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Communications

Marketing Foreign Policy: How can President Bush get across to the world the principles of his foreign policy?

President Bush has a number of obstacles to overcome as he attempts to communicate his administration's foreign policy principles to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, most of these obstacles formed as a result of his administration's actions. While his tapping Karen Hughes and Condoleezza Rice are steps in the right direction, President Bush will be ultimately unsuccessful in this arena, unless he is able to bring his administration's actions in line with its rhetoric.

Immediately after election, President Bush began to outline a foreign policy based on what he describes as our American values. At his first State of the Union address, he referred to the "non-negotiable demands of human dignity" and spoke of our need to defend "liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere."ⁱ As Mr. Spalatan pointed out, up to 80 percent of non-Americans don't believe in Bush's sincerity on this issue, even though up to 60 percent of them would support these values if enacted in their countries.ⁱⁱ

In an attempt to push his message, President Bush has made two commendable steps in appointing Condoleezza Rice to be the Secretary of State and his long time aid Karen Hughes to be the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy. Given the right resources and ability to act on the President's behalf, Ms. Rice and Ms. Hughes have the opportunity to make a noticeable impact on America's perception abroad. As Mr. Spalatan noted, given her position and stature, Ms. Rice has already begun to travel in support of President Bush's foreign policy values, and all of her appearances have focused on reiterating the values outlined in his 2001 State of the Union address.ⁱⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, Ms. Hughes' and Ms. Rice's efforts are not occurring in a vacuum. In a recent interview about the perception of the Bush Administration abroad, foreign policy pundit Stephen Damours explained that Bush seems to think the "best way to achieve stability is by an American empire," not only of American corporations, but of "American dominance, by force if necessary, using

our overwhelming military power as a source of our power.”^{iv} The largely unilateral invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, the attempted appointment of John Bolton as U.N. Ambassador, and our continued support of Israel at all costs heighten this global perception of American unilateralism.

Ironically, these actions actually complicate what is largely considered our primary foreign policy goal: the “war” on terror. Melvyn Leffler, in a recent article published by Foreign Policy, explains “Terrorism, at least in part, is spawned by feelings of revulsion against U.S. domination and by a sense of powerlessness and humiliation. By elevating the hegemonic posture of the United States to official doctrine, these policies make the United States and its citizens even more attractive targets for terrorists.”^v Accordingly, it will be very difficult for America to talk the talk, until we start walking the walk.

ⁱ George W. Bush, *speech before Congress*, February 2001.
<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>>

ⁱⁱ Ivo Spalatan, *statement at Johns Hopkins University*, 13 April 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*

^{iv} “Bush Foreign Policy Continues to Alienate Friends and Enemies Around the World,” *Between the Lines*, 8 April 2005. <<http://www.btlonline.org/btl040805.html>>

^v Melvyn P. Leffler, “Think Again: Bush’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy*, September/October 2004.
<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2671&page=0>