little diplomatic varnish, but I will always speak from the heart and I will always do my best to stand for what President Bush has called the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice and religious tolerance.

Thank you all very much and I look forward to my confirmation hearings.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

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Released on March 14, 2005

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