



# DIGITAL OUTREACH TEAM

## **Mission:**

The Digital Outreach Team (DOT) is a ten-person group within IIP that actively engages with Arabic, Persian and Urdu language Internet sites, including on blogs, news sites and discussion forums. Its mission is to explain U.S. foreign policy and to counter misinformation. The team operates overtly and identifies itself online as being part of the State Department.

## **Tactics:**

The DOT posts several dozen comments on 25-30 Internet sites per week. The team creates engaging, informal personas for its online discussions instead of simply making dry policy pronouncements. It contrasts objective facts and analysis with the often emotional, conspiracy laden arguments of U.S. critics in hopes that online readers will take a fresh look at their opinions of the U.S. Beyond short comments and longer op-ed pieces, the DOT posts short, translated videos previously produced by IIP.

## **Impact:**

The DOT is engaged on many of the most popular sites that cater to Arabic, Persian and Urdu language readers. Its target audience does not include extremist sites due to their lack of traffic and unwillingness to engage with U.S. representatives. The DOT's operation has drawn attention in a number of media outlets in the region, including print media. Since its operation began in November 2006, on a smaller scale than at present, the DOT has posted more than 2000 messages and received several hundred thousand "hits" online.

