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Soft Power and the War on Terror
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Thank you very much for the kind introduction Bob. It's a pleasure to be with the Foreign Policy Association. I'm going to try to keep my remarks relatively brief so that we'll have a maximum amount of time for questions and answers.

It's obvious that we are going through difficult times in the United States. The shocking photos we've just seen are only the latest of a series of problems. They really can be traced back to 9/11. That was a trauma for the United States, and I've often used the analogy that 9/11 was like lightning on a Summer evening when you are hiking and it's just getting dusk and all of a sudden you see a strange and difficult landscape revealed to you, and then it goes dark again and you know you have to pick your way through it. We as a people are basically struggling to find our way through this difficult new terrain.

It's a terrain made more difficult by changes that have been occurring underneath the surface of world politics that became very evident on 9/11. One was the great increase in the depth and quickness of globalization, which was illustrated by the fact that if you had asked many Americans in the 1990's what they thought about Afghanistan, the conditions in Afghanistan are dreadful but what difference does it make to us? What we

learned on 9/11 was that dreadful conditions in a poor, weak country half way around the world matter very much to us.

The other thing of course is the changes in technology that have been going on for some time, sometimes called the democratization of technology. What we've seen has been a tremendous drop in the cost of computing and communications. These costs can be illustrated by the example that if the price of the automobile had been cut down as dramatically as the price of computing power between 1970 and 2000, you could buy a car today for \$5.

Well anytime something decreases in cost that dramatically, the barriers to entry go down. Everybody can get into the game. And what that meant is that all sorts of non-governmental actors were empowered by the access to technology, which previously had been preserved for rich organizations and governments. For example, in 1970 if you wanted instantaneous, global communications you could do it, but you needed a pretty big budget to be able to afford it. Today, anybody can have instantaneous global communications if you have access to an internet café.

So there have been some very dramatic changes in terms of the democratization of technology, and that's empowered a number of non-state actors. Some of which are good; Oxfam, Amnesty International and so forth, but some of them are very bad, such as Al Qaeda. And what we've seen is these non-governmental actors have been able to play roles that are much different than they were in the past. It's not that terrorism is new. It's not. Quite clearly we've had terrorism throughout the 20th century and before. But the idea that you could have a terrorist network, which had cells in 50 or 60 different countries and was able to communicate across these distances, meant that there was a greater agility and lethality to terrorism than we had experienced before.

This was obvious, again, on 9/11.

It's interesting if you think about the future and how these changes have created a new set of threats for our foreign policy. If you look at the year 2000 during the election

campaign, you may remember President Bush ran as a very traditional, realist Republican, saying we were going to focus on great powers, no more foreign policy and social work and China was to be a strategic competitor, not a strategic partner. All that changed 180 degrees after 9/11, and you see it in the new national security strategy statements that we have as much to fear from weak states as we do from great powers. The greatest threats we face are terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. I think that's correct. The change in focus of foreign policy to deal with these threats after 9/11 is a correct focus.

My difficulty comes more in the means that have been chosen to deal with them. I think we've chosen to focus too much on our military capacities and not enough on our soft power. Now what do I mean by soft power? It does sound like an oxymoron, but it's actually not hard to grasp. If power is the ability to get others to do what you want, or in other words to influence them to get the outcomes you want. There are three main ways of doing that. One is you can threaten or coerce people another is to conduce people with payments and the third is to attract people or co-opt them, getting them to want what you want and that third is soft power.

We need to use all three types of power, both the military and economic dimensions of hard power to succeed in this struggle we have against terrorism but we're not paying nearly enough attention to the problems of soft power. I think the best way to think of this is to realize that power always depends upon the context in which it occurred.

In the 21st century there really is a context in which you have very different types of capabilities depending on the field or the area in which you are working. If your thinking about interstate relations in terms of military power, then the U.S. is clearly the worlds strongest power but, if your thinking about economic relations, then the United States power is balanced by others, Europe, Germany, Japan, China, and so forth. If you think

about trans-national relations, which cross borders outside the control of governments, be it drug traffickers, international crime or international terrorism there is no structure of power. It doesn't make any sense to call this unipolarity or the world's only superpower or American Hegemony, its chaotically organized and the only way we can deal with the issues in this area of transnational relations, where these new non-state actors are involved is through the cooperation of others.

We may be able for example to use our military power effectively as we did in Afghanistan to remove the Taliban government or as we did in the three and a half week campaign in Iraq, but the problems of wrapping up an organization like Al-Qaeda or governing a country like Iraq is that they are much less susceptible to solutions by military power alone. Looking at Afghanistan you'll notice that we were able to replace the Taliban Government quickly but we only wrapped up about a quarter of Al Qaeda using military power.

When you have a terrorist network with cells in 50 or 60 countries you simply can't bomb them all. Some of these cells are in places like Hamburg or Detroit, where you can't bomb them, the only way you can deal with that kind of a threat is through close civilian cooperation. Meaning intelligence sharing, police work across borders, tracing financial flows and so forth. The difficulty I see is if we focus solely on our military power and solely on hard power, we may forget that what we really need is to get others to cooperate with us to deal with these new types of threats.

Now that approach is not one which is always universally attractive in Washington. There has been a tendency since the end of the Soviet Union for people to look at the fact that the U.S. is the world's only superpower and to conclude that we can do what we want as a result. A good example of this would be the phrase the new unilateralism, which was coined by Charles Krauthammer, in which he said the U.S. is so strong that others have no choice but to follow. The trouble with that is that it focuses on our military power and not on the other dimensions of our power. It also may mean that as we follow that path or that advise we wind up antagonizing others and undercutting the soft power we are going to need to be successful.

If you look at where the U.S. is today in the struggle against terrorism, I'm not sure we are doing very well. If Donald Rumsfeld is to be believed, he had a memo which was leaked recently which stated that the key question is what is the metric to know whether you're winning or losing in a war on terrorism? He said the way we know is by whether the numbers we are killing and deterring are greater than the numbers the Madrassas are producing and Al Qaeda is recruiting. Putting that in my terms, is the number we are killing with our hard power greater than the number Bin Laden is recruiting with his soft power. I think the answer is that we are not doing as well as we should.

If we look at something like the Iraq war, it got rid of a viscous tyrant, Saddam Hussein but it also helped Osama bin Laden increase his recruitment. When you look at the effects of this on the standing of the United States even before the recent issues at Abu Ghraib prison, it's really quite dramatic what has happened to American popularity or

attractiveness in the world. Polls that were taken a year ago right after the Iraq war ended show that the U.S. had lost about 30 points on average in all European countries in Western Europe including ones that had supported us on the war like Britain, Italy and Spain, then you looked at the Islamic world it was even more dramatic. In the year 2000 in Indonesia ¾ of the people thought the U.S. was attractive, by last year in May when the Pew polls were taken it had declined to 15% but even more dramatic were the recent polls which came out three weeks ago showing that in Jordan and Pakistan -both of which are usually referred to as friendly Islamic countries- there were more people attracted to Bin Laden than President Bush.

These are states which are on the front line of the struggle against terrorism, when we have less soft power than Bin Laden in those countries it makes it more difficult for us to prevail. If you accept my reasoning -that you need cooperation from other countries- when you allow the status or attractiveness of the U.S. to deteriorate to the point where being pro-American is toxic in domestic politics in another country, it's going to make leaders very loath to cooperate with us.

Take Turkey a year ago, sending troops across Turkey into Iraq from the North, would have given us the capability in the Sunni Triangle much sooner than we got the troops there. If you remember the Prime Minister of Turkey was willing to go along with us but the Turkish parliament was not, they voted it down, which meant that the 4th infantry division had to go through the Suez canal, up through the Gulf and was late for the war. That is a case in which the way we went about our policy, the feeling that it was

unilateral or not legitimate undercut our soft power and in turn hurt our hard power. Similarly if you look at a year ago, when we had won the war in Iraq, we didn't bring others in, we said we won it we own it, by the time we realized that was a mistake it was too late. So I think what we have seen is that the approach that we are taking of emphasizing so much of our hard power rather than our soft power is turning out to be expensive in getting that cooperation which I said was essential to our success.

There is another aspect to the importance of soft power in the struggle against terrorism beyond getting cooperation from governments, its how the people respond. If you think of the struggle against Islamic terrorism as a clash of civilizations, Islam vs. the West, I think you are mistaken. I think what your seeing is a clash within Islamic civilization. A clash between a small minority that want to use force to impose what they see as a pure version of their religion upon others and a majority that want most things out of life that other people want: better opportunities, education for their children, healthcare, a sense of dignity and so forth.

Unless the moderates win in that struggle inside Islam, we're not going to win. In other words, we have to be able to attract moderates if we're going to be able to prevent Bin Laden from attracting them, relating back to Rumsfeld's metric of them getting more than we are able to deter and kill. If you look at that question we are not doing well. Most reports you see from intelligence agencies or if you look at the reports from the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London they show Al Qaeda recruitment has gone up in the past year rather than down. In that sense we are in a world where what

matters is whose stories win, and I don't think ours is winning. In part this is because of our policies and partially the poor job we are doing of selling our policies.

If you look at what we are investing as a people in getting our message out, we have cut back dramatically from what we used to do. You could argue that we won the Cold War not just with our hard power which deterred Soviet aggression but also by our soft power, the values and ideas that we were exporting which ate away Soviet self confidence from inside. You get numbers such as in the Cold War 70% of East Europeans were listening to Radio Free Europe or the Voice of America.

Polls done two years ago show about 2% of the Islamic world listening to Voice of America. Another way of looking at this is that we broadcast about two hours a day of Urdu, which is the lingua franca of Pakistan, again a front line state in the struggle against terrorism. A bipartisan panel chaired by former Ambassador Ed Djerejian, showed that 2 years ago we spent \$150 million on all our exchange programs and broadcasting to the entire Islamic world, from Morocco to Indonesia, that's about the same as two hours of the defense budget.

It is extraordinary that as a country at the forefront of the information revolution we've been so inept to get our message across. One way to think about this is that if you were to take our military budget as a surrogate for hard power for a moment and take all our exchange programs and broadcasts as a surrogate for soft power, we spend 400 times

more on hard power. There is something odd about that ratio, you would think that a little bit more of an investment in the area of soft power would be productive.

Countries like France or Britain spend as much as the U.S. on public diplomacy but we are five times larger. We have a problem, that problem is that I'm not quite convinced that our story is winning, and all this was true of course before we had the episode at Abu Ghraib come to light and the shocking effect of the pictures that were displayed.

We are in a difficult situation as a people, we have seen revealed to us a new set of problems and a new set of threats. While we are trying to work our way through this we're tending to be a little like the child with a hammer seeing everything as a nail. We have such capacity in our military that we forget that we need to have other capacities to supplement the military.

It's not that military power isn't necessary in terms of being successful in the struggle against terrorism, Afghanistan is a case in point, but military power is not sufficient. What I fear we have done over the last few years is so overemphasize our military response that we've forgotten that we also need to combine it with soft power. In that sense we need to learn the lessons we learned in the Cold War, to be a smart power you need to be able to combine hard and soft power. At this point we haven't got that formula correct. The good news is that we have been able to do it at times in the past, in principle we should be able to do it again in the future. In any case let me stop there and open the floor to your comments and questions.