

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL  
SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS,  
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

*Hearing on the 9/11 Commission Recommendations on Public Diplomacy:  
Defending Ideals and Defining the Message*

**Oral Remarks By**

**Keith Reinhard  
President, Business for Diplomatic Action, Inc.  
Chairman, DDB Worldwide**

**Monday, August 23, 2004  
1:00 pm  
Room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515**

Good afternoon. Chairman Shays and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today. It's an honor to appear before you.

Let me begin with a statement you included in your invitation.

"If the United States does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world, the extremists will gladly do the job for us."

- 9/11 Commission Report

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As you know, the problem of America's reputation is not confined to the Islamic world, which means it would not be wrong to paraphrase the commission's statement:

"If the United States does not act quickly and intelligently to define itself in the **post 9/11** world, its detractors **across the globe** will gladly do the job for us."

- Business for Diplomatic Action

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Two recent, if small, examples were...



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...this illustration on the front page of the German edition of the *Financial Times* and...



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...this image from *Middle East Online* from last Friday.

I claim no expertise in government or foreign policy. But as a concerned U.S. citizen and international businessman, I enlisted some of the most preeminent professionals from the fields of global communications, marketing, research and media to form....



...Business for Diplomatic Action, a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to...

### Purpose of BDA

Mobilize and harness the private sector in a separate but parallel effort to augment whatever the government is doing to reverse the alarming decline in America's reputation.

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Let me be clear—this effort is not about ads or “selling.” BDA does not stand for Business for Diplomatic Advertising. It's Business for Diplomatic Action.

Because listening is the most important part of any communications process, the brief we gave to ourselves was a line from the Scottish poet:

“O would that God the gift might  
give us, to see ourselves as  
others see us.”

- Robert Burns

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Our listening confirmed that the image of America is a montage of our foreign policy, our global brands and our entertainment product.



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It's a mixture we sometimes refer to as a "Rummy and Coke with Madonna on the side." Should there be doubt that government and commercial actions are inextricably linked, one needs only to review...



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...the political cartoons in the foreign press the day after Saddam was toppled.

A careful analysis of all of our listening efforts revealed four important root causes for the rise in anti-American sentiment around the world.

### The Root Causes of the Problem

- U.S. Foreign Policy
- Effects of Globalization
- Pervasiveness of American Popular Culture
- Our Collective Personality

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BDA believes that an activated U.S. business community can effectively address the last three.


**"As others see us"**

<p><u>Positives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity</li> <li>• Freedom</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> </ul>	<p><u>Negatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrogant</li> <li>• Ignorant</li> <li>• Insensitive</li> <li>• Disrespectful</li> <li>• Unilingual</li> <li>• Self-centered</li> </ul>
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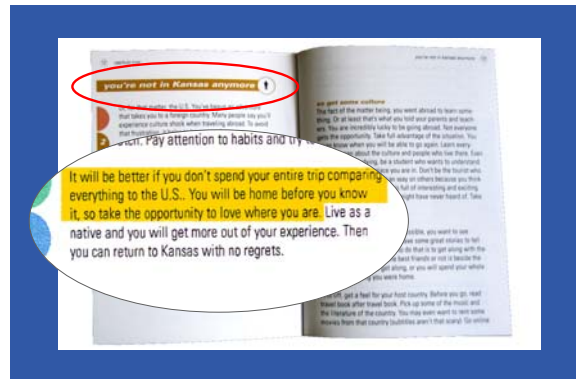
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This slide shows some of the most prominent positives and negatives we have found in how others see us. To paraphrase Johnny Mercer, we see BDA’s job as one of “accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative.” To do both means engaging people both at home and abroad. Let me just touch on a few projects we have underway.



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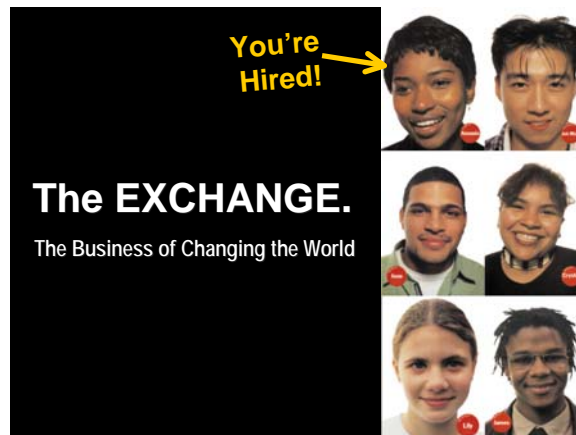
PepsiCo has paid for the initial distribution of this *World Citizens Guide* to the 200,000 young Americans who will study abroad next semester. The content for this passport-size booklet was provided by respondents in 130 countries who answered our question: What advice would you give to Americans on how they could be better global citizens? The response was robust, candid and prescriptive. This little passport-size booklet, an advance copy of which we have for you today, is not a travel guide for young Americans. Rather, it is a compendium of insights that arouse their interest in the world and move them closer to a global mindset.



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We also plan an abridged version for the 50 to 60 million Americans who travel outside the United States each year.

Everyone acknowledges the importance of exchange programs. We hope to find new ways of bringing the transformations that occur in exchange programs to life and to share them with mainstream mass audiences. One approach to this notion is a treatment we've developed for a reality show featuring interns from abroad working inside U.S. corporations and Americans interning in foreign offices of the same multinational. In the final episode, the CEO of the company may even say, **“You’re hired!”**



In the Middle East, especially, we need messages that inspire hope and promise to youth at a very early age. Gary Knell, President and CEO of Sesame Workshop and an active BDA Board Member, is here with me today. He has vast experience in enabling locally produced children’s programming, especially in the Arab world. This is an activity BDA is actively supporting.



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Although you may be anxious to create effective messages from the U.S. government to the Middle East, I respectfully suggest that, even with careful planning, such an effort is likely to meet with failure at this time. Based on everything we know and have heard from the regions, the U.S. government is simply not a credible messenger. The implication for this committee, Mr. Chairman, is to guide the U.S. government to give real support and incentives to empower and activate credible messengers who can begin the process of bridge building.

This slide shows just three additional BDA projects currently on the drawing board. A comprehensive list of additional programs and initiatives has been attached to my written testimony:

### Representative BDA Projects

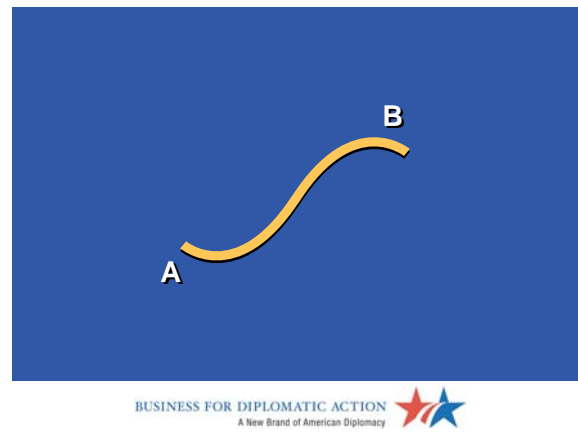
- Collecting, sharing and building upon best practices of U.S. multinational companies
- World citizenship briefings for top U.S. business executives and curriculum for schools
- Academic conference and authoritative book on the role of the private sector in public diplomacy

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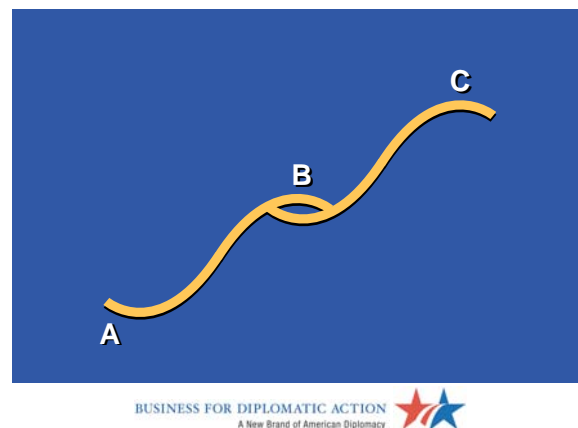


Mr. Chairman, I claim no expertise in government. But in crafting a response to the challenge posed by the 9/11 Commission, BDA would recommend the same strategy development process that we in the marketing world use to address any major global brand in trouble or any company being attacked by a competitor wishing to destroy or diminish it. The process is outlined in my written testimony.

I'd like to close with a simple way to portray the state of America's reputation and a way we might think about it.

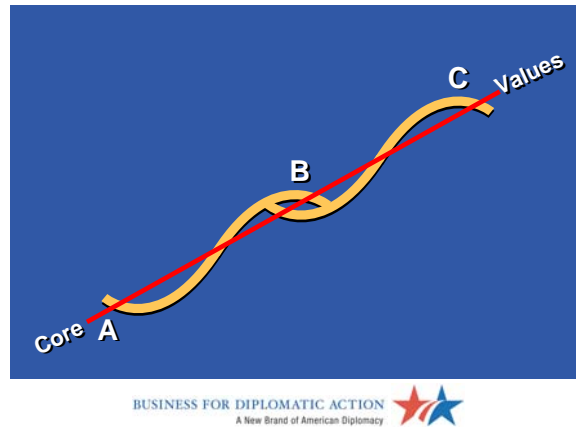


This is the sigmoid curve, which we often use to diagram the life of a product or a corporation, our careers and our very lives. We wobble a bit getting started, then we flourish and grow and then, at the end of the life cycle, we start to wane again. The good news is that, for organizations, states and reputations, there is life beyond the curve...



...if we start a new curve soon enough.

The integrity of the organization, or nation for that matter, is maintained...



...by making sure that core values are preserved, perhaps even reemphasized, as a new curve begins. But not everything stays the same. Typically, what got you from A to B will not get you from B to C. In the business world, the nature of the competition may have changed. In our larger world, the nature of our struggle has changed.

At the risk of oversimplifying, it seems to me that, while in the years preceding 9/11 we could lead the world by force, in the days to come we must learn to lead the world by influence and example.



Mr. Chairman, Business for Diplomatic Action stands ready to help you do so.

Thank you.