

FTS STATE DEPT

**Moderator: Ellen Nelson
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1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: And this call is being recorded. If anyone objects please disconnect.
Otherwise thank you and have a great afternoon.

James Glassman: Okay. Good afternoon everyone. I just felt that I am in a part of the
government where there are a lot of experts. And I have been impressed by
what bloggers have been writing about public diplomacy.

And so, I felt that it would be a good idea to just get together every now and
then and give you an opportunity to talk to me on an on the record basis.

I actually do not have too much to say to begin with except that we are doing
a lot of reorienting of the effort here and a refocusing and a new effort on the
War of Ideas.

And I think many of you already know about that. You may have seen my
previous speeches and my op-eds and so forth. But let me just make a few
points that I have made before.

We feel that our mission in the War of Ideas is highly focused. It is - to use the tools of ideological engagement, word, deeds and images to create an environment that is hostile to violent extremism.

That is our mission. We want to break the linkages between groups like Al-Qaeda and their target audiences. And unlike the traditional functions of public diplomacy like education and cultural exchanges, the aim of the War of Ideas is not to persuade foreign populations to adopt more favorable views of the United States and its policies.

Instead, the War of Ideas tries to ensure that negative sentiments and day to day grievances toward the U.S. and its allies, do not manifest themselves in the form of violent extremism.

This is not to say that we are not concerned about the way the United States is viewed in the world, especially the respect and trust with which we are held. But when you look at the foreign policy goals to reduce threats to the United States from - especially from violent extremism and weapons of mass destruction and to promote freedom in the world, while certainly increasing respect and trust helps us along that path; it's one of the means. There are in fact more direct means, and we are focusing in the War of Ideas efforts on the more direct means.

In education and cultural affairs which is where most of the money is spent in this office, we are continuing to build trust and respect and it is a long term effort. And that is absolutely true as well in IIP.

But in the War of Ideas we are much more focused on trying to create an environment in which violent extremism will not flourish.

And we do that in two ways. One is by pushing back against the ideology of Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups. And second we do it through a process of - I like to call diversion for want of a better term, and that is providing opportunities for young people especially in order to divert them from the path toward violent extremism.

So I think I will just stop there and I know that some of you have written about this subject. You may have questions for me. And so, go right ahead. Actually, if you do not mind identifying yourself when you ask the question.

Steve Corman: Sure. This is Steve Corman from COMOPS Journal and also Arizona State University. And hey thanks very much for taking the time to talk to us today.

I have got kind of an easy question to begin with. And that is I am kind of curious what is behind all of the appearances you - and speeches and op-eds and so forth you have been making lately.

You know, I have not actually counted, but it seems like you have easily outdone your predecessors by now on this, and I am kind of wondering what your thinking behind the such, I mean such a high profile in this job.

James Glassman: Well I do not necessarily want to have - personally have a high profile, but I do think that we are making a significant change here. And it is a change in emphasis and focus. And I want as many people as possible to know about that - people in the public diplomacy community are more - our constituents in Congress and other parts of government, and as much of the general public that is interested in it both here and abroad.

So what I feel I am doing in these early stages is outreach. I mean, we are - people, you know, people view public diplomacy as kind of a beauty contest of popularity contest.

I am saying, I am not saying you...

Steve Corman: Yes good.

James Glassman: ...on this call, but I am sure the public does. And I am trying to explain a different kind of focus. So I would say that is why I am doing it. And I do not, you know, I think there is a discussion that we want to get going so.

Steve Corman: Yes. So do you think there is a sort of a lack - because there hasn't been that kind of awareness before do you think there is a lack of support for it or lack of importance placed on it, or?

James Glassman: No I think quite the contrary. I think there is a lot of support for War of Ideas in general. And I think a lot of support for the approach that we are taking. It is just that it is somewhat different from the approach that others imagine, let us say, that the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy might take.

Steve Corman: Um-hmm.

James Glassman: And it is diff - and it is, I would say, different from my predecessors. And this is not a criticism of my predecessors. I think Karen Hughes did an excellent job. And actually began to provide some of these tools with our digital outreach team, with direct response unit, a number of tools.

But this is different. I mean, there is a change here. There is a change in focus and there is a change in emphasis.

Steve Corman: Good, thank you.

James Glassman: Okay.

Matt Armstrong: Mr. Under Secretary, this is Matt Armstrong, (Nat)'s brother.

James Glassman: Yes.

Matt Armstrong: This - you made a comment that this meeting with bloggers was going to be something that you are going to do every now and then. So, in that vein, is this going to be a regular if impromptu event and is this part of the effort to raise the profile you just said within the United States.

And then if so, which you indicated it was, does - what do you think about efforts to completely split public diplomacy from public affairs. And I am thinking about specifically a bill that Senator Brownback is putting forward which is one of many ideas to completely cleave one from the other.

So, you know, this is a global information environment and you are able to bridge the two from the United States information environment over to the global information environment, the non-US.

What do you see as your roll in that and how are you going about that?

James Glassman: Well first let me say that this is - I do not know exactly what the schedule is going to be, but I would like to do these on a regular basis. I want to make sure we have something to talk about, but I would like to do these on a regular basis.

You know, I consider you the experts. I mean, you really have devoted a lot of your lives and a lot of your energy to this subject, whereas many in the rest of the media, this is sort of part of what they do. So I think it is good to be talking to you directly.

Also, this is - this kind of conversation is actually part of the overall philosophy that I am bringing. And it is not just me. It was actually already started here, about developing broader conversations in general.

This was one of the things for example that international information programs is doing and will be doing I think more vigorously in the future where, you know, we have got a great Web site, America.gov, but we want to develop conversations even outside that Web site.

So, okay, so your other question about splitting public affairs and public diplomacy. I just have a kind of general answer to that. I do not know how much time I have on this job, but it may be just six months. And my feeling has been that I do not want to concentrate on restructuring or advocating restructuring.

I think the structure we have now is perfectly fine for what we need to do. It certainly can be improved and I am happy to have people talk about that, people like you, people in Congress. But it is not going to - it is just not going to take up much of my time.

We have done a restructuring here at state and for the inter-agency, and, you know, it is modest, but it is - but on the other hand it is important. And I think we will - going forward it is going to be pretty active.

I mean if you wanted me to talk about that I can certainly - I can certainly talk about that too - about our - about the restructuring we have done here for War of Ideas.

Steve Corman: Sure, I would like to hear a little about that.

James Glassman: Yes. Sure. Okay. Okay. Well we - I am the Chair of the Policy Coordinating Committee on Strategic Communications which we take to be a synonym for War of Ideas. And there are representatives from a number of other agencies - DOD, the intelligence community, NCTC, Treasury and so forth.

This is a PCC that has been operating for several years now, I think two years. And in fact I went to one of the meetings when I was Chairman of the BBG. And this is the main body that sets strategy and decides on programs.

It meets - it was meeting roughly once a quarter. It will be roughly once a month.

One of the sub-PCCs that is part of this PCC is called The Global Strategic Engagement Center or GSEC. And that is an inter-agency office, believe it is about a dozen people, that is headquarter - is situated here at State but it does have people from other agencies who are part of it.

And those of you who know a lot of these details that went before, there was an organization called the CTCC, Counter Terrorism Communication Center.

Steve Corman: Um-hmm.

James Glassman: And really the CTCC has been turned into the GSEC. And the G, but GSEC has a different function. The GSEC is really the coordinating and day to day operating authority for the PCC.

Then, we have - we are setting up a strategic advisory council which is a public private organization, will be quite small, probably ten members, five - two from each of five different broad sectors.

And they will be able to reach out into the private sector to draw a private sector participant in War of Ideas Strategic Communications Activities.

Let us see, I think that is - yes, that is basically it. I mean, it is not a - it is just - it is not a major thing, but it was an important - it was important restructuring for us. You know, I have - I said this before, I have two jobs. One of them is running public diplomacy in the State Department. But the second one is being the inter-agency lead in the War of Ideas.

And State has a role in War of Ideas program. DOD has a roll. Other agencies have a roll. And, but, it is my responsibility to be the lead and this is going to be a major focus of my efforts.

You know, the restructuring sort of allows us to - allowed us to shift focus. And let me add - let me just add one thing. This is not in any way a diminution or de-emphasis on the importance of education and cultural affairs.

We have the biggest budget that we have had in years. We have a very, very good Assistant Secretary and it is the same thing at IIP. It is just that my time, probably because the President designated me as the inter-agency lead and partly because I think this is where my background is, it is going to be focused on the War of Ideas efforts. Anyway. Sorry for the long answer.

Any other questions?

Matt Armstrong: So you have just been in, you know, as you noted yesterday, the advantage of taking six months to confirm is that you have had a lot of time to actually meet with people and actually hit the ground running.

So even though you have only been in the office for several weeks, it has been a month now, you have been, you know, closer to the process than most people would think for quite some time.

Based on the knowledge you have right now, what advice would you give - what guidance would you give the next administration on what they should do for the first six months to continue what you have been doing?

James Glassman: The first piece of advice I would give them is to adopt the platform that we have constructed here. You know, when this administration came in in 2001, it was not - there was no War of Ideas structure.

And I am not - that is no knock against the previous administration. And it has taken a while to develop. There is tremendous inter-agency buy in. And I would say, you know, we will see how things go over the next six months. But I would say that from my vantage point here, I would hope that the next administration takes a look at the structure that we put in and adopts the same structure.

But I think beyond that, you know, we - when I was on the bridging group, we said something along the lines of public diplomacy deserves the same attention and commitment and seriousness of purpose. I think that was the term. As conventional official diplomacy let us call it, and our military efforts

and I think that at this moment in history, public diplomacy actually has it, or we are getting there. Let us put it that way.

I think we are getting there. We are not quite there yet. And I would really hope that the next administration, the next President, makes public diplomacy a very high priority, not just resources but just commitment.

Now I think this administration has, or it certainly is now. And that is a change from five years ago. And so, so I guess that is what I would say that, you know, the structure and the commitment, those are the keys. And resources obviously are important as well.

So are there any other questions? If not.

Steve Corman: Oh yes, oh yes.

Matt Armstrong: On that note, there is this workshop that I was at last week in the DC area, one of the things that the symposium (get) that came out of this discussion of several days, and this was a defense community discussion, was a desire and a push to change from the paradigm of an operational order for the military that has an information annex ID, a kinetic operation if you will that has some information, some influence affects attached to it, to (revaunt) to flipping that on its head where orders are based on what are the influences they want to create and the information they want to generate followed by operation orders.

Are you coordinating at all with that? Are you seeing any of that from your inter-agency perspective?

James Glassman: Let us put it this way. I certainly see a major emphasis and attention paid to the public diplomacy side. You know, and I have had a good deal of contact

with DOD folks and there is no doubt about that. And they are getting it from the top.

So that has been very gratifying as far as we are concerned because, you know, they are continuing to look to us for leadership, but they are doing some - they understand that they are not going to be able to succeed in their mission unless public diplomacy itself, that effort itself is effective. So, you know, I think this morning in the Washington Post, Secretary Gates talked about State leading, you know, State being the lead in public diplom- so.

Steve Corman: Steve Corman here again. So I was interested in something you said in your opening remarks where you said that one of the priorities in the War of Ideas is pushing back against ideology. And so I was kind of curious what the general plan is for pushing back against that ideology. And in particular, since that is at least an important a religious ideology, what you think our limitations are as, you know, the United States producing messages that would try to counter the religious ideology behind some of the extremists.

James Glassman: Well I think that the United States is not - that Americans are not particularly credible messengers. And we realize that. And the pushing back against the ideology is - that is done by Muslims themselves. And we want to do what we can to encourage that.

At the same time, you know, I do not think that Americans should be reluctant to express, you know, their horror and general opposition to the ideology, to the way that the ideology has manifested itself. But, you know, this is something really much for others to do and for us to encourage.

And for example, you know, the apostasy of Doctor (Foddle), this having a huge impact on Al Qaeda and on potential recruits and that sort of thing.

There is something that we can do to make sure that more people hear about that.

Steve Corman: Okay.

James Glassman: But in the end, it is people like Doctor (Foddle) that are going to have the most impact. Certainly he is going to have a lot more impact than I would ever have.

So we are very, very conscious of that, that it is not, and you know, and I said this in speeches, and I think it is a really important point, it is not, you know, the war - the War of Ideas, or the focus of the War of Ideas really is not us. It is not the United States. I mean there is a battle going on within Islam and it is - it affects us. I mean it lead to the death of 3000 people in the United States.

But the United States, but our image and the United States itself, we are not at the center of the War of Ideas. But it is very important to us that this war turn out the right way. And so we have a huge stake in the outcome. And that is what makes it difficult.

Steve Corman: Right.

As far as the point about, you know, help for Muslims on doing this, I wanted to relate to you that about oh nine months ago or so, I sort of came into indirect contact with a group of Muslims in the United States who were interested in, you know, engaging the extremists on some of the Arabic language forums and so forth, but they were afraid to do that because they thought if they started logging in to extremists forums, they would be picked up by Homeland Security and be subject to watch lists and scrutiny and stuff like that.

James Glassman: Hmm.

Steve Corman: Is there anything being done to, you know, enable U.S. Muslims who want to sort of make our case to be more safe in doing that?

James Glassman: We would love to enable them. And, you know, I would like to hear from them if that is - if there is anything we can do, because that is exactly the kind of the thing that needs to be done.

Steve Corman: Yes.

James Glassman: Okay. Well if there are any more questions, you know, we will do this again. And I appreciate your joining the call. So thank you. And, you know, understand that this is just the first of several of many, first of many. And if you feel, you know, that you need to get to me, you know, we cannot guarantee that I am going to be there on the second or anything, but I really do want to make myself accessible.

And so thank you for being on the call.

Glen Roberts: Guys I will give you all of my contact info and please feel free to give me a call at any time with any questions, or if you want to speak to the Secretary. My email is robertsgf as in Glen Frank at state.gov.

And I invite you guys to give us a call at any time with any questions that you may have. And as he said, we plan on doing this again at least a few more times.

And, you know, as he is refining his messages, he is out in the field quite a bit and he is learning, you know, exactly what it is that he wants his message to be as he continues to craft that. Certainly you guys will have questions I am sure and we want to be as clear as we can.

So, please by all means, hit us with any questions that you have.

Melinda Brower: Thanks very much. Can you just repeat your email address one more time?

Glen Roberts: Sure. It is robertsgf@state.gov.

Melinda Brower: Great. Thanks so much and thanks for including this in this conversation. We really appreciate it.

Glen Roberts: No problem (unintelligible). And also if you guys have recommendations on people that you think would also, I mean, we welcome all dissenting voices, we welcome anyone who is interested in the public diplomacy debate. So that includes, you know, all types of opinions.

So please if you know someone that you think would be good to include on this, you guys know the other bloggers and I am kind of new to the blogosphere so please definitely drop me a hint or contact info for them. I would love to invite them on.

Melinda Brower: Sure thing.

Glen Roberts: Thank you very much.

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