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Ambassador Edward Djerejian
Chairman
Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy
in the Arab and Muslim World
United States Department of State
301 4th St., S.W., Rm. 600
Washington, DC 20547

Dear Ambassador Djerejian:

I would like to offer some comments about international broadcasting and public diplomacy to the Arab and Muslim countries. I am an audience research officer in the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau, but writing as a private citizen and student of international broadcasting. I have written several articles about international broadcasting and public diplomacy, including "Too Many Voices of America," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1989-90, and "Is There an Audience for Public Diplomacy?" *New York Times*, November 16, 2002.

Your Advisory Group faces a formidable task. In your assigned countries are skeptical and sometimes hostile audiences. With U.S. international broadcasting and public diplomacy products unwelcome in many of these countries, you and your colleagues must also deal with the question of how to get this content to the target audiences.

In this letter, I will discuss...

- 1) BBC World Service, and why it has the largest audience, even though the United States spends more on international broadcasting.
- 2) Radios Sawa and Farda, and the mass versus elite strategies of international broadcasting.
- 3) The planned Middle East Television Network (MTN).
- 4) Opportunities for public diplomacy as separate from international broadcasting.

Why BBC World Service dominates in most Arab and Muslim countries

I have not yet seen audience research data on listening in Iraq and the Middle East during the Iraq war. But newspaper accounts most often mentioned BBC World Service as the station used for information

during the war. Even U.S. military officers tuned to World Service as a key source of information about the progress of the war.

In the U.K., the BBC is facing a controversy concerning its coverage of the Blair Government and the Iraq War. Nevertheless, audience research from before the war would predict that BBC continues to have the largest worldwide audience of any international broadcaster, especially among influential elites. BBC World Service has a weekly audience of 150 million, more than the VOA's 80 million, and more than all the elements of U.S. international broadcasting combined.

Why did and does the BBC have more impact in the Arab and Muslim countries, and worldwide, than U.S. international broadcasting?

Money is not the answer. Britain's annual budget for international broadcasting is 330 million dollars, compared to 544 million for the United States.

I believe the success of BBC World Service is largely the result of two attributes that U.S. international broadcasting does not have: 1) consolidation and 2) autonomy.

Consolidation. Britain's budget for international broadcasting goes exclusively to BBC World Service. All transmitting, newsgathering, and talent resources are concentrated in one organization.

The U.S. budget for international broadcasting is divided among several entities: Voice of America, Worldnet-TV, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, Radio Sawa, and Radio-TV Marti, and the International Broadcasting Bureau. The aforementioned resources of international broadcasting, scarce no matter how much the United States spends, are split among stations *that compete with each other*. In 29 languages, VOA and a Radio Free station transmit in the same language.

The stated reason for this is that VOA is the "official" station, transmitting news about the United States, general world news, and U.S. policy positions. RFE/RL and RFA are "surrogate" stations that report mainly on the domestic affairs of the countries to which they broadcast.

While U.S. international broadcasting is constantly described in terms of this "dual mission" structure, the reality is very different. VOA has always put much effort in providing news about the countries to which it broadcasts; otherwise it would not have an audience. VOA is famous for transmitting such news to Africa, China, Burma, and Iran. RFE/RL and RFA include a certain amount of world and U.S. news to put their regional news in context. RFE/RL and RFA report on the policies of the United States government that pertain to their target countries.

If the dual mission structure were true, then listeners would have to tune to two U.S. stations, different times, different frequencies, to get a complete newscast. Audience research shows that audiences for U.S. international broadcasting, like normal people everywhere, are interested in news about their own countries *and* about the world in general, and to some extent about the United States. Presumably they would like to get all this news in one newscast.

One example of the tendency of U.S. international broadcasting to compete with itself is in Arabic. Radio Sawa, Radio Free Iraq, and the remnant of the VOA Arabic Service all maintain Arabic-language websites. You will not see links on any one of these pointing to the other two.

BBC World Service is famous for providing people in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, the Caribbean, etc., with news about their own countries and regions. World Service is also the best-equipped international broadcaster to provide general world news. Somehow they pack all this information - the mix of news that audiences want -- into one convenient radio station. This is one of the main reasons BBC World Service achieves more audience with less budget.

Autonomy. There is great contrast in the political nature of the appointment of the VOA and BBC World Service managements. The BBC World Service director is appointed not by the prime minister, but by the director of the parent BBC, with the approval of the BBC Board of Governors. Historically, VOA directors have been selected by the president. However, with little fanfare, that policy changed in August 2002 when the present director, David Jackson, was appointed by the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Nothing in writing guarantees that this nominally apolitical method of selecting VOA directors will continue. The director of the International Broadcasting Bureau, VOA's parent agency, is appointed by the president, with the consent of the Senate, as explicitly specified by legislation.

Another key difference between VOA and BBC World Service involves content. VOA is required by law to broadcast editorials, while BBC World Service is prohibited by law *from* broadcasting editorials. This contrast between the two stations is not lost on listeners.

The third principle of the VOA Charter states: "VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies." Because international broadcast audiences desire an antidote to propaganda, U.S. policies would most "effectively" be transmitted by way of news and current affairs reportage. However, the 1998 Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act hardwires editorials into VOA content, by requiring "clear and effective presentation of the policies of the United States Government and responsible discussion and opinion on those policies, *including editorials, broadcast by the*

Voice of America, which present the views of the United States Government." (Emphasis added.)

Separating international broadcasting and public diplomacy. In Britain, international broadcasting and public diplomacy are separate activities. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office funds BBC World Service. It participates in making decisions about the languages in which BBC World Service transmits. But the Foreign Office has no control over the content of World Service.

British public diplomacy is conducted through agencies entirely distinct from BBC World Service. These include the websites *britain-info.org* (British Information Services) and *www.i-uk.com*.

Such a separation of international broadcasting and public diplomacy is necessary for U.S. international broadcasting to achieve credibility. Why should the U.S. government fund an international broadcaster if it has no control over its content? First, autonomy is necessary to attract an audience: people in areas where domestic media are deficient, due to government control or poor economy or both, seek believable international broadcasting for relief. Second, autonomous international broadcasting provides audiences the information they need to counter disinformation from state-controlled media, and to make their own decisions about current events.

In my November 2002 *New York Times* op-ed, I noted a blurring of the functions of international broadcasting and public diplomacy: "Almost all of the recent reports, articles, bills and speeches about public diplomacy put international broadcasting in the same basket as public diplomacy. Public diplomacy, however, manages information to put the United States and its policies in the best light. In my experience, this is exactly the type of pro-government reporting that audiences seek to escape by tuning to foreign broadcasts."

I was therefore encouraged to hear, a few weeks later, Kenneth Tomlinson, chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, make a similar statement in his February 27, 2003, testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

Let me conclude my statement with some reflections on the relationship between traditional public diplomacy and international broadcasting. I am convinced that we will not be successful in our overall mission of delivering our message to the world if we fail to grasp that these are two different spheres and that they operate according to two different sets of rules. Indeed, we must always remember that each is most successful when it does so and least effective when it attempts to impose its approach on the other. This Committee well recognized these differences when it considered the International Broadcasting Act of 1994.

Traditional public diplomacy involves government spokespersons here in Washington and around the world taking America's message to the world passionately and relentlessly to foreign officials and foreign audiences. International broadcasting, in contrast, is most effective when it operates first and foremost according to the highest standards of independent journalism. It is based on establishing a direct line of trust between those delivering news and information and those consuming it, and consequently, reliable, accurate news and explicit identification of policy programs is a requirement for success.

This statement is also featured prominently in the front of the BBG's 2002 annual report, signaling an important philosophical change in U.S. international broadcasting.

Radios Sawa and Farda

My 1979 Ph.D. dissertation, *Alternative Programming Strategies for International Radio Broadcasting*, posited that most international broadcast content is boring, and that more lively and entertaining approaches are needed. I therefore take a great interest in experiments such as Radio Sawa and Radio Farda.

Radios Sawa and Farda follow in the tradition of Radio Luxembourg (to the U.K.), Radio Monte Carlo (to France and Italy), Radio Monte Carlo-Middle East (Cyprus to the Arab counties), and Africa Number One (Gabon to francophone Africa). These stations provided a music service to countries where popular music was generally unavailable from the staid domestic broadcasting monopolies.

I'm not surprised that early research suggests that Radio Sawa is doing well -- in the cities where it is available on FM. Additional audience data soon to come must be studied carefully. Before Radio Sawa is declared a success, its audience must be measured in the same way that the VOA Arabic Service was measured (and declared a failure): *throughout* the Arab world, and among all age groups.

Radio Sawa is so far available on FM in only the major cities of six Arab countries. FM frequencies were quickly obtained in relatively friendly Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Iraq was added by dint of occupation (not a method I would recommend to secure FM outlets in other Arab countries). Radio Sawa is also available in Djibouti, not really an Arab country.

The difficulty of adding FM outlets is illustrated by a July 30 report by the Egyptian news agency MENA. An official of the Palestinian information ministry said that a local West Bank station leased an FM frequency to Radio Sawa "in contravention of Palestinian regulations." The official added, "The Palestinian radio waves and frequencies are deemed a national wealth that cannot be used or leased

by anyone." This may be the FM outlet mentioned in the Radio Sawa website as serving "Bethlehem/Jerusalem/Ramallah" on 94.2 MHz.

All told, Radio Sawa is heard on FM in only a small part of the Arab world. Most Arab countries may never be inclined to allow a U.S. government radio station to transmit from FM transmitters within their borders.

Radio Sawa must therefore depend largely on the second most desirable radio band - medium wave (or AM, as we call it in the United States). Radio Sawa's medium wave relays in Cyprus, Kuwait, Djibouti, and Morocco will be its workhorses. In most areas, because of limited medium wave range during the day, the signal will be audible only at night.

Even at night, the medium wave signal will suffer from day-to-day variations in ionospheric propagation, and from occasional static crashes caused by lightning. The question, then, is whether the content of Radio Sawa is compelling enough that Arab audiences will forsake FM and television in their own countries for distant scratchy medium wave signals.

A major feature of the original Radio Sawa plan was for the station to transmit separate regional streams - eight hours per day to each of five segments of the Arab world, in local dialects, with local weather and traffic information. This would be during morning and afternoon "drive time." But because both drive-times occur mostly during hours of daylight, signals from the distant Radio Sawa medium wave relays will generally be inaudible. This aspect of the Radio Sawa plan will have to be revisited.

In justifying the creation of Radio Sawa, the BBG derided the VOA Arabic Service for its "one size fits all" approach to the Arabic language and its use of "scratchy shortwave." Radio Sawa, if it is to be heard throughout the region during the daylight half of its 24-hour broadcast day, will have to depend on scratchy shortwave. And because its medium wave and shortwave signals have wide footprints, spanning many dialects of Arabic, one size *will* have to fit all for Radio Sawa, just as it does for the successful BBC World Service, Radio Monte Carlo-Middle East, Middle East Broadcasting Centre, and Al-Jazeera.

Many observers are troubled by the fact that Radios Sawa and Farda contain only relatively small amount of news. In the traditional mode of international broadcasting, small but elite audiences listen to content that is laden with news, information, and analysis. In the Sawa/Farda alternative mode, large audiences hear a smaller amount of news. But if those newscast are especially well written and achieve credibility, they can have at least as much impact as classic international broadcasts full of "freight."

In fact, Radio Sawa could be beneficial even with no news. The existence of a friendly station from the United States can engender

goodwill, certainly a valued commodity. It would help to have a few announcers speaking Arabic with an American accent (granted, such talent would be difficult to find, especially these days). If Radio Sawa moves to Dubai, as was planned, it may lose its identity as an American station. This is why, of all the available cities of Arab culture and heritage, I would prefer locating Radio Sawa (and the Middle East Television Network) in Detroit.

In the meantime, domestic FM radio stations in the Arab countries are beginning to imitate the Radio Sawa format. In Jordan, the army has begun Radio Fann (www.radiofann.com), with a mixture of Arab hits and western tunes. In Egypt, where Radio Sawa is not available on FM, a new station called Nile FM features youthful music content. It is not so difficult to replicate the Radio Sawa format, and when this is done, Radio Sawa's honeymoon may be over.

On the other hand, it is difficult -- very difficult -- to establish a competent broadcast news organization that achieves credibility in the Arab countries and elsewhere in the world. Even if an Arab country could find the funds for such an operation, none of these countries seems at present disposed to allow a completely uncensored news organization. The least censored of the Arab news channels, Al Jazeera, is certainly constrained, at least, in its coverage of Qatar's domestic affairs.

This is why the Arab World needs foreign stations like BBC World Service and the late VOA Arabic Service. They provide the comprehensive and credible news, about the Arab countries and about the world, which will not be available from the domestic media of the Arab countries, at least for the foreseeable future.

Mass versus elite strategies of international broadcasting.

Traditional international broadcasters have yielded audiences that are small relative to the target country's population. But these audiences make up for quality what they lack in quantity. The two percent audience size for which the VOA Arabic Service was maligned is about the size of the VOA and BBC World Service audiences worldwide. The real story is among elites. Here audiences are often above ten percent. In a 2001 survey of elites in Egypt, VOA Arabic had a respectable weekly audience of 24 percent. This is compared to 38% for BBC and 40% for Radio Monte Carlo-Middle East, each of which had the advantage of a Cyprus medium wave relay. (VOA's relay was in farther-off Greece; the Radio Sawa Cyprus relay did not come until later.)

A main reason that international broadcasting audiences tend to be elite is that they usually must make some effort to receive foreign broadcasts. Mass audiences are less likely to own a shortwave radio, tune to a distant medium wave signal, visit a website, or endure the information-laden, entertainment-sparse content of traditional international broadcasting.

The elite audience is desirable. They are the decision makers or, at least, the opinion leaders of the target country. They tend to be older than the norm. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Decision makers also tend to be older. The lack of a youth audience is not necessarily a devastating failure for a radio station. The audience is not dying off; instead, audiences are growing into the format.

The alternative Radio Sawa approach seeks to compete not with BBC but with the domestic media of their target countries. To do this, Radio Sawa must have access to FM inside the target country, or hope that listeners will, in large numbers, tune to scratchy distant medium wave in large numbers. There will have to be high ratio of music to talk. If Radio Sawa yields to pressures to introduce more "freight" into its broadcast day, its audiences will probably diminish.

Furthermore, mass audiences will tend to prefer local stations with local personalities and local information, if such stations are available. Such stations did become available in the target countries of Radio Luxembourg, Radio Monte Carlo (Monaco), and Africa Number One, resulting in the decline of these once-great mass-strategy international broadcasters.

Will Radio Sawa, Radio Farda, and other mass-strategy international broadcasters have an impact in their target countries? If so, the opinions of their listeners would have to filter up to the decision makers, by way of a path of influence much longer than is necessary for elites, who are closer to the decision makers. In countries without free elections, and without freedom of expression, this can be problematic.

All told, in terms of attracting an audience and having an impact in the target country, the elite strategy is more viable in international broadcasting than the mass strategy. The mass strategy may be worth a try where opportunities exist (Iran is a good example), but success will not come easily.

Keep Radio Sawa, but reintroduce VOA Arabic. With so much invested in it, Radio Sawa should continue. But it must deal with the fact that it will not have FM access in many or most Arab countries. It will have to face many of the same delivery problems that vexed VOA Arabic for decades.

Radio Sawa has succeeded as a source of entertainment. As a news provider, Radio Sawa insists it is balanced and objective. Observers in the Middle East, and my own Arabic speaking confederates, insist that Radio Sawa is biased, certainly not the equivalent of BBC World Service. A content analysis, in which subjects evaluate news from Radio Sawa and other stations, without knowing where the news came from, may resolve this disagreement.

The problem of credibility, whether real or perceived, can be addressed by reintroducing VOA Arabic content (branded as VOA) to the

Radio Sawa broadcast day. VOA news has a good reputation developed during decades of broadcasting. The Radio Sawa broadcast day could include four or five crisply produced daily half-hour VOA-branded news magazines, as well as four-minute newscasts during the other hours. Elites would tune specifically in to these newscasts, while the Radio Sawa mass audiences will stay put if the news programs are sufficiently appealing in their content and presentation.

Special interest programming could also be added to the schedule. As with face-to-face conversation between people who are trying to get along better, it is a good idea to steer the topic away from politics or religion. Topics could include business, science, technology, or health. In these programs, it important to have hosts who display their interest in the subject and in the audience.

To be sure, the BBG is interested in segmenting audiences for international broadcasting. Ideally, Radio Sawa and VOA would have their separate channels, one reaching out to a younger mass audience, the other to an older elite audience. Usually, however, this will not be possible. Countries that have granted U.S. international broadcasting one FM channel may not be willing to provide two. Vacant medium wave channels are extremely scarce. Shortwave transmitters and channels are in short supply. Because of these realities of international broadcasting, Radio Sawa and VOA Arabic must cohabitate.

The same realities apply to Radio Farda and VOA Persian. Each service has a serious news operation. Each chases the same stories. These newsrooms, if combined, would form a formidable news organization, perhaps capable of competing with the BBC. For four hours per day, Radio Farda and VOA Farsi compete simultaneously for audiences in Iran, vying for scarce frequencies and transmitters. Ostensibly, the audiences for Radio Farda and for VOA Persian split at a certain age. I don't think it's so simple. Efficiencies could be achieved by incorporating the VOA news product within the Radio Farda schedule.

U.S. international broadcasting should declare a moratorium on creating new 24-hour radio services, with new names, for each target country. Such a service for Pakistan is now being planned. "Radio Together" and "Radio Tomorrow" are names reminiscent of the clandestine stations that are rife in the Middle East. Each becomes a bureaucracy unto itself, competing with the other bureaucracies, and not sharing resources. These 24-hour schedules include many hours after midnight and during mid-day when audiences for foreign broadcasts on medium wave and shortwave are very small. Radio Farda, for example, transmits via Abu Dhabi on medium wave throughout the daylight hours, when the signal can be heard, at best, only in extreme southeastern Iran.

U.S. international broadcasting would better be served with consolidated resources and a global brand that commands respect through competence and credibility. I suggest dropping "Voice of

America" and using the initials "VOA" as the name of a new consolidated global multimedia corporation, adjusting content and media mix, as appropriate, for each target country.

Middle East Television Network (MTN)

Given the importance of television in the Middle East, it is not surprising that the United States is planning to use television to reach audiences in this region.

Two western international television organizations that have stature in the Middle East, BBC World and CNN International, do not have (stated) plans to emulate Al Jazeera with Arabic-language television channels of their own. BBC briefly had an Arabic television channel, which quickly folded when its Saudi partner attempted to control its content. Both BBC and CNN do maintain Arabic-language websites.

And so the United States Government is stepping in with a new television service with an unknown name and no reputation. The Middle East Television Network (MTN) will have to build its credibility from scratch. It is a process that will take years, probably decades. As a news service, MTN will have to out-Jazeera al-Jazeera. Al Jazeera has shown an unprecedented willingness to interview Israeli and American officials. But it also interviews persons connected to Al Qaeda and the Taliban and other elements inimical to the United States.

Will MTN be willing and able to interview all of the newsmakers whose statements audiences in the Middle East will want to hear? The recent experience of U.S. international broadcasting suggests otherwise. In September 2001, the State Department applied pressure on VOA not to broadcast excerpts of an interview with Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Later that year, a Congressional conference committee wrote: "The conferees expect that the VOA will not air interviews with any official from nations that sponsor terrorism or any representative or member of terrorist organizations, or otherwise afford such individuals opportunities to air inaccurate, propagandistic, or inflammatory messages."

If MTN is selective as to whom it interviews, if it accentuates issues congruent with American policy and underplays opposing viewpoints, it will establish itself from the outset as a propaganda station. This will leave an indelible scar on MTN's reputation.

MTN might become an all-news station, like Al Jazeera. A less expensive approach, capable of attracting larger audiences, would be for the station to consist mostly of entertainment programs, with news programs a key hours - like ABC, CBS, and NBC in the United States. The problem is that few programs after 1980 or so are suitable for

Arab or Muslim sensibilities. MTN would have to bid for the limited supply of these programs against Arab television channels such as MBC.

In any case, it seems that MTN will have to borrow from the resources of U.S. television industry. One scenario would be to form a consortium consisting of some combination CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, Discovery Channel, etc. The U.S. government would fund the channel, but the consortium would manage its operations and control its content during a five-year renewable franchise.

One issue that MTN will have to face is access to viewers. Three ways that audiences receive television are 1) terrestrially, through the traditional television antenna, 2) via cable, and 3) direct from a satellite.

Full-time ownership of terrestrial television transmitters will generally be unavailable. Time on domestic channels, ranging from one-hour programs to three-minute reports, is a possibility, but always subject to revocation. VOA's successful Indonesian-language television programs were removed from key Indonesian television networks at the beginning of the Iraq War. At the same time, Al Jazeera was added to Indonesian television channels.

Access to cable systems is also difficult. Cable systems are regulated in many countries. Many countries have thousands of small cable systems, and access to U.S. international broadcasting may have to be negotiated for each of these systems. There are success stories to be studied, such as CNN's and BBC World's inclusion as free channels on India's cable systems.

The best opportunity for MTN will be through direct-to-home satellite systems. Even in this technology, access is not guaranteed. In the Arab world, the most-used direct-to-home satellites are Arabsat and Nilesat. Generally these companies have been ecumenical in allowing access by foreign broadcasters, including BBC, CNN, and Radio Sawa. But they can always deny access. On April 15, the MENA news agency reported that Arabsat would not resume its relays of Iraqi TV, now U.S.-controlled, without Arab League authorization.

If access to Arabsat or Nilesat is denied, there is always Hotbird. This Eutelsat satellite is already used by television viewers in the Middle East for programming not available from the Arab satellites. Reception of Hotbird may require a slightly larger dish, and it would have to be pointed conspicuously (i.e. visible from the street and to authorities) to the 13-degrees-east orbital position. Although Middle Eastern countries might appeal to Eutelsat, I doubt U.S. broadcasts would ever be removed from Hotbird.

MTN will be a difficult undertaking. It must transmit to a skeptical target audience while taking its income from a possibly meddlesome U.S. government. MTN must attract the former while resisting control by the latter, or it will become a white elephant.

The Separate but Vital Role of Public Diplomacy

Both international broadcasting and public diplomacy have important roles in the Middle East. As discussed above, each has a separate function. Each can succeed if one is not confused with the other. International broadcasting provides news and information and must establish its credibility. Public diplomacy is advocacy, by way of persuasive appeals and selective use of information.

As a general rule, audiences in need of information and an antidote to government-controlled media in their own countries will not seek more propaganda or advocacy from abroad. They will not listen to a radio station or watch a television channel that provides propaganda rather than reliable information. Radio Moscow was the largest of all international broadcasters. It transmitted in more languages, for more hours per day, with more kilowatts, than any international radio station. Its audience, however, was never more than a small fraction of those of the BBC and VOA. Radio Moscow was not broadcasting what audiences wanted to hear.

Public diplomacy thus cannot attract audiences on its own. It must find its way into media that do attract audiences. There are a number of ways to do this, already obvious to practitioners of public diplomacy:

News releases. These are the staple of all press relations. The challenge is to be familiar with all the useful media outlets in the Arab and Muslim countries. Press release would be made available in the recipient's choice of paper mail, fax, e-mail, or website.

Arranging interviews. Al Jazeera has expressed frustration that U.S. officials have not been available for their interview programs. We should be frustrated, as well, because this is an opportunity to convey desired messages to a ready-made audience. Other prime outlets for interviews would be the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), the BBC Arabic Service, Radio Monte Carlo-Middle East, and domestic broadcasters throughout the region. Such interviews could reach more people and have more impact than any U.S. international broadcasting effort attempting to compete with these outlets. Success will require aggressive media relations experts thoroughly familiar with broadcast and print outlets in the region and, of course, proficient in the appropriate languages.

Advertising. There was logic to Charlotte Beers' use of advertising to convey messages in the Muslim countries. I don't think there was a particular need to assure audiences overseas that Muslims in the United States enjoy religious freedom. But often news releases and attempts to peddle interviews are not enough to secure the desired

coverage. Advertisements in established target-country media tap into already existing audiences.

If the United States feels that certain information must be transmitted, or that misinformation persists in the target country, advertising might be the remedy. We have seen such advertisements, purchased by foreign governments, in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. If the ads are well designed, and especially if they do not try to pack too much verbiage into the available space, they can be effective.

Newspapers read by elites are probably the most useful outlet for such advertising. The broadcast media could be used to reach larger audiences, but the messages would have to be much shorter. Such ads should be used sparingly, only as needed to deal with particular information problems.

These advertisements are most likely to work if the message is concise, straightforward, and plainly identified. It could be a letter to the people of Country X from the Secretary of State. Even though it is advertising, it should not be designed like the typical sales pitch.

Of course, as we learned from Ms. Beers' campaign, this technique of public diplomacy is limited by the fact that media outlets in many countries will not be allowed to accept such advertising. This is why we have *international* broadcasting. This is why getting news releases and word of interview opportunities to international broadcast outlets such as Al Jazeera, MBC, and BBC remains Plan A for public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy website. A website devoted to U.S. government policy statements will probably not have mass appeal. It is, however, an indispensable tool for journalists, government officials, and those individuals with particular interest in U.S. government relations with the rest of the world. Such a site would provide the news releases, statements, transcripts, and contact information, i.e. the raw material journalists in the region need to prepare their stories.

This is now being provided by www.usinfo.state.gov. Or is that www.state.usinfo.gov? Or state.usinfo.gov? Actually, it's usinfo.state.gov. (Include the "www" and you get an error message). Herein lies the problem. This website needs a catchier, easier-to-remember URL. Yes, the State Department wishes to proclaim its sovereignty over Information, i.e. the functions of the old U.S. Information Agency. But internet users overseas are not interested in such politico-bureaucratic minutiae. They just want to get to the site that has the information they need, without having to look up the URL each time they do so. Why not just www.usinfo.gov, with usinfo.gov working as well?

The content of usinfo.state.gov, operated by the Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs, is now available

only in English, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Persian. Instead of U.S. international broadcasting competing with itself in 29 languages, international broadcasting and public diplomacy could *complement* each other in at least these 29 languages.

Members of the Advisory Group who have Arabic or Persian, and perhaps outside consultants, may want to look at the usability, navigability, and compatibility of those language sections of usinfo.state.gov. Is everything easy to find? Is the format compatible with the display screens and Internet access speeds typical in the target countries?

A word about *Hi*. The newly introduced Arabic language magazine *Hi* raises the same questions as international broadcasting. Will this publication have better chance of success as an autonomous journalistic outlet, providing comprehensive and balanced information? Or is it more appropriately an instrument of public diplomacy, emphasizing information congruent with U.S. policy interests? Which approach will do a better job of attracting readers? Is it better to guide these readers to desired conclusions? Or provide them information and expect that, in the long run, they will see things not so differently from the way we see things?

I wish the Advisory Group success in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

The Media of International Broadcasting

Radio has been the predominant medium of international broadcasting because, from the 1930s to 1970s, only radio could convey information long distances and across national boundaries without interdiction. With the advent of communications satellites and the internet, text and video, as well as the traditional audio, can now be transmitted from country to country. International broadcasters must make choices about what mix of media they will employ, because they do not have the funds to maintain maximum effort in all the available media. In any case, some media are more effective than other media. This chart reviews the advantages and disadvantages of each medium.

Medium	Advantages	Disadvantages
Shortwave radio	Farthest range of any terrestrial broadcasting, so transmitter does not have to be close to the target country. Long range even during the daylight hours. The only medium with some physical immunity from interdiction, because distant transmitters are often heard better than closer jamming transmitters.	Only some radios have shortwave bands. Shortwave stations often change frequency, causing interference to one another, and confusion among listeners. Reception is often unsatisfactory and varies day to day.
Medium Wave radio (AM) (transborder)	Virtually all radios have a medium wave band. MW is easier to receive because stations are always on the same frequency. Sufficient range to transmit into target country from a friendlier, neighboring country.	Long range capabilities only a night, and even then the range is shorter than on shortwave. MW is also subject to day-to-day propagational variations and static charges from lightning. Vacant MW channels are very scarce and unavailable in some regions.
FM rebroadcasting (from within the target country)	The preferred medium of radio listeners because of its sound quality. The best way to reach large audiences via radio. MW rebroadcasting (using transmitter within target country) opportunities are increasing as MW stations, having lost audience to FM, seek income by leasing blocks of time.	Short range, thus usually requiring the transmitter to be located inside the target country. Some countries will not allow such rebroadcasting; others cut it off during times of crises, when international broadcasting is most needed. Full-time licenses and part-time leases can be expensive.

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Medium	Advantages	Disadvantages
Medium wave and longwave rebroadcasting (from within the target country)	With audiences having migrated to FM, there may be bargains on leasing time on MW and LW transmitters. Audiences interested in a certain type of content are motivated to tune to MW or LW.	MW and LW are now much less popular than FM.
Websites	The most efficient way to communicate large amounts of news and information, because of its use of text and its interactivity.	Internet access still limited in many countries. Websites are blocked by some countries. Software and proxy sites are not yet a satisfactory solution to this problem.
E-mail	Less interdictable than websites, by employing methods used by spammers. Text more efficient than audio for communication of information.	E-mail access not yet universal in many countries. Anti-spamming techniques can stop incoming e-mail, at least temporarily. Recipients of e-mails can be identified.
Satellite television (direct-to-home)	Capable of delivering clear television signals, as well as audio and data, over long distances and across national boundaries	Direct-to-home satellite service not available into all target countries. Even if it is, the satellite company may not be willing to lease transponder to U.S. international broadcasting. Satellite receivers are prohibited and confiscated in some countries. Satellites relatively easy to jam.
Television placement (reports or programs on domestic stations in the target country)	Potential to reach the largest audiences possible for international broadcasting by placing reports in popular news programs in the target country.	Entirely at the mercy of the gatekeeper. Some stations will refuse to carry content for political reasons, others for commercial reasons (i.e. they can attract larger audiences with their own content).

The Communication Process of Elite and Mass Strategies of International Broadcasting

