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News from the Dean for International & Border Programs

The Challenge to America's International Image: *THE DECLINE IN AMERICA'S REPUTATION: WHY?*

On June 11, 2008, the [U.S.] House Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight issued the first of three reports on America's International Image entitled *THE DECLINE IN AMERICA'S REPUTATION: WHY?* The report was based on a series of 10 hearings held by the subcommittee that focused on international opinion about the United States and its foreign policies. The subcommittee was chaired by Massachusetts Democrat Representative William Delahunt.

The full report is available online (<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/42566.pdf>).

My column this month summarizes the findings of this report, the principal finding, printed on the report's cover, being that "...people in other nations don't "hate us because of our values"—but rather that they are disappointed with us because we aren't always true to those values." Herein the summary:

The report points to a number of polls conducted by the U.S. government and private firms in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, reflecting "a precipitous decline in favorability toward the U.S. and its foreign policy." It notes, "While the United States can't base its foreign policies on opinion polling – either at home or abroad – this consistently negative view of U.S. foreign policy is both a liability and a sign that something has gone seriously awry."

The report asks, "What happened?", and "Why do they hate us?" The report identifies two possible answers: one being that the issue is "rooted in a 'clash of civilizations' between Western and non-Western values; and the second, that the problem arises not from our culture, values, or power, but from our policies. The report concludes that the data presented to the subcommittee support the second view, that "disappointment with U.S. policies, rather than anti-Americanism, is the cause of today's record lows in international approval."

The subcommittee identifies eight main findings about the levels, trends, and causes of international opinion of American policies, values, and people. They are: 1) U.S. approval ratings have fallen to record lows in nearly every region of the world; 2) The policies have driven the decline; 3) The U.S. is perceived as hypocritical; 4) The U.S. is seen as unilateral; 5) U.S. domination remains in people's historical memory; 6) There is a lack of contact with America and Americans; 7) Interaction with the U.S. immigration and visa process is a significant source of frustration; and 8) The U.S. is perceived as waging a war on Islam.

With regard to the issue of contact with America and Americans, the report explains that visitors to the U.S., particularly students, as well as their families and friends, have more positive views about America and Americans than non-visitors by approximately 10 percentage points. It notes that former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes told the Delahunt subcommittee that foreign student programs in the U.S. are the best form of public diplomacy."



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With regard to visas, the report notes that, “Interaction with the U.S. immigration and the visa process is a significant source of frustration with America. Particularly among Muslim applicants, the experience with customs and border officials creates a perception that they are not welcome. This perception spreads across their communities through their ‘horror stories’ about travel to the U.S.” The report outlines several difficult visa cases and describes some of the negative polling data about the U.S. visa process.

This first (of three) report has clear implications for both study abroad and international students at our country’s colleges and universities. In the words of the former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, “...foreign student programs in the U.S. are the best form of public diplomacy.”

Everett Egginton

British Studies Program - July 10 thru August 10 2008



2007 Group Photo

The Office of Study Abroad is working with Midwestern State University to offer an exciting option for NMSU students who are interested in studying in London. The British Studies Program is a four-week summer experience that allows both undergraduate and graduate students a chance to earn 6 hours of credit in one of the courses chosen by the student. Students can pick one of nine courses offered during the program:

- Photography in Great Britain,
- Theatre,
- International Issues in Business,
- Comparative Criminal Justice,
- World War II,
- British Culture and Society,
- Contemporary British Politics, or
- Determinants of Health Disparities.

These courses often include exciting field trips to places like the annual Shakespearean Festival, the House of Parliament, and other points of interest relevant to the course topic. NMSU faculty members Dr. Tom Winfree, Criminal Justice; Dr. Laura Godwin, Theatre Arts; and Dr. Keith Akins, Criminal Justice; help make the program a success by teaching one of the courses offered.

This program continues to gain in popularity with NMSU students; this year there are over 20 participants venturing abroad through this program.



The Office of Study Abroad offers several travel stipends to help defray the costs for this program. We would like to congratulate the winners of the year’s travel stipends: Sarah Shannon, Sarah Vanest, Jessica Kubiak, David Lehleitner, Joel De-Booy, and John Lovelace.

For more information about this study abroad opportunity or to obtain additional information about other study abroad programs, please contact the International and Border Programs Study Abroad Office at stdyabrd@nmsu.edu or visit our website at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~ip/>.



British Studies Program 2007 Group photo

Other Items of Interest

New International Student Orientation

The Office of International and Border Programs will be conducting its orientation program for new International students on August 14, 15 and 18 in the Corbett Center Auditorium. If you have any question and/or concerns, please contact Mary Jaspers at 646-3199.

International Student Highlights



Guillermo Ortiz, NMSU graduate (individual on the left in white shirt) conducting a workshop.

NMSU graduate, Guillermo Ortiz Master's of Science – 2007 Department of Plant and Environmental Science is currently working in his home country of Mexico for CEDAIN (Center for Indian Alternative Development) which is a non-profit organization based in Chihuahua City. Guillermo is stationed in Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico in the heart of the Sierra. Guillermo is responsible for delivering workshops on soil conservation and sustainable agriculture practices to indigenous populations in the Sierra.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

THIS NEWSLETTER IS RELEASED THE BEGINNING OF EACH MONTH. THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF NEWS ITEMS IS THE 25TH OF EACH MONTH. PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS WHICH ARE PLANNED AND/OR ARE SCHEDULED FOR SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE. THIS NEWSLETTER IS INTENDED TO SHARE INFORMATION AND TO INFORM OTHERS ON CAMPUS OF UPCOMING AND PENDING ACTIVITIES, TRAVEL, VISITORS ON CAMPUS, ETC. FOR THIS REASON, ITEMS WHICH ARE SUBMITTED FOR ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE WILL ONLY BE UTILIZED IF THEY HAVE SOME RELEVANCE TO FUTURE ACTIVITIES. PLEASE MAKE SUBMISSIONS TO CIP-ADM@NMSU.EDU. IF YOU WISH TO REVIEW OLD ISSUES OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS ISSUES FOR THE LAST 12 MONTHS CAN BE FOUND ON THIS SITE.

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