

Agenda Transcript for the July 2011 Public Meeting of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy held a public meeting from 10:00am to 12:00pm on July 12, 2011, at the Capitol Visitor's Center, room SVC 203-02.

The meeting included discussions on funding public diplomacy and the Smith-Mundt Act. The Commission welcomed commentary from subject matter experts from several organizations, including the State Department, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the Congress, and the public on this and other relevant topics. This meeting was open to the public, Members and staff of Congress, the State Department, Defense Department, the media, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Commission Members present:

Mr. Bill Hybl, Chairman
Amb. Lyndon Olson, Vice Chairman
Amb. Penne Peacock
Mr. Sim Farar

Staff Members present:

Mr. Matt Armstrong, Executive Director

Presenting at the Meeting:

Mr. Jeff Trimble, Executive Director, Broadcasting Board of Governors
Mr. Andrew Cedar, Senior Advisor in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
Dr. Chris Paul, Social Scientist, RAND Corporation

The Commission would like to thank April Gascon and Willow Williamson, Lindsey Boyle, Kristin Rubisch for their assistance during the event.

MEETING TRANSCRIPT

WILLIAM HYBL: Good morning. I'm Bill Hybl and I'd like to call this session, which has been duly notified in the Federal Register. And I want to thank all of you for being here. Particular thanks to Senator Lugar for arranging our room today.

I'd like to welcome the members of the Commission who are with us. It's certainly our pleasure to be with you. Special thanks to Chris Paul and Jeff Trimble from BBG for being here, we certainly appreciate that. A couple of folks that have helped us: April Gascon and Willow Williamson, Lindsey Boyle, Kristin Rubisch and – provided a great deal of assistance for us today.

Would like to touch for just a moment on the official actions that have gone on in public diplomacy over the last 90 days. Secretary – Under Secretary of State of Public Diplomacy Judith McHale entered the private sector on July 1. She had two great years of service in public diplomacy. And I know the Commission wants to commend and thank her for the work that she has done.

The acting Under Secretary is Ann Stock, who's the Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs. And on behalf of the Commission and, certainly, the staff of the Commission, we want to know – we want her to know that we certainly plan on being very supportive of her efforts and, certainly, many of the programs that were started under the tenure of Judith McHale.

Maybe we could have a staff update, and I would like to introduce our executive director, Matt Armstrong. Matt is off and running in some five months that he's been here, making a real difference in the impact that the Commission is having, particularly as he addresses a series of white papers that will be short in nature but long on content in the area of public diplomacy. Matt?

MATT ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

The Commission is actively seeking interns. I'm interviewing an intern later today, as a matter of fact. We are also working on completing a detail from DOD, an advisor to assist us in certain areas and provide other technical assistance as well as recruiting a short tour foreign service officer. If you have any suggestions, comments, we're always open for that. If you know an intern that is in the State Department that would be interested in working with the Commission, we're interested and welcome to entertain that.

As the chairman just said, we're working on white papers. Several of them are going to be coming out. They're going to be timely relevant discussions on – with digestible topics and actionable items. And so we're increasing our staff to be able to produce that and provide that and to – also, to do our inquiries and to properly research these items and understand them better so we can better inform the president, the secretary of State, the Congress and the American public to build support and understanding for public diplomacy to fulfill our mission.

And that's it.

MR. HYBL: Great, thank you.

I think that on a lot of the things that you've addressed in your prior life – and certainly the Commission is looking into Smith-Mundt. Why don't you address that?

MR. ARMSTRONG: OK. The issues of Smith-Mundt is – we generally refer to Smith-Mundt in the – in the broad sense of the legislation. The reality, what we're talking about, is legislation that prohibits the access within the borders of the United States of content produced within the public diplomacy realm or that which is considered to be within the public diplomacy realm, including BBG material.

The modern era and the disappearance of – the permeability or virtual disappearance of boundaries such as language, geography, time, culture, ethnicity – they have virtually disappeared. These borders are – that are unique to the United States need to just go away. They're inhibiting America's ability to communicate with the global information and human environment, and they're inhibiting the understanding of foreign policy, public diplomacy, the utilities of the various products, interfering with Americans' understanding of what's happening around the world and essentially surrendering much of the narrative to others.

There was an article in the – in The Washington Post this past Sunday about the Somali community in Minneapolis-St. Paul. This is a reflective issue. I think that may be coming up in a little bit with Jeff. To be honest, it was actually Jeff, I believe, that sent it to me.

So that's why Smith-Mundt is a critical issue for us. We're in a global information and human environment. And so the Commission is very interested in this, and that's why we have the individuals to my right here to speak about this later today. And we're happy to have more discussions on this. Thank you.

MR. HYBL: Thank you, Matt.

With that preamble and introduction, I would like to ask the BBG Executive Director Jeff Trimble to maybe comment not only on Smith-Mundt but the pending legislation and the changes which may occur in terms of the entire act. Jeff?

JEFF TRIMBLE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to do so and very pleased to be here today representing Broadcasting Board of Governors and to share with you our perspective on Smith-Mundt. And by that, to be precise, we're referring to Section 501 of the United States Information and Educational Act of 1948, which we refer to as Smith-Mundt, and Section 208 of Public Law 99-93, referred to as the Zorinsky amendment. The Board, let me just say, welcomes its continuing, ongoing interaction with the Commission and looks forward to continued cooperation with you all.

As you know, BBG – but let me say, just for the sake of those in audience who don't know us – is the independent federal agency that encompasses all civilian U.S. international

broadcasting, including Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, where I worked for ten years, Radio Free Asia, Radio and TV Marti, and the Middle East broadcasting networks, which are Radio Sawa and Alhurra television in Arabic. Our broadcasters distribute programming in 59 languages to an estimated weekly audience of 160 million people around the world via radio, TV, the Internet and other new media.

Well, first, the headline. The BBG has drafted and received administration approval of an amendment to the Smith-Mundt Act, which we have recently transmitted to the Congress. We're only in the beginning stages of consultations with Congress to discuss the administration's proposal, but we can share with you what the administration has proposed. And it's very brief.

The provision, the amendment does the following: It establishes that Section 501 of the Smith-Mundt Act – that's the domestic dissemination ban – and the Zorinsky amendment are not applicable to the programming carried out by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, full stop. So Smith-Mundt, again, barred State – USIA, the United States Information Agency, from disseminating its program material in the U.S., and the [Zorinsky amendment](#), a corollary provision adopted in the FY '86, '87 authorization process, provides that, quote, “no funds authorized to be appropriated to the USIA shall be used to influence public opinion in the U.S. and no program material prepared by the USIA shall be distributed within the U.S.” So this is a specific action by this administration, legislation proposed by BBG, that is on the Hill at this time. And very – we're very hoping that there'll be action on this.

In a global media environment where our stories go viral, where they're picked up by media competitors, by aggregators and often are played back to the U.S. public, we really believe a new examination of Smith-Mundt is in order. The ban was adopted at a time when media sources were limited and programming was more easily directed to target audiences. Today, the Internet and other digital technology make the ban an anachronism that is impossible to enforce.

So decades ago, while we broadcast mostly on shortwave targeted to the Soviet Union and other places around the world, today, while we continue broadcasting on these legacy technologies where it's appropriate to do so, we deliver programming through our website and we direct our programming towards sites such as YouTube and Facebook to ensure that our content is on the media tools that people look at every day. So when targeting an overseas audience on these sites, we also reach a U.S. audience. Similarly, placing our programming on broad satellite distribution network makes Voice of America and other programming available within this country.

We have no choice: BBG must be on satellite radio and television and web-based platforms where people around the world increasingly seek information. In seeking significant audiences, the BBG cannot limit its distribution to safe technologies that would guarantee or ensure compliance with the spirit or letter of Smith-Mundt.

Therefore, we've argued that any domestic audiences for programming provided over these media are inadvertent up to now and, therefore, not in violation of the Smith-Mundt statute. This opinion tracks specific language in the Television Broadcasting Act to Cuba, which states, “with respect to the dissemination in the U.S. of information prepared for dissemination abroad

to the extent such dissemination is inadvertent, the BBG shall provide for the open communication of information and ideas.”

Nevertheless, so you know, our agency has consulted with Congress on a number of instances where new technology would make BBG programming available in parts of the U.S. or to certain markets in the U.S. And I'll give two quick examples. In seeking to enhance the availability of TV Marti in Cuba, the BBG sought placement on a DIRECTV satellite channel that had limited availability to subscribers in the Miami area, so it is available there. Second, in the aftermath of the deadly earthquake in Haiti last year, BBG worked with Sirius satellite radio on a proposal to make VOA Creole-language products available on radios to be donated by Sirius to Haitian citizens. The channel assigned could, of course, be heard also by users of Sirius radio in the U.S. In both cases, consultations with Congress resulted in agreement that the inadvertent domestic distribution should not stop the enhanced transmission efforts.

So as media companies and organizations become truly global and their audiences virtually unlimited, the challenge to comply with Smith-Mundt becomes increasingly daunting. In addition, the cautions and concerns reflected by Smith-Mundt seem less relevant in the increasingly burgeoning media environment here in the United States. The number and quality of media voices here argue that another voice available in this rich mix would not wield undue influence, nor would it compete with U.S. media.

U.S. international broadcasting operates under strict journalistic standards pursuant to its legal requirement to be conducted according to the highest standards of broadcast journalism. We are not propagandists.

U.S. international broadcasting would continue to produce programming for the benefit of audiences overseas, not specifically for the American people who have myriad sources of news and information. BBG does not aspire to compete against U.S. media or develop products for U.S. markets. The opportunity to be seen, heard and read by U.S. audiences is desirable; however, the agency would not actively market its programs in the U.S. nor produce targeted programming.

I should point out that the U.S. International Broadcasting Act, our founding legislation, provides no authorization for the production of programming for U.S. audiences. So while there's a ban on disseminating, there's not explicit authorization to produce it. So absent that authorization, our mission would remain the same: to reach overseas audiences.

It is the case that U.S. media outlets, increasingly, are seeking access to BBG video or other content as sources for their own stories because we have it available. This is especially true as our media have drawn back their overseas news gathering assets.

I should mention, and Matt has touched on this, that an important potential audience for U.S. international broadcasting has been missing in its efforts to reach audiences in their vernacular languages. And these are the expatriate and émigré communities in the United States.

Matt referenced an article in Sunday's Washington Post on the front page which specifically documents efforts by an individual to reach out to the Somali-speaking community in Minneapolis to ensure that they have accurate information and to prevent them from being potentially targeted and recruited by al-Shabab to engage in extremism and even, conceivably, acts of terrorism. It is the case that a Somali-language FM radio reached out to us a couple of years ago from Minneapolis and asked us for Voice of America's Somali-language programming to put on the air to reach exactly this community, and we were unable to provide that programming because of the Smith-Mundt ban.

I can't ensure that they aren't taking that programming off the – off the VOA's website and putting it on the air in any case, and that gets to an enforcement issue, but we were not able explicitly to authorize them to use this content. Again, this would've cost us nothing; it would not have been an expense to the American taxpayers and would've contributed, in our view, to the exact efforts that are being described here in this Post article, to prevent extremism here in the United States.

Diaspora communities do access BBG programs over the Web. A couple of months, the NewsHour did a story on Parazit, the extremely popular Persian news network Voice of America television satire program for Iran, in which they profile a couple in McLean, Virginia, watching Parazit and chatting about it and calling their relatives in Iran to talk about the program. I don't think the NewsHour folks had any idea that they were exposing a violation of Smith-Mundt, but that's exactly what they did, and they were exposing exactly the kind of interaction between American Persian-speaking audiences and relatives and friends in Iran that we like to encourage with our broadcast and we feel that the ability to access our content readily in the United States would facilitate. Smith-Mundt presents a chill on any further efforts to promote this kind of global engagement.

In sum, a BBG exemption from Smith-Mundt would enhance program opportunities and effectiveness by eliminating questions about the availability of programming in the U.S. and the viability of programming to connect U.S. and foreign communities.

Plenty more to say on this issue, and I'd welcome any questions and discussion on it later in the – later in the session.

MR. HYBL: Thank you, Jeff.

Andrew Cedar, a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, is with us and will be commenting on Smith-Mundt firewall and the changes that might occur. And we welcome you to the Commission today. Thank you.

ANDREW CEDAR: Thanks very much.

Hope this works.

Thanks. I'm going to be a little more brief than Jeff but try to get the issues on the table and hopefully open it up to discussion.

MR. HYBL: (Inaudible.)

MR. CEDAR: First of all, thank you for the opportunity to – is this on? Can you hear?
OK.

Thank you for the opportunity to have State represented here. Obviously, this is an issue we've been talking about and thinking about for quite a while, and we welcome the opportunity to get more feedback on it, to get input and also to share our perspective. Thanks also to Matt who has really led on this issue, put it on the radar of lots of senior leadership both at the State Department and across the U.S. government.

As Jeff mentioned, there are a number of efforts underway on the Hill to re-examine Smith-Mundt. And we have, both in communications with the Hill and also here as well, expressed that we welcome those efforts, that we're happy that they are occurring, because, quite honestly, when we look at the world now, when we look at the world that we are likely to see developing over the next years, decades, even months, it's a world in which we need greater flexibility to be able to engage the audiences that we need to.

It's important to put a couple caveats out front. First of all, the domestic dissemination ban is something that, in day-to-day activity at the State Department, has not been as big a deal for a few reasons. One is the majority of our sort of DNCP point seven funding that this supplies to is deployed overseas and, therefore, less likely to run into those sorts of issues. Secondly, sort of 60 percent of our funding, which is in the ECE educational and cultural exchange category, doesn't have this restriction. And therefore, on a day-to-day basis, this is not as much of an issue has sort of has been brought up.

That said, there are a number of areas where we do look forward to greater flexibility as some of these efforts are undertaken. And I'll mention a couple of them, some of which Jeff and Matt have already touched upon.

The first is certainly the world of the Internet where any concept of a domestic website versus an international website is just so arcane at this point, it's not even worth wasting the time talking about it. And that is a – that is a blurry line that is getting increasingly blurred. When we talk about social media, when we talk about the followership that we have on various social media platforms, that's also one where we begin to get blurry and one where greater flexibility in terms of clarity, as Jeff mentioned, on eliminating the domestic dissemination ban, is something that would help us to a large extent.

Secondly, it would help us in the category of resources. And especially as we talk about tough resource times ahead, this is an area where, again, only at the margins, we are probably duplicating resources and not giving taxpayers the greatest bang for the buck that we can have.

An example of that might be if we have a youth exchange study program and students come here, they go all over the United States, and our video unit does a brief interview with them and a video about them. That's material that certainly can be broadcast back out to the world,

but it's also incredibly useful for diaspora communities. It might be useful, in addition, for domestic constituencies like news – local news that might want to run information about, hey, there was a – there was a young person from Yemen who was living in Oklahoma City, did you know about this? In terms of broadening our mandate for mutual understanding, that must go in both directions. So that sort of duplication of resources would hopefully be eliminated.

Another very large strategic thrust for us is to begin to get out onto third-party platforms. Too frequently, we are, in the realm of public diplomacy, asking people to come to us. And this extends across both physical and virtual platforms. When you talk about our American centers, when you talk about our websites, it is a thrust, as laid out by the last undersecretary and very much adopted by our secretary of State that we must be out where people are. And in the virtual world, this means increasingly being out on platforms that don't belong to us, and platforms where, for the purpose of Smith-Mundt, we don't determine what is a domestic or an international platform or primarily targeted audience. And therefore, as that becomes more of a thrust of what we do, this line gets blurrier and Smith-Mundt will get in the way even more.

Just to touch on very briefly that I asked for a point that is another priority for us in the sense that those are important conduits to foreign populations. And though our mandate probably will and should continue to be towards engaging foreign publics, this is a tremendous lever that we have that we're hamstrung somewhat in reaching out to and building relationships. We're able to send them, obviously, on educational and cultural exchanges, but to the extent that our materials are helpful and could be passed forward or enhanced, in many ways, by those domestic constituencies, we want to make sure that we're able to engage them.

And the last is another category where there are increasingly – as those walls come down of international communications, it also means that Americans have broader followings abroad. And that means that, as there are bloggers who are American who might be able to get to constituencies we care about, we need to ensure that we can reach out to them, give them material, communicate with them because they are important and very effective and often more credible advocates than people who are in the government.

And therefore, these are issues that are arising right now, I should say, more on the margins than – certainly at BBG, but they're issues that need to be addressed; they're issues that we very much welcome that Congress is putting on the table. We are supportive of legislation that's going forward. And what we want to make sure is that it reflects the reality of our mandate, the reality of our focus going forward.

And a couple of caveats that are worth mentioning as well, because though this will give us more flexibility, we've got to ensure that a couple of things are in there: The first is – and this is sort of an indirect point – to a large extent, Smith-Mundt has been seen over time as the guarantor of protection for public diplomacy funding, the notion that, no matter what happens, to some extent, we have protected funding, it can't be sapped away for political expediency or all kinds of other things that might occur over time.

Though Smith-Mundt doesn't, in a legislative sense, guarantee that – what guarantees that is the desire of the State Department to put forward a budget with a line item and then the

corresponding desire on the Hill to grant that line item – it is still a guarantee that’s sort of enshrined in that. And we want to make sure that, as this gets opened up for discussion, that funding guarantee and protection is considered and reflected.

The second is, as we open this up, we need to make sure that the mandate of public diplomacy remains clear. Though diaspora communities and though lots of efforts to certainly leverage the investments we’ve already made are critically important, we also want to make sure that there aren’t forces trying to draw that money away towards domestic advocacy. And we can all think of the examples where that’s the case. Whether it’s an election year or whether its particular languages we’d like to translate into, there are real issues that might arise as you loosen the restrictions.

That said, what that needs to be complemented by to ensure that we do protect those things is a commitment on the part of these opening up the law, which I believe is the case, and on the – and on the part of the leadership of both people here and at the department as well, that public diplomacy is – and we all know it is – an increasingly critical function for how we engage people overseas. And that’s certainly not going to go away. And as we open this up, certainly we welcome the greater flexibility, particularly given the world that we live in and given the way that world is evolving. We just want to make sure that those caveats are addressed along the way.

And I’m happy, as Jeff mentioned, to follow this up with discussion. Thanks.

MR. HYBL: Great. Thank you, Andrew.

To get a – really, an outside subject matter expert on this, on the [need?] impact of Smith-Mundt on a variety of U.S. government activities, we want to welcome Dr. Chris Paul from the RAND Corporation. Chris?

CHRISTOPHER PAUL: Thank you very much. Thanks, everyone, for joining us today. Thanks for inviting me here.

The past decade has seen a host of white papers, reports, articles, op-eds, commentaries, et cetera suggesting reform in strategic communication and public diplomacy. In 2009, I undertook a survey of these reports, and this was no mean undertaking. In fact, Andrew, one of your colleagues at Department of State reported to me that he had a stack of public diplomacy and strategic communication reports on his desk, but had become so high that it required an improvised wooden scaffolding to avoid collapse.

So I only found 36 noteworthy reports. I’m sure I missed some, but I examined those 36 reports in some detail and conducted some supporting interviews, and results of that survey were published in 2009 as “[Whither Strategic Communication? A Survey of Current Proposals and Recommendations](#)” by the RAND Corporation.

So among those reports and interviews, there was complete consensus on only one thing, and that is that we’re not doing very well at public diplomacy and we need to get better. There

were some themes that recurred, but without complete consensus. Some of the four – the four themes that occurred with the greatest frequency were, first, a call for leadership; second, a call for a clear definition of overall strategy; third, the need for better coordination; and fourth, demand for increased resources.

Now, of the four, the single most frequent recommendation, though not ubiquitous – nothing was – was this call for increased resources. And this is resources of all kinds: funding, programmatic resources, human resources to include personnel in this area. And while this is clearly a time of fiscal responsibility and shrinking budgets, if public diplomacy is a national priority, and it should be, that's going to require resources. It should be resourced as it were a priority.

So within this broader topic of resources, I'd like to address two subtopics: first, the balance of capabilities between civilian agencies like the Department of State and the Department of Defense; and second, the role of public-private partnerships.

So right now, the Department of Defense employs the majority of the resources in terms of funding, manpower, tools and programs used by the United States government for efforts to inform, influence and persuade foreign audiences and publics. And most of us would agree that that's not an ideal state of affairs. In fact, most of us would agree that the Department of State or another civilian agency should have the preponderance of these capabilities.

So that begs two questions: What's the right balance between State and Defense? And how do we get there?

So imagine that in some foreseeable future, the Department of State's capabilities become sufficiently robust to meet baseline steady-state needs in this area on a global level. At that point, I would argue that the Department of Defense still needs to retain significant capability in this area.

Why? Two reasons: First, actions communicate, and the Department of Defense will continue to act, so it will need capabilities to support planning and coordination of the communication content of those actions and of communications in support of those actions. Second, Defense's responsibilities for responding to contingencies necessitate that it retain some "inform, influence and persuade" capabilities. Even the most robust State Department apparatus that anyone could imagine would still likely lack the necessary surge capacity and expeditionary capability that the Department of Defense would need, that the military needs when they're asked to respond to the kinds of contingencies that we asked them to prepare for.

So, for example, when the U.S. military presence in some country goes from negligible to massive, who is going to be there alongside the operating forces explaining and seeking to make palatable their presence? I'll tell you who: military communicators. Unless, of course, all military communicators have been made to disappear, and then the answer is: no one. And that would be a concerning state of affairs.

So how do we get there? Well, right now, State isn't capable of meeting global steady-state communication public diplomacy needs. So we need to increase State's capacity. And arguably, there is some space to move capacity from Defense to State. How can we do that without creating gaps in current capability without creating gaps in existing service that would come at the expense of the national interest or of military lives? In fact, there's some danger; if we're too zealous in stripping away capabilities from Defense before State is ready to take them on or absorb them, there is the very real possibility that the operation could be a success, but the patient might die anyway.

So the right answer is to slowly and thoughtfully migrate some capabilities from Defense over to the Department of State. So State or another civilian agency should clearly have the preponderance of capabilities in this area. But this – ideally, this transition will happen without an overall diminution in the capabilities available. So at the end of this migration process, ideally we'd like to see greater capability on the State side, but with Defense retaining some capabilities and serving as a valuable but subordinate partner in public diplomacy while meeting the needs of their – of their own mission.

So turning back to the broader heading of resources, I'd like to speak briefly about public-private partnerships. So looking back at the reports I reviewed in 2009, quite a few of them called for some kind of new organization for public diplomacy. There were a variety of different proposals, but the ones that I found most compelling all agreed on the need for some kind of independent entity, aligned with government but not part of government, supporting government efforts but able to do things that a government entity just can't do or have, such as certain kinds of flexibility and certain kinds of relationships with the private sector.

So right now, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is hosting an effort, the Strengthening America's Global Engagement effort – SAGE is the acronym – which seeks to articulate an actionable business plan for just such an organization. Such an organization would be an excellent opportunity to pool resources both in terms of funding across government and the private sector, and enable public-private partnerships and to activate expertise and contributions in academia, from industry, and even at the level of private citizens. Most importantly, such an effort would be extremely cost-effective from the perspective of the federal government.

So another theme in the reports I surveyed in 2009 and the preeminent theme today is Smith-Mundt, the Public Law 402, the U.S. Information and Exchange Act of 1948. So this act authorized the U.S. government, for the first time in its history, to conduct international information educational exchange activities. We don't want to lose that. But at the same time, as we've already discussed, it carried stipulations preventing the government from disseminating public diplomacy material domestically.

So on the face of it, a prohibition against propagandizing the U.S. population remains a good idea in principle. But in actual practice, the way these prohibitions were enacted 60 years ago and updated slightly more recently than that but not a whole lot – it fails to take into account the global nature of the contemporary information environment.

As we've – as we've said here repeatedly, the global information environment no longer allows the possibility of a meaningful distinction between a domestic audience and a foreign audience; it's all just one big global audience. And so prohibitions against certain kinds of information reaching the domestic audience become either highly artificial, meaningless or just end up being a complete prohibition against these activities.

And this challenge is not a paper tiger; this is real and consequential. It matters at BBG, it matters at State, it matters at Defense. On a daily basis, there are personnel throughout the government who have things that they would like to do, but either because of a fear of this prohibition or because someone in their chain of command activates this prohibition, they cannot do these things. Smith-Mundt reform is overdue.

So I think these are hugely important issues. And I could go on at great length, but I think I'll conclude my (remarks ?) with that. So thank you very much for your time and attention this morning.

MR. HYBL: Thank you very much, Chris.

The format we're going to use for questions or comments will be first for members of the Commission and then, certainly, for all of you in the audience today.

Ambassador Olson?

LYNDON OLSON: Am I (coming ?) through?

MR. HYBL: No, it's the other way. There, you got it. Now you are.

MR. OLSON: Am I on?

MR. HYBL: Yes.

MR. OLSON: Can you get it? I have a question, Jeff, and to Andrew – Chris, it's nothing personal, I just – they both triggered – they both triggered – also, Andrew, you're way too young to be a senior advisor to anything. (Laughter.)

And I apologize to the audience and those of you who are very familiar with Smith-Mundt, but – Jeff, relative to the kind of histrionics to Smith-Mundt, what was the fear or the concern or the public policy reasons in the beginning for Smith-Mundt?

MR. TRIMBLE: I can answer that. I'm also tempted to dock it because the actual greatest expert in this issue sitting in this room is sitting immediately to my left, and most of what I know about this issue, I know because of what Matt Armstrong has done and written. I would sum it up very quickly and be delighted if Matt could pick up on it.

There seemed to be two concerns at the time. One was that a government broadcaster would propagandize on the behalf of a sitting administration the American people with the

perspectives of that particular administration. And the second is that it would create competition to American domestic media. It would be a competitor in the marketplace. And –

MR. OLSON: Public sector – public competitor.

MR. CEDAR: Yeah. And that – and that – and that sums up the two basic reasons. But if you don't mind, and if Matt could contribute –

MR. OLSON: I'm just looking for an – (inaudible).

MR. CEDAR: – he's the – he's the expert at this.

MR. OLSON: Great. Matt.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Yeah, to echo what Jeff said, the latter part – I don't have to echo the first part – there were two – there were several concerns: The first and foremost, actually, for this dissemination abroad, which was the way it was framed in the original legislation in 1948, was that the Congress pretty completely did not trust the State Department to manage this activity, whether it was the broadcasting activity or the exchange programs. FBI expressed a concern that State wouldn't be able to properly monitor people that were brought in from abroad. Congressional members, Senate and House, were on the record pretty actively stating – in fact, there's one Time article where there was a citation where a congressman said, the State Department is full of loafers, drones and incompetents; the lousiest outfit in town; chock full of reds; it just continued to go on. In fact, several secretaries of State – over the time of the Smith-Mundt when it was first introduced in Congress in October of '45 to when it was signed into law in January '48, there were three secretaries of State and they were called up to the Hill to clear the Department. And this was before Whittaker Chambers, which came out later in 1948. So that was a – that was a critical element.

One thing I'd like to emphasize that Jeff pointed out about the competition is that the State Department and the Congress had always intended on private media filling the gap. And so in the original legislation, there is a line in here – and this gets into the actual anti-propaganda elements, and that is, private information – “the secretary shall reduce such government information activities whenever corresponding private information dissemination is found to be adequate.” Second part of it, real anti-propaganda, was, “nothing in this Act shall be construed to give the Department a monopoly in the production or sponsorship on the air of shortwave broadcasting programs or a monopoly in any other medium of information.” So there is two other elements of the act that are germane that have been lost to history.

And then, if I may just overextend to comment on one thing that Jeff made about Zorinsky amendment, 1985: Zorinsky – the result of the Zorinsky amendment in '85 was that the U.S. federal court actually deemed USIA material to be exempt from the Freedom of Information Act for a time. And that's a little ironic considering the 1967 Advisory Commission, the same commission, in 1967, in its reports recommended that based on the recent passage of what we now know as the Freedom of Information Act, we should do away with this prohibition on American access or domestic access to the material.

MR. TRIMBLE: If I could add just one more – out of our own – out of our legislation, which is, the U.S. International Broadcasting Act, 1994, Section 303 of the act prohibits U.S. international broadcasting from duplicating the activities of private United States broadcasters as well as government-supported broadcasting entities of other democratic nations. So we have these concerns and sentiments expressed in our legislation as well.

MR. OLSON: I don't want to dominate from a time standpoint. I am curious, Andrew, when you said that there were real issues that will evolve in the loosening of the law. What – one, if you'd answer that. And then two, who today is likely to oppose this change?

MR. CEDAR: Sure. I think the real issues are more risks than they are necessary issues. And the two that are at sort of the forefront of people's mind at State – and I should say this hasn't impeded our general pleasure with the fact that this is being taken up, and the fact that we'd like see this taken up on the Hill. These are just caveats that are risks that have come up.

The first is, as I mentioned before, people have seen Smith-Mundt as the – as the guarantor of protection for funding. It authorizes specifically overseas communication, and therefore people have extended that to mean that authorization, and therefore the corresponding appropriations, are specifically for that and therefore not for domestic dissemination, not for general sort of public affairs activity.

Though amending Smith-Mundt wouldn't actually change that, people worry at State that that's – that is a slippery slope. People harken back to the integration of USIA where particularly in the walk over resources there was a lot of effort and not necessarily agreement, on the part of State, to ensure that those resources were protected – that for example, in a pinch, the State Department couldn't take PD resources and repurpose them for, let's say, anything from physical plant improvements to, on the more reasonable end, domestic public affairs activity.

And so people who live with that memory of having walked it over and fought those real bureaucratic battles at the time are worried that as you begin to erode some of the language that specifically authorizes this as a – as an exclusively foreign-facing operation – their worry is that that's the beginning of sort of a slippery slope that eventually might overtake that dedication of those resources. That said, this is really not an issue as much as it is, at this point, I think, a fear because Smith-Mundt is not – and the appropriations legislation that guarantees that. And in fact, even if it were, this depends to a large extent on the fact that the State Department continues to send up a budget that has that line-item.

Whether Smith-Mundt is amended or not, the State Department can send up whatever budget it wants. And therefore the most important thing for us is that there's continued political commitment to this. So that's the first, I should say, risk – not –

MR. OLSON: That's kind of an internality in the sense that it's a budgetary movement of funds through cost centers. The same fear – what was it '99, 2000, when you went through it?

MR. CEDAR: Yeah, correct. Correct.

MR. OLSON: It's the same fear that there would – those funds would be used for another purpose. And that is an internal concern.

MR. CEDAR: Right. That is true. And it would also need though to be backed up, going forward as budgets get sent to the Hill, that any amendment to the authorizing – you know, ability of us to have some exposure for domestic audiences, that that wouldn't – that the Hill would still be in favor of that.

The one more reasonable risk that I think people have brought up somewhat is not that in budgets you'd see a huge change, but that over time at the margins, if this money were more fungible certainly within the communications world at the State Department, that you would begin to have things that were not necessarily sort of towards that end of influencing foreign – influencing and communicating with foreign populations. So more money dedicated to – sort of more money pulled back from our posts, more money dedicated to domestic press work, or for example, decisions on which languages we should translate presidential speeches into depending on domestic constituencies.

That, again, is more a fear and more an internal piece than it is sort of a real legislative concern on our part. But nonetheless, there are people at State who have lived through that walk over from USIA and are concerned about those things rearing their head again.

And the second question –

MR. OLSON: Oh, I was just curious as to who would oppose it. Who would oppose these changes if they're obvious – special interest, it doesn't bother me. I'm just curious where the resistance would come from today. This is a practical internal resistance – more internal, politically?

MR. CEDAR: I think at that this point that's true.

MR. HYBL: Good. Thank you. Ambassador Peacock.

PENNE KORTH-PEACOCK: Yes. I'll do that. Is it on? Yeah, I'd like to ask –

MR. HYBL: No, you need the red light.

MS. KORTH-PEACOCK: – Jeff a question. He has been recently in German, as of Matt Armstrong and myself, when we were going around, and I assume you found this too, trying to explain Smith-Mundt – and also for you, Chris – because the foreign publics that we discussed Smith-Mundt with were very confused about why we couldn't tell the American public what good things we're doing in public diplomacy.

And I would like for you to tell our audience today here what your best description would be to those foreigners that we saw in Germany and in Brussels about why we so fervently would like this to get reorganized and, you know, that it is, as Chris was saying, you know, it's a huge

thing. It's DOD versus Department of State – and the funds, again, as Andrew mentioned, where they're going to go and how they're going to get there.

MR. TRIMBLE: Yeah, Ambassador, there's no question that Smith-Mundt has presented perception challenges that are difficult to explain in our dealings and our operations and can also touch on our credibility. I personally have been involved in meetings over the years with Russian officials arguing for greater access to Russian domestic media for our products so it can be distributed inside the Russian Federation because in recent years, since 2006, the Russians have all but shut down our ability to distribute our content domestically through Russian media outlets.

At the same time, there's greater distribution of Russian-generated content here in the United States. And Russian officials pretty consistently said to me, well, look if you guys really were high-quality real professional journalism, as you say you are, why can't you be distributed in the United States? Obviously you are a propaganda tool, and your government understands that, and it limits your ability to distribute.

Now, compare and contrast that to the BBC where Broadcasting House, the BBC's historic art deco 1932 headquarters building, is in the final stages of a billion-dollar refit that will bring together in one football field-sized newsroom all of the BBCs domestic and international news production in a single facility and news operation. So all of BBCs world service foreign language content will be generated in the same facility with the BBCs domestic content for Britain. So I just give those two examples in my own recent experience and fresh in my thinking about the challenges that that presents.

But that said, look, our issue of credibility – our credibility is built over time. We have to get people to access our products, and once they do they have to understand and be impressed that we're telling the whole story. And that's what we rely on to build our credibility first and foremost. But we do hear this issue raised from time to time, and in the case of the Russians explicitly it's been raised with me any number of times.

MR. HYBL: Chris?

MR. PAUL: That's a great point. And if we come back to actions communicate, the act of having a policy that prohibits the internal dissemination of this information calls that information into question. And that's not a good starting position for any foreign information dissemination. If you want it to be believed, if you want to argue that it's true and persuasive on its own virtuous merits, then that information should be available to the domestic audience as well.

MR. HYBL: Commissioner Westine?

LEZLEE WESTINE: If I can follow-up – Chris, I was very interested in your report. When you came up with the four findings you said we're – basically we're not doing well in the area of public diplomacy. And you mentioned the resources, which you did a phenomenal job laying those out; you mentioned strategy, leadership and coordination, I think. Could you take

just a moment and give some top-of-mind thoughts on those other three areas? Any, you know, things that we perhaps can do to help increase the leadership and/or the strategy and/or collaboration or coordination? That would be my first question.

And then my second is, I am passionate about business engagement and public-private partnerships. And I appreciated you mentioning the Woodrow Wilson work, which is very exciting. Are there other models out there in the business/public partnerships that you have seen that worked very, very well, that we can learn from?

MR. PAUL: I'll start with that second question because I think it's harder. Off the top of my head, I can't think of any massive successes in public-private partnership. There are smaller successes, there are lots of little success stories that you might be able to pull together and leverage. On Sesame International, they've done some great things. I believe the British Council has some aspects of public-private partnership that have been very successful. And I think one of the virtues of the SAGE approach at Wilson is that they're trying to synthesize all the good ideas.

I think part of the reason that this giant stack of reports didn't, over the last decade, generate as much traction as they might have is because of these little nuances and disagreements. And so by taking the best of the ideas from a dozen reports and synthesizing them into one no-kidding, concrete business plan, hopefully they'll get some traction. I understand the current fiscal climate is a significant barrier to getting any kind of buy-in from the government, but there we go.

So coming back to – you were right, you listed out the four most common recommendations: leadership, a call for a definition of overall strategy, and the need for better coordination and resources, which I elaborated. Leadership was very interesting. In the reports, leadership was being used as code for one of a couple different things. One was, in fact, the strategic element of leadership, clear direction.

Another was desire for specific presidential attention, though as one of the people that I interviewed pointed out that every – every proponent of an issue area craves attention from the highest level of policy makers. But another – there's probably something else, but I don't have that to hand. But so that's an important emphasis there.

The call for a clear definition of overall strategy – it's very difficult to plan communication and influence activities without a clear idea of what the objective is. And often – so criticisms in these reports raised from criticisms of the highest-level strategies offered, which are often – I characterize it as at the hand-waving level, things that sound good but in terms of trying to connect actual activities or objectives to – things like “win the long war.” And that was prominent in our national security strategy for quite a while. That's a – that's a good millennial goal, but what do I do at the programming level to win the long war?

So it's fine to have highest-level strategies and goals like that, but there needs to be some kind of process to specify subordinate goals. And in certain situations we're not very good about

articulating our strategies at all. And so connected with the desire for a definition of overall strategy and for leadership is concerns about certain policies.

I have a quote in that report from one of the interviews that says you can't communicate to improve bad policies. If you make a policy that is unattractive to foreign audiences, you can – you can be apologetic about that in your communicates – your communications, but you can't make people like it. That's just not possible. So there was some grumbling about that too. If our policies were clearer then we could either be apologetic for them or supportive of them. And sometime – if policies are better – and again, that's a very pejorative statement from the position of a single speaker – it would be easier to communicate in support of.

Coordination was another significant issue. The Department of Defense has a term for failing to coordinate; it's called information fratricide. That's when one information-providing component says something that's contradictory to another information-providing component. I have a great example from 2004. President Bush gets up behind a podium and says there's 128 operational Iraqi battalions. On that same day, two generals get up behind a different podium and say there are two Iraqi battalions operating independently in Iraq as of today.

Sounds like they've just contradicted each other; sounds like someone's lying. The sad thing is the two sets of gentlemen were speaking about the same report. Unfortunately that report categorized Iraqi battalions at three different levels of readiness, one of which was manned and trained, one of which was operating with American liaison personnel, and the other was operating independently. The president referred to the battalions in the first bin, the two generals referred to the battalions in the last bin. They both spoke the truth, but in such a way that it seemed to contradict itself.

How do we do that? Again, it's easy, and many of these reports point out the problem; the suggestions offered vary widely. Some of them suggest some new structure at the National Security Council, some suggest the re-creation of a USIA 2.0 and coordinating authority there, some suggest just interagency partnerships, which is kind of the structure we have now – coordination – voluntary coordination, opportunities to talk about significant upcoming rollouts and events and to talk about how these things are going to be discussed and presented. But there's a lot of issues surrounding that.

MR. HYBL: Good.

MR. CEDAR: If you don't mind, if I can add a couple things, because all the things that Chris said are certainly – are certainly issues that we've grappled with a lot in public diplomacy but just in terms of chronology, I think a lot of those reports don't take account for certainly a number of the things we've done in the last couple years. And I just want to mention a few, because there's certainly a long way to go, but on a number of those issues I think we've made a good deal of progress.

Leaving out the resource point, which I know will be a topic of discussion, our leadership strategy and coordination – starting with strategy. Certainly, you know, to your point, a lot of the previous strategies – and I think one you're referring to was the communications strategy

from 2007 – were at these sort of very high-level, hard for anyone either in Washington or the field to operationalize. We put out a strategy about two years ago that actually got the exact opposite criticism which was, not enough imagination and sort of big stuff too much focused on the very practical, tangible focused-on programs.

And so you can fall wherever you want on the philosophical debate there, but we've tried to bring that sort of, what does this strategy mean for tactical operation in the field, what does it mean for the fact that we now need to rejigger a fairly big and complex budget and reallocate money towards the programs, at a programmatic level, that we believe are successful? And so that has been not only the prerogative of the undersecretary and the leadership in PD, it's something that the secretary has sort of enshrined and codified in the QDDR, so it's something that will outlive, certainly, the last undersecretary.

But also it's something that we're very focused on operationalizing through, as you said, a bunch of new structures that have created this sort of leadership throughout the department, not just in the person or the office of the undersecretary, which I should mention we've completely restructured as well because it used to be completely divorced from the policy process at the State Department. It was sort of one person and an executive assistant, which is just not enough to really get into the meat of where policy is made. So that is a tremendous reformation of how public diplomacy is structured to provide the leadership not only for the – for the department, but in those bureaus.

And I could – I'll leave it there. There's certainly a ways to go, but I think we picked up to your point; there were 36 reports, or whatever it was, that there was a lot of good thought that had been done on this. And a lot of the focus had been on either signature initiatives or sort of high-level philosophical principles. We've tried very much, not only through the structures and processes, but also making sure that we have strategies on critical priorities.

We've now reinstated, which has been gone for probably a decade, written focus strategies at each of our posts overseas that account for the institutional environment, the audience environment and also programmatically what that means people are going to do. Those are things that had withered on the vine over the last sort of 10 years that we're trying to bring back because, exactly as you said, we need to be translating those sorts of strategies and coordination down to a much more operational level.

MR. TRIMBLE: Can I add a note on public-private, just two sentences? The first sentence is that U.S. international broadcasting, to be clear, is a public-private partnership. Three of our five broadcasters are private 501(c)(3)s grantees. And the second point is that U.S. international broadcasting acquires a significant amount of programming from the private and public sectors in the U.S. and purposes it and delivers it to audiences overseas. And it's an area that this board – current Broadcasting Board of Governors is interested in pursuing and expanding, in part as a way to fill out programming streams at low cost.

MR. HYBL: Good. Commissioner Farar?

SIM FARAR: First I want to thank you all for coming today, it's very kind of you to all come out here and to hear us have this discussion. It's very important you're here. I want to thank our three speakers who I thought were very, very informative and very helpful to me, and very interesting.

I have two questions. And I have – my first question goes out to Dr. Paul. The RAND Institute has identified, you know, these four important issues that you discussed with us. And I think that they all need special attention. But you discussed financing or resources being moved over from DOD to State. And I want to know how – we've not really touched on that. I think Andrew kind of touched on it just briefly. But how do you see those resources being moved over? How do you see – what is the plan of the RAND Institute or for our – just give me some information on how you want to do that?

MR. PAUL: It's not based on RAND research. RAND hasn't looked explicitly at that issue yet; no one's asked us to. But I know there's been – there's been significant movement. There's been congressional pressure to make moves of that kind, to cut funding for information operations and military public diplomacy on the Defense side.

I know from speaking with Rosa Brooks, who's just recently left her position in the undersecretariat for policy in Defense as a special assistant there, that there was – there was agreement on the Defense side that some programs – some Defense programs could be transitioned over to State. And there were conversations – they were working with State to identify specific programs and to make a transition plan.

Again, I think that's the right way to do it, to increase resources on the State side – and there's a growth and time component as well. Department of Defense has a lot more personnel than State. Department of Defense has a lot more personnel that are communicators and folks with “inform, influence and persuade” training than State does.

Now, so State – to make an effective transition, State needs to become more robust in this area. And the transition needs to be slow. If there are a couple key programmatic activities that everyone agrees, boy, that really should be under DOS rather than DOD, move them over one at a time and then wait a little while and see how that works out.

See if State's able to digest those capabilities. Let them get used to strategizing and managing those portfolios. Let them add personnel and have time for those personnel to become institutionally acculturated, used to doing that job in that context. Then a year or two later, look again at the different DOD programmatic capabilities, maybe some things – some slightly bigger things, and think about moving those resources over.

There may have been detailed planning that gets into greater granularity. I haven't seen that, from my point of view.

MR. FARAR: My second question goes out to Jeff. And my concern is, you're talking about this legislation being up on the Hill. Do you have anyone that's going to be like the – anyone that's carrying the water for us up there?

MR. TRIMBLE: We're just at the very early stages. It's just come up here at this point, and we're just beginning to discuss it with the relevant committees and others. So it's early days to say. We do know that there are members of Congress, of course, who have shown an interest in the issue, and there have been attempts to introduce new legislation introduced in prior sessions.

So we'll be working with a wide range of folks up here. But it's early days yet, and we're still in the process of informing and working at the entry level.

MR. FARAR: Thank you very much.

MR. HYBL: Thank you. Further questions from the commission? If not, I'd like to ask the executive director of SAGE, who's with us here – I think he's back there, but – Brad Minnick, do you want to – SAGE came up three or four times today. Do you want to, if you would please, give us an update on where it stands?

BRAD MINNICK: (Inaudible.)

MR. HYBL: Short update. Yeah.

(Pause.)

MR. HYBL: You get a mulligan. We have another mic.

MR. : There's another one coming.

MR. MINNICK: Thank you very much. My name is Brad Minnick, and I'm project director of the SAGE initiative at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. And this initiative was launched last September, based on over a dozen of these 36 reports that have recommended, in one form or another, the creation of some kind of independent, non-governmental but governmental-supportive entity to help further our public-diplomacy and strategic-communication efforts around the world.

So the Wilson Center agreed to be the convener of a bipartisan working group which has since grown to over 80-plus members from media, from academe, from government, from business, from the non-profit sector, from think tanks that have come together over the past few months to develop an actionable business plan to create such an organization.

That process went on through the fall. There is now a draft of an actual plan that is in – being reviewed by a very senior-level group of outside experts, again, from the business community, from Capitol Hill, former government officials. And once that process is completed, the report will go to – the plan will go to Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Former Defense Secretary Bill Perry, who are the honorary co-chairs of this initiative. And it will be released publicly by them and President Jane Harman, the new president of the Wilson Center, we anticipate sometime this fall.

MR. HYBL: Good. Thank you, Brad. Very good. Questions from members of the audience of our panelists today? Well – (inaudible) – yes, sir.

MR. : Can we get the microphone up here?

Q: My name's Jim Bullock, retired public diplomacy officer. I'm known to – I know a few of you. Question for Jeff on the legislative strategy: It just addresses broadcasting, and I know that the issues are very similar over on the State side. And either do you think at some point your draft legislation would be expanded to incorporate the State Department concerns – IIPs, dissemination – or do you think someone on the Hill might from their side take action to expand the scope of your proposed legislation?

MR. TRIMBLE: Hi, Jim. I don't know is the – is the honest answer. We and the board – let me tell you where the board's – where the BBG's coming from. This board has been in office a year now. They're very eager to move forward on a strategic rethink of U.S. international broadcasting. And this is an opportunity for me to say to the group that we'll be rolling out a new strategy for coming years for U.S. international broadcasting this fall. It's informing, already, the process of coming up with our FY 2013 budget submission.

And in their eagerness to make change, they kept bumping up against this Smith-Mundt issue in various aspects of their work. So they were eager to move ahead. And so we went ahead and worked with the administration to go on a separate track with BBG. That's not to say at some point, for reasons that have to do with up here or back in the administration, they might not come back together with State. But it was fairly easy to carve out just the U.S. international broadcasting piece from the other issues that might have to do with State. So there was a decision, at least initially, to go that way. But now we'll have to see what happens.

MR. CEDAR: Can I just add one thing? There is a bill that Representative Thornberry has introduced which is a broader, not just international-broadcasting piece, but on the domestic-dissemination piece. I'm not exactly sure how these will or won't dovetail over time. But there is – there is effort not just on the broadcasting piece to examine this.

MR. HYBL: Good, further questions? Yes, ma'am. Identify yourself and your organization also.

MR. : The microphone's coming.

MR. HYBL: Yeah, I guess there are three things – and you get a mic.

Q: Wonderful presentation. Hello, I'm Elaine Sarao. I'm a Franklin fellow at the Department of State, public diplomacy issues. And I was particularly interested in the point that was made by Mr. Trimble with regard to Russia – and a very good point he – if you can't – if you can't broadcast it to your own people, then it's got to be what exactly what we don't want saying here. It's not, you know, free – a free information.

How do you see – if we can manage this process and being able to open up the flow of information, do you see – do you see this not only dissolving their argument, but how do you see it dissolving any other arguments that might come up?

MR. TRIMBLE: Thanks, Elaine. We – while not specific on details at this point, it is not the intention of the board, in part, because they're not authorized at this point to create specific content to reach audiences in the United States. The intention of the board is to make no particular effort to distribute content in the United States.

But if there would be outreach on behalf – I gave the example of a Somali-language FM radio station in Minneapolis. Hey, can we take VOA Somali programming? Sure. They can pull it off the Internet, where it's on the website, or we can make it available through a specific feed, if it's a quality issue, those kinds of things. But we would not go out actively to seek to target those kinds of partnerships.

But I could envision, based on the calls and communications we've had, a lot of interest from communities around the United States where there are large expat populations in having access not only through the Internet, but possibly over broadcast means, to content.

And Elaine, you give me an opportunity to make another point that has to do with the changing global media environment. It is the case that in some of the environments today where it is the most difficult for us to deliver our content because of government efforts to prevent it from reaching people – China – that some of the greatest success we're having is it's being funneled to people in China by people in the expatriate communities who are reading it or consuming it and then calling people on the phone, sending them an email and doing other kinds of person-to-person communications that are not as easily blocked by the blanket kinds of things the Chinese government does to block websites, to jam radio broadcasts.

So in the case of Tibet in 2008, when there was widespread unrest in the run-up to the Olympics and the Chinese were heavily jamming the broadcasts of Voice of America and Radio Free Asia and the websites are completely blocked, we got a tremendous amount of anecdotal feedback about Tibetan communities in Los Angeles and elsewhere in the United States consuming these products on the Internet and communicating that information to family members in a way that it goes viral.

It's very hard for us to measure, and it's a challenge and something we're seeking to get our arms around because it has to do with impact. And that's a very difficult kind of impact to measure, because it's almost word of mouth. And you can't go out and do surveys on that very easily.

But it is another way that we perceive the distribution of content in the United States or to communities worldwide that may not be in target countries. It may be a diaspora population living in Norway, which is not a broadcast target of U.S. international broadcasting. But they're picking up that content and disseminating it back to countries from which they came, that we see having an opportunity for us to connect up with audiences in a new way, different from the traditional broadcast methods.

MR. HYBL: Thank you, Jeff. Yes? Back –

Q: (Inaudible) – Voice of America. I'm a retired Army officer, so I have command voice – (inaudible, laughter). Hopefully everyone can hear me. Mr. Trimble, you picked up on a great point, and that is the diaspora community being a conduit back to the home country. I think that's an effective way to communicate. I think they may even have more credibility with their neighbors, with their former neighbors and with their family members as a part of that conduit.

As part of my doctorate, I interviewed an engineer from Michigan. He told me that the largest Arabic-speaking area in the world outside of the greater Middle East is Dearborn, Michigan. And he told me that there's as much of a need for VOA Arabic in Dearborn, Michigan, as there is in Amman, Jordan. Of course, the irony of the statement is, there is no VOA Arabic. But Radio Sawa would work.

And there are plenty of channels available because over a decade ago, the U.S. FCC approved HD radio, digital radio, for every FM channel. It can broadcast three streams of content. But there's a chicken-or-egg process going on. Broadcasters are not putting content on there because it costs money for the content and there's no revenue stream. But if they were able to get VOA content in the various language services, it would help spur that on. And so I would recommend that.

Also, for Dr. Paul, you talk about DOD initiatives in PD being transferred to civilian agencies. There's one that's captured my imagination, and I'd like to offer this Mr. Trimble. There's a process that DOD is doing called Radio in a Box. And it's essentially an entire radio station in a – in a CONEX container that's dropped by helicopter into a (meager ?) community in Afghanistan, low-powered FM for that community, run first by Americans, then by the Afghan National Guard and then later turned over to the communities, community radio.

I would argue that the brainpower to operate that lives within the IBB and the BBG. And I would offer for your consideration to have that – and of course, the budget proposed with it – transferred to BBG.

MR. TRIMBLE: Yeah, Rick (sp), that – just on your second point, that is – thanks, first – that is something in the mixer that we're considering. And thanks for bringing it up.

In terms of distribution, I am quite certain that we don't even have to do anything to go as far as what you suggested with these unused capacities, that there are current, existing, on-the-air FM and AM radio stations in Dearborn, Michigan that are hungry for content, and furthermore, that there are cafes where people are drinking coffee in Dearborn, Michigan, and watching Al Jazeera all day long in Arabic, and they don't have the opportunity to watch Alhurra, which is the U.S. product. They can't because it can't be distributed on that satellite system. And we don't think that's right.

MR. HYBL: Good. Yes, back on the left.

Q: Dan Kuehl, National Defense University. I want to come back to this issue that – (inaudible, laughter) – and it’s certainly brought up, about the independent entity for strategic communication. There are probably more than several of us in this room that contributed to at least one of those reports that probably stand up to the ceiling, all of which advocated in some way, shape or form the creation of a RAND-like entity that would pull together expertise and capability and thinking about strategic communication in public diplomacy.

It would rely upon the approach that Chris outlined. We’re going to move at the speed of Washington bureaucracy. The adversaries are moving at the speed of the information revolution. If you don’t see the danger of that mismatch, we got a problem.

One way of doing it is letting it – (inaudible) – up from the bottom with project SAGE, but it would be a lot more effective if this entity has a real push and support from the U.S. government. I’m not aware that there’s any traction for that from within the United States Congress. I hope I’m wrong in that. Would you allude to what you think the outlook is for getting some support for Congress into them creating this independent entity to do strategic communications, public diplomacy and all the stuff we’re talking about?

MR. PAUL: Perhaps we’d ask Brad to speak again, because I know from discussions – I’m involved in the SAGE initiative, and I know from internal discussions, exactly that issue is a concern.

That was one of the points of significant discussion regarding the business plan: Just how much support, endorsement or funding was the business plan going to require from Congress? Would it be congressionally mandated? Would it be congressionally endorsed? Would it not have any congressional reference at all? Would there be a one-time start-up appropriation from Congress? Would there be a periodic one? How big would it be?

I don’t know what the current status of all those plans are, nor what level of – I know there were considerable outreach efforts to try to socialize the program in other departments and in the Congress. But perhaps Brad, you’d like to speak briefly to that, if that’s OK with everyone.

MR. MINNICK: Thank you. Yes, you make an excellent point. And this initiative will never get traction if it doesn’t have support from both the public sector and the private sector. The very first thing that we did with the SAGE initiative way back in July of last year was have a meeting with – a dinner, actually, hosted by the MacArthur Foundation and then-Wilson Center president Lee Hamilton with senior officials from the Obama administration to say, here’s what the plan is; here’s what we want to do; we would love to get you engaged in this to the extent that you would like to be engaged.

We did the same with Congress, and I’m proud to say that in every one of the either full plenary meetings or subcommittee meetings that we had, there was one or more congressional staff that were participating in this process. So they added to the dialogue, they added suggestions.

I mentioned the high-level review panel that's currently looking at the plan. There is a Democrat senator, Ben Cardin, from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a Republican congressman, Jeff Fortenberry, from Nebraska on the House Foreign Affairs Committee who are both part of the executive board of this initiative and looking – and giving us constructive feedback on the plan.

So there is – there are pockets of congressional support. I'm not going to represent that there's this tidal wave that's going to give us \$50 million to start this thing off, but we have been working the process. We've been working the Hill. We've gotten people engaged from day one in the process. And the hope is that with time, that will produce tangible results.

MR. HYBL: Good, thank you.

MR. : Can I add one comment to that? One of the reasons why you guys, RAND, have been successful is because you're willing to say, no, your accepted wisdom, Air Force, is wrong. It's – so there's a degree of independence there that is absolutely essential. And that's what this thing really needs to have, is some degree of autonomy to do that.

MR. MINNICK: That's right. (Inaudible) – there will be – for example, there will be no members of Congress on the board of this organization – maybe some advisory capacity, but – and ethically, they couldn't do it anyway, so –

MR. HYBL: Good.

MR. TRIMBLE: I would just add, from the perspective of U.S. international broadcasting, to be absolutely clear that if – and I feel very comfortable speaking on behalf of the board on this issue – that any configuration of public diplomacy or strategic communications that would somehow involve U.S. international broadcasting would have to be done in a way that would absolutely, in practice as well as in terms of image, guarantee the credibility and independence of the journalists to do their job because without that credibility, they can't possibly succeed in what it is they're tasked to do.

MR. HYBL: Yes, please.

Q: I'm Cynthia Efirid. I'm a long-term public diplomacy officer, 37 years now, currently detailed to the U.S. Helsinki Commission. And I include the three years I was an ambassador in Angola as a public diplomacy assignment, because it certainly – all ambassadorships have to be.

Sure, get rid of Smith-Mundt. In 37 years, I can think of two times when it made any difference, and it was a little minor problem. And the risk that money will be diverted toward the public affairs side – I would say, the biggest problem for public diplomacy in 37 years, even with Smith-Mundt, has been that the focus too often in Washington has been on how will these themes, how will these programs play in Washington – even with Smith-Mundt – and not, how successful are we going to be on the ground in a specific place?

This has had three effects. One is that it has focused the attention of the senior decision-makers who are our best – or who are very good spokesmen to focus on only domestic U.S. concerns. Secondly, it has made it very attractive to put too much money into gee-whiz initiatives that a new person coming in thinks will answer the problems that people back here have. And then thirdly, the specific danger, that themes will be adjusted so that they don't cause trouble back in Washington because, of course, you don't play just to a foreign audience; you're playing to a domestic audience – you know, past Smith-Hundt (ph) – Smith-Mundt.

Many of our most effective programs now are in subjects that nobody in Washington cares about. They have come about because of the virtuous circle, where issues have come up, the public diplomacy aspects have been filtered in, the decision-maker had noted that it was important and policy and resources have been devoted.

The Roma issue right now: In Europe, we're doing wonderful work; I mention this because my commission cares about it. Nobody back here cares about Roma in Central and Western Europe, but the work that the IBB is doing, the work that public diplomacy is doing is important. If you have a private group back here that's focused on what Washington is interested in, will you care about a Roma issue?

MR. HYBL: Thank you. Further comments or questions? Yes, Bruce.

MS. : (Off mic) – introduce him –

MR. HYBL: Bruce Gregory, a former executive director of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, and someone that I served with a couple of years ago.

Q: At least a couple of years ago. (Laughter.) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Matt, Jeff, Chris, Andrew, thoughtful and compelling presentations, thank you very much.

Looking at Smith-Mundt, there are many reasons why, in half a century, efforts to change the domestic dissemination restrictions have never passed. And a big part of that is the very hard partisan politics that lie behind efforts to change it.

I guess my question goes to the commission. You've heard from the guests. The commission has taken a position on Smith-Mundt many times over the years. What's your current position on Smith-Mundt? Is it consistent with past positions? And have you given it thought with a view toward making a public statement now?

MR. HYBL: Certainly. Ambassador?

MS. KORTH-PEACOCK: Matt – (inaudible). He's the one working on it. I'm going to say, defer to Matt as Jeff did, because he's our – he is our expert on that idea.

MR. HYBL: It's a great thought. Matt? (Laughter.)

MR. ARMSTRONG: Bruce, this is a part of the commission's work to come up with a decision that – the commission will look at the past reports of the commission, the current environment, the backing behind the Thornberry-Smith – Smith-Mundt Modernization Act that was introduced last year – last session, the legislation from the BBG – you heard a reference that there's thought at State. So the commission is actively considering this, and this meeting is part of that active consideration. So I would expect that you would see something from the commission in the future on this.

MR. OLSON: Can I ask Bruce a question?

MR. HYBL: Yeah, certainly.

MR. OLSON: What – Bruce, what is – in light of the realities today, are the – is the issue of Smith-Mundt today different than it was politically ten years ago?

Q: (Off mic) – good question, and I'm not sure I know. I think Matt and you folks are better equipped to answer that. But over the years it was – (inaudible) – the price of politics, and a lot of this – (inaudible) – and concerns above – (inaudible) – the administration and the White House – (inaudible) – public diplomacy – (inaudible). (Inaudible) – technology – (inaudible) – for years. But the commission – (inaudible) – or the Senate – (inaudible) – simply hasn't happened – (inaudible) – estimate how hard this means – (inaudible).

MR. OLSON: Are there legitimate philosophical issues? Or are they issues, limited government versus expansive government; do you trust the State Department relative to the, you know, the developer of the message; is it, if Democrats are out, they don't trust Republicans, if they're in, if the Republicans are in, they don't trust Democrats, if they're – Republicans are out – I mean, what is the partisan stuff? What is – what's the divide here? Or what – historically, what has been the divide? And what do you think the divide is today?

Q: (Off mic) – well, today is not a question I can truly answer. I think that maybe some things now based on globalization, based on technology changes that could lead to a different result – but over time, there's been – the Senate campaign would use – (inaudible) – government funds as part of a campaign. That was a Republican campaign, Democrats – (inaudible). In the Reagan administration, the State Department stood up an Office of Public Diplomacy – (inaudible) – the American publics of foreign policies in Central America. The Democrats, who normally want us to change their – (inaudible) – were then opposed – (inaudible). Now, that may have changed, but a half century of Smith-Mundt – (inaudible). Add to that, I think, that historically, the White House and presidential leadership has not seen this as an issue worth – (inaudible). This is where – (inaudible) – commission – (inaudible).

MR. : Good point.

MR. HYBL: Good.

MR. OLSON: Mr. Chairman, actually, I'll speak for myself, but I don't know that – I mean, I have an initial gut reaction to this. And that is, my gosh, how can this be, in this day and

time, with this kind of technological advancement? But I don't think any – I'll let them speak for themselves, but I'll bet you everybody here'll say, we don't have – we're listening. We're wide open. You know, we're bipartisan. And this needs to have thoughtful people that are not weird. (Laughter.)

Q: (Fair ?) enough. And I'm glad you're listening – (inaudible) – you have lots of past commission reports of recent decisions – (inaudible).

MR. OLSON: Yeah. No, that's reasonable to me.

MR. HYBL: Good.

MR. ARMSTRONG: If I can add – can I make – add to Bruce's comment? The Office of Public Diplomacy comes up frequently, and that was not a pure Office of Public Diplomacy, and that was an NSC operation that was housed in the State Department, but yet that phrase comes up and people react. Senator Zorinsky, the Zorinsky amendment that came up, was reacting against that. He was also reacting against – he was also investigating USIA for nepotism. He compared USIA, should the information be available to the American public, that USIA would be no different than a Soviet propaganda agency. So you had that partisanship, especially in the '80s, happening.

But in 1972, when you had another major – the first major amendment to try to prohibit access, you had Senator Fulbright who asked the U.S. attorney general, or the acting U.S. attorney general, to block another U.S. senator from showing a USIA film on his public access TV station. And the attorney general said no, this is within the intent of the Congress in 1948, and that is to allow the Congress to decide who gets to show what. And Fulbright went to war essentially with the Nixon administration to either kill BBG – or kill broadcasting, and ultimately kill – he tried to kill USIA. There was a telling statement from Fulbright when he said – talking about the radios, the radio should be given the rightful opportunity to take their place in the graveyard of Cold War relics. And so that was a different time and wasn't necessarily part of partisan politics, but in the '80s we did.

And I just want to offer one last contrasting note, and that is, in the late '80s I think it was, the Congress decided that foreign government material no longer had to be labeled as propaganda. It could be simply disseminated internally within the United States. Prior to that, you had the Foreign Agent Registration Act which required foreign government material to be labeled as such. Canada protested because they wanted to show a film on – a government film on acid rain and some other things, and ultimately Congress relented. So what we have now is that Congress does not label foreign government product as propaganda and effectively prohibits – puts a greater constraint on U.S. material that the taxpayer pays for, and the taxpayer doesn't know what it's doing.

MR. HYBL: Thank you, Matt.

MR. OLSON: This gentleman right here, in the second (row ?).

MR. HYBL: Was there another –

MS. : Second row.

MR. : The young lady – (inaudible).

MS. : There he is. (Chuckles.)

MR. HYBL: In the back of the room, please?

Q: Thank you. Thank you for your presentations. I'm Rhonda Zaharna at the American University. And one thing that I'm hearing is, I'm still sensing a one-way communication thinking. And we're now talking about social media, we're talking about networking, relational strategies. And when I see the Smith-Mundt, the U.S. public – when you say that communication is actionable, the U.S. public is – they're communicating. And I want to think, is there anything that you all are thinking about in terms of two-way thinking and two-way communication for the Smith-Mundt as a way to get (writ ?)?

MR. TRIMBLE: Thanks. I mentioned the example of the Parazit program that Voice of America Persian News Network does, and how it's watched by people here in the United States who find – people have described that show as the Iranian Jon Stewart show. It's quite amusing. And this couple in McLean featured in the NewsHour piece was calling relatives in Iran and they were chatting about the program because they'd all watched it. So that was a very informal level of facilitating communication that not having Smith-Mundt in place would allow.

But there could be other scenarios. It's not something – and it's something that we do already. We do town hall meetings that engage American – members of the American public with audiences overseas, and they discuss issues of common interest. It's a natural engagement piece. The difference is, is that product isn't now disseminated in the United States; would there be an interest in doing so? And it might, in fact, evoke greater interest if you do a town hall meeting between people in Kunming, China and Des Moines, Iowa; well, you could air it in Kunming, China, now, but it couldn't be aired in Des Moines, Iowa, if we were part of it.

Now there are American organizations that do that kind of work and do it very well – American Abroad Media, for instance; they do those kinds of things. But we don't do that with an eye toward dissemination in the United States because of Smith-Mundt. And conceivably, that could be a byproduct down the road, although, again, it wouldn't be a priority of BBG. But if there'd be an interest in that kind of content on the part of American broadcast outlets, they could take it as well.

MR. : Sounds like you have a follow-up question?

Q: What I mean by one-way thinking, it's: How do we get the message out? How does the U.S. communicate its message? And I understood, as part of the public diplomacy mission, it's not just informing and influencing, it was also understanding, creating understanding, and so

part of the mission of how do we create mutual understanding. And there are now tools, the media tools, for doing that. And it seems that the Smith-Mundt may be in the way of that.

MR. PAUL: And this is one of the big ambiguities in the conversation on public diplomacy and strategic communication. It's a place where people are often talking past each other. It's a tension I've characterized in other discussions as the tension between broadcast and engagement. Former Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Jim Glassman joked about the "great megaphone" approach to public diplomacy where you get up behind a podium and you say your message more loudly, more clearly and on more channels, and that's better public diplomacy. That's a caricature, surely, just as much as a pure engagement approach would be a caricature.

But absolutely, there is – the other famous quip about the last three feet of public diplomacy: those face-to-face engagements, listening, understanding. And, to be sure, it's easy to – especially when focused on Smith-Mundt, which is about dissemination and sitting next to a prominent figure from the BBG which really is a broadcast organization, that's their mission, that's in their charter, they do international broadcasting. I'm sure Jeff wouldn't dispute the importance of engagement to public diplomacy, but it's understandable, when he talks about the BBG mission, that he focuses on diplomacy or on broadcast.

MR. CEDAR: Can I just add a couple of things because you're referring to the mission of public diplomacy? Certainly, it always has been this sort of two-way engagement – a piece of strengthening relationships, and that can't just be done with the communications aspect of broadcasting a message. We are increasingly interested in that two-way piece and, as you said, there are lots of new platforms that allow us to just broaden the range of stakeholders who we can solicit that information from.

Smith-Mundt does not tend to get in the way of that. It tends to get in half of the way of that. If you're talking about just the listening and learning piece, you know, this is about just domestic dissemination and, therefore, overseas listening is certainly not precluded by that at all. That's what our officers are out in the field doing hopefully all the time.

New platforms – you take something like Facebook where it's no longer – where it is a two-way piece where we can have – for example, our Facebook walls are often very vibrant platforms for discussion, platforms for polling, as you said, foreign publics to get opinions on what's going on, what's important. We're setting up at all kinds of embassies advisory commissions, sort of different constituencies that come in.

So we are trying to emphasize that sort of two-way piece, mostly because as we begin to inform foreign policy formulation more. And the attitudes and opinions of people are more critical to how we do that; we can't do that in a vacuum. We need to be out there listening to people as much as we're broadcasting.

Luckily on the Smith-Mundt front, because this is really only applying to sort of one angle of the transmission, this hasn't gotten in the way of our officers being able to be out there

or us in Washington being able to use the incoming information sources as important data points for us in policy formulation, but also in how we design programs too.

MR. TRIMBLE: Yeah, any media outlet in today's world and going forward that does not engage its audiences is in big trouble. And so, in U.S. international broadcasting, we understand that very well, and audience engagement and bringing people into the conversation and inviting their contributions is an important path forward for U.S. international broadcasting, absolutely.

If you look at voanews.com, you'll see a link there to a new project that VOA stood up that is about violence against women in Congo, and it is – the starting point is high-quality journalism done by VOA about this terrible issue in eastern Congo. But it's only the starting point. The website includes tools that people can come in, create their own content, contribute, be part of the conversation, offer their ideas, offer their own reporting in a way that's moderated by our journalists.

Technically Smith-Mundt should get in the way of that. In fact, it's a web-based thing. If people in the U.S. want to get into that conversation, they're already there. Again, that's the anachronism of Smith-Mundt in terms of that kind of engagement that any media organization has to do – has to do today.

MR. HYBL: Good. Third row on the aisle: Do you still have a question? (Laughter.)

MS. : (Right ?).

MR. HYBL: Yeah.

Q: Thanks.

MR. PAUL: I thought maybe your arm would get tired.

Q: Well, I only raised it twice, and then I changed my mind. I'm Dan Whitman; I used to be USIA; I'm American University also.

Ambassador Olson has asked three times in this session, who would oppose this measure – this effort? It may be time to pronounce the eulogy; I – because I haven't heard an articulation that would give Ambassador Olson the proper preparation should there be an unexpected opposition to this amendment that you're proposing.

I was two years old when Smith-Mundt was passed, so I don't remember the exact arguments. I'm told – (laughter) – I'm told that part of the rationale was to prevent the United States from ever having anything that would resemble a German ministry of information. I mean, let's give history a little bit of credit even if we're going to transcend it.

Now, what possible arguments might you hear against this? Because I think Ambassador Olson deserves an answer to his question. When Jeff Trimble says, no particular effort to

disseminate in the U.S.: Let's say, for the sake of discussion, we absolutely trust Jeff Trimble 100 percent, but we do not know who his successor's successor will be, and we have seen in the past the use of the wireless file, rest in peace, and some of its successors absolutely used towards the end of advocating an administrative position in a political matter. We have seen these abuses. Those who might oppose this effort would cite those historical precedents and would say, we trust Jeff Trimble, but we're not sure that we'd give – want to give carte blanche to all of his successors.

That's all.

MR. HYBL: Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

MR. TRIMBLE: I would point out that – again, this is just the U.S. international broadcasting piece – that subsequent to many of these discussions earlier about Smith-Mundt and lifting it is the establishment of the current architecture of U.S. international broadcasting, which is the Broadcasting Board of Governors as an agency. And that agency, which is responsible – that board that's responsible for the programming, for the content, is bipartisan by statute.

It's nine members; it's appointed by the president, but it's four members – no more than four members – from any one party and, of course in practice, in the U.S., it means four Democrats and four Republicans, and the secretary of State ex officio is the ninth member of the board.

So the composition of the oversight board for U.S. international broadcasting is, in our view, a guarantor that the U.S. international broadcasting is not going carry the water of any particular administration because you have, built into the management, four people who are not from that party. And if there were an attempt, if the journalists did get away or if content producers got away from the legislation and the requirement to do high-quality journalism that tells the whole story, presumably someone would speak up.

And I mean, just to be – just to be perfectly blunt, one of the board members today, we mentioned, is Dana Perino. You know, Dana Perino is an Obama administration official on the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Well, Dana's also filling in the slot on FOX for the – for Glenn Beck all summer. I mean, she – Dana Perino's not going to carry the Obama administration's water on things.

And I don't mean to pick on Dana – she's a great governor in any respect – but the structure that exists now of U.S. international broadcasting, I believe, is set up in such a way to accommodate the post-Jeff Trimble world or whatever else is along, and I would submit – and I think you make – I think you make a very good point, Dan – that any structure going forward should include those kinds of guarantees. That's why I, as a journalist, in reaction to some earlier legislation proposed about an overarching organization, have been a little bit allergic to the idea that it would somehow be under the administration, and that would be it, without some independent status or something that gets it away from the position of an administration.

MR. ARMSTRONG: It's also –

MR. HYBL (?): Yes, Matt.

MR. ARMSTRONG: – very important to note that, in 1946, there was something called the Advisory Committee on Radio Programming, which was established to provide guidance to Congress, that somebody was watching over the international broadcasting. In 1948, that was made official as the Advisory Commission on Information. That is the predecessor to this commission; it was – this commission was renamed in 1977 to become the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

The point being is that there is an oversight organization – that is a critical element; this is part of the activation and the – or restarting, if you will, for the commission and how we're being much more active and engaged because our job is to provide that oversight as well as the advocacy for the same.

So you're asking about essentially oversight; Jeff described the broadcasting board as an oversight; this commission is also oversight, and it's our responsibility to pay attention and to provide Congress, the president, secretary of State, and the American public with that oversight.

MR. HYBL: Yes.

Q: Hello, sir, my name's Fred Wellman. I'm a retired Army public affairs officer. I appreciate – tell that story about the fratricide earlier. I was the – I was General Petraeus' spokesman for that incredible event. I got some wonderful phone calls from D.C. on that one. (Laughter.) So I have fond memories of those days. Luckily I don't sleep much.

You know, the one thing – and Matt and I are longtime foils on Twitter and (everything ?) else – and in one of the jobs I – my last job in the Army, I ran the Army social media programs. And I'm often use a – an analogy that I feel like really relates to this.

In many ways, we talk about a moot discussion in the current technological environment. I'm reminded often, while I'm sitting here, that we're all sitting here trying to put our finger in the dyke, right? OK, because you got this going on, I got that going on – you need to look up because there's a tidal wave of information flow coming at the top of the dyke. The whole dynamic has changed.

Just yesterday, Ambassador Ford himself – where did he post his statement about the Syrian issues? Facebook – (chuckles) – right? In Arabic and English. I had in my Twitter stream – within a minute of it going up, right? So that was directed to the Arab audience, right there in Syria; he went through Facebook because they're on Facebook; I'm on Facebook; ten percent of the world population is on Facebook, right? So in many ways, it's a moot argument.

In many ways, trying to fight over old battles has become just a silly battle in the last two years. Information dissemination is no longer what it was in 1948. In 1948, information flow

was controlled by the government, and some rising technologies, like this new-fangled TV thing, were having some influence.

Today, information is owned by the community. I mean, all you ever hear in my business, in the social media business, is, I am the information. I can communicate. I argue with some of the greatest minds in public diplomacy every day, and they don't know who the heck I am. This is the probably the first time Matt's ever seen my face in public, right? (Laughter.) I mean, it's the first time we've actually met. But we've been arguing for two years.

And so I think in many ways – (laughter) – to go towards the Congress and say, hey, look, don't worry about this political stuff – you know, hey, look, half the Congress is on Twitter. Ask Congressman Weiner about that. How'd that work out for him? (Laughter.)

So I think maybe by going in there, trying to fight this 1948 law, in many ways we're fighting a battle that we're – in completely the wrong way. I mean, as an Army officer, you learn, I can attack the forward way or I can just go around, and sometimes just leave that dumb thing there, and just go around it. I mean, I spent the entire invasion of Iraq avoiding Iraqis and going to Baghdad. And at – by the time I got to Baghdad, they all said, you know what? Never mind. They all went home. (Chuckles.) That might be the approach you need to take at this point.

The argument for Smith-Mundt is in many ways moot at this point. The technology flow, the information flow across borders is no longer what it was two years ago, folks. I'm not talking 10 years ago; I mean, literally in the last two years, information flow has just been obliterated in every way we all thought it was, that we grew up with during the Cold War or wherever you grew up.

So I think in many ways, I sit here and I think, my gosh, we're really missing the point, folks: that our approach to Congress may be, look, you guys get it, and we get it. We don't control the information anymore. The best we can do, as government agencies, in my opinion, is to be a part of the conversation, influence it with the factual information that backs our arguments – hopefully it's factual and not made up, because that's a problem – and then – and then be a part of that conversation.

That's what the – just like you said with the Arab community in Dearborn, Michigan, that's a major influencer. We should be talking to them, and to try and make believe we're not talking to them is the height of ostrich. (Chuckles.) So I think, as I sit here, I say, you know, maybe we need to recognize that technology's changed, fight this battle in a totally different way, like: Look, folks, there's a 1948 law. Some things have happened in communications since 1948, right? And maybe in recognition of that, we have to change this law to meet the modern demands of the communications flow.

MR. HYBL: Good.

Q: Does that make sense? So.

MR. TRIMBLE (?): Thank you.

Q: Yes, sir.

MR. PAUL: You make a great point of the – and you're absolutely right that, in some respects, the issue is moot. The problem is, in some respects, it isn't, and folks at BBG have a statutory obligation to not do certain kinds of things.

So when somebody asks them for something – when radio stations in Dearborn, Michigan, ask them for content, they're statutorily obligated to say no, even though it's silly, even though it's beside the point, even though it's moot. And if we could remove that statutory barrier so that they could do the simple things and then concentrate more on the new media and not have to be looking over their shoulder every time there's the possibility that something goes out to the global information environment, to not – even though there's no active enforcement – to not know that they're breaking the law.

Q: (Off mic) – right, and that's exactly – (inaudible). The laws on every level are moot.

And it's not just in this department, by the way. I mean, we know this as far as, copyright law is a joke now, right? Let's be honest, I mean. I don't know if you saw, Google+ came out: If you post your pictures on Google+, they own it. So the copyright laws are now out-of-date forever.

So there's a whole book of law that needs to be updated for our communications environment. Here in our world, I mean, for me, there's – the ultimate example happened in the last 24 hours. I saw that note from Ambassador Ford within minutes of him putting it up, and I was in my house down at Stafford, Virginia. I certainly wasn't in Syria.

So those information flows – I mean, I would have heard about that in the newspaper a week from now, you know, maybe two weeks from now, right?

MS. PEACOCK: Yes.

Q: I mean, not even 10 years ago. But that's not the dynamics. So, I mean, I think there's a good case for us to make as leaders to go to the Congress and say, look, you got to look hard at these laws because you're fighting – you're forcing government to fight battles, and by the way, costly battles and go through these hoop drills that we don't need to fight anymore because it's just an opinion. And the point is, you know, everyone's just going to ignore it anyways. And frankly you kind of said – you said something key, Andrew, when you said, really, it's not a problem for us.

Why is it not a problem? Because you are breaking the law sometimes. And – (inaudible) – nobody cares. They don't understand that a tweet is going to go out across borders no matter where it's sent from.

MR. FARAR: Bill, can I say anything?

MR. HYBL: Yes, commissioner.

MR. FARAR: First off, this audience feedback is wonderful and great, and very, very much appreciated by many of you. But I think it's just reinforces one thought that – and I've been involved with the United States Senate and the House for many years, like many of the other commissioners here, and you many of you have, but also it's a long, hard process, as you know, and it's not going to be a slam dunk. But, you know, anything that, you know, we as individuals can help you with, and once the commission has made some decisions on how they will approach it, you know, hopefully we can help you, but – you know, walking on the Senate floor with the senators or the House members. But it's going to be a long, uphill battle; but I think we're here to help as much as we can.

MR. HYBL: Let me – thank you, commissioner. I, on behalf of the commission, would like to thank you all of you for joining us today. Special thanks to our speakers. I think this was a very good session. I know some of you may have to go vote now; I heard the bells.

But the fact is that we hope to have a chance to, in the future, meet again with all of you in terms of programming and efforts that we have. And I know that Matt has talked about not only the panels that we'll be putting together, but also the work that will be provided to all of you, those of you that have an interest in public diplomacy and are looking for answers, just not the questions. Thank you very much.

MR. : Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)



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202-203-7463 Office

301 4th Street S.W., Room M-21, Washington, D.C. 20547