

**Written Testimony of Sarah B. Rogers
Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy
Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee**

Chairman Mast, Ranking Member Meeks, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

It is a profound honor to serve as Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy. I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in me by President Trump and Secretary Rubio. I take seriously the responsibility I bear to the American people and to this institution, and I welcome this opportunity to update the Committee on our work.

Since my confirmation in October, a primary focus of my tenure has been freedom of expression. My high-profile media engagements on this topic have involved advocacy in Europe and the UK over extraterritorial enforcement of censorship laws, but I am also working to foster constructive solutions to real policy challenges that prompt misguided, censorious responses. Those challenges include threats to child safety online, deepfakes, antisemitism, and genuine anti-American propaganda operations by foreign actors. My Digital Freedom team is actively exploring solutions to some of these challenges, including through age-verification technologies that preserve anonymity for adults. Through advocacy, grants, and direct outreach, we are making clear to foreign publics that freedom of speech is foundational to prosperity, innovation, and long-term stability.

Moreover, I am harnessing our entire public diplomacy enterprise to advance the United States and enable American diplomacy. My mission is broad and vital. We are fully utilizing all the tools at our disposal—exchange programs, cultural heritage initiatives, micro-grants, and more—to advance the President’s America First agenda and ensure that every engagement delivers measurable results for the American people and maximizes the impact of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

I am privileged to direct a dedicated, talented workforce and lead a set of issues as multi-faceted as they are consequential. From championing the power of sports diplomacy—at a moment that our country will enter a “decade of sports” ahead of the FIFA World Cup and L.A. Olympic Games—to orchestrating USA Pavilions at World Expos, I will showcase American excellence and advance opportunities for U.S. businesses through commercial diplomacy. These priorities will unite, inspire, and serve our national interests. I am also launching new initiatives, such as our partnership with the NFL, which leverages players and coaches as cultural ambassadors and promotes a great American sport. As we approach America’s 250th birthday, I am especially committed to ensuring the Department honors this milestone, using it as an opportunity to open doors, build new partnerships, and celebrate American excellence globally.

We are also ensuring our entire Public Diplomacy enterprise is equipped and has the vision to tell America’s story of excellence, confidence, and leadership. Our new Public Diplomacy Strategic Plan, to be released next month, will provide clear direction, strategy and cohesion. It aligns our

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efforts with the President's National Security Strategy and the Secretary's Strategic Plan, placing sovereignty, security, and economic renewal at the center of our foreign policy. We are increasing clarity of U.S. resolve, countering malign foreign influence, and reinforcing the responsibility of our allies and partners. To ensure every dollar is spent wisely and in support of our priorities, our Ambassadors and their public diplomacy teams are now using a new approval process for grants, ensuring all spending is properly tracked, approved, and targeted to advance U.S. policy objectives. We are also dedicated to conducting rigorous monitoring and evaluation to ensure we are always iterating and improving our PD programs. Every dollar we spend must make America safer, stronger, or more prosperous.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is central to this vision, serving as a cornerstone of American public diplomacy and amplifying U.S. influence and credibility through long-term relationship building. A global network of exchange programs, English language initiatives, and cultural partnerships connects the United States to millions of emerging leaders, influencers, and future decision-makers each year investing in long term relationships. These efforts not only expand the reach of U.S. diplomacy but also generate measurable impact—strengthening alliances, opening markets, and supporting American security and prosperity.

For example, we have marshalled our English language programs to bolster policy outcomes—for instance, by offering instruction to mining engineers in countries where U.S. companies operate and aviation workers in nations transitioning to the use of American-made aircraft. ECA's Fulbright Program has introduced participants to innovative American AI products and has supported the global adoption of those technologies. Our International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) program continues to advance commercial diplomacy and support efforts to bring about fair and mutually beneficial trade and economic partnerships.

In Global Public Affairs (GPA), we are ensuring that the Department's resources tell America's story loudly, clearly, and credibly to audiences worldwide. GPA engages global media to shape narratives on American foreign policy, leverages innovative digital strategies across platforms to tell stories that reach the right audiences, and utilizes data to inform and improve the effectiveness of messaging. The Global Communications Strategies team leads high-impact campaigns that are actively supporting efforts to end illegal immigration and secure our borders, counter foreign anti-American propaganda, promote American economic, energy, and technological leadership, and spotlight American achievements and innovation. Further, GPA's new unified branding guidelines, centered on the American flag, ensure that U.S. government programs, entities, and initiatives abroad are unmistakably recognizable and associated with American leadership. GPA is also harnessing artificial intelligence and advanced analytics to identify emerging trends, measure messaging effectiveness, and streamline workflows—freeing our public diplomacy professionals to focus on high-value engagement.

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Regionally, we are focused on the issues that matter most to the American people. In the Western Hemisphere, we are contributing to the U.S. priorities of ending illegal immigration and disrupting transnational criminal and narco-terrorist organizations, as well as promoting commercial diplomacy and American excellence. In Europe, we are defending freedom of expression and supporting civilizational self-confidence. In the Indo-Pacific and in South and Central Asia, we are highlighting U.S. technological leadership, supporting American businesses, and deterring anti-American propaganda and influence operations by foreign actors. In the Middle East and Africa, we are building partnerships that promote peace and economic opportunity. Across all regions, our public diplomacy initiatives will increase understanding of U.S. policies, highlight the benefits of partnership with the United States, and counter coercion from our adversaries. This disciplined, strategic approach ensures that all arms of U.S. public diplomacy and messaging remain a decisive and persuasive instrument of American power—advancing our interests and strengthening America’s position in the world through consistent credibility and alignment with overarching U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Above all, I am committed to being a responsible steward of taxpayer resources. Every dollar we spend must advance our national interests and deliver measurable results. I am grateful for the Committee’s partnership as we work to ensure that America’s voice is heard clearly, credibly, and decisively around the world.

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