"***Public Diplomacy and Communications***"

Remarks by
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Thank you for welcoming me here. And it is a particular honor to be invited and hosted by Geoff Cowan; Wren and I have known and respected him and Aileen for so many years.

These great institutions and their contributions to the University and its student life reflect Walter Annenberg's generosity and his wisdom, in understanding the value of information, and its role in pursuing US interests abroad.

Today's topic is public diplomacy, so it is appropriate to both look back to the time – 1969 – when Walter Annenberg became Ambassador to Great Britain.

To help him and his colleagues in those Cold War Years, Ambassador Annenberg had a wide range of public diplomacy tools at hand, including a strong, professionally staffed US Information Agency; a national commitment to extensive cultural exchanges; growing Peace Corps and Fulbright Scholar Programs; and a variety of public and private initiatives that brought thousands of students to the United States to experience America firsthand; and a robust foreign aid program.

If today Walter Annenberg were posted to London, or Cairo or Kuala Lumpur, he would find some similar challenges: as in the Cold War, we are engaged in a long-term, global struggle, this time against terrorism. As in the early 1970s, we face a lengthy involvement in a war that is controversial at home and unpopular in much of the rest of the world. But the parallels stop there. The resources available to our diplomacy are much thinner than they were 30-40 years ago – and getting even scarcer.

Gone is the bipolar world that defined our global purpose, created bipartisan consensus in our foreign policy, and guided the network of alliances and international institutions. Instead, we live in an age of what the UN Secretary-General has called "problems without passports", problems that are much harder to handle, and even more difficult to explain to the American public: genocide; human rights violations; climate change; global trade; and, economic development. USIA is gone; USAID is much smaller; the State Department's resources remain thin, and in many ways, the Department has become just a landlord for the much better resourced agencies that also have representation around the world: Department of Defense, Agriculture, Commerce, the United States Trade Representative.

Most concerning is the evaporation of the enormous reservoir of global good will toward the United States –cultivated through two World Wars and complemented by visionary leadership and a generous nation. The decline is especially dramatic in the Arab and Muslim worlds – where we face some of our most central policy challenges.

As has been widely reported, pollsters who regularly survey international publics, such as the Pew Global Attitudes Project, report a steady and alarming erosion in how foreigners view the US. Anti-Americanism is deeper and broader than at any time in modern history.

- In Pew's 2004 survey, solid majorities in Germany and France – and 41 percent of the British – said that the US-led war on terrorism is not a sincere effort to reduce terrorism.
- Anger toward the US in Muslim nations remains "pervasive", as does the belief that the US war on terrorism is really a grab for oil and influence.

I am sure you have heard the Edward R. Murrow quote: when the great broadcaster was head of the US Information Agency in the 1960s, he said that "successful public diplomacy needed to be in at the takeoff of policy, not just its crash landing."

Posture and presentation are important, but more than anything else, it is our policies that shape global opinion.

And in this new interdependent world of "Problems without Passports," unilateralism and American exceptionalism do not appear to be the policies that will get us where we need to go.

The Administration's best ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, put it this way at the most recent World Economic Forum in Davos:

> "If America wants the rest of the world to be part of the agenda it has set, it must be part of their agenda too. It can do so, secure in the knowledge that what people want is not for America to concede, but to engage."

The world is tied together by information, so billions of people know what we do – instantly – and have opinions as to why we do it. So diplomacy becomes more and more public, and more and more dependent on publics around the world. If we want our friends to send troops and funds to support us in Iraq, we have to persuade them – and their publics – of the validity of our strategy and the strength of our ideals. We had a stark reminder of this during the UN vote on Iraq: our best friends in the Western Hemisphere, Mexico and Chile, were both members of the Security Council at the time – and both of them voted no, refusing to go along with their giant friend to the North.

How did we allow this dangerous erosion to occur? Among other reasons, for more than a decade we have allowed our public diplomacy resources to decline. The combination of public sector leadership and private sector inspiration that carried the idea of America during the Cold War has dwindled, and is today more often public sector lecturing and private sector indifference. Demoralized, under-funded public diplomats have been given a 1970s script for 21st-century challenges; there is a conceptual hole where USIA once stood.

Proportionately, our largest peace dividend has come not from less military spending, but from the budgets once used to help us engage with the rest of the world. We have also assumed that we could turn public diplomacy over to the private sector and Madison Avenue – for billions of people around the world, "Dallas" and "Baywatch" became the predominant vision of the United States.

Now President Bush has asked Karen Hughes to go to the State Department and turn things around. She is a welcome appointment – she is highly skilled, and she will bring much needed high-level attention to public diplomacy. There is no question that she understands President Bush as well as anyone, and that will be very useful – as Murrow advised, she has enough access to be in at the take-off.

Karen Hughes' complex and important assignment has at least three major components:

- to restructure and augment the resources for public diplomacy;
- to help adapt our policies to the changing outside world;
- and to work to build a domestic constituency for US foreign policy.

Each of these is a very big task, and together they will challenge her very considerable skills. For the real challenge here is not just modernizing and better resourcing our public diplomacy efforts; it is that much of our problem is not that the world does not understand us – it is that <u>they</u> think <u>we</u> do not understand, or care, about <u>them</u>:

- We have scorned international treaties carefully negotiated to take our interests and those of others into account: the Comprehensive Test Ban; the convention banning landmines; the Kyoto climate change protocol, even controls on tobacco sales, and most recently the consular agreement that protected our citizens in foreign judicial processes.
- We have rejected the workings of international institutions in favor of ad hoc arrangements where we hold all the cards, and we have made it clear that rules for others do not apply to us.
- We have made it clear that we think that we know better – insisting on abstinence programs that fail at-risk young people, and trade terms that block lifesaving drug imports.
- And we appear confused at best about universally agreed standards of human rights and even torture, and in many parts of the world, photos of Abu Ghraib have replaced the Statue of Liberty as the icon of our country.

For Ambassador Annenberg and his peers, public diplomacy was about showcasing a vision – a vision of ourselves, and of the world, that looked far superior to what the Soviets were promising because it was far superior to anything they could deliver. We need to again showcase the nuanced, sympathetic, idealistic vision that is America.

The great challenges of our time are not so much about winning an argument – although there are still important arguments to be won – but building global cooperation on great causes that even the US cannot tackle alone:

- Stopping terrorists where they recruit and train, before they attack;
- Ending the poverty and indignity that crush economic progress and feed fanaticism;
- Preventing the genocidal conflict that shames our fundamental humanity; And,
- Creating a new energy future that puts affordable, clean energy within everyone's reach.

Whether we succeed or fail will depend on how we listen to the world, and show that we care about their concerns and priorities.

Starting with the resource issue, we would do well all to heed the mission statement of the Center of Public Diplomacy here at USC: "Dialogue, not a sales pitch, is often central to achieving the goals of foreign policy."

We need to make at least four changes in the US government's approach:

- We need diplomats who will conduct that dialogue and be rewarded for doing it;
- We need to provide the resources so diplomacy can be done in a modern, multi-media environment;
- We need to support free and open global media rather than just our own outlets;
- And we need a renewed open door policy that will let another generation of future leaders come see the best of America for themselves.

Additional funds must be allocated for public diplomacy, to renew and reinvigorate that function at the State Department.

The Pentagon has 16 times as much funding for public diplomacy as the State Department, and we wonder why the rest of the world often thinks that we try to lead with the barrel of a gun. The State Department runs a threadbare operation. Secretary Powell did a good job of re-energizing hiring and recruitment, but as a recent Council on Foreign Relations study found, it is still the case that more than 20 percent of public diplomacy specialists lack the language skills they need to do their jobs. Middle East area and language specialists are especially rare.

Perhaps even worse, the Department is still dominated by an old diplomatic culture in which real men do not do public diplomacy – or human rights, or environment or refugees. Real men do politics and maybe economics. As a consequence, the promotion boards reward what is called the political cone, and career advancement makes it harder for public diplomacy to be rewarded in the career service.

No Undersecretary of State, no matter who she is, can fix that; it's going to require a Secretary who takes it on and changes the structure of the Foreign Service to match the world we actually live in. If the Secretary says that work on global issues and public diplomacy is important, and backs that up with career opportunities and promotions, the rank and file will respond with the same skill and professionalism they bring to bilateral relations.

We must also bring our broadcasting and media operations into the information age. Ironically, the foes of open society have been much quicker to embrace our technologies than we. For example, 11 years ago, the architects of genocide in Rwanda used radio to spread their inflammatory messages of hate, apparently from a low-power transmitter in the back of an SUV.

The world's sole superpower – which had been able to track broadcasts from the Soviet Union for 40 years – could not find, jam or otherwise stop that moving call to hate and slaughter.

Today, a decade later, we still have not made the transition to modern broadcasting. Last year, we showed our tin ear by sending our diplomats to ask the government of Qatar to shut down Al Jazeera. Instead, we should be putting our diplomats on Al Jazeera and other Arab stations as often as we can – along with our academics, our businesspeople, everyone who can show the reality and the variety of America.

This should be part of a major new commitment to supporting free and open global media. Genuinely free media, whose audiences recognize it as free, will do a better job of selling America than anything governments can do. In places like Iraq and Cuba, we should be doing more to support independent, indigenous media, instead of setting up our own outlets that audiences perceive as simply propaganda.

If we are perceived as competing with the propagandists, we have already lost the war of ideas.

And we must re-open our doors so that students and visitors can experience the best of America at institutions like USC – without being treated like criminals in the process.

Foreign applications to US graduate schools dropped 28 percent last year, and 32 percent the year before. The absolute number of foreign students in the US declined for the first time since 1971. Australia and Europe are eagerly recruiting to pick up the slack. China and India are opening new universities and ratcheting up the competition.

Post-9/11 visa restrictions, and the way they are implemented have prevented thousands of students and visitors from returning to the US, and deterred tens of thousands more from even trying. Surely, we can find better ways to protect our borders without tearing up the welcome mat.

We also need to broaden efforts to empower government and non-governmental organizations to fund and sponsor student, press, and professional visits. For example, at the United Nations Foundation we have experimented with this, bringing journalists from Arab countries, Cambodia and India to the UN; developing a cooperative program with the Association of Editorial Writers in the US; organizing tours for US reporters to visit development programs in Asia; and sponsoring a tour of Women Living with AIDS to six major cities in the US.

The private sector – business and non-governmental institutions – will be central to this work, for they possess much of the legitimacy that, a generation ago, belonged exclusively to governments. Private individuals and organizations dominate the "airwaves," from bloggers deciding the fate of public figures in the US, to Islamic clerics setting the timing of elections in Iraq, or Al Jazeera setting the agenda for people across the Middle East. Global business is a reality, as trade opens around the world more each year. And a broad system of rules, treaties and agreements holds this system together.

Democracy <u>is</u> the compelling idea for governance, in all its messy forms.The admirable commitments to democracy voiced by this Administration should be used to strengthen the alliance of democratic governments, help strengthen and reform the United Nations, and bring more domestic constituencies into the fold of support for US global engagement.

So if a new public diplomacy's first task is resources, and the second is restarting the dialogue between the US and the rest of the world, the third is to restart the dialogue at <u>home</u> – among the American people, about the value of the global cooperation and international institutions. Here, I hope Karen Hughes will take the lead in helping to rebuild and then grow the constituency for effective international cooperation and effective public diplomacy.

Like other Departments in Washington, the State Department is a political institution – it needs budget, it needs attention, it needs public support. But as currently conceived, it is terribly weak in its ability to mobilize this help. The Department has never recognized that it has to work to develop this constituency – not its small number of Foreign Service officers, but the much broader constituency that works around the world:

- our large global business establishment
- refugee and humanitarian assistance groups
- environmental organizations
- communications companies and even Hollywood
- human rights activists
- faith based communities

These are potential constituencies for State, and the constituent elements of our public diplomacy. They can argue for State's budget, support the Secretary's efforts, and work to rebuild trust between America and the rest of the world. But only if more of them are brought into the fold. This will be the major task for the new Undersecretary, to translate these concerns to the Administration just as she will advocate the President's policies.

Let me close with a recruiting pitch:

The three great challenges of today's public diplomacy contain diverse job descriptions that should appeal to any of you – as Foreign Service officers, news and press specialists, and technical support for broadcasters and internet, grassroots political organizers, leaders for cultural exchange programs, student and university liaison officers and many more.

All these skills are needed in the fascinating public diplomacy challenge. I hope that you will look carefully at these – and think about the opportunity you have to help bring the world together to work on the important and fascinating problems and challenges of this century.

Public service is a wonderfully gratifying way to spend a career – and you can join in this important rebuilding effort, to reinvent and recharge public diplomacy by combining media savvy, good political sense and a broad vision of the world for our day. That reinvention will grow out of the good work you are doing here at USC, and about your personal engagement and commitment. So together, let's go to work.

Thank you very much.