



"Building New Bridges to the World"

Statement Submitted for the Record

By

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on behalf of the board of
Business for Diplomatic Action
to the
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Public Session Addressing Public Diplomacy

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As an advertising executive who has led a global network of agencies and helped forge the strategies and communications of many iconic American brands for almost two decades, I find our nation greatly in need of new leadership in managing our reputation among the people of the world. America has so much good to offer but we make too little of it and too often pursue policies that make us difficult if not impossible to appreciate.

And this is not the fault of a particular political party or administration. It is a collective failure that has gone on too long and puts our future in jeopardy.

The appointment of Karen Hughes to a high-ranking public diplomacy post is a positive step. However, along with my fellow board members of Business for Diplomatic Action, I believe that the private sector must harness its resources and creativity in order to mount a credible public diplomacy offensive to help restore the respect and even admiration that we have enjoyed in the past.

Since the birth of our nation, America has been devoted to the principles that (1) people should be allowed the greatest possible individual liberty consistent with the need to live in a communal society, (2) we are governed by laws administered with equal and consistent justice for every citizen, and (3) our government acts through the will of the people who decide through the democracy of free elections who will lead us.

America is that simple. And that complex.

We have learned that it is not easy to always adhere to these concepts, balancing their idealistic hope with the reality of the vagaries and often conflicting demands of human nature. We know our record has not been perfect. But when we have strayed from our beliefs, we have always worked our way back.



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Liberty, justice, and the democracy of representative government are what we stand for, what we want the world to see in us, and what we wish for all mankind.

But it cannot happen because we say so. It cannot happen because we have the power to impose our will. It cannot happen unless the world wants it to. It cannot happen unless we build the bridges that bring America closer to the world, and the world closer to America. Our vision of an America understood, respected, and believed can only be achieved by an America willing to understand, respect, and convince.

As difficult as it is to govern just ourselves and find solutions to our own socio-economic problems, it is that much more complicated for America to be both a citizen and a leader in today's world. We must work not only with those who believe in and admire us but also with people who view us with mistrust or even hatred. We must accept as reality even what we know is irrational in order to cope with it. We must consider compromise when our instincts are to remain unyielding. We must enhance our well established and still appreciated tradition of sharing our wealth, our power, and our success for the benefit of others. We must build more such bridges to more of the world, crossing them ourselves so that we might better listen and hear while inviting the world to cross over to us so that they might better experience the fundamental truths of America.

It is to this end that Business for Diplomatic Action enlists leaders in business and communications, as two of the most powerful and potentially effective forces in guiding how America is and will be seen around the world. Our goal is to work on issues that we believe affect people's beliefs about us, subjects such as (1) the social and economic consequences of globalization, (2) the impact on other countries of the entertainment and popular culture we export, and (3) the personality of our nation as seen in the American people working and visiting abroad. And while we are not associated with or supported by the U.S. government, we will encourage and endorse any administration's effort that can lead to building new bridges to the world -- bridges that will be good for business, good for America, and good for the world.

This is the America that Business for Diplomatic Action would have the world perceive -- a nation striving to perfect its own commitments to liberty, justice, and democracy while working in partnership with the rest of the world to provide both the hope and the realities of a better life for people everywhere.

Is this just our dream alone or does the world share it? Do we have both the will and the resources to make it happen? In a world as diverse, as difficult, and in fact as fragile as ours has become, is it even possible?



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What America has accomplished in its relatively short history should leave no doubt about our answer. As a people, we have shown our resolve, our commitment, and our determination to meet such challenges at home and abroad, time and again. In this new time, we will do so again. And we believe it must be the business community supported by the communications industry that leads the way.

Business for Diplomatic Action is a private-sector task force directed by preeminent communications, marketing, political science, global development and media professionals. The task force steers a collective of multinational companies in the development, sharing, and warehousing of ideas, insights, and guidance on communication and public diplomacy issues that U.S. businesses are uniquely positioned to address. For more information on our effort please visit our website at www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org or contact our Executive Director, Cari L. Eggspuehler at: cari.eggspuehler@sf.ddb.com, 415.732.3620.