ATTACHMENT B

GENERAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Demonstrate respect. The most comprehensive survey we have conducted shows the number one thing the United States can do to improve public perception of our country is to demonstrate respect for other countries’ culture and contributions; this is especially true in many Islamic countries. United States officials can demonstrate respect by: visiting important historic and cultural sites during foreign travel; actively scheduling “listening” events and opportunities to interact with foreign publics and listen to their point of view; planning events that demonstrate respect for different cultural and faith traditions; inviting respected local authors, historians, poets, musicians, etc to appear at USG sponsored events; and attending important cultural and historical events in other countries.

Use humility. The history of our own country is one of constantly striving and many times failing to live up to our own noble values. Our society is not perfect, and we should not be afraid to admit that we face many challenges and struggle to live up to our own ideals.

Use caution when dealing with faith issues in the public square. Government officials should be extremely cautious and if possible, avoid using religious language, because it can mean different things and is easily misconstrued. The extremists are murderers who pervert religion, members of a cult that promotes death and destruction rather than legitimate practitioners of any faith. When it is necessary to make a point that involves Islam, for instance, quote Muslim voices themselves. Also, avoid characterizing people of any faith as “moderate”—this is a political word which, when extended to the world of faith, can imply these individuals are less than devout and faithful. The terms “mainstream” or “majority” are preferable. Finally, avoid phrases such as the “Muslim community” that imply it is monolithic; Muslim communities, like other faith communities, are diverse.
Create platforms where divergent ideas are encouraged and freely and openly debated. Support conferences sponsored by think tanks and foundations and intellectual publications that foster debates. Seek to empower/highlight Muslim voices that speak out against terror and violence, even when they do not agree with every aspect of U.S. foreign policy.

Use good pictures and images. Well-choreographed pictures and images convey emotion and/or action as well as a convincing story.

Suggestions:

− Before any event, think through a desired picture that would best capture and tell the story of the event.
− Where should the photo be taken—what is the background? The background should help convey where you are—the country, the city, the building, the environment. Should there be a flag in the background? Is there a banner behind or in front of the podium? Is a recognizable part of the building visible? What part of the building is recognizable? E.g., capture I.M. Pei’s Pyramid as your background for an event at the Louvre rather than an unrecognizable column inside.
− Who should be in the picture? The principal along with those who are the focus of the event should be in the picture to help convey the story. Musicians? Youth? Government officials? E.g., if the Ambassador and State Minister for Education are speaking at a Fulbright event, make sure to get shots not just of the officials speaking but with Fulbright grantees in the photo.
− What is the action or the emotion? Are they dancing? Talking? Listening? Learning? Enthusiastic? Include props if that helps convey the story. E.g., if the Ambassador is meeting with 4th graders to give out books, the photo should include students holding the books, youth reading, pointing to a picture in the book, etc.
− The photographer should think through the location for the photo with all of the technical considerations in mind—not shooting into the sun, not in front of reflective glass or a mirror, not in shade or shadows, etc. The key people who need to be included in the shot should be identified.
− Look for the action or emotion. For action shots, get a tight shot rather than wide. A tight shot will convey more emotion in addition to the story. E.g., for a U.S. military big band in town with swing dancers, rather than capturing the whole crowd, pick out one couple in full enthusiastic swing dancing in front of a large U.S. flag and banner of the event so the country and occasion are conveyed.