
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A NEW EUROPE



A Report of the
United States
Advisory Commission
on Public Diplomacy

**TO THE CONGRESS
AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

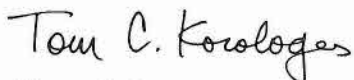
The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, pursuant to Public Law 101-246, "shall submit to the Congress, the President, the Secretary of State, and the Director of the United States Information Agency annual reports on programs and activities carried out by the Agency" and "such other reports to the Congress as it considers appropriate."

In accordance with these requirements, the Commission submits herewith a report on "Public Diplomacy in a New Europe."

Respectfully submitted,



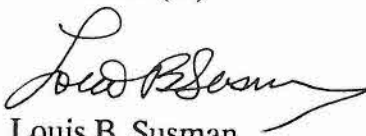
Edwin J. Feulner, Jr. Chairman
President
The Heritage Foundation
Virginia (R)



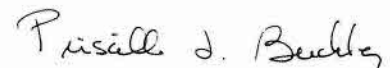
Tom C. Korologos, Vice Chairman
President
Timmons and Company, Inc.
Virginia (R)



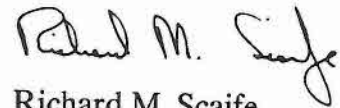
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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The transformation of Europe has redefined our world and proven beyond doubt the appeal of democratic principles and free market economies.

Decades of radio broadcasts, educational exchanges, exhibits, books, seminars, and U.S. embassy press and cultural activities all contributed to the epic events of the past year. They built relationships, disseminated news and information, and kept the idea of truth and freedom alive.

But with this hopeful political landscape comes a formidable challenge -- to use the tools of public diplomacy in assisting the new democracies in Eastern Europe and in support of United States interests elsewhere throughout the world.

In January, the Commission invited senior officials from the U.S. Information Agency, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Endowment for Democracy, and knowledgeable individuals from the private sector to address some of the central issues raised by the revolution of ideas in Europe. There was unanimous agreement on a basic assumption: the United States has a fundamental stake in these experiments in democracy and freedom, and ideas are more important to their success than economic assistance.

In this report, my colleagues and I outline the direction we believe public diplomacy should take in the new Europe. We call for a strategy, bold leadership, additional resources, new priorities, and hard-headed planning.

We invite Congress, the Administration, and the American people to join us in a dialogue on the issues we have raised.



Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.
Chairman
May, 1990

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings

- America's national security and foreign policy interests will be enhanced significantly if democratic governments and free market economies become firmly established in Eastern Europe.
- USIA's overseas public affairs and cultural programs, the Voice of America, and educational exchanges are vital to the success of democratization in Eastern Europe.
- More than just economic assistance, the new governments need institution-building skills, entrepreneurial know-how, and a firm intellectual foundation in democratic values.
- USIA has been disappointingly slow to develop program priorities and resource proposals. Within the Executive Branch there is lack of cohesion and high-level commitment to public diplomacy.
- USIA is not a creature of the Cold War, its work now finished. The Agency's worldwide mission will become more, not less, important as bipolar military and ideological competition gives way to a world focused increasingly on economic, cultural, and communications issues.

Recommendations

- Consistent with the President's position on the power of communication and American ideas, USIA should develop a comprehensive public diplomacy strategy in Eastern Europe linking government and the private sector.
- The President should establish a National Council on Public Diplomacy.
- Congress should invest substantial additional resources for public diplomacy in Eastern Europe without reducing underfunded programs in other parts of the world.
- USIA's radio and television broadcasting to Eastern Europe should emphasize programs on democracy in action.
- The United States should start planning now for the termination of Radio Free Europe's language services when their goals have been achieved, and the transfer of assets as appropriate to the Voice of America.
- USIA's information and cultural programs in Eastern Europe should be expanded. Disproportionate emphasis on direct broadcasting and exhibits should no longer dominate program and resource decisions.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

"America's ideas are powerful; and through the power of communication, we can share them with the world."

President George Bush, April 2, 1990

"As we enter the 1990s we are confronted with an exciting yet difficult task -- to assist the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe . . . Public diplomacy and communicating America's story to the world must remain a priority for the entire Administration."

Message from Vice President Dan Quayle to the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, January 24, 1990

"While it is important that we provide economic support, it may prove to be even more important that we provide the kind of expertise that tells people how to form political parties, how to deal with the political process, how to organize, how to poll, and it is going to be equally important that we provide the expertise that tells people how to organize a banking system."

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger at the January 24, 1990 meeting of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

"The removal of Marxism-Leninism as the official ideology and its elimination from secondary and higher school training has left a gaping hole in curricula, particularly in the area of social sciences and the humanities. The new government wants to fill this with western social and political science courses but lacks textbooks, teachers and advice on how to do this."

U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Shirley Temple Black

We have before us a rare, historic opportunity to achieve our foreign policy goal of the past 40 years in Czechoslovakia. The only limitations on USIA program possibilities will be our sparse budget, small staff and larger resource problems of the Agency. This is not a matter of redoubling our efforts. Our American officers are already working ten to sixteen-hour days and seven-day weeks."

Tom Hull, USIA Public Affairs Officer, Prague

"Poland has 7 million students who know little of democracy and less of the English language. It has 18,000 Russian-language teachers and fewer than 1,000 equipped to teach English. We need 20,000 English-language teachers, and we have no way of training them ourselves."

Wiktor Kulerski, Polish Deputy Minister of National Education

Introduction

"You have informed us truthfully of events around the world and in our country as well, and in this way you helped to bring about the peaceful revolution, which has at last taken place. However, by this I don't intend to say your work has now lost its meaning. On the contrary, it now has taken on new meaning. You will have to inform us about how to create a democracy . . . and we have a lot to learn."

Remarks of President Vaclav Havel to VOA Broadcasters , February 20, 1990

When President Havel visited the Voice of America to pay tribute to its Czechoslovak broadcasters, his presence symbolized the value of more than forty years of American public diplomacy in Eastern Europe.

For those four decades, Western radio broadcasts brought news and information to millions long denied both. Educational exchanges and international visitor programs continued during the darkest days of the Cold War, sustaining important personal and institutional ties between Americans and East Europeans. U.S. embassy cultural and information programs built relationships with many of the pivotal figures in a revolution of ideas that has fundamentally altered the course of history.

The transformation of East-West relations is eloquent testimony not only to the effectiveness of containment and the internal contradictions of flawed political systems -- but also to the importance of communications and the value of public diplomacy as a force for freedom and democracy.

A bipartisan consensus is emerging: the world is moving beyond containment; bipolar military and ideological competition is giving way to a world increasingly focused on economic, cultural, and communications issues.

There is a compelling case for public diplomacy in such a world.

Quite simply, America's national security and foreign policy interests will be enhanced if the countries of Eastern Europe and elsewhere are successful in establishing democratic governments and free market economies. Our interests will be harmed to the extent these processes are reversed.

To succeed, the new governments need more than economic assistance. They need what decades of totalitarian rule did not provide -- institution-building skills, entrepreneurial know-how, and a firm intellectual foundation in democratic values and human rights.

Sharing national experiences, communicating information about the United States, and bringing people together are what public diplomacy is all about. USIA's overseas public affairs and cultural programs, the Voice of America, and educational exchanges have valid purposes in support of a fundamental policy goal: to promote democracy.

But it would be a mistake to tie the mission of international information and educational exchange programs exclusively to transitory events or to U.S. interests in a single geographic area. Public diplomacy is not, as some suggest, a creature of the Cold War, its work now accomplished.

Most of USIA's major programs predate World War II. With occasional changes in emphasis, the interrelated elements of the Agency's mission have remained constant:

- To explain and advocate U.S. policies in terms that are candid and meaningful in foreign cultures,
- To provide information about American society, its values and institutions, and,
- To build mutual understanding and lasting relationships through educational and cultural exchanges.

It is a global mission that derives from America's interests, ideals, and leadership role in the world.*

** For a discussion of USIA's mission and structure, see the 1989 report of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, pp. 16-19.*

To compete successfully as a nation we must communicate persuasively. We must be subtle and creative. We must understand other cultures, and they must understand ours.

Trade, narcotics, commercial opportunities, nuclear nonproliferation, the environment, new regional groupings, changing technologies, and a host of other issues comprise a complex chessboard of political and economic challenges. The ability to communicate to elite and mass audiences is a strategic asset in a world that relies less and less on traditional statecraft and military stockpiles -- and more and more on outcomes determined through the ballot box.

Strategy and Resources

The Commission is deeply concerned the Administration and Congress have not developed a public diplomacy strategy or adequately addressed urgent public diplomacy resource needs in dealing with new opportunities in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in the world.

USIA has been disappointingly slow to develop comprehensive program and resource proposals. Within the Executive Branch there is a lack of cohesion. In public diplomacy, it is not quite business as usual, but basic questions go unanswered. Who is in charge? Where are we heading? What programs and resources are required?

The United States needs a bold and comprehensive public diplomacy strategy linking government and the private sector as they seek to assist countries newly embracing democracy and free market economies. Key elements include:

- Clearly stated objectives,
- Immediate resource allocations for urgently needed programs,
- A multi-year assessment of resource needs continuously evaluated in terms of changing circumstances,

- Institutionalized review of the priorities and mix of the means of communication,
- An effective interagency coordinating mechanism,
- A commitment to energize private sector initiatives,
- A plan to eliminate duplication in U.S. broadcasting services, and
- Research, program evaluation, and long-range planning capabilities.

Unprecedented public diplomacy opportunities in the emerging democracies cannot be left to normal bureaucratic processes. Windows now open may close. The stakes are as critically important as any since World War II.

To provide the coherence, continuity, and high-level commitment that is needed, the Commission urges the President to establish a National Council on Public Diplomacy. The President or Vice President should chair the Council, which would include executive branch departments and agencies with national security and public diplomacy responsibilities. Its functions should be: (1) to advise and assist the President in developing public diplomacy policies and strategies, (2) to monitor and coordinate their implementation by executive departments and agencies, and (3) to foster close executive branch coordination and cooperation with the private sector. The Council would have an executive secretary and a small staff. It would seek the views of the private sector, including those of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, and would not interfere with existing lines of authority and responsibilities.

Public diplomacy should be a central element in the planning and implementation of American foreign policy. Commitment must come from the top, and establishing a National Council on Public Diplomacy is a means to this end.

In their speeches, Administration and Congressional leaders have made a strong intellectual case for supporting the new democracies. But the public diplomacy programs and resource enhancements needed to carry out their ideas have not fol-

lowed. Funding and staffing for public diplomacy programs carried out by U.S. missions in Eastern Europe have changed little from the low levels dictated by Cold War restraints.

The Support for Eastern Europe Democracy (SEED) legislative initiatives and appointment of the President's Coordinator for United States Support to Eastern Europe are necessary and important steps, but they focus primarily on economic assistance programs. We must invest substantial additional resources for public diplomacy in Eastern Europe without reducing underfunded information and cultural programs in other parts of the world.

Ambassador Max Kampelman put it well at the Commission's January meeting:

*"If we cannot demonstrate that democracy works best in Eastern Europe . . . then I think we have struck a very serious blow against liberty in that part of the world. You cannot deal with these problems simply by saying 'You don't throw dollars at them.' You don't throw dollars. You have got to use dollars. Dollars are indispensable."**

Or, as House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell (D-FL) has stated:

*"1990 may very well be the year in which we finally begin to realize the full potential communications and broadcasting have on the evolution of society, on political institutions, on business behavior, and just about every aspect of human behavior. As a politician, I know that cutting my communications budget is the last thing I will do, unless of course I do not want to get elected. The East Europeans have learned a similar lesson over the last 45 years."***

USIA's budget is smaller today in real terms than two decades ago. A resource decline that began in 1985 continues. Field staffing remains at the lowest level in the Agency's history. Cutbacks have forced reductions in programs and broadcast hours at the Voice of America and significantly delayed its modernization program. Congressional mandates -- such as those for TV Marti and VOA's new Tibetan Service -- reduce the flexibility needed to meet opportunities in Eastern Europe and maintain core public diplomacy programs of proven value.

* *Proceedings of the Commission's meeting on "Public Diplomacy in a New Europe," January 24, 1990, p. 55.*

** *Testimony of Congressman Dante Fascell (D-FL), House Subcommittee on International Operations, March 22, 1990.*

In recent Congressional testimony, USIA Director Bruce Gelb observed:

*"During the period 1986 to 1991, we will have eliminated over 700 jobs; VOA broadcast hours will have been reduced by 207 hours a week, or 17 percent; and we will have eliminated approximately 440 academic exchange and international visitor grants."**

For more than forty years, we have spent billions to protect ourselves from the threat posed by an expansionist Soviet Union. It makes sense to invest far less -- but more than is now budgeted -- to ensure that these fragile democracies survive and flourish. In Europe, where Soviet troops are pulling back, new leaders plead for English teaching, media training, knowledge about the rule of law and holding local elections, and workshops on economic theory and commercial practice.

USIA's Public Affairs Officers in Eastern Europe describe extraordinary opportunities and an insatiable desire to learn about the United States. The Commission believes the American people will support resources to meet these opportunities as an investment in a world that will be more secure, more open to American economic interests, and more commensurate with American ideals.

Major initiatives in Eastern Europe will require significant new resources. In the Commission's judgment, offsets will not be found elsewhere in the international affairs budget. They must come from a reevaluation of national budget priorities. Developing the popular support needed for such wise decisions is what political leadership is all about, and the Executive Branch through USIA must take the lead.

Programs and Priorities

While the fundamental mission of public diplomacy is sound, the epic events of the past year do call for a fresh and constructive look at programs and priorities.

How should the U.S. Information Agency adapt to a world where the free flow of people and information has dramatically increased and the military threat has diminished?

**Statement of USIA Director Bruce S. Gelb, Senate Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies, March 20, 1990.*

- What are the implications for international broadcasting of changes in communications technology and a more open media environment?
- What should be the priority and mix of information, educational exchange, and cultural programs?

Examination of these and other questions has begun in the Administration and Congress. The Commission welcomes the oversight activities initiated by committees of the House and Senate and the President's decision to direct the National Security Council to conduct a review of U.S. international radio and television broadcasting.

In pursuing these reviews, the Commission offers the following considerations.

The continued value of the Voice of America and USIA/TV. The United States will need global radio and television broadcasting services well into the future. Commercial media by definition are in business to sell products and are no substitute for government broadcasting established to provide information about the people, culture, and policies of the United States. International communications are a vital foreign policy tool. Now is not the time to curtail them.

Changes in broadcasting emphasis. VOA and USIA's Television Service have important roles in providing an information base for emerging democracies in Eastern Europe. Repeat broadcasts and other programs designed to overcome jamming are no longer needed, nor is the primary goal to provide news denied by government information monopolies. Power levels and numbers of shortwave transmitters should be carefully assessed. East Europeans increasingly find their own media interesting and credible. They concede Western economies and forms of government are superior; they want to know how to achieve the same results.

Today, USIA's broadcasting media should emphasize programs on democracy in action: federalism, the rule of law, the role of a free press, adjusting national interests to ethnic and local differences, and "how to" organize a political party, run a public meeting, write a constitution, or start a small business. The temptation to preach should be avoided. It is a matter of sharing practical ideas and the diversity of the American experience with those who will adapt what works best for them.

"Radio bridges" and English teaching. VOA's co-programming with other countries ("radio bridges") and English language instruction should be expanded to meet the demand of millions of East European and Soviet listeners. Resources and relief from staff shortages are needed if broadcasters are to have the time to develop imaginative and competitive new programs.

Media training. VOA's International Media Training Center, in cooperation with other USIA program elements, is uniquely positioned to provide training for independent radio, television, and print enterprises in Eastern Europe. VOA's innovative cooperation and cost-sharing with U.S. journalism schools has provided practical, high quality media training for hundreds of journalists. The Center should be given resources to enable its workshops to provide training quickly in East European languages.

Alternatives to shortwave. Rapidly declining shortwave listenership in parts of Eastern Europe will require diversified signal delivery systems. To remain competitive, VOA will need to broadcast increasingly via local medium wave and FM stations. Additional satellite distribution of English and language service direct broadcasts, facilities leasing arrangements, and a VOA Europe II channel offer considerable promise of enhanced coverage. Daily delivery of VOA Polish broadcasts for rebroadcast by Warsaw Radio I suggests the concept of transnational partnerships is viable. VOA should also give greater emphasis to its examination of Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) technology.

This does not mean VOA's shortwave modernization program is not an urgent priority for broadcasting to China, Africa, the Soviet Union and other areas. The Commission continues to support VOA construction projects in Morocco, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Israel.

Surrogate broadcasting. For decades, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty have provided listeners in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union with a reliable alternative to their state-controlled media. The many testimonials to the power of the radios in keeping democratic hopes and principles alive are well-deserved. The Board for International Broadcasting has stated the mission of the radios well:

*"In contrast to the Voice of America, whose primary mission is to present U.S. policy and to project U.S. society and institutions, RFE and RL seek to identify with the interests of their listeners, devoting particular attention to developments in and directly affecting the peoples of Eastern Europe and the USSR. In focusing on the special concerns of their audiences, they perform some of the functions of a 'home service' as well as a surrogate free press."**

Many East European leaders, including Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel, have urged continuation of RFE while the information needs of their societies evolve. The radios have large audiences, contractual commitments, and a valid surrogate broadcasting mission while the possibility remains of reversing the current democratization and until their listeners have established free media alternatives.

Unlike VOA, whose worldwide mission to broadcast news and information about the United States will continue, the goals of some surrogate broadcasting services will be achieved if democratic trends in Eastern Europe are sustained. Planning for this eventuality should include:

- Country-by-country differentiations within RFE/RL. For example, the reduced need for RFE's Polish and Hungarian services contrasts sharply with that for Radio Liberty, which broadcasts in Russian and eleven languages of other Soviet nationalities.
- Establishing clear criteria for decisions to reduce or terminate RFE's services. Such criteria should include well-established democratic institutions and free media alternatives, and demonstrable VOA/RFE audience and program duplication.
- A strategy for terminating or, as appropriate, transferring RFE's assets to VOA when the separate need for them ceases.

* Board for International Broadcasting, *Annual Report, 1987*, p. 45.

Radio in the American Sector (RIAS). The rapid pace of German reunification puts RIAS high on the public diplomacy agenda. Established at the end of World War II as a joint U.S.-West German undertaking, RIAS currently reaches approximately 50 percent of the population in Berlin and East Germany. RIAS-TV began broadcasting in 1988 and now reaches two million viewers.

There are good reasons in principle to continue U.S. involvement in RIAS radio and television operations. Located in Berlin, the possible future capital of a united Germany and a focal point for European integration, RIAS could play a vital role in maintaining an American presence in central Europe. It could serve as a major source of information about democracy and the United States for 16 million East Germans. It could also be an investment in the future of Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) audio broadcasting and satellite television. In January, RIAS began broadcasting from the Kopernikus I satellite, which reaches from France to western parts of the Soviet Union.

The National Security Council should examine U.S. options carefully and quickly. A decision to continue to participate in RIAS should be based on (1) a broad supporting consensus in both countries, (2) a clear statement of what its mission and legal basis would be in a united Germany, (3) an assessment of its value in the context of overall U.S. public diplomacy activities in Germany, and (4) a demonstrated willingness by Congress to provide the necessary additional funds.

The cost factor is significant. The Bundestag currently provides \$97 million a year for RIAS; the U.S. share is a nominal \$3 million. Estimates project this ratio would change in a unified Germany with much higher U.S. appropriations being needed to insure adequate representation of American interests. The Commission believes it is essential that funds for RIAS not be taken from other public diplomacy programs.

Public diplomacy balance. USIA's programs in Eastern Europe should reflect a more balanced mix of exchanges, international visitors, publications, cultural centers, seminars, workshops, English-teaching, public affairs, personal contact by language-qualified officers, and radio and television broadcasts. Disproportionate emphasis on direct broadcasting and exhibits -- historically the most effective means of communicating with closed societies -- should no longer dominate program and resource allocation decisions.

Policy and program direction. USIA's Bureau of Programs has been without an Associate Director for a considerable period of time. The Commission believes the Administration should move quickly to appoint a qualified individual to this important post and urges early Senate confirmation.

Expanded public affairs and exchange programs. USIA's public affairs and educational exchange programs in Eastern Europe should be expanded to meet the extraordinary demand for information and skills. USIA's "natural audiences" -- writers, journalists, students, intellectuals, and cultural figures -- have pivotal roles in the new societies emerging in Europe. U.S. experiences with democracy, the rule of law, and a free market economy should be shared by Americans skilled in the art of public diplomacy and familiar with East European culture and traditions.

The Commission remains convinced that educational and cultural exchange programs, administered by USIA in cooperation with many private organizations, are among the most effective tools of public diplomacy. Early establishment of bilateral Fulbright Commissions in the democratizing countries of Eastern Europe should be encouraged. They can institute and expand long-term exchanges and provide guidance to scholars, researchers, and students seeking an American educational experience. U.S. corporations and other private sector organizations wishing to assist the new democracies should be encouraged to provide training, direct and in-kind contributions, and other forms of assistance.

Field operations. Extraordinary new opportunities in Eastern Europe cannot be met with the small, hard-pressed field staffs that remain at Cold War levels. Housing, training, and support for additional language-qualified foreign service officers, English teaching officers, regional book officers, and VOA correspondents should be given a high priority in supplementary resource allocations.

English teaching. USIA, in cooperation with the Peace Corps, should multiply its English teaching programs to meet exploding demand in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Research. Rapid changes in the political and media environment in Central and Eastern Europe will require increased research on radio listening patterns and

television viewership, magazine readership, effective program evaluation, and application of findings by USIA's managers.

Embassy objectives. The wide variety of organizations involved in East European democratization creates a danger their programs may unwittingly work at cross-purposes or be in conflict with U.S. policy goals. Efforts to build institutions within a country should be consistent with U.S. embassy objectives and priorities. Exchanges, grants, and training programs are most effective when decisions are coordinated by appropriate language-qualified officers in the field.

Institutionalizing public diplomacy. Public diplomacy remains a marginal consideration in planning and implementing U.S. foreign policy. The National Security Council and the Department of State should institutionalize a process for making public diplomacy a central element in foreign policy planning and implementation. USIA should be involved at senior and operational levels. Assessment of foreign public reaction to proposed policies should be a part of all major policy decisions.

The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy is an independent, bipartisan body established by Congress to oversee the international public affairs and educational exchange programs of the United States government.

The Commission assesses the policies and programs of the U.S. Information Agency, including the Voice of America, international educational exchanges, television broadcasting, and overseas press and cultural activities.

Commission members are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commission submits reports to the President, the Congress, the Secretary of State, the Director of USIA, and to the American people.

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Public Diplomacy in a New Europe

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