

Under Secretary Karen Hughes' Remarks at Press Conference, June 22, 2006

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Karmen Hughes: [starts in the middle of sentence] ...we're gonna have our spokesman up here just in a second. I wanna thank the people in Germany and the organizing committee for doing just a fabulous job. Everyone has told me, what a welcoming environment, and what a just terrific job the people of Germany have done in hosting this World Cup, and I'm thrilled to be here. I'm what is known in America as a Soccer Mum. I have a son who started playing soccer when he was five. He's now 19, and he and his friends still play soccer games informally. They're no longer on formal teams, but he's home from College for the summer and he and his friends are out playing soccer in the afternoons. My job as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy is to foster America's conversation with the world and seek to promote greater dialog and understanding. And I can really think of few better ways to do that than through the common language of soccer. And so when we started thinking about this year's World Cup and how the world's attention will be focused on the World Cup, we started thinking about how we could share this experience, particularly with young people. And as I've met these young people, I had them to my house for pizza and ice cream after one of those matches last week, and as I've met these young people, I don't know how to assess their soccer skills, but I know that we have here some of the future leaders of our world. They are bright, articulate, they love their own countries, they've learned a great deal about America during this experience. And they've experienced each others countries and cultures through this program and now they're having the opportunity to experience Germany and of course the wonderful opportunity to attend a World Cup game. With that I'd like to hear from a couple of the kids. This is Anna, she's from Uzbekistan and this is Abdul from Pakistan, and they're gonna tell a little bit about their experience, if you'd like. Did you have something you wanna say?

Anna: Okay I just want to say that it will be, for all of us it will be unforgettable holidays, it will be the most exciting and impressive holidays that we had in our live. And I just want to say that today we will support the US-team, and we wish you to win. [applause]

Abdul: My name is Abdul from Pakistan and I'm just telling you that it is a great experience for me to being here and I'm supporting US and I hope you are all supporting the US and... [laughter] We all global family, we are here to make the friends and we are here, so I'm very glad here and it's a great opportunity for me to see the World Cup and it's my great dream comes true, and I hope you'll see. [applause]