

**Speech from Leigh Carter at the General Meeting of
the Swiss American Society on
June 4, 2009**

US – Swiss Relations and Smart Power

Good Afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to be here with you. It's also a relief to see some familiar faces in the audience today!

I'm going to spend a few minutes on a topic called Smart Power and then we'll save time for questions. Given the interest about the new administration, we thought that you might like to hear about the new policy emphasis we are receiving from President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton.

However, the most important thing is to hear from you, so I will keep this short so we have time for questions, a time to exchange views.

If I were to put the President's foreign policy approach into two words it would be "Smart Power." What is that?

Some of you may be familiar with its earlier form as Soft Power – the theory developed in three books by Harvard Professor Joseph Nye. Most recently Professor Nye has worked with former Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage of State who served State Colin Powell to expand upon his earlier work. A famous article appeared in Foreign Affairs in 2004 by a former Clinton official named Suzanne Nossel where the term was first coined and the concept has been evolving since then, most critically during the recent election. Condoleeza Rice tried to develop something similar during her time called Transformational

Diplomacy but I must confess it didn't get a lot of attention and quietly died off.

The evolution of Smart Power grows out of a concern that we have been overinvesting in military capacity at the expense of our underfunded diplomatic corps. Diplomacy is not capital intensive – its primary resource is the people who carry it out. IN June 2008, there were only 6,636 FSOs and 4,919 support staff and specialists in the State Department – just 10% more than 25 years ago when there were 24 fewer countries in the world and the cold war meant that our national interests tended to be concentrated in Europe and Northeast Asia.

The chronic underfunding of diplomacy and foreign assistance has a major impact on how we wield power

abroad. Let me give you an example that paints a better picture:

The number of lawyers in the Defense Department is larger than the entire diplomatic corps. There are more musicians in the military than there are FS officers. There are more tuba players than there are Ambassadors. Last year, the Department of Defense's budget was 24 times larger at \$750 billion than ours -- \$31 billion which includes the Foreign Assistance budget. A mere \$7.5 billion went to State diplomatic and consular programs, including our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the 265 other posts around the world.

The application of Smart Power is meant to develop a broader, more effective approach to applying international

influence. Basically, smart power overcomes the shortfall with soft power which was an either or kind of thing – which was to be effective you have to be able to apply power in some organized way. Smart power is meant to be controlled by policy. So when President Obama and Secretary Clinton talk about exercising American power, they are talking about combining the elements of diplomacy, development, public diplomacy and military power in a coordinated and focused way.

Smart Power is defined as using the full range of tools at our disposal – diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal and cultural –picking the right tool, or combination of tools, for each situation.

Why does any of this matter? Especially those of you who might be skeptical about growing the bureaucracy!

Consider this: A recent Rand Corporation Study found that of 648 now defunct Terror Groups between 1968 and 2006, the most common way for them to disappear was to be absorbed by the political process. The second most common way was to be defeated by good, old fashioned police work. By contrast, only in 7% of cases did the military destroy the terrorist elements.

Secretary Clinton has stated clearly that the State Department is committed to a new diplomacy powered by partnership, principle and pragmatism. The defining terms of the Administration's foreign policy is partnership, listening and alliances and, in particular engagement and smart power. On his second full day in office, President

Obama visited the State Department to emphasize the centrality of diplomacy to national security. By just showing up.

This underscores the importance of public diplomacy in this new effort. We must use new tools and partners to broaden the reach of our diplomacy because 21st century state craft cannot just be government to government, it must be government to people and people to people. We must engage with civil society, women, youth, political activists and many others to advance our goals.

But again, how? The information arena of diplomacy is undergoing tremendous change. It is posing intellectual and organizational challenges. But communication –

especially two-way communication -- is at the heart of smart power.

We – not the citizens of the United States nor of Switzerland -- but we, the citizens of the world face urgent foreign policy challenges including wars and regional conflicts, the global economic crisis, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, climate change, worldwide poverty, food insecurity, and pandemic disease.

Smart Power requires reaching out to both friends and adversaries, bolstering old alliances and forging new ones. Even if we disagree with some governments, the United States shares a bond of common humanity with the people of every nation, and President Obama has pledged

to work to invest in that common humanity. The President is in Cairo today delivering a speech entitled “A New Beginning.”

The President’s stated foreign policy goals are:

- Keeping the American people, the nation and our allies secure

- Promoting economic growth and shared prosperity at home and abroad

- Strengthening our position of global leadership to protect the health of the planet and expand human dignity and opportunity

- Protecting and advancing US values

To achieve these goals Secretary of State Clinton is committed to pursuing a foreign policy agenda powered – as I noted previously -- by partnership, principles and

pragmatism. Cooperating and collaborating with other nations and organizations, the State Department will work to design and implement global and regional solutions to the world's most pressing problems.

Secretary Clinton has defined her tools as:

- Negotiation, persuasion and exertion of leverage
- Cooperation with our military partners and other agencies of government
- Partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and international organizations
- Empowering negotiators who can protect our interests while understanding those of our negotiating partners
- The use of modern technologies for modern outreach

The blending of modern technologies in conjunction with our traditional and successful programs is particularly

critical in communicating with younger audiences. But it is also a hurdle for people of all ages especially in critical countries like Afghanistan and North Korea.

Public Diplomacy for the Next Generation

Today's young Europeans are part of a fundamentally new generation—one that has grown up without a Berlin wall, with a deeply integrated and broadly expanded European Union, and, because of the challenges we face today, with a profoundly different worldview than their parents and grandparents.

Securing the support of this generation will be crucial to U.S. relations with Europe in the coming years. Many of these young people are voting for the first time. They will determine who the next European leaders will be, and,

down the road, may themselves be these leaders. We need to rely on their cooperation and collaboration, but we cannot take their support for granted: the circumstances under which this generation came of age have afforded them new opportunities, not least of which is the opportunity to turn away from the United States. Unlike their parents and grandparents, today's Europeans do not automatically look to the U.S. for leadership. Thus, in order to ensure the support of Europe in the future, we must engage these young leaders.

In the US/Swiss context, sometimes I think that we lack the bonds that a shared past struggle against Communism or Fascism would bring – the bonds we still see in Britain and France. Our soldiers have never fought side by side. There was no US liberation of Switzerland, no memorial

delivery of economic assistance. Subsequently, no store of shared historical political good will to draw on. Shared values yes. Shared experiences no. I think you can see this play out today in the public reaction here over the UBS case as previously over the Holocaust Assets issue 10 years ago.

We need to build a **new** history together.

We see challenges and opportunities in four broad areas: Audience, Attitude, Agility, and Accountability. The younger generation in Europe doesn't necessarily respond to this shared history either.

First-time voters -- This generation does not remember life behind the Iron Curtain, Poland's Solidarity, or the fall of the Berlin Wall. They do not necessarily look to the U.S.

for leadership. And yet, over the past decade we have made no concerted investment in central Europe, and only static investment elsewhere, to remedy this. We need to re-engage this generation.

Europe's changing face: children of immigrants -- We focused heavily in recent years on reaching out to Europe's minorities, but much remains to be done. The change in administration -- especially to one with a President who is a first-generation American on his father's side -- offers unique opportunities to work with our European partners on integrating minority and marginalized communities.

Attitude -- Many of the new generation have complained that the United States tries to foist unpopular policies on

Europe. We believe the real problem lies in finding ways to discuss and work on issues like NATO and Afghanistan in terms that resonate with post-Cold War Europe. Young people who took part in Secretary Clinton's Town Hall in Brussels earlier this year commented overwhelmingly that they were surprised Secretary Clinton actually listened to them and valued their input. In Tokyo, many hundreds of young Japanese girls who could not fit into the university hall where the Secretary was holding her talk, gathered beforehand to greet her arrival and waited throughout the speech to say good-bye.

President Obama, who has held his own jam-packed town halls in several parts of the world, has signaled that the U.S. is ready to listen to our allies, but seeing this willingness in action is the only sure tool we have to

convince skeptical audiences we intend to meaningfully engage. Thus we must be smart in our interactions with young Europeans.

Smart listening -- We need Foreign Service Officers who are approachable and engaged. Diplomats who can interpret interactions and messages from our foreign interlocutors – whether they be from the host country's Foreign Ministry or from universities or from business or from callers to the Embassy -- and then communicate them to a receptive Washington.

Smart talking -- only after we understand our audiences can we re-craft our policy messages in meaningful ways to this important generation, using the appropriate tools and technologies to ensure our messages are understood.

Agility -- We need to assess our old tools, invest in what continues to prove successful and to discover new tools that are effective in taking our messages to the audience rather than waiting for the audience to come to us.

You can't get more old-fashioned or low tech than exchange programs – be they the 63-year-old Fulbright Scholarship Program or the much copied International Visitor's Leadership Program –yet it's hard to beat them for successfully contributing toward a more peaceful, wealthier global village.

In March when Secretary Clinton hosted an acclaimed and internationally covered town hall in Brussels, we linked her to 135 embassies and consulates and 2,500 people either logged on through embassy access or directly.

This allowed people all around the world instant, immediate access to the Secretary.

We also host conversations on third party websites where State Department representatives go on sites in Arabic and Persian to engage in conversations. Let me stress that we identify ourselves as State Department officials.

We speak in a conversational tone, but what we present us USG policy. Straight from the source. There is no media filter and anyone on the site has direct access to a member of the State Department.

We have a democracy video challenge that uses You Tube to try and encourage an international conversation on what democracy is. The last I knew there were more than 900 entries from 95 countries, including entries from China, Iran and Burma. I must admit, You Tube is something I would do for my country, but with great stress. However, I was amazed to read in the New York Times recently that our Nobel Laureate Secretary of Energy Steven Chu has a You Tube following for his lectures on climate change. His admirers have also chosen an unofficial theme song for him -- a famous Steely Dan song called Dr. Wu. So I guess this proves the point. If you can find the right way to attract your key audience, you have the opportunity to present your case.

One of our most revered journalists is Edward R Morrow. One of his most often quoted lines in our line of work is that communications span the world, but the real persuasion happens when people make personal connections, in the last three feet. That is the most effective way to reach people is personal contact, one person talking to another.

How we achieve this in Western Europe, versus Iran, versus North Korea, and versus Afghanistan is different. We do not achieve credibility by only giving a speech. We must engage more widely, deeply and innovatively.

We must find ways to reach the majority of Afghans in avenues that compensate for the fact that only 28% of the population is literate – and less than 10% of women in

rural areas are literate. Add to the illiteracy problem that the majority of the country is without electricity. Radios and televisions are not an effective alternative.

If you would allow me to share a personal story: I served in Pakistan after September 11th and we were trying to educate people about Osama bin Laden. One avenue was dropping pamphlets via balloons in some of the rural areas. The problem was the majority of people were illiterate and they believed that God had dropped these photos of bin Laden from the sky, inferring that he was allied with God.

I believe we will succeed. What we are talking about is actually a return to the roots of Public Diplomacy but with 21st century technology to tackle 21st century challenges.

This is a return to the basic groundwork that helped us win the Cold War, when Cultural Attaches developed programs to make US authors, musicians, legal scholars, etc accessible to people in every corner of the world.

When Press Attaches engaged not just the media but talked to university students on the role of the media in civil society and good governance.

We're working on how to do that. I'd be interested in your thoughts on that or any other issues. So I'd like to hear from you now.