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A Presidential Commission created by Congress to provide bipartisan oversight of the international broadcasting, information, and educational exchange activities of the United States government.

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UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON

# PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE PACIFIC CENTURY

- *No region of the world is more important to America's long-term prosperity and security than East Asia and the Pacific.*
- *Public diplomacy should be a central component of a national strategy to promote vital long-term U.S. security and economic interests in Asia.*
- *Governments and public opinion in Asia generally favor greater American involvement, creating a window of opportunity for expanded public diplomacy.*

■ *U.S. Information Agency programs are a highly cost-effective means of encouraging support for U.S. policies, a dialogue with Asia on shared concerns, and mutual understanding.*

■ *The following public diplomacy activities should be strengthened:*

*Television, which is becoming the dominant information medium in Asia;*

*Field staffing and training;*

*Exchanges, such as Fulbright scholars and International Visitors;*

*Outreach to Asian students in the U.S.;*

*Coordination with private and public organizations operating in Asia;*

*Radio broadcasts to Asian countries denied free media;*

*Programs with major potential, including book translations, library services, "Study of the U.S." projects, speakers, environmental efforts, and English teaching;*

*Communications technologies: dish antennas, two-way video systems, and digital compression.*

■ *Funding should be provided through a redirection of assets within the USIA, defense, and international affairs budgets.*



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No region is more important to America's long-term prosperity and security than East Asia and the Pacific. And nowhere are America's foreign policy goals of open market economies, a strong defense, and support for democracy more relevant or interrelated.

**Economics and Trade.** If current economic and trade trends continue, the 21st century will be the "Pacific Century."

The world's fastest growing economies, the largest U.S. export markets, and the largest U.S. trade deficits are in East Asia. The International Monetary Fund ranks China's economy in third place worldwide, behind the U.S. and Japan.

#### **Security.**

Three times in this century Americans have fought major wars on Asian soil. Today the United States is widely viewed in the region as an essential balancing force, a guarantor of peace and stability in a part of the world where territorial disputes, nuclear proliferation, civil war, and other risks of military adventurism warrant U.S. vigilance and readiness.

**Building Democracy.** Asian governments range from old-line Communist tyrannies to full-fledged democracies. The U.S. must encourage the development of democratic institutions, human rights, and more open, pluralistic societies. To do this effectively, our support for democracy building requires a knowledge of and sensitivity to the history, culture and language of these countries, and a willingness to listen to divergent viewpoints.

### **Increased Attention Needed**

In recent years, East Asia has not received sufficient high level attention from the U.S. government. The exception is when trade or policy disagreements emerge. U.S. concerns in the region, however, extend well

beyond short-term disputes. The shape of the post-Cold War world will depend as much on U.S. relationships with Asia as it does on peaceful and democratic reforms in Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Recent statements by senior U.S. officials indicate a heightened awareness of the need to project a greater U.S. presence in Asia, a focus this Commission greatly encourages.

Asian nations are reassessing their relationships with other countries and the value of increasing regional investments and alliances. In the past, policies were formed largely in a bilateral context; today multilateral ties are becoming more important. The U.S. must be an active participant

in this process or risk losing influence in the region.

Countries in Asia are concerned about the staying power of the United States. Governments and public opinion in the region generally favor a sustained American

security and economic involvement, creating a window of opportunity for public diplomacy programs.

### **USIA Programs**

U.S. Information Agency programs -- educational and cultural exchanges, press and information activities of U.S. missions abroad, and television and radio broadcasting -- encourage support for U.S. policies, a dialogue on shared concerns, and mutual understanding. This programming is cost-effective, all the more so in a time of major cutbacks in our defense and foreign affairs budgets.

The Commission recommends strengthening the following activities:

**Television.** The communications revolution is fully underway in East Asia with phenomenal growth in satellite TV, home dishes, VCRs, and cable systems. Increasingly television is becoming the

**The U.S. exports more to Japan than to France, Germany, and Italy combined.**

#### **U.S. Trade with East Asia**

- \*\* 35% of U.S. Current Trade
- \*\* 40% More Than With West Europe
- \*\* \$120 Billion in Exports
- \*\* \$84 Billion Trade Deficit

region's dominant medium for news, information and entertainment.

Insufficient vision, funding, and planning continue to limit the U.S. government's use of this powerful medium, especially the potential of instant-access satellite TV.

The U.S. should purchase time on regional satellites with direct-to-home capability, such as AsiaSat, with a footprint spanning 39 countries from Japan to the Middle East. USIA should produce and acquire a mix of programs in English and local languages that provide an appropriate blend of news, information, and features. Research studies of audience and media trends are essential in efforts to develop programs and marketing strategies.

The Commission welcomes the strategic planning unit recently established by the Bureau of Broadcasting. However, the public diplomacy potential of television will only be realized through strong leadership at the highest levels, additional resources, and cooperative planning by field officers and all major USIA elements.

**Staffing and Training.** Field officers are central to the effectiveness of public diplomacy. American and foreign employee staff increases are necessary if USIA is to undertake program expansion in East Asia and the Pacific.

Field officers should be well trained, not only in the languages and cultures of the region, but in economics and information technology. Training to upgrade their competence and professional skills is an investment in the future.

**Exchanges.** Exchanges, such as Fulbright scholars and International Visitors, are among the most effective public diplomacy programs, and a means for building personal and institutional relationships that enhance mutual understanding.

To be competitive in East Asia, more Americans should speak the languages of the region and understand the nuances of Asian cultures. While more than 40,000 Chinese and 40,000 Japanese study in the U.S., less than 1,000 Americans study in China and 1,400 in Japan. Expansion of exchange programs will increase the number

of Americans teaching and studying in East Asia and of Asians coming to the United States.

**Student Outreach.** There are some 200,000 students from the region at American universities. The great majority are here under private auspices, and are a plus for the American economy. Campus and community outreach activities provide these students with a deeper appreciation of American institutions and culture, which complements their classroom learning. These programs should be increased.

**Other Organizations.** Many organizations are involved in East Asia, among them the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Asia Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Smithsonian Institution. Of special relevance is the East-West Center, which receives USIA funding and where a career officer is assigned as diplomat-in-residence. Washington and field staff should consult regularly with such organizations to explore opportunities for joint programming and to avoid duplication.

A computerized database could provide the means to share information about what these organizations and USIA are doing in East Asia. The Agency should consider adding this capability to its pilot computer projects.

**Coordination with Defense.** The role of the U.S. military abroad is changing in the post-Cold War world. More and more, military responsibilities include UN peace-keeping, disaster relief, civil-military relations, and other activities with a significant public affairs component. Increased coordination between USIA and the Department of Defense is essential – in Washington, at the U.S. Pacific Command, and at U.S. missions abroad – and will help develop the military's awareness of the impact of public opinion and foreign media.

The current Memorandum of Understanding on joint programming between DOD and USIA was signed in 1983. The agreement is being revised to reflect the changing times. The Commission urges this be done quickly.

***The IMF ranks China's economy third behind the United States and Japan.***



**Field Programs.** The Commission recommends increased funding for textbooks and book translations, "Study of the U.S." projects, speaker programs that send American experts to Asia to meet with counterparts, and environmental protection efforts. These and other field programs have proven value in East Asia.

USIA's library services in Asia are highly effective in communicating democratic values and information about the United States. Their role as technologically advanced reference centers with computer-based data systems should be emphasized.

In Asia as elsewhere, there is keen interest in learning English, the predominant language of international commerce and science. USIA's English teaching activities sustain this favorable trend and help develop greater understanding of the United States.

**Radio.** Although television is increasingly the medium of choice in Asia, shortwave and AM/FM radio remain vital to U.S. interests. U.S. broadcasts to Asian countries denied free media should be enhanced. New and replacement transmitters are needed to guarantee a delivery capability into the 21st century.

**Technology.** USIA's programming must keep pace with new information technologies. Field use of computer systems has not been given sufficient training, funding and technical support. Dish antennas receive VOA and Worldnet broadcasts, and should be purchased for Asian posts that, remarkably, still do not have them.

Two-way video systems should be installed at selected Asian posts for teleconferencing, which would be useful to other embassy elements and could serve as models for USIA posts elsewhere. The Commission supports efforts to achieve cost savings through state-of-the-art digital compression technologies.

Looking ahead, the public diplomacy implications of the new world of interconnected digital systems -- computers, television, fiber-optic cable -- call for imaginative planning.

## Funding

America's best small investment, high yield approach to East Asia and the Pacific today is public diplomacy.

Continuing reductions in USIA's field programs and staffing -- activities unprotected by Congressionally-mandated earmarks and dedicated appropriations -- have substantially eroded the effectiveness of what is really the heart of public diplomacy. Since 1985, USIA's operations in East Asia have been cut an average of 12 positions and a million dollars annually. This cannot continue.

To maintain core programs and fund selected enhancements, the Commission recommends redirection of assets in the defense and international affairs budgets. Within the USIA budget, additional funds could be attained through termination of TV Marti, which is not cost-effective. Asia's importance also may require difficult but necessary redistribution of assets from USIA's other regional operations. Additional funds could be obtained from cancellation of the Israel shortwave transmitter project.

## High Level U.S. Effort

Public diplomacy in East Asia should be a central component of a national strategy to promote vital long-term U.S. security and economic interests in this dynamic region. To provide the coherence and high level commitment national needs require, direction should be set by the President working with Congress.

USIA's programs can make a difference. The Commission is convinced they are a wise investment in the nation's economic prosperity and national security. The stakes are high, and the benefits to Americans from a coordinated public diplomacy effort in East Asia and the Pacific are enormous. That effort should begin now.