

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

CREATE A NEW NON-PROFIT TO COMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

Mobilize the Private Sector and Make Government Smarter

Background

At least since World War II, America's standing in the world has been a source of strength, security, and legitimacy. But now, for a variety of reasons, that standing is in peril.

America's tarnished international reputation can have negative consequences for advancing U.S. national interests and for attracting the necessary cooperation of foreign governments and their citizens. Anti-U.S. attitudes also aid America's enemies.

Since the existing institutions for public diplomacy were created, the world has changed markedly: public opinion plays a larger role; information and communications technologies are cheap and ubiquitous; private companies, non-governmental organizations, and social movements exert greater influence. And hostile ideologies support violence that imperils the United States and its allies.

But America has an appealing story to tell. Its government is based on sound and admirable principles. It has demonstrated adaptability and ingenuity. It has abundant assets, both governmental and non-governmental. It leads the world in innovation, communication, education, and research. And its civil servants are talented and compassionate.

In short, America is well-equipped to meet the complex challenges of today and the future. Effective public diplomacy is an important element in meeting those challenges.

Recommendations

Here are some specific steps the United States can take to strengthen its efforts to engage, persuade, and attract the support of foreign publics:

- Create a nimble new non-profit organization called the USA·World Trust to complement and support the U.S. government's public diplomacy efforts. This new organization will tap expertise in the private sector and NGOs and bring it into government; conduct research and analysis relevant to public diplomacy and strategic communication; develop and adapt new media and technologies; serve as a hub of innovation; and provide grants to American and foreign organizations that will present a more accurate portrayal of America to counter-balance anti-American views, promote shared values and interests, and contribute to an environment of mutual trust.
- Invest more resources in America's public diplomacy and strategic communications and integrate these instruments of statecraft at all stages of policy-making and at all levels of government.
- Establish strong leadership, a government-wide strategy, clear lines of authority, and stronger mechanisms to ensure coordination between government agencies.

- Do not expend valuable time, resources, and energy on recreating the U.S. Information Agency or other new government agencies. Make the current structures work better instead.
- Expand the State Department's capacity for public diplomacy, including designating deputy assistant secretaries in all regional and most functional bureaus. Expand and improve public diplomacy training for Foreign Service officers and for public diplomacy professionals.
- Streamline policies to facilitate government partnerships with the private sector, and establish programs to draw outside experts into the government.

Key Facts

Private interactions across borders now dwarf government actions—while the Department of State has 15,500 employees and operates in nearly 180 countries, Coca-Cola operates in 200 countries with 90,500 employees.

In the last 50 years the world's population has increased from 2.9 billion to 6.7 billion; the number of international tourists has increased from 25 million to 898 million; the number of American students abroad has increased from 12,500 to 223,500; two-thirds of the world's countries are now democracies; and the number of social networking users has exploded.

America's most senior military and defense leaders argue that today's threats cannot be addressed with military force alone.

Brookings Experts

Kristin Lord, a fellow in Foreign Policy and the Saban Center's Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, previously served as associate dean for strategy, research, and external relations at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.

Hady Amr, a fellow in the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and director of the Doha Center, previously served at the Department of Defense, World Economic Forum, World Bank, UNICEF and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies.

Peter Singer, a senior fellow and director of Brookings 21st Century Defense Initiative, was director of the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World.

Ann Florini, a senior fellow in Foreign Policy, was director of the Project on Transnational Civil Society at the Japan Center for International Exchange.

Tamara Wittes, senior fellow and director of the Saban Center's Middle East Democracy and Development Project, was a Middle East specialist in the Research and Studies Program at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Required Reading

["Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century,"](#) Kristin M. Lord, November 2008

["The State Department, Not the Pentagon, Should Lead America's Public Diplomacy Efforts,"](#) Kristin M. Lord, opinion article, the *Christian Science Monitor*, October 29, 2008

["Creating a New Public Diplomacy Cabinet Post,"](#) William Galston, *Diplomacy: A Journal of Ideas*, Spring 2008

["Engaging the Muslim World: A Communication Strategy to Win the War of Ideas,"](#) Hady Amr and Peter W. Singer, *Opportunity 08: Ideas for the Next President*, The Brookings Institution, February 2007

["How to Advance U.S. Public Diplomacy,"](#) Hady Amr and Steven W. Barnes, *Beirut Daily Star*, Sept. 3, 2007