2004
REPORT

United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

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SEPTEMBER 28, 2004

To the President, Congress, Secretary of State and the American People:

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, authorized pursuant to Public Law 106-113, submits its annual report on U.S. government international communications efforts.

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy is a bipartisan presidentially appointed panel created by Congress in 1948 with responsibility for assessing public diplomacy policies and programs of the U.S. State Department, American missions abroad and other agencies. Advisory Commission responsibilities extend to international exchanges, U.S. government international information programs, U.S. government international broadcasting and publicly funded nongovernmental organizations.

Our 2004 report examines recommendations made by the Commission in recent years and assesses implementation of those recommendations by the relevant agencies. We believe communications with foreign populations is a crucial component of our foreign policy in these critical times. This document includes leadership models and suggestions on private initiatives that promote dialogue and could have a cumulative long-term effect on foreign attitudes and understanding directed at the United States.

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Introduction

In governments throughout the world, public opinion greatly influences the direction of policy. Consequently, in the development of domestic policy, early consideration is given to how the public will react. While the analysis of potential public response may not alter the essence of the policy, at a minimum it reflects the context in which the policy is explained and even the words used in the explanation. As new public diplomacy initiatives are created, it is essential that this paradigm be kept in mind. Extraordinary changes in world communication have made international public opinion a key aspect to achieving American foreign policy objectives. Most leaders, even in nondemocratic societies, are wary of getting too far away from the will of their people.

It is still necessary to communicate with opinion leaders — journalists, academics, clerics, government officials and business leaders — of global societies. However, inexpensive access to satellite television and the Internet have informed and thus empowered broad publics, not just elites, in countries throughout the world, including nations where democracy has yet to fully emerge. Foreign political leaders listen carefully to their citizens on the international issues that concern American national security. Cooperation with the United States in the war on terrorism, in halting trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, in calming ethnic and religious rivalry, and in other destabilizing situations — as well as the ability of American citizens to safely and effectively conduct commerce everywhere in the world — now depends on international public support.

America cannot determine its foreign policy on the basis of what pleases foreign publics. But when policy is adopted, the government should carefully consider the

proper means for communicating it to populations abroad. Specifically, deliberation needs to be given to the context in which the policy is announced and the words used to describe it. The global communications revolution necessitates a cohesive strategy for America's international broadcasting, educational and cultural endeavors, and public affairs initiatives to directly support the nation's foreign policy.

The Department of State and the United States Information Agency were consolidated with the promise to facilitate the merger of policy-making and public diplomacy. After the recommendations of numerous organizations and task forces, and presidential directives of two administrations, the development of foreign policy is now beginning to include public diplomacy analysis and input in national security organizations.

In its 56th year of examining public diplomacy, the Commission has recently observed greater consideration given to international communications in all areas of the foreign policy community, yet many challenges remain to impart a strategic ethic in this realm. In the pages that follow, the Commission intends to note this recent progress, while bringing attention to areas of public diplomacy that still need significant attention.

This report is divided into three main topics areas: short-term communication, long-term communication and broadcasting. Each area was led by a bipartisan working group. Short-term communication primarily addresses the public affairs aspects of public diplomacy. Long-term communication examines the relationship-building activities of public diplomacy that take years to develop, such as cultural and educational initiatives. Finally, the broadcasting section examines the challenges and accomplishments of all U.S. government–funded international broadcasting. The Commission believes all areas are essential for America to successfully communicate with the world.

America cannot determine its foreign policy on the basis of what pleases foreign publics. But when policy is adopted, the government should carefully consider the proper means for communicating it to populations abroad.

The Advisory Commission revisited past reports in its 2004 analysis of public diplomacy. The list below is a guide to the reports cited.

RECOMMENDATION CITATIONS

1997 — Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy Report issued on a visit to Jerusalem and Damascus in October 1997 by Harold C. Pachios.

2002 — Annual report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, chaired by Harold C. Pachios. *Building America's Public Diplomacy Through a Reformed Structure and Additional Resources.* September 2002.

2003a — Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, chaired by Barbara M. Barrett, *The New Diplomacy: Utilizing Innovative Communication Concepts That Recognize Resource Constraints.* July 2003.

2003b — Report of the Advisory Group on the Arab and Muslim World (a subcommittee of the Advisory Commission), chaired by Edward P. Djerejian. *Changing Minds Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World.* October 1, 2003.

2004 — Letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee From the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, chaired by Barbara M. Barrett. February 19, 2004.

SHORT-TERM COMMUNICATION

Addressing the public affairs aspects of public diplomacy

Short-Term Communication

MESSAGE DISSEMINATION

Issue

As the public face of traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy must articulate U.S. policies and perspectives to the world. The news management aspect of public diplomacy needs to ensure strong and rapid communication of these policies. Yet several aspects of message dissemination need improvement, and as a result, the U.S. government's voice is sometimes missing from local and international media.

Daily communications are currently lacking in:

- **Round-the-clock dissemination:** In a 24-hour news cycle, the United States needs a 24-hour capability. Without a quick response to breaking news, events can be misinterpreted and public attitudes set before the U.S. government is able to respond effectively. The State Department maintains staff to monitor media worldwide around the clock, but no capabilities exist for responding to crises as they arise.
- **Messengers:** The U.S. government often lacks consistent and relevant spokespeople on international media outlets. Ambassadors are fearful of making errors or projecting a view inconsistent with State Department policy, and caution is rewarded more frequently than boldness. Other embassy staff members are underutilized as representatives of the United States partially as a result of increased embassy security.
- **Media relations:** Foreign journalists can become excluded from regular media outreach efforts. Problems with journalist visas, lack of access to top officials and other factors give them the impression that the U.S. government is more interested in forming contacts with domestic media sources. Reaching out to foreign media representatives is key to reaching audiences overseas.
- **Two-way communication:** Understanding audiences and their current views through dialogue and measurement is essential to creating effective messages. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the U.S. government spends only a tiny fraction of what the private sector does on public opinion polling: $5 million compared to $6 billion.

Recent Action

As the senior ranking U.S. officials, ambassadors serve as the primary messengers for policy goals in their host country. Yet, many are still uncomfortable serving as advocates in the media and in front of mass audiences. New ambassadors receive two days of media skills training, but this training is not required and not all attend. The Commission recommends that more U.S. government staff employed abroad should be utilized as public diplomacy messengers. Ambassadors and public affairs staff members should spend at least 25 percent of their time communicating with mass audiences, while other members of the embassy staff at all levels should be encouraged to reach out to host country populations.

Have more U.S. government staff employed abroad serve as messengers of public diplomacy.

The Media Outreach Center at the U.S. Embassy in London was created to communicate with Arab press based in Europe. The group employs two staff members and develops relationships with local media, conducts briefings and other events, facilitates media access to materials and government officials, monitors Arab and Muslim public opinion and places a spokesperson fluent in Arabic to communicate with Arabic-language media. The Commission recommends that the London center be expanded to a network of 24-hour message dissemination and monitoring centers, modeled on the Coalition Information Centers created during the war in Afghanistan. By placing centers, headed by a White House–appointed director, in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, the government could effectively monitor and respond to world media cycles in eight-hour shifts.

Expand the London Media Outreach Center's ability to communicate with Arab press by creating a network of 24-hour message dissemination and monitoring centers.

To demonstrate the efficacy of a more robust public diplomacy program and structure, the Commission recommends selecting a test region to receive increased funding for a range of public diplomacy programs. This would include academic and educational exchanges, public affairs programming, broadcasting initiatives and standard communication practices, all structured around one cohesive strategy and funded through supplemental funding from Congress. Using standard polling procedures, public perceptions would be measured at regular intervals and at the beginning and end of the initiative. If the strategy proved effective and showed that perceptions moved in a positive trajectory, the approach could be replicated in other areas and eventually expanded globally.

Model a public diplomacy strategy in a test region through concentrated programs, programming, exchanges and initiatives; evaluate the success by measuring public perception.

Short-Term Communication

COORDINATION

Issue

Since international public opinion is pivotal to achieving and sustaining American foreign policy objectives, skilled public relations professionals who have access to and serve the president and other key administration officials need to be engaged in unveiling new policies. Disparate missions and strategies among government agencies engaged in public diplomacy have resulted in inefficiencies in public diplomacy efforts.

Specifically, interagency coordination is needed in:

- **Structure:** Along with the White House and the Department of State, nearly all government agencies engage in some public diplomacy efforts. While a few structures link federal officials, coordination often does not extend to embassy practitioners, who are communicating U.S. policy on a daily basis.
- **Strategy:** The Department of State lacks the authority to implement a strategy for integrating the various agencies engaged in public diplomacy activities and the ability to utilize them to achieve common objectives. Effective public diplomacy requires an interagency strategic communications plan that clearly identifies messages, priorities and target audiences.
- **Messages:** The lack of a coordinated structure and strategy can result in conflicting messages. Thus, at the least, ambassadors, public affairs officers and other State Department communicators miss the magnifying effect that coordinated messages could have on expressing ideas to overseas publics. Worse, a possible negative effect of lack of coordination could be conflicting messages that reveal inconsistencies and cost us credibility.

Past Recommendations

- A new operating process and architecture are required for the transformation of public diplomacy. Specific structural changes relating to the organization of the White House, the National Security Council interagency process, U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID], the Defense Department and the Department of State are urgently recommended.[1]
- Fully implement the White House Office of Global Communications.[2]
- The U.S. Agency for International Development and the Defense Department, both of which engage in activities with a significant public diplomacy dimension, must be more closely tied to the reinforced strategic direction and coordination that we propose.[3]

Recent Action

Several recent initiatives better coordinate public diplomacy efforts. The Office of Global Communications (OGC) was established in January 2003 within the White House to coordinate strategic daily messages for distribution abroad. The OGC works with several hundred foreign journalists in Washington, providing them with access to White House events and briefings as well as interviews with the president and other top officials. In addition, this office serves as a catalyst for daily consultation among communication strategists for relevant agencies, particularly for special events like the Olympics or international crises.

The Strategic Communication Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) was established in September 2002 and is co-chaired by the National Security Council and the State Department. It ensures that all agencies work together to develop and disseminate America's messages across the globe. The PCC and the OGC work together on strategic communications activities such as outreach to the Muslim world. In an effort to fully harness the power of this PCC, it should meet regularly with the members of the administration and then relay relevant information to the practitioners of public diplomacy.

Created in December 2002, the interagency Strategic Communications Fusion Team operates under the authority of the PCC to improve interagency coordination and enhance collaboration in strategic communication. The fusion team meets weekly to share resources and information among public diplomacy practitioners from the State Department, USAID, the Department of Defense and other agencies.

To unify these efforts, the State Department has recently created an office of Policy, Planning and Resources (PPR). The office will provide long-term strategic planning and measurement functions for public affairs and public diplomacy programs. By giving the undersecretary better control of public diplomacy cotr inarion r:e

Short-Term Communication

THIRD-PARTY CREDIBILITY

Issue

In public diplomacy, it is important to establish legitimacy and credibility through the use of third-party validators. These outside sources provide an alternative means to communicate U.S. foreign policy with international audiences and bolster the efforts of American officials. Yet such sources are rarely incorporated into public diplomacy efforts since U.S. embassies lack the means to contact American expatriates and sympathetic prominent citizens of other nations.

The most valuable untapped sources are:

- **American expatriates:** Americans living abroad are in touch with local populations, and their interactions can have tremendous impact. Private American citizens can supplement embassy efforts and serve as unofficial spokespersons.
- **Prominent international citizens:** Diplomats have often worked with respected nationals to develop bonds between the United States and other countries. In today's 24-hour media environment, it is necessary to expand the number of such contacts and provide them with communication tools such as messages and talking points.

Past Recommendations

- The U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program should be substantially expanded.[4]
- The Commission recommends that Congress authorize funding for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to foster and track relationships with exchange participants who are funded by the U.S. government.[5]

Recent Action

The State Department has recently launched an "offered speakers program" to identify and proactively promote interesting people and ideas to share with foreign audiences. The pilot program was launched in Europe and has expanded to the Arab and Muslim world. The Department of State also directed staff to work more closely with think tanks, universities and individual experts to identify ideas and trends that engage youth audiences.

Still lacking from State Department programs are the means and tools for contacting and using third-party resources. The Commission recommends that embassies maintain a network of individuals interested in communicating positive concepts on behalf of the United States. The embassy can then provide these contacts with relationship-building activities, such as policy briefings and embassy-sponsored lectures, which help further the foreign policy agenda of the United States.

Willing speakers also need to be provided with talking points and other advocacy tools in order to be effective. The Bureau of International Information Programs' (IIP) news stories and transcripts are excellent but are not enough to support entrepreneurial individuals who are interested in advocating U.S. policies and perspectives. The Commission recommends that IIP make available electronic advocacy products.

Require embassies to maintain networks of individuals interested in communicating positive concepts on behalf of the United States.

Provide electronic products, through the Bureau of International Information Programs, to support the efforts of individuals interested in advocating U.S. policies and perspectives.

[4] 2003b
[5] 2004

Short-Term Communication

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Issue

Military, embassy and other U.S. government personnel in the field face cross-cultural communication challenges every day. It takes only one misplaced image, word or phrase to confuse or cause offense, and many more to repair the damage. Language choice is important for all levels of personnel. These details are immensely important in effective international communication.

Specific challenges in this area are:

- **Language instruction:** According to the September 2003 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, "U.S. Public Diplomacy," "21 percent of the 332 Foreign Service officers filling 'language-designated' public diplomacy positions overseas did not meet the foreign language speaking requirements of their positions."[6] Without adequate knowledge of the local language, public affairs officers cannot build relationships with their designated publics.
- **Cross-cultural training:** The current level of cross-cultural training that most government personnel and contractors receive is inadequate. While Foreign Service officers receive as much as six months of training, preposting protocol briefings for other personnel are less extensive and tend to focus on behaviors to avoid. Instructional briefings for military personnel and government contractors often do not address the values and beliefs behind behaviors, background that is essential for informed, appropriate interaction in a full range of situations.
- **Cross-cultural messaging:** The best public diplomacy practitioners ensure that messages reflect the cultural sensitivities of audiences. However, policy is often communicated to appeal to the American public, emphasizing American values and failing to consider how the values and history of others might impact perceptions.

Past Recommendations

- Additional professional staff for public diplomacy dedicated to issues of the Arab and Muslim world is urgently needed. The professional level of fluency in the local languages and the level of knowledge about Arab and Muslim societies must be dramatically enhanced.[7]
- In addition, we recommend that substantially more public diplomacy resources be set aside for translation of Internet-linked information and news on U.S. government Web sites in Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Bahasa Indonesia and other strategically important languages.[8]

Recent Action

The State Department has implemented several measures to ensure Foreign Service officer language proficiency since 2001. Junior officers now receive 25 to 33 percent more training in "hard" and "superhard" languages. The Diplomatic Readiness Initiative offers Foreign Service officers longer language training, language incentive programs and a new "language continuum" plan to optimize work-force planning decisions regarding language use and development. The Department of State is also recruiting new Foreign Service officers who have pre-existing language skills. The Commission commends the language and messaging efforts undertaken and urges aggressive implementation of the language continuum strategy and recruitment efforts in the Department of State. The Commission believes further cross-cultural and language training for other government personnel and contractors stationed abroad is merited.

Implement the language continuum strategy aggressively to help Foreign Service officers achieve language proficiency, and provide cross-cultural and language training for other government personnel and contractors abroad.

Officials have made some adjustments in their terminology. When describing terrorists, officials formerly used words chosen by the terrorists themselves, like *jihad* and *mujahadeen.* These implied martyrdom, holy war or other positive connotations. Terrorists are aware of the importance of semantics and history in communicating ideas. More recently, officials have employed terms with negative connotations, like *evildoers,* that accurately translate into Arabic and other languages. The Commission supports the administration's efforts to negate certain terrorist messages and convey ideas through the skillful use of semantics.

Support the administration's efforts to negate certain terrorist messages and convey ideas through the skillful use of semantics.

[6] p. 27
[7] 2003b
[8] 2003b

LONG-TERM COMMUNICATION

Examining the relationship-building activities of public diplomacy

Long-Term Communication

BORDER SECURITY

Past Recommendations

- Congress should fund an evaluation of current visa procedures and communications initiatives to promote visa applications and enhance understanding of the process.[10]
- Congress should fund the establishment of a fast-track visa procedure to accommodate travelers who meet national security criteria.[11]

Issue

As the U.S. government works to build ties with international audiences, there is an increased perception that U.S. borders are no longer open to friendly business people, students, tourists or family members. Private-sector travel to the United States by international visitors represents a vital part of American interactions with the world. These interactions depend upon the U.S. government processing visas quickly while consistently communicating this capability. Despite new promotion initiatives, applications for visas are still down by as much as 40 percent since 2001. Foreign student intake, which had been increasing at more than 10 percent per year for over a decade, demonstrated less than a 1 percent growth from 2002 to 2003. The number of students from the Middle East was down 10 percent for the same period.[9] America's historical influence with international business leaders, students and other visitors will be lost unless the United States balances its visa policies with security concerns.

More specifically, the two major challenges in this area are:

- **Effectively communicating visa policies to mass audiences:** The State Department has authority over visa issuance, but the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Commerce and Transportation have roles in border security and international travel. The different messages and systems that have been communicated by these departments have resulted in mass confusion among international audiences and the media.
- **Eliminating redundant security measures and excessive costs:** Numerous new databases and security checks are in place to process visa applicants. Some of these systems will soon be redundant. Statutorily, visa applicants must pay for these increased and surplus measures. Fees for visas have increased from $20 to $45 in 1998, from $45 to $65 in 2002 and from $65 to $100 in November 2002. In addition, student visa recipients soon will be required to pay an additional $100 to enroll in the database that tracks them.

Recent Action

The government has improved its visa clearance procedures by digitizing interagency security checks and speeding up the clearance process. A Web site operated by the Department of State, www.unitedstatesvisas.gov, provides one-stop shopping for visa information. In addition, an interagency task force has been created to communicate visa policies to domestic and international audiences. While overall visa and visit numbers are down from 2001, there were some increases from 2003 to 2004 — visa applications are up by 12 percent, issuances by 16 percent and international visitors by 28 percent.[12] However, misperceptions remain. The United States is faced with stiff competition from other countries willing to receive the many international citizens desiring travel to the United States. The United Kingdom, Australia and others have government or private-sector campaigns to illustrate the ease of their visa processes. If the United States wishes to maintain its competitive advantage, the private sector or the government must fund a significant marketing campaign to explain visa processes and recruit visitors.

The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs is required by statute to charge application fees that cover the cost of issuing visas. As security measures and technology increase, this will require that American visas be priced significantly above visas for other nations. This will eliminate a competitive advantage of the United States. Congress should act to ensure that international citizens not bear the entire cost of new security measures dedicated to visa processes.

Through the US-VISIT system, which requires international visitors to submit biometric data upon applying for a visa and at ports of entry, the United States will be able to maintain security while efficiently allowing visitors to enter and leave the country. When US-VISIT becomes completely functional, redundant and duplicative checks that are based primarily on ethnic origin and gender should be phased out. In addition, Congress should allow Visa Waiver Program countries sufficient time to incorporate biometric identifiers within their passports.

- Fund a significant marketing campaign, either through the private sector or the government, to explain visa processes and recruit visitors — and help the United States maintain its competitive advantage.

- Encourage Congress to ensure that international citizens not bear the entire costs of new security measures dedicated to visa processes.

- Phase out redundant and duplicative checks based primarily on ethnic origin and gender, once US-VISIT is completely functional, and encourage Congress to allow Visa Waiver Program countries sufficient time to incorporate biometric identifiers in their passports.

[9] http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=36523
[10] 2004
[11] 2004
[12] "April Shows Double-Digit Growth for International Visitor Levels." Department of Commerce Press Releases. June 21, 2004

Long-Term Communication

EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Issue

Exposure to American culture and values through personal relationships and understanding is key to the success of long-term public diplomacy efforts. U.S. cultural, education and professional exchanges that build mutual understanding occur through the Fulbright, the International Visitor (IV), the Humphrey Fellowship and the Citizen Exchange programs, among others. Many world leaders, including UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, are alumni of these programs. Once they return to their home countries, alumni often foster understanding of American culture. Equally important is providing opportunities for Americans to gain exposure to another culture while serving as "citizen diplomats" overseas.

These long-term investments in public diplomacy are currently facing two main challenges:

- **Funding decrease in real terms:** Despite the need for additional resources in cultural exchanges, program funding and thus participation have remained stagnant. Funding for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA's) educational and cultural exchange programs went from $242 million in 1993 to $245 million in 2003, a contraction of funding in real terms. Similarly, the number of Fulbright scholars decreased from 6,457 in 1994 to 6,302 in 2003. The 9/11 Commission report noted the importance of strengthening these programs, stating, "The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope."[13]
- **Ineffectual alumni network:** While exchanges provide dramatic initial impact on participants, the momentum of these exchanges wanes when a participant returns home and fails to maintain connections. There are limited databases available in overseas posts, and Fulbright alumni associations often are not fully functional. Similarly, minimal structures exist to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Past Recommendations

- Given the drastic reduction in AID scholarships awarded to students in the [Middle East] region, from 20,000 in 1980 to 900 currently, there should be a significant increase in funding for scholarships across the board.[14]
- The Commission recommends that Congress authorize funding for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to foster and track relationships with exchange participants who are funded by the U.S. government.[15]

Recent Action

This year, ECA launched the Fulbright Legacy of Leadership project to engage Fulbright alumni who are leaders in their fields and societies. The primary component of the project is development of a directory of 1,500 prominent alumni worldwide. ECA created an Office of Alumni Affairs with a full-time staff of three and commitments of $390,000 from the regional bureaus for ECA-directed alumni activities abroad. In addition, ECA plans to create a comprehensive, searchable database. The Commission recommends that the State Department allocate the resources necessary to develop a comprehensive alumni database from the many disparate and incongruent sources.

Allocate the resources necessary to develop a comprehensive exchange alumni database.

ECA developed three new types of fellowships that offer scholars short-term exchange opportunities and allow them to extend their Fulbright experiences. These include New Century Scholars for supporting collaborative research and discussion of a single subject with a focus on issues of major global concern; Senior Specialists for American experts who serve overseas as consultants and workshop leaders; and Alumni Initiative Awards for returned scholars to support linkages between their home and overseas host institutions.

On March 9 of this year, Senators Russell Feingold and Chuck Hagel introduced SR 313, the "People-to-People Engagement in World Affairs Resolution," which called on Secretary Powell to create an online database that Americans can use to find opportunities to participate in an exchange or study or volunteer abroad, work with an immigrant or refugee group, host a foreign student or professional, participate in a sister-city program or learn a foreign language.

IV programs have been expanded, and new cost-effective initiatives have been developed with the cooperation of American posts in a given region. For example, regional encounters for IV participants have been organized that provide a forum for exchange among American and other regional country experts, while reducing the cost of transportation. The Commission recommends that the Department of State continue to encourage the resourcefulness of posts by requiring the submission of competitive proposals for exchange programs.

Encourage the resourcefulness of posts in offering exchange programs by requiring the submission of competitive proposals for such programs.

[13] p. 377
[14] 2003b
[15] 2004

Long-Term Communication

CENTERS, CORNERS, VIRTUAL CONSULATES AND LIBRARIES

Past Recommendations

- A rapid expansion of the scope of the American Corners programs for local institutions should be undertaken, especially given the decreased access to American facilities.[16]
- The Department of State must create a comprehensive strategy, which encompasses Virtual Presence Posts, American Corners and American Presence Posts, tailored to accomplish public diplomacy needs.[17]

Issue

To effectively tell America's story to the world, the United States needs to interact with international citizens in physical environments that can provide exposure to American values and culture. In the past, the United States Information Agency sponsored American Libraries and Centers. Many key international decision makers cite these gathering places as a formative part of their lives. Today, these goals are pursued through five types of information centers: American Corners, information centers staffed and maintained by host country citizens; Virtual Presence Posts, interactive Web sites that could perform some functions of a physical consulate; Information Resource Centers, open only by appointment; American Presence Posts, where a single American Foreign Service officer in an important region furthers commercial and public diplomacy goals; and a few remaining American Libraries. A comprehensive strategy, which includes all these communication techniques, can reach out to vast audiences.

However, these concepts that utilize new media and overcome resource constraints are facing two key challenges:

- **Maintaining security:** Physical public diplomacy outposts staffed and owned by the United States present prime targets for terrorists throughout the globe. The Pallazzo Corpi, a former American Consulate and Library in Istanbul, Turkey, that is located in the city center, was targeted at least six times by terrorists until it closed last year.
- **Reaching mass audiences:** Due to the lack of widely available Internet access for target populations and limited locations of physical American Corners, Centers and Presence Posts, it is often difficult to reach extremely large audiences. These facilities are currently accessible to any who choose to visit them; however, the physical locations on college campuses and host-government buildings reach primarily academic and government audiences.

Recent Action

Over the past year, the Department of State has significantly ramped up its investment in American Corners and Virtual Presence Posts. There are now 143 American Corners in Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and plans to open another 130 in 2004. The Commission finds this development encouraging. In addition, the Department of State has moved to create a Virtual Presence Post template for cities with major populations that do not have physical American missions. However, Virtual Presence Posts have not yet been linked in a comprehensive strategy with American Corners. The Commission recommends that each American Corner with Internet access provide a Virtual Consulate Web site as a start-up page on all workstations.

Encourage each American Corner with Internet access to provide a Virtual Consulate Web site as a start-up page on all workstations.

American Centers or Libraries still exist in a few places, but many of these are slated for closure. In Mexico City and Casablanca, the Commission observed that these centers have had tremendous success through hosting English language programs, American films and Internet access. By reaching out to non-elite youth populations, these centers have been transformed from mere libraries into truly modern-day "American dialogue centers." The Commission believes that American Centers/Libraries provide great public diplomacy value. Where security constraints permit their existence, the Commission recommends that funding continue for the remaining American Libraries/Centers.

Fund American Centers/Libraries wherever security constraints permit their existence, in order to continue benefiting from the great public diplomacy value they provide.

The American Presence Post concept, which utilizes a few Foreign Service officers to further commercial or public diplomacy interests, has not been expanded significantly. This concept could be particularly useful in mass media markets that lack on-the-record American spokespersons. The Department of State is statutorily required to receive congressional approval to create each one of these posts. To create the agility necessary to expand this concept, the Commission recommends that Congress provide the secretary of state the authority to create these posts by notifying the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Encourage Congress to give the secretary of state the authority to create American Presence Posts, and thereby expand this concept, by notifying the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

[16] 2003b
[17] 2003a

Long-Term Communication

USAID AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Issue

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programs foster economic growth and development, and strengthen civic and governmental institutions in developing countries. USAID activities make a positive contribution to U.S. public diplomacy when they are communicated to host populations. The significant funds allocated to development — fiscal year (FY) 2004 USAID appropriation was $12.6 billion, FY 2003 was $10.6 billion — also reap public diplomacy benefits when projects are publicized to host-country audiences.

Generally, USAID funds should be used in a manner respectful of a country's priorities, requests and policies. Although it is not a program of USAID, the Peace Corps is a good example of how U.S. efforts can greatly contribute to public diplomacy. By responding to countries' requests, and by sharing knowledge, talent and a way of life, Peace Corps volunteers communicate to the world genuine American interest in the well-being of people around the world.

A major challenge facing USAID in terms of public diplomacy is:

- **Awareness:** Ensuring that aid projects are communicated as gifts of the American people to audiences overseas.

Past Recommendations

- The U.S. Agency for International Development …that engages in activities with a significant public diplomacy dimension must be more closely tied to a reinforced strategic direction and coordination.[18]
- Lift restrictions that prohibit USAID from utilizing its funds to disseminate information about its activities.[19]

Recent Action

USAID's active leadership is encouraging better coordination in the field between embassy public affairs staff and USAID mission directors. Through USAID's hiring of communication professionals, training of staff overseas and direct coordination in country, the Commission sees important progress for policy advocacy and information outreach.

In April 2004, USAID created the position of director of public diplomacy for Middle Eastern and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Affairs within the Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs. The Commission believes it is beneficial to follow this practice for other areas of the globe.

Create, for multiple areas of the globe, director of public diplomacy positions in the Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs, as has been done for the Middle East.

In 2003, the Department of State and USAID created a Public Diplomacy Policy Group under the new State-USAID Joint Policy Council. This council ensures that U.S. foreign assistance is fully in line with foreign policy and that recipients are aware the assistance is a gift of the American people. The agency is also in the process of changing its marking policy to ensure that all USAID programs, projects and activities are clearly identified as "funded by the American people." This standard graphic identity will be used consistently on everything from project plaques to food bags and from event banners to publications.

Continue to enhance efforts to publicize the substantial amount of financial aid that the American people contribute abroad.

To better facilitate public diplomacy programs with USAID investment, the agency should consider host-country priorities in its decision making. When disagreements occur in priorities, well-informed reasons should be presented to the host country to avoid the impression that the U.S. government is not responsive and that America is not listening. USAID cannot solve the antagonistic sentiment prevalent toward U.S. foreign policy; however, actively presenting the human face of project results to foreign audiences, decision makers, journalists and beneficiaries demonstrates the benevolence of American efforts. The Commission recommends that the Department of State continue to coordinate with USAID to better publicize the contributions America makes to foreign societies.

Continue to coordinate with USAID to better publicize the numerous contributions America makes to foreign societies.

[18] 2003b (paraphrased)
[19] 2003b

Long-Term Communication

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Issue

English language programs communicate American values and culture, build security through understanding and provide international audiences with increased opportunities in the global economy. The State Department's Office of English Language Programs (OELP) sponsors two programs that send graduate students and academics abroad to teach English or train English teachers: the English Language Fellows for long-term stays and the English Teaching Specialists for short-term stays. OELP also maintains electronic journals and print resources that aid teaching efforts.

The two major challenges to English language programs are:

- **Budget:** Regional English Language Officers (RELO) are restricted to a budget of about $12,500 with additional funding for specific programs and travel costs. Each post may contribute additional funding to English language programming, but in reality, few do.
- **Broadening focus:** In keeping with the greater public diplomacy needs in the Middle East and Muslim world, young audiences are the primary focus of recent efforts, because they are the leaders of the future. However, this focus should not come at the expense of other important regions such as Africa and Latin America.

Past Recommendations

- Programs in support of English language training, a critical instrument of outreach, education and job opportunity, must be expanded and supported by increased funding and human resources.[20]
- Increases in … the number of Regional English Language Officers and the size of their budgets. Larger program funds for Regional English Language Officers, managed by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, as well as more backup staff, would give the effort more clout and flexibility.[21]
- Increases in … the English Language Specialist program, which sends approximately 90 U.S. professors abroad for two- to six-week visits each year.[22]
- Increases in … the English Language Fellows program, which places approximately 100 American teachers in local host institutions each year on 10-month grants to teach, train teachers and develop curricula.[23]
- Increases in … distribution of the English Teaching Forum magazine (currently 65,000 copies of each issue).[24]

Recent Action

The OELP budget increased from $3,234,000 in FY 2003 to $6,653,000 for FY 2004, an increase of $3,419,000. While helpful, this increase does not reflect the strategic importance of English language programs to U.S. public diplomacy.

Recently, OELP has instituted two new programs to increase knowledge of the English language around the world. One such program, Access provides scholarships for qualified youth to study English after school or on the weekends for a two-year period. E-Teacher is an online distance education program designed to train local English language teachers around the world. The Commission believes that the State Department should engage the private sector to bolster these programs.

Seek the support of the private sector to bolster programs designed to increase knowledge of the English language around the world.

While some cooperation exists at individual U.S. missions, OELP should attempt to strengthen official coordination between its English language services, the Bureau of International Information Programs and the Voice of America (VOA). Collaboration in this manner would likely result in more effective utilization of government resources and in greater impact for English language programs. The Commission believes it beneficial for the State Department to continue its efforts to reach English teachers through training programs and exchanges, as these programs have a multiplier effect.

Continue efforts to reach English teachers through official training programs and exchanges, for better use of government resources and greater results from the programs.

[20] 2003b
[21] 2003b
[22] 2003b
[23] 2003b
[24] 2003b

Long-Term Communication

PRIVATE SECTOR

Past Recommendations

- Involve the private sector.[25]
- An independent Corporation for Public Diplomacy should be created to facilitate funding for private and nonprofit broadcasting and Internet applications.[26]

Issue

The U.S. government is not the only sector currently facing global challenges in public diplomacy. Private organizations face similar problems as they try to market their goods and services overseas. Although they have similar interests at stake, few links between the public and private sectors exist. The two sectors need to work together to face the significant challenges ahead. In many cases, the private sector is ready and willing to participate, but the State Department has not yet taken an active involvement in forging such relationships.

For example:

- **Private funding is dependent on U.S. government funding.** When U.S. government agencies reduce their funding, partner nations and private organizations reduce their funding reciprocally. The ability to generate private-sector support is commensurate with the level of resources the State Department contributes.
- **Charitable and other works performed in a country outside U.S. government efforts often go unheralded.** The generosity of the American public in the areas of medicine and education, multinational corporations and American nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are sometimes not widely recognized.

Recent Action

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has recently leveraged substantial support for exchanges through partnerships with American state and local governments, higher education, business, NGOs, foundations, U.S. allies and other U.S. government agencies. Gross support for ECA's exchange programs totals over $500 million annually, of which more than 35 percent comes from non-U.S. government sources. ECA also hosts the Culture Connect program, which sends "cultural ambassadors" — prominent artists and intellectuals — abroad to work with youth audiences. Among the list of current "ambassadors" are Yo-Yo Ma, Denyce Graves, Wynton Marsalis, Frank McCourt, Tracy McGrady and Doris Roberts. Individual posts should be encouraged to explore public-private partnerships on a local level.

Encourage individual posts to explore public-private partnerships on a local level.

During the recent visit of the Iraqi National Symphony through the new Culture Connect program, a number of private groups were interested in raising funds and donating equipment to the group. The symphony was unable to take advantage of this because of their status as U.S. government guests. The Commission recommends that a mechanism be created that allows visitors to take advantage of private-sector generosity while on visitor exchanges.

Create a means of allowing visitors to overcome restrictions and take advantage of private-sector generosity while on visitor exchanges.

The Cultural Affairs budget is $3 million for 2004. To use such a small budget effectively, the Commission recommends that the State Department use this funding as seed money to initiate projects that ultimately will be self-sustaining. This will magnify the Department of State's branding and marketing potential for new programs.

Use the small Cultural Affairs budget as seed money to initiate projects that ultimately will be self-sustaining.

Business for Diplomatic Action (BDA), an association of business leaders attempting to address the role of business in problems of worldwide anti-Americanism, was launched earlier this year. The BDA board comprises communications experts with international experience; the organization's 150 members come from marketing, advertising, client companies and academic institutions. Projects under way include a public diplomacy Web portal for businesses and a reality television show called "The Exchange" that follows three foreign interns in the United States and three American interns abroad.

[25] 2002
[26] 2003b

Developed in 2001, America Abroad Media (AAM) is a private, nonprofit organization that produces programming distributed in the United States and worldwide to facilitate international dialogue and exchange. Current programs include "America Abroad," an international public affairs show; "YouthSPAN," a global videoconferencing project connecting American students with students in Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Korea and Turkey; and "YouthSPAN" Television, a student discussion show presented to television audiences here and abroad. AAM's first television program was placed with international media organizations, including the Broadcasting Board of Governors' Alhurra. The Commission commends these private-sector efforts and notes that they are excellent examples of mutually beneficial public-private partnerships in public diplomacy that should continue to be fostered.

Continue to foster the kinds of Internet and media programming developed by the private sector that exemplify mutually beneficial public-private partnerships in public diplomacy.

BROADCASTING

Examining the challenges and accomplishments of U.S. government-funded international broadcasting

Broadcasting

WAR ON TERROR

Issue

At a time when terrorism is a worldwide threat, addressing anti-American sentiment abroad and engaging in the "war of ideas" are necessary supplements to traditional security measures. Public diplomacy, through broadcasting and other tools, is critical to fostering support for U.S. policies and discrediting intolerance. Bringing accurate and objective news and information to audiences at the center of the war on terrorism — the Middle East — is vital to counter myths about the United States and provide alternatives to extremism in the region.

The United States held no effective presence in Middle Eastern media until recently. Broadcasting in the region was largely unprofitable for the private sector and undervalued by government agencies. Thus media organizations with attitudes unfavorable to U.S. policies have largely dominated the public sphere in countries in which such sentiments are already widespread.

More specifically, the challenges currently facing broadcasting in the war on terror are:

- **Reaching larger audiences:** For the most part, elite audiences in the Middle East are already consuming U.S. broadcasting; they often speak English and watch CNN and other mainstream American channels. To increase the chances of reaching mass audiences, international broadcasting needs to reach wider audiences, particularly through local language services. A GAO report from April of this year identified increasing audience size as one of the main challenges facing the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).[27]
- **Demonstrating impact:** To show progress in the war on terror, expanding audiences alone is not enough. International broadcasting must also show measurable impact, whether through viewer statistics, attitude surveys or more anecdotal evidence such as adoption of U.S. media practices by local broadcasters.

Past Recommendations

- A careful independent review of the merits of the Middle East Television Network initiative should be undertaken.[28]
- A new culture of measurement must be established within all public diplomacy structures.[29]

Recent Action

Radio Sawa was launched in March of 2002 and provides audiences with a mix of music, news and information. Recent surveys have shown that the percentages of adults (age 15 and older) listening to Sawa on a weekly basis are 73 percent in Morocco, 42 percent in Kuwait, 35 percent in UAE, 27 percent in Jordan, 11 percent in Egypt and 41 percent in Qatar.[30]

The newest BBG initiative in the Middle East, Alhurra, was launched in February 2004 amid heavy criticism that the channel would serve only as a U.S. government propaganda channel. Yet despite accusations that American broadcasting in the region was unlikely to succeed, initial surveys regarding the channel are promising. A survey conducted by Ipsos-Stat found that 53 percent of viewers believe that Alhurra's news is "very or somewhat reliable."[31] Viewer statistics were also encouraging. The seven-country survey conducted in April showed that 29 percent of adults had tuned in to Alhurra in the last week. Encouraging e-mails from the public also demonstrate the station's initial impact with statements such as, "You are much needed to balance biased news controlled by those full of hatred to western world," and "This is the first step to fight the 'hate culture' that feeds terrorism."[32]

The 9/11 Commission report released in July 2004 noted international broadcasting's need for additional resources. "Recognizing that the Arab and Muslim audiences rely on satellite television and radio, the government has begun some promising initiatives in television and radio broadcasting to the Arab world, Iran and Afghanistan. These efforts are beginning to reach large audiences. The Broadcasting Board of Governors has asked for much larger resources. It should get them."[33]

Grant the Broadcasting Board of Governors increased resources.

[27] http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04711t.pdf
[28] 2002
[29] 2003b
[30] http://www.bbg.gov/_bbg_news.cfm?articleID=112&mode=general
[31] http://www.bbg.gov/_bbg_news.cfm?articleID=112&mode=general
[32] http://www.bbg.gov/_bbg_news.cfm?articleID=111&mode=general
[33] p. 377

Broadcasting

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Issue

Broadcasting educational programs establishes a mutually beneficial relationship with audiences that few other public diplomacy programs can match. Learning American English builds psychological bonds and deeper cultural understanding while giving listeners tools they need to succeed in the world. For this reason, the VOA's Special English programs are among their most popular.

Each broadcast begins with news followed by one short feature and one long feature on diverse topics such as science, health, development, economics and American history, culture, and notable experts and personalities. These programs often have double or triple impact when Peace Corps and other English language teachers use broadcasts and transcripts for English instruction. Also, a Special English policy allows private companies to reproduce these materials as long as the VOA is credited.

Yet these programs, despite being popular, efficient and self-propagating, are facing one main challenge:

- **Resource allocations:** Despite an increase in programming from 20 hours to 23.5 hours a week from FY 2003 to FY 2004, the budget increased only marginally. The ability to market programming and materials effectively and expand into new projects such as CD-ROMs and documentaries will occur only with adequate funding.

The BBG also produces educational health programming, providing audiences with important information on polio, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and other diseases. The Senate Appropriations Committee report for FY 2004 noted, "Radio broadcasting is an underutilized tool in the fight against the African AIDS epidemic. Its accessibility to even the most impoverished communities makes it an ideal way to transmit information about the disease. Radio broadcasts could be a major component of sustained prevention efforts undertaken by the governments of many African countries, humanitarian organizations and U.S. assistance programs."

Past Recommendations

- Programs in support of English language training, a critical instrument of outreach, education and job opportunity, must be expanded and supported by increased funding and human resources.[34]

Recent Action

In health programming, VOA brought "Hip-Hop Connection" back to Africa in 2003. The program features hip-hop music from the United States and Africa combined with features on entertainment news and information on health issues and conflict resolution. In May 2004, the VOA's Vietnamese Service launched a new radio call-in show called "Health Hotline," which enables VOA listeners to ask questions of guest health specialists about medical issues and advances.

In May of 2004, VOA Special English added another 30-minute daily radio broadcast for China. The program airs in the early morning hours, when research shows more Chinese listen to the radio. With this program addition, Special English now broadcasts four times daily to Asia and once a day to Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

The Special English Web site is one of the VOA's most popular. The site allows audiences to read transcripts, hear and download programs and view a dictionary of words used in Special English broadcasts. Reading-comprehension exercises were recently added to the Web site to give listeners the ability to test their skills.

The American Consulate in Shanghai has made use of Special English's reprinting policies. The consulate has provided a local publisher with recordings and transcripts of VOA programming, which are then transformed into English-teaching products that also educate students about American culture and free-market practices. The Commission observes that given the difficulty in reaching Chinese audiences because of heavy jamming, programs such as these are an excellent way to reach audiences.

Continue circumventing heavy jamming and reaching Chinese audiences through Web sites and teaching products that educate users in both the English language and American culture.

[34] 2003b

Broadcasting

SATELLITE TELEVISION

Issue

Satellite broadcasting has drastically changed the international media landscape. Terrestrial television distribution makes transmission from one part of the globe to another slow, cumbersome and, in many cases, infeasible. Satellite technology now allows broadcasters to instantly reach audiences all over the globe, even in areas that lack terrestrial broadcast infrastructures.

Satellite penetration rates are growing exponentially in many regions. This is particularly true in the Middle East, where some services are free to anyone with a satellite dish and receiver. The Nilesat satellite alone reaches 7.1 million households in the Middle East — double the number from last year.[35] According to Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times,* satellite television is "not only the biggest media phenomenon to hit the Arab world since the advent of television; it also is the biggest political phenomenon" across that region. At the same time, in areas that lack the means to access satellite broadcasts, such as southern Africa, radio remains the medium of choice.

As satellite technologies grow in popularity, the BBG faces two specific challenges:

- **Transitioning to television programming:** The BBG has traditionally relied largely on radio to reach audiences. While radio is still important in many markets, television is increasingly the medium of choice. Increasing television programming reaches new and important audience segments.
- **Strategic use of limited resources:** Satellite broadcasting is more expensive than other broadcasting methods and will consume significant resources. The BBG will need to determine where satellite services are most beneficial and have the best potential for reaching audiences.

Past Recommendations

- Satellite broadcasting … should be a priority for our public diplomacy efforts in China, simply because the country is so big. The growth of small and affordable satellite receivers will facilitate this.[36]
- The United States should consider satellite television programming in Arabic from a studio located in the Middle East, Turkey or Greece.[37]
- A careful independent review of the merits of the Middle East Television Network initiative should be undertaken.[38]

Recent Action

The notable recent development in satellite television is the creation of Alhurra, a 24-hour Arabic-language channel reaching 22 countries in the Middle East. The station began broadcasting from Springfield, Va., studios on February 14, 2004. With a main focus on news and information, the network also airs discussion programs, news magazines, and features on sports, health, entertainment, and science and technology. Alhurra is distributed via the two largest satellite distributors in the region, Arabsat and Nilesat. Despite initial skepticism toward the network, initial viewer statistics are promising. An Ipsos-Stat survey conducted in April in seven countries showed that in the past week, 29 percent of adults had tuned in to Alhurra: 40 percent in Lebanon, 29 percent in Syria, 19 percent in UAE, 18 percent in Egypt, 44 percent in Kuwait, 37 percent in Jordan and 19 percent in Saudi Arabia. Other satellite television developments include:

- In July 2003, the VOA launched "News and Views," a 30-minute Persian news show. The show airs Iranian and worldwide news as well as cultural and special interest features. A September 2003 survey indicated that the show had already accumulated 4 million viewers on direct-to-home satellite.
- Television Marti was made available on Hispasat direct-to-home satellite in September 2003, giving Cubans more access to the station.
- "Jurnal VOA," a 30-minute live and interactive show in Indonesian, began in September 2003. With a reach of 118 million, the show features viewer calls, a man-in-the-street question segment and a summary of U.S. editorial opinion. The show is distributed via satellite to local affiliates for terrestrial broadcast.

The Commission finds the recent action in satellite television refreshing and recommends that satellite television technologies be further developed.

Develop satellite television technologies further and expand on recent successes in making native-language programming available via satellite television to millions of viewers in other countries.

[35] http://tbsjournal.com/amin.htm
[36] 1997
[37] 1997
[38] 2003b

Broadcasting

INTERNET

Issue

The Internet, as an increasingly popular global medium, is an important vehicle for reaching target public diplomacy audiences. The rising popularity and unique nature of the Internet are causing it to surpass even television as the most effective and influential medium in some markets. In recent years, some of the largest Internet growth has been in less developed countries. Recent data from the Internet World Stats report indicated that since 2000, the number of Internet users rose 253 percent in China, 295 percent in Brazil and 270 percent in India.[39] While the Middle East is one of the world's least connected regions, the number of Internet users increased 219 percent over the same period.

In light of these changes in the modern media environment, international broadcasting faces two main challenges:

- **Availability:** Like other areas of diplomacy, international broadcasting is currently facing the challenge of adapting to new technologies by making programming available online. Internet broadcasting services are widely available commercially while U.S. government broadcasters attempt to gain the resources necessary to provide the same.
- **Content:** Commercial media provide dynamic, interactive and multimedia experiences to audiences throughout the world. To be competitive, especially among youth audiences, international broadcasters must provide equally compelling content and foster participation and dialogue, not just reception. At the same time, the Internet provides unparalleled ability to personalize content and make effective connections with target audiences.

Past Recommendations

- Given the importance of information technologies, a greater portion of the budget should be directed to tap the resources of the Internet and other communication technologies more effectively.[40]
- Congress should authorize funding to accelerate multimedia and Internet development, infusing more emerging communications media into the BBG's portfolio.[41]

Recent Action

Two of the largest BBG Web sites already provide outstanding content and services. The Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and VOA Web sites bring together excellent design, extensive news and features, and on-demand streaming in multiple languages. Both sites also allow users to access archives as well as download program material for later use, making access easier for those in countries with high Internet connectivity costs. According to their Web site, VOA is "one of the world's largest audio streaming sites — with more than 1,000 hours of weekly Webcasts." Such material is clearly popular. The RFE/RL Web site calculated that "in March 2004, the RFE/RL Web site registered nearly 6.9 million page views and 2.5 million visits, while more than 1.3 million visitors listened to nearly 600,000 hours of live and on-demand RFE/RL Internet audio broadcasts."

Other BBG Web sites provide more limited services. While Radio Sawa has been providing streaming since June 2002, the online content and features of the site are less extensive than similar sites. Radio Free Asia offers news stories online but does not yet offer streaming audio. Alhurra, as a recent addition to the BBG, offers only a program schedule online.

Even the most outstanding BBG Web site could provide more interactive programming. The BBC Web site offers audiences the ability to chat live, play games, post messages and set features to display local weather, among other highly interactive services. Radio France Internationale also allows users to interact through clubs, chats, forums and surveys.

Emerging software developments such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) — an XML tag for sharing headlines and other Web content — and Short Messaging Service (SMS) — wireless phone protocols that parallel those of the Internet — should be integrated with BBG communications wherever possible. The Commission encourages the BBG to actively look for ways to use emerging software developments to expand its broadcasting reach over the Internet.

Encourage the Broadcasting Board of Governors to actively look for ways to use emerging software developments to expand its broadcasting reach over the Internet.

[39] InternetWorldStats.com
[40] 2003b
[41] 2004

Broadcasting

HARD TO REACH AREAS

Issue

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms, "Everyone has the right … to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Yet many governments jam terrestrial and satellite signals and Internet sites of foreign media organizations. Areas without indigenous free and independent media are the most in need of objective news and information and are perhaps the most important for the BBG to reach. Technologies like the Internet and direct broadcast satellite have made it more difficult and expensive for governments to block programming, but not impossible.

Although jamming occurs throughout the world, several areas are particularly hard to reach:

- **China:** The BBG, with the aid of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), has determined that virtually all of the Voice of America's and Radio Free Asia's shortwave broadcasts to China in local languages are jammed. China also has the world's most censored Internet, according to Harvard University.[42] Blocking information during incidents like the SARS epidemic prevented the public from receiving important information and may have exacerbated the crisis.
- **North Korea:** According to Reporters Without Borders, North Korea is the world's worst violator of press freedom.[43] Citizens of North Korea face significant penalties if caught listening to VOA and RFA broadcasts. Radios in North Korea must be registered with local police, where they are locked on the government channel and sealed to prevent tampering. Failing to register a radio is a "political crime."
- **Cuba:** With one of the highest rates of jailed journalists in the world, free and independent media in Cuba are virtually nonexistent. Cuba aggressively jams incoming Radio and TV Marti signals and has interfered with signals to Iran as well. On July 6, 2003, when the VOA began broadcasting News and Views to Iran, the Cuban government began jamming the transmission along with two other weekly VOA Persian-language television programs.[44]

Recent Action

U.S. international broadcasting agencies continue to combat jamming through political and diplomatic channels. The BBG has filed monthly "harmful interference" complaints against China with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) since 2000. In July and August of 2002, China acknowledged the complaints, insisting that what appeared to be jamming was simply interference from other stations on China's crowded airwaves. The BBG also passed a resolution on July 15, condemning the Cuban government's interference with broadcasts to Iran and urging the State Department and the FCC to lodge appropriate formal requests to end the jamming.

The BBG continues to develop new transmission methods to overcome blocking:

- **Phone:** RFA began two call-in programs in 2003 for China that allowed listeners to dial into toll-free hot lines in four languages.
- **E-mail:** In 2003, 4 million e-mail messages were distributed daily, up from 400,000 in 2002. In Iran, content from Radio Farda and VOA Persian is distributed to 5,000 subscribers each day.
- **Internet:** VOA China service also uses mirror sites to circumvent Web site address blocking. Similar programs exist in Iran, where proxy server addresses are distributed in daily e-mails as well as on the air.
- **Satellite:** In Cuba, Radio and TV Marti were available on the Hispasat as a free-to-air network available to all Cubans with satellite dishes. With the transition to Hispasat transmission, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting will phase out the aerostat transmission system in September 2004.
- **Other:** The BBG's office of engineering is investigating new ways to reach areas in China, including peer-to-peer technologies and mobile phone short messaging.

The Commission commends BBG's efforts to combat jamming.

Continue the Broadcasting Board of Governors' development of new transmission methods to combat jamming.

[42] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/filtering/china/
[43] http://www.rsf.org/country-50.php3?id_mot=260&Valider=OK
[44] BBG press release July 15, 2003, "BBG Condemns Cuba's Jamming of Satellite TV Broadcasts To Iran"

CONCLUSION

The information revolution has meant that more power is in the hands of individuals: the power to communicate globally, the power to engage in international dialogue and the power to influence their leaders. As a result, international public opinion and understanding are key to the success of American foreign policy. The pervasive 24-hour global communications environment requires responsiveness, but not hastiness; messages and strategies must be carefully crafted and coordinated, with regard to content and presentation, before they are communicated to audiences worldwide.

As noted throughout this report, significant progress has been made in many areas, but there is still much that can be accomplished. Three themes in this report illustrate what can be done: structure, responsiveness and measurement. The agents and structures of public diplomacy need to be properly coordinated to achieve maximum efficiency. Public diplomacy messaging must become more strategic and responsive, and at the same time must properly reflect the values and attitudes of target audiences. Anecdotal evidence is important and in some cases is the only way to determine whether programs are working; yet, at the same time, public diplomacy requires objective measurement through data collection, opinion polling and surveys to ensure that desired effects are being achieved.

As numerous reports, organizations and officials have attested, public diplomacy should be a national security priority. This Commission believes this need is now widely recognized in government. However, as international public opinion continues to influence the success of American foreign policy objectives, an aggressive strategy and increased allocation of resources are necessary to fulfill the recommendations of this report. This Commission looks forward to working with the administration and Congress to achieve a better understanding of and dialogue with the world.

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Barbara M. Barrett is chairman of the Commission. She is the president and CEO of Triple Creek Guest Ranch in Darby, Montana. She serves a number of boards including Freedom House, the Center for International Private Enterprise, the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and the Senior Advisory Board at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She was formerly chairman of the board of Thunderbird, the Garvin School of International Management. Her previous positions include vice chairman of the United States Civil Aeronautics Board, deputy administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and president and CEO of the American Management Association.

Harold C. Pachios is a former chairman of the Commission and is serving his fourth term as a Commissioner. He is managing partner in the law firm of Petri, Flaherty, Beliveau, Pachios & Haley, based in Portland, Maine. In his prior government and political career, he served as associate White House press secretary under President Johnson and as chairman of the Maine Democratic Party. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a director of the Salzburg Seminar in Salzburg, Austria.

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Tré Evers is the president and co-founder of central Florida's Consensus Communications, which provides public relations, public affairs and political consulting services to a wide variety of private- and public-sector clients. Prior to opening Consensus, Mr. Evers served as special assistant to Orlando Mayor Glenda E. Hood and as an appointee of President George H. W. Bush in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, where he worked for four years in the Office of Governmental Affairs. Mr. Evers is a member of the Florida Governor's Mansion Foundation Board and the Atlantic Council of the United States.

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Jay T. Snyder is a principal of HBJ Investments, LLC, specializing in private equity investments. He also is a principal of Ashfield Consulting, a financial services firm. Prior to his employment with HBJ, Mr. Snyder served at Biocraft Laboratories as vice president of Research and Development and as a member of the board of directors. His prior government service includes serving as a U.S. representative to the 55th United Nations General Assembly.

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