

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: James Spiegelman
Director of Communications
The Aspen Institute
Tel. 202-736-3849

**ASPEN INSTITUTE, US STATE DEPARTMENT, AND
AND SIX US JOURNALISM SCHOOLS TO LAUNCH NEW INTERNATIONAL
JOURNALISM PROGRAM**

Washington, DC. December 13, 2005—US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice today announced the launch of a new international journalism program, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and six leading US schools of journalism. Joining Secretary Rice for the announcement were Geoffrey Cowan, dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Aspen Institute President and CEO Walter Isaacson.

The Edward R. Murrow Journalism Fellows Program — a partnership among the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Aspen Institute, and six American universities — will invite 100 international media professionals to spend time at leading journalism schools in the United States, honing their skills, sharing ideas, and gaining first-hand understanding of American society and democratic institutions. The goal is to not only inform the fellows about the United States, but also to promote journalistic freedom and excellence around the world.

The Edward R. Murrow program will culminate in April 2006 with an international symposium for the fellows and other journalists to be organized by the Aspen Institute, through its Communications and Society Program.

“The Department of State is determined to forge partnerships with our private sector so that Americans of all stripes, all traditions, all ethnic groups and also all walks of life might be able to help to carry the story of democratic progress and the progress of liberty,” said Secretary Rice. “We especially look forward to working with our partners.”

“Sixty years ago, the US was faced with a wholly new global challenge to freedom: the spread of communism,” said Walter Isaacson. “Our nation’s leaders responded with a new doctrine and a set of innovative institutions that wove together America’s interests with its ideals, such as the Marshall Plan, the World Bank, NATO and the UN. Now, we are faced with a new and serious challenge in the 21st century, that of fanatical terrorism. Once again, it requires a doctrine that weaves together our idealism and our realism. I hope this journalism program we are launching today can become part of this historic effort.”

— MORE —

“Democracy cannot work without the free flow of information and ideas that is made possible through an independent and effective press,” said Geoffrey Cowan. “The Murrow Program adds an exciting and important new component to those that the USIA and State Department have offered in the past. It harnesses the resources of American journalism schools. All of our schools expect the international journalists to learn from our courses — and we all expect our students to learn from our visitors.”

The six journalism schools involved in the new program are the University of Kentucky, University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Southern California, University of Texas at Austin, and University of Oklahoma.

Named after the renowned journalist and former director of the United States Information Agency Edward R. Murrow, this program will emphasize many of the democratic principles that guided Mr. Murrow’s practice of his craft: integrity, ethics, courage, and social responsibility.

This new journalism program is an innovative public-private partnership, led by the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. Leading the initiative for the State Department are Karen Hughes, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, and Dina Habib Powell, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The journalism schools are designing specialized curricula for the international fellows highlighting journalistic standards in the U.S. On the university campuses, the program participants will take part in intensive seminars and field activities with faculty and students. The State Department will not fund the seminars, nor will it be involved in shaping the curricula.

The Aspen Institute-led symposium in April will feature prominent working reporters, commentators, editors and columnists discussing practical and ethical issues inherent in the journalistic process. It will also include key government spokespeople, who will discuss the relationship between media and government. Among the themes of the symposium will be the importance of diversity of opinion, an informed public, and challenges facing journalists around the world.

The project emanates from a variety of suggestions for interaction between world journalists and their colleagues in the United States. Among those are the reports of the Aspen Institute conferences on international freedom of expression and sustainability of independent press and the Aspen Institute Arab-US Media Forum.

The Aspen Institute, founded in 1950, is an international nonprofit dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. Through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership development initiatives, the Institute and its international partners seek to promote nonpartisan inquiry and an appreciation for timeless values. The Institute is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Its international network includes partner Aspen Institutes in Berlin, Rome, Lyon, Tokyo, and New Delhi, and leadership programs in Africa and Central America.

###