

Agenda and Edited Transcript for the May 2011 Public Meeting of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy convened a public meeting at 9:00am on May 12, 2011, in conference room 1107 at the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the meeting was open to the public from 9:00am to 11:00am.

The Commission requested the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs update the Commission on the State Department's "Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy" that was released in March 2010.¹ The Commission also asked the Broadcasting Board of Governors to update the Commission on its activities and to discuss whether U.S. international broadcasting was striking the right balance when engaging youth, elite, online or offline audiences. The Commission welcomed commentary from the public on these and other topics relevant to its mission.

Commission Members present:

Mr. Bill Hybl, Chairman
Amb. Penne Peacock

Staff Members present:

Mr. Matt Armstrong, Executive Director

Presenting at the Meeting:

Dawn McCall, Coordinator of the Bureau of International Information Programs
Ms. Betsy Whitaker, Strategic Communications Officer, Office of the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
Mr. Jeff Trimble, Executive Director, Broadcasting Board of Governors

Meeting Agenda:

9:00 Call to Order by Chairman Hybl
9:10 Introduction of the new operating model of the Commission (Armstrong)
9:20 Presentation by Ms. Betsy Whitaker, Strategic Communications Officer, Office of the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, on the state of the Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy
9:45 Presentation by Mr. Jeff Trimble, Executive Director, Broadcasting Board of Governors, on striking a balance in reaching audiences
10:05 Question & Answer session
10:50 Closing Comments by Chairman Hybl
11:00 Adjourn

¹ See <http://www.state.gov/pdcommission/library/> for a copy of the Framework.

Edited Transcript

CHAIRMAN WILLIAM HYBL: Good morning. Let me, if I may, on behalf of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, welcome all of you today. And we thank you for being here. This is a two-hour public meeting where we have some very distinguished guests. And for you, ladies and gentlemen thank you for being here.

I'm Bill Hybl, chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. I'm joined today by Ambassador Penne Korth Peacock and also our new executive director, Matt Armstrong.

You know, the Advisory Commission started in 1946 under another name² and in 1948 it was fully commissioned as the Advisory Commission on Information. And it's gone on really with a distinguished history, with a lot of members, and I think has played a very constructive role in its reporting to the President, to the Secretary of State, and also to the Congress.

As we've looked at the commission going forward, I think we're very fortunate to have Matt Armstrong, certainly someone who is well-known for his work in public diplomacy, and someone who speaks throughout the nation on the issue of public diplomacy, an expert on the Smith-Mundt Act, but also has the desire and, I think, the energy to really move this commission forward.

And as we look at the new model for the U.S. commission, I want to ask Matt to say a little bit about that and maybe introduce our first speaker.

Matt Armstrong.

MATT ARMSTRONG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, everybody, for being here. There are empty seats at the table, so if you don't want to be a back-bencher, if you want to come up, feel free. If you don't want to – if you want to stay in the back, that's fine as well.

I want to remind you that this is – this meeting is on the record. There is a recording and there will be a transcription of this meeting, and we will publish that, along with the bios of the speakers. So, again, thank you for coming as well.

The Commission is going through a restructuring, a reformat, if you will. We're going to have a new operational model than we've had in the past. Many of you I've already met with. We're going to be much more engaged with communities. That means both folks here in the Department, folks in other departments, folks in the academic community, and the think tanks.

² In April 1946, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton organized the Advisory Committee on Radio Programming. Members included: Edward R. Murrow as chairman; Philip H. Cohen, director for radio and television programming for an advertising agency and former director of the American radio station for Europe during the war; Harold Laswell; Don Francisco, from the advertising firm J. Walter Thompson and the former head of radio operations for the Office of the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs; Walter Millis, editorial and staff writer for the *New York Herald Tribune*; Sterling Fisher, director of the National Broadcasting Corporation's University on the Air; Malcolm Muir, editor-in-chief and president of *Newsweek* as well as founder of *BusinessWeek*; and James Linen, publisher of *Time* magazine.

We want to hear and understand the issues involved for Congress. We want to address those and figure out what solutions there may be, as well as harness the horsepower, if you will, of the broad thinking community.

I want to reiterate the charter and the purpose of the Commission, and that is to appraise the government's activities intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics. We also have a second mandate, if you will, to increase understanding and support for public diplomacy.³ And to that, we will be producing a lot more product and facilitating a lot more discussions than simply a report every two years.

One of the changes that we will be doing is a product more along the lines of white papers that are one-to-four pages of timely, relevant, digestible, and actionable. We will do iterative documents where we will issue a drafts, ask for comments and reissue.

We will be facilitating discussions. We are working with several think tanks on hosting discussions at their facilities, where we will partner with raising a particular topic and delving deep into the topic. We will also be hosting discussions up on Capitol Hill. It is important to understand that the Commission issues its reports to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress. In a sense, we are returning to our roots.

And with regard to the status and membership, we have two nominees for the Commission at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee waiting to be approved and pushed to the floor of the Senate. We are looking forward to having a full commission in the near future.

So with that – and then, let me just go over the agenda real quick before I introduce our first speaker, Betsy Whitaker.

We have a presentation by Betsy Whitaker from the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Policy Planning and Resources. She'll talk about the framework on public diplomacy: where we are today and what are the challenges and issues ahead.

Then we have a presentation by Jeff Trimble. I'll let Chairman Hybl introduce him. Then we'll go into a question and answer session. The Commissioners get the first cut at the questions and then it's open to the audience, and then of course they get to take the prerogative of the questions.

And after that we'll close. And we have a hard adjourn at 11:00. Apparently at 11:05, somebody else is moving in. So we will be timely with this. And we are already 10 minutes ahead of schedule, which is nice. So let's have this continue.

So, Betsy Whitaker, strategic communications officer. She's a retired FE-MC, retiring to the State Department in September '09 as a strategic communications officer assigned to the Office of Policy and Planning Resources for the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, this March returned to R/PPR – Policy Planning and Resources. Inasmuch, she served as office director from 2004 and '05. Now she's heading the office which she established at the request of the department leadership.

³ The current charter of the Commission: <http://www.state.gov/pdcommission/charter/index.htm>

I just want to give the introduction. The full biography will be in the product that we release following this that includes the transcripts. So, with that, I'll turn it over to you.

BETSY WHITAKER: Good morning. Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Peacock, Matt, delighted to be with you again this morning. I think some of us have had encounters in previous incarnations and previous times. And it's good to be here with you, also good to be with a community of people around the room, obviously self-identified as interested in and supportive of public diplomacy. We love to be in that atmosphere, don't we?

I'm also happy to be joined by Jeff Trimble, to my left, and by Dawn McCall, IIP Coordinator.⁴ While she's not been asked to present, I reserve the right to toss balls about IIP to her whenever they may come my way, if that's OK with you.

Matt asked me to talk a little bit this morning about what's happened since the launch of the Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy by Under Secretary Judith McHale a year ago, and I'm happy to talk about that.

I would hope that, in the course of my remarks, which I guarantee will not take 25 minutes, I would indeed enjoy a conversation with both of you. If you would like to stop me or ask questions or points of clarification as I go along – happy to do that. Of course the Q&A afterwards is something we always look forward to. But I would like to keep it a little bit informal.

Indeed, in February of 2010, Under Secretary Judith McHale, late of Discovery Corporation, launched a Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy. And I know you have seen this. I know you've discussed it with her.

Just to remind everyone where that came from, inasmuch as upon arrival in May of 2009, she undertook a series of extensive consultations. Not only did she speak to public diplomacy practitioners in the field and in Washington, also non-practitioners in the field in Washington, chiefs of mission, her counterparts on the 7th floor here, also with many of you, I expect, around this room who have expressed interest and written extensively about public diplomacy.

She is also fully conversant with the, I think, close to 60 reports that have been written about public diplomacy over the last 10 or 11 years, and on the basis of those interchanges formulated the strategic framework.

As you might expect, a CEO would, it is indeed, as she sat with us, those of us who were tasked with and had the honor of working with her to put this together – you know, she said, I see a number of tasks before us, and the first really is to complete the merger, the merger of USIA, which of course took place in 1999. But, again, approaching this as a former CEO, she sort of said, I see some things have connected and some things have not.

And so that – completing the merger including sort of a type of cultural integration, was certainly a priority. Certainly as she, again as CEO, summoned the spreadsheets and looked at

⁴ Dawn McCall's biography: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/6665.htm>

budgets and how we deployed our resources, made the observation that it looked a little bit like 1945 instead of 2009, and thought that would be another area of very useful focus, as well as taking note, of course, of the many changes that have occurred in the world around us, that it's no longer a bipolar world. Issues are more complicated, more players, changing information landscape.

And so, in putting all of those factors together, she sought to provide to public diplomacy a strategic focus that would withstand the test of time by putting together the strategic framework. And indeed, we very carefully set out to write a framework and not to write a comprehensive document. Those of you who have seen it know that there are not FTE and dollar signs attached to it.

We followed up the framework with a series of working groups – a process I'd be glad to discuss if anyone is interested. But the purpose of those working groups, just one year ago now, was indeed to bring in practitioners and non-practitioners, but basically to flesh out some of the principles established in the working groups.

So, in the one year since we finished up the working groups, we have spent our time and focus, accompanied by many colleagues around this room, in trying to implement many of those suggestions from the working groups, to implement the principles of the strategic framework. And I'm happy to summarize, in very broad fashion this morning, some of the things that we've been focused on.

As you recall in the strategic framework, we set forth five strategic imperatives: shaping the narrative, expanding and strengthening people-to-people relationships, combating violent extremism, better informing policymaking, and deploying resources in line with current priorities.

And, using those as an outline, let me just mention some of the things that we have done. And, again, please do feel free to interrupt me with any questions or concerns you may have.

In terms of shaping the narrative, you will recall that the focus there was how do we become more proactive in our outreach? Can we develop strategies to inform, inspire and persuade, motivated by the fact that of course we have not been represented in some global conversations. As people always say, if we don't tell our story, others will tell it for us. That has certainly been our experience around the world.

And so the issue, then, was, so what can we do to equip our Foreign Service officers in the field to be more proactive? And we started out by creating a public affairs deputy assistant secretary for international media engagement. This is a woman named Dana Smith.⁵

Dana is a senior Foreign Service officer, now a DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary) in the Bureau of Public Affairs. And her exclusive focus – broad focus -- is indeed engaging with international media. She has also created an office for international media engagement, bringing in some really top-line professionals to work with her.

⁵ Dana Smith's biography: <http://www.state.gov/r/bios/144748.htm>

And their focus has been ensuring that as posts need U.S. government interlocutors back here in Washington to interact with foreign press, that those are available, proactively setting up engagement with Al-Jazeera and other foreign media outlets, and basically trying to bring, again, some strategic focus to the tools in public affairs, to bring that focus to benefit public diplomacy, inasmuch as we do have some public diplomacy resources parked there.

We have also tried to rework some of our – you know, where we spend our money, in hopes of creating an expanded video capacity. At the end of the last fiscal year we gave \$4 million to IIP to expand their ability to produce video and to get it out on various platforms – and I would leave the details to Dawn if you are interested in them – but, again, as a vote of moving our money where our mouth is.

We even did some very simple things such as putting Blackberrys into the hands of our press officers and PAOs in the field who didn't have them. This was borne out – we witnessed this in some personal encounters with officers in the field, sometimes who, because of the way resource decisions are made in the field, that sometimes our press officers, or PAOs, were not given public PDAs or Blackberrys so that they could be available 24/7. And I think we all agree, in this day and age, if you're not available, you're not available. Talk about getting a jump on the story; you're already a couple of news cycles behind.

And so, something very simple but, again, as a way of trying to put our money where our mouth is, we took a quick hand count and we asked the field, how many of you could use public – you know, PDAs, and took that count, and then, working with our colleagues here in IRM⁶ at the department, very quickly moved to get those Blackberrys out into the hands of people who need them, again, making them available to respond or even, you know, get a jump on news stories.

There's another major element, I think, of shaping the narrative, and that is that IIP's very ambitious and creative business review that they have undertaken – and I would never begin to speak to that, but I think that might be an area of questioning that you all would like to pursue with Dawn McCall, inasmuch as she is leading her organization to, again, help the field be more proactive, be able to respond to a 24/7 news cycle.

In terms of expanding and strengthening people-to-people relationships, this was an area that's kind of, you know, comfortable to many of us who have been in public diplomacy for some time.

This is the area where we talk about exchanges, we talk about American centers and spaces and corners – English teaching, academic advising to encourage study in the United States – all familiar areas, but as I'm sure all of you know, areas that, for lots of different reasons, resources certainly one of them, have not perhaps thrived as we'd hoped – as we would hope they would, and areas that our practitioners, and I think many of you, know have proven their worth and their value to establishing that mutually respectful dialogue between people that is so critical to all of our other objectives.

⁶ Bureau of Information Resource Management: <http://www.state.gov/m/irm/>

And to that end, we have indeed tried to mobilize attention and support to some of the things that we know have worked for quite some time, knowing that, for example, that cultural programs are wonderful ways of opening up a discussion, whether they're performing artists or plastic artists or whatever.

We have worked with ECA⁷ – again, a terrific partner in this enterprise, equally enthusiastic as IIP. ECA has been a great partner in working to streamline and make a little more user friendly cultural programming so that posts, whereas in the past, I think have been given some offerings for cultural programming and then sort of had to piece together some of the support mechanisms in the field.

ECA has revamped its approach to this kind of programming so that it's a one-stop shop. Posts can get an offering and then ECA is there to help the field carry out this program without quite so much logistical activity on their part.

American Spaces are clearly an area of great importance to generations of public diplomacy officers, and platforms of course that can be used sometimes as a sort of politically neutral venue where people can gather and simply learn about the United States through a variety of different media, and also interpersonal interaction.

We have, with, again, the assistance of IIP, created an office for the support of American Centers. In fact, we have the acting director over here, Anne Barbaro. And in working with IIP, we have also worked very, very hard for 18 months now, I think, to create a very good working relationship with our colleagues in Diplomatic Security and the Overseas Building Operations Bureau.

Why? Because we have sought, and I think are gradually achieving, an all-of-department approach to these spaces. DS clearly we need as a partner as we – because one of the reasons, as you know, that many of these centers have been shuttered or called back or pulled back behind embassy gates is simply because of security concerns.

And what we have been doing with OBO is twofold. One, as posts are anticipating the construction of new embassy compounds or new consulate compounds, working with the mission, if it has been part of the planning discussion to think about bringing some of these centers and spaces back in with the rest of the mission, we're simply asking people just to stop for a second and ask the question, is this a wise move in terms of our outreach, and, you know, is this absolutely necessary in terms of security?

Let me be clear: Under Secretary McHale says security trumps all. And if it is indicated that these facilities must be brought – relocated or brought behind a fortified line of some sort, she of course understands that. But I think what she's asking is for people just to simply stop and think and consider this, consider whether or not the mission would be interested in coming in for what we call a co-location waiver, whether or not there is a circumstance in which that space could be apart from the mission offices and such.

⁷ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: <http://exchange.state.gov>

And we've had some good luck. We've had a couple of waivers granted in the past year, one in Ouagadougou I recall. And, you know, others are coming in as our missions – and this is, again, an all-of-missions thing – the chief of mission must sign off on these requests – as missions decide, you know, whether or not they'd like to make the request for a co-location waiver.

Yes, ma'am?

COMMISSIONER PENNE PEACOCK: That sounds like very good news to me. I'm wondering, with all of the budget cuts going on, how you all are funding it, or from where you're finding the money to at least go back to a few of these wonderful things that people used to like to visit our embassy to do or see or learn.

MS. WHITAKER: Right. Well, I will say, I think we wish we had more funding for this. The fact is that in addition to trying to make better partners of ourselves with DS and also with OBO, we've been working through how those resources should flow.

To date, since consolidation, funding for American Spaces has largely come from the Under Secretary, from the appropriation. And we are working that issue with a number of colleagues in the department, not only with OBO, with RM.

I know there's interest on the Hill as well to see if – you know, where – first of all, where does it make sense to park resources, for example, for the construction or rehabilitation of a particular space? Does it – should it really be parked with the Under Secretary or should funds be parked with the Overseas Building Operations Bureau?

So, we're trying – again, working on some structures and some of the administrative process of this whole thing. But indeed, as we are looking at how we can get back into the spaces game with limited resources, to the extent the Under Secretary has any flexibility, she has put resources against them. She has, for example – I think you know – set up a pilot project in Jakarta.

This is called – it's a space called @America. It is located in a shopping mall in Jakarta. The location is a result of a good deal of study as to where Indonesians go on their off hours and where would be a good location. And, working with DS and OBO in that instance, you know, we have created this space, which is cutting-edge technology. I know it's a high priority for IIP to support.

But that's a good example of a – you know, an investment made by the Under Secretary, a pilot program that we're watching and measuring performance to see how it's going, as one possible alternative to the more traditional space.

So we have moved resources where we've felt they needed to be, but the fact is that as we consider refurbishing, rehabilitating, opening new spaces, we have worked with our regional bureau of colleagues, all of, you know African Affairs, et cetera, and asked them to go to the field, consult with their PAOs and chiefs of mission as to what are the priorities they have for the next I think even six to 10 years.

But by trying to get folks to give us some strategically focused lists of priorities, then we've taken those under consideration and the Under Secretary is funding as we can. Could we do more with more? You bet we could.

In addition to – I don't want to spend too much time on American Spaces, but they are terrifically popular and interesting – we have also tried some creative approaches to such things as education or academic advising, to provide information to students who would like the opportunity to study in the United States, and, working closely with ECA, try to, again, move some resources toward the more traditional programs –

We have advisors around the world – but also developed some innovative approaches including a mobile advising booth that we have tried in Bahrain, and that is one that basically travels around the country to fairs, to markets and so forth, basically taking the information with an advisor to those places in order to, you know, provide information to populations that we might not otherwise reach.

I know other – with encouragement and support from ECA and the Under Secretary, other advisors in other countries, you know, have gone to some nontraditional places. I know we've sent advisors to the beach and some of the warmer climates around the world, armed with information about what study opportunities exist in the United States. And, again, the idea under all of this is we have got to get to where people are. We cannot be always behind doors. We've got to be more mobile. We've got to be more agile.

In similar fashion, on English teaching, we've directed more funds – pushed more funds in support of that. ECA has been a great partner again, helping to look into online English language instruction, also mobile English language instruction. People can get on their phones, since that is a way many people get their information around the world.

ECA has also linked arms with other elements of the U.S. government, whether it's Peace Corps, DOD, USAID and other elements that we know do English teaching. We know BBG does English teaching, for example. And we have pulled together a working group to talk about who's doing what and to see if some of those materials and approaches might be shared across agency lines rather than be siloed, just to try to make the best use of taxpayer dollars.

Moving on to combating violent extremism, certainly the biggest and I think most ambitious response to that was the creation of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communication, CSCC, an interagency effort focused on tracking who's saying what on all kinds of platforms in this day and age, and trying to provide information and guidance for our practitioners around the world, ideally before the case, so that they are prepared to counter these narratives from people who would do us harm.

In addition, we've also encouraged our practitioners around the world to try to identify people who would – whose views are consonant with our own, at least in this particular area, thinking that sometimes the American spokesperson behind the microphone might not be the most credible person to comment on some of these things. And, again, encouraging our PAOs to look for people – to watch, you know, who's saying what, and who might be some credible people to bring into this global conversation.

In terms of better informing policymaking, this is something that we've accomplished, but we have almost a year now under our belts with the creation of deputy assistant secretaries for public diplomacy in every regional bureau. These have been filled by senior-level folks, some career, some non-career.

This is a discussion that Under Secretary McHale has had with all six bureaus, but all positions were filled by September 1st, I think, of last year, sort of a record for U.S. government action. And their role has been very carefully articulated by the Under Secretary. They are there to be part of policy discussions. They are there to inform policy discussions, with their understanding, garnered from research and the field, to ensure that policy decisions are informed by an understanding of public attitudes and opinions.

This is not – we don't expect for them to argue that if we do X or Y, that will make us popular in a particular country. That's not the purpose. Policy matters – far more serious than that, of course, but the idea is, as options are considered, that those who are making the policy decisions can understand what the implications may be and we can plan for those in terms of public diplomacy outreach.

We have also focused on trying to make sure that our public diplomacy activities, our global information campaigns, are better informed by research. And this is something very much in play. And, again, this is something that you may want to probe a little bit with IIP Coordinator McCall.

We are working, I think, more closely with our colleagues in INR⁸ to try to share information across, again, the bureau silos. INR, of course, is the portal to the interagency, and they have been very good partners in trying to work with us.

But also envisioned in the framework is something that Dawn McCall has made happen, and that is the creation of a research element at the top level of IIP – brought in a fine professional. In fact, why don't I just stop and ask you to talk a little bit about that? You can do this better than I. Do you want to talk about being a – (inaudible) – a little bit?

COORDINATOR DAWN MCCALL⁹: Sure. Thanks, Betsy. More than happy to.

You know, as Betsy said, you know, certainly one of our priorities has really been to focus in on who our audience is. You know, we have, in IIP I think, created a lot of fantastic products, but we didn't always know the path that they would need to travel down.

So, by bringing in Dana, who has an extensive background in media – in fact, her family owns a newspaper out in the Midwest – and has been in the media business – she was head of research for a number of years down in Latin America.

So she is familiar, certainly, with the needs, as you look at audience, trying to make the determination on the kinds of products you need to create for those audiences, and also is familiar with, obviously, all the new media that we're all having to deal with, the new social

⁸ Bureau of Intelligence and Research: <http://www.state.gov/s/inr/>

⁹ Dawn McCall's biography: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/6665.htm>

media, trying to figure out, how do you learn things, how do you see some kind of, you know, future of where a conversation is going?

So we're doing a lot of work in that area with Twitter and Facebook and other things to get a better sense, because obviously that's where, you know, many of the youth now are having their conversations.

So it's really everything from traditional media, obviously, to the new social media area in research. So it's – she's only been on board five weeks, I think is already making an impact, quite honestly, with some of the things that she's put together, certainly working within the agency – I mean, within the State Department and also outside.

We have a very nice working relationship with the BBG on a lot of the research they're doing, because I think we certainly are not of the mindset it all needs to be created here and it needs to be fast. And I think a lot of people are doing a lot of great research.

So it is not about commissioning new research. It is really about trying to look at the information that we have in a new and different way to find new things and new ways in which we need to do things.

MS. WHITAKER: Great. Thank you. Thank you very much.

One other point on that, just as – you know, as a former FSO, it's a conversation I've had with some folks who have been doing some contract work for us. And that is – and this might be an area of interest to the commission at some point, and that is – because I think there's a very firm commitment to using research as the underpinning for our public diplomacy activities, the fact is that most – your average public diplomacy practitioner is not schooled in the art of commissioning research, understanding research, interpreting research, understanding what this means for what you do in the field.

And I think that's an area that we've got a lot of work to do, and would welcome thoughts that you all might have about how to make our officers better practitioners, and using research to inform their public diplomacy activities.

And, again, this is sort of back to what Under Secretary McHale is all about this year and, you know, until the end of her tenure here, which we hope is a good long time, and that is, how do we institutionalize some of these changes? Research is not just a passing fancy. This is something we need to get serious about. The question is, how do we make this part of our common, everyday standard operating procedure?

The last strategic objective listed was deploying resources in line with current priorities. And that is – while it was something mentioned in last year's strategic framework, it is something that even as we were still briefing the framework around town and around the world, something we focused on very quickly, indeed, moving resources in fiscal year 2010.

And these were end-of-year resources, but moving resources to some of the priorities – English teaching spaces, academic advising, the Blackberrys I mentioned before. We bought

Wi-Fi equipment for American Centers around the world that could take this. So we began to move resources, again, putting our money where our mouth was by the close of fiscal year 2010.

We also, in preparing our fiscal year 2012 budget request, last year began to work very closely with IIP and ECA in looking at their budgets and ensuring that they were in keeping with the principles of the framework, with the priorities that had been set forth there. And I think the – you know, if you take a look at those documents you will see – I know they're still in play on the Hill but, you know, our intent was, again, to reinforce the support for some of the principles established in the framework.

We are taking that a step further with the budget process in fiscal year – or the budget process for fiscal year 2013. And this has been an across-the-board consultation with our regional bureau colleagues – IIP, ECA and PA. Again, you know that PD resources do flow into PA. And the idea there is indeed to ask every bureau to identify what its priorities are – in the regional bureaus, to identify most critical policy priority countries. And we have been in steady negotiation – constant negotiation with all of them with an eye toward reallocating resources to our priorities.

Indeed, Embassy Germany last year took a – on their own hook, I should note; this was their own initiative – took a 30 percent budget cut at the direction of EUR leadership back here, and undertook a process over a year ago, with the ambassador's support and certainly Under Secretary McHale's support, wherein it was pretty much a white board exercise, where they said basically, what should we be doing in then-2010, taking everything off the table and only putting the things back in terms of public diplomacy activities they really thought were critically important to support their policy priorities – again, that linkage that we have to have between PD and policy.

And in doing so, they put together a package of activities and staffing that was 30-percent smaller than it was when we started. Those resources were reallocated within the EUR bureau by bureau leadership. And we're using that as a very good model as we look at allocation of resources around the world.

Finally, we are also working with FSI, the Foreign Service Institute, in terms of making sure that their training offerings track with what our people need, whether it's strategic planning, audience analysis; whether it's the use of new media and trying to support those activities.

We created a \$2 million innovation fund last year and have re-upped that for this year. The idea is great ideas, great opportunities come up for the field. They may not have budgeted for these in their budget proposals. How can we get money – how can we look at those proposals, get money into the hands so that we're not losing these opportunities? We spent every dime of the 2 million (dollars) last year and are on target to do the same this year.

One last thing I would note too is resources include human resources. And the Under Secretary has, with full cooperation and support from the secretary and Under Secretary Kennedy, become – PD has become an active participant in making decisions about where public diplomacy officers will be deployed, especially in terms of critically important countries.

It's a process known as consultative staffing. That is where the Under Secretary has a voice in making some of the assignments in full consultation with regional bureaus. This is something that has been standard operating procedure for consular affairs around the world for years and years and years.

You know, we're very – (audio interruption). I'm almost done. (Laughter.) Is there a hook out there? (Chuckles.) Gosh, Jeff.

JEFF TRIMBLE: We're in the media business here. (Laughter.)

MS. WHITAKER: Exactly.

MR. TRIBLE: All right.

MS. WHITAKER: That's OK.

Something we're very proud of. I think there were easily dozens of positions that came up to be filled this summer. And while we did not take aim at every single one of them, we, again, worked on the priority positions, and I think have had a very good collaborative conversation with all assistant secretaries in terms of identifying the best possible talent we can send to some critical places like Pakistan and Afghanistan and, you know, other – Turkey, other countries that are so very important, to make sure we've got our best people in the most important places to us.

And with that – I've been talking a lot – I would be happy to either cede the word here or take any questions that you may have.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you. That was certainly very informative, and you've made great progress, we can tell.

Let me just say welcome, Dawn – Dawn McCall, the Coordinator of IIP. Anything else you might add to the discussion here?

MS. MCCALL: I think we want to get out by 11:00, right? (Chuckles.) No, there's obviously, as Betsy says, a lot of things that's been happening, you know, over in IIP. You know, more than happy to answer any questions that you might have about it. I know that we're going to have a conversation a little bit later today to go into, you know, obviously any details you want.

But I think Betsy's done a great job in summing up a number of the things that we've been involved with, and a number of things that we've been looking at. So, nothing at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Jeff Trimble, but I think we just heard from him a minute ago. (Laughter.) But the fact is, Jeff is the executive director of the BBG. And that's the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

Jeff has a long past, spending 10 years with RFE/RL. And then, before that was with U.S. News as their foreign director and also their chief correspondent in Moscow – certainly someone who has a long background in the media and communication, and we welcome you, Jeff.

MR. TRIMBLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Madame Commissioner. It's my pleasure to be here to speak today on behalf of the Broadcasting Board of Governors about U.S. international broadcasting and the strategies and techniques that we're using to engage audiences around the world today.

And, Matt, if you ever need an offline discussion about being executive director to a high-powered part-time board, give me a call because it's – it has its moments.

I was going to introduce my colleague, Tish King, our director of communications, but maybe I won't under the circumstances. (Laughter.) No, Tish, thanks for being here. And we are going to share something with you. And, Betsy, again, apologies for pushing that button a little bit too soon.

BBG, as you know, is an independent yet integral part of a global U.S. government communications effort that seeks to advance U.S. national interests. As you've heard, we work very closely with the State Department. By statute, the Secretary of State is a BBG board member and is represented in monthly meetings and other BBG work by Judith McHale, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Dawn and Betsy both have mentioned research sharing. That's just one area of close cooperation. We do \$12 million worth of media research each year around the world. I see senior colleagues here from InterMedia, our contractor who does that work. Susan Gigli and Mark Rhoades are here today.

It's mostly media research. We share that not only with State but across the entire interagency process and are happy to make that work available. And we, in turn, use the research by State and other organizations to help us made decisions about programming and other things.

U.S. international broadcasting has a distinctive niche in public diplomacy, and that is objective journalism. The power of a free press fuels and sustains the exchange of ideas and the struggle for individual thought and freedom.

The current BBG governors were appointed last July and have involved the agency in a comprehensive strategic review that is ongoing and will inform their decisions going forward about all aspects of our work.

We'll wrap that up this summer, in part so it will inform our 2013 budget submission this fall. But I can say already that the new board believes that the organization of U.S. international broadcasting, the current organization, is inadequate to address the increasingly complex challenges of a global multiplatform media world.

They basically say that everything is on the table. They're looking very hard at the entire shape and structure of U.S. international broadcasting. So I think you can anticipate some interesting discussions following the end of this strategic review.

As the chairman mentioned, I'm a journalist, 15 years with U.S. News & World Report, including Moscow bureau chief as the Soviet Union was falling apart, and then joined RFE/RL in 1997 in Prague, and since 2007 have been with BBG.

I'm enormously proud – just wanted to take a second to say, of the work that our broadcasters and those who support their efforts do every day, thanks to their efforts, our networks – and that's of course Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Middle East Broadcast Networks, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting – reach more than 160 million around the world in 59 languages every week.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the Middle East because I think in that we can capture a lot of the challenges and current developments with U.S. international broadcasting.

As you know, just a few short months ago in Tahrir Square, a democratic movement that started in Tunisia blossomed on the streets of Cairo, where citizens took to the square to air their political and economic demands for change and justice.

The Arabic-speaking world turned to many media and social media platforms for news information and analysis as the historic events unfolded, including the BBGs Arabic language, Alhurra Television, which was on the scene and on the air, providing as much as 19 hours a day of live coverage of the historic events. For a time, as threats against journalists escalated and media outlets were being taken off the air, Alhurra was the only international satellite news network to broadcast live from Cairo.

At the same time, Radio Sawa's Egyptian stream expanded its newscast and provided in-depth information on the latest news, interviews with U.S. officials, with demonstrators in the square, and with noted analysts from the U.S. and Middle Eastern human rights organizations and think tanks.

In a flash survey of 500 respondents in Cairo and Alexandria, from February 3rd to 8th, of the sources Egyptians said they were using for news and information about the protests and related developments, 98 percent said they were using television – this broad-speaking media consumption, not ours. I'll get to that in a sec, but to give you a flavor of the media environment – 98 percent said they were using television, 76 percent friends and family, 52 percent radio, 51 percent newspapers, and 31 percent the Internet.

These same poll results indicated that Alhurra TV was reaching a large audience during this period, with 25 percent of respondents saying that they had used the station to follow the events. And that figure is far higher than that for BBC, Arabic, or for CNN.

Together, Alhurra and Sawa reach about 35 million people across the Middle East every week. Every week, 73 percent of Iraqi adults – 73 percent – listen to or watch one of the four BBG broadcasters serving Iraq. That's Alhurra TV, Radio Sawa, Radio Free Europe, Radio Free Iraq, and Voice of America's Kurdish service.

I'd like to share with you – give you a flavor of the coverage of Alhurra of recent events. The time is now, Tish. (Laughter.) Just a very brief clip of Alhurra's coverage. And while I'm a print journalist, I'll try to do the technical thing of turning the light switch now, see if I can get that right.

(Begin video segment.)

ANNOUNCER: It was the powerful sound of liberation that awakened possibility – possibility that spread across a region, taking the seeds of a movement and growing it into a Middle East revolution.

(Chanting.)

ANNOUNCER: As passions ignite and protests grown, Alhurra is there to capture it all, proving to be what the domestic press and state TV are not – a trusted source of news for the region.

(Background conversations in Arabic.)

ANNOUNCER: Alhurra has delivered live firsthand accounts from the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan and Syria, broadcasting important reaction from the various governments, giving voice to the opposition, and reporting the all-important perspective from the United States. It's the type of free reporting that only Alhurra can offer.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: Libya sits directly between Tunisia and Egypt, two nations that inspired the world when the people rose up to take control of their own destiny.

ANNOUNCER: The difference is clear, and viewers have responded via email and Facebook, with contributions to Alhurra newscasts and reaction to the coverage.

And when Alhurra was targeted, the satellite signal blocked, the correspondence threatened, Alhurra's coverage never stopped, because at Alhurra, it is not just a broadcast; it's a mission, a promise to bring accurate and objective news and information to the viewers and users across the region.

(End video segment.)

MR. TRIMBLE: Thank you. A very important – please.

COMMISSIONER PEACOCK: Jeff, that's very impressive. I would also be interested in what you're doing now, because of the events in the last week [and the killing of] Osama bin Laden. Are you putting together another one of these as testimony to the rights and the wrongs and the maybes?

I mean, it's still very much up in the air and facts are changing, so I'm sure you haven't got it ready to go yet. But will you do something along those lines?

MR. TRIMBLE: Well, thanks for the suggestion. I'm not sure if the MBN Alhurra colleagues have done that, but we're always eager for purposes of outreach and to explain to important constituencies the work of Alhurra. I know that they've been covering Osama bin Laden and every aspect of it, absolute wall-to-wall coverage, as have the other U.S. international broadcasters.

This the strength of the system because just as the news was breaking, Radio Free Europe had a stringer from its Pashtun language service Tweeting outside the compound. And that information becomes available to all the other networks so that they can share it.

So this is – I just wanted to make the point that the networks share their information and it expands their reach in a way that oftentimes many other media outlets in the region and throughout the world are not able to do. So I'm going to take that suggestion back to the MBN people and ask them if they would put together something on OBL.

Syria has been a challenge for journalists because it's difficult to get in and work on the ground in Syria. And I've got a remark here that Syria is an instance where they're relying heavily on social media and contributions from citizen journalists coming out – cellphone video and everything.

As you've probably seen in Syria, whenever anything happens on the street, there are 300 people holding their cellphones up, taking pictures and video of what's happening. And they're sharing that information widely.

This was a way into talking about the tremendous growth that Alhurra and Sawa have experienced in feedback from audiences. Because they're using email, Facebook, Twitter – you know the list – they're hearing from audiences and interacting in a way that they would not have done in the past.

I mentioned that all the networks have been covering events in the Middle East – VOA, 44 languages around the world; RFE/RL Radio Free Asia tailoring coverage to their particular audiences, in China for instance.

Radio Free Asia has focused mainly on China's reaction to the demonstrations across the Middle East, including the Chinese government ban on news of the unrest, as well as Chinese cyberactivist calls for similar demonstrations. So that's news and information to people in China that they're not getting from their domestic media.

But this programming that you've just seen is emblematic of the work that U.S. international broadcasting has been doing for more than 60 years. The real question, though, is how do we meet these challenges today?

We are available through radio, television, Internet, mobile devices. The popular platforms YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, SMS text, cellphone video – all of this makes us

participants in the global community and provide a voice to those who, in the past, have had none.

BBG and State Department-sponsored independent research – to which I’ve already referred – and I’ll give you some more numbers in a minute – confirms the gathering momentum behind the use of digital media as a source of news and information, as well as the accelerating decline of radio, and particularly short-wave radio in many parts of the world.

So the challenge today, in many respects, is the same as during the Cold War, reaching populations that are otherwise deprived of a free flow of information. But during the Cold War, the media landscape of course is much simpler. In target countries, there were few media options for consumers and even fewer sophisticated operators. The battleground, therefore, was largely radio, and throwing shortwave broadcasts over closed borders, even despite jamming, was relatively easy and very successful.

Today these Cold War-style markets are few and far between. Instead, we increasingly see crowded, vibrant and sophisticated media environments. The sheer number of well-executed television and radio options commanding the attention of consumers becomes a clutter that, in effect, serves as a new type of jamming.

Add to all this Internet and mobile behavior, and you have a consumer that has very different media behavior patterns than his or her Cold War counterpart. In short, the only thing different about the media environment of the Cold War and the media environment today is everything.

In this environment, the BBG takes not one approach, but many, each tailored specifically to the target market and target audience. The BBG is platform agnostic. There is no one size fits all. There’s no cookie cutter.

That means that with regard to distribution, we’ll explore all options and any distribution method available, when and where appropriate, to reach target audiences. Although we don’t mention it all that often, in addition to broadcast, we even do print publications in a number of markets such as Belarus, where we have difficulty getting our electronic products in.

So, whether it’s television, FM, AM, shortwave, satellite, Internet, mobile or other new media, we’ll employ any of these platforms based on the following criteria: number one, the media habits of the audience; number two, market forces such as competition and its level of sophistication; and finally, three, available transmission opportunities – how can we get in?

To help make programming decisions, as I’ve mentioned, we utilize hard research, more than \$12 million a year – to create specific solutions based on audience needs and available opportunities. There are macro trends worth noting, the first of which is an undeniable trend away from shortwave. Shortwave listening has dropped, primarily due to increased use of local FM, local over-the-air television, and satellite television.

While we still reach millions of people each work in shortwave, it’s in highly specialized environments and a handful of countries such as Burma, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and parts

of Afghanistan. The BBG intends to continue shortwave in places where the consumer still uses it, and in places of last resort where we don't have any better options.

Other international broadcasters are seeing the same trend in the drop-off shortwave use, and as they cut back on their shortwave broadcasting, the overall decrease in shortwave use will only accelerate in the next several years.

The second macro trend I would point to is an incredible consumer adoption of mobile technology. Just a couple of numbers: mobile phone ownership by adults is near universal in Haiti. It's just surpassed 80 million people in Nigeria. Chinese mobile phone ownership is 91 percent. There are 100 million mobile phone subscribers in Pakistan. And of course 3G services continue to roll out, enabling consumers in emerging markets to leapfrog other technologies such as fixed computers with Internet access.

The next macro trend is that the adoption of new media is uneven across our target countries. To help understand this, the BBG has developed a new media index, which has been designed to assess the readiness of a given market to consume new media. The index has pointed to the Balkans, the Middle East, some former Soviet republics as BBG markets most ready for content by new media. Countries such as Niger, Cambodia, Burma are obvious laggards.

The next macro trend is the extremely young demographic breakdowns in Africa, the Middle East, parts of Central Asia and Asia. The significant numbers are such that this young demographic increasingly is influential and can be influential – look at what's happening in the Middle East. And this calls into question previous definitions of elites, meaning small groups of people as change agents, because we're seeing mass change taking place.

Just a couple of statistics. Forty-three percent of the population of Yemen is under the age of 14. The median age of most South American countries is in the young 20s. So these are the demographics that we're looking at as we're seeking to reach new audiences.

The next macro trend is to target more specifically audiences by demographic as well as psychographic. A couple of examples – VOA's Indonesia service targets multiple economic classes and has a weekly reach of more than 25 million people as a result. Radio Sawa targets young adults in the Middle East and North Africa, reaching more than 17 million people each week.

I'd like to drill down just for a second on China as another example, in part because the BBG has proposed some things in its 2012 budget submission that's on the Hill at this time that have drawn some interest and comments from outside.

In 2006, 24 percent of Chinese adults owned and used a radio for news and information. In 2009, just three years later, only 8 percent of Chinese adults said that they have a radio and are weekly listeners, half as many as just [in] 2007.

Let's turn to shortwave. In 2010, our survey research in China indicated that .1 percent – that's .1 percent of respondents – listened to Voice of America in Mandarin on short wave. Only .4 percent of respondents reported listening to any shortwave radio broadcasts in the previous

week. Survey results showed hardly any acknowledged listening to any international broadcaster. Clearly, shortwave, even if holding some kind of legacy audience, is not a medium for the future. It's not going to attract new audiences.

In contrast – and this draws it into sharp focus now – the trend for Internet and mobile technology in China is increasing rapidly. The largest number of Internet users in the world, 38 percent of respondents in our survey said they own a computer, up from 30 percent in 2008. Twenty-eight percent of Chinese are weekly Internet users. That's a sevenfold increase in the Internet population since 2003. Seventy-five percent or more of Chinese mobile subscribers are projected to have Internet access to their mobile devices in the next five years.

Voice of America's Mandarin streams – so this is listening over the Internet and using the Internet – had 430,000 views in January 2011. In China – and this gets to something Betsy mentioned – is a significant consumer of VOA's English and special English websites and media content, in part, we think, because these websites are not blocked by the Chinese government.

VOA's English learning website, which is goEnglish.me, is also not blocked. So while our research indicates that VOA is the top U.S. broadcaster in China, if you parse those numbers further, you'll find that it's actually VOA English is the top Internet U.S. international broadcaster in China. RFA Mandarin is second and VOA Mandarin is third.

So, in part it's because this is not jammed, but in part because clearly there's a heavy appetite in China for learning English. And just one more statistic: By 2050 there will be more English-speaking Chinese than all other English speakers in the world combined. So, clearly there is a market for the products there.

Just a word about our efforts to overcome blockage of the Internet, which is something that gets a lot of attention. And of course this is the continuation of the cat-and-mouse game that's gone on for more than six decades, of our trying to get products into countries whose governments don't want them, and their efforts to block them.

The BBG has a robust anti-censorship program to combat Web blockage. We work in partnership with the State Department on this, with DRL¹⁰. And this anti-censorship program is an increasingly important part of the agency's mission. Our team employs existing technology to overcome censorship, explores ways to get past state-imposed censorship, and provides unfiltered access to information.

Our most-used tools are Web-based proxies with email notifications of changed Web proxy addresses. We send millions of emails daily to interested users in China and Iran that include news summaries and proxy links. And we change the keywords to modify the appearance and modify the apparent sender to help get around the censorship, again. We also partner with numerous academic and non-government organizations who work on these issues.

I wanted to be relatively brief. I've got tons of information and really look forward to a conversation about all these things and whatever you'd care to discuss, but finally I'd just say

¹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/>

that our networks continue to play a critical role in countries that lack adequate press freedom and credible alternative media.

We succeed when we deliver the news our audience want and need to make informed judgments about their societies, and when we deliver our content via the media our audiences prefer and can easily access. This is a simple formula, but one that requires the agency to remain on top of media realities and trends in order to position ourselves for the future.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

MR. HYBL: Thank you, Jeff – very good.

Let me first turn to Ambassador Peacock. Anything you would add?

COMMISSIONER PEACOCK: No. Thank you, Jeff. It was wonderful. I did a little quick math on your English-speaking Chinese. In 2050 I'll be 139, so I'm not going to worry about that. (Laughter.) But I think what you're doing is quite fantastic.

And, again, back to the OBL thing. For instance, on the news this morning – just this morning – in the notes that had been found in Pakistan, there were plans for disrupting the 10-year anniversary of 9/11. Do you think that far out of the box? Are you planning anything? I hope that all Betsy's Blackberrys are up there in Syria and Cairo and wherever else.

But specifically things like that – I mean, to both of you really. I mean, that will be here very shortly.

MR. TRIMBLE: Yeah, we're in the planning stages now – and Betsy can jump in as well – with State in the interagency context under NSC to do some very specific, targeted outreach in communications efforts in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of September 11th.

In the case of BBG, it will be, by and large, creating platforms and spaces for conversation and global discussion about the meaning of September 11th and what's happened in the past 10 years.

So we will seek to create, in our 50 languages, spaces where people can come together from around the world and talk about the issues of September 11th and its legacy. That's our particular piece of it. But we know there is a government-wide effort and a lot of work underway in this area, and perhaps Betsy and Dawn would want to say some more about their part of this.

MS. WHITAKER: I would just echo what Jeff said. That is, the NSC has pulled together many interagency players to focus on this. And we've had these discussions ongoing for a few months now, anticipating a very important date.

And also, mindful of the fact that the anniversary will play in very different ways within the borders of our own country and outside, and I think that's been a critical element of the discussion – a lot of talk about the use of the word “resilience” and how societies – you know,

we are not alone as a society in suffering attacks and what societies, not just our own, have done to try to come back.

But it's an ongoing process, and certainly the events of last week have put a new element into all of this planning.

COMMISSIONER KORTH PEACOCK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you. Let me just say that we would enjoy hearing from any of you, your comments or certainly questions of the panelists. And just identify yourself and your organization so we know who you are.

Questions? Comments? My gosh, they answered every – behind me? Oh. (Laughter.) Just come up to the table to ask a question. That would be great.

Q: Karen Walker with the University of Maryland. I have a question on the process for priority setting and the linkage with the R Bureau. And you talked about the bureaus within R and the regional bureaus. And I'm curious how the functional bureaus fit into that process, particularly related to things like environmental diplomacy with OES or the new entrepreneurship initiative that EB is championing.

And do they have a direct line into the public diplomacy priority setting, or do they have to go through the regional bureaus to make their case?

MS. WHITAKER: It's a good question. Actually, there is – I think a new direct line to the Under Secretary. It's certainly one of the most important elements of all that Under Secretary McHale has done, is to make it clear to all in the field who are practitioners, and here in Washington, is that we have to be able to articulate the connection between policy priorities, whatever they happen to be, and our public diplomacy activities. You know, that is something we are working every single day to make sure that our folks can articulate that.

And, as mindful of that as – issues, whether it's climate change, food security, other issues, have arisen, we have indeed had direct conversations with EEB, OES, whatever the functional bureau in mind, bringing in our colleagues in our component bureaus in IIP and PA and ECA, so that we've got sort of an all of our, and all of department, approach to these. I think that is something that has operationally changed.

The other thing that – I have to throw this little resource tidbit in here a well. We – this shows you how old I am – having been here at the time of consolidation in 1999 and helped crosswalk 30 positions from USIA into the functional bureaus in the State Department, I think it's fair to say that those positions have not necessarily been tracked over the last 12 years.

And we have begun – and I know this because this is my other part-time job – we have begun conversations with every single functional bureau, which allegedly has public diplomacy resources flowing to it, to verify the status of those positions. You know, we're talking to OES and we're saying, according to perhaps not the best records, but according to records, you know, we have four or five public diplomacy positions parked with you. You know, what are these folks doing? Can you verify?

And the idea is to sort of identify where all our resources are to make sure that if we have no resources in a particular bureau that is fully active, wants to do public diplomacy on a policy priority, that we're able to take resources that may not be being used for public diplomacy – maybe they have been diverted to public affairs – to try to make some of those changes so that we're putting our resources where our policy priorities are.

Thank you. Good question.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you.

Yes, sir? Did I see a hand back here? I didn't mean to scare you.

Q: Hi. Joel Harding. I'm an independent consultant. In the National Framework for Strategic Communication, there is a part in there about the IPC, the interagency process. And I'm just trying to find out what is being done to coordinate the message throughout the government so that when somebody from USAID speaks and somebody from agriculture speaks and somebody from State Department speaks, or the BBG broadcast speaks, that the message is coordinated and it doesn't conflict with the other parts.

And I'm wondering if the – from what I understand, it meets every two weeks or so. And is that adequate to coordinate and de-conflict the message?

MR. TRIMBLE: IPC is just a little bit – I could just start on the BBG piece, just to clarify. While we're active participants in the interagency process, we're – by statute we're journalists. We're a media organization, so we don't do messaging in the sense of taking a particular strategic communications idea or message and putting it out. Our journalists just do what they do.

We of course cover everybody else who's making statements about those messages, and therefore the messages get propagated, because that's what journalists do. You report the news. But I just wanted them to be – it gives an opportunity to, again, sort of clarify the BBGs distinct part in the overall – in the overall picture.

As to the process itself, maybe the State Department colleagues would be in a better position to talk about the overall process of coordination on the issues.

MS. WHITAKER: We have seen a good deal of support from the NSC in terms of trying to get conversations going across agency lines, and make sure that we're all singing from the same page of music. That's sort of a macro approach. But also, as events were – anniversaries, whatever, come up, I mean, there's a particular sort of stepped up pace of activity.

So, in Washington there is ongoing cross-agency consultation through the NSC. There is also a good deal of conversation happening led by PA, our new Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Media Engagement. She's a very proactive person who understands that when DHS, for example, makes a policy pronouncement about lists or searches or whatever, that maybe simply they think it's for the information of the American public.

You know, we are there to work with them and remind them that these things play internationally, of course, and how can we then make sure people have the right information and that we're putting our people out about to ask questions? So I think there's some good momentum in Washington, trying to de-conflict some of this.

I can also say that as particular issues like Haiti have come up, that we have seen DOD, VOA, BBG writ large, AID – I mean, Under Secretary McHale has, herself, stepped up to the plate to try to coordinate that, with the full backing of the NSC, but understanding that we've got to get these messages right, and get them right the first time.

MR. TRIMBLE: Yes –

MS. WHITAKER: The other piece that I would add – forgive me, Jeff – is she understands that this also happens in the field. Washington can say whatever it wants, of course, but how this plays in the field is also critically important, and she has made a point of instructing our PAOS globally, and also chiefs of mission – and I would note, she meets with every chief of mission who comes through this city, to the extent that her schedule permits.

If there is a gathering of chief of mission gathering, whether global or regional, she is there, takes very seriously the communication at that level to say, Mr. or Madame Ambassador, our PAO is there to serve the entire country team. Certainly your interests and your press interests are important, but this person is PAO to AID, DHS, DOJ, any other agency that happens to be there, so that there is one voice in the field.

MR. TRIMBLE: If you don't mind, I'd love to say a few words about Haiti, which Betsy mentioned, because it's a textbook example of interagency cooperation and allows me to make a couple of other points about challenges and operations today.

At the time of the earthquake, which was a year ago January, Voice of America's Creole service had weekly listenership in Haiti of more than 50 percent of the adult population. It's a hugely popular, successful VOA service.

It had that audience thanks to an extensive comprehensive network of FM affiliate partners on the ground in Haiti. Earthquake happens, FM network goes away. The towers fall down. The electricity doesn't work. Radio is off the air in Haiti.

Our first instinct was to throw up a lot of shortwave broadcasting in order to replace it. We then took a close look at the research and saw that only – and, Mark, you may know the number off the top of your head – Mark Rhodes, from InterMedia – but only something like 2 percent of the population in Haiti today has access to a shortwave radio.

So, while the inclination was to, OK, we're in a crisis situation, let's surge shortwave, we realized that really wasn't going to do much to reach an audience.

It was at that point that we reached out through the interagency and got invaluable information from State Department colleagues on the ground about the situation there that, in partnership with DOD, we had access within 72 hours to one of the airborne transmission

aircraft, Commando Solo,¹¹ which flew down and based out of San Juan, Puerto Rico and did Broadcasting over Port-au-Prince five hours a day on four FM frequencies of VOA Creole programming.

So, that illustrates to me textbook interagency cooperation where we're all true to our own missions and mandates but support each other in our work, and also gave me another opportunity to talk about changing media consumption habits, and how that presents challenges to us.

MR. HYBL: Thank you. Let me suggest, we do have a mobile mic now so we'll bring it to you. Questions?

Yes, sir.

Q: Bud Jacobs. I'm with the Public Diplomacy Council. Thanks, Jeff, Betsy. Terrific presentations.

Jeff, a question for you. Could you talk a little bit about BBG's Africa strategy, particularly with reference to whatever – I guess it would be VOA is doing with community radio on the continent? And also, how are you reaching audiences in South Sudan and Darfur?

MR. TRIMBLE: Bud, thanks for that question. I have a fair amount off the top of my head, but I also have a tab on it, so I'm going to take a look and make sure I give you really accurate information about this.

Africa, Bud, as I think you know, and folks here know in the room, is still a heavily radio market and very FM oriented. So if you want to hit bit audiences in Africa, you want to get to them with FM radio, which, as everybody knows, you have to be within 30-50 miles of an FM station in order to hear it. So you've got to be local in country with affiliate partnerships.

So, the short-term, medium-term strategy for Africa is to expand FM partnerships for local distribution in country there. And that includes of course, Bud, as you indicated, community radio stations.

Africa, though, in addition, is one of those places where we're seeing a leapfrog of technology, that people are skipping over entirely hard-wired computers at their desk to answer the Internet and going directly to handheld technologies.

So it's an environment at this time in which we have, simultaneously, one of the Voice of America's largest weekly audiences, which is a short-wave audience in Hausa in Nigeria, co-existing with expanding FM desire and opportunities for us, and implementing mobile strategies to try to reach people in the new way that they're using information. SMS is also – is also popular in Africa.

But it also gives me the chance to mention an important social media initiative that Voice of America has launched for Congo. The subject is violence against women in Congo, which, as

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we know from reading the news reports, anyone with a casual reading knows is a horrific problem.

The platform is called “Congo Story: War, Women and Rape.” It’s a project that Voice of America has done, together with Citizen Global, which has an outstanding new media – social media platform that we’re utilizing. And it’s built on the backbone of VOA’s on-the-ground reporting from Congo, which includes eyewitness reports and accounts, and then offers a space where people around the world, starting in Congo and elsewhere, can offer their own contributions.

It has a built-in, very simple audio and video editing player so people can upload and submit content very easily and become a part of the conversation hopefully pointing towards solutions to this.

VOA is deeply engaged in Africa. It’s also a great example to show how VOA not only is true to its traditional role of the bigger story, an American perspective on things, and international regional news, but is doing an outstanding job of on-the-ground, in-depth, intensive coverage, which in an earlier era we called surrogate radio. VOA is very much doing that in Africa.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you.

Questions? Did I see a question over here? Yes.

Q: Hi, this is Susan Gigli from InterMedia. Thank you for very interesting presentations. I actually have two questions, the first one non-research related.

Jeff, you – this is for you, Jeff. In the beginning of your remarks you said that the current organization is inadequate to address the global challenges in the increasingly complex media world. And I just was wondering, besides the obvious resource –

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Could you speak up just a little for my colleagues over here?

Q: Oh, sorry. Besides – I’m not close enough. Besides the resource issue, if you had a wish list, you know, what would help you meet those challenges? That’s sort of question one.

MR. TRIMBLE: Do you want me to take that one first, Susan? I’m actually looking at Kristin Lord as I’m prepared to answer because this is a subject that Kristin has done a great deal of work on. That’s the structure and shape of U.S. international broadcasting and its future.

Unfortunately, I can’t presume the outcome of the strategic review, which is midway right now. We’re wrapping up. We’re at a regional level, looking at how we operate around the world right now. You folks at InterMedia are deeply involved in that process.

The board’s big takeaways and its thinking about future structure is still being sharpened, and we’ll see it, I think, by the end of the summer or fall, certainly by the time the ’13 budget come out publicly, which is, I guess, what? February is when the president’s budget goes up to

the Hill. But already I think this fall we're see the board starting to make moves to do some things in a different way.

Again, I don't mean to be particularly vague; I just can't really presume the outcome of the process that's underway right now. But they did come in very much, I think, as a result of their own backgrounds of what they'd gone through in the confirmation process and what they've learned now that they've engaged in the job, that there are more efficient, smarter and better ways to put things together for the future.

Q: And if I may, the second question is research related. You all spoke about the focus on research and where – InterMedia is involved in research for R/PPR and for BBG, so we – and we are aware of the sharing of data. That's fabulous.

What about on the front end? How much sharing is there going on in terms of planning the research? Because we know there are opportunities to actually sometimes, you know, multipurpose the ongoing research. And, you know, research is expensive and time-consuming, and sometimes just a conversation beforehand, you could actually get more bang for your buck by, you know, sharing sort of the design of the research.

MR. TRIMBLE: BBG, under the umbrella of the IPC on strategic communications, co-chairs a working group with State Department INR on research issues. And as they're stepping up their activity, this very much is in the focus of their attention, and that is on the front end to look at some ways that we might do shared research in a way that would be a little smarter and even potentially more resource-effective up front.

So that's an ongoing process. And from the BBG end, this is being led by Bruce Sherman, our director of strategy and policy at BBG.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you. Over –

Q: Kristin Lord from the Center for New American Security.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Sure.

Q: I have a question for Dawn and Betsy, but first a quick comment for Jeff.

Jeff, I know I've been a constructive critic of the BBG, so I just want to say that's been one of the best – that was one of the best, most strategically minded presentations I've heard on international broadcasting in a long time. So, the strategic review is making me very hopeful right now. So, kudos.

The second thing is I wanted to pose a question of Betsy and Dawn. How are you addressing public diplomacy strategy in the wake of the "Arab Spring"? I mean, obviously this presents a huge number of opportunities for the United States, but it's also an extremely challenging climate.

Can you talk a little bit about what are the strategic objectives? What are the means you're using? How are you building a strategy so it's adaptive to all the changes that are happening in the region? Can you just tell us a little bit more about the strategy here?

MS. WHITAKER: This is – you know, this is an evolving situation, and so I sort of hesitate to outline something that, frankly, does not yet have a very specific and clear outline. I mean, this is something that we clearly have been involved in and working with since, you know, the first folks when out to Tahrir Square.

Under Secretary McHale is personally involved in trying to pull together the elements of support for public diplomacy, whether they're IIP, ECA, PA, and working very closely of course with the regional bureaus, with Assistant Secretary [of State for Near Eastern Affairs] Feltman¹² to make sure that, one, we've identified that we're clear on the strategic objectives for public diplomacy and begun to marshal and send support where we think it needs to be.

And, again, short of – in a setting like this I'm not sure I want to go into great detail about all that is being done, but I can say, both program resources and human resources have indeed been identified and are being deployed – I think already have been deployed – to provide the support required.

Under Secretary McHale herself made a trip to Tunisia to get a very good sense of what's going on, on the ground there, consult with the embassy team, and upon return, pull together a plan – again, in consultation with her NEA colleagues – to make sure that we were there to provide the support, provide – to those democratic forces in those countries that required support.

And so, in sort of a multi-phased way, whether it's information outreach, whether it's opportunities for person-to-person engagement in anticipation of upcoming events such as the elections in Tunisia and elsewhere, I mean, this is something that she is personally engaged in, and has begun to marshal and deploy their resources in support of that.

I would hesitate to be a little more specific in this particular setting.

MS. MCCALL: Kristin, nice to see you again. Just a couple of things. You know, I agree with Betsy. Obviously it's an evolving situation as far as the support. But from the IIP perspective, you know, obviously, as I think you are aware, I mean, we really create a lot of the on-ground support for our posts and what their needs are.

And I guess there's really three areas that we're really focusing on. One is in and around entrepreneurship. Obviously jobs, the economy are obviously very important in many of these countries, so either – you know, looking at certainly working through our current American Center network, along with speakers, along with publications, articles, various things that we've produced to support what the posts need in that particular area.

Also, obviously around elections, again, you know, using the same, you know, group of tools, you know, depending again on what the posts feel like they need, they obviously are on the

¹² Amb. Jeffrey Feltman's biography: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/120440.htm>

ground and they have a much better idea of the kinds of things that they want to take a look at and how they want to move forward.

And then obviously just in and around, you know, democracy itself. You know, again, I think every country will evolve in a different way, probably, at a different speed, and we certainly want to provide whatever resources, you know, those organizations, as NGOs are being developed in those countries – provide them with whatever support the posts feel like is appropriate.

So we are very much taking the lead of what our posts need and what they want on the ground. But overall, as a strategy, as Betsy suggests, you know, it is a changing world seemingly every day. So, there's new pieces that you add to that puzzle every single day as you think about, what are the resources that are required and are needed, you know, on the ground in those locations?

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you.

Brad?

Q: Hi, I'm Brad Minnick from the Wilson Center. I'm just curious – besides money, what other obstacles stand in the way of implementing the strategic framework, and what can those of us on the outside do to help you implement it?

MS. WHITAKER: You know, I hope what came across in my presentation is that I think Under Secretary McHale has approached all of this from a – you know, a fairly modest sort of structural, institutional, procedural focus because, in my own opinion, I think that's exactly what public diplomacy has needed in the 12 years since integration, perhaps even before integration for that matter.

Resources are always welcome, of course. And I think that's certainly an area of concern for us inasmuch as we're trying to demonstrate to ourselves, first and foremost, but also to anyone interested on the Hill or elsewhere, that indeed we're making the best possible use of the resources that we have.

And that gets to, I hope, the answer to your question, which is I think what we need is time, and I think we need to continue to cement some of the changes – the structural and other procedural changes – that we've made, whether in terms of budget, in terms of assignments, in terms of making sure that the positions we've created remain in place long beyond the McHale administration.

And I think support for those changes – again, they're pretty modest. They're pretty humble. We get that. Judith McHale did not publish a huge, you know, eloquent treatise, as many of you have done around this room.

She has – you know, indeed, she took a fair amount of criticism for not doing that a year ago. But I think she has remained true to her focus, which is we've got to help get our own house in order, make sure our practitioners can articulate what our mission is and how what we do supports national security objectives.

And we need to make sure that we in Washington are supporting our field agents' ability to do this. And that's where these structural procedural changes have come from. That's what they're intended to do.

And I think we will need another year, two, or five or 10 of support that these were the right decisions to make, and to sort of let them become of the body politic that is the State Department.

This is new. It's change. We're very well aware of that. And we think it's change for the better, but what we will certainly need is time and the support of the community for the kinds of changes that she's tried to implement.

Would you add anything to that?

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Good. Thank you.

Other thoughts or questions? Yes, sir. We had a mic a minute ago. Oh, there he is.

Q: Thank you. My name is J.J. Rohr (ph) and with Sendly (ph). Sendly is my early-stage startup that does after-school engineering education to kids as young as kindergarteners, and also other STEM education.

Betsy Whitaker, you had mentioned an innovation fund. I was wondering if you could expand on the nomination criteria for innovations, and the decision-making process for which programs get funded.

MS. WHITAKER: Absolutely. Again, the motive behind this was, as Under Secretary McHale spoke to practitioners in the field, mindful of the U.S. government process that has you sort of plot out your spending two years ahead of time, that many times posts would find themselves with opportunities where they really could use some kind of infusion of cash to support a new idea or a late-breaking opportunity. And she said, we need to build in the flexibility to meet those needs.

And, as such, in creating the innovation fund, funded at \$2 million a year, we have sent information out to all of our officers in the field and basically said, we will consider these more or less on a quarterly basis. That said, if something is even more time-sensitive we're willing to take a look at those.

But the idea is, send us your ideas, the more creative the better, and explain why what it is you want to do is worthy of support, and what's the timeline and so forth. And so, we have been working very closely with our regional bureau colleagues. They receive the ideas from the PAOs in the field. And in some instances it's been, you know, a request from Jakarta to fund some SMS messaging at the time of President Obama's visit to Jakarta.

We've had computer applications, you know, as suggestions come in from Africa – all manner of pretty exciting ideas that come in, are vetted by our regional bureau colleagues. They

are the ones that sort of set the priorities. They determine which ones they think are the most worthy of funding.

And those representatives then sit down with representatives of the Under Secretary and sort through them and determine which ones will be funded. And once funding decisions are made amazingly enough, funds flow rather quickly to the field so that they can get the work done.

Q: All right, thank you.

MS. WHITAKER: Thank you.

MR. HYBL: Thank you. Questions?

I'd like to welcome Duncan MacInnes, Principal Deputy Coordinator of the Bureau of International Information Programs. Thank you for being with us.

You know, this is like an auction. If I don't hear another bid – (laughter). Let me just say – oh.

Q: Quick question – apologies. Kirsten Fontenrose.

Betsy, could you talk a little bit about what the performance metrics are that are being either implemented or set up for things like the new American Centers and other programs?

MS. WHITAKER: I can give you the non-expert answer to that, but I'm happy to put you in touch with the folks who are working very closely with the American Centers element, as well as our evaluation and measurement folks, who are actually focusing in on that.

And, in fact, you know, maybe the best place is to start with Anne Barbaro. If you'd like to talk a little bit about that. Let's go right to the expert here.

ANNE BARBARO: Actually, Kevin Saba, who's here – one of our teammates, is the expert on evaluation and performance metrics. And we're in the process of developing some new ways of looking at our engagement and our reach, how we reach people in unidirectional forms such as broadcasting, SMS messages, other forms of just pushing out information to the public first as direct engagement where we have a two-way interaction, whether it's in person or over the Internet, let's say.

And we are looking at ways to know really how many people are we engaging with, and how many people are we reaching, because we have had the Mission Activity Tracker (MAT) system that works very well for a variety of purposes. But one of the interesting things about it is it doesn't record, for example, walk-ins to our American Spaces. It doesn't tell us how many people came and saw us. It doesn't tell us how many people we interacted with in a less formal way than in a program activity, which MAT tracks very well.

And so, these are some of the ongoing projects that my team is working on. Actually, Betsy said it's 18 months old. It's actually eight months old. It seems like 18 months. (Laughter.) But we're still really getting up and running.

And maybe Kevin wants to just add one more point about that.

KEVIN SABA: No, perhaps just reinforce what Anne said, in looking at all of the various activities and the various spaces that we have – lots of things going on. So we have to focus on what's important.

And I think Anne highlighted that engagement and reach are at a very high level, and we define “engagement” as two-way interaction and then “reach” as one-way interaction in terms of, you know, broadcasting or the like.

So what are we doing in terms of quantifiable numbers in engaging and reaching people at one level? And then, how do those people come away from that engagement and reach? Are we having a positive impact or not?

So it's, you know, really looking at all of our activities and how do they fit into those top-line, if you will, measurements that we need to look at?

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you.

Yes?

Q: I'm Aggie Kuperman. I'm ex-FSO, public diplomacy, and I was also Deputy Chief of Personnel at Voice of America.

I have a question, Betsy, to you about something that has been in the air for a long time, and that is public diplomacy versus strategic communication, and the relationship between State and DOD.

There has been an awful lot of interaction while Secretary Gates has been in position. I remember Kristin Lord and I were working on separate papers on the reorganization of public diplomacy and so on. And I don't know what the future holds in that area. Could you speak to that point? You mentioned a lot of times interagency but nothing about DOD. Thank you.

MS. WHITAKER: Let me be very clear. I think we consider our DOD colleagues very good partners. Whether that cooperation is as deep in all pockets around the world I think is really the question.

There is certainly a lot of discussion about strategic communication or communications – whether you add the “s” or not – also where public diplomacy fits in that. I, as, again, just a practitioner myself, see some of that discussion as theological. I tend to think of public diplomacy as a subset of strategic communication.

But I think what you're getting more really is what is the relationship that we have with the Department of Defense? And the fact is, I think – again, illustrative of the interagency

comments made before – that in the field actually I think cooperation works pretty well, perhaps because Washington doesn't try to interfere too much.

Indeed, we have stories of – you know, from PAOs all around the world. We're working very successfully with their DOD colleagues, whether they're information support folks, whether they're information operations folks, whether there's, you know, a temporary deployment to build a road or something, that indeed those public affairs-oriented activities work quite well. Certainly leadership on both sides helps make that happen.

In terms of the big strategic picture back here in Washington, and how will all of DOD's information activities – and I'm just going to refer to them as that – and State's information activities, how do they intersect? Of course they do.

I think, again, we have a very good player, very good leader at the NSC who is doing what he can to get us at the same table to try to make sure that we're planning together and de-conflicting. There is anecdotal evidence of lots of collaboration all around this town, whether it's on the regional side or even at the 7th floor level. Under Secretary McHale does engage with her counterparts at DOD.

I think where we, you know, run into – where we get into the great unknown, or the great evolving maybe is a better way to put it, is in terms of – is in terms of resources. And, heaven knows, discussions have been taking place about where resources for communications with public audiences – unclassified communications with public – with foreign audiences ought to be located. And I don't think that discussion has – it ebbs and flows.

I think we're at a quieter stretch right now, inasmuch as some of the congressional support that existed I think has – is not there anymore. But I don't think that's – that is a topic that is forever off the table.

I think we continue to explore that, but we are mindful of the fact that as two executive branch departments, you know, we can have these discussions and create opportunities to cooperate very effectively. And Jeff outlined one. We can give you, you know, half a dozen other examples just from the past year.

But in terms of the big picture and where those resources ought to go, that is something that I think is still very much under discussion. I don't know when a decision is going to be made, because that clearly is – that falls to the legislative branch. And I think there are a whole other set of equities that need to be taken into consideration there.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Thank you.

Well, let me just say I think this has been very informative, very productive. Special thanks to you, Betsy, Jeff, Dawn. I know the Commission certainly appreciates your being here today.

And for those of you that had interventions, thank you for your interventions and expanding the discussion we had today, and to all of you for being here and your interest in public diplomacy.

Most of you probably know Matt Armstrong, but the Commission wants to thank him and the staff for putting this together. More importantly, what he said earlier about new energy for our ability to interact and to provide good information, but also to be an advocate, a vocal advocate for public diplomacy within the executive branch, within the – certainly within the congressional branch.

With that, any final comments? If not, thank you.

Matt, anything?

MR. ARMSTRONG: No. Thank you. Thank you, everybody, for coming out here. I tried to keep my comments brief earlier today. Those who I've spoken with know that I can be quite verbose – (laughter) – I wanted to be brief today. Thank you all for coming.

CHAIRMAN HYBL: Yes, we're adjourned. Thank you.

*** The meeting adjourned at 11:00am ***

About the Commission

Since 1948, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy has been charged with providing oversight of and advocacy for U.S. Government activities and policies that relate to understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics to the President, the Secretary of State, the Congress, and the American public.

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