

The “New Exchanges:” Challenges and Opportunity for U.S. Public  
Diplomacy in the Middle East

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Term Paper Submitted to Ambassador William Rugh

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## I. Introduction: The New Exchanges

The analysis and formulation of public diplomacy initiatives throughout the world have risen dramatically since September 11, 2001. Public diplomacy was defined by the United States Information Agency (USIA) as the activities that “promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.”<sup>1</sup> After a decline in funding and priority in the U.S. after the Cold War, public diplomacy is increasingly being recognized as an integral part of the “war against terror” and the battle for the “hearts and minds” of foreign publics. Government initiatives have ranged from the promotion of marketing or “branding” techniques in communicating U.S. cultural and foreign policy messages to more dialogue-based projects between the U.S. and the Muslim world. As anti-Americanism continues to be prominent not only in Muslim countries, but also in America’s strategic allies in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, U.S. public diplomacy practitioners work to counter these trends.<sup>2</sup>

International exchange programs are a central component of U.S. public diplomacy and “cultural diplomacy” programs. Cultural diplomacy too has won new recognition in policy and government circles as an effective tool to reach younger generations around the world that have increasingly negative views of the U.S. The challenge diplomats are presented with today involves how to engage these publics, especially in the new geographic regions that have become critical to U.S. national

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<sup>1</sup> United States Information Agency Alumni Association, *What is Public Diplomacy?* (accessed September 24, 2006); available from [www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm).

<sup>2</sup> William A. Rugh, *American Encounters with Arabs: The “Soft Power” of U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), xi. Rugh quotes a Zogby International poll in June 2004 that reported unfavorable ratings of the U.S. reached levels of 98 and 94 percent.

security. As the danger of Muslim youth being drawn to extremist ideology in increasing numbers has grown, the United States has been forced to find new ways of reaching the silent majority of the Muslim world in particular.<sup>3</sup>

This paper will examine program changes and trends in the “new” U.S. youth exchange programs with the Middle East since 9/11 and the effects of these changes on meeting U.S. public diplomacy objectives. Specifically, it will analyze new elements in youth exchange programs, as well as broad strategies, some of which are taking place under the framework of Secretary of State Rice’s *transformational diplomacy*, which include shifts in location, target audience, partnerships, and funding. The conclusion from this study is that transformational diplomacy has provided public diplomacy and exchanges with new prominence and integration into foreign policy and embassy operations; however, case study analysis shows that public diplomacy exchanges demand a more *country-specific approach* rather than the current *regional approach*. Therefore, in order to take advantage of the increased priority and funding levels for exchanges in the Middle East, a country-specific exchange program organizational framework should be adopted.

## II. Defining Public Diplomacy

The term “public diplomacy” was first used by Edmund Guillion, Dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, in 1964.<sup>4</sup> According to his definition, public diplomacy is “the means by which governments, private groups and individuals influence the attitudes and opinions of other peoples and governments in such a way as to exercise

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<sup>3</sup> Helena K. Finn, “The Case for Cultural Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (November/December 2003), 15.

<sup>4</sup> The Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, *What is Public Diplomacy?* (accessed December 16, 2006); available from <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/public-diplomacy.html>.

influence on their foreign policy decisions.”<sup>5</sup> Today, there are many definitions of public diplomacy in use, as more scholars and policymakers add their voices to the dialogue. Hans Tuch, a former public diplomacy officer widely cited in the public diplomacy advisory reports, defines public diplomacy as “a *government’s* process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies” (my italics).<sup>6</sup> He criticizes Dean Gullion’s definition as being too broad, claiming that public diplomacy is a government affair that does not include “the role of the press and other media in international affairs...[or] the non-governmental interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another.”<sup>7</sup> To complicate matters further, public diplomacy has often been understood by some policymakers as one-way communication from a government to foreign publics. However, the most effective public diplomacy takes place as more of a dialogue with a multitude of influential actors in society.

#### Defining Cultural Diplomacy and Exchange in Public Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy has been described as the “linchpin” of public diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> Cultural diplomacy, “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding,” offers new opportunities for addressing public diplomacy challenges long-term.<sup>9</sup> Long advocated by its practitioners as the most effective way to enhance understanding, cultural diplomacy

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<sup>5</sup> The Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, *Definitions of Public Diplomacy* (accessed December 16, 2006); available from <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/pd/definitions.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Tuch, *Communicating with the World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy. *Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*. (Accessed October 31, 2006). Available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Cummings, *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey* (Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003), 1.

has had remarkable success in its educational exchanges and citizen exchanges, despite a history of bureaucratic struggles and relative marginalization within the foreign policy establishment.

Cultural diplomacy is a distinct component of public diplomacy. According to Joseph Nye, the three dimensions of public diplomacy are: 1) daily communications, explaining American domestic and foreign policies to foreign publics; 2) strategic communications, developing a set of themes for communications such as in a political campaign; and 3) developing long-lasting relationships with key individuals, which involves scholarships, exchanges, and conferences.<sup>10</sup> Cultural diplomacy lies in the third dimension: affirming American values, creating trust, reaching broad audiences and key individuals, fostering civil society, and providing neutral ground for American and foreign citizens to communicate openly.<sup>11</sup> Juliet Antunes Sablosky, a former Foreign Service Officer, perhaps describes the relationship between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy best: “Cultural diplomacy is related to public diplomacy, whereas the latter addresses both short-term policy needs and long-term interests, cultural diplomacy’s emphasis is on long-term interchange among nations.”<sup>12</sup>

U.S. public diplomacy programs in the Middle East have historically included all three of Nye’s dimensions of public diplomacy, but third dimension programs such as the educational and cultural programs have proven to be particularly effective in changing attitudes long-term. Information programs, such as broadcasting and relations with the media, relate to the short-term, Nye’s first dimension category. Ambassador William

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 109.

<sup>11</sup> Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy.

<sup>12</sup> Juliet Antunes Sablosky, *Recent Trends in Department of State Support for Cultural Diplomacy: 1993-2002* (Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003), 2. Available from <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/JASpaper.pdf>

Rugh describes four components of public diplomacy that are helpful in understanding the role of exchanges in public diplomacy. According to Rugh, public diplomacy has four distinct components: “1) explaining U.S. foreign policy to foreign publics; 2) presenting them with a fair and balanced picture of American society, culture, and institutions; 3) promoting mutual understanding with those foreign publics; and 4) advising U.S. policy makers on foreign attitudes.”<sup>13</sup> Educational exchange programs fall into the second and third components, presenting American culture and promoting mutual understanding with foreign publics. Informational programs, on the other hand, play an important role in the first and fourth components, explaining U.S. foreign policy and gauging foreign opinion.<sup>14</sup>

This study will focus on exchange programs with the Middle East because of the unique potential of exchanges to change deeply-held attitudes in the region about the United States and Americans. People in the Middle East not only disapprove of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq and the Israel/Palestinian conflict, but are increasingly reflecting negative attitudes about American culture and trust in the United States has declined markedly in recent years.<sup>15</sup> Public diplomacy exchanges, which focus on mutual understanding and communicating American values, are well-suited to addressing these concerns. People from the Muslim world who visit the U.S. on exchange programs gain more favorable, balanced opinions of America, as well as those who have the opportunity to interact with the roughly 1,000 American speakers sponsored by the U.S. State

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<sup>13</sup> Rugh, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Rugh, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Telhami, Shibley, Brian Katulis, Jon B. Alterman, and Milton Viorst., “Symposium: Middle Eastern Views of the United States: What Do the Trends Indicate?” *Middle East Policy*, 13, (Fall 2006), 1-28. Available from [http://www.mepc.org/forums\\_chcs/45.asp](http://www.mepc.org/forums_chcs/45.asp).

Department annually.<sup>16</sup> The second component of public diplomacy above, what Rugh has informally called “Americana,” strives to present a more objective and balanced portrayal of American society and culture, including discussing dissent and alternative points of view. The “Americana” function is best done through educational exchanges, which are by their nature a form of dialogue between the exchange participant and the diverse Americans they meet over the course of an extended stay in the U.S.<sup>17</sup>

Educational exchanges, through their dialogue and “Americana” functions, have the potential to increase mutual understanding and express shared values in ways that short-term programs are unable to do.<sup>18</sup> The exchange experience allows visitors to encounter many aspects of American culture that short-term programs are not able to communicate such as American values of community and family, which are also “central aspects of Middle Eastern society.”<sup>19</sup> Many public diplomacy practitioners have noted this long-term impact of exchanges, which happens through the direct engagement of American citizens with those of another country. Exchange programs are particularly effective in the Muslim and Arab world, where high value is attached to personal

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<sup>16</sup> Rugh, 17-19. Ballow writes that the “strongest admirers of the United States, and those who generally understand us best, are typically those who spent months or years in the United States as students, teachers, or research scholars.” From Barry Ballow, “Academic and Professional Exchanges with the Islamic World: An Undervalued Tool,” in *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds Through Public Diplomacy*, William A. Rugh, Ed. Washington, DC: Public Diplomacy Council, 2004, 111.

<sup>17</sup> William Rugh, “Seminar on U.S. Public Diplomacy,” The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, January 30, 2008, seminar notes by author.

<sup>18</sup> United States Department of State, *2005 Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy* (November 7, 2005) (accessed November 6, 2006); available from <http://www.state.gov/r/adcompd/rls/55903.htm>. John Alterman, at the Middle East Institute panel discussion notes, “We’re going to have a lot more success with educators and academics and exchanges and those kinds of things over a broad period of time on a very micro level affecting attitudes than we’re going to have with a government program, a strategy.” Telhami, et. al, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Ballow, 116.

relations and face-to-face interactions.<sup>20</sup> Participants are also able to learn first-hand about how free societies and democratic political systems operate, as they are able to gather information freely about the U.S. while on an exchange and engage in discussion with whomever they choose.<sup>21</sup> Media relations are central to preventing misunderstanding about foreign policy initiatives short-term, but only exchanges create the long-term understanding of the U.S. that comes from exposure to the U.S. and relationship building.

### The Role of the Cultural Affairs Officer

Before analyzing the attributes and effects of new exchange-based public diplomacy programs, it is important to briefly outline the role of a Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO), the primary agent of cultural diplomacy and exchange overseas. Richard Arndt describes five main functions of a CAO, which are similar to those of a diplomat: 1) representation, 2) research and advice, 3) negotiation and administration, 4) networking, and 5) programming. What sets CAOs apart from their other colleagues at the embassy is the more informal nature of their relationships with foreign publics, which allows for alternative kinds of dialogue, exchange, and networking.<sup>22</sup> The CAO utilizes the public diplomacy tools of exchanges, English language teaching, cultural programming, and American speakers, among other activities. While organizing cultural

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<sup>20</sup> Kenton Keith, “The Last Three Feet: Making the Personal Connection” in *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds Through Public Diplomacy*, ed. William A. Rugh (Washington, DC: Public Diplomacy Council, 2004), 15.

<sup>21</sup> Government official with knowledge of Syria programs, Interview by author (March 14, 2008). I will reference as Interview H.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 546-547. Charles Frankel attempted to capture the typical day for a CAO in his book, *The Neglected Aspect of Foreign Affairs: American Educational and Cultural Policy Abroad*, (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1966). After observing CAOs in action in the 1960s, Frankel’s model CAO in the imaginary country “Evolutia” spent his day answering correspondence, chairing the embassy’s Fulbright Committee and International Visitors committee meetings, and networking with arts leaders.

programs and conducting outreach, a CAO has traditionally come into more direct contact with members of society that extend beyond government circles.<sup>23</sup> As such, a CAO could often offer insights about the culture and society in advising on short-term policy goals in that country.<sup>24</sup>

Building a local network is an asset for the CAO that is also invaluable for the embassy.<sup>25</sup> This network is integral in finding the right people to participate in educational and professional exchange programs. When matching applicants and programs, CAOs traditionally look for people who are moderate in their views of the United States and could benefit most from the experience. Someone extremely anti-American will not overturn their long-held animosity in three weeks, just as a strong supporter of the U.S. would not greatly change his or her views after an exchange. In some cases, however, an anti-American exchange participant can take away new skills, perspective, or gain nuance in his or her views of the U.S.<sup>26</sup> As Arndt notes, the work of a CAO is all about making connections: “networks are the means; people and their growth remain the ends.”<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that many of the above functions are also shared by the Information Officer (IO), who works with the more short-term information programs, as well as by the Public Affairs Officer (PAO), who generally

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<sup>23</sup> “The Overseas Post: The Forgotten Element of Our Public Diplomacy,” *The Public Diplomacy Council*, (Washington, DC: forthcoming), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Mulachy, “Cultural Diplomacy and the Exchange Programs: 1938-1978,” *Journal of Arts, Management, Law and Society* 29, no. 1, Spring 1999 (accessed November 5, 2006); available from Expanded Academic ASAP.

<sup>25</sup> State Department official with years of experience in USIA, interview with author. November 22, 2006. I will reference as “Interview B.”

<sup>26</sup> Wilson P. Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 206. Dizard cites the example of Saths Cooper, a leader of an anti-American organization in South Africa, who shocked the USIS office by volunteering to apply for a Fulbright grant. He received the Fulbright scholarship to Boston University and began a career in teaching and TV upon returning to South Africa, “in addition to his political activities.”

<sup>27</sup> Arndt, 550.

supervises the work of the CAO and IO at an embassy.<sup>28</sup> For example, an IO involved in press work relies on his or her networks to connect with local media outlets and journalists and invites them to participate in programs to the U.S. or publish an article with the ambassador's byline. A PAO may also consult with the CAO to use an exchange program to enhance a U.S. foreign policy goal, such as encouraging a free press by sending journalists on an International Visitor Leadership Program exchange. For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term "CAO" throughout this study in referring to Foreign Service Officers working on exchanges. I will also use the terms "cultural diplomacy" and "public diplomacy exchanges" to refer to the educational and citizen exchange programs of this study.

### III. A Brief History of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy and Exchanges

Prior to 1945, the U.S. government sponsored few cultural exchanges. The first U.S. government sponsored exchanges can be traced to the Boxer scholarships in 1905, which funded a small group of Chinese students to study in the U.S. as part of the U.S. indemnity after the Boxer rebellion.<sup>29</sup> The State Department first created the Division of Cultural Relations to organize exchanges with Latin America in 1938; however, the office had such low resource levels that few exchanges took place. After World War II and before the creation of the United States Information Agency (USIA), the Office of Military Government (OMGUS) in the U.S. occupation zone in Germany initiated a "massive exchange operation that brought thousands of German journalists, teachers, businessmen, and anti-Nazi political leaders to the United States for a firsthand look at

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<sup>28</sup> Rugh, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Dizard, 127.

how a democratic society operated.”<sup>30</sup> The German exchange programs, as well as similar programs implemented in Japan, became a model for later U.S.-funded programs such as the professional exchanges.<sup>31</sup>

In 1946, Senator William J. Fulbright proposed his famous two-way exchanges for students, and in 1953 USIA became responsible for its administration abroad.<sup>32</sup> The International Visitors Program began shortly afterwards, and many more cultural and academic exchange programs followed during and after the USIA years (1953-1999).<sup>33</sup> Many of these first programs included future political leaders and scholars and the Fulbright program expanded rapidly over the years; by the end of the 1990s the Fulbright program had grown from 100 two-way exchange participants to roughly 4,000.<sup>34</sup>

#### IV. The New Exchanges and Broad Changes to U.S. Cultural Diplomacy Today

##### A) The Role of Transformational Diplomacy

Before examining current exchange programs, it is important to examine the structural changes taking place under transformational diplomacy. The “new exchanges” in public diplomacy have been strongly influenced by the concept and organizational consequences of the *transformational diplomacy* initiative. Cultural diplomats have been given a new set of priorities and goals in “transformational diplomacy,” which seeks to engage diplomats in the new crucial areas of the world. Announced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a speech at Georgetown University on January 16, 2006, transformational diplomacy involves a massive reorganization of the Foreign Service and the diplomatic community to reflect America’s changing national security needs,

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<sup>30</sup> Dizard, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 189.

including shifting hundreds of Foreign Service posts in Europe or Washington to the Muslim world and developing countries.<sup>35</sup> These initiatives have been heralded by some as the solution to antiquated Cold War structures, but have also been met by skepticism within the Foreign Service and the very professionals who carry out public diplomacy exchange programs who are concerned that traditional audiences and programs will be sacrificed for new priorities.

Transformational diplomacy is a new vision for American diplomacy that has changed the “grand strategy” *and* day-to-day work of cultural diplomats. The objective of transformational diplomacy is to “work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.”<sup>36</sup> The corresponding “global repositioning initiative” to America’s new strategic partner countries had already shifted 100 positions from Europe and Washington to the Muslim and developing world by the end of 2006. Transformational diplomacy also includes “localization,” requiring diplomats to reach out beyond capital cities, sometimes in the form of “American Presence Posts” manned by a young diplomat. Diplomats are to become actively engaged and partner with foreign societies to help them strengthen democracy, reshaping diplomacy into “dialogue, not a monologue.”<sup>37</sup>

As these changes are underway, members of the Foreign Service, including CAOs, are divided about the initiatives, ranging from an embrace of transformational diplomacy to outright indifference to what is seen as a “repackaging” of what Foreign

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<sup>35</sup> Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, *Transformational Diplomacy Fact Sheet* (January 18, 2006) (accessed November 6, 2006); available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59339.htm>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Shawn Zeller, “Transformational Diplomacy: A Work in Progress.” *Foreign Service Journal* 82, no. 2 (February 2006): 18.

Service Officers have been doing for years. Transformational diplomacy has also instituted new requirements for advancement in the Foreign Service such as multi-regional expertise and service in hardship or “unaccompanied” posts, and has caused concern about working with new audiences in new regions.

### B) Trends in Cultural Diplomacy and its New Priority in Transformational Diplomacy

Historically, cultural diplomacy has suffered from organizational problems, policy incoherence, and a lack of funding. After the Cold War, cultural diplomacy reached a low point in funding and resources. After facing extensive budget and staff cuts in the 1990s, followed by the demise of USIA in 1999, cultural diplomacy in the last 20 years has been described by one of its practitioners as “persistence in the face of adversity.”<sup>38</sup>

Cultural diplomat and scholar Richard Arndt goes as far as to lament that the “cultural dimension of diplomacy has been slashed... its values blurred, its human resources driven away, its budgets strangled, and its honest servants befuddled by misguided reorganizations and meretricious rhetoric.”<sup>39</sup> However, some senior Foreign Service Officers have argued that transformational diplomacy has the potential to solve past marginalization problems by putting cultural diplomacy high on the agenda for all bureaus at the State Department, granting new recognition and resources to its programs, and integrating public diplomacy work into all embassy initiatives.

USIA’s organizational and leadership problems have been well documented by scholars such as Richard Arndt and do not have to be fully listed again here.<sup>40</sup> The three most significant bureaucratic shifts occurred 1) in 1953 when the Eisenhower

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<sup>38</sup> Juliet Antues Sablosky, “Reinvention, Reorganization, Retreat: American Cultural Diplomacy at Century’s End, 1978-1998,” *Journal of Arts, Management, Law and Society* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 10.

<sup>39</sup> Arndt, xxi.

<sup>40</sup> Please see Arndt and Dizard for a complete treatment of the subject.

administration created the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in the State Department 2) in 1979, when the cultural programs at the State Department were transferred into USIA and 3) in 1999, when USIA was absorbed into the State Department. The organization of public diplomacy has been particularly vulnerable to political influences, writes Arndt, such as in the appointment of USIA directors who reorganize the administration depending on political priorities and new attitudes.<sup>41</sup> The organizational shifts in USIA invariably involved debates regarding the separation of cultural and information programs and the role of public diplomacy in the foreign policy establishment, although officers did press and cultural work in the field and saw no conflicts in doing both.<sup>42</sup>

Martin Cummings has outlined ten major trends in U.S. cultural diplomacy that have emerged since its inception 70 years ago. I will outline briefly the most relevant to transformational diplomacy and the ways these trends have been changing. First, Cummings notes that active involvement and funding for cultural diplomacy occurred only during times of a foreign threat or crisis. In designating the engagement of foreign publics a high priority, already a central goal of cultural diplomacy, transformational diplomacy can reverse this trend and make cultural diplomacy support a long-term feature of department budgets and not only a crisis-management tool. Second, Cummings points out that the new threat to the United States posed by international terrorism will continue to shape the nature and direction of our cultural diplomacy. Transformational diplomacy will directly deal with this issue of building cultural

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<sup>41</sup> Sablosky, "Reinvention, Reorganization, Retreat: American Cultural Diplomacy at Century's End, 1978-1998," 1. Many sources, including Sablosky, have noted the appointment of the ideological Charles Wick as USIA director by President Reagan and his focus on international broadcasting during the Cold War, charging him with marginalizing cultural diplomacy.

<sup>42</sup> Interview B.

understanding with the Middle East, Iraq, and Afghanistan as cultural diplomats and their colleagues become more involved in these societies.

Cultural diplomacy's organizational "home" has traditionally reflected how the role and priority of cultural diplomacy is seen in the department.<sup>43</sup> Reorganizations in the past, such as the transfer of cultural programs to USIA in 1978, were interpreted by many as symbolizing the relative lack of importance of cultural and exchange programs compared to information programs and international broadcasting. Cultural diplomacy and exchanges are now gaining new recognition as a vehicle for dialogue and gaining support in the very top ranks of government. The Global Cultural Initiative, which includes cultural and educational exchanges, was inaugurated by First Lady Laura Bush in September 2006, and is a major sign that the administration, Secretary of State Rice, and former Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes supported cultural diplomacy and exchange.<sup>44</sup> In other words, transformational diplomacy has brought an acknowledgement across the entire State Department that educational and cultural exchanges matter.<sup>45</sup>

The consolidation of USIA into the State Department continues to be a sensitive issue with repercussions that are still felt today, although transformational diplomacy is slowly making up ground in funding and staff for public diplomacy that was lost after consolidation. The very dissolution of USIA showed more than anything the low priority

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<sup>43</sup> Cummings, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Government official with familiarity of cultural programs, interview by author (November 27, 2006). I will reference as Interview C.

<sup>45</sup> State Department official with years of experience in USIA, interview with author (November 29, 2006 and February 14, 2008). I will reference as Interview A.

of public diplomacy during the post Cold War period.<sup>46</sup> USIA had roughly 12,000 employees doing public diplomacy in the mid-sixties; today there are 6,715 employees for public diplomacy throughout the State Department, according to the Center for Arts and Culture.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, between 1995 and 2001, the number of exchange participants in Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) programs fell from about 45,000 to 29,000.<sup>48</sup> One senior Foreign Service Officer who works in educational exchanges noted the immense changes for USIA officers during the transition, as public diplomacy programs lost funding, personnel, and its status as an independent agency. She notes, “The State Department was not all that clear about what cultural diplomacy was and given historical managerial difficulties within the state department, asking it to suddenly take on another agency, and a very troubled agency, was probably asking the moon.”<sup>49</sup> By 2000, the cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy budget together made up less than 8% of the State Department’s budget.<sup>50</sup>

At the time of the merger, former director Joseph Duffey was optimistic that the open approach, experience, and private sector contacts of USIA and its staff would be put to good use at the State Department.<sup>51</sup> However, many professionals in the field felt that the flexibility and autonomy of USIA was lost and public diplomacy officers did not get the influence in the State Department that they had hoped for.<sup>52</sup> Overall, the

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<sup>46</sup> Cynthia Schneider, “Culture Communicates: US Diplomacy that Works,” *Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy*, Issue 94 (September 2004): 12. Available at <http://www.clingendael.nl/cdsp/publications/discussion%2Dpapers/list.html>.

<sup>47</sup> *Cultural Diplomacy: Recommendations and Research* (Washington, DC: Center for Arts and Culture, 2004), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Interview B.

<sup>50</sup> Schneider, 3.

<sup>51</sup> “Interview with former USIA Director,” *The Journal for Arts Management, Law and Society* 29, no. 1, Spring 1999, (accessed November 5, 2006); available from Expanded Academic ASAP.

<sup>52</sup> Rugh, 145.

consolidation was relatively successful in ensuring that traditional exchange programs such as the Fulbright program survived in most cases.<sup>53</sup> Where the promise of consolidation failed was in integrating the mission of public diplomacy and public outreach in the State Department and an understanding that foreign public opinion matters to the success of diplomatic objectives. This new recognition and awareness is one of the biggest implications of transformational diplomacy and the attention that Under Secretary Hughes and Secretary Rice have given to cultural diplomacy and exchanges.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout its history, cultural diplomacy practitioners in Washington and in the field have understood the *transformative* nature of academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs in the State Department. Transformational diplomacy and cultural diplomacy are both about changing lives and changing values. Cultural diplomats conduct programs, activities, and outreach for exchanges that will enable citizens to learn about American values and decide how to organize themselves, which is a main tenet of transformational diplomacy. Not only is the goal to present a more favorable view of the United States, but to give people around the world exposure to shared values that are held within a democratic society. Exchange participants build exactly the long-lasting relationships that are so important to soft power. According to the State Department *Performance and Accountability Report* for fiscal year 2005, more than 85% of exchange program participants stay in touch with their host families for as long as 15 years after their program and 98.3% of exchange participants surveyed initiated positive change in

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<sup>53</sup> Interview A.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

their community within five years of their program experience.<sup>55</sup> Foreign Service officers have noted that transformational diplomacy highlights these successes and integrates exchanges and public diplomacy components into other parts of the embassy's activities such as economic development or rule of law programs. For example, the Political Officer can approach the CAO about including an important group of judges in an International Visitor Program as part of U.S. efforts to improve rule of law in a given country.

#### V. Transforming Professional and Cultural Exchanges

Within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, there are two divisions involved in exchange: The Office of Academic Exchanges, which administers programs such as the Fulbright and Humphrey fellowship programs, and the Office of Citizen Exchanges, which is responsible for professional, cultural, and youth exchanges. Cultural diplomacy exchange programs have been changed in recent years by transformational diplomacy initiatives in three major ways: 1) new regional priority with a funding increase for critical countries in the Muslim world, 2) an audience shift from "opinion leaders" to youth and youth influencers, and 3) the abandonment of a one-way model in certain types of exchanges to a more interactive two-way approach in program design.

##### a) Regional Shift in Exchange Programming

The first change in regional focus, as described above, reflects a general change in all government programs toward the Muslim world after 9/11. In 2004, exchanges received approximately \$356 million in funding, representing a 12.4% increase from

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<sup>55</sup> State Department Bureau of Resource Management, *Performance and Accountability Report* (November 2005) (accessed November 25, 2006); available from <http://www.state.gov/m/rm/rls/perfplan/2005/html>.

2004. Included in these funds are 5,800 exchanges with participants from the Muslim world.<sup>56</sup> The State Department defines the “Muslim world” as the 58 countries with significant Muslim populations, which has a combined population of 1.5 billion in Africa, Asia, and Europe.<sup>57</sup> Between 2000 and 2003, the number of state-sponsored exchanges with the Middle East and South Asia nearly doubled. Funding was increased for the “Partnerships for Learning” youth education program related to the Muslim world, as well as the YES (Youth Exchange Study) program for Arab and other Muslim teenagers, which anticipated 1,000 participants in 2006-2007. Overall, beginning in 2002, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs began to “redirect 5% of its annual budget to Partnership for Learning programs oriented toward the Muslim world.”<sup>58</sup> In addition, the new PLUS exchange program for Arab undergraduate college students had 70 students in 2004 and plans were underway to increase those numbers to 100 in 2005.<sup>59</sup> As reflected in the 2005 *Performance and Accountability Report*, indicators for success of initiatives and programs such as “reaching out to broader audiences” are evaluated specifically by how they engage these audiences in the Middle East and South Asia.<sup>60</sup>

#### b. Target Audience Shifts in Exchange Programs

The second major shift caused by transformational diplomacy is the new youth and non-elite audience that cultural diplomacy practitioners are supposed to reach. The push behind transformational diplomacy’s new target audience comes from the demographics

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<sup>56</sup> State Department Bureau of Resource Management.

<sup>57</sup> United States Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges*. Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives. May 2006; 20 (accessed November 18, 2006); available from <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?IPaddress=162.140.64.21&filename=d06535.pdf&directory=/diskb/wais/data/gao>.

<sup>58</sup> Ballou, 117.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>60</sup> State Department Bureau of Resource Management.

of the Muslim world, where people under 20 or 25 make up 50-70% of the population.<sup>61</sup> One overlying performance goal for the State Department's public diplomacy (cultural diplomacy included) is: "International Exchanges Increase Mutual Understanding and Build Trust Between Americans and People and Institutions Around the World." For this goal, the corresponding State Department initiative/program is stated as "Reaching Younger Audiences" with a performance indicator of measuring the "number of foreign youth participants in regions with significant Muslim and Arab populations reached by the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program."<sup>62</sup> Reaching youth and "youth influencers" (teachers, mentors, coaches) is a critical part of transformational diplomacy and an important tool in reaching target audiences. Engaging youth should also be incorporated by the goal: "Basic Human Values Embraced by Americans are Respected and Understood by Global Publics and Institutions."<sup>63</sup>

The increased focus on youth audiences, including non-elite youth, has presented new challenges to CAOs. In the past, USIA officers primarily worked with elites within foreign societies in communications and exchange programs. The cultural arm of USIA, whatever form it was in, "provided personal contact between individuals in the U.S. and other nations, particularly leaders (or leaders to be) of influential groups."<sup>64</sup> USIA, given its small budget and institutional knowledge, talked to elite audiences and was mainly based in capitals or large cities. CAOs were trained and taught to deal with editorial writers, university rectors, senior professors, opinion leaders and elite audiences. Now, CAOs are expected to transition from speaking to the editor of the prestigious

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<sup>61</sup> Interview A.

<sup>62</sup> State Department Bureau of Resource Management.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Mulachy.

“Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” in Germany to youth in the Muslim world, as well as minority and rural populations in these countries. CAOs need to learn the skills required to deal with interacting with youth, as well as new languages, but, as noted above, these skills are still in the transition phase.<sup>65</sup>

### c. Funding Practices for U.S. Government Exchanges and Interactive Programming

As the target audience of cultural diplomacy programs has shifted from foreign elites to youth and “youth influencers,” a shift has also occurred in the funding process of ECA programs, which reflects a new type of collaborative, interactive program that ECA is looking for in grant applicants. Before discussing the grant process, it is important to note the close relationship intended between ECA and the regional bureaus, since this dialogue supports changes in the grant process and programs. Funding decisions and program design should be coordinated between the embassies, their regional bureaus, and ECA. ECA attempts to integrate regional foreign policy priorities within exchange programs when they design programs or grant solicitations (for example, targeting a specific audience or region in a country).<sup>66</sup> CAOs and embassies abroad are eager to participate in this dialogue and increase programming. According to one ECA official, when former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Dina Powell recently solicited embassies’ feedback on cultural diplomacy, the overwhelming response was in favor of increasing cultural and exchange programs overall. The embassies also give specific feedback that is incorporated by ECA such as what kind of

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<sup>65</sup> Interview A, Interview B.

<sup>66</sup> Interview A.

American sports figure or community leader might be the best fit for an exchange with a given country or region.<sup>67</sup>

Transformational diplomacy has enhanced this dialogue, as new regions and audiences are established, and influenced the objectives of open competitions (grant solicitation). In designing an open solicitation for grants, an office within ECA such as the Office for Citizen Exchanges uses this dialogue about priorities with the Secretary of State, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, and the regional bureaus and embassies to formulate goals and objectives for grant programs.<sup>68</sup> After developing a programming idea, the office should consult with the regional offices within the State Department as well as with the corresponding Foreign Service Officers in the field.

In this way, ECA can determine specifically what it is looking for from partner organizations, which are typically American public or non-profit civil society and educational institutions. Overall, ECA is looking for exchange programs that involve youth and develop capacity in civil society institutions abroad. For example, the open competition for professional exchange programs announced in January 2008 by the Office of Citizen Exchanges for professional exchanges laid out youth influencers as a target audience, as well as other specific goals in promoting values and development. The competition announcement describes concrete priorities and prescriptions for applicants:

“Proposed projects should transform institutional and individual understanding of key issues, foster dialogue, share expertise, and develop capacity. Through these people-to-people exchanges, the Bureau seeks to break down stereotypes that divide peoples, to promote good governance and economic growth, to contribute to conflict prevention and management, and to build respect for cultural expression and identity in the

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<sup>67</sup> Interview C.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

world...Projects should include current or potential leaders who will effect positive change in their communities...The Bureau is especially interested in engaging socially and economically diverse groups that may not have had extensive contact with counterpart institutions in the United States and particularly seeks proposals that engage *educators or other groups that directly influence youth in innovative ways.*<sup>69</sup>

An ideal program for promoting democratic values, according to the announcement, would “demonstrate the importance Americans place on community service as an element of active citizenship and may include ideas and projects to strengthen civil society through community service either during participants' stay in the U.S. or upon their return to their countries.”<sup>70</sup> Priority countries in the Middle East announcement for 2008 are: “Algeria; Bahrain; Egypt; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Lebanon; Morocco; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; United Arab Emirates; West Bank / Gaza; Yemen.” The Professional Exchange programs in the Middle East countries have specific thematic requirements: “Professional Mentoring for Women in Science and Technology” or “Math, Science, and Technology in Secondary Schools.” Young women and secondary school teachers who are responsible for engaging the “successor generation” in the region are the target audiences of the program.<sup>71</sup>

After an open solicitation is published by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, applications are reviewed internally and forwarded to the Assistant Secretary who accepts or rejects the panel’s recommendations. Grants are given to groups that submit the best proposals and that meet the specified criteria, which may change from program to program. In the process of reprioritizing regions, themes, and audiences, the role of

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<sup>69</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Open Competition Seeking Professional Exchanges Programs in Africa, East Asia, Eurasia, Europe, the Near East, North Africa, South Asia, and the Western Hemisphere (accessed January 28, 2008); available from: <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/rfgps/febu15rfgp.htm>.

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Request for Grant Proposals* (accessed February 1, 2008); available from <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/rfgps/febu15rfgp.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

partner organizations, as for the professional exchanges' open competition, must adhere to these strict programming guidelines in writing project proposals for grants.

As this open competition announcement and process demonstrates, the priorities of transformational diplomacy, engaging and partnering with foreign publics and breaking the mold of paternalistic diplomacy, have changed the nature of public diplomacy exchange programs. The common pattern of cultural programming, for example, during and just after the Cold War was “exporting the American arts.”<sup>72</sup> Performers and exhibitions were sent abroad and performed for crowds to demonstrate the power of American music and art. The jazz music program was particularly popular, as legends such as Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie “brought abstract concepts of liberty to life.”<sup>73</sup> Today, exchange practitioners strive to create a more collaborative environment, where visiting scientists or sports figures not only perform but share their methods, learn about the artistic heritage of the other country, and interact with youth. The newest open solicitation specifies that “to the fullest extent possible, programs should be two-way exchanges supporting roughly equal numbers of participants from the U.S. and foreign countries.”<sup>74</sup> In the new academic and professional exchanges involving youth influencers and young women, an overarching goal here as well is to allow: “all participants to come together, learn from each other and to build relationships.”<sup>75</sup>

A recent call for proposals for the sports exchanges illustrates the new interactive programming dynamic in youth exchange, which strives to empower societies and create stable infrastructures for youth involvement in target countries. Administrators within

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<sup>72</sup> Interview C.

<sup>73</sup> Schneider, 8.

<sup>74</sup> U. S. Department of State, *Request for Grant Proposals*.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

ECA are looking for successful organizations in the U.S. to partner with in-country institutions to create sports exchanges. This collaborative dynamic should allow American and foreign professionals to develop programs for coaches in methodologies and teach youth about leadership and healthy lifestyles. The increase in sports programs, such as the World Cup Initiative, is further testament to this new interactive dynamic, which allows for participation from representatives from government and non-governmental organizations, coaches, community leaders, and youth.

d. The Effects of Transformational Diplomacy on PAO work environments

As PAOs adjust to the geographic shifts and new target audience, many difficulties and challenges remain from the USIA merger into the State Department in 1999. In fact, many of the administrative or management challenges that PAOs face have been exacerbated by the post 9/11 initiatives in public diplomacy. Overall, the post-USIA problems involve a lack of resources and autonomy that have made PAO work in organizing long-term exchanges more difficult. When USIA dissolved, the PAO felt the effects in the loss of executive officer positions and resources, but even a small loss such as the USIA car service meant a loss in mobility. Former PAO James Bullock notes the extreme shortages in staff that continue today, noting that USIA had stopped hiring during the mid-1990s for both Foreign Service and Civil Service positions.<sup>76</sup>

The resulting increase in paperwork and loss in mobility have caused PAOs to spend significantly more time on administrative issues within the embassy and dealing with short-term communications efforts, instead of networking outside of the embassy.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> James Bullock, "The Role of the Embassy Public Affairs Officer After 9/11." In *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds Through Public Diplomacy*, ed. William A. Rugh (Washington, DC: Public Diplomacy Council, 2004), 39.

<sup>77</sup> Keith, 16.

PAOs today spend the majority of their time completing administrative work such as internal reporting and budgeting, which has cut down on time for important programmatic responsibilities and managing personal contacts.<sup>78</sup> New initiatives from Washington that involve tracking the success of programs have added to the administrative and reporting burden.<sup>79</sup> Even PAOs with much-needed language skills in the Arab world are obliged to manage the increase in paperwork. According to Bullock, the problem lies in the new bureaucratic structures: in the past, headquarters provided support to the field officers, however, now PAOs are asked to support initiatives from headquarters rather than develop their own.<sup>80</sup>

In recent years, the “push” from Washington to PAOs in the field, Bullock argues, has meant that short-term communications projects have higher priority than relationship-building activities such as exchanges. The image of PAOs as “debating champions,” Bullock argues, is not realistic; PAOs need to be able to build relationships with institutions and organize events for foreign publics.<sup>81</sup> In USIA, PAOs were able to act independently and cooperate easily across regions. After the merger, PAOs from USIA were seen as technical managers instead of programmers, a perception that still exists today.<sup>82</sup> In the State Department after the USIA merger, primary policy-making responsibility stayed with the regional bureaus and public diplomacy was continually marginalized, although the prominence of Under Secretary Hughes had improved the public diplomacy perspective and inter-regional initiatives in policy making in recent years.

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<sup>78</sup> Bullock, 39.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>81</sup> Bullock, 46

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 41.

Another concern among many public diplomacy practitioners has been the loss of expertise or the “dilution” of a core of public diplomacy experts. After consolidation, public diplomacy positions became available to Foreign Service Officers from the other functional areas of the Foreign Service: Economic, Political, Management, and Consular. Officials in ECA now spend more time advising public diplomacy officers in the field who have never run a program before or are unfamiliar with public diplomacy tools and methods.<sup>83</sup> The strains of learning a new set of skills required by transformational diplomacy shifts, as well as the increased reporting responsibilities, has meant that public diplomacy officers spend less time in the field than under the USIA system and ECA officials spend more time counseling officers in the field.

e. New Actors in Public Diplomacy: The Non-Profit and Private Sector

Since its beginnings under the United States Information Agency (USIA), U.S. public diplomacy has generally been practiced by the public sector. The private and non-profit sectors, however, have a strong interest in influencing foreign publics and their activities in diplomacy are increasing. As the Secretary of State’s Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy writes, “international diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be increasingly non-governmental in character,” and American diplomats need to learn how to partner with the non-profit and private sector partners.<sup>84</sup> Monroe Price describes this involvement in his “market for loyalties” model of society. In the market for loyalties, Price describes the potential for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multi-national corporations (MNCs) to actively compete for the loyalties of foreign audiences. Price describes the global information space as a market for competing ideas

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<sup>83</sup> Interview A.

<sup>84</sup> *A Call to Action: Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy* (accessed February 23, 2008); available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/99903.pdf>.

and ideologies. The government can make tacit or explicit agreements with agents such as NGOs or corporations to affect cultural and political attitudes where their interests coincide. In this market, the “sellers” are the government, MNCs, or other groups in society with power, who are selling their political or cultural views. The “buyers” are citizens who pay the sellers with their loyalty. The sellers form a cartel, with which they form barriers to entry for other voices that might try to enter the market. As Price demonstrates with the market for loyalties model, the government is certainly not the only actor interested in influencing foreign publics.<sup>85</sup>

Non-profit and private actors can participate in the market for loyalties directly through their involvement in public diplomacy programs. In fact, their role in public diplomacy is increasingly recognized as they commit resources and design programs. Diplomats can no longer ignore non-state actors, who now “develop public diplomacy policies of their own.”<sup>86</sup> The University of Southern California’s Center on Public Diplomacy, for example, goes as far as to include the study of “the impact of private activities- from popular culture to fashion to sports to news to the Internet- that inevitably, if not purposefully, have an impact on foreign policy and national security.”<sup>87</sup> In this sense, NGOs and MNCs are changing the old frameworks of government-to-government or government-to-people diplomacy.<sup>88</sup> As Crocker Snow, Director of the Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, writes, “the dogma that public diplomacy is governmental alone carried on well beyond the reality of the situation as the

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<sup>85</sup> Monroe Price, *Media and Sovereignty* (Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 2002), 31-40.

<sup>86</sup> Jan Melissen, “Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy,” *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers* no. 2 (2005): 8.

<sup>87</sup> USC Center on Public Diplomacy, *What is Public Diplomacy?* (accessed on December 6, 2006); available from [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/about/whatis\\_pd](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/about/whatis_pd).

<sup>88</sup> Jarol Manheim, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3. Manheim describes the distinctive aspects of diplomacy as government to government, diplomat to diplomat, government to people, and people to people.

number of players communicating on and about America became ever more numerous and independent of government control or influence.”<sup>89</sup> NGOs are involved with governments in many areas, as they take on lobbying, compete for government grants, and partner with other organizations to carry out government programs in many areas.<sup>90</sup>

The private sector has also increased its interest in public diplomacy programs and government cooperation as executives deal with enforcing corporate social responsibility and communicating their values to publics.<sup>91</sup> Most successful companies strive to align their operations with universal values like human rights, labor rights, environmental standards, and transparency. In order to communicate these values and attitudes, businesses engage in their own public diplomacy.<sup>92</sup>

Even as ECA exercises more control over the type of program it is looking for in open competitions, the non-profit sector and private sector still have an important role in carrying out ECA programs under transformational diplomacy. There are many opportunities for the U.S. government to cooperate closely with the private and non-profit sector in public diplomacy activities such as recruiting speakers that communicate Americans’ principles and ideals. Public-private partnerships have been a tradition in most exchange programs, such as the Fulbright program, which is administered by the Institute for International Education (IIE) and has support by foreign governments in its constituent countries. The National Council on International Visitors (NCIV) is another example of a partner organization that works closely with ECA to design programs for

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<sup>89</sup> Crocker Snow, “Public Diplomacy Practitioners: a Changing Cast of Characters,” *Journal of Business Strategy* 27 no. 3 (2006): 19.

<sup>90</sup> John A. Quelch and Nathalie Laidler-Kylander, *The New Global Brands: Managing Non-Governmental Organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Thompson South-Western, 2006), 7.

<sup>91</sup> Snow, 20.

<sup>92</sup> Michael B. Goodman, “The Role of Business in Public Diplomacy,” *Journal of Business Strategy* 27, no. 3 (2006): 7.

the international visitors selected by embassies. Partnerships within the non-profit sector, such as the Alliance for Educational and Cultural Exchange, which represents 64 exchange organizations, help combine resources for exchanges and conduct leadership training for staff and directors.<sup>93</sup> Not only are such partner organizations necessary from a logistical perspective, but foreign governments and citizens are at times more willing to work with them than with the U.S. government.<sup>94</sup>

In the open competition process, applicant non-governmental organizations are required to work closely with cultural affairs officers at the embassies in target countries. CAOs are to be actively involved in the application process and program execution in-country. The announcement requires that the applicant's proposal therefore "clearly states the applicant's [NGO] commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. embassy in the relevant country(ies) to develop plans for project implementation and to select project participants... Applicants should state their willingness to invite representatives of the embassy(ies) and/or consulate(s) to participate in program sessions or site visits."<sup>95</sup>

As the situation in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts seem to have stagnated, western governments like the U.S. need the credibility and access that non-profit organizations enjoy.<sup>96</sup> Engaging foreign societies, as transformational diplomacy attempts to do, "is often best done by the non-governmental agents of our own civil

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<sup>93</sup> Sherry Mueller, "The Power of Citizen Diplomacy," *Foreign Service Journal* (March 2002).

<sup>94</sup> Michael McCarry, "Public-private Partnerships and the American Exchange Programs: a View from the Field," *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1999). Accessed November 5, 2006. Available from Expanded Academic ASAP.

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Open competition announcement*, (Accessed February 23, 2008); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/rfgps/feb09rfgp.htm>.

<sup>96</sup> Shaun Riordan, "Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: a New Foreign Policy Paradigm?" *Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy*, Issue 95 (November 2004): 6.

societies.”<sup>97</sup> The new “Global Cultural Initiative” demonstrates the administration’s commitment to building bridges with the private sector and non-profit sector to enlist the resources of public and private sector institutions in cultural diplomacy, as well as the formation of the “Office of Private Sector Outreach” in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in 2006.<sup>98</sup> Global Cultural Initiative partner institutions include the well-respected John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the American Film Institute (AFI), the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

## V. Theoretical Underpinnings for Audience Shift Beyond Transformation Diplomacy

### A) Influence of Youth Bulge Theory on Exchange Program Development

The theoretical underpinnings and assumptions underlying the shifts in cultural diplomacy have implications for public diplomacy effectiveness. The “youth bulge theory” is one such assumption that has led to perceptions about youth audiences and participation in public diplomacy. I will first outline the history and substance of the “youth bulge” theory and follow with a discussion of its critiques and implications for public diplomacy exchange programs.

The “youth bulge” theory has become prominent in security policy circles and subsequently, in public diplomacy circles, as an explanation for the rise in anti-Americanism and recruitment to radical or extremist terrorist networks in the Middle East. The youth bulge theory, which was formally developed in 1985 by geographer

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid,12.

<sup>98</sup> U.S. Department of State, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Office of Private Sector Outreach, *About Us*, (accessed April 3, 2008); available from <http://www.state.gov/r/partnerships/about/>.

Gary Fuller, “claims that a proportion of more than 20 per cent of young people in a population signals the possibility of political rebellion and unrest.”<sup>99</sup> Samuel Huntington, in an interview with *The Observer*, explained the danger as “the people who go out and kill other people... males between the ages of 16 and 30. During the 1960s, 70s, and 80s there were high birth rates in the Muslim world, and this has given rise to a huge youth bulge.”<sup>100</sup> Although the connections between youth and political unrest and terrorism had been formally considered by the U.S. security establishment in the past,<sup>101</sup> after 9/11 the youth bulge theory became an extremely popular explanation for instability and terrorist recruitment in the Muslim world in the western media and policy circles.<sup>102</sup>

Fareed Zakaria, writing in *Newsweek*, echoed the sentiments of many others in the months after 9/11, drawing upon images of “angry young men” in the Arab world and the “demographic ticking time bomb,” coupled with economic decline and social change, to explain extremism in the Middle East.<sup>103</sup> Former director of the CIA George Tenet summarized the new agenda for U.S. counterterrorism efforts and later public diplomacy goals: the U.S. must seek to “enlarge the opportunities within the Muslim world to embrace democratic norms; to encourage open, constructive political discussion in closed, reserved societies; to support experiments in improved governance; (and) to promote opportunities for Muslim women to participate more broadly in the life of their

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<sup>99</sup> Anne Hendrixson, *Angry Young Men, Veiled Young Women: Constructing a New Population Threat*. Corner House Briefing 34 (December 2004): 2. Available from <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/pdf/briefing/34veiled.pdf>

<sup>100</sup> Henrik Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,” *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006): 607.

<sup>101</sup> Hendrixson traces this trend back to the 1974 National Security Council’s Memorandum on the “Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for US Security and Overseas Interests,” which argues that large numbers of young people in less developed countries are more prone to extremes and violence. Hendrixson, 2.

<sup>102</sup> Urdal, 608

<sup>103</sup> Zakaria in Hendrixson, 2.

societies.”<sup>104</sup> Through engagement, the U.S. would lessen the conditions that “bring people to despair, weaken governments, and create power vacuums that extremists are all too ready to fill.” He explicitly mentions the youth bulge, “what Robert Kaplan calls ‘unemployed guys walking around,’ a strong indicator of social volatility.”<sup>105</sup> Tenet’s recommendations were based on conclusions by the CIA: “the growing demographic youth bulge in developing nations whose economic systems and political ideologies are under enormous stress—will fuel the rise of more disaffected groups willing to use violence to address their political grievances.”<sup>106</sup> Most recently, the youth bulge theory has been used to explain the rise in youth violence among immigrant and Muslim youth in particular across Europe.<sup>107</sup>

While the youth bulge theory has found a large audience in the policy community, there is still a lack of critical studies of the youth bulge phenomenon. One study, by Norwegian scholar Henrik Urdal, examined whether “youth bulges” (defined by Urdal as “large cohorts in the ages of 15-24 relative to the total adult population”) may increase the risk of political violence, including terrorism.<sup>108</sup> His cross-national analysis of political violence from 1950-2000 (for internal violence) and 1984-1995 (for terrorism) showed that youth bulges were in fact associated with increased risk of terrorism in countries with long-term negative per capita economic growth.<sup>109</sup> His study concludes that “relatively large youth cohorts are associated with a significantly increased risk of

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<sup>104</sup> George Tenet, “Remarks by the Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet at the Nixon Center Distinguished Service Award Banquet,” (accessed January 30, 2008); available from [https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2002/dci\\_speech\\_12112002.html](https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2002/dci_speech_12112002.html).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> In Marc Sommers, “Fearing Africa’s Young Men: The Case of Rwanda,” *Social Development Papers*, The World Bank 32 (January 2006): 2.

<sup>107</sup> “Exempel des Bösen,” *Der Spiegel*, January 7, 2008, 22.

<sup>108</sup> Urdal, 607.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 620.

domestic armed conflict, terrorism, and riots/violent demonstrations.”<sup>110</sup> As illustrated by the UN *Arab Human Development Report*, countries in the Muslim world will continue to face the challenge of high proportions of youth in society and unemployment.<sup>111</sup> The report also noted widespread discontent of young people, shown by the fact that half of all Arab youth expressed an interest in emigrating from their home country due to worries about job opportunities and education.<sup>112</sup>

### Implications for Public Diplomacy Exchanges

The youth bulge theory has played a prominent role in the formulation of new public diplomacy exchange programs targeting youth. As I described above, the new exchanges target youth and youth influencers to develop life skills and increase access to education. However, do these kinds of programs adequately address the conditions described by the ‘youth bulge theory’? More importantly, is the use of the youth bulge theory causing some misguided policy decisions in exchange programs? As Ambassador Rugh notes, “after 9/11, members of Congress and senior officials in the administration in Washington, seeing that the 9/11 terrorists were all young Arab men, decided that something should be done to reach Arabs for whom there were no longer specific U.S. government programs. They therefore agreed to initiate new educational exchange grant programs aimed at Arab and Muslim youth.”<sup>113</sup>

One danger of the youth bulge theory is its tendency to oversimplify and generalize relations in Muslim societies. Grouping all youth together into one dissatisfied mass prevents policymakers from distinguishing among different economic,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 623.

<sup>111</sup> In Urdal 625, see note on UNDP 2002 report.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Rugh, 19.

religious, and cultural groups, all of whom have different grievances or reasons for discontent in their societies and in their relations with the U.S. In the same vein, viewing the youth bulge as a purely demographic problem causes policymakers to ignore the deeper issues that cause discontent, such as lack of resources and increasing gaps between rich and poor within Arab countries.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, viewing youth and male youth in particular as something dangerous leaves out the fact that youth could actually play a positive role in changing Muslim societies, as Marc Sommers argues. He points to a recent study that illustrates how early adolescent males are easily influenced by their peers and when exposed to those “engaged in positive activities, they are likely to become leaders.”<sup>115</sup> Therefore, “the answer to the youth challenge is not to further marginalize or paint male youth as fearsome security threats. That can only inspire increased alienation and a sense of being cornered...unemployed, undereducated young men require a positive engagement and appropriate empowerment, and participatory financial and program support.”<sup>116</sup> Thus, instead of simply empowering youth to learn English or study in the U.S., effective public diplomacy exchanges with youth should directly engage youth in their societies and economies.

The youth bulge studies cited above, and the UN *Arab Human Development Report*, also point to the frustration of well-educated young men who are unemployed and depressed about their lack of opportunity. Focusing on youth specifically leaves out this extremely important group of “older” young men, who are the most vulnerable to

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<sup>114</sup> Hendrixson quoted in Sommers, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Sommers, 14.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. Hendrixson also argues that policymakers should study how youth can influence their own society and serve as in impetus for positive reform of institutions.

recruitment by extremists and terrorist networks.<sup>117</sup> Expanding education has been seen as a way of reducing the risk of political unrest and discontent among youth, however, the high employment among educated groups “has been argued to be one of the most destabilizing and potentially violent sociopolitical phenomena of any regime.”<sup>118</sup>

Recently, the risk of high youth unemployment and its relation to increased levels of religiosity in Egyptian youth was featured in the *New York Times*. In Egypt today, young men with high levels of education are unable to find work for at least six years after completing university studies, which has caused them to wait as long or longer before marrying and gaining respect and empowerment in society.<sup>119</sup> Public diplomacy exchanges would be advised to therefore target these groups by offering “older” youth meaningful ways to be involved in the private sector and learn job skills outside of purely English language programs which are currently offered or offering further education.

#### VI Other Organizational Frameworks: The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) was formed as a presidential initiative in 2002 to support democratic reform in the Middle East. Because this post-9/11 initiative also organizes exchanges, I will briefly describe its role in exchanges, the “education” pillar of programming, and the future direction of the initiative. MEPI was formed as an office in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. State Department, with a mission to fund programs that strengthen the “building blocks for democratic change” in the Middle East. MEPI operates in: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel,

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<sup>117</sup> Urdal, 612.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Michael Slackman, “Stifled, Egypt’s Young Turn to Islamic Fervor,” *The New York Times*, February 17, 2008.

Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.<sup>120</sup>

MEPI innovatively uses small grants and cooperative agreements to implement its programs. Running programs through cooperative agreements, instead of just awarding grants, allows for MEPI to have substantial involvement in programs. For example, if a mid-term evaluation uncovers an area for improvement, MEPI officers can make suggested improvements quickly. Most cooperative agreements and programs are conducted through the Washington, DC office at the State Department, whereas small grants are awarded at the local level and managed locally.<sup>121</sup>

MEPI's programming falls into four "pillars" for reform: "(1) political governance and participation, (2) economic liberalization and opportunity, (3) educational quality and access, and (4) the empowerment of women."<sup>122</sup> While most of MEPI's programs take place in the Middle East, exchanges are one of the tools used in the Education and Women's Empowerment pillars along with trainings, workshops, and networks.<sup>123</sup> The MEPI program goals are distinctly different from that of public diplomacy; MEPI aims not to promote mutual understanding, but rather to promote democratic change and reform. Nevertheless, the CAO or PAO at embassies often has to organize MEPI and ECA exchange programs concurrently. In some countries, MEPI has used its own resources to provide contract positions at embassies, which should relieve

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<sup>120</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Middle East Partnership Initiative* (accessed March 24, 2008); available from <http://mepi.state.gov/c10128.htm>.

<sup>121</sup> Government official familiar with MEPI programs, interview by author (March 24, 2008). I will reference as Interview L.

<sup>122</sup> *Middle East Partnership Initiative* (accessed March 23, 2008); available from [mepi.state.gov](http://mepi.state.gov).

<sup>123</sup> The Legal and Business Fellowship Program, for example, is a five-month program to provide women aged (22-32) in the fields with advanced study and internship experience in the U.S. U.S. Embassy Sana'a, *Legal and Business Fellowship Program* (Accessed March 28, 2008). Available from <http://yemen.usembassy.gov/lbfp.html>.

the extra programming burden on the CAO. In addition, MEPI has two regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Tunis that provide support to embassies and assist in coordinating programs.<sup>124</sup> AMIDEAST is the primary programming agency in the region for MEPI programs as well as ECA programs.

Roughly one-fourth of MEPI's 293 million USD budget is devoted to the "Education" pillar of programming. The goals of this pillar are to improve access to education and quality of education through programming aimed at education reform. The ultimate goal of MEPI programs is to have the country adopt reforms such as improving access to education long-term, so that U.S. assistance is no longer necessary. MEPI's education programs include translating children's books into Arabic and providing books at schools throughout the region to develop thinking and analytical skills in youth, developing English language and civic education curricula, providing funding for the English Access Microscholarship program in the Middle East countries, facilitating university partnerships between universities in the region and in the U.S., and the MEPI Youth Summer Leadership Institute for University Students.<sup>125</sup> The student leaders program is the only formal exchange program in the education (youth) pillar. Until recently, the program was coordinated in conjunction with ECA; however, in 2008 MEPI fully managed the program itself. The summer institute program brings roughly 175 undergraduate student leaders from the region to the U.S. for six-week programs at American universities that include leadership and civic engagement training, such as in fundraising or grassroots organizing skills. Communicating the values of civic

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<sup>124</sup> Interview L.

<sup>125</sup> U.S. Department of State, Middle East Partnership Initiative, *Success Stories* (accessed March 28, 2008); available from <http://mepi.state.gov/c16050.htm>.

engagement, diversity, and democracy is a high priority for MEPI officials and they have sought to include these values in all of their affiliated programs.<sup>126</sup>

The MEPI alumni network for participants in MEPI programs in-country and the summer institutes program is an important component of MEPI programming. As in the case studies below, MEPI officials aim to create long-term relationships and networks with their program participants. In many cases, MEPI has provided the resources for an embassy staff person or AMIDEAST representative to track MEPI alumni and provide alumni network programs and events. Because MEPI programs in most countries are just a few years old, it is still too early to analyze the effects and functioning of their alumni networks and alumni programs long-term. In the meantime, the staff and resource support have ensured that the alumni programs take place regularly.

As an initiative with a distinct political goal, strengthening democracy in the Middle East, MEPI faced considerable challenges in gaining acceptance by governments and leaders in the region. In fact, embassy officials in the region also responded very negatively and were concerned that such programs would affect their fragile credibility and working relationships with civil society, youth and their parents, and the ministries of education.<sup>127</sup> Although MEPI officials claim that host governments have become more accepting of MEPI programs, CAOs in the region have reported that in some cases it is best to downplay the political nature of MEPI programs in recruiting or conducting outreach. By far, the most positive response from CAOs or PAOs concerned the increased funding to carry out exchange programs and English teaching.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Interview L.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Government official familiar with youth programs, interview with author (March 14, 2008). I will reference as Interview G.

While it is still uncertain what the long-term effects of the new MEPI initiative will be in the region, the future of MEPI is also unclear. MEPI was launched as a presidential initiative, and as such, applies for funding from Congress each fiscal year. Embassy and MEPI officials are unsure whether MEPI will continue, as it largely depends on the priorities of the new administration. Most PAOs assume that MEPI will continue in some form, as the resources of the program have become important to carrying out their public diplomacy work, especially in youth outreach through the English Access Microscholarship program and the summer institutes. Because of its goal to help citizens improve their own lives and build their own nations, MEPI promotes itself as “transformational diplomacy in action,” which may find resonance as the transformational diplomacy initiative continues to influence priorities and structures within the State Department.<sup>129</sup>

#### VII General Evaluation Structures and Alumni Tracking

Program evaluation and alumni tracking are mandated for most of the new exchange programs, whether through MEPI or ECA. Formal evaluations of exchange programs are carried out by the Office of Policy and Evaluation for ECA programs. These evaluations attempt to measure, mostly through surveys and focus groups, if a program is meeting its goals. For example, the Youth Exchange Study (YES) Program evaluation aimed to “evaluate from the outset of the program whether the program is meeting its goals of 1) providing the opportunity for young people in selected countries to learn more about American society, values, and culture; 2) fostering personal connections; 3) enhancing American understanding of the foreign students’ countries and cultures; and 4) supporting program alumni to put the knowledge and skills acquired to

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<sup>129</sup> *Middle East Partnership Initiative* (accessed March 24, 2008); available from <http://mepi.state.gov/>.

use in their home countries. For each of the first three cohorts, the evaluation consists of three phases: a pre-program survey, an end-of-program survey, and a one-year post-program survey. Intermedia, located in Washington, D.C., is conducting the evaluation.<sup>130</sup>

Despite efforts to evaluate outcomes over outputs, officials in ECA and Foreign Service Officers in the field remain concerned with the issue of how to best measure increased mutual understanding. Increased resources for evaluation would allow policymakers to do more follow-up with alumni over the long-term to see what institutions they represent years after participating in exchanges, how opinions have changed, and how the experience played a role in the alumni's views over the long-term. Many practitioners want to see evaluation measures that would catch these substantive issues and not merely increases in numbers and funding.<sup>131</sup>

Alumni tracking and participation has also been a consistent challenge in recent years for exchange practitioners. As the case studies below will show, alumni are tracked by multiple agencies: CAOs at the individual embassies have their own databases, the programming organizations have databases, and the U.S. State Department is encouraging all U.S. exchange program participants to participate in the database and online community at [alumni.state.gov](http://alumni.state.gov). In addition, MEPI has its own database of alumni, which are tracked by programming organizations and at the embassy.

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<sup>130</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Evaluations in Progress* (accessed February 2, 2008); available from <http://www.exchanges.state.gov/education/evaluations/inprogress.htm>.

<sup>131</sup> Government official familiar with Educational and Cultural Affairs, interview with author (February 27, 2008). I will reference as Interview I.

### VIII. Case Studies of new exchange programs targeting youth and non-elites<sup>132</sup>

The following section is an in-depth analysis of three new longer-term public diplomacy exchanges programs in the Middle East region: the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program, Partnerships for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS)/ Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), and the Community College Initiative (CCI). Based on discussions with current government and NGO officials involved in each program, I will discuss the goals and objectives, recruitment and selection, evaluation, and alumni tracking of each program, as well as current challenges faced by the programs. The Fulbright Foreign Student Program is not a new youth exchange program, however, as one of the long-term and established exchange programs in the region, it will be considered. I have chosen not to include the short-term or four-week “summer camp” type exchanges that target youth, such as the MEPI “Student Leader Institutes,” as the funding and participation of countries for these programs vary from year-to-year. In addition, the impact of shorter-term exchange programs, which often do not include a host family stay or formal high school or university study with American students, offer a different type of exchange experience but offer an interesting area of further study.

I have included the English Access Microscholarship program, which is not technically an exchange program, because its target audience is only non-elite youth and the program has been widely cited as an influential “feeder” program for the other exchanges of this study.

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<sup>132</sup> Please see Appendix for an overview of program years and participating countries.

### A) YES Program

The Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program was founded directly in the aftermath of 9/11 and was officially inaugurated in October of 2002.<sup>133</sup> Prior to its inception, the U.S. government had no public diplomacy high school exchange programs with youth in the Muslim world, which is part of what makes this particular program so unique. The YES program in the Middle East countries is entirely run by AMIDEAST (America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc.), which does recruitment, selection, and alumni programs throughout the region. The AYUSA International Consortium organizations provide family and school placement in the U.S.<sup>134</sup>

The objectives of the YES program are not only to improve mutual understanding between populations in countries with a significant Muslim population and the United States, but to develop young leaders in the Muslim world.<sup>135</sup> During their year at an American high school, students stay with an American host family and are required to do community service in the area where they live, as well as a leadership project or mentoring program (depending on the location and the student). YES students are also given \$400/month “allowance” to engage in the community and learn decision-making and money management skills. The community service component of the program has in fact been one of the most successful aspects of the program, as this experience is completely new for exchange students. Students have worked in beach clean-ups, elderly

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<sup>133</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Youth Exchange and Study Program* (accessed February 4, 2008); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/yes.htm>.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> The countries taking part in the YES program are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel (Arab Community), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and Yemen. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Youth Exchange and Study Program*.

homes, orphanages, and often continue community service work in their home community after the exchange.<sup>136</sup>

These unique aspects of the YES program in civil society and leadership development, as well as the high level of English involved in succeeding at an American high school require the selection process to be a competitive one. In selecting participants for the YES program, each particular country office of AMIDEAST, sometimes with a representative from the U.S. embassy involved, conducts the selection. The selection criteria for Lebanon in 2008 is representative of criteria for each YES country: students must be enrolled in the Lebanese baccalaureate program, born between 1991 and 1993, demonstrate high maturity, good character, flexibility, and adaptability, have excellent English, agree to attend classes full-time, demonstrate willingness to participate in host family daily life, and are not to have attended school in the U.S. previously.<sup>137</sup>

The most unique aspect of the YES program, however, lies in its target audience, which has also been one of the biggest challenges in implementing the program. YES was founded shortly after 9/11 to reach “underserved” and non-elite youth populations in the Middle East who were seen to be most vulnerable to extremism and harbor misperceptions of the U.S. However, recruiting students from this audience can be extremely difficult. First, students from “underserved” populations (rural, non-elites) often do not have adequate English skills to meet program requirements. As I will discuss later, this has improved somewhat through the Access English Microscholarship

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<sup>136</sup> AMIDEAST, *YES Alumni Newsletter* (accessed February 7, 2008); available from [http://www.amideast.org/programs\\_services/exchange\\_programs/Yes/newsletter/Aug\\_07/regional.htm](http://www.amideast.org/programs_services/exchange_programs/Yes/newsletter/Aug_07/regional.htm).

<sup>137</sup> AMIDEAST, *Youth Exchange and Study Program* (accessed February 5, 2008); available from [http://www.amideast.org/offices/lebanon/programs\\_services/yesleb.htm](http://www.amideast.org/offices/lebanon/programs_services/yesleb.htm).

program in some areas. In the past, students who were competing for an exchange like the Fulbright scholarship would receive private tutoring through their parents, and therefore came mostly from elite families.<sup>138</sup>

A second major challenge in the region has been integrating a high school exchange year into the educational plans of students in countries with a significant Muslim population. In the Middle East, in particular, the last years of high school involve challenging baccalaureate exams that determine students' university plans. Entire families are invested emotionally and financially in their sons and daughters high school careers, and are often unwilling to interrupt educational plans for a high school year where students often get no credit. Because youth are involved, the Ministries of Education in many of the YES countries have been involved in negotiations to allow high school students to go to the U.S. for a year and not be penalized in their educational career. However, official relations with the U.S. can interfere with ministry involvement. Where relations with the U.S. are poor, such as in Syria, U.S. embassy officials cannot recruit for their youth programs in public universities.<sup>139</sup> This essentially excludes outreach and participation of non-elite audiences in those countries.

Recruitment for the YES program varies in each country, depending on the specific conditions on the ground in each country and the connections of the provider organizations like AMIDEAST. AMIDEAST and ECA promote the program through their websites and alumni are involved in recruitment in the Middle East. After initial hesitancy and skepticism about the program and its intentions from parents and students, word of mouth from alumni has had the greatest affect on increasing the number of

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<sup>138</sup> Exchange program official with familiarity of program, interview by author (February 13, 2008). I will reference as Interview D.

<sup>139</sup> Interview H.

applications to the program.<sup>140</sup> Provider organizations like AMIDEAST also try to emphasize for students and parents the immense gains made in English skills during the year. At its core, YES remains a political program, but cannot be marketed as such. In contrast, the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX) in Eurasia, a high school exchange program that served as a model in creating the YES program, has the specific goal to “provide an opportunity for high school students from the countries of the former Soviet Union to experience life in a democratic society in order to promote democratic values and institutions in Eurasia.”<sup>141</sup> In order to facilitate government and popular approval of the YES program in a politically sensitive environment, the YES program focuses instead on community development and community service. While applications have increased in recent years, students from the region often withdraw in the post-acceptance phase, which has created a particular challenge for partner organizations. Further recruitment problems vary from country to country; provider organizations have also raised the point that in some Middle Eastern countries with ample government financial resources, the government itself will not support a high school exchange because the government provides its own means for its students to study abroad at the university-level.

As recruitment numbers in many countries in the Middle East have improved, an additional challenge to the YES program in recent years has been host family capacity and finding schools in the U.S. Provider organizations and ECA representatives emphasized the challenge of recruiting host families in the U.S., especially in

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<sup>140</sup> Interview D. Also: exchange practitioner with experience in educational exchange in the Middle East, interview by author (February 13, 2008). I will reference as Interview E.

<sup>141</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *FLEX Program* (accessed February 18, 2008); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/flex/>.

communities where there has been little exposure to or understanding of people from the Middle East.<sup>142</sup>

Alumni tracking and alumni involvement have been a top priority for ECA and public diplomacy planners involved with the YES program. Provider organizations such as AMIDEAST are mandated to keep track of YES alumni. Such tracking involves self-reporting databases, alumni newsletters, and alumni organizations in individual countries. In societies where civil society organizations such as an alumni club are rare, the YES alumni efforts can be difficult at first as students learn how to be involved with such organizations. Furthermore, alumni organizations are difficult to form in countries with non-democratic political systems.<sup>143</sup>

AMIDEAST actively organizes and supports alumni organizations and facilitates mini-grants for YES alumni to engage in community service work and alumni activities in their home countries.<sup>144</sup> This money can be used for advertising a community service project or paying for transportation for a regional alumni conference. An underlying theme in all of these efforts is to facilitate a continuing relationship to the YES program and the U.S. through a unique identity as a YES participant. The new State Department-wide alumni website seeks to cultivate this image and maintain ties within and across alumni groups from all exchange programs.<sup>145</sup>

From its inception, evaluation has been a central feature of the YES program. The firm Intermedia was hired by ECA to conduct pre-departure, post-arrival, end-of-

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<sup>142</sup> Interview D, F.

<sup>143</sup> Interview H

<sup>144</sup> *YES Alumni Newsletter* (accessed February 7, 2008); available from [http://www.amideast.org/programs\\_services/exchange\\_programs/Yes/newsletter/Aug\\_07/regional.htm](http://www.amideast.org/programs_services/exchange_programs/Yes/newsletter/Aug_07/regional.htm)

<sup>145</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *State Alumni: Your Global Community* (accessed April 2, 2008); available from <https://alumni.state.gov/landing-page>.

stay, and one year surveys of participants to track how attitudes and perceptions have changed. A comprehensive YES program evaluation should be released in 2009.

#### B) Partnerships for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) Program and UGRAD

The PLUS Undergraduate studies program was designed shortly after 9/11 with the trend to fund a broader Muslim audience participation and recruit “non-elite, gifted young men and women” for study in the U.S.<sup>146</sup> The “Partnerships for Learning” initiative was developed as a formal organizational framework for exchanges to reach non-elites and wider audiences. The goals of the program included: “providing educational opportunities for youth who have not had access to such opportunities; working to close the “hope gap” among youth, creating a positive agenda for cooperation with; and strengthening the capacity of future leaders to drive economic and societal development.”<sup>147</sup> The program also aimed to provide academic and English preparation to include these audiences in the Fulbright Foreign Student program in the future.

The PLUS program consisted of the final two and a half years of undergraduate degree study in the U.S., and was in its final year in 2008. Because of the structure of the program, applicants had to be at least in their sophomore year of university study before they could apply to the program, and some students had the option of taking language courses before their study program. After roughly five years running the program, ECA recently determined that the PLUS program was not reaching enough of an audience to justify its expense.<sup>148</sup> This is likely due to the expenses connected with undergraduate education, which is more expensive than graduate education and would have caused the

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<sup>146</sup> Ballow, 118.

<sup>147</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *PLUS Fact Sheet* (accessed April 8, 2008); available from [http://exchanges.state.gov/education/P4L/plus/plusfactsheet\\_090105.pdf](http://exchanges.state.gov/education/P4L/plus/plusfactsheet_090105.pdf)

<sup>148</sup> Interview I.

program to devote resources to a smaller number of people. Additional challenges to the PLUS program and its successor program involved the level of English of target audiences and the complexities of including the exchange years into undergraduate study.<sup>149</sup>

The PLUS program reached roughly 70-100 students a year, and these alumni will be included into the embassy alumni databases and programming managed in the Middle East region. Similar to the YES program evaluation, the PLUS program's evaluation took place in four stages: pre-program survey, mid-program review, focus groups, and end-of-program survey. However, the results of this survey were not yet released at the time of this writing.<sup>150</sup>

In the context of the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), the new Near East and South Asia (NESA) undergraduate exchange program, which began in 2007, is a one-semester or one-year program. After an exchange year or semester, students reenroll in their home institutions. Alumni of the NESA program will be welcome to apply to the Fulbright program and will likely have the high level of English and academic qualifications to do so. In 2008, the NESA program planned to include 70-100 students in its first cohorts of students. According to ECA, the public affairs section of the embassies in the region are responsible for a substantial amount of the recruitment on smaller programs, like the NESA program, and it is often up to the CAO to ensure that a diverse pool of applicants is recruited through advertising and reaching out to their in-

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<sup>149</sup> Interview G.

<sup>150</sup> Katherine Schaefer, "Developing an Effective Way Forward: U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East," Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Thesis (The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 2007), 17.

country networks.<sup>151</sup> The program aims to target “underrepresented sectors” of the region in its target audience.<sup>152</sup> CAOs in the region are skeptical about reaching this audience in light of English levels and educational barriers.<sup>153</sup>

### C) Fulbright

The Fulbright program was mandated by the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961, and its purpose is to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.”<sup>154</sup> American Fulbright recipients going to the Arab world are selected through a peer review process, while Fulbright recipients from the Arab world are selected by binational commissions in some countries, and embassy committees in others. In most countries in the Middle East, AMIDEAST administers the Fulbright program under a cooperative agreement with ECA.<sup>155</sup> The Fulbright Foreign Student Program places students from the Middle East in graduate programs in the U.S. to obtain a master’s degree. Although selection criteria was intended to be merit-based and apolitical since the Fulbright program’s inception, the “ambassador and country team usually consider... what is good for the U.S. national interest” and select a candidate who may someday become a political leader or influential in the country.<sup>156</sup> Fulbright grantees in the Middle East region often come from business, computer science, or engineering, as applicants’ main concern is how a U.S. degree will enhance their job prospects in their home country.

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<sup>151</sup> Interview I.

<sup>152</sup> Center for International Education and Development, Georgetown University, *Near East and South Asia Undergraduate Exchange Program* (accessed April 5, 2008); available from <http://www8.georgetown.edu/centers/cied/nesa/>.

<sup>153</sup> Interview H, G.

<sup>154</sup> Rugh, 18.

<sup>155</sup> AMIDEAST, *Fulbright Foreign Student Program* (accessed February 20, 2008); available from [http://www.amideast.org/programs\\_services/exchange\\_programs/fulbright/default.htm](http://www.amideast.org/programs_services/exchange_programs/fulbright/default.htm)

<sup>156</sup> Rugh, 19.

Evaluation of the Fulbright Foreign Student program usually consists of a questionnaire upon completion of the program and three years later, which is compiled by AMIDEAST. The Office of Policy and Evaluation in ECA conducted a comprehensive review of the Fulbright Visiting Student and Scholar program in the summer and fall of 2004. The study, published in 2005, concluded that the Fulbright programs were extremely effective in meeting their objective of fostering mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries.<sup>157</sup> Fulbright alumni associations exist and host periodic events in most countries, some of which are organized under the binational Fulbright commissions.

#### D) Community College Initiative (CCI) Egypt

The Community College Initiative (CCI), currently only in Egypt, is one of the newest and most innovative exchange programs. This \$60 million program, which has been organized with funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Cairo, will fund the study of 1,000 Egyptian students over three years at U.S. community colleges, beginning in the fall of 2008. Grantees will study for one or two-year terms at U.S. community colleges, which will result in the attainment of either a Certificate or Associate's Degree.<sup>158</sup> The program's objectives are: 1) to foster mutual understanding between young Egyptians and Americans; and 2) to develop professional level skills and aid youth in finding employment in the Egyptian job market, mostly in technical sectors.<sup>159</sup> The State Department has contracted with the Binational Fulbright

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<sup>157</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Outcome Assessment of the Visiting Fulbright Student Program* (accessed February 7, 2008); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/evaluations/execsummaries/FVSP.pdf>

<sup>158</sup> The Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt, *Community College Initiative* (accessed April 2, 2008); available from [http://www.fulbright-egypt-cci.org/default\\_e.asp](http://www.fulbright-egypt-cci.org/default_e.asp).

<sup>159</sup> Francis J. Ricciardone, "The Solid Impact of Soft Power: U.S. Educational Engagement with Egypt," U.S. Department of Education International Education Programs Service International Education Forum,

Commission in Egypt to organize the program in Egypt, and the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID) has been selected to run the U.S.-based aspects of the program such as community college placement. The Fulbright Commission conducts recruitment for the program, selection, and has subcontracted with AMIDEAST to provide grantees with extensive pre-departure English language training. The first 200 students were to depart in the fall of 2008 for their first year of study in the U.S., with 400 students following in the fall of 2009, and an additional 400 students in the fall of 2010.<sup>160</sup>

As stated above, the goals and objectives of the CCI program are mutual understanding and improving youth unemployment. Unlike the YES program or the MEPI summer institutes for youth, the CCI program does not have political goals such as strengthening leadership skills or civil society development and democracy. Program designers examined trends in the Egyptian economy and youth unemployment to target technical areas and skills that Egyptian graduates need to improve their chances on the job market. Therefore, the CCI grantees are primarily in the health professions, information technology, business management, applied engineering and tourism.<sup>161</sup> Gaining marketable skills is a central part of the program, and the eligible fields for grantees are highlighted at the onset of the application process.<sup>162</sup>

According to program managers, the CCI initiative was launched with an ambitious recruitment effort that included targeted mailings, newspaper ads, and outreach

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22 February 2008 (accessed March 25, 2008); available from <http://cairo.usembassy.gov/ambassador/tr022108.htm>.

<sup>160</sup> Exchange practitioner familiar with CCI program, interview by author (March 31, 2008). I will reference as Interview M.

<sup>161</sup> The Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt, *List of Final Results for the selection process for CCI AY2008-2009*, (accessed March 31, 2008); available from <http://www.fulbright-egypt-cci.org/Results-E.asp>.

<sup>162</sup> The Binational Fulbright Commission in Egypt, *Community College Initiative*.

to the Ministry of Higher Education and governorate administrations. The response to the call for applications was extremely high and the Fulbright Commission received many applications for the program. In their efforts to recruit as many applicants as possible for the CCI program, the program managers in Egypt aimed to reach non-elite youth and rural communities. Conducting such a wide recruitment effort is an effective way to find well-qualified applicants in non-elite audiences and prevents committees from having to choose candidates based on criteria other than merit in the selection process.<sup>163</sup> However, CCI program organizers would like to see more women involved in the CCI program and they are considering how to raise the number of women applicants.

At the early stage of the program, with the first grantees set to leave for the U.S. in the fall of 2008, evaluation measures and alumni tracking had not yet been put into place. The Commission has formed an advisory council specifically for the CCI program, which consists of experts in Egyptian higher education and the marketplace. Evaluation might consist of measuring if the grantees are able to compete on the job market and find employment when they return. The alumni organization for this program could also involve career counseling, an online network or job fair, as well as serve as a forum for alumni to interact with one another and maintain connection with the program and the U.S.

The Binational Commission in Egypt has implemented an alumni organization strategy for its programs that involved the creation of “alumni circles,” which are small groups of alumni who work in a common field or have common interests, such as in the arts or sciences. The American Studies Circle, for example, brings together Fulbright alumni in Egypt with an interest in American literature, political science, or cultural

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<sup>163</sup> Interview M.

studies, for discussions and events with visiting Americans in the field. The circle “serves as a forum for exchange among the Commission’s American studies alumni.”<sup>164</sup> This type of alumni organization has great potential to be transferred to other countries in the Middle East region; alumni networks will continue to grow as programs and funding expand. As the youth alumni grow older and move on to separate educational and career paths, such a “circle” format will be one way to keep alumni programming relevant and maintain alumni involvement.

#### E) English Access Microscholarship Program

English teaching has traditionally been a very successful public diplomacy instrument. In the past, the U.S. government sponsored English language classes throughout the Arab world, including Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Yemen. These programs, “taught by Americans using American materials...help[ed] communicate a great deal about American society and culture.”<sup>165</sup> In 2004, Ambassador Margaret Tutweiler, then Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, approved the English Access Microscholarship program, which consisted of grants to “non-elite” youth to allow them to study English locally. As the U.S. Ambassador to Cairo notes, the program reaches “pre-university students, especially the economically disadvantaged.” For example, in Morocco, AMIDEAST, the programming organization in that country, works with Peace Corps Volunteers in rural communities to recruit students.<sup>166</sup> In 2004, the program enrolled over 1,500 youth in 12 Arab countries

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<sup>164</sup> The Binational Fulbright Commission, *Highlights* (accessed April 3, 2008); available from <http://www.fulbright-egypt.org/highlights/highlightslist.asp#b143>.

<sup>165</sup> Rugh, 21.

<sup>166</sup> Exchange program professional, interview with author (March 14, 2008). I will reference as Interview K.

and by 2007, an estimated 6,000 students were participating in the Middle East.<sup>167</sup> In addition to learning English, students “gain an appreciation for American and wider-world culture and values” through summer camps activities, movie nights, and materials used in the classroom that discuss American culture.<sup>168</sup>

The Access program was evaluated by ECA’s Office of Policy and Evaluation in 2006, covering Oman, Morocco, and Lebanon in the Middle East region. The evaluation consisted of “in-depth individual interviews, survey questionnaires, focus groups, discussion groups, and classroom observations.”<sup>169</sup> The evaluation concluded that while teacher training had some room for improvement, the overall changes in views and knowledge of the United States, sharing new knowledge, and growth of leadership skills and professional development were at extremely high levels (80-90% of those surveyed).

Developing successful methods for gathering data on and engaging Access alumni remains difficult for the CAOs and program officers implementing the program. Alumni activities vary from country to country, but the embassy usually organizes an alumni organization with regional events, summer camps, or other form of meeting so that alumni can stay in touch with their colleagues and the embassy. Since the program is just a few years old, it remains to be seen how the alumni associations will develop.<sup>170</sup> An additional challenge is the extremely high number of participants and alumni that will be

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<sup>167</sup> Rugh, p. 190.

<sup>168</sup> Ricciardone. It should also be noted that MEPI, as a sponsor of the program, has encouraged the curriculum for ACCESS to include civic engagement and democracy principles. However, in my conversations with MEPI officials, they were unsure of how to track the coverage of these principles in the individual country programs.

<sup>169</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Executive summary: evaluation of the English Access Microscholarship Program* (accessed January 31, 2007); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/evaluations/execsummaries/Access.pdf>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

coming out of this program; the YES exchange for example will have 30 alumni a year in a given country, whereas the Access program will have 100-200 a year in each country.

Students from non-elite sectors of society graduate from the program with improved English and a desire to do something with their language skills and new connections to the U.S. How to incorporate these large numbers of students into alumni programs remains unclear and probably depends on increasing the resources devoted to Access alumni programming. Overall, Access alumni will be entered at a young age into the alumni databases carried out by embassies in their respective countries and could potentially have a lifelong relationship with the embassy and the U.S., especially if their participation allows them to take part in one of the above long-term exchanges for study. However, program alumni, mostly non-elite youth, could develop hostile attitudes if they feel neglected by future programming. Alternatively, because there are so many alumni, without appropriate alumni programming many could lose their relationship to the embassy and English programs and this target audience would not be included in the future exchanges, which until now have not been successful in recruiting non-elite audiences.

### IX. Recommendations

#### *1) Design exchange programs to allow for audience variation and flexibility.*

To achieve public diplomacy objectives in some cases, more than one audience has to be reached by a program or initiative. It is simply not possible to reach non-elite audiences in each country in the Middle East region with programs in their current form. Allowing for recruitment and incorporation of more than one audience, or more than one “tier” of participant in programs, would allow for a range of audiences to be included and

for specific country audience needs to be met, such as extra English training for non-elite audiences that normally lack the opportunity to receive English training.

2) *Develop country-specific exchange programs instead of region-wide initiatives.*

The differences between countries in the Middle East are too great to allow for a “one size fits all” approach. In the past, non-elite and youth audiences were left out of U.S. public diplomacy exchanges. The “successor generation” should have a relationship to the U.S., and given the new dynamic created by transformational diplomacy strategies, these audiences should be increasingly included in exchange, but not at the expense of other country needs. Programs designed to reach non-elite youth across the region are important, but the regional approach leaves out important audiences such as opinion leaders and youth elites.

Programs that are country-specific, rather than region-wide initiatives, would guarantee that public diplomacy resources are being directed to where they are needed and reaching the right audiences. Some CAOs are able to adapt region-wide programs to assigned countries, but it would be more efficient to address country-specific needs when programs are designed. For example, funding an undergraduate exchange program in an underdeveloped country where the youth population lacks adequate English skills is not as effective as funding cultural exchanges or English teaching for that audience. A program design like the Community College Initiative (CCI) in Egypt has the potential to be highly effective. Because of its country-specific conception, the program has been created to match the needs of the *Egyptian* job market and education system. The Washington-based Educational and Cultural Affairs offices should be including embassy

input into program design; however, the discrepancies between regional and country needs indicate that this communication is not integrated.

*3) Include elites in exchange programs.*

Many of the new exchange initiatives target non-elite youth only. Country conditions such as the level of democracy, level of English, or strained official relations, present unavoidable obstacles to reaching the non-elite audiences and resources should be devoted to audiences that are more accessible. In addition, elites are still influential players in the region, and can contribute to mutual understanding and the communication of American culture and values in the Middle East. The “youth bulge” theory discussed earlier in this paper is one contributor to region-wide thinking, but those studies have illustrated that educated youth elites are also subject to high levels of unemployment and anti-Americanism which could influence other segments of society and increase extremist activity in some areas. Exchange programs that target the youth elite could address these tendencies to extremism.

X) Exchange Environment in the U.S.

A) Student Trends from the Middle East

The increased student interest in participating in the above exchanges matches general international trends that show an increase in international students studying in the U.S. After a decline in the immediate years after 9/11, due to a climate of fear and visa restrictions, numbers have finally begun to improve slightly. Overall, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions has risen by 3% for the academic year 2006-2007, while the number of U.S. students studying abroad

increased by 8.5%.<sup>171</sup> According to the Institute of International Education's most recent *Open Doors* report, student numbers from the Middle East increased by 25% in 2006-2007, with a most prominent increase in students from Saudi Arabia due to a government scholarship program introduced in 2005. While student numbers modestly increased from Iran, Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority, numbers declined for students from other significant countries in the Middle East such as Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman and the UAE.<sup>172</sup> Public diplomacy professionals will have to keep in mind these general trends and individual country trends in establishing country-specific goals for numbers of students and target audiences.

#### B. Students from the U.S. in the Middle East Region

Exchanges are two-way programs, and it is therefore also important to look at U.S. participation. U.S. students studying in the Middle East region increased by 31% from the previous year during 2006-2007, however, this represents only 1% of all Americans studying abroad. A significant increase of 81% occurred in students studying in Jordan, bringing the total number of American students studying in Jordan to 309 students. It is significant to note that the diversity of America is not represented in the student population studying abroad, which has the potential to undermine public diplomacy priorities in exposing only a narrow audience of Americans to Middle East publics.<sup>173</sup> The majority of American students studying abroad are engaged in “Doctoral/Research Extensive and Intensive” institutions (59%), while only 16% and 2%

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<sup>171</sup> Institute for International Education, *International Student Enrollment in U.S. Rebounds*, (accessed March 15, 2008); available from <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=113743>.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Daniel Obst, Rajika Bhandari, and Sharon Witherell, “Meeting America’s Global Education Challenge: Current Trends in U.S. Study Abroad and the Impact of Strategic Diversity Initiatives,” *Institute for International Education White Paper* (May 2007). Available from [http://www.iienetwork.org/file\\_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/1710/folder/62450/IIE+Study+Abroad+White+Paper+I.pdf](http://www.iienetwork.org/file_depot/0-10000000/0-10000/1710/folder/62450/IIE+Study+Abroad+White+Paper+I.pdf).

came from baccalaureate and associate institutions.<sup>174</sup> The community college student population in particular, representing students from minority and low income backgrounds, represents “a huge untapped potential audience, but one that also faces significant obstacles.”<sup>175</sup>

American students studying abroad are overwhelmingly white/Caucasian (83%), while African American students (3.5%) and Latino (5.6%) continue to make up a minority of students studying abroad. This represents a much lower number than students of color enrolled in universities overall, and IIE notes concern that these percentages have not changed over the past 10 years.<sup>176</sup> Financial need remains a major concern for these student groups, but minority student numbers can also be improved by increasing the number of study abroad programs that are directly relevant to student majors. IIE highlights university programs that are launching initiatives to counter these trends, such as at Goucher College, and programs such as the Gilman Scholarship program that finance study abroad for students with financial need.

In addition, it is significant that the majority of U.S. students are studying abroad for increasingly shorter lengths of time, such as summer or January terms (56% in 2004/2005). In contrast, only 6% of U.S. study abroad students are participating in academic-year programs. These trends continue to be controversial, as short-term programs do not provide students with the same level of cultural immersion or language development.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>177</sup> Obst et. al, 15. IIE also finds, however, that funding initiatives such as the Boren Scholarship Program show that long-term study abroad is still attractive to students.

The impact of American student exchange in the Middle East, as numbers continue to increase, is an important area of further study. Although I have not addressed this issue in my study of U.S. public diplomacy exchanges, an additional issue for further study that brings U.S. and Arab youth together involves the increase in U.S. educational and university partnerships in the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf region and in Egypt. As Tamara Lewin in the *New York Times* wrote on February 10, 2008: “The American system of higher education... is becoming an important export as more universities take their programs overseas.”<sup>178</sup> In Egypt alone, the following American universities have institutional linkages or an actual presence in Egypt that have been partly supported by the U.S. government: Georgia State University School of Business, Indiana University School of Law, George Washington University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Colorado State University, the University of Connecticut, the University of Maryland, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Texas A&M.<sup>179</sup> Overall, American participation in exchanges is an important part of the public diplomacy environment in individual countries that should be evaluated by embassy and ECA officials in designing public diplomacy exchange programs.

### C) The Challenge of Host Family Capacity

Increasing the number of U.S. students who travel to and study in the Middle East region has immense potential to improve mutual understanding between the two regions and supplement the U.S. government-funded public diplomacy exchanges to the U.S. According to a recent Gallup poll, 39% of Americans surveyed admitted to feeling “at

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<sup>178</sup> Ricciardone.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

least some sort of prejudice towards Muslims.”<sup>180</sup> Exchanges with the Arab world have an important impact on Americans and their knowledge of the region.<sup>181</sup> Facilitating more exposure to people and cultures from the Middle East across the U.S. would also ease the implementation of exchanges; many programming organizations have stated that a continuing obstacle in implementing the new exchange programs above is in host family capacity. ECA is contributing to an effort to increase host family capacity in the U.S. and persuade more families across the country to host exchange students. Deputy Assistant Secretary Alina Romanowski, for example, recently traveled to Indiana with two YES students to meet with education officials and host families to speak on behalf of increasing host family capacity.<sup>182</sup> Raising public awareness of the benefits of exchange and cultural experience is necessary to increase the number of willing host families. As a recent study by the Council for Standards on International Education Travel’s (CSIET) notes, most families decide to host because they are interested in the cultural experience and learn about programs through word-of-mouth.<sup>183</sup>

## XI. Conclusion

As the war in Iraq continues to damage opinion of the United States in the Muslim world, some argue that any public diplomacy efforts are futile in the face of bad foreign

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<sup>180</sup> “Muslims and Americans: The Way Forward.” *Special Report: Muslim World, Gallup World Poll* (2006), 1 (accessed April 4, 2008); available at <http://media.gallup.com/MuslimWestFacts/PDF/GALLUPMUSLIMSTUDIESIslamandWest2107FINALrev.pdf>.

<sup>181</sup> Rugh, 16.

<sup>182</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *DAS Romanowski Continues to Lead Bureau’s Efforts to Increase Hosting Capacity*, (accessed April 20, 2008); available from <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/news/2007/121907.htm>.

<sup>183</sup> JaeInn Lee, “Hosting Motivation and Satisfaction Survey,” *Council on Standards for International Educational Travel 2007* (accessed March 3, 2008); available from [http://data.memberclicks.com/site/cosfiet/Hosting\\_Motivation\\_and\\_Satisfaction\\_Study\\_-\\_Final.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/cosfiet/Hosting_Motivation_and_Satisfaction_Study_-_Final.pdf).

policy decisions and the behavior of Americans abroad.<sup>184</sup> According to this view, while Muslim populations continue to object to U.S. foreign policy and unilateralism, no amount of dialogue over values or recommendations for increased exchanges will improve the situation. According to Julia Sweig, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, public diplomacy is failing to counter rising anti-Americanism. She argues that this is not for a lack of good people involved, but because of flawed foreign policy and ignorant policymakers who do not know the value of multilateralism. Americans and their leaders need to become educated about foreign countries and gain experience abroad, instead of simply expecting public diplomacy to “explain what America is about to skeptical and angry populations in the greater Muslim world and beyond.”<sup>185</sup>

While Sweig is correct in her assessment that foreign policy decisions affect opinions of the U.S. globally, she fails to address the fact that public diplomacy programs strive for *long-term* changes in foreign public opinion and intercultural relations. No amount of polling of attitudes today will reflect exactly how exchange programs and relationships are changing opinions over longer periods of time. Public diplomacy programs sustain linkages and dialogue among cultures, even when governments have strained relations.<sup>186</sup> The fact that public diplomacy results are hard to quantify in the long term makes strategic considerations and evaluation of new programs in any sector all the more valuable.

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<sup>184</sup> Pew Global Attitudes Project, “America’s Image Slips, But Allies Share Concern over Iran, Hamas.” June 13, 2006. Accessed November 28, 2006). Available from <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252>.

<sup>185</sup> Julia Sweig, *Friendly Fire: Losing Friends and Making Enemies in the Anti-American Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 216.

<sup>186</sup> John Brown, “Purposes and Cross-purposes of American Public Diplomacy,” *American Diplomacy*, August 15, 2002; 9 (accessed November 5, 2006 ); available from [http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives\\_roll/2002\\_07-09/brown\\_pubdipl/brown-pubdipl.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2002_07-09/brown_pubdipl/brown-pubdipl.html).

The new prominence and weight given to public diplomacy and exchanges through transformational diplomacy has great potential to improve long-term relations with the Muslim world and create an environment where the U.S. is perceived as more than its foreign policy. Public diplomacy officials need to take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen public diplomacy exchanges and integrate this essential tool into U.S. foreign policy strategy. As changes in program structure, location, and target audience continue, it is important to evaluate program effectiveness and determine the implications of program changes for public diplomacy effectiveness. An examination of the new exchange programs and some common challenges exchange professionals face with the programs demonstrated that the intended target audiences are not being reached and may not always be correct. Region-wide frameworks are failing to reach the intended audience.

From their inception, exchange programs have to be designed to fit specific country needs. The regional frameworks such the YES program, while addressing important audiences in some countries, leave out other key audiences and simply are not able to be implemented in many situations. Adjusting frameworks to meet the target audience needs of key priority countries will determine the success of new exchange programs and ensure that the opportunity presented by transformational diplomacy will not be missed.

## Appendix

### Overview of Programs and Countries Studied

Program	Participating Countries over course of program	Years
YES Exchange <sup>187</sup>	Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel (Arab Community), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and Yemen	2002-present
PLUS Exchange <sup>188</sup>	Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen	2004-2007
NESA Exchange	Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, West Bank/Gaza	
Fulbright Foreign Student (Middle East and North Africa region only) <sup>189</sup>	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, West Bank/Gaza, Yemen	1970s (for AMIDEAST)-present
English Access Microscholarship <sup>190</sup>	Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burma, Cambodia, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gaza, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, West Bank, and Yemen.	2003-present

<sup>187</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *Youth Exchange and Study Program*.

<sup>188</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *PLUS fact sheet*.

<sup>189</sup> AMIDEAST, *Fulbright Foreign Student Program*.

<sup>190</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, *English Access Microscholarship Program*, (accessed February 12, 2008); available from [http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/access\\_fs.pdf](http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/access_fs.pdf).

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<sup>191</sup> Please see the individual interview citations in the text for interview information. I conducted 15 interviews in the course of my research with exchange professionals and government officials abroad and in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, my sources are not permitted to be quoted on the record, and I therefore refer to them in the text as Interview A, B, etc.

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