



Highlights of [GAO-07-795T](#), a testimony to the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Why GAO Did This Study

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, polling data have generally shown that anti-Americanism has spread and deepened around the world, and several groups have concluded that this trend may have harmed U.S. interests in significant ways. U.S. public diplomacy activities undertaken by the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), which totaled almost \$1.5 billion in fiscal year 2006, are designed to counter such sentiments. Based on our prior reports, this testimony addresses (1) the negative consequences various groups have associated with rising anti-American sentiments; (2) strategic planning, coordination, and performance measurement issues affecting U.S. public diplomacy efforts; and (3) key challenges that hamper agency activities.

What GAO Recommends

We have made a number of recommendations in the past 4 years to the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the BBG to address strategic planning issues and administrative and staffing concerns. Both agencies agreed with our recommendations and have made some progress in implementing them.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-795T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Jess T. Ford at (202) 512-4128, fordj@gao.gov.

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Strategic Planning Efforts Have Improved, but Agencies Face Significant Implementation Challenges

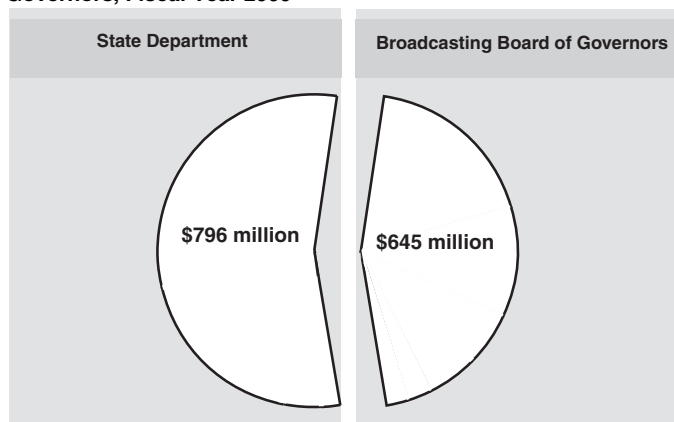
What GAO Found

Numerous experts, policymakers, and business leaders have identified various potential negative consequences of growing anti-Americanism. According to these sources, anti-Americanism may have a negative impact on American economic interests, the ability of the United States to pursue its foreign policy and military goals, and the security of Americans worldwide.

Our reports and testimonies have highlighted the lack of a governmentwide communication strategy, as well as the need for an integrated State Department strategy, enhanced performance indicators for State and the BBG, and improvements in the BBG's audience research methodology. We also reported in March 2007 that U.S. foreign assistance activities were not being consistently publicized and branded, and we recommended that State help develop governmentwide guidance for marking and publicizing these efforts. State has responded to our recommendations and has taken actions to develop a more strategic approach and measure the effectiveness of its programs. Likewise, the BBG has adapted its strategic plan to include additional performance indicators and is beginning to address our recommendations to adopt management improvements at its Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).

Nevertheless, State and the BBG continue to face challenges in implementing public diplomacy and international broadcasting. State has shortages in staffing and language capabilities, and security issues continue to hamper overseas public diplomacy efforts. For example, in 2006 we reported that State continued to experience significant foreign language proficiency shortfalls, particularly at posts in the Muslim world. The BBG faces challenges in managing a disparate collection of broadcasters. Also, MBN faces several managerial challenges involving program review, internal control, and training.

U.S. Public Diplomacy Resources for State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2006



Source: State Department and BBG.