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FOR GLOBAL CITIZEN DIPLOMACY
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DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS WITH PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM NATIONS
ROUNDTABLE

Randa Fahmy Hudome | Co-chair
Stephen R. Grand | Co-chair

EVERY CITIZEN A DIPLOMAT

Cover: Gultori school children in Pakistan read with Greg Mortenson, 2008 National Awards for Citizen Diplomacy honoree.

Dear Colleagues:

In an era of increasing globalization, more and more people develop their most lasting impressions through face-to-face, personal encounters — when people visit the United States or Americans travel abroad — or through such virtual connections as e-mail and Facebook. In this context, the 'citizen diplomat' can be a powerful force in defining the U.S. to the rest of the world and creating a reservoir of goodwill and personal relations between the U.S. and the world.

This report on "The Role of Citizen Diplomacy in Developing Partnerships with Predominantly Muslim Nations" was undertaken for the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy, as part of its U.S. Summit for Global Citizen Diplomacy, held on November 16–19, 2010, in Washington, DC. The Summit, the first since a similar meeting convened by President Eisenhower fifty-four years ago, served as the launch for an expansive multi-year Initiative for Global Citizen Diplomacy to expand opportunities for thousands more Americans to be involved in citizen diplomacy programs and activities both at home and abroad. The Summit was a partnership of The U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy, the U.S. Department of State's Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and more than 1000 U.S. non-profit organizations conducting citizen diplomacy. The U.S. Summit & Initiative for Global Citizen Diplomacy are intended to support the efforts of the current Administration to make global citizen diplomacy a national priority and utilize new technologies to broaden the reach and opportunities for engagement.

Over a five-month period, the "Roundtable on The Role of Citizen Diplomacy in Developing Partnerships with Predominantly Muslim Nations" brought together 23 experts for a series of meetings to examine the current state of citizen diplomacy between the United States and Muslim-majority countries, identify best-practice models of engagement, explore the possibilities presented by new technologies, and formulate recommendations for the future. Drawing from these discussions and past research and reports on the subject, the roundtable produced the enclosed report, which includes recommendations regarding a plan of action for the next five to ten years.

In recent months, with the controversy over the Park51 community center and a Florida pastor's threat to burn the Koran, the issues raised in this report have assumed heightened importance. These events have highlighted the misunderstanding and fear still surrounding Muslims and Islam in America. These high-profile controversies have echoed around the world — damaging further America's frayed relations with predominantly Muslim societies. They have underscored the importance of the kind of engagement and learning advocated in this report.

The following report reflects the hard work and thoughtful contributions of the members of our Roundtable, who gave generously of their time and talents. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of them. We would like to thank as well Aysha Chowdhry for her efforts as the roundtable's rapporteur.

The report concludes with as set of recommendations that we hope will be implemented by U.S. citizens, the private sector, and in some cases, the U.S. government. We fervently hope that they can make an important contribution toward improving relations between the peoples of the United States and predominantly Muslim societies.

Randa Fahmy Hudome, Co-Chair

Stephen R. Grand, Co- Chair

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One of the most important strategic challenges facing the United States is placing its relations with predominantly Muslim societies on sounder footing. Too often in recent years, particularly since the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11, these relations have been dominated by fear and mutual recriminations. As President Obama articulated in his Cairo address, there is much to be done if we are to get this vital relationship right: from eliminating the widely held perception among many Muslims that the United States is at war with Islam, to resolving the many violent and divisive conflicts now roiling the Muslim world in which the United States is often deeply embroiled, to addressing the very real developmental challenges facing many predominantly Muslim societies and improving how these societies are governed. But building more bridges and partnerships between citizens of the United States and of predominantly Muslim societies may be the most vital.

An important dimension of the problem is the lack of knowledge and depth of mutual misunderstanding we possess about one another. In repeated Gallup polls since 9/11, when asked what they most admire about Muslims and Islam, a majority of Americans have responded either "don't know" or "nothing." The majority of Americans also say they do not know much about Islam, and only about half know a Muslim personally.[1] In contrast, most Muslims do express admiration for some aspects of the West, citing technology and democracy most often,[2] but many disapprove of U.S. foreign policy and very few have ever met an American.[3] What this data bears out is that we simply do not know enough about one another.

> *"One of the greatest challenges for citizen diplomacy going forward will be to devise ways of reaching those segments of global society that have traditionally had less access to international connectivity."*
> PETER MANDAVILLE, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT & ISLAMIC STUDIES, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

The need for citizen diplomacy

In comparison with many other regions of the world, there is relatively little travel, trade, and scholarly exchange between the United States and predominantly Muslim societies. While we now see many images of each other on television and film, these are often biased, singularly focused on our worst stereotypes of each other, rather than on the myriad similarities that might bring us together.

Following World War II, public and private leaders in the United States invested heavily in ensuring up-and-coming leaders developed strong ties with counterparts in Europe and Japan. President Dwight Eisenhower's People-to-People Summit of 1956 (which led to the creation of the People-to-People and Sister Cities organizations), along with organizations like the American Council on Germany, the Atlantic Brucke, the Asia Society and later the Aspen Institute-Berlin, German Marshall Fund of the United States, the French-American Foundation, and the U.S.-Japan Foundation were all parts of this important public-private endeavor.

Today we need an ambitious undertaking of similar scale and scope – one that galvanizes the energies of governments, private corporations, philanthropic institutions, non-profit organizations and ordinary citizens – to help ensure the next generation of leaders from the United States and predominantly Muslim societies know and understand one another. This is one of the defining challenges of our era. In so doing, we would do well to learn and build upon the lessons of citizen diplomacy efforts during the Cold War, while updating this playbook to the realities and tools of the 21st century.

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1   *Religious Perceptions in America: With an In-Depth Analysis of U.S. Attitudes Toward Muslims and Islam* (Gallup, 2010)
2   John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (Washington DC: Gallup Press, 2008).
3   *A Pioneering Model of Measuring Intercultural Trends* (Anna Lindh Foundation, 2010)

What Cold War policymakers and opinion leaders intuitively understood was that close personal ties provide the foundation for strong political relationships.   Sustained interaction over time across cultures builds trust. This is as true for interpersonal relations within countries as between them.   For example, survey data show that individuals in the United States who have had some sort of personal connection with a Muslim are more likely to view Muslims and Islam favorably. In a recent Gallup study, researchers found that those who said they knew a Muslim were less likely to express extreme prejudice against the faith group.[4] In similar fashion, individuals who have travelled abroad on an exchange program return with their perspectives fundamentally altered. As Anthony Clairmont, a senior at Sewanee, recently told the New York Times about his six-month stay in Morocco: "I genuinely enjoyed watching the bottom fall out of every one of my preconceived ideas about the Muslim world."[5]

> *"One of the most important issues of our time–improving U.S.-Muslim relations- necessitates citizen, not just political, diplomacy. Bridges between cultures involving only governments are fragile. The challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century require us to build robust networks between communities which engage all segments of society, from religious and civic leaders to business and media pioneers."*
> DALIA MOGAHED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GALLUP CENTER FOR MUSLIM STUDIES, DIRECTOR,
> ABU DHABI GALLUP CENTER

What is citizen diplomacy and what should its aim be with regard to predominantly Muslim societies?

Citizen diplomacy is the notion that foreign policy can be shaped "one handshake at a time" by ordinary citizens.[6] The emphasis of citizen diplomacy is much more on the citizen than on diplomacy. In distinction to public diplomacy – public relations activities undertaken by governments that are targeted at foreign publics and designed to affect favorably opinion about a country – citizen diplomacy derives its credibility and hence effectiveness from the very humanity and kindness of ordinary citizens. We tend to view other countries through the uni-dimensional lens of their foreign policy. Ordinary citizens, through their personal interactions with counterparts from another country, can help convey very effectively the great richness of their society above and beyond its diplomacy.

The aim of citizen diplomacy with predominantly Muslim societies should be to create foundational relationships, particularly among emerging leaders. These foundational relationships should then provide the social capital to counteract the inevitable disinformation, tension and even conflict that occur at the political level. The idea is to provide individuals on both sides with a human face in the place of the "other" they see on their television and movie screens – to humanize and give perspective to, and thereby temper, what they may read in the daily drumbeat of negative media headlines.

 That does not mean that the sole purpose or the stated aim of citizen diplomacy should be "relationship building." The best relationships emerge when the goal is not to build a relationship but to solve a common problem or see the world through another person's eyes. The best relationships tend to emerge as a byproduct of other activities, rather than when the focus is on relationship building as an end in itself. When individuals engage in frank dialogue together, when they travel together and, even better, when they work together to address shared problems, they forge meaningful relationships that have the potential to be long-lasting and life-changing.

> *"Make no mistake about it: citizen diplomacy is absolutely necessary; but it is only a first step. Once we have succeeded in bringing peoples together, we will have to engage in a similar effort to get governments to follow suit."*
> SHERMAN JACKSON, ARTHUR F. THURNAU PROFESSOR OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Citizen diplomacy can therefore have a dual purpose. The first is to change attitudes through interpersonal relationships. The second is to advance certain developmental goals. As the Peace Corps has demonstrated so powerfully, individual citizens are often better at delivering development assistance – whether in the field of health,

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4   *Religious Perceptions in American: With an In-Depth Analysis of U.S. Attitudes Toward Muslims and Islam* (Gallup, 2010).
5   Jennifer Conlin, "For American Students, Life Lessons in the Mideast," *New York Times* (August 6, 2010), see <http://www. nytimes.com/2010/08/08/fashion/08Abroad.html?pagewanted=all>.
6   See <http://www.uscenterforcitizendiplomacy.org/pages/what-is-citizen-diplomacy/>.

education, the environment, human development, or economic development – than large-scale, bureaucratic government programs. They also tend to engender greater gratitude toward the donor country. Many predominantly Muslim societies are confronted with glaring development challenges – challenges which are often as much in the U.S. interest as the interest of that society to address – that would benefit from citizen diplomacy efforts.   In his Cairo speech, President Obama rightly championed partnerships in development. We should seek to increase dramatically the density of cooperative partnerships and relationships between the United States and predominantly Muslim societies.

What are best practices?

Several best practices should be adopted in citizen diplomacy toward predominantly Muslim societies. First, relationships need to be developed on the basis of equality. People-to-people exchange should take place on the basis of equal status contacts – e.g., professionals meeting like-minded professionals. Any agenda for dialogue or joint action should be jointly developed. An initiative, no matter how well intentioned, will be irreparably damaged if one party feels the other is patronizing them, treating them as a victim or trying to civilize them.

Second, the depth of the experiences people have and of the relationships they forge should be central in designing citizen diplomacy programs. Real human-to-human interaction needs to be intentionally built into programs. Every effort needs to be made to get people out of their cultural cocoons and have real-life experiences in another culture, where they get a sense of what the world looks like through another's eyes   They should be exposed to another culture's rules, priorities, perspectives, and traditions. If travelling, for example, participants need to see places far beyond the capital city and its cultural monuments, to include villages and smalls towns. They need to see first-hand how ordinary people live, work, and grapple together as citizens with collective problems.

> *"As an internationally involved religious leader, I know the importance of grassroots involvement in every type of international cooperation. Citizen diplomacy is not only a comprehensive way to improve relations between the West and predominately Muslim countries, it is crucial to our future peace and security."*
>
> REVEREND JOEL C. HUNTER, SENIOR PASTOR, NORTHLAND CHURCH

Third, success should be measured in terms of the number of people who have these deep experiences and forge these deep relationships, and their ability to translate what they have learned into tangible changes in their own society.

Finally, the networks that get forged out of these encounters are also vitally important. In lieu of one-off exchange programs, we should aim to create programs that in the end produce active networks of people working together to address shared problems. Such horizontal networks have become a powerful force for change in today's globalized world.

"In many Muslim societies where good governance remains an aspiration and government is often both distrusted and disconnected from the daily lives of citizens, direct people-to-people contact with the U.S. represents a highly leveraged and impactful way to build mutual respect and understanding. The key is to forge these contacts in the form of partnerships for mutual benefit, where deeper understanding develops through shared work and newfound respect develops through shared results."

AAKIF AHMAD, LEADERSHIP TEAM, US-MUSLIM ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE;
VICE PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER, CONVERGENCE

Whom to target and how?

In an environment of scarce resources, certain groups will be more important to target than others:

- **Youth.** Many predominantly Muslim societies are currently experiencing an unprecedented youth bulge. It is estimated that 780 million, or nearly half, of the world's estimated 1.4 billion Muslims are under the age of 25. [get exact cite] Like Baby Boomers in the United States, this youth demographic is likely to have an oversized role in shaping the future of their countries. Like youth elsewhere, they will tend to be more open to engaging with other cultures than their parents and more likely to alter their attitudes as a result of these experiences. An important long-term challenge many predominantly Muslim societies face is creating enough jobs to employ this sizable youth population. To the extent citizen diplomacy programs enhance the job skills and employability of this youth cohort, they will be contributing substantially to the future stability of these societies.

- **Teachers.** An important influence over youth, of course, is their teachers. Ideally, teachers provide the knowledge base and skills to enable today's students to compete effectively in tomorrow's global economy and to be active citizens in shaping their country's political future. Each investment in an individual teacher has the potential to influence positively the development of hundreds of young minds.

- **Emerging leaders.** Citizen diplomacy programs rightly have often targeted "up-and-coming leaders" – individuals who are still young and impressionable but far enough along in their careers that one can discern a professional trajectory that will lead them to a position of some influence. One interesting challenge in many predominantly Muslim societies, where governments are sometimes ineffective and corrupt, is figuring out who the right "multipliers" are to engage: young government officials, dynamic social entrepreneurs or bloggers, or disaffected youth who might otherwise be vulnerable to being drawn away into extremist causes? The answer probably is to engage them all, as all are likely, in different ways, to make an important contribution to their society's future.

- **Civil society leaders.** Across many Muslim countries, diverse networks of civic, social and service organizations form among the most vibrant elements of society. They often serve multiple purposes: catalysts for social or democratic reform, a convening space for individuals keen to serve the public good; a natural training ground for emerging leaders; and often a necessary resource for delivery of basic services to large numbers of ordinary people, especially in situations of crisis. Civil society leaders in Muslim countries are deeply involved in their communities, deeply respected and influential.

- **Business leaders**. Commerce is often the default interchange between societies. Outside the sphere of government, Americans and citizens of predominantly Muslim societies are far more likely to rub shoulders over a business deal than in any other setting. Our businessmen often know these societies better than our diplomats. We should take advantage of these naturally occurring cultural encounters driven by commercial interest to build a cadre of business leaders committed to enhancing ties.

- **Scientists.** Science is a universal language shared across civilizations. Early Islamic civilization made invaluable contributions to its advancement. Its methods are grounded in fact and it rewards achievement based on merit. It is a neutral, apolitical field of endeavor where American and Muslim experts can an come together to collaborate and in so doing advance the human condition.
- **Other professionals.** The professional class, because of their education and incomes, is an important constituency in any society in terms of how opinions get shaped and how politics gets conducted. As citizen diplomats, professionals also have invaluable skills to share in promoting development in other societies. Professional groups like doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, carpenters, farmers, accountants and lawyers are often eager to lend their services to help others in need abroad.
- **Artists and media figures.** The news, television sitcoms, popular music, and film all play an important role in shaping the images we see of each other. More knowledgeable artists and media figures, producing more accurate and nuanced portrayals of "the other," would go a long way toward eliminating the misinformation and stereotypes that too often poison relations between the United States and predominantly Muslim societies.
- **Religious leaders.** Many of the political conflicts driving a wedge between the United States and predominantly Muslim societies have been labeled (often spuriously) as religious disputes. Religion may or may not be a source of the problem but it can be a part of the solution. Religious leaders can play an important role in combating extremist religious narratives and mediating between cultures. Increasingly in recent years, they have been turned to in order to explain their religious community to others and to explain to their own community the religious and cultural practices of others.
- **Muslim American community**. Muslim Americans on the whole are better educated and wealthier than the American average. Since 9/11, they have come under increased scrutiny and at times had their civil liberties infringed upon as part of the "war on terror." Many feel their own security and identity are held hostage by the current animus between the United States and predominantly Muslim societies. Many are eager to play a positive role in bridging the divide between the two and in advancing human and economic development in the country of their ancestry. The engagement of Muslim Americans is critical toward altering the narrative that America is at war with Islam toward one in which Muslims are viewed as part of the solution in countering Al-Qaeda.

In designing citizen diplomacy programs, the methods employed will of course depend greatly on the target group involved. For youth, a summer camp or a shared travel experience may be the most effective means of getting them outside of their own cultural bubble. For teachers, the experience of teaching in another's classroom may prove the most profound. For business, the opportunity to apprentice in each other's companies may be the most meaningful. For civil society, the chance to share best practices in administration and delivery of service may allow for the most mutually beneficial exchange. For emerging leaders, the experience of shared travel in each other's country may be most valuable to get to know one another and each other's society. For professionals, it may be the chance to work together on a shared development challenge.

Citizen diplomacy with predominantly Muslim societies in the context of globalization

The starting point for designing citizen diplomacy programs should be the recognition that we live in a globalized world, where there are already multiple points of contact between citizens – though arguably less so with predominantly Muslim societies than with other regions of the world. We engage in commerce with each other; we travel as tourists to each other's countries; we send some students and teachers to each other's universities; our best and brightest diplomats, scientists, artists, and journalists may meet on occasion at international conferences; and our publics now see images of each other on our television and movie screens and our youth interact to a degree via social media.

The challenge is how to build upon these already existing relationships. How do you take advantage of existing market forces, trade flows, travel patterns, media penetration, and social networks to create more numerous and more meaningful interactions between citizens from the United States and from predominantly Muslim societies? Instead of reinventing the wheel, the need is to broaden and deepen the kinds of connections that are already occurring, along the way making them richer and more meaningful and more enduring. For example, thousands of

tourists from predominantly Muslim societies travel to major American cities like New York, Chicago, Washington and Los Angeles each year, where they interface in particular with taxi drivers and hotel clerks, many of whom are themselves Muslim. How do you make these taxi drivers and hotel clerks more aware of the important ambassadorial role they play and ensure that these ordinary encounters are learning experiences for both sides? Similarly, at a time when we're cutting education budgets, the Gulf is importing American teachers from the elementary to university level, because of a scarcity of quality teachers, particularly ones capable of teaching in English. How do you ramp up the flow of such teachers to all predominantly Muslim societies, not just the oil-rich states of the Gulf, while making talented American teachers understand that this is not just a promising professional opportunity, but also a chance to help advance important development and diplomatic goals of the United States? And how do you ensure the presence of such American teachers not only fills a short-term need, but at the same time also advances long-term systemic change in these countries' educational systems?

> *"As apt as the comparison to our post-World War II efforts to build bridges with Europe is, an important difference we need to remember is that of religion. Yet religion can be the binding element in creating the space for progress in citizen diplomacy."*
> BISHOP JOHN CHANE, PRESIDENT AND CEO, PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL FOUNDATION

Citizen diplomacy with predominantly Muslim societies and new technologies

New communications technologies – from the Internet and text messaging to social networks and virtual worlds – present new possibilities for citizen engagement. Fifteen percent of American undergraduate students now study abroad, but very, very few of them in predominantly Muslim societies.[7] New technologies now make it possible for a far wider group of Americans who would not otherwise engage in physical exchanges to make connections virtually with counterparts in predominantly Muslim societies. As the President proposed in his Cairo address, students in classrooms in Kansas can now engage in dialogue via the Internet with students in classrooms in Cairo. Such engagement across cultures has tremendous value in its own right, most especially in terms of engagement with societies where security or political concerns make it difficult for individuals to meet in person. Hopefully, it will also serve as an inducement for many more to take the next step and take part in physical exchanges. In this way, virtual exchanges can not only reach a far broader swath of the population, but also serve as an appetizer of sorts for more physical exchanges.

New communications technologies have great strengths as well as some important limitations when it comes to their potential to bridge the gap between different societies. The Internet can be a powerful tool for acquiring knowledge about another culture. Such innovations as YouTube and video-enabled websites provide remarkable platforms for good storytelling across cultures. But as a second-generation of Web technologies has emerged, the Web has also moved beyond just content distribution to also generating conversations around that content. New social networking platforms provide means of linking individuals with common interests across borders. Within the limitations of a two-dimensional, 19" screen, users are able to be "present" with others from another country as they view and comment on the same material on the Web. In so doing, they can develop new sympathies and new modes of understanding across cultures.

At the same time, new social networking sites allow users with similar interests to find each other quickly – for informal cause- or interest-based networks to emerge organically – and to access content relevant to those interests. New crowd-sourcing technologies provide an invaluable sorting function that can help individuals who want to engage find an easy way of doing so. They also create the possibility of more efficient clearinghouses that could, for example, enable citizens interested in volunteering to work in predominantly Muslim societies to identify overseas programs that are seeking individuals with their particular skills. Meanwhile, new translation technologies can help overcome the once daunting barrier of language, enabling Arabic speakers to communicate directly with English speakers– albeit with the inconvenience either of some linguistic imprecision or a slight time delay, depending upon the technology employed.

Internet connectivity in predominately Muslim societies is growing rapidly, with the Middle East region in particular showing a growth rate of 1825% from 2000-2010, as compared to the global average over that period of 445%. The

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7   See *The Condition of Education 2010: U.S. Students Studying Abroad* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), <http://nces. ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/pdf/40_2010.pdf>.

degree of Internet access varies widely, with for example 88% of the population in Bahrain and 43.2% in Iran having access, but only 17.7% in Syria and 1.1% in Iraq.[8]

For all the promise of the Internet, it is important to remember that technology is value-neutral, and can just as easily be exploited as a platform for evil as for good. Arguably Al Qaeda has been more effective than governments at harnessing the power of the Internet. The Web, it is worth recalling, can be a source of misinformation as much as information; a place where conspiracy theories are hatched and rapidly disseminated in the guise of fact; and a place where people go to reinforce their own prejudices by finding like-minded individuals with which to commune, as opposed to opening themselves up to new information and new perspectives.

While virtual exchanges can be immensely rich, they will never replicate the experience offered by physical exchanges. The breathtaking sight of the giant pyramids of Giza shimmering at sunrise or the many smells of the Souk in Jerusalem's Old City simply cannot be replicated on-line. Nor can a Skype-enabled conversation substitute fully for the experience of debating politics in-person, with someone from another culture, over shisha.

Finally, political considerations can also infringe upon the freedom of virtual exchange. There is little privacy on the Web. Many governments of predominantly Muslim societies monitor closely their citizens' Internet activity for the purpose of limiting dissent. Bloggers or users of social network sites who are particularly outspoken, especially on political issues, run the risk of having their accounts blocked or being thrown in jail. In 2008, Egypt authorities arrested more than a dozen young Facebook users for employing the social media to organize protests in support of striking textile workers. In 2009, Iranian authorities beat and detained a large number of Iranian youth for blogs, text messages, and web posts critical of the country's June elections. The UAE recently threatened to shut down Blackberry service in the Emirates unless authorities were given access to users' encrypted communications.

Virtual exchanges are most promising and effective as a complement to direct physical exchanges. As mentioned, they can open people's eyes to new cultures beyond their own country's borders and entice them to pack their suitcases and experience for real what they have gotten a taste for on-line. They can also provide the continued connectivity that make the once-in-a-lifetime experience of a physical exchange more enduring – allowing acquaintances made across great distances to develop into enduring networks for cooperation. New crowd-sourcing technologies also permit potential citizen diplomats to come together quickly around an issue of shared concern, as the Haiti earthquake demonstrated. The technology can be employed as well to create virtual clearinghouses that link interested citizens to worthwhile projects.

8   "Internet Usage in the Middle East," see <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm#me>.

How best to build virtual connections on top of a shared physical encounter – be it a trip, a conference, a summer camp, or a shared social action project – is still being worked out. There already exist various out-of-the-box technologies that can be effectively used to create "virtual alumni networks." However, whatever technology is employed needs to be tailored to the on-line habits of those participating. The limitations of "virtual alumni networks" often have less to do with the technology involved than the "personal bandwidth" of the individuals involved (as the saying goes, there are only so many hours in a day). Busy executives, for example, particularly those of older generations, are unlikely to take the time to check a social networking site regularly, but they may a list-serve that shows up periodically in their Blackberry inbox.

With the new reliance on search and crowd-sourcing technologies, proper data tagging becomes essential. If interested citizens are going to be able to quickly find volunteer or exchange opportunities abroad, it is important that projects embed the same tag – e.g., "citizen diplomacy" – in their physical and meta data so as to identify their activities in a uniform way and drive traffic to the appropriate sites.

> *"I believe that Internet and mobile penetration combined with advances in automated translation and crowdsourced translation will fundamentally change the way the world exchanges information. As the routes to information exchange become more fundamentally social, we might begin to see that the most powerful and scaleable "exchange programs" are informal and bottom-up — driven by the need and ability of a global community to exchange information."* ED BICE, CEO, MEEDAN

The U.S. Government's Role

The U.S. government runs a number of valuable citizen diplomacy programs, the Peace Corps, the International Visitors Program, and the Fulbright Program being most prominent among them. These should be expanded and updated for the 21st century as important vehicles for engagement with predominantly Muslim societies. Greater focus should be placed in particular on what comes after an exchange – on developing and strengthening alumni networks. As well, a number of creative things could be done with existing alumni of these programs – who have already demonstrated through their past participation their willingness to serve – to advance citizen diplomacy efforts with predominantly Muslim societies. For example, "Peace Corps summer camps" could be established to provide Peace Corps alumni and their families the opportunity to do short-term development work in predominantly Muslim societies. Former Fulbrighters could be enlisted to teach master classes for promising younger faculty.

However, these hallmark programs should not be the sum total of U.S. government efforts in this area. There is a need for experimentation and the development of a second-generation of citizen diplomacy programs that reflect changed geopolitical realities, employ new technological tools, and are specifically tailored to the needs of predominantly Muslim societies.

The U.S. government can play other important roles as well. It can help raise the visibility of citizen diplomacy efforts, provide seed funding for new initiatives, and encourage the private sector to play a more prominent role in this field. It can also help eliminate many of the significant hurdles confronting grass-roots citizen diplomacy efforts by easing visa restrictions, ensuring the physical safety of participants in these programs, and helping potential citizen volunteers and donors find the appropriate private organization with which to connect. It can help increase the availability of mobile technologies and unfettered Internet access in predominantly Muslim societies where either political restrictions or lack of financial resources constrain their use.

However, there are also important limits to what the U.S. government should do. As an Egyptian businessman we interviewed observed: "Nations' relations are lasting, governments' relations are always changing." The United States government currently is deeply distrusted in many predominantly Muslim societies. Private U.S. citizen diplomacy efforts often are more likely to be effective, not only because they tend to be more nimble, but also because they are greeted with less suspicion than government-run initiatives. Where the U.S. government attempts to use citizen diplomacy efforts for the purpose of public diplomacy or advancing a particular U.S. government interest, it is likely to be quickly recognized for what it is and its purposes undermined for lack of credibility.

To minimize suspicion, the U.S. government should take pains to clarify for foreign audiences which initiatives are government-run, which are government-supported but not controlled, and which are entirely private initiatives without U.S. government involvement. These distinctions may be lost on many from predominantly Muslim societies who may be accustomed to a larger state role in their own societies and assume that any American initiative, whether undertaken by a private non-profit organization, corporation or government, is ultimately controlled by the state. But this distinction is an important message in and of itself: the tremendous initiative and generosity of ordinary citizens are one of this country's most ennobling qualities.

The Role of the Private Sector

To be successful, the United States' efforts to engage with predominantly Muslim societies must extend far beyond the work of a few well-intentioned U.S. government officials to become a truly national effort. Like our outreach to Europe and Japan in an earlier era, it must engage the imagination, creativity, and financial and human resources of U.S. philanthropic organizations, corporations, and ordinary Americans.

To build the kind of bridges that need to be built between emerging leaders, and to help address the many developmental needs faced by predominantly Muslim societies, will require financial and human resources many times beyond what is now available. This effort at grassroots diplomacy, one based on mutual respect and mutual interests, can complement the United States government's foreign policy and public diplomacy activities. Over the next ten years, the U.S. government should commit $1 billion to this effort, which should be matched by an equivalent $1 billion from the private sector. At a time of tight fiscal constraints, this a substantial sum, but it pales in comparison with what we are now spending on our counterterrorism efforts or military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Alongside this financial commitment, the President should issue a call to service for Americans to engage in the kind of partnership building that he spoke of so eloquently in his Cairo address. The objective should be nothing less than having a million Americans travel on exchanges or participate in volunteer projects in predominantly Muslim societies over the next decade.

The Congress should consider establishing, with initial U.S. government funding, a private not-for-profit organization designed to encourage, seed and coordinate private efforts in this area. This entity could become a "community foundation" of sorts for America's relationship with predominantly Muslim societies. The organization could provide a safe vehicle for foundations and corporations wishing to support activities in this area to invest their funds, it could provide micro-loans as well as access to the latest technology to promising young ventures, and it could help broker partnerships between private entities and with the U.S. government.[9]

The business sector should have a clear interest in investing in such initiatives, both for profit and the public good. As U.S. businesses look to expand internationally, predominantly Muslim societies clearly represent potential areas for growth both as consumer markets and as competitive sources for labor and capital. U.S. companies have a unique opportunity to build brand awareness and loyalty among a predominantly young population, at time when a new generation of middle-class consumers is emerging.

The trend in private and corporate philanthropy has swung sharply in recent years toward investing in projects with clear metrics. However, few activities could be more vital to America's future than investing in a network of relationships between emerging leaders in the United States and predominantly Muslim societies. Funders – whether philanthropic, corporate or governmental — need to recognize that creating this kind of social capital, where a next generation of leaders knows and understands one another, has value in and of itself. Evaluating the impact of these relationships will always elude perfect measurement.

Few things, however, could be more important to our nation's future security.

> *"Citizens — Americans and Muslims alike — can play a critical role in building new bridges of understanding between the U.S. and the Muslim World. Public institutions should more creatively embrace private-public sector partnerships to meet this vital goal."*
> AMBASSADOR MARC GINSBERG, PRESIDENT, LAYALINA PRODUCTIONS

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9   For one proposal as to how such an organization of this kind could be structured, see Kristin Lord's discussion of the USA-World Trust in *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2008*)*.

Key Recommendations

The roundtable recommends the following with regard to citizen diplomacy efforts with predominantly Muslim societies:

1. Given the strategic importance of improving America's relationship with the Muslim world, building bridges and partnerships between citizens of the United States and of predominantly Muslim societies should be accorded the utmost policy priority. Just as U.S. leaders invested heavily following World War II in building ties between emerging leaders in the United States and those in Europe and Japan, so today we need an ambitious undertaking of similar scale and scope – drawing on the energies of governments, private corporations, philanthropic institutions, non-profit organizations and ordinary citizens – focused on predominantly Muslim societies.

2. Citizen diplomacy efforts should be designed to create "foundational relationships," especially among emerging leaders, as a kind of social capital that should help temper the inevitable disinformation, tension and even conflict that occur at the political level. Programs should be crafted with the recognition that the best relationships tend to emerge when the stated goal is not to build a relationship per se, but to solve a common problem or see the world through another person's eyes.

3. Some basic best-practice principles that should inform program design include:
    - make sure relationships are developed on the basis of equality, with agendas for action developed jointly;
    - keep the focus on the depth of the experiences that participants have and the depth of the relationships they forge;
    - measure success in terms of the number of people who are afforded such in-depth experiences and their ability to translate what they have learned into tangible changes in their own society; and
    - ensure that from these programs enduring networks get formed of people working together, irrespective of borders, to address shared problems.

4. Given scarce resources, some key groups to target through citizen diplomacy programs include: youth, teachers, emerging leaders, civil society leaders, artists and media figures, religious leaders, scientists, business leaders, other professionals and, most crucially, the Muslim American community.

5. In an era of globalization where there often already exist connections among citizens, the challenge is to craft citizen diplomacy programs that take advantage of existing market forces, trade flows, travel patterns, media penetration, and social networks to create more numerous and more meaningful interactions between citizens from the United States and from predominantly Muslim societies.

6. New communications technologies – from the Internet and text messaging to social networks and virtual worlds – open up new possibilities for engagement that are particularly promising for citizen diplomacy with predominantly Muslim societies because they help overcome the barriers of distance, security, politics and language that often place limits on physical exchanges.

7. The "virtual exchanges" that these new technologies enable are most promising and effective as a complement to direct physical exchanges. They can open people's eyes to new cultures and entice them to pack their suitcases and experience for real what they have gotten a taste for on-line. They can also provide the continued connectivity that makes the once-in-a-lifetime experience of a physical exchange more enduring – allowing acquaintances made across great distances to develop into enduring networks for cooperation.

8. The U.S. government runs a number of valuable citizen diplomacy programs, like the Peace Corps, the International Visitors Program, and the Fulbright Program, that should be expanded and updated for the 21st century as important vehicles for engagement with predominantly Muslim societies. Particular attention should be paid to what comes after these exchanges – on how robust alumni networks get created and for what purposes they are deployed. At the same time, given the importance of the challenges we face, there is also a need for greater experimentation and the development of a second-generation of citizen diplomacy programs that reflect changed geopolitical realities, employ new technological tools, and are specifically tailored to the requirements of predominantly Muslim societies.

9. To be successful, though, the United States' efforts to engage with predominantly Muslim societies must extend far beyond the work of a few well-intentioned U.S. government officials to become a truly national effort. Like our earlier outreach to Europe and Japan, it must engage the imagination, creativity, and financial and human resources of U.S. philanthropic organizations, corporations, and ordinary Americans. The President should issue a call to service for Americans to engage in the kind of partnership building that he spoke of so eloquently in his Cairo address, with the objective being nothing less than having a million Americans travel on exchanges or participate in volunteer projects in predominantly Muslim societies over the next decade. The U.S. government should commit $1 billion to this effort, which should be matched by an equal $1 billion from the private sector.

10. The Congress should consider establishing, with initial U.S. government funding, a private not-for-profit organization designed to encourage, seed and coordinate private efforts in this area. This entity could become a "community foundation" of sorts for advancing America's relationship with predominantly Muslim societies.

SUGGESTED READING LIST

■ Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World (http://www.usmuslimengagement. org/storage/usme/documents/Changing_Course_Second_Printing.pdf)

■ The Doha Compact: New Directions for the Untied States and Muslim World (http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/ Files/rc/reports/2008/10_doha_compact/10_doha_compact.pdf)

■ The Opportunity of the Obama Era: Can Civil Society Help Bridge Divides between the United States and a Diverse Muslim World? (http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/papers/2009/11_civil_society_amr/11_ civil_society_amr.pdf)

■ Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century (http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/ reports/2008/11_public_diplomacy_lord/11_public_diplomacy_lord.pdf)

■ Gallup Poll: http://www.muslimwestfacts.com/mwf/109492/Publications.aspx

■ A New Era of Partnerships: Report of Recommendations to the President | President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ofbnp-council-final-report.pdf

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