

RELEASE IN FULL

From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
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To: H
Cc: DiMartino, Kitty; Sullivan, Jacob J; Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: startegic communications

Greetings from Nairobi. I'm at the end of week-long trip to Kampala, Kinshasa and now Nairobi. The trip has been very productive and I will fill you in on some of the discussions I have been having when I return. In the meantime, I know that there are a number of discussions with Dan Benjamin and others relating to a new more aggressive approach to CVE and I wanted to update you on my thoughts in terms of how those critical discussions fit in with our overall approach to strategic communications around the globe.

As you and I have discussed, it is essential that we become much more pro-active in all our communications efforts. To put it bluntly, we are in an "information war" on all fronts. With the proliferation of media outlets and opportunities around the world, we must fight aggressively to get, and maintain, our fair share of "consumer share of mind." Both our adversaries and allies recognize the importance of this aspect of foreign policy and are adopting new ways of communicating with foreign publics. Consumers everywhere are constantly facing a barrage of information and in some cases misinformation and dis-information. In order to get our messages across and confront the threats posed by our adversaries, we must develop a new sense of urgency in all our communications efforts. Much has been said and written about the concept of "soldier diplomats". In the same vein, I believe we must empower a corps of "diplomat soldiers" to help us gain ground in this new war.

While countering violent extremism is, and will remain, a key objective of our communications efforts we must apply the same level of determination with respect to all communications. We must both aggressively promote positive stories about the US and rapidly respond to attacks against us. In the past, our failure to respond to attacks and distortions has diminished our credibility and undermined our ability to combat our adversaries. For example, had we not responded to all the rumors and innuendos surrounding our relief efforts in Haiti, I believe we would have provided a fertile field for AQ and others to continue to perpetuate the image of the US as an "invader".

Before I left for this trip, I convened a meeting of our top PD officers and told them that we must become much more aggressive in our strategic communications programs and initiatives. We plan to implement daily calls between our new regional PD DAS's and PAO's in the regions so we can monitor on a daily basis all stories about the USG. We will work with the Posts to ensure that they have strategies for dealing with stories as they develop. I would also like to request that you send a cable to all Chiefs of Mission informing of the new strategy and reminding them of their responsibilities in this critical area. We will work on a draft for your review when you return.

Finally, we are developing new organizational solutions, modeled on an approach I saw at our Mission in Uganda, which I think will greatly clarify roles and responsibilities with respect to in country communications not only within the Mission, but across all government agencies within particular countries.

I will continue to update you as we move forward.

Hope your trip is going well. Look forward to greeting together when we are both back in DC.

JM