

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

REVITALIZING U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

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Anti-Americanism is on the rise around the globe and not only endangers our national security but also puts us at risk of direct attack from those who hate us most. The growing distrust of American policies and values makes it even more difficult for America to realize long-term global aspirations as we lose friends and influence on the world stage. Effective U.S. public diplomacy is a vital instrument of national power and key to demonstrating to the world community we can once again be trusted and admired. U.S. public diplomacy can promote a favorable climate of public opinion in countries critical to U.S. interests if it is credible, flexible, adequately resourced, and proactive. Today, in part due to its configuration within the Department of State, U.S. public diplomacy is far from being credible, flexible, adequately resourced or proactive. This paper will trace the rise and fall of U.S. public diplomacy, discuss problems that prevent us from having a more effective public diplomacy program, and then frame a set of recommendations for a revitalization of U.S. public diplomacy.

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REVITALIZING U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The United States today lacks the capabilities in public diplomacy to meet the national security threat emanating from political instability, economic deprivation and extremism, especially in the Arab and Muslim World¹

- Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy,
October 2003

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

When U.S. astronauts landed on the moon for the first time, it was the Voice of America (VOA), the radio service of the United States Information Agency (USIA), that carried Neil Armstrong's words to people on Earth. When a student or scholar in a foreign land conducts research in the U.S. information center in his city, he is using one of the most popular services provided by U.S. public diplomats in his country. When such notable international figures as Anwar Sadat, Helmut Schmidt and Margaret Thatcher visited the United States under the educational exchange programs of the U.S. government, U.S. public diplomacy was at work. These examples are but a few of the many activities in which public diplomacy is involved, but they help to illustrate the scope and variety of modern public diplomacy.

According to the Planning Group for Integration of USIA in the Department of State, "public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interests of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences."² Traditional diplomacy actively engages on a government-to-government basis whereas public diplomacy deals not only with foreign governments and officials but also with non-governmental individuals and organizations. Public diplomacy activities may also represent many differing views as espoused by private American individuals and organizations, in addition to official U.S. government views associated with traditional diplomacy.

In governments across the globe, public opinion greatly influences the direction of policy. While it is still necessary to communicate with the leaders of global societies through traditional diplomatic means, access to the Internet and satellite television can inform and mislead public opinion, making efforts to strengthen U.S. public diplomacy even more critical. Gaining international support for the war on terrorism, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and ensuring the safety of American citizens aboard now more than ever depends on maintaining international public support. Although America cannot determine its foreign policy solely on the basis of what is palatable to foreign publics, the absence of international public support can reduce the likelihood of success by questioning the legitimacy of the policy

and inhibiting support from other nations. Therefore, when a policy is adopted, the government should carefully consider the proper means for communicating it to populations abroad.³

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Readers of recent public opinion polls and foreign newspapers, along with an ever-growing viewership of satellite television and the Internet, are keenly aware that anti-Americanism is both a regular feature of these mediums and steadily growing around the globe. The amount of discontent around the world bears a direct relationship to the amount of danger Americans face abroad.⁴ With the United States at its zenith of power, both militarily and economically, why should we care if we are well liked or not? In part, at least, because although we as a nation are in a position as the world's only true superpower, we are also inimitably vulnerable across a broad spectrum. Not only are we at risk of direct attack in the United States as we witnessed on September 11, 2001, our long-term goals of promoting freedom and establishing democracies across the globe are being put in jeopardy.

As Senator Richard G. Lugar of Indiana, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, noted, "The governments of most nations respond to public opinion, whether it is demonstrated in the voting booths or in the streets."⁵ What matters to foreign publics matters to their leaders, so with regard to their level of support for U.S interests and policies, their opinion must matter to us or at the very least be considered in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Taking foreign opinion into account does not mean we forsake U.S. interests or values. However, it would be naïve to think that attitudes abroad are not obstructing the success of American policies and endangering the safety of Americans. This danger makes the revitalization of our public diplomacy and corresponding positive influence on world opinion crucial to stemming the tide of anti-Americanism and enhancing the success of our long-term national goals.

DISARRAY AND A RUDE AWAKENING

Arriving in office, the Bush Administration was uncertain about playing the public diplomacy hand dealt by the Clinton Administration. Aware of the decline in America's image among foreign publics, it sought new tools to win the hearts and minds of potential allies and adversaries. Initially, the White House created an Office of Global Communication to coordinate messages to foreign audiences and nominated a former advertising executive, Charlotte Beers, as the new Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in the State Department.⁶

Meanwhile, the DOD Defense Science Board commissioned a task force on "managed information dissemination" that found U.S. public diplomacy programs to be understaffed, underfunded, poorly coordinated, and insufficiently integrated into national security planning and

implementation processes.⁷ It prepared a detailed report that recommended the creation of a National Security Council policy coordinating committee on international information dissemination and that both State Department public diplomacy programs and DOD foreign communication programs be strengthened along traditional lines.⁸

On September 11, 2001, when America was attacked by foreign terrorists in hijacked airliners, it became apparent once again that the United States had enemies in the world. The Bush Administration tried to limit Al-Qaeda's ability to spread propaganda, recruit terrorists and sensationalize the events of 9-11 by clamping down on the media and asking U.S. television networks to limit replays of Osama bin Laden tapes, urging Qatar's government to do the same with their popular al-Jazeera TV channel, and firing a VOA director who permitted an interview with Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar. Critics reasoned that America needed to fight back with its own communication efforts.

While the State Department set about preparing a \$15 million advertising campaign to showcase Muslim life in America to Islamic nations, the Pentagon established the Office of Strategic Influence to provide a means to get a message out aimed at countering the terrorists, using a combination of public affairs and information warfare. Although details were never revealed, the office would have been engaged in a broad range of activities, from dispensing truthful news releases to planting stories through outside contractors to conducting cyber attacks against enemy computer networks and web sites.⁹ However, some senior officers complained that this would ruin the credibility of legitimate public affairs. Further, media critics charged that false news stories planted in foreign news outlets could end up in the American press, violating a ban on government propaganda activities in the United States. As a result, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld closed the office in 2002 and eventually replaced it with one to coordinate combat information activities along more traditional lines.¹⁰ Meanwhile, only four Islamic nations aired the State Department's television ads touting Muslim tolerance in the United States, and critics like Mamoun Fandy, an Egyptian media analyst who served briefly as a consultant to the campaign, charged that it seemed expedient, insincere, and likely to inflame anti-American sentiments.

Public diplomacy and related international broadcasting efforts cannot be put back together the way they were before the 1999 merger of the United States Information Agency (USIA) with the Department of State, as some concerned USIA alumni have suggested and will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections. Another complete reorganization would cause needless anxiety and waste. Furthermore, the improvements already achieved would be lost. Merging USIA into the State Department has enabled public diplomacy to become an

integral part of foreign policy planning and implementation. It more closely follows corporate public relations practice and the institutional model of military public affairs¹¹ Independence has brought creative thinking to international broadcasting, allowing it to fill a gap rapidly by beaming balanced news to certain captive audiences in the Middle East. Before examining short and long-term recommendations aimed at revitalizing U.S. public diplomacy, it is important to first examine how we arrived at the conundrum facing our current efforts to effectively employ public diplomacy.

COLD WAR SUCCESS, THEN DISREPAIR

Since World War II, public diplomacy and foreign broadcasting have helped contain and defeat Soviet communism, promote democracy in many countries around the world, and expose foreign publics to American values. Both functions have roots in World War II efforts aimed at countering Axis radio broadcasts, such as those by Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose that were meant to demoralize occupied populations and allied troops.¹² These efforts at public diplomacy flourished during the Cold War when information moved at a slower pace and little was known about America in closed societies behind the Iron Curtain or in developing countries where newspapers and radio were just beginning to reach important segments of the population. During this time, their purpose gelled into countering negative propaganda and presenting a favorable image of the United States.¹³

Overseas press briefings made official Washington more accessible to journalists in foreign lands. Simultaneously, long-range aspects of U.S. public diplomacy programs like cultural and academic exchanges (numbering about 700,000 to date) helped educate world leaders like Anwar Sadat, Helmut Schmidt, and Margaret Thatcher at early points in their careers about the United States and its values. Meanwhile, broadcasters like Willis Conover brought jazz and its musical message of freedom to listeners in the Soviet Union, and the Voice of America (VOA) and WORLDNET TV informed Chinese audiences about the pro-democracy movement that filled Tiananmen Square in 1989. These public diplomacy operations have always been regarded as important foreign policy tools; however with the advent of the information age they have become even more crucial to the overall success of U.S. foreign policy.¹⁴

But this does not mean that these programs are well supported. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, public diplomacy and international broadcasting suffered from declining interest in the White House and among members of Congress and other vital U.S. opinion leaders. Key programs were eliminated, and the public diplomacy and foreign broadcasting

budgets were slashed. In 1998, Congress passed the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act to cut costs. In doing so it ended a half-century of public diplomacy independence and spun off foreign broadcasting as an independent entity. Both institutions were still struggling to regroup on September 11, 2001.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

For 46 years, the centerpiece of U.S. public diplomacy was the United States Information Agency (USIA), established in 1953 at the height of the Cold War to counter anti-American propaganda from the Soviet Union and coordinate foreign information dissemination programs. Its early directors included media pioneers like journalists Edward R. Murrow, Frank Shakespeare, and Carl Rowan. Charles Wick, the dynamic director during the Reagan Administration, prodded it into creating the first global satellite television network, WORLDNET.¹⁵

But after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, lawmakers began to cut budgets without critically rethinking the mission. For instance, resources for the USIA mission in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, were slashed in half, according to Fred Coffey, Jr., a former public diplomacy director there.¹⁶ From 1995 to 2001, academic and cultural exchanges dropped from 45,000 to 29,000 annually, while many binational cultural centers with accessible downtown store-front libraries either were abandoned or became "information resource centers" stuck in spare rooms of fortress-like embassies.

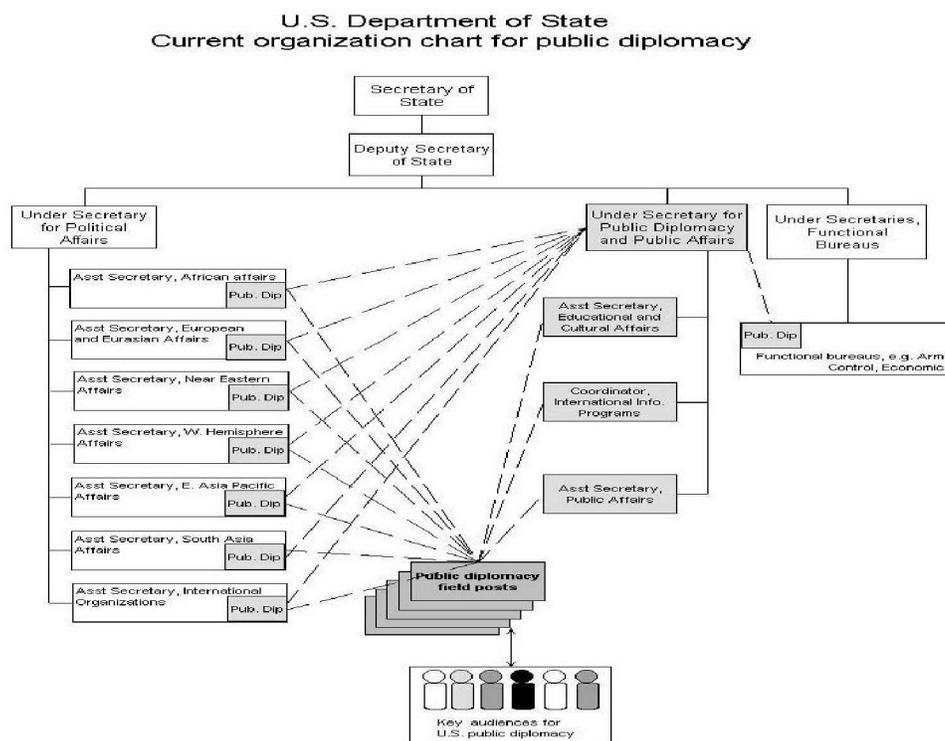
On October 1, 1999, USIA disappeared as an independent agency as a result of congressional efforts to reduce foreign operations expenditures and merge the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) into the Department of State. With its multibillion-dollar budgets, USAID was the main target, but skillful advocacy by its administrator helped it to avoid the wrecking ball. USIA, barred by law from using any of its products intended for foreign audiences in the United States, never enjoyed USAID's level of domestic advocacy and easily succumbed to consolidation into the State Department--despite efforts by a coalition of liberals and conservatives to maintain USIA as a separate entity.¹⁷

HOSTILE TAKEOVER AND REORGANIZATION

The consolidation of public diplomacy functions into the U.S. Department of State was both a curse and a blessing. USIA was a small, generally well-managed independent U.S. government organization with an efficient finance and personnel system. It was folded into a "troubled cabinet agency" where travel vouchers sometimes take six weeks to process, budgets

of small offices are often raided by larger bureaus, and hard assets and personnel are gobbled up more through internal political designs than by senior management decisions or congressional intent. While the Clinton Administration's foreign affairs reinvention plan merged public diplomacy assets into the State Department, it left the department itself largely untouched.¹⁸

State Department negotiators were not familiar with the USIA mission and regarded some of the Agency's assets as scrap to strengthen State's own bureaus. USIA's area offices were



consolidated into State's geographic bureaus and lost their independent budgets and reporting channels. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) swallowed USIA's media reaction and opinion analysis division. The Public Affairs Bureau (PA) absorbed USIA's television production facilities and the Foreign Press Centers in Washington, New York, and Los Angeles, while the Office of Strategic Communication--an important message-coordinating entity--was abolished.¹⁹ Figure 1 outlines the State department's current organizational structure for employment of public diplomacy.

FIGURE 1. DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

NOT ALL BAD NEWS

On the positive side, folding USIA into the State Department made it clear that modern diplomacy was not only a matter of discrete negotiation, but also a task of communicating with foreign publics. Because public diplomacy directorates were placed in the State Department's geographic bureaus, their inputs were finally able to influence the "takeoff of policies, not just the occasional crash landing," addressing a hope USIA Director Edward R. Murrow had expressed 40 years ago. Pairing State's ailing Public Affairs Bureau with Public Diplomacy elevated its status and suggested the need for State's personnel to develop core competencies similar to those of public diplomacy officers.²⁰

Independent international broadcasting brought more creativity and strategic planning based on research of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), a bipartisan board that was established in 1994 to consolidate the efforts of all U.S.-sponsored foreign broadcast transmissions.²¹ Despite management upheavals, just six months after the September 11 tragedy, the BBG established the Middle Eastern Radio Network (MERN) and Radio Sawa broadcasting 24 hours a day in Arabic on AM, FM, shortwave, digital satellite, and the Internet. Although criticized for content heavy on pop music and light on news (only 10 to 20 minutes out of 60), it began to appeal to youthful audiences in eight Arabic countries including Iraq. Radio Farda ("Radio Tomorrow" in Persian) began transmitting into Iran with a similar mix of music and news in December 2002 on AM, shortwave, digital satellite, and Internet from studios in Washington, D.C., and Prague, Czech Republic. Hoping to take advantage of the success of these efforts President Bush allocated \$30 million to create an Arabic-language satellite television network in his FY 2004 budget²², the basic structure of which is now beginning to take shape. Despite these relative successes there are a number of areas of the USIA-Department of State merger that still need to be resolved.

PROBLEMS STILL REMAIN

While public diplomacy (PD) area directorates became features in State's geographic bureaus, the merger substantially weakened field operations. PD/PA directors in State's regional bureaus now report to State's regional assistant secretaries below the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Thus, public diplomacy field reporting that once went swiftly through proprietary channels to senior public diplomacy decision-makers must now endure lengthy embassy staff and ambassadorial reviews that are standard procedure for State's political reporting. Public diplomacy lost its separate budget and control over representational housing, cars, and specialized computer and communications equipment. To support field initiatives,

public diplomacy area directors must persuade State regional assistant secretaries with little familiarity or interest in overseas communications to share resources. Further complicating effective conduct of field operations has been the loss of institutional knowledge that was an outgrowth of the merger.

The institutional expertise that skillfully managed information programs for foreign audiences and opinion leaders no longer exists. Public diplomacy's domestic counterpart, public affairs, is still largely dedicated to reactive press briefings, although it has developed a useful Web site and has facilitated some press encounters with State's senior leaders. Staffed by civil servants historically denied opportunities for public relations training or overseas experience, public affairs was relegated to organizing press conferences and distributing lengthy speeches by senior officials in the 1990s.²³

Media and public opinion research is misplaced in State's intelligence bureau, which analyzes classified material for State's political decision-makers. This research should be in the public diplomacy hierarchy where public diplomacy officers can drive its activities and immediately access data to shape communications strategies. The Foreign Press Center and television production staff now sit in the domestically-focused Public Affairs Bureau, which has little experience in dealing with foreign audiences or making video products for overseas distribution. Key programs curtailed in the 1990s, such as U.S. government-supported libraries in foreign countries, are now virtually extinct. The already decimated educational and cultural exchanges, including Fulbright fellowships, were cut by an additional 2,500 slots in 2002.²⁴

The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act made foreign broadcasting independent and strengthened the BBG, giving it authority to act as "a collective CEO" in the words of Board member Norman J. Pattiz. This had disastrous consequences when, shortly after September 11, 2001, the new BBG appointed a Bush Administration candidate to direct the VOA and some BBG members allegedly undercut his decisions, resulting in a resignation and needless public scandal. The new BBG structure also presents opportunities for conflict of interest in that sitting board members serve part-time and may continue as executives for private businesses with vested interests in board decisions. While this change brings welcome expertise to the Board, there is little to keep members from directly hiring business associates to work in subordinate agencies.

Congress has steadily reduced the budget for international broadcasting from \$844 million in FY 1993 to \$560 million for FY 2004, necessitating cuts in services targeted to regions such as the Middle East and Latin America at a time of growing upheaval. In 2001, the BBG dropped Portuguese-language radio service to Brazil, the world's eighth largest economy. Yet the BBG's

confusing organization and collection of services, stations, affiliates, and surrogates still waste money with ineffective and overlapping efforts. Surrogates Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty still receive substantial U.S. funding although they no longer broadcast to captive nations. Radio Martí has lost effectiveness by catering to Miami's Cuban exile community, while TV Martí is hardly seen. Radio Sawa and Farda reach new listeners with pop music and balanced news as if they were surrogates, but the BBG plans to cut VOA transmissions with editorial content that could address extreme anti-U.S. propaganda in Middle Eastern media.²⁵

The Bush Administration's ambitious \$30 million effort to start a 24-hour Middle Eastern satellite television service may not be cost-effective considering its unknown impact in a region where satellite TV is still banned in two large countries (Saudi Arabia and Iran) and faces stiff competition from Arab networks in other countries. Elsewhere, the Voice of America continues shortwave broadcasts even though target audiences on that bandwidth are disappearing. WORLDNET TV wastes some of its potential on innocuous public affairs shows and old science documentaries dubbed in foreign languages. Finally, civil service personnel rules continue to enshrine a static workforce that keeps VOA from flexibly expanding and contracting according to critical needs, necessitating the use of surrogate outlets.

USIA was consolidated within the Department of State with the promise of facilitating the merger of policy-making and public diplomacy. After the recommendations of numerous task forces and presidential directives of two administrations, the development of foreign policy is beginning to include public diplomacy analysis and input. Public diplomacy is a strategic long-term effort that requires consistent application to be successful. Public diplomacy cannot deliver instantaneous support for U.S. policies that may be unpopular overseas.²⁶ Given a strategic direction and time to work, however, public diplomacy can nurture a positive relationship of America abroad and ultimately establish relationships that provide a basis for trust and understanding. Once confidence is established it can cultivate a tolerance and understanding of U.S. policies and actions with the local populace, but this does not occur overnight. Quite often this requires a mix of interpersonal and media communications to ensure the proper messages reach a wide variety of audiences, and determining the right mix and proper message is time consuming. With the "instant results" approach that permeates the media in today's society public diplomacy is often robbed of the time it takes to connect with those targeted for our message. Effective public diplomacy must be multi-dimensional and flexible, as well as strategic and consistent. While there is no shortage of "good ideas" to continue to improve this process, the following sections propose recommendations aimed at the continued revitalization of public diplomacy.

SPREAD THE MESSAGE

Critical to the success of public diplomacy is a clear articulation of U.S. policies and perspectives to the world. With the advent of 24-hour news cycles the news management aspect of public diplomacy needs to ensure a rapid and precise communication of U.S. policies. However, the U.S. message is often times found missing from both local and international media broadcasts. Without a quick response to breaking news, events can be misinterpreted and public attitudes developed before the United States can respond effectively.

Although the State Department maintains staff to monitor word media around the clock, they do not have the capability to respond to crises as they arise. To address this shortcoming the State Department should establish 24-hour message dissemination and monitoring centers, modeled after the Coalition Information Centers created during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).²⁷ By augmenting the existing center in the United States with two additional centers in the United Kingdom and Australia, the State Department could provide an ability to effectively monitor and respond to world media cycles in eight-hour shifts. To ensure the U.K. and Australian centers are appropriately resourced and manned they should also be headed by a White House appointed director. No firm estimates exist to detail costs associated with starting these two new centers; however, the ability to respond in a timely and accurate manner to worldwide media events would seem to be justification enough.

A related recommendation involves ensuring that the United States takes credit for the good that it does around the globe. In FY 2004 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) appropriation was for \$12.6 billion directed at programs that foster economic growth and development and strengthen civic and governmental institutions in developing countries, yet little mention is made of these projects in the international media. In 2003 the Department of State and USAID created a Public Diplomacy Policy Group to ensure this word was getting out, but they have had mediocre success in getting foreign media to report on these dollar figures. As simple as the notion seems, we must ensure the aid projects sponsored and funded by USAID are communicated as gifts of the American people to audiences overseas. Integrating the actions of this policy group with the efforts of the BBG could ensure that at a minimum we spreading this news through foreign media outlets sponsored by the United States.

FORMULATING FOREIGN POLICY

Formulation of foreign policy, whether done at the macro Department of State level or the micro country team level, must be more sensitive to the aspects of public diplomacy.²⁸ Public

diplomacy is most effective when it is an integral piece of the foreign policy formulation process. Taking this approach inculcates public diplomacy into the policy making process, codifying its importance rather than treating it as an afterthought to help sell a foreign policy or react to a criticism. Including public diplomacy personnel in the foreign policy development process provides several benefits: (1) ensures that policy makers are aware of potential reactions of foreign leaders and publics to a proposed policy; (2) assists in developing a strategy in how to best communicate the proposed policy to foreign audiences; and (3) ensures that U.S. officials are prepared to effectively articulate the policies once they are announced.

While there are not enough public diplomacy personnel to be at every level of foreign policy development in the State Department, inclusion of Strategic Communications PCC personnel at the existing meetings of major regional PCCs would be a measure that could ensure active public diplomacy involvement in foreign policy formulation. The sheer volume of interagency meetings, to include PCCs, is staggering. However, the White House Office of Communications (WHOC) could be used as a filtering mechanism to ensure Strategic Communications PCC personnel are present at appropriate foreign policy meetings that have public diplomacy implications.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Over the past two years the Bush administration has taken steps to create an effective Public Diplomacy Coordinating Structure (PDCS) by forming the White House Office of Global Communications and establishing a Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) on Strategic Communications. However, there is still work to be done in both these nascent organizations. Specific recommendations include designating the White House Office of Global Communications (WHOGC) as the coordinator for interagency public diplomacy programs. The head of this office must have routine access to the President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense as well as other top government officials. Additionally, the PDCS should resemble the National Security Council in its role as adviser, synthesizer, coordinator and priority-setter.²⁹ This designation would ensure the WHOGC acts as the focal point for synchronizing public diplomacy efforts across the interagency and would have the “full weight” of the President behind it, a subtle but meaningful designation based on personal experience in the interagency.

To codify the structure and purpose of the PDCS, as well as provide an impetus for strengthening inter-agency coordination, the President should issue a Presidential Decision Directive on Public Diplomacy. A PDD would have the value of making clear the President's

personal commitment to reform public diplomacy and integrate it as a key element of U.S. foreign policy. This PDD would provide an outline and vision for America's public diplomacy strategy as well as providing a mechanism to unite the government's civilian and military public diplomacy assets, further demonstrating to the interagency the value the President places on effective public diplomacy.

EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

As described in the opening paragraph of this paper, many world leaders are alumni of U.S. cultural, education and professional exchange programs. Once they return to their home countries these emerging leaders often foster a better understanding of American culture within the local populace. Equally important is the opposite aspect of this program - providing opportunities for Americans to gain exposure to other cultures while serving as "citizen diplomats" overseas.³⁰ Despite the importance of programs designed to provide these opportunities, funding and in turn participation have remained stagnant or decreased. For example, funding for the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) educational and cultural exchange programs dropped from \$242 million in 1993 to \$245 million in 2003 and the number of Fulbright scholars fell by over 200 during the same period.³¹ Rather than cutting funding, programs such as these should be strengthened and potentially expanded. The 9/11 Commission report makes this point, stating, "The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope."³² The rebuilding process should begin with an increase in funding for short-term exchange opportunities such as the Fulbright Legacy of Leadership program. Participants who take advantage of these opportunities are an essential component of increasing global awareness of U.S culture and values.

Public encouragement of American citizen participation in exchange study or volunteering abroad would also seem to provide a relatively low cost opportunity to help influence world opinion and promotion of American values. If the State Department were to consolidate and maintain a comprehensive database of overseas volunteer opportunities that were accessible to the general public we could build on the volunteer spirit that resides in communities across America and export those volunteers. This First Lady would be an excellent choice to head this project and further demonstrate the administration's commitment to volunteerism. Participants in this project would ultimately increase exposure to our system of values and beliefs to targeted foreign countries.

TRAINING

U.S. government personnel in the field are faced with cultural challenges on a daily basis. Words matter, and one misplaced word or phrase can confuse or cause offense and ultimately require a concerted effort to repair the damage. Training improvement recommendations in this area are directed primarily at language instruction and cross-cultural training.^{33/34} According to the September 2003 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on 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.”³⁵ Lacking adequate knowledge of the local language, Foreign Service Officers and public officials find it very tough to build relationships with local civic and public sector leaders, as well as the local population. To address this shortfall the Department of State needs to aggressively pursue a “language strategy” that works toward ensuring Foreign Service Officers are trained and proficient in the required language skills.

The current level of cross-cultural training that most government personnel and contractors in support of government programs receive is inadequate. While career Foreign Service Officers receive as much as six months of cross-cultural training on a country, programs for other personnel are less extensive and tend to focus on behaviors and places to avoid. The instructional briefings that are given to government contractors and visiting military personnel quite often do nothing to address the values and beliefs behind local behaviors, background that can be essential for informed and appropriate interaction in a multitude of situations. Further development of cross-cultural training, and in some cases language training, for personnel other than Foreign Service personnel stationed abroad is warranted and would be a valuable tool in improving cultural sensitivities. This training could be accomplished by contracting with both United States-based schools and agencies in other countries. The initial training in the United States would provide a rudimentary set of language and cultural skills before departing the United States and then the individual would be taken to a more advanced level of training at an in-country facility prior to assuming his/her duties in the country.

Finally, during the two-week training program the State Department currently offers new ambassadors, only a small amount of time is devoted to public diplomacy. Their exposure to public diplomacy is usually limited to a one-to-two page printed summary specific to the country to which the ambassador is assigned. Two days of this course are devoted to media skills training, although this is not mandatory and not all ambassadors participate. As the chief spokesman for the U.S. government in their country and, as such, the lead agent for public diplomacy, new ambassadors need more training in these critical areas. Their training seminar

should be expanded along the lines of the program for career officers with participation mandated in the media skills program and an additional day devoted to cultural awareness specific to the country and region in which the ambassador will work.

CENTERS, CORNERS, VIRTUAL CONSULATES & LIBRARIES

To assist in telling America's story to the world in an accurate and efficient manner, Americans must interact with foreign citizens in environments that provide exposure to American values and culture. Prior to the 1999 reorganization USIA sponsored American libraries and centers in key locations across the globe. A large number of international leaders and decision makers have cited their experiences at these locations in developing a positive view of America and its values. Today this work is accomplished through the use of four types of information centers: American Corners, which are staffed by host country citizens; Virtual Presence Posts, which are interactive Web sites aimed at performing some consulate functions; Information Resource Centers, open only by appointment; and American Presence Posts, usually manned by a single Foreign Service officers and located in key region. Additionally, there are also a few American Libraries still in existence and functioning.³⁶

Over the last year the State Department has steadily increased spending on American Corners and Virtual Presence Posts, ending 2004 with 143 American Corners in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.³⁷ Where feasible, the State Department should expand the number of American Presence Posts, as this interaction between local populations and Foreign Service personnel can significantly further public diplomacy goals. A further recommendation is to develop a strategy to link the American Corners with Virtual Presence Posts to ensure common themes are being fostered at each type of location. The challenge facing the United States in expanding these facilities is ensuring that security is maintained across the spectrum of the facilities, while keeping them accessible enough to reach out to foreign audiences. A comprehensive strategy that includes all the entities described above and is fully funded will enable foreign publics to continue to benefit from these successful tools of public diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

In the information age, it is amazing that the United States government has been hesitant to embrace and effectively implement the public diplomacy and communication programs required to support America's defense and foreign policy goals. In recent times, only the Reagan Administration consistently factored communication strategies into meeting its domestic and international political agendas. Now, when Washington clearly needs public diplomacy as an effective tool for influencing world opinion, it seems to expect reactive public diplomacy

efforts to deliver goodwill instantly among foreign publics without first establishing a necessary foundation of mutual trust and understanding.

Public diplomacy is most effective when it builds on long-term relationships that identify common interests between people and capitalizes on them. It must be strategic, consistent, and flexible in its use of channels and, above all, must encourage two-way communication. In 1999, after several years of post Cold War neglect, the bulk of public diplomacy was folded into the State Department, with only international broadcasting remaining independent. To its credit, this "reinvention" does integrate traditional and public diplomacy at the most basic level. Now, however, we must adapt the resulting structures to make them work. Both public diplomacy and foreign broadcasting should be strengthened and made more efficient. Some programs that were cut, such as exchange programs, should be restored; others that have fulfilled their purpose, like some broadcasting operations, should be phased out.

Public diplomacy is an important instrument of national power. Its mission success was at its pinnacle during the great international conflicts of the Twentieth Century, but its philosophical roots go back to America's founding. In his farewell address, President George Washington counseled, "As the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion be enlightened."³⁸ The same could be said of U.S. diplomacy and foreign views of America. The absence of an overall public diplomacy strategy has resulted in a series of uncoordinated efforts and marginalization of public diplomacy as an effective instrument of national power. While a sound public diplomacy program is not a silver bullet for rebuilding America's image abroad, improving the conduct of public diplomacy and making it a vital component of our national policy making process is a vital step in ensuring our security and attaining our long-term global aspirations of freedom and democracy.

WORD COUNT=5945

ENDNOTES

- ¹ U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. Press Release. U.S. Department of State, October 1, 2003.
- ² United States Information Association (USIA) Alumni Association. *Public Diplomacy -- What it Is and Is Not*. September 1, 2002.
- ³ U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. *2004 Report*. U.S. Department of State, September 28, 2004: 3.
- ⁴ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy. *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U. S. Public Diplomacy*. Council on Foreign Relations, June 2003: 17.
- ⁵ Opening statement, Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Hearing on public diplomacy and Islam, February 27, 2003.
- ⁶ Sands, David R. *VOA Director Was Undermined by Doubts*. The Washington Times, September 5, 2002.
- ⁷ Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication. September 2004. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Technology and Logistics, Washington, D.C: 13.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Kiehl, William P. *Unfinished Business: Foreign Affairs Consolidation Was Only the Beginning*. National Security Studies Quarterly, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (Winter 2001): 117.
- ¹⁰ Sands, David R. *VOA Director Was Undermined by Doubts*. The Washington Times, September 5, 2002.
- ¹¹ U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. *Building America's Public Diplomacy Through a Reformed Structure and Additional Resources*. U.S. Department of State, 2002: 10.
- ¹² Feulner, Edwin J., Jr. *Don't Let Security Hide Our Light*. The Washington Post, October 7, 1985: A13.
- ¹³ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform*. Council on Foreign Relations, July 30, 2002: 32.
- ¹⁴ Keith, Kenton. *Troubled Takeover: The Demise of USIA*. Foreign Service Journal, September 1999. Available from <http://www.afsa.org/fsj/Sep99/TroubledKeith.htm>. Internet. Accessed 11 January 2005.
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¹⁷ Hopkins, Mark. *A Babel of Broadcasts*. Columbia Journalism Review, July-August 1999: 44.

¹⁸ Weyrich, Paul M. *Radio Static: The Controversy at the Voice of America*. CNS News, September 19, 2002. Available from: <http://www.cnsnews.com/Commentary/Archive/200209/COM20020919c.html>. Internet. Accessed 2 February 2005.

¹⁹ Dao, James and Eric Schmitt. *Pentagon Readies Efforts to Sway Sentiment Abroad*. The New York Times, February 19, 2002: 1-7.

²⁰ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy. *Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform*. Council on Foreign Relations, July 30, 2002: 32.

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²² Ibid, p.7.

²³ Weyrich, Paul M. *Radio Static: The Controversy at the Voice of America*. CNS News, September 19, 2002. Available from <http://www.cnsnews.com/Commentary/Archive/200209/COM20020919c.html>. Internet. Accessed 2 February 2005.

²⁴ "Radio Farda Emails. Broadcasting Board of Governors. December 27, 2002. Available from http://www.bbg.gov/bbg_news.cfm?articleID=56&mode=general. Internet. Accessed 9 January 2005.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Johnson, Stephen and Dale, Helle. *How to Reinvigorate U. S. Public Diplomacy*. Heritage Foundation, April 23, 2003: 10.

²⁷ U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. *2004 Report*. U.S. Department of State, September 28, 2004:7.

²⁸ Ibid., 35.

²⁹ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy. *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U. S. Public Diplomacy*. Council on Foreign Relations, June 2003: 9.

³⁰ U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. *2004 Report*. U.S. Department of State, September 28, 2004:18.

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³² The 9/11 Commission Report, "Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States", p. 377, W.W. Norton & Company

³³ The 9/11 Commission Report. *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. W.W. Norton & Company: New York: 18.

³⁴ Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy. *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U. S. Public Diplomacy*. Council on Foreign Relations, June 2003: 40.

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³⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

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