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## Remarks With Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes at Town Hall for Public Diplomacy

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Loy Henderson Auditorium  
Washington, DC  
September 8, 2005

(11:00 a.m. EDT)

**MR. ALHASSANI:** Good morning. Madame Secretary, Under Secretary Karen Hughes, Deputy Under Secretary Dina Powell, public affairs and public diplomacy officials worldwide, I'd like to welcome you to today's town hall meeting.

My name is Medhi Alhassani, a senior at George Washington University and a new intern here at the Public Affairs Bureau. I have the great privilege of meeting Under Secretary Hughes, her fourth day on the job, when she truly impressed 30 Muslim American students.

When I was asked to introduce Secretary Rice, I was trying to think of things we might have in common. And I was told a rumor that the Secretary's real dream job is to be NFL Commissioner. (Laughter.) I'm a big football fan myself. The difference is, the Secretary is a big Cleveland Browns fan, who by the way have won zero championships in the past four years. (Laughter.) I'm a New England Patriots fan, who by the way have won three championships in the past four years. (Laughter.) Of course, that might change when the Secretary becomes the NFL Commissioner -- (laughter) -- but in the meantime, the Browns are going to have to take a backseat to U.S. foreign policy. (Laughter.)

At this time, I'd like to introduce somebody who I hold in great regard. Please join me in welcoming the 66th U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

(Applause.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, thank you very much for that fine and challenging

introduction -- (laughter) -- and I'll call you during the season and see how they're doing.

We do have actually one other thing in common, which some of you may know. I was actually an intern here in the State Department in 1977 for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. And that says two things: First of all, even then, I had a very strong interest in public diplomacy and secondly, be nice to your interns, you never know where they're going to end up. (Laughter.)

I want to thank you all for being here, our public diplomacy professionals from around the world, and I want to thank you for your tireless and dedicated commitment to the job of getting the message out about the United States of America and what it is that we are trying to achieve and for being a vehicle for a conversation not a monologue with other people around the world.

This is a very exciting time for us in the world because freedom is on the march and we're going through great historical changes in the world. Difficult changes in many parts of the world, but it is rare that you get an opportunity to be at a time when the world is at a crossroads of history. And when the United States has such a vital and important role to play in how that history comes out.

I know that sometimes it is difficult to see that this is a history that is moving in the right direction but I think as long as we remain true to our values and true to our belief that democracy and freedom and liberty are the birthright of every living human being; that we will one day stand here and see that the world has been transformed, indeed, for the better.

Because it is such a critical time in international history, it is also a critical time for our public diplomacy efforts. Public diplomacy has to be a priority for this Department and for this government. And public diplomacy is not just the job of public diplomacy professionals, even though it is absolutely critical, it is the job of everybody who is interested in and concerned about American foreign policy.

Because I consider public diplomacy to be so critical to our efforts; because I consider it so important that we have the opportunity to engage the rest of the world, to have exchanges with the rest of the world so that we can get to know them and they can get to know us; that we can have the ability to educate Americans and others about who we are but also about who the rest of the world is. So in many ways, Americans are too focused on who we are. We need to know more about the cultures and the languages of the world.

And because I strongly want to empower all of our people to engage in the process of public diplomacy, I am especially delighted today to be with this fine new public diplomacy team, the new "R," my good friend, Karen Hughes, who is now Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy; Dina Powell and the rest of this team.

Now, Karen and I have a long history. It is a history that goes back to when we were actually working together to elect then-Governor Bush. But our association in foreign policy comes from a very specific point in time, and I can remember it like it was yesterday. It was when I, as a foreign policy professional, a policy professional, recognized how critical it is to have policy and message, policy and public diplomacy, policy and communications, integrated in what we do.

And that is, you all may remember, in 2001, not long after the Administration had been in office, when our EP-3 aircraft was forced down on an island in China. And we were trying to solve this very thorny problem, but of course we were

also trying to communicate -- and not just to the American public, but what messages were we sending to the world, what messages were we sending to the Chinese?

And we started a practice -- Karen and I -- of meeting with the President together every morning so that policy and message, policy and communications, were reinforcing each other and that joint project, the way of thinking about these as linked, continued through our association in the White House. Karen and I spent many a time on Middle East speeches that the President was about to give, or about trips that we were about to take and how we would use the message to reinforce the policy, and vice versa.

And so I am a very strong believer in the integration of public diplomacy, of message, of communications and of policy. And Karen will be a part of my policy team, as will the members of her team be a part of the policy teams of the assistant secretaries and other under secretaries.

It also means that in the field I will ask ambassadors to be very certain that public diplomacy is a key function of each and every embassy. Because, in fact, public diplomacy isn't what we do here in Washington; it is what we do in Riyadh or Amman or Berlin, where we need to communicate with the populations that, after all, particularly in a world that is going more democratic, must support their governments in supporting us.

So I can think of really no more critical issue than to make certain that our public diplomacy efforts are professional, that our public diplomacy efforts are integrated into our policy and that we understand that it is the responsibility and the job of each and every one of us to make certain that our public diplomacy efforts are working.

So, Karen, I'm delighted that you've come on board. I have to mention just one other thing because I'm pretty proud of him. Karen has a wonderful son. He's going to Stanford. (Laughter.)

(Applause.)

**UNDER SECRETARY HUGHES:** Well, thank you all very much and thank you, Secretary. I really am truly honored and humbled that you and President Bush have asked me to take on the challenge of America's public diplomacy at this very historic time. And you, personally, have already set a terrific example around the world of how to engage and advance America's public diplomacy because both here and abroad you have lived out our values with great dignity and integrity and graciousness, and all of America is very, very proud of you. And I know you've got meetings to go to, so thank you so much. We're honored that you would join us. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

**UNDER SECRETARY HUGHES:** I said at one of my hearings earlier this year that as I travel around the country, I hear people everywhere in little shops and stores talking about our new Secretary of State and how proud they are of her and how excited they are to have her leading our foreign policy. And it's wonderful for our country.

I want to thank Medhi for that wonderful introduction. He has a very articulate voice and one of my jobs, I think, is to empower the voices of some of our wonderful American young people as we work to reach out to young people across the world. So thank you so much for being here with us.

This is now my fourth week here at the State Department and I can't tell you how challenging, how interesting, how much fun and how busy it's been. I was joking -- yesterday, I was late for a meeting and it was really because I had back-to-back meetings scheduled so closely together that I hadn't really had time to breathe all day. But I'm doing work that's important and work that I love with a great group of people here in the R family, led by our Deputy Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary for ECA, Dina Powell, by our Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Department Spokesman, Sean McCormack. I had the great privilege of working very closely with both Sean and Dina when Sean was at the NSC and Dina was at the White House with me and I'm really glad to continue that association here.

And I've had the opportunity, since I've arrived, to work with our coordinator for the Bureau of International Information Programs, Alex Feldman. I also want to recognize three key members of my executive team: my Chief of Staff, Dan Smith; the Director of our Policy, Planning, and Resources Office, Gretchen Welch; and my Senior Advisor, Jeremy Curtin. And they are just key members of my executive team and I feel like we just have a great group of people assembled to do this work.

And in just my four weeks here, I have to tell you that I have really been struck by the great dedication and the experience of the men and women of the R family here at the State Department. You've devoted your careers and much of your lives to serving our country and you're doing a lot of very good work, so I see my job is to help amplify the good work that you're doing and to help you be even more successful.

When I accepted this new challenge, I looked back at some memos that historians had written about our State Department and I learned -- I was telling Secretary Rice on the elevator on the way down here -- that I learned that when Thomas Jefferson became our nation's very first Secretary of State in 1790, he had six employees. He had a chief clerk. He had three deputy clerks. He had a translator and -- and I think this is very important -- he had a messenger. The communications world has certainly a lot since then, but there's still that need to get the message out. Now they reminded me in our office, don't carry that too far because in the old days, the messenger actually had to hand-deliver the message and I said, "Well, you know, that's kind of person-to-person contact. That's kind of what we do in public diplomacy. I like to say that public diplomacy is people driven. Ed Murrow famously said that the most important part of public diplomacy is that last three feet. It's that person-to-person contact. So we still need messengers to be out there delivering personally that message.

I spent the last few months after the President announced my nomination reading the many reports -- some might say, too many reports. There's some 31 of them in all I think now at last count, about the state of our public diplomacy and I also sought input and advice from many individuals in groups, both current and former State Department and USIA employees.

I reached out to veterans here at the State Department, as well as our PAOs in the field. I studied what we're currently doing in public diplomacy as well as the rapidly changing communications world in which we are doing it. And it struck me that, although today's tools and technology are far different, that much like the Cold War, we today face a generational and global challenge, which requires all aspects our national power. As the President has said, "In the long run, defeating terrorism is going to require winning the war of ideas."

So our overall mission is to put in place a long-term strategy to ensure that our ideas prevail. The strategic framework that we developed has really three key components. First of all, we have to offer a positive vision of hope that is rooted in

the President and the Secretary's freedom agenda and that is freedom, as Jeremy reminded me the other day, that's freedom *writ large*. That's freedom for people to speak their minds and to practice their faiths; freedom to choose who represents them; freedom for women to be full participants in society. And I think it's important to remember that our vision of this hope and freedom and opportunity is really in such stark contrast with the very oppressive, repressive, tyrannical intentions of the terrorists. And we saw that demonstrated so vividly and so horribly in the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and I think that's a good contrast for people to remember. The people of Afghanistan had virtually nothing. Their economy was terrible. They had almost no hope. They had just horrible, horrible conditions. And that is -- in that we see the dark intentions of the terrorists.

Second, the second strategic pillar is that we will work to isolate and marginalize the extremists and undermine their attempt to appropriate religion. At every opportunity, the civilized world and people of all different faiths, and no faith at all, must come together and say that no injustice, no complaint, can justify the murder of innocents.

Third, and more broadly throughout the entire world, we must foster a sense of common interests and common values between Americans and people of different countries, cultures and faiths. The way we will -- our approach, I think, needs to be open and respectful. I said at my hearing, and I absolutely believe, that public diplomacy needs to be as much about listening as it is about speaking; and before we seek to be understood, we must first work to understand. And I will be very mindful of that as we travel to New York next week for the UNGA meetings and I reach out to leaders from across the world.

As I travel and visit on behalf of our country across the world, we're confident in the power of our ideals. This is another part of our approach. We believe that given a fair hearing and a free choice, that most people the world over will choose freedom over tyranny, and tolerance over extremism, and diversity over some rigid conformity, justice over injustice. So that confidence in our ideals means that we will rely on truth. Our opponents have to resort to propaganda and myths and distortion and indoctrination because they want closed minds; they don't want people to question or think for themselves. We want open minds. We want people to consider and decide for themselves.

So our mission then becomes: How do we create the conditions and the climate that allow people to give our ideas that fair hearing? Because again, we are confident, if they are able to think for themselves, if they're able to give that fair hearing, that people will choose the power of our ideals.

Now, how do we do that? Well, as a communicator, I like to boil things down to pretty basics and things that are memorable, so our pillars are going to be the Four E's: Engage -- and the Secretary mentioned them -- Engage, Exchange, Educate and Empower. It's always nice when somebody else mentions your Four E's because that means the message maybe is getting out. She asked me this morning, she said, "Now remind me all the Four E's again."

We must engage more vigorously, and that's first. We can't expect people to give a fair hearing to our ideas if we don't advocate them very aggressively. Our experience shows that when people around the world know that America is partnering with them, partnering with their governments, partnering with groups in their communities to improve their lives, it makes a real difference in how they think about us. I am going to be calling on our ambassadors and our public diplomacy professionals in the field to find opportunities to work with other agencies, to work with USAID, to work with the Department of Labor when they're doing projects, to highlight the work that America is doing in ways that are relevant to people's lives, to show that we're helping provide clean water or food for their families or to educate young people.

The other side of engagement is a much more rapid and aggressive response to information that is wrong. We'll create a rapid response unit here at the State Department, it's already in the works, to monitor media and help us more aggressively respond to rumors, inaccuracies, and hate speech whenever -- wherever they are engaged in around the world. Working with guidance from public affairs, our rapid response unit will also be able to support PAOs across the world in real time when they need fast action to information from Washington.

And we plan to forward-deploy regional SWAT teams who can look at the big picture and formulate a more strategic and focused approach to all our public diplomacy assets; not just country by country, but within a region of the world. For example -- and there are a lot of different examples -- but you might have a speaker visiting one country. It might make more sense to have that speaker visit a series of countries and work with the regional media, as well as the media within that country, to ensure the broadest possible coverage, to amplify and expand and reinforce our message. We will also launch a technology initiative to more swiftly and effectively engage on the internet, in web chats, with digital video and even text messaging. We have to harness the power of today's technology to more effectively communicate our message.

The second E is exchange. Now, as I went around at all these meetings earlier this year, every person I met with made the point that historically, over the last 50 years, the most effective public diplomacy tool in our arsenal has been our people-to-people exchanges. Americans who go overseas describe their lives as being forever changed. Their minds are open, they see different cultures, they're -- it forever changes their lives. And it's interesting, Dina and I noticed people use that comment, they'll say, "forever changed," almost everyone who has experienced one of these programs.

And people who come here have the opportunity to learn and see for themselves that Americans are generous and hardworking people who value faith and family, much as they do. Now, ECA has already done some very, very good work here, reaching out to younger and broader audiences. We need to be even more focused and even more strategic, directing our efforts toward youth and those who are key influencers, such as religious leaders, teachers, journalists, sports and cultural figures.

All of the Es are also two-way streets. We want more Americans to study and travel abroad. We can use emerging technology to help amplify the exchange experience. For example, we can invite a documentary producer to cover one of our exchange programs so that large television audiences in both countries can experience the exchanges, not just the nine or ten people who are in the group actually going through the exchange.

And I welcome and invite your ideas. I'm all about trying to make things bigger, make our communications resonate with bigger and bigger audiences. We'll also reach out and work with the alumni of our exchange programs, which is a worldwide network of more than 800,000 people that have been to our country and seen for themselves what we are like.

The third pillar is education. Now, we know that education is the path to greater -- to upward mobility and greater opportunity for boys as well as girls. Americans must educate ourselves, as the Secretary mentioned, to be better citizens of the world. We need to learn different languages and learn more about other countries and faiths and cultures. I'm working with the Secretary on a strategic language initiative to make sure that our American young people are able to communicate with people in -- throughout the world.

And through English language training programs, we can give young people across the world a very valuable tool that

they value, that their parents value, and that helps them improve their own lives as it opens the door for them to learn more about America and about our values. We're already starting to try to make a difference. In just the last few weeks, we redirected more than a half-million dollars to expand English language training programs in the almost-completed 2005 budget year and we're also planning to request a significant increase in English language training for the budget we're currently working on, which I was surprised to find is 2007, which seems like a very long time away, but they're asking me, "What do you want to spend money on in 2007," and I thought, "Wow, that's a long timeframe of the federal budget."

The final E is empowerment. We must empower our most important international asset: individual American citizens. Through the internet, through video conferencing, through a citizen ambassador program, we will foster greater communication between foreign publics and the people of America. I plan to travel with citizen ambassadors and create a robust program to help Americans share their unique American stories with appropriate audiences around the world.

Empowerment is critical because we have to recognize that in some of this work, the voice of a government official may not be the most effective or the most credible voice. For example, I've spent a great deal of time in these early weeks reaching out and meeting with Muslim Americans.

I want to thank Mehdi again. He was in a group that I met with. Young Muslim Americans, like Mehdi have might have more credibility to debate issues about their faith to condemn terrorism that's committed in the name of religion. They have far more credibility to engage in that debate than I do. So one of the things I want to do is foster opportunities for our young people to be on television, to engage in debate, to be on the internet talking with young people throughout the world. We have to foster and form third-party groups and encourage interfaith dialog and aggressively condemn hate speech of all kinds directed against all people.

We'll also work closely with the private sector to marshal its enormous creativity. American companies and universities, private foundations, our travel industry, have extensive contacts with people throughout the world. Our music and film industries, our artists and entertainers create very powerful impressions, sometimes good, sometimes bad, but they're always, always powerful. Dina has already reached out and I'm working to reach out to CEOs to begin to develop specific ways that we can partner with the private sector and we intend to do a lot more of that.

So again, if you have ideas on how we can make connections or you're working on a project where you'd like to team up with someone, please let us know because we want to do a lot more of that. That's been one of the charges that the President gave me is for us to collaborate. And all the reports mention the need for us to collaborate more fully with the private sector.

I'll also convene the University President's Summit with Education Secretary Margaret Spellings to develop an action plan to encourage more American young people to study abroad and make sure that we continue to attract foreign students to America. And we want to tell foreign students that they are welcome in our country. We want them to come here to study and to learn.

Now, to accomplish all this, I intend to be an aggressive, consistent advocate for a reenergized public diplomacy cone here at the State Department. I want to make sure that public diplomacy is a rewarding career path for each of you and for the many young people that we hope to attract to this vital work for our country. I want to give our public

diplomacy professionals here in Washington and worldwide the tools and the training and the support that you need to excel. We'll be working with the Foreign Service Institute to ensure that training there hones your public diplomacy skills. And if there's an area that you feel needs improvement, let me know. If there's something that you feel like you could use more resources or more training in, I want to hear that. We also want to continue to make training available to our Foreign Service National employees.

And I want to make sure that wherever our public diplomacy, public affairs professionals are posted, they consider our family to be their family and that each of you feel you have an aggressive advocate here in Washington. To strengthen the integration of public diplomacy and policy, which the Secretary talked about was so important; we're going to work with the regional bureaus to create a dual-headed DAS for public diplomacy. That dual-headed DAS will report both to me and to the regional and functional assistant secretaries. This will ensure that public diplomacy becomes fully merged in a very powerful way in the policymaking process.

Now, the Secretary also mentioned that public diplomacy is the job of all of us, from our professionals here at the State Department to our ambassadors out in the field to the Secretary and to the President himself. As part of the Secretary's vision of transformational diplomacy, communicating with foreign publics in this day of satellite networks and 24/7 news and the internet must become a critical part of every ambassador's job. And we're going to make public diplomacy a part of the evaluation criteria for promotions.

Now, along with asking our ambassadors to step up to that responsibility, we know we need to do a better job of providing tools and information to them. And that's why we've already started publications like the *Echo Chamber* to get information to the field in a fast and quick and usable way so that -- the goal of that is so that our ambassador can get that and pick it up and know that that's information he can use or she can use in meetings or speeches or in talking with the press around the world.

Now, all the ideas I've outlined today are really a strategic framework. I want to hear from you. I want to hear what you think works, what you think doesn't work. I invite your ideas for specific programs that can help support these goals and that can help us do a more effective job. Let us know what works. Or maybe something that you think is outdated and no longer effective and needs to be changed or modernized. I am known as an aggressive advocate. The President always smiles when I say this. I am known as a very persistent, aggressive advocate for what I believe in. And I believe in public diplomacy.

But to advocate substantially more resources, we must show that public diplomacy dollars are a good investment. If I hadn't announced the Four E's before we thought of a fifth, I might have added a fifth: Evaluation. I recognize that much of what we do is long term and kind of hard to measure. You know, it's hard to tell whether bringing a student here today might pay off at a better attitude about America 40 years from now. But ECA has been very creative and very effective in developing good evaluation tools and they have been honored by OMB for the great job they do. We've got to evaluate as best we can: interviewing participants in our programs; rating speakers; getting input and feedback from the field when we send people out in the world.

Finally, let me share -- before I take your questions, let me share just a couple of quick stories that helped inspire me and I think underscore why our public diplomacy is just so vitally important.

A few years ago, I was in Afghanistan and I was touring an English language training program and education program

that our government had set up there. And I met a young woman. We were talking with a group of young people and we were asking them what they wanted to be when they finished their studies, and one woman said she wanted to be a writer, that she hoped one day to write a book. And I told her I was at the time working on my book and I told her I was writing a book and that I would be glad -- I'd like to say something on her behalf in mine until she got around to writing hers.

And I'll never forget. Her answer through the translator was just quick and unequivocal. She said, "Women should be able to go to school and work and choose our own husbands." She was 13-years old. And as I was leaving, the translator came up and grabbed my arm and stopped me, and she said, "She wants to tell you something else: Please don't forget them. Please help them live in freedom." And I'll tell you, the eyes of that little girl followed me home and I think about her all the time because that's what we're helping people do. We're helping little girls and little boys across the world to live in freedom.

The second story is even closer to home. I was talking with my family about whether I should take on this great challenge. Many of you know I moved home several years ago so that my son could spend his high school years in Texas. And he's now getting ready, in about a week and a half, to go off to college, as the Secretary mentioned. And so I was talking with him about whether he thought I should take on this great challenge, and he immediately said yes. And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, because you really care about it, Mom. You talk about it all the time." And then what really got to me, he said, "And because it's really important for my generation."

Public diplomacy is vitally important for the next generation, not only young people here in America but young people across the world want to live in a better world. They want a future of hope and opportunity and peace. And that's exactly the kind of world that our work, the work we do every day, can help to create.

I'm excited about working with each of you. I thank you for making me feel so welcome here at the State Department. I've been to staff meetings, I've run into people in the halls and in the cafeteria and I'm really looking forward to meeting with and working with all of you.

**2005/841**

Released on September 8, 2005



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