

2005  
REPORT

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UNITED STATES  
ADVISORY COMMISSION  
ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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November 7, 2005

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 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 non-governmental organizations.

Our 2005 assessment examines the recommendations issued by the Commission in its previous report and reviews the level of implementation achieved to date. This report also presents a vision for bringing public diplomacy into the 21st century. We understand that reforming public diplomacy will be a long-term, sustained effort and hope that our suggestions will benefit public diplomacy leaders and practitioners.

We would like to recognize the dedicated public diplomacy practitioners in Washington, D.C., and at U.S. missions worldwide. Every day, these individuals contribute their skills, knowledge and hard work to the mission of public diplomacy and to the service of their government. This demanding job, requiring finely tuned skills, has never been more important than it is today. We commend them for their efforts.

Respectfully submitted,



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# Introduction

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, now in its 57th year, has witnessed innumerable changes in U.S. public diplomacy. For decades, U.S. public diplomacy sought to break the information monopoly and monotony found behind the Iron Curtain. Today, the challenge is breaking through information clutter in the globalized modern world. While past outreach efforts focused on countering communism, today's outreach efforts involve countering extremists and, as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "building a firm foundation for peace, security and prosperity well into the future." Public diplomacy seeks to convey the truth about American values, culture and people to the world.

Although public diplomacy has various facets, it is critical to understand its core goal: to advance policies. Public diplomacy entails informing, engaging and influencing foreign publics so that they may, in turn, encourage their governments to support key U.S. policies. It involves building mutual understanding and fostering more-favorable attitudes toward the U.S. so that other peoples near and far are more likely to shake our hands than to squeeze them.

To be successful, public diplomacy needs to adapt to the 21st century. In addition to utilizing traditional public diplomacy activities such as scholarships, exchanges, radio and television, this means communicating through new technologies such as blogs, podcasts, Web chats and smart video. It entails reaching key audiences where they access information.

Adapting to the 21st century also means engaging in two-way communication. Both Secretary Rice and Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes emphasize the importance of dialogue over monologue. This requires effectively listening to and communicating with other cultures.

Although public diplomacy is sometimes mistakenly viewed as obscuring inconvenient truths, the fact is that it seeks to convey the complete story of America. The danger lies not in promotion of the truth, but rather in its absence and distortion. A critical part of this effort is full exposure to the American way of life. Recognizing the important tie between public diplomacy and person-to-person contact, President Bush stated: “Everyone who travels abroad or welcomes an exchange student into their home is an ambassador for America. And we need more of our citizens involved in our public diplomacy.”

Furthermore, this quest for truth works both ways, in line with the renewed emphasis on two-way communication. Mutual understanding and respect can occur only if Americans, too, are more exposed to other cultures, values and people.

As the Cold War era demonstrated, public diplomacy needs to be a long-term, sustained process. Its successes are measured over decades, not months or years. We undertake our latest assessment of U.S. public diplomacy with this perspective in mind. We reviewed the recommendations from last year’s report to assess the level of implementation achieved to date. The Commission offers its review in three sections: short-term communication, long-term communication and international broadcasting. In our conclusion, we offer thoughts for how public diplomacy practitioners can take advantage of 21st century capabilities.



# Short-term Communication

The United States today conducts public diplomacy in a world of 24-hour news cycles and instantaneous communication. In this environment of rapid information dissemination, the United States needs to be more vigilant than ever in telling its story and countering misinformation.

Effective spokespeople are critical to this effort. Such messengers include U.S. embassy officials well versed in local languages and third-party mediators who enjoy credibility with key populations.

In the short term, a central goal is to establish platforms for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Two-way communication is critical to fostering a sense of shared values and trust. Essential to this goal is providing Foreign Services Officers with effective training in local languages and cultures.

Given a global communication context in which U.S. policies and actions are interpreted—and misinterpreted—in the blink of an eye, it is critically important for American personnel and U.S. supporters to tell America's story in their own words and in a timely fashion. In the modern media world, domestic stories resonate abroad. The latest example of this effect is the international outpouring of support following Hurricane Katrina.

Through proactive communication, substantive training and interagency coordination, U.S. public diplomacy can make the most of its short-term communication tools.



# Short-term Communication

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND MESSAGE DISSEMINATION

In a global, 24-hour news cycle, public diplomacy requires proactive message dissemination. A prime example is the news story, which was later retracted, alleging that a copy of the Koran had been handled with disrespect. False information spreads quickly and needs to be countered quickly. In today's information environment, diligent media and public outreach efforts as well as crisis-response capabilities are essential. Good judgment and an understanding of the effects of misinformation on different audiences and cultures are required to counteract misinformation in a timely and effective manner.

### 2004 Recommendation

This Commission previously noted that the news management function of public diplomacy needs improvement. Too often, the voice of the U.S. government is missing in local and regional outlets. The 2004 report recommended that more U.S. government staff employed abroad serve as messengers in order to increase the number of voices speaking on behalf of the United States. The report also recommended that public diplomacy practitioners make better use of technology in public diplomacy outreach.



## Implementation

- **Rapid Response:** Secretary Rice travels widely, actively reaching out to foreign media. Her travels resonate positively. The overall U.S. government ability to respond to global media, however, remains weak. The bureaucratic clearance process continues to hinder the government's ability to respond. We observed this in more than one post. We note that Under Secretary Hughes stated she plans to form "rapid response units" to dispel misinformation and to defend administration policy worldwide. These units, operating locally or abroad, would respond to incidents of misinformation and misinterpretation as appropriate. We look forward to reviewing the progress of these efforts.
- **Local Outreach:** Embassies are encouraged to increase outreach activity. However, there remains no formal, consistent requirement across posts. We urge Ambassadors to create a proactive outreach strategy and encourage embassy officers to engage with journalists and local audiences. Outreach can include representing the United States at local events, especially outside the capital, in order to reach wider audiences. The State Department should consider making outreach activities a work requirement for Foreign Service Officers and a part of their evaluation process.
- **Foreign Media:** Contact with foreign media can be made without leaving the country. U.S. Foreign Press Centers (FPCs) in Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles provide foreign journalists with a variety of services to help them report on American society, politics and culture. The FPCs also work with U.S. embassy public affairs offices to assist foreign correspondents visiting the United States on assignment or for U.S.-sponsored reporting tours. Currently, there are 2,000 foreign journalists in the U.S., 1,500 of whom are in Washington. These centers, open to all U.S. government officials, should be utilized more widely by them.
- **Internet and Technology:** The State Department is beginning to use the Web more interactively to engage key audiences. The Department will be launching a democracy dialogue initiative that will feature a monthly series of interactive programs on the USINFO Web site. USINFO also makes major speeches by President Bush and Secretary Rice available for download in MP3 format. This year, Secretary Rice met with Korean journalists via a Web chat that attracted a substantial audience. This was the first Web chat connecting a top U.S. government official with foreign journalists. Creative ways to reach young people where they are—online, in many cases—should be encouraged.



# Short-term Communication

## COORDINATION

While the State Department remains the lead agency for public diplomacy, many other government agencies engage in related activities and programs. The Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, recently expanded their strategic communications and public diplomacy efforts. Yet coordination and strategy for these activities remain largely ad hoc. Even within the State Department, coordination between various bureaus on public diplomacy remains a challenge, as does coordination between public diplomacy and policy design.

### 2004 Recommendation

Numerous reports addressed the issue of interagency coordination in public diplomacy. The Commission noted the various organizations attempting to improve coordination and strategic direction. Last year, the Commission recommended strengthening existing interagency coordination structures and strategic planning. It also highlighted public diplomacy's new office of Policy, Planning and Resources, which was created to provide long-term planning and measurement for public affairs and public diplomacy programs.

### Implementation

- **Coordination:** Under Secretary Hughes stated that she plans to lead the effort to synthesize and manage the strategic communication resources of the U.S. government. Public diplomacy coordination still remains problematic. There exists a lack of strategic planning, interagency coordination and timely response at the highest levels. In addition, the Department of State lacks tasking authority in the interagency process as it stands today.
- **Existing Coordination Structures:** The White House Office of Global Communications was incorporated into Strategic Communications at the National Security Council, thus creating the Office for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach. As a result, outreach and foreign policy efforts were combined. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this office.
- **Strategic Direction:** We are encouraged by Under Secretary Hughes' comments regarding interagency coordination, which she made during her confirmation hearing. She announced her plan "to identify and marshal all the communications and public diplomacy resources of our different government agencies and provide leadership to make our efforts more coordinated and more strategic."

## THIRD-PARTY CREDIBILITY

U.S. supporters should be empowered to speak on our behalf to communicate with publics abroad. American expatriates, prominent international citizens and former exchange participants are all excellent resources for public diplomacy practitioners. Their local knowledge, fluency and presence make them especially credible forces.

### 2004 Recommendation

Last year, the Commission recommended that the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) provide electronic products to support individuals willing to speak on behalf of U.S. policies and perspectives. The 2004 report also called for embassies to maintain networks of individuals interested in communicating positive concepts on behalf of the United States.

### Implementation

- **Electronic Support Products:** IIP expanded electronic products that support potential spokespersons. The USINFO Web site, available in six critical foreign languages plus English, is now incorporating audio and video clips into its front-page articles and electronic journals. IIP's use of technology is attracting more visitors for high-profile issues and events. For example, IIP reports that the site registered a 300-percent increase in Web visits following the G8 summit and Live 8 concerts. Meanwhile, INFOCENTRAL, designed for U.S. government officials and with 5,000 registered users, provides talking points on sensitive issues such as the Guantanamo Bay detainees and Abu Ghraib prisoners. IIP also utilizes Real Simple Syndication (RSS), which distributes news to subscribers as it becomes available. More should be done to provide information to American expatriates and other individuals who are interested in advocating U.S. policies and perspectives.
- **Alumni Database:** The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is in the process of populating a database of former exchange participants. Once complete, the database will have contact information for up to 700,000 foreign and domestic alumni. This database will give embassy staff and other public diplomacy practitioners an important resource for allowing individuals to re-engage in exchanges, share their knowledge of and experience with the U.S. and participate in other outreach opportunities.

# Short-term Communication

## CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

One of the most vital aspects of public diplomacy is tailoring content to meet a given audience. An understanding of cultural differences is essential to ensuring effective communication. Messages that work in Brussels may fall flat in Beijing. U.S. staff and officials need to have adequate knowledge of the local communications environment—media, language, values, culture and audience preferences—in order for public diplomacy efforts to be successful.

### 2004 Recommendation

Last year, the Commission recommended that Foreign Service Officers undergo more extensive language training. The report also recommended that other government personnel and contractors receive cross-cultural training.

### Implementation

- **Cross-cultural Training:** The Foreign Service Institute (FSI), the federal government's primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the U.S. foreign affairs community, offers a number of courses for government personnel to enhance cross-cultural understanding. A three-day, basic-orientation public diplomacy course is open to all government employees. Employees from the Department of Defense and the Government Accountability Office, among others, have taken the course. Media training is now mandatory for Ambassadors.
- **Public Diplomacy Training:** The training period for new public diplomacy officers expanded from three to 19 weeks. The curriculum incorporates more skills than previously offered, particularly in media and technology. As is the case with all foreign service professionals, the need to fill a post quickly often prevents public diplomacy officers from receiving their full training. A culture of training should be strongly reinforced by senior leadership.
- **Listening:** U.S. officials abroad should ensure that their interactions extend beyond the elites and that they hear the message of a cross-section of society. Otherwise, they might be shielded from a range of public opinion on key issues. Cross-cultural communication entails knowing more about the diverse populations we are trying to reach. More sophisticated measurement, better cultural awareness and concentrated listening enhance understanding of public opinion overseas.

# Long-term Communication

The international communication environment today poses new challenges for U.S. public diplomacy. Decades ago, the challenge was to get any information about the U.S. to publics living under repressive rule. In today's high-tech age of instantaneous, global communication, the challenge is to present the truth about America in a world awash in information—and disinformation.

The challenge of painting a fully informed, well-rounded picture of the United States for foreign audiences is daunting in the current information environment. This is where public diplomacy's long-term communication tools fit in.

It is important to keep in mind that a negative U.S. image abroad is not merely a cosmetic blemish. It has real consequences in the real world. The goal, at its core, is pragmatic and substantive. Among other things, long-term public diplomacy seeks to increase mutual understanding across cultures to maximize prospects for peace and development; foster support for values such as freedom, democracy and human rights; enhance trade opportunities; and promote positive international relations.

# Long-term Communication

## BORDER SECURITY

The U.S. has long been an attractive destination for tourists, business people, students and other visitors. In order to maintain the economic, cultural and educational advantages that come with open—yet secure—borders, the U.S. government should evaluate, clarify and promote its visa policies and procedures. The “welcome mat” will be effective only if the word “welcome” is still visible through the necessary red tape.

### 2004 Recommendation

In its 2004 report, the Commission recommended greater interagency cooperation in communicating visa policies and procedures. The report called for phasing out redundant security measures and excessive costs that unnecessarily impede the flow of travel. The Commission also noted that other countries run both governmental and private-sector campaigns to illustrate the ease of their visa processes. We suggested that the government or the private sector launch a campaign to clarify visa policies and to recruit visitors.

### Implementation:

- **Visa Processing Time:** We note recent efforts by the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs to expedite the visa application process and to assign priority status to foreign students and exchange visitors. Currently, it takes about two days to turn around student visas. It takes about 14 days for those subject to extra screening. This marks a significant improvement over recent years.
- **Business Visas:** New efforts such as the Business Visa Center, which aids American businesses in explaining the visa process to foreign employees and other guests, are useful in facilitating international business travel and supporting U.S. commerce.
- **Communicating Visa Policy:** In the fall of 2005, the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) released an electronic newsletter designed to provide current information about entry procedures to all visitors, whether business, student or tourist. However, the U.S. government should do more to counter the misperception that the visa application process and other border-entry procedures remain overly burdensome. Internet initiatives help, but other media outlets should be utilized to publicize our visa policies as well.

## CENTERS, CORNERS, LIBRARIES AND VIRTUAL CONSULATES

Physical outreach facilities are another key component of successful long-term public diplomacy. Outreach facilities like the American Centers and Libraries, designed to expose foreign nationals to American culture and values, suffered dramatic cuts beginning in the 1990s due to budget and security concerns.

The biggest public outreach challenge facing the U.S. government today is balancing security concerns with the need for public accessibility. As many observers have noted: How can the U.S. connect with foreign publics from behind a 10-foot concrete wall?

Embassies and other practitioners are meeting this challenge with solutions like American Corners, which are information and media rooms inside host-country facilities, and Virtual Presence Posts, which are interactive Web-based portals that offer some of the functions of a physical consulate. Some physical facilities remain: Information Resource Centers, American Presence Posts and a few surviving American Libraries.

### 2004 Recommendation

Previous Commission reports stressed the importance of creating accessible outreach facilities, particularly given the increased security constraints on U.S. embassies. Last year the Commission recommended that American Centers and Libraries be funded wherever security permits.

### Implementation

- **American Centers:** The proposed American Center in New Delhi, although not yet funded, is an example of the type of creative idea needed to address the tension between security and accessibility. This kind of facility would create a stand-alone public outreach building with appropriate security.
- **Virtual Presence Posts:** We applaud the Virtual Presence Posts and other online efforts to reach beyond major urban centers. As of September 2005 there are 26 Virtual Presence Posts worldwide.
- **American Corners:** The number of American Corners increased from 180 at the end of 2004 to 257 at the end of FY 2005. American Corners are tailored to their location. Furthermore, they strive to match local needs by employing appropriate resources, including books, Internet access and digital video conferencing. Mission Public Affairs Officers and Information Resource Officers should ensure that the staff in charge of the Corner are properly trained and encouraged to reach out to the community. Ongoing review of American Corner sites should be conducted to ensure that they are being used optimally.



# Long-term Communication

## EXCHANGES

Through educational and cultural exchanges, The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) seeks to promote cross-cultural understanding, an awareness of shared values and a platform for ongoing dialogue. There is a wide variety of exchanges, including the Fulbright Program, Partnership for Learning (P4L), Youth Exchange and Study (YES) and the International Visitor Leadership Program.

Despite concerns about the visa-issuance process, the United States remains the top study destination worldwide. In the past year, the United States hosted 570,000 exchange students. At a time when public opinion polls show widespread poor favorability ratings for the U.S., it is absolutely critical for America to utilize one of the most effective long-term public diplomacy tools at its disposal: people-to-people exchange.

### 2004 Recommendation

We noted the challenge of administering exchange programs with inadequate funding for the most recent fiscal year. The Commission highlighted ECA's Fulbright alumni database and the establishment of the Alumni Affairs Office. The Commission recommended the creation of a comprehensive alumni database that covers all educational and cultural exchanges.



## Implementation

- **Resources:** ECA resources for FY 2006 educational and cultural exchange programs are budgeted to increase by approximately \$70 million over FY 2005, bringing the total to \$430 million.
- **Utilizing Exchange Alumni:** ECA created an Alumni Affairs Office that helps U.S. diplomatic missions overseas stay in touch with exchange alumni and aids alumni in extending their exchange experiences upon returning home. The office runs a Web site for alumni and trains alumni coordinators at diplomatic missions abroad, among other activities. It also established a comprehensive exchange alumni database. The database currently contains records for 450,000 former exchange participants, with plans to expand to all 700,000 alumni of exchange programs since 1970.
- **Engaging Youth:** ECA strengthened its outreach to youth with the Partnership for Learning (P4L) initiative and the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program. P4L activities seek to reach younger and more diverse audiences mainly in the Arab and Muslim world. YES offers scholarships for up to one academic year in the U.S. to secondary-school students from countries with significant Muslim populations. One key benefit of YES is that the learning occurs both ways; while learning about America, the exchange participants also teach Americans about life abroad.
- **International Visitors:** The International Visitor Leadership Program is another key exchange opportunity. This program brings leaders in government, politics, education and other fields to the U.S. to meet their professional counterparts and to experience the U.S. More needs to be done to identify leaders who can potentially serve as connectors between the U.S. and key audiences.
- **Evaluation:** ECA incorporated performance measurements of its programs. Beginning in 1998, ECA shifted from using anecdotal evidence to employing a more formal, quantitative evaluation method to achieve greater accuracy in results. The Office of Management and Budget commended ECA on moving beyond mere quantitative evaluations and shifting toward assessing how the behaviors and attitudes of program participants changed. We recommend that other U.S. public diplomacy practitioners follow this evaluation model.

# Long-term Communication

## ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

English-language programs serve a vital function in connecting the United States with other countries. English-language classes promote cross-cultural understanding, engender an awareness of common ground, open up educational and research opportunities and empower students to participate in the global economy. ECA's Office of English Language Programs administers a variety of programs that offer students worldwide not only a new language, but also an invaluable life-skill.

### 2004 Recommendation

In 2004, we noted that funding levels for English-language programs did not adequately reflect their value in public diplomacy. We encouraged the State Department to engage the private sector in supporting English-language programs. The Commission also noted that reaching English teachers overseas through exchange was beneficial for its multiplier effect.

### Implementation

- **ACCESS Microscholarship Program:** ECA's newest outreach effort is the English ACCESS Microscholarship Program. ACCESS provides English-language study after school or on weekends to underprivileged youth in predominantly Muslim countries. The scholarship periods are one year or two years, depending on the region. During the 2004–2005 academic year, this program enrolled 3,600 students from 39 countries in English-teaching schools selected by U.S. embassies. In 2006, ECA anticipates offering ACCESS scholarships to nearly 10,000 students. A key characteristic of the ACCESS program, which features an American-style classroom experience, is that it helps students to overcome socioeconomic barriers that would otherwise preclude them from an English-language education. On a broad scale, ACCESS is designed to serve as a feeder program to future U.S.-based study opportunities. Students who develop solid English-language skills and a strong familiarity with America are empowered to eventually study in or engage in business with the United States. The ACCESS program serves as an example of how an English-language education can open up a student's world.
- **Private-sector Support:** We note the positive example of private-sector support found in Turkey. There, the American Research Institute, the Rotary Club, and the Turkish American Association provided various types of support over the past year to ACCESS microscholarship recipients. The Turkish American Association even raised funds to create 60 additional scholarships.
- **Program Expansion:** ECA plans to expand the ACCESS program to other parts of the world, including tsunami-affected areas, Western Hemisphere nations and non-Muslim Africa. The program offers contacts for the United States as well as invaluable educational opportunities for the students.

## PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

The government is not the only body responsible for public diplomacy. Private corporations, universities, nonprofits, foundations and private citizens play critical roles. Both American and international businesses have a clear interest in friendly, open markets. Universities welcome international students for the cultural diversity they bring, the cross-cultural bridges they establish and the varied perspectives they offer. Nonprofits and foundations provide constructive services such as citizen exchanges and development and demonstrate the generosity of Americans. Private citizens benefit personally and professionally from positive international relations.

### 2004 Recommendation

The Commission previously noted that American assistance and generosity often go unrecognized. Last year's Commission report also recommended that individual posts explore public-private partnerships at the local level.

### Implementation

- **USAID and Public-Private Partnerships:** USAID is allowed to accept private-sector resources. Through the Global Development Alliance model, USAID engages non-traditional partners, including NGOs, foundations, private companies, government agencies and civil society organizations, in public-private partnerships. The Global Development Alliance brought Internet access to developing countries and development relief to post-conflict areas.
- **ECA and Public-Private Partnerships:** ECA funding serves as an example of partnership between the federal government and the private sector. For FY 2005, funding equivalent to 35 percent of ECA's appropriation was contributed toward these programs by the private sector. ECA administers its International Leadership Program in coordination with a wide variety of nonprofits and over 90 community-based organizations across the nation. As discussed earlier, the ACCESS program serves as an example of how the State Department can partner with NGOs. We note that it still remains difficult for private enterprise and individuals to provide funding for State Department public diplomacy programs.
- **The Fulbright Program and Public-Private Partnerships:** The majority of funds for the Fulbright Program are appropriated by the U.S. Congress. However, the program also receives significant support from foreign governments, public and private academic institutions and other private organizations in the form of tuition support, university housing, scholarships, salary supplements and other offers. The United Nations Foundation, a private organization, supports professional internships for U.S. Fulbright alumni at UNESCO headquarters. Some posts are encouraging local partnerships with the Fulbright Commission.

# Long-term Communication

## USAID AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

USAID is the lead agency for providing assistance to countries seeking to alleviate poverty, recover from disaster and undertake democratic reforms. According to the USAID-State Department Joint Strategic Plan, the shared policy mission is to “create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.” U.S. involvement in international relief efforts plays an important role in fostering goodwill toward America. Most recently, relief efforts in Southeast Asia after the December 2004 tsunami demonstrated America’s generosity.

### 2004 Recommendation

This Commission previously noted that USAID activities make a positive contribution to U.S. public diplomacy when they are communicated to host populations. In its 2004 report, the Commission recommended that USAID create director of public diplomacy positions for different regions of the globe and that the Department of State continue to coordinate with USAID to better communicate the contributions of the American people.

### Implementation

- **Project Awareness:** Since 2003, USAID has increased its “telling our stories” initiative and now provides over 1,000 country-specific success stories on their Web site. In 2004 USAID began to clearly identify programs, projects and activities as “funded by the American people.” USAID reports that the use of this standard graphic will be fully implemented by the beginning of 2006.
- **Development Communications Outreach:** USAID now has Development Outreach and Communications Officers (DOCs). There are currently 55 DOCs at USAID missions worldwide, with plans to have one in place at every mission. DOCs generate, consolidate and disseminate information about the mission’s development activities in the region. Additionally, standard evaluation procedures now factor in how well USAID is communicating in the field. The Commission urges DOCs to ensure good coordination with the embassy Public Affairs Officer and Chief of Mission.

# Broadcasting

When U.S. government-funded international broadcasting began in 1942, it had a well-defined enemy and purpose. At the onset of the Cold War, the threats and mission changed, but were still clear. Since the end of the Cold War, those threats have become varied and less easily identifiable. At the same time, the information revolution produced a profusion of communication methods, from satellite television to mobile phone messaging. International broadcasters face increased competition not only from private broadcasters, but also from individuals.

Throughout its history, this Commission provided recommendations to public diplomacy practitioners on how to respond to the rapidly changing international media landscape. Recent reports issued recommendations to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)—the organization that oversees U.S. international broadcasting today— to support their efforts and to ensure that they remain a flexible, creative and innovative force in U.S. public diplomacy.

More than ever, U.S. government-funded radio and television broadcasting is a necessary instrument of foreign policy to reach mass audiences. Coordination and sophisticated planning from the BBG, its grantees and affiliates are important to keep up with the rapid pace of change in broadcasting.



# Broadcasting

## WAR ON TERROR—EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Measurement in public diplomacy is urged in the Commission's reports and others, yet most programs still fail to incorporate adequate evaluation. Research is often too simple and fails to incorporate local media and audience information. Studies also frequently do not disclose inherent limitations, such as error and the effects of censorship or other cultural restrictions. Public diplomacy practitioners will need to enhance the evaluation process in order to understand how the U.S. can communicate most credibly and effectively.

### 2004 Recommendation

This Commission has repeatedly stressed the importance of measurement in public diplomacy programming. Among other recommendations, it called for ways to show progress in the war on terror and proposed that a culture of measurement be established within all public diplomacy structures. In its 2004 report, the Commission noted that the expansion of audiences is not enough; international broadcasters should also show measurable impact.

### Implementation

- **Evaluation Process:** Programs are evaluated two ways. The annual BBG language review process looks at the overall picture of international broadcasting and ensures that resources are being channeled strategically. Second, each BBG surrogate or grantee supervises its own program review. These reviews generally assess program balance and objectivity, compare program service to other regional media and establish goals for the next fiscal year.
- **Audience Research:** The BBG also conducts audience research through its own office of research and through independent contractors. These studies frequently do not delve any further than general viewer and credibility ratings; more segmented, results-focused research would provide a more effective guide for programming structure. Radio and television audience numbers are important but not enough; the BBG should measure program impact and progress toward meeting their stated mission, "to promote freedom and democracy and to enhance understanding by broadcasting accurate, objective and balanced news and information about the United States and the world to audiences abroad." Such research is expensive, but vital to make broadcasting more effective.

## SATELLITE TELEVISION

Television programming, particularly satellite television, is increasingly popular throughout the world. The rapid rise in satellite television presents an opportunity for international broadcasters to capitalize on the medium's popularity. In the Middle East, television is the most relied upon source of information. Growth in satellite viewership, while promising, is still unstable. It remains a challenge for any new TV station to capture a sizeable audience in an already saturated and competitive satellite TV market. Additional research also is required to assess the impact of consumer preference for local news stations over pan-Arab television. The evolving satellite television environment will require a flexible and responsive approach.

### 2004 Recommendation

Recent Commission reports noted that satellite television is an excellent way to reach many markets, but that given the expense of producing satellite programming, it should be employed where it has the best potential for reaching audiences. The 2004 Advisory Commission report recommended further development of satellite capabilities.

### Implementation

- **Middle East:** Alhurra plans to add service to Europe. The BBG reports that they doubled the length of a daily television news program broadcast to Iran from 30 to 60 minutes a day. The BBG reports that they plan to expand programming to 3 hours daily over the next year.
- **Other Regions:** The VOA recently responded to requests for more programming from major television stations in Indonesia by launching three new 5-minute news and information programs. The VOA also launched a new 30-minute Russian-language news program. This fall, the VOA launched Urdu-language television programming for Pakistan.
- **Satellite Uplinks:** The BBG created a satellite video uplink in Baghdad to allow Alhurra to transmit news reports and other programming from Iraq.

# Broadcasting

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

International broadcasting provides audiences with news and information while also educating international publics about American policy, culture and values. VOA's Special English programs are among their most popular worldwide. Teaching American English on the air also successfully builds psychological bridges with audiences by sharing language and culture. Additionally, the VOA sponsors training programs in broadcasting and journalism for VOA affiliates in select countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh and Argentina.

### 2004 Recommendation

The Commission previously noted that educational programs are extremely efficient since VOA educational programming is often rebroadcast by other entities. In its 2004 report, the Commission recommended that the BBG reach audiences through teaching products that educate users in both the English language and American culture.

### Implementation

- **Special English:** Special English increased programming from 23.5 hours in 2004 to a total of 41 hours as of September 2005. Special English is now on Iraq FM, Kuwait FM and Kabul FM. The BBG reported that the increase in programming was achieved not through increased funding, but through reallocating existing resources.
- **Training Programs:** In addition, the BBG expanded training programs. Broadcaster training in journalism and production is sought out by affiliates. The FY 2005 budget for training was \$194,500 and remains stable for FY 2006. These training programs help to develop relationships with affiliate stations. They also are useful in promoting free and independent media abroad in the long-term, and fulfill the requirements of providing training for indigenous media established in the 1994 International Broadcasting Act. We encourage the BBG to expand these programs significantly.

## INTERNET AND HARD-TO-REACH AREAS

Remaining on top of technological developments will be essential to public diplomacy's future success. The Internet already allows international broadcasters to be more flexible and innovative in reaching audiences. To compete in the rapidly evolving international media landscape, the BBG should continue to employ and evolve with new media and delivery systems. New technologies are also useful in overcoming the jamming, occurring in many countries, of programming from BBG surrogates and grantees.

### 2004 Recommendation

In its 2004 report, the Commission encouraged the BBG to actively look for ways to employ emerging technology and to expand broadcasting reach over the Internet. The Commission also recommended that the BBG continue its efforts to overcome jamming.

### Implementation

- **Anti-jamming:** International broadcasters continue to battle signal jamming and Internet blocking. The BBG reports that it sends daily emails to more than 4 million addresses in China and 5,000 in Iran. The 2005 and 2006 BBG budgets each include \$1 million for Internet anti-jamming efforts.
- **Internet:** Engaging new technologies, the VOA launched RSS (Real Simple Syndication) service, making it easy for individuals and organizations to syndicate VOA content. By the end of 2005, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) will employ RSS technology in all of its language Web sites. The VOA also makes MP3s available for download and will begin podcasting (syndicating MP3s via RSS feed) service soon. RFE/RL hopes to incorporate podcasting technology before the end of the year.
- **Telephone:** Three of RFE/RL's Web sites—English, Russian and South Slavic—currently employ Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) technologies that allow users to access Web content via their mobile phones. The VOA is currently testing Short Messaging Service (SMS) technology to determine its most appropriate use. The Middle East Broadcasting Networks developed an extensive SMS call-in system that allows audiences across the Middle East to send questions and comments to discussion programs aired on Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq. Radio Sawa operates live phone chats in select Middle Eastern cities.

# Conclusion





# Conclusion

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The previous section outlined public diplomacy's progress over the past year. This section focuses on suggested improvements for the future. Going forward, the Commission hopes public diplomacy will:

- **Connect:** Public diplomacy practitioners need to be involved in policy-planning in Washington. While foreign public opinion does not dictate U.S. policy, it is constructive to factor in potential overseas reactions when formulating policy and its presentation. This will require a more comprehensive, interagency approach and strong cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, there needs to be greater cross-utilization of Foreign Service Officers among the various career tracks within the State Department. All State Department personnel, whether their job is to issue visas or to plan economic strategy, conduct outreach by virtue of their interactions with the host-country population.
- **Modernize:** It is time to modernize the Smith-Mundt Act, which prohibits the United States government from exposing U.S. citizens to its public diplomacy programming. With today's technology, information is borderless. Modernizing the Smith-Mundt Act also might allow for greater participation from the private sector as it learns more about available outreach opportunities.
- **Focus:** The State Department should focus its resources on successful programs. Various programs continue simply because they have existed since the Cold War. To meet the needs of the new communication age, the State Department should conduct a comprehensive review of its public diplomacy programs to assess what is most effective in current circumstances.
- **Innovate:** In today's world, it is not enough for public diplomacy practitioners to say they have a presence on the Internet. Practitioners need to constantly engage appropriate technologies that will reach key audiences. Practitioners need to think ahead in technology and embrace innovations.
- **Partner:** State Department personnel and other public diplomacy actors should partner with the private sector more. Businesses, universities, nonprofits, community leaders, sister-city programs and others share a deep interest in fostering a fair image of America.



- **Train:** Media relations are more important than ever. Media training needs to be improved and sustained for long-term effectiveness. Intensive courses in technology, media outreach, public speaking, cross-cultural issues and language are critical to meeting the challenges of a media-savvy world. Furthermore, these skills will help public diplomacy officers bridge what Edward R. Murrow called “the last three feet.” Modern technologies help to expand outreach, but there is still no substitute for effective face-to-face contact.
- **Engage:** Proactive public diplomacy entails assessing how local populations obtain their information, then reaching them where they are. In some cases, radio might work where television does not. In other cases, printed material might penetrate areas where no mass medium can. Some audiences may be reachable through electronic technologies such as blogs and podcasts.
- **Adapt:** The global information age presents new challenges to the practice of public diplomacy. Instantaneous news and electronic information distribution require proactive communication strategies and lightning-fast response. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work today. Public diplomacy practitioners need to leverage their broad array of outreach tools to tailor their message to a given audience.
- **Invent:** Public diplomacy practitioners should make creative use of an array of diplomatic resources. For example, they could encourage a career option for senior Foreign Service Officers who are talented linguists to become “language ambassadors.” This would significantly aid media outreach efforts and expand public diplomacy beyond major cities. Field officers could be given a high-tech toolbox offering a range of cutting-edge technologies designed to reach targeted and potential audiences.
- **Measure:** Polling needs to play a larger role in outreach efforts. Public diplomacy is not just about getting audiences to know you; it also is about getting to know your audiences. We need to know more about public diplomacy’s effects on attitudes and behavior. Moreover, we need to avoid standardized approaches, and instead encourage country-specific research strategies.

## COMMISSIONER AND STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**BARBARA M. BARRETT** is chairman of the Commission. An attorney and pilot, she is the president and CEO of Triple Creek Guest Ranch in Darby, Montana. She is a member of the US-Afghan Women's Council and the Council on Foreign Relations. She serves on the boards of the Center for International Private Enterprise and the Senior Advisory Board at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She was chairman of Thunderbird, the Garvin School of International Management and the Arizona World Affairs Council. She also served as 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.

**MARIA SOPHIA AGUIRRE** is an associate professor of economics at The Catholic University of America. Dr. Aguirre has also held appointments at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University's Economics Department. She serves and has served as an officer in different capacities on several organizations' Boards. Among them is the Commission on the Status of Women in the Professions, a working group of the American Economic Association. Her work has been published in numerous academic journals. She has also served as advisor to several governments on women's education, family policies and health, and has previously advised several U.N. representatives.

**ELIZABETH F. BAGLEY** serves as "of counsel" to Manatt, Phelps & Phillips Law Firm and senior advisor to Manatt Jones Global Services. Ambassador Bagley's prior government experience includes serving as the senior advisor to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright from November 1997 to January 2001. From 1994 to 1997, she served as the U.S. Ambassador to Portugal. She also held several positions in the U.S. Department of State from 1977 to 1981. Ambassador Bagley is a Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and serves on several international boards, including the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Vital Voices International and the American Ireland Fund.

**TRE' EVERS** is the president and co-founder of central Florida's largest Public Relations company, Consensus Communications, a full-service, strategic communications consulting firm. 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.

**PENNE KORTH PEACOCK** has served on the Commission since 1997. President George H. W. Bush chose her to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius and as his first female appointee to serve as co-chair of the American Bicentennial Presidential Inaugural. She currently serves on the boards of directors of Chevy Chase Bank, the Council of American Ambassadors, the Hillwood Museum, and the US-Mauritius Business Council. She has formerly held positions with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Meridian International Center, and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Ambassador Peacock is an International Representative for Sotheby's and a member of the Sydney Cancer Center Advisory Committee.

**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.

### STAFF

**ATHENA KATSOULOS** is the executive director of the Commission. She brings to her position extensive foreign policy experience, having served with the Departments of State and Defense, both overseas and in Washington, D.C. She has previously served as special advisor to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. In addition to her government service, she was an adjunct professor of political science and foreign affairs in Paris, France.

**JAMICE CLAYTON** is the administrative officer of the Commission. Her 27-year career with the federal government has included service with the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, the Selective Service System and Health and Human Services.

**LEIF PICOULT** serves as a research fellow at the Commission. He has several years of writing and editing experience in Washington and Seoul. He holds master's degrees in International Communication and Korean Studies from American University and Korea University, respectively. He also possesses bachelor's degrees in Journalism and Psychology from the University of Maryland at College Park.

**JULIANNA EVETT** served as a research fellow for the 2004 and 2005 Commission reports. She is a recent graduate of the Masters Degree program in International Communication at American University, where she specialized in public diplomacy. She has formerly served as a communications assistant and a French language instructor.

**MELISSA MACS** served as an intern with the Commission. She graduated from American University, where she studied print journalism and psychology. She now works in the private sector and hopes to work internationally.

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