

Marrying the Mission to the Market

Strategic Plan

2002-2007

(Text Version)

Broadcasting Board of Governors

A Message from the Board

We are proud to present the first strategic plan of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (henceforth “Board” or “BBG”) since the Board and the distinct broadcasting organizations we supervise became an independent Federal entity on October 1, 1999.

This plan has been several years in development. Since 1999, the Board has periodically reviewed broadcast language services to determine additions or deletions of services, as mandated by Congress, leading to a systematic method of establishing language service priorities and assessing impact.

By examining where we should broadcast and how well we are broadcasting we have sharpened our focus on the future direction and specific tasks of U.S. international broadcasting.

This has already produced tangible results. The BBG’s Middle East Radio Network is the exemplar of a new way of doing business for U.S. international broadcasting. Making this initiative a success is one of our key near-term objectives.

Beyond the formal regimen of periodic language reviews, the Board has held wide-ranging discussions at retreats and meetings over the last year on the vision, mission, goals, and challenges of U.S. international broadcasting.

We have become convinced that to advance U.S. foreign policy goals, we must dramatically improve our performance in key markets across the globe. The war against terrorism, which necessitates a vigorous broadcasting response, brings even greater urgency to our work.

To have the impact we require, we must rethink where we broadcast, how we broadcast, and how we are organized internally to support our broadcasting. The Broadcasting Board of Governors’ 2001-2007 strategic plan, *Marrying the Mission to the Market*, embraces these imperatives and charts a progressive course forward.

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Executive Summary

Marrying the Mission to the Market

Marrying the mission to the market expresses the fundamental strategy of U.S. international broadcasting today. The challenge facing the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is to discern how to reach large audiences in complex, competitive media environments worldwide with straight news as well as perspectives on American culture and information on official U.S. government positions and policies.

The BBG supervises all civilian, non-military international broadcasting funded by the U.S. Government, including Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio and TV Marti). The Board became an independent Federal entity as of October 1, 1999 with 3200 employees and a budget of \$535 million in FY 2002.

Mission and Vision

The BBG mission is:

**To promote and sustain freedom and democracy
by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information
about the United States and the world to audiences overseas.**

The long-term vision for the BBG is:

A flexible, multi-media, research-driven U.S. International Broadcasting System, incorporating regional networks and single-country operations, that reaches mass audiences by programming the distinct content of the Voice of America and the surrogate services through state-of-the art formats and the distribution channels-AM, FM, audio and video satellite, shortwave, and the Internet -- that our audiences use and we control.

Focus

The BBG now supports 65 broadcast languages through over 90 language services (counting VOA and the surrogates separately) to more than 125 markets worldwide. Congress has highlighted the need for the BBG to concentrate on supporting democracy and cover issues related to the establishment of democratic institutions. The focus is clear: U.S. international broadcasting should prioritize those countries and regions that lack democracy or are still making the transition to democracy and are consequently still vulnerable.

Broadcast Language Priorities

In its broad support of U.S. foreign policy, the BBG sets three major priorities in the post-9/11/01 time frame of this strategic plan:

- to provide accurate and objective news and information to priority areas in support of the war against terrorism;
- to provide clear and accurate information to regions of the world where freedom of information is suppressed or denied, or to areas that lack freedom and democracy;
- to serve humanitarian efforts by assisting nations in crisis, or are suffering epidemics and illiteracy.

Key Factors

Two key factors influence the BBG in achieving its vision and continued success in accomplishing the mission – market challenges and internal challenges.

Market Challenges:

- Branding and Positioning – create a distinctive contemporary identity.
- Target Audiences – determine language service-by-language service target audiences.
- Formats and Programs – update outmoded formats and programs.
- Delivery and Placement – ensure broadcasts are easily seen and heard.
- Marketing and Promotion – improve awareness levels so that audiences know where and when to tune in and what type of information they will receive if they do.
- Technology – maximize use of new media.

Internal Challenges:

- Consolidate and rationalize – leverage all of our resources to maximize impact in our priority markets.
- Coordinate among BBG entities – increase coordination and cooperation among the many disparate broadcasting components, each of which has its own history and tradition.

- Resources – allocate resources in a fair and comprehensive manner.
- Market competitiveness – strengthen our multi-media profile by funding and conducting research, carrying out marketing and promotion, securing talented language-qualified journalists, broadcasters and technicians.
- Intergovernmental Relations – establish an overall relationship of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation within the U.S. Government’s foreign policy community, while safeguarding the BBG’s journalistic independence.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

➤ **Goal I – Design a Broadcasting Architecture for the 21st Century.**

- *Create the Worldwide U.S. International Broadcasting System*
- *Realign the BBG Organizational Structure*

➤ **Goal II – Expand the U.S. International Broadcasting System through Regional Networks and Single-Country Priority Initiatives**

- *Launch the Middle East Radio Network and Make It a Success*
- *Harmonize Radio Free Afghanistan and VOA in the Afghanistan Radio Network*
- *Pioneer Anti-terrorism Broadcasting*
- *Reach the Two Continental Giants: Russia and China*

➤ **Goal III -- Employ Modern Communication Techniques and Technologies**

- *Accelerate Multi-media Development, Infusing More TV and Internet into the Mix*
- *Adopt the Principles and Practices of Modern Radio “Formatics”*
- *Control the Distribution Channels that Audiences Use*

- *Go Local in Content and Presence*
- *Tailor Content to the Audience*
- *Drive Innovation and Performance with Research*
- **Goal IV – Preserve our Most Precious Commodity – Credibility – and Ensure Overall Programming Excellence**
 - *Maintain the Firewall*
 - *Update and Enforce Journalism Standards*
 - *Perform Periodic Program Reviews of All Broadcast Services*
- **Goal V – Revitalize “Telling America’s Story” to the World**
 - *Be a Model of a Free Press and Democracy in Action*
 - *Concentrate on Those Aspects of America that Research Tells Us Interest Individual Audiences*
 - *Present Targeted Editorials that are Relevant to Local and Regional Concerns*
 - *Use Formats, Presentation Techniques, and On-air Presence that Will Appeal to Audiences*
 - *Maximize Interactive Use of the Internet as a Ready Reference Source for Presidential Speeches and Other Vital Documents*

➤ **Goal VI – Shore-up Our Surge Capability**

- *Upgrade Existing Shortwave Transmitter and Support Systems to Ensure Backbone of Our Surge Capability*
- *Develop a Rapid-response Capability – Low power, Portable AMs and FMs.*

Principal Performance Indicators Used by the BBG

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires that all government agencies establish indicators, or measures, that provide a meaningful reading of how good the entity is doing. The BBG’s performance indicators are a best effort to measure each broadcast element’s level of effectiveness now and where it is targeted to be in the future. The indicators are verified and validated through independent evaluations of the different measurement techniques.

- Weekly Listening Rates
- Program Quality
- Signal Strength
- Satellite Network Performance Index
- Affiliations
- Internet Use
- Transmission Network Consumable Expense
- Target Audiences
- Cost per Listener
- Awareness

Key Values

The key values held by the organization and each employee as we pursue our mission and vision are:

- * *Integrity*
- * *Innovation*
- * *Achievement*

- * *Service*
- * *Teamwork*
- * *Sense of Urgency*
- * *Diversity*

Now, more than ever, we must marry the mission to the market. The 2002-2007 Strategic Plan provides a framework to meet this challenge.

Marrying the Mission to the Market

Marrying the mission to the market expresses the fundamental challenge and the great opportunity facing the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) today.

The Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), and Radio and Television Marti -- the broadcasters under the Board -- have always been driven, and remain driven, by a keen sense of mission. Congress created each entity individually, citing the belief that what we do advances the perennial U.S. foreign policy goals of promoting and sustaining freedom and democracy around the world.

We accomplish this by achieving sustained excellence in broadcast journalism. Through balanced and accurate reporting, we tell our audiences the truth about the world they live in and about the United States.

To succeed in this, we must reach listeners and viewers. It is not enough to talk through a megaphone from Washington if no one wants to tune in to hear the message. If no one is listening to us on the radio, or watching us on TV, or logging on to our Internet sites, we fail to fulfill the mission. Thus, our broadcasts must be designed to reach significant audiences.

Reaching significant audiences in the year 2002 is a far different proposition than it was in 1992. Our priority markets have multiplied since the Cold War. Media environments have advanced virtually everywhere with an explosion of local radio and television outlets that compete aggressively for audience share. Broadcast and computer technologies have made quantum leaps, with satellite TV and the Internet becoming preferred modes of sending and receiving information for many people. The result: people now can pick and choose their information sources. We want them to choose us.

Because every media market is different, a one-size-fits-all approach for U.S. international broadcasting will not work. We must tailor everything we do for each of the more than 125 markets in which we operate. The news, information, and Americana we present; the language we speak; and the media we use must fully factor in local preferences and practices.

How we meet this challenge will determine what we must do as an organization.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors

We are the Voice of America (VOA-comprising radio and TV), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB-encompassing Radio and Television Marti), and Radio Free Asia (RFA) – all publicly funded, civilian, international broadcasters.

We are also the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), which directly manages VOA and Radio and TV Marti and provides support services, such as transmission and marketing, for all the broadcasters.

And, we are the nine-member, part-time, bipartisan board of eight private citizens and the Secretary of State (*ex officio*), who supervise these different broadcasting organizations. Together, we comprise what is commonly referred to as U.S. international broadcasting.

Our programming in 65 languages reaches more than 125 markets. We are a multilingual, multimedia global broadcasting organization with an annual budget of just over \$536 million.

We employ 3400 journalists, producers, technicians, and support personnel in headquarters in Washington (VOA, IBB, RFA, and the Board), Miami (OCB), and Prague, Czech Republic (RFE/RL) as well as some 90 news bureaus and offices worldwide. All told, we constitute one of the largest news-gathering and reporting operations in the world.

VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and Radio and TV Marti, while all under the BBG, have varied legal and organizational frameworks. VOA, Radio and TV Marti, and IBB are fully part of the U.S. Government. RFE/RL and RFA, in contrast, are grantee organizations that receive their funding from the government but are organized and managed as private corporations.

BBG Organizations

The Board

In accordance with its enabling legislation, the Board sets the priorities and overall strategic direction of U.S. international broadcasting, allocates resources, manages relations with the other executive branch agencies and Congress, reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of the broadcast language services, and safeguards journalistic integrity. This last function is of key importance to the Board, which sees as vital its role as a “firewall” between BBG journalists and those who would seek to influence news coverage.

While its authorities are numerous, the Board does not have a day-to-day operational role. This is the responsibility of the broadcasters and the IBB. At the helm of each is a director who is charged with ensuring that management of daily broadcast affairs is both effective and efficient.

VOA and its sister broadcasting organizations under the Board were created at different times in response to geopolitical circumstances and U.S. foreign policy interests. U.S. international broadcasting needs to represent America as well as report the news to foreign audiences that lack access to information. This dual emphasis has resulted in both VOA and “surrogate” broadcasting, respectively. Surrogate broadcasting stresses local and regional news, operating in effect as a free local press.

The corporate BBG now shares a pressing need to achieve unprecedented levels of coordination among the broadcasters. The aim must be to leverage and combine our unique strengths and resources to enhance the collective U.S. international broadcasting mission.

The International Broadcasting Bureau

The International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) comprises the Voice of America (VOA), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) – Radio and Television Marti, and a dozen support offices. The IBB, like the BBG itself, was established under the 1994 International Broadcasting Act. Its fundamental role within the BBG is to deliver the programming produced by VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and Radio and TV Marti. IBB manages the worldwide network of shortwave and medium-wave (AM) transmitters, the leasing of satellites, and the recruitment of and management of relations with more than 1200 FM and AM affiliate stations for all BBG broadcasters. In addition, IBB provides executive, personnel, and administrative management for VOA and Radio and TV Marti.

The Voice of America

The Voice of America is the oldest and largest of the BBG broadcasting organizations. Created during World War II as an antidote to Nazi propaganda, its first broadcasts aired on February 24, 1942. The VOA Charter, enshrined in Public Law 94-350, mandates that VOA broadcasts be accurate, objective, and comprehensive; represent all segments of American society and present a balanced and comprehensive view of significant American thought and institutions; and present and responsibly discuss the policies of the United States.

VOA broadcasts 1,000 hours weekly in 53 languages on radio and 20 languages on TV to an estimated audience of 94 million people each week. Its programming aims to reach all parts of the globe with the exception of Western Europe and the United States.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is a private, non-profit, corporation and grantee organization of the BBG, focusing on the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and South Central Asia.

RFE/RL broadcasts over 1,100 hours weekly in 34 languages and encompasses the separately legislated services Radio Free Iraq and Radio Free Afghanistan. RFE/RL added three North Caucasus languages, Chechen, Circassian, and Avar in April 2002.

More than 16 million weekly listeners rely on RFE/RL's daily news, analysis, and current affairs programming to provide a coherent, objective account of events in their region and the world.

RFE/RL has traditionally played a “surrogate” role, providing a free press for countries that lack this. Consistent with this role, RFE/RL emphasizes local and regional news and analysis.

Radio Free Asia

Radio Free Asia is to Asia what RFE/RL is to the former Soviet Union and other regions -- a grantee organization of the BBG and surrogate broadcaster. Founded in 1996, RFA broadcasts news, information, and commentary and provides a forum for a variety of opinions and voices from within Asian countries. RFA airs 245 hours of programming weekly in 9 languages to China, Tibet, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and North Korea.

Office of Cuba Broadcasting

Radio and TV Marti broadcast Spanish-language news, features, and entertainment programs especially related to Cuba for the people of Cuba. In accordance with the Broadcasting to Cuba Act of 1983, Radio and TV Marti follow the VOA journalistic code, mandating accuracy and objectivity. The broad aim of both services is to further the cause of freedom in Cuba. Radio Marti airs its programming around the clock on AM and short wave. TV Marti transmits four-and-a-half hours daily from an aerostat platform in southern Florida. The Cuban government heavily jams both services.

Mission

The BBG mission is:

*To promote and sustain freedom and democracy
by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information
about the United States and the world to audiences overseas.*

The BBG mission embraces the longstanding dual components of U.S. international broadcasting: (a) representing America's culture and official policies (VOA) and (b) serving as a surrogate for indigenous free press (RFE/RL, *et al*).

On February 24, 1942, the Voice of America broke onto the airwaves in German with this pledge to its audience: "The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth."

This has been the animating spirit of all U.S. international broadcasting since then. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and Radio and TV Marti have each come into being over the last fifty years with the same commitment to uphold the highest standards of journalism.

The effects have been dramatic. The United States and its allies triumphed in World War II, and the Voice of America was there with significant audiences among German soldiers and citizens across Europe. The United States won the Cold War, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and VOA were there for the entire forty years with huge audiences across the entire Soviet bloc.

We promote freedom and democracy, not through all possible means, but by disseminating factual and balanced news and information. We enable our audiences to make informed choices on the vital issues that affect their lives, trusting that their choices will in the end be favorable to our own. Whether their choices involve direct action of one kind or another is not within our control.

This mission sets us apart from traditional U.S. public diplomacy. As direct communication with the populations of foreign countries, public diplomacy aims at advocating American values and policies. Programs vary from foreign visitor exchanges to Fulbright scholarships to op-ed articles in foreign publications. U.S. international broadcasting best conveys American values of freedom and democracy by being an example of a free press and democracy in action.

In passing the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, the Congress recognized that the credibility of U.S. international broadcasting was crucial to its effectiveness, and that the

agency's independence contributed to this credibility. The conference report (105-432) accompanying the Act states that "credibility would be at risk if the various broadcast services were placed inside the Department of State, where they would be perceived by foreign audiences as mere adjuncts of the Department, and where they would be subject to the daily pressures of diplomacy." By manifesting a free press in all that we do, we provide a clear and compelling example for the many countries of the world that censor the news.

Focus

The mission establishes ultimate goals. But, to be a vital component of U.S. foreign policy, we must have a focus and be effective within that focus. Trying to do too much fractures the focus, extends the span of control beyond management capabilities, and siphons off precious resources.

The BBG now supports 65 broadcast languages through over 90 language services (due to overlaps between VOA and the surrogates) to more than 125 markets worldwide. It is a daunting challenge to obtain the impact the Board desires across all its language services given what is essential to spend in the high priority services.

Increased complexity and competitiveness of media markets worldwide are driving the BBG today to commit far greater resources to research, distribution, overseas offices and bureaus, and marketing and advertising, among other vital functional areas in all of our priority regions.

The BBG acknowledges that present resources are inadequate to address all broadcasting needs. However, absent new resources, we must address broadcast priorities through strategic choices. We have to ask first where U.S. international broadcasting most needs to be. Answering this question will lead to the BBG focus area and consequently drive our strategic direction. The answer comes from our enabling legislation.

Congress has stressed that the BBG should concentrate on supporting democracy. The Conference Report on the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994 indicates that the creation of the BBG was a response to “new political conditions in the post Cold War world, technological advances in broadcasting and changing budget realities.” The report highlights the ongoing importance of U.S. international broadcasting in an uncertain world but recognizes the need for “adjustments in programming content, hours, and languages.” In this regard, it emphasizes “the particular importance of broadcasting in countries and regions undergoing democratic transition.”

Indeed, the report stresses that “U.S. government international broadcasting services should in the years ahead give high priority to covering issues related to the establishment of democratic institutions.”

In the years following the 1994 Act, we have seen a series of legislative initiatives that underscore priorities for U.S. international broadcasting.

- In 1998, Public Law 105-174, the Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act, authorized Radio Free Iraq and a Persian service within Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Both services began broadcasts on October 30, 1998.
- In 2000, Congress provided \$10 million of one-time supplemental funding for BBG broadcasts to Russia and China.
- In December 2001, Radio Free Afghanistan was established, renewing a service that had been eliminated in 1993 after the Soviet Union retreated from Afghanistan.

U.S. international broadcasting needs to prioritize its resource allocations to ensure coverage to those countries and regions lacking in democracy or caught in the throes of making the transition to democracy. By “democracy,” we mean more than the structure of a political system. Free and open media, respect for human rights, and market-oriented economies invariably attend genuine transitions to democracy. As Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, among other European nations, have established their own democratic systems, they have let a free press flourish, expanded the political and civil rights of their people, and adopted market economies. Moreover, they have become integral members of the larger European community.

As a corollary to supporting democratic development, the BBG must carefully assess the need to sustain its current broadcasting to countries and regions that have successfully made the transition to democracy.

Broadcast Language Priorities Post-9/11/01

In its broad support of U.S. foreign policy, the Broadcasting Board of Governors articulates three major priorities as we enter the 2002-2007 time frame of this strategic plan:

- to provide accurate and objective news and information to priority areas in support of the war against terrorism;
- to provide clear and accurate information to regions of the world where freedom of information is suppressed or denied, or to areas that lack freedom and democracy;
- to serve humanitarian efforts by assisting nations in crisis, or which are suffering epidemics and illiteracy.

September 11, 2001 profoundly altered our nation's view of our vital security interests and objectives. For international broadcasting, September 11 is to the first decade of the 21st century what the end of the Cold War was to the last decade of the 20th century. The BBG has taken full stock of the revisions to our national security interests brought about by the need to combat global terrorism, and we have re-evaluated our broadcast language priorities accordingly.

Over several years, the Board has refined a proprietary calculus to determine priorities among our broadcast languages. We have done this to fulfill our legislative mandate "to review, evaluate, and determine, at least annually, after consultation with the Secretary of State, the addition or deletion of language services." Deciding additions or deletions of language services necessitates a process to set priorities.

We base our priorities on U.S. strategic interests; political, economic, and press freedom; political instability; human development concerns such as education and health; and population size. We weigh these criteria and then assign them a score using a host of public and private indices. In ascertaining U.S. strategic interests, we consult fully with the Department of State.

Securing our nation's interests against terrorism has now become the top U.S. foreign policy priority. President George W. Bush has repeatedly stressed that this is not a short-term objective but one that will take years to achieve.

Therefore, in our 2001-2002 review of all broadcast languages, the Board shifted the priorities for U.S. international broadcasting towards Islamic nations. This shift reinforces a long-term realignment of U.S. international broadcasting language priorities to match changing geopolitical realities.

Long before September 11, 2001, the Board had established Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Urdu, Farsi, and other languages of the Muslim world as priorities. We proposed the ground-breaking Middle East Radio Network (now called Radio Sawa) in the spring of 2001 after reviewing the research the Board commissioned on this area in early 2000.

In proposing MERN, we acknowledged the threat to the U.S. of Islamic fundamentalism and the rampant anti-Americanism of the Middle East. We also recognized the near total lack of freedom and democracy in the Arab world.

Since the end of the Cold War, freedom has flourished in many nations of Central and Eastern Europe. However, in January 1992 only 25% of the world's population lived in freedom, according to Freedom House. By January 2002, the percentage of the world living in freedom had risen to 41% -- an impressive gain.

Still, 59% of the people in the world today live in states that are not fully free and that deny their citizens basic human rights. The "freedom deficit," as Freedom House has referred to it, is especially profound in the Islamic world. The African nation of Mali is the only state that both has an Islamic majority and can be considered fully free.

At the same time, the Board remains committed to serving humanitarian and development concerns in Africa and elsewhere. The incidence of AIDS and other epidemics, the challenges of illiteracy, the struggles of fledgling democracies – all these argue for a relatively higher priority for U.S. international broadcasting in under-developed nations. It is not a coincidence that our listening rates are much higher in these areas, as our programming finds very receptive audiences.

For all these reasons, the BBG began several years ago to shift the focus of U.S. international broadcasting. We have moved away from Central and Eastern Europe to allow greater emphasis on Russia and Eurasia; Central and South Asia; China and East Asia; Africa; and selected nations in our own hemisphere such as Colombia, Cuba, and Haiti.

Target Audiences

Marrying the mission to the market requires that we first define our target audience. Given the premise that each BBG market is different, it follows that each BBG language service must have its own defined target audience – on a national or regional basis.

The Board has established two fundamental drivers for setting target audiences: (1) that we aim for the largest possible audience consistent with our mission; and (2) that we heed the fact that in our top priority broadcast areas the populations tend to be overwhelmingly young.

For years, U.S. international broadcasting has debated whether to aim at mass or elite audiences. Definitions of elite vary but typically include the better-educated and the strategically positioned, such as legislators, judges, leading academics and journalists, and captains of industry.

The Board is acting to moderate this debate and is doing so on several grounds. First, we believe it is in keeping with the nature of public diplomacy that we aim for broader audiences. Public diplomacy is a mass phenomenon. As direct government-to-people communication, it supplements traditional face-to-face exchanges between diplomats and the governing and intellectual classes. Were the BBG only to target these same groups, we would arguably fail to substantially add value.

Second, broadcasting itself is a mass phenomenon. Radio, television, and even the Internet constitute mass media. They cater to communicating with large audiences. Were the BBG only interested in reaching elites, then we would certainly want to consider other communications means besides broadcasting, including direct mail, conferences, seminars, and the like.

It is not demographic analysis alone, however, that drives the BBG decision to seek younger audiences. We aim to attract listeners early in their lives and to become a habit for them. In Russia today, few young people listen to either Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty or the Voice of America. When asked in research studies, many young Russians are surprised to hear RFE/RL is still on the air and characterize the service as something their parents listened to. This must change. If people do not have the habit of tuning us in in their youth, they are unlikely to do so as they age.

At the same time, we want future leaders to know our services and use them regularly. Of course we cannot possibly know who these leaders will be. By aiming for a large as well as a young audience, we seek to cast a wide net among this key demographic segment.

Aiming at large and young audiences will have significant consequences for the content, format, and delivery of BBG language services. With this target, we will identify news and information features that both meet our mission and the audience's interests. We will develop an appropriate programming style and sound. And we will broadcast via the media, largely local FM, which our target audiences use.

As we proceed in this way, we will bear in mind that: (1) we must not compromise our legislatively mandated news and information mission; and (2) we must not ignore the particular circumstances of given markets. We know that aiming large and young is not a universal formula. In the Balkan countries, for example, the majority of the population is over 30 years of age. Russia's population, to cite one example, is aging as the birthrate drops.

Current Impact

“Impact “ is complex – it can’t be reduced strictly to listening rates. Yet, what we can most readily and accurately measure is whether people are listening (or watching or clicking).

It is instructive to review the weekly listening rates of our top services regardless of priority and then the weekly listening rates of our top priority services. The charts in the Appendix capture this data.

As one can see, U.S. international broadcasting does very well in many countries and in several that are very important to U.S. strategic interests today, such as Afghanistan, through Dari and Pashto broadcasting. However, on the second of the two charts, looking at the higher priority services, it is apparent that in many of the most vital countries the listening rates are very low – a small fraction in some cases.

Indeed, as the third chart shows, well over half of all BBG language services have weekly listening rates of less than four percent and about half of these are under two percent.

It is this under-performance in the higher priority countries and regions that strongly motivates the Broadcasting Board of Governors to look at new approaches for U.S. international broadcasting that can yield higher returns.

Market Challenges

A primary reason for sub-par performance for many BBG services around the world is the dramatically more competitive media environments today as compared to ten or fifteen years ago. The challenges we face are complex and numerous.

Branding and Positioning

Many BBG broadcasters currently lack a distinctive contemporary identity – what the communications industry calls a “Unique Selling/Listening Proposition.” Having more media choices usually translates to greater access to information. Audiences in significant markets like Russia and China believe they are well informed. Yet their media sources are not accurate or objective. Too often, we are not giving the audience a reason to tune us in. We are not telling them that we provide something that no one else does.

Target Audiences

Identifying a target audience is essential to establishing a broadcasting strategy – yet only a few BBG language services have set targets. As a result, audiences are left to find us; we’re not finding them.

Formats and Programs

The formats and programs of too many BBG language services have an outmoded, even Cold War, sound and style. Potential listeners interviewed in focus groups frequently cite irrelevant programming that sounds distant, tired, and out of touch with the new domestic realities.

Delivery and Placement

Broadcasts are frequently hampered by poor audibility. This applies to shortwave and AM broadcasts in particular, and at times to FM broadcasts. Placement, where placement is possible, sometimes has been hindered by poor partner station choice with poor broadcast times. There is a need to move to FM networks wherever and whenever possible and to make sure that attention is paid to affiliates, as there is currently little tracking or verification of broadcasts.

Marketing and Promotion

Audience awareness of our programs is generally low across the world. Younger listeners and viewers especially do not know where and when to tune in and what type of information they will receive if they do.

Technology

We must turn use of multi-media to our advantage for audience reach, real-time audience interaction, and cross-promotion. While radio is our backbone, TV is usually dominant. There has been substantial growth in Internet use in many markets, most often among the young and well educated. The choice of media mix must be decided on a market-by-market basis.

Internal Challenges

In addition to challenges in our markets worldwide, there are also challenges inside our organization. To move forward strategically, *marrying the mission to the market*, we must confront these as well.

Rationalizing the Overall Enterprise

The U.S. International Broadcasting Act calls on the BBG to adapt to changing geopolitical and market realities. Consolidation of transmission systems, other support functions, and language services has been a focus. But further consolidation might well be necessary.

The diversity of the BBG – diverse organizations with different missions, different frameworks, and different constituencies – makes it a challenge to bring all the separate parts together into a more effective whole.

Forty percent of the BBG's 90 plus language services overlap, constituting a permanent resource allocation challenge for the Board. Clearly, we must leverage all of our resources to maximize impact in our priority markets.

A Young and Unique Organization

Since its inception, and especially since the BBG became independent in 1999, it has actively worked to sort out the respective roles and responsibilities of all the various components of the organization – the Board, the IBB and the broadcasters. This has been a constructive dynamic. As a part-time board of private citizens (and the Secretary of State, *ex officio*) the governors bring unique broadcasting, journalism, and government expertise to the service of U.S. international broadcasting. The successes of the agency over the last several years, especially of the Middle East Radio Network (Radio Sawa), are attributable in great part to the drive and innovation of the governors.

In Need of a Comprehensive System for Allocating Resources

Allocating resources is always a difficult and sensitive exercise. Appropriate performance measures for the BBG are necessary to allow a direct linkage between performance and budget. Language Service Review has taken great strides in this area for the broadcast language services. We now need to broaden this exercise to encompass the support elements as well, creating truly comprehensive resource allocations BBG-wide.

Many New Requirements to Ensure Market Competitiveness

These requirements, discussed above, include: strengthening our multi-media profile, funding and conducting research, carrying out marketing and promotion, securing talented language-qualified journalists, broadcasters, and technicians. Never before have BBG broadcasters had to be so mindful of so many different broadcasting variables to ensure success. Many of these factors necessitate substantial new budget outlays.

Journalistically Independent yet a Government Agency

The BBG was established as an independent agency in order to preserve our journalistic integrity and credibility with audiences. We must assert this independence when and if diplomatic pressures mount to ensure that our news carries the right “message”. In such an event, the Board carries out its role as a “firewall” between the State Department and the broadcasters. On the other hand, the BBG is dependent on other agencies of government for assistance in furthering our mission. We need broad support for our budget and programs; we require diplomatic support to help stop the jamming of our broadcasts and to help establish and maintain transmission resources around the world; and we require cooperation to secure our personnel and assets overseas. Given the tensions that can develop between the BBG and other agencies because of its unique responsibility to protect its journalism, we must work to establish a more clear and flexible relationship within the government structure.

Vision

The Board's vision statement for the 2002-2007 period articulates a specific and far-reaching view of the future, encapsulating the gist of the strategic plan itself:

The Broadcasting Board of Governors will become a flexible, multi-media, research-driven U.S. international broadcasting system, incorporating regional networks and single-country operations, reaching mass audiences by programming the distinct content of the Voice of America, RFE/RL, RFA and Radio and TV Marti through state-of-the-art formats and the distribution channels --AM, FM, audio and video satellite, shortwave, and Internet -- that our audiences use and we control.

Strategic Goals and Objectives for 2002-2007

The over-arching aim of the Broadcasting Board of Governors is to achieve an increasingly effective international broadcasting system that reaches significant audiences where most needed in support of U.S. strategic interests. It is in the context of this broad purpose that the following goals and objectives should be considered.

Goal I – Design a Broadcasting Architecture for the 21st Century

Objective I – Create the Worldwide U.S. International Broadcasting System

The Board believes it is essential to consider the capabilities and resources of U.S. international broadcasting as a whole as we look to substantially enhance our impact in the priority markets. It would be unwise not to do so when 40% of BBG language services overlap. It is precisely by drawing on all available resources and assessing how the different components of broadcasting can best work together that we will be able to marry the mission to the market in priority areas worldwide.

We see this as rationalizing our broadcasting consistent with the U.S. International Broadcasting Act of 1994. A broad purpose of the Act was to make our broadcasting more coherent and effective through the reorganization and consolidation of broadcasting.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors has already moved strongly to fulfill the mandates of the 1994 Act. It has consolidated worldwide program delivery systems (transmission networks and marketing of programming to affiliate stations), initiated annual language service review to address redundancy, centralized audience research within a single contract administered by the Board, and harmonized program quality standards.

The BBG will carry this rationalization further. It will look upon U.S. international broadcasting as a single system. However, the Board has no pre-conceived configuration of the system. *Marrying the mission to the market* requires approaching each country and region on a case-by-case basis. The Board's aim will be to leverage broadcasting assets in the most efficient and effective way to enhance overall impact in those places of greatest importance to U.S. strategic interests.

- *Create integrated programming streams across U.S. international broadcasting services – where such streams are both possible and advisable.* While the programming of U.S. international broadcasters has long been complementary – i.e., VOA’s focus on representing America and providing regional and international news has complemented the surrogates’ focus on reporting local news – integrating it into one stream is new.

Integrating programming in this way has distinct advantages: (a) it allows each broadcaster to focus on its specific value-added; (b) it eliminates the need for separate, costly distribution channels; and (c) it heightens complementarity by having one service buttress the mission of the other – i.e., local news reporting will give audiences the news they most want, thereby attracting them at the same time to hear news and views from America.

There is no one formula for integration. It can assume the level of full-scale integration as in the planned BBG 24/7 Farsi service in which VOA and RFE/RL will adapt their current formats to a new programming approach entirely. Integration can also assume the form of discrete programming blocks for each broadcaster using a shared broadcast frequency, with a coordinated overall sound, common production values, smooth on-air hand-offs, cross-promotion, etc. – as in the case of the VOA-RFE/RL Afghanistan Radio Network.

However, in some markets, such as China, any attempt to integrate programming would be counter-productive. For example, VOA’s efforts to distribute elements of its programming inside China would not be successful if its programming were bundled with RFA’s. As noted above, the Board will pursue the integration of programming on a case-by-case basis.

- *Fulfill both the VOA and the surrogate (local news) missions in every high priority market.* The Board is committed to sustaining dual missions in all high priority markets. Both the VOA and the surrogate missions are vital to promoting freedom and democracy. Marrying the mission to the market as a general strategy is rooted in honoring the BBG’s legislatively-mandated missions for VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB while seeking the largest possible markets for these missions. It is the express purpose of program integration to enhance the accomplishment of this mission.
- *Format the content of the joint broadcasting to suit the given market and to maximize appeal.* As just noted, there is no pre-set formula for integration. It is important that the programming streams to a given market have internally consistent formats as well as formats

that make them competitive and compelling within specific market conditions. Regardless of the scale of integration, the programming blocks of the broadcasters must sound broadly consistent and reflect uniform production values.

- *Rationalize news, programming, and administrative resources.* Forging a U.S. international broadcasting system and integrating programming will facilitate a host of other activities that enhance BBG efficiency and effectiveness. In short, it's less expensive to produce one programming stream than to produce two. When operating in concert, VOA and RFE/RL or VOA and RFA will hew closely to their legislative missions, preventing redundancy in news-gathering and reporting and other programming resources. This affects, for example, the number of correspondents and stringer reporters required by each. A common format means both services share production costs for a host of programming elements such as musical bridges, station IDs, etc. As important, sharing of news bureaus and other office space should result not only in greater collaboration between services but in cost savings as well.
- *Marshal BBG resources towards the high priority markets.* Limited resources are a challenge for all Federal government agencies. New allocations are often essential to expand program activity. This said, BBG resource allocations will take into account the relative priorities of broadcasting. Given the rising costs of modern transmission systems, research, and marketing, the BBG will assess the trade-offs required to ensure funding to be effective in reaching information-denied populations in countries like Iran, Pakistan, and China, to cite just a few high priority markets.

Objective II – Realign the BBG Organizational Structure

As the BBG moves to establish the worldwide U.S. international broadcasting system, some internal realignments will be necessary. One might view this as marrying the mission with our own organization. Any adjustments will build on current practice, so the degree of change will be moderate.

- *Stress the roles of VOA, RFE/RL, RFA, and OCB as content providers for the U.S. International Broadcasting System (USIBS).* The broadcasters are in fact today content providers. Their role is to produce high-quality, mission-driven news and information programming. However, they have also sought a role in programming distribution and marketing. In the evolving U.S. international broadcasting system, the broadcasters will focus on content, integrated as described above and professionally formatted so as to enhance its appeal to diverse audiences worldwide.
- *Re-affirm IBB as the network manager responsible for program delivery, combining all transmission and local placement.* IBB is now the manager of BBG worldwide programming, distribution and marketing. As it has done well for the Middle East Radio Network, IBB's responsibility to gain new and better transmission systems will grow.
- *Consolidate the Board's role as CEO to lead and manage change.* The Board is the head of agency with a host of non-delegable authorities. It plays the lead role in shaping overall BBG strategic direction, in setting expectations and standards, and creating the context for innovation and change. As it consolidates its role as the collective CEO, the Board will seek to create better and stronger linkages among the entities, getting everyone united in a common purpose and program. Vital to this effort is developing effective internal communications. Communications in an organization must be good in all directions – which the BBG will strive to improve.

At the same time, the Board will assume the role of helping the broadcasting organizations to develop radio formats to package and better present the broadcasters' content. This becomes a major responsibility, as professional formatting is vital to BBG competitiveness and effectiveness. There is no one format that will serve BBG interests going forward; rather, there will be a variety of formats, some music and some news and some in between, that will enable BBG programs to reach wider audiences.

- *Institute annual strategic review.* Language service review is currently the sole systematic oversight mechanism that the Board of Governors uses to consider the value and effectiveness of broadcasting. Instituted to fulfill the legislative requirement that language services be evaluated for additions and deletions at least annually, it has also fulfilled the requirement that effectiveness be measured.

We will improve language review as a management tool by adding a budget review component. Language review now considers only part of the picture. The support services

within IBB, which have a major impact on language service effectiveness, are not evaluated as part of the existing process. They should be.

- *Institute annual reviews by each language service.* Language services will develop annual plans, set targets, and state the resources they need to achieve those targets. Decision-making should start at that level, where generally the resource needs are clearest. Their conclusions should be vetted at the next higher level and so on up the organization. All of these individual plans should come together at the top, through broadcast entity management to the BBG, to be considered and evaluated against strategic requirements and resource availability organization-wide.

Goal II – Build Out the U.S. International Broadcasting System Progressively, Using Regional Networks and Single-Country Priority Initiatives

Objective I – Complete the Successful Launch of the Middle East Radio Network

Although daily radio use remains strong across the region, this has not traditionally meant strong listening to U.S. international broadcasting. Voice of America (VOA) Arabic listening rates in the region averaged around two percent of the population. Awareness of VOA was lower than for competing international media, probably due largely to VOA's poor signal delivery in the region. To remedy this, the BBG last year proposed and recently launched the Middle East Radio Network, replacing the VOA Arabic service. MERN broadcasts as Radio Sawa (“together”) in the Middle East. We must continue to design and build the network to achieve significant coverage using appropriate delivery means for local audiences. This means:

- *Attracting and building a significant audience from among the target group of under-30.*
- *Staying "on-message" by using regular audience research to guide program decisions.*
- *Presenting news that is objective, comprehensive, fresh, and relevant to Middle East audiences.*
- *Providing a forum for reasoned discussion of regional "hot button" issues and U.S. policies.*
- *Designing and building the network to achieve significant coverage using appropriate delivery means for local audiences.*

Objective II – Harmonize Radio Free Afghanistan and VOA in the Afghanistan Radio Network

The BBG currently has two strong services broadcasting to Afghanistan, VOA and RFE/RL. Each has its own unique mission to fulfill. There is a need, however, to ensure that overall resources targeted to Afghanistan are used wisely and effectively, and not competitively.

The answer is to harmonize the programs of both stations in a single "network" program stream. This will:

- Permit each entity to retain its unique character, while smoothing transitions between programs.
- Rationalize access to scarce broadcast frequencies.
- Acclimatize listeners to tune in to one station for the information they need.
- Facilitate sharing of program/news resources.

Making this work will require close cooperation between the managements of RFE/RL and VOA. It will also necessitate ongoing support of the Board in the area of program formatting, using consultants, as required, to work with VOA and RFE/RL on the Afghan project.

Objective III – Pioneer Anti-Terrorism Broadcasting

The nature of terrorism and the tools it uses make U.S. international broadcasting a natural, strong weapon in America's arsenal.

Terrorism is not random, thoughtless violence. The terrorist carefully plans and orchestrates his campaign to achieve specific objectives. These primarily include showing the world that the terrorists have the power to do anything they want anywhere; and creating fear and panic in the public and an undercurrent of mistrust and revolt against the government. To maximize the media coverage of their actions, terrorists perpetrate graphic atrocities in an attempt to increase the number of victims. They attack places with social or religious significance at a time when an important event takes place and lots of media personnel are present.

Modern media, particularly television, have been used by terrorists as a weapon. The popularity of TV guarantees terrorists immediate coverage and access to practically every household worldwide.

Around the world, the terrorists' message of hatred of what America stands for resonated among many Islamic populations. They saw the awful scenes on television and read slanted coverage in local newspapers, which had the theme: "yes it was a terrible thing, but America deserved it because America is arrogant, pro-Israel and anti-Islam."

- U.S. international broadcasting has a role to play in this environment. As noted, we have already established the successful Middle East Radio Network as a major part of the BBG's anti-terrorism effort. At the same time, BBG broadcasters have surged broadcasting in the languages of Central Asia and South Central Asia to carry and analyze the news as well as explain U.S. policies.
- And in the still longer run, given Congressional authorization and Administration approval, we stand ready to launch new model radio and television operations in a multitude of Islamic languages. America's message will be heard and seen.
- The first such project, which will actually be funded within the BBG's current allocation will be a powerful medium wave radio service to Iran aimed at young adults, building on the existing VOA Farsi Service and RFE/RL Persian Service.
- A second project, still in the development stage, would target the Muslim populations of Pacific Asia, targeting Indonesia and possibly Malaysia.

Objective IV – Reach the Two Continental Giants: Russia and China

Russia

Russia has in many ways regressed since the optimistic days of the early 1990s. A return to communism and Marxism-Leninism appears unlikely, but the national system has not developed into a civil society with liberal democracy and flourishing market economy. Putin's government has moved piecemeal in a more "authoritarian" direction and is exerting considerable pressure on what had become a pluralistic media scene. Independent national television is now non-existent. Weekly listening to RFE/RL and VOA combined have dropped from 21 percent nationally in 1993 to about 4 percent in 2001. Even worse, the audience is aging.

- The challenge to RFE/RL and VOA is to reach out successfully to the more serious stratum among youth, while retaining a core of middle-aged and older listeners who are still committed to a transition to democracy. Delivering relevant and attractive programs via local FM stations is crucial, as is achieving a much better level of awareness among potential listeners. Efforts to date to place existing programs on affiliate stations have paid dividends in local markets, as shortwave listening has dropped.
- We need to take a fresh, research-driven look at the kinds of formats needed to reach the crucial young adult listener and then re-invent our programming accordingly. The old models are not working.

China

Reaching the Chinese population effectively through the barriers raised by the Chinese government (jamming, Internet firewall and no access to rebroadcasting) remains the greatest challenge to international broadcasters in the region. Reaching less than 1% of the population regularly (as we now do) will not inform the population of the facts. It is not surprising 68% identify the U.S. as the greatest threat to China, instead of a great trading partner and boon to its people. This attitude is based largely on ignorance of the facts. Most believe the U.S. “spy plane” incident was the fault of the U.S. We need to do a better job of getting the facts to the Chinese and all peoples in the Far East who are denied access to a free press.

- We must develop programs that appeal to an increasingly nationalistic audience. This audience thinks it already understands America from commercial TV products and films. It believes that America, however attractive, is not to be trusted.
- Clearly there are no simple communications solutions, as long as China continues to jam shortwave, to intimidate regional neighbors from permitting medium wave transmitters on their soil and block access to international news websites. None of these Chinese measures is totally effective.
- We need to keep on exploring technical solutions. We need to be alert to any program placement opportunities that may emerge. And we need to keep the issues before the Administration, stressing: (a) the lack of reciprocity of treatment of U.S. international broadcasters compared to that of Chinese media in the United States, and (b) the need to repeatedly raise the broadcasting issue with China's neighbors.

Goal III – Employ Modern Communications Techniques and Technologies Across the Board

Objective I – Accelerate Multi-media Development, Infusing More TV and Internet into the Mix

Radio will remain the backbone of our communications. However, for some broadcast languages, TV and the Internet have strong roles to play as well. The power of images is such that most people around the world now use television as their primary source of news. This is true even in countries where the medium is state-run, and therefore censored. A February, 2002 poll found that 39 percent of Russians consider TV news biased, yet TV remains the primary information source for most of the population. At the same time, the Internet is assuming an ever-increasing role of information-provider as it spreads across the globe. A recent Chinese national survey found that 43 percent of Chinese who regularly access the Internet now use it as their primary information source. All of this has negatively affected international radio audiences. The answer is not to fight the problem, but to recognize the solution.

- *Appropriate Television* – VOA has seen significant audience impact in several key markets through television broadcasts – the Balkans, Iran and Indonesia. We can and will do more with TV where market realities demand this and where resources permit. The first step is to cement the establishment of VOA-TV from the former WORLDNET.
- *Higher Quality Web Presence* – We have seen spotty progress towards the goal of having all language services create high quality news-oriented websites. Some are outstanding. The content of others is thin in content and visually uninteresting. Bottom line: We will ensure that all the entities have world-class Internet presences.

Objective II – Universally Adopt the Principles and Practices of Modern Radio "Formatics"

In its early days, radio was a medium characterized by specific programs broadcast at known times. Radio stations had very wide intended audiences and sought to be “all things to all people.” Then, partially in response to the drastically increased availability of media, radio developed into a “format” medium where each station targeted a specific segment of society with a specific *kind* of programming (e.g. all-news, all-sports, all-talk, all-rock, golden oldies, etc.). Successful, modern radio today, is based on providing a consistent, clear, targeted service to a

target audience 24 hours a day – a “format” rather than a collection of unique programs. The United States led the development of format radio starting in the late 50’s and early 60’s. Since then, format radio has become the norm in Europe, Asia and increasingly in other parts of the world as well. This has strong implications for U.S. international broadcasting, if we are to effectively compete with listeners.

- Where we control the distribution channel (e.g. Radio Sawa), formatics will shape our program philosophy.
- Where we are rebroadcasting via affiliates, we will shape our programs to fit into the affiliates’ formatics.

Having identified the target audience and how best to reach them, we will consider the following aspects of formatics in designing our programs:

- Music – Selection of what songs to play and in what proportions, creation of program clocks to schedule specific types of music at specific times each hour of the day.
- News – what types of news to cover and in what proportions (i.e. international vs. national vs. local news), development of an on-air style of presentation, creation of a schedule of news to meet the needs of the audience at different parts of the days.
- Feature programming – What other kinds of non-musical programming the station will present (i.e. topics, lengths, scheduling during the day).
- DJ presentation – What types of on-air personalities the station will use, including their on-air attitude (will they be funny? serious? warm and friendly?).
- Imagery – Slogans and so-called “positioning statements” which, along with the other elements, help create the station’s image in the listeners’ minds.
- On-air and off-air promotion – What kinds of contests and other activities will be conducted to make direct contact with the target audience and develop a bond between them and the radio station.

Objective III – Control the Distribution Channels that Audiences Use

To achieve success in broadcasting it is just as important to remove reasons for *not* listening as it is to create reasons to listen. The easiest reason for people not to even sample a radio station is for it not to be available on the channels that the target audience already uses.

A telltale indication that programs are being delivered via the wrong channels is a very low awareness level of your station among the intended audience. At the same time, control of the channel is important to permit a consistent format the audience can count on at any time they tune in. Therefore, where possible, BBG will follow these principles:

- *Broadcast on the channels the audience uses and ensure redundancy.* If they listen to AM, then we need to be on AM; if FM, then FM. The last thing we want is to be inaccessible. Which is why we must also have sufficient redundancy as a hedge against host government interference.
- *Own the channels of distribution.* Owning the channels precludes sharing or leasing arrangements whereby programming incompatible with our format and profile would air juxtaposed to ours.
- *Broadcast 24/7.* Being on around the clock establishes a fixed, prominent profile as opposed to sporadic broadcasts at different times during the day. We need to maintain a constant on-air presence and be available whenever the audience wants us.

Objective IV – Go Local in Content and Presence

Paradoxically, for us to be successful as international broadcasters, we must be local in orientation and sound. Broadcasting from 10,000 miles away inevitably sounds like it and turns listeners off. Radio Sawa is BBG's first effort to reflect this at the truly local (not national) level. The fully developed MERN will have a unique format of locally targeted programming streams together with a pan-Arabic stream. It will serve as a model for regional broadcasts in the future.

- In the local stream, we will focus on local news, issues, and problems. At the same time, we have to *sound* local, which means employing on-air talent speaking local dialects. The more local we are overall, the more the audience will see us as their own.
- We will also establish a physical presence in the area. Local and regional news bureaus and program centers will drive the news gathering and reporting and specialized programming development and facilitate recruitment of language-qualified talent.

Clearly we cannot afford to take this approach for every one of our broadcast languages. But to the degree we can apply them, these principles will help shape our broadcast policies everywhere.

Objective V – Tailor Content to the Audience

Success, for any radio station anywhere in the world, depends on the station becoming an integral part of the lives of its audience. This is what must ultimately happen for U.S. international broadcasting to succeed. This will establish the trust and loyalty that will pave the way for our news and information mission.

- Where appropriate, we must make strategic use of music and entertainment as vital programming tools. We have to be realistic. The target audiences for Radio Sawa are young adults aged 15-30. This group, for the most part, listens not for news, but entertainment. We have to attract them with the programming they want to hear and expose them to the news and information we want them to hear. This means strategically using music and entertainment. Since music will be a vital programming tool, it must be absolutely current. A major competitive advantage of Radio Sawa is access to specialized music researchers who use state-of-the-art music research to stay up to the minute on changing audience preferences.

Objective VI – Drive Innovation and Performance with Research

All broadcasting aims to communicate. Successful communication, however, is not solely in the hands of the broadcaster. It depends on the willingness of the target audience to receive the message or even to listen. That is why audience research is the life's blood of broadcasting and why it is our challenge to use this powerful tool correctly. Audience research tells us what customers want and do not want and it points to the ways to reach them. It does this by informing us in three areas:

- *Programming* – Research identifies outmoded formats, shows how to remain relevant, how to maintain and inspire trust and how to appeal to specific groups (e.g., young people).
- *Delivery* – Identifies the usage patterns of various electronic channels by the target population.
- *Media Habits* – Identifies the best ways to enhance audience reach in a given population by using supplemental media. (e.g. satellite TV simulcasts may make sense in some target countries, but not others.)

Audience research can guide at the micro level (e.g. a focus group suggests that a particular newscast is too long) or the macro level (surveys and focus groups across a region point to trends in new media use and therefore that certain changes will be needed to reach audiences there). In FY 2002, the BBG consolidated long-standing individual research efforts spread across the entities and instituted a comprehensive audience research program that now serves all. We will ensure that the results of the research are interpreted and drive change appropriately.

Goal IV – Preserve our Most Precious Commodity – Credibility – and Ensure Overall Programming Excellence

Objective I – Maintain the Firewall

Credibility is the key to success in broadcasting, and it is our greatest asset. In order to preserve our credibility as a public diplomacy tool, Congress decided, in considering the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, not to merge broadcasting functions into the Department of State. Instead, the Act establishes the Broadcasting Board of Governors as an independent agency. The reason is simple: If our audiences do not find our broadcasts to be credible, they will tune us out. If they tune us out, we sacrifice our mission of advancing U.S. foreign policy goals. This is why being credible is the first requirement of marrying the mission to the market.

Two things follow from this. First, we must appreciate the impediments to being credible with any given audience. Secondly, we must resist efforts to sway our news coverage or otherwise interfere with the content of our broadcasts.

- Because we are government-supported, our credibility is automatically suspect. Audiences worldwide often believe government-supported media simply toe an official line - because many government-supported media (e.g., Iraqi, Cuban, North Korean media) do toe an official line.
- At the same time, peoples' views of our country and our policies color their view of the purposes of U.S. international broadcasting. Middle East audiences, for example, have viewed traditional VOA Arabic-language programming through the prism of U.S. support for Israel.

- In places like Afghanistan, where we broadcast in multiple languages to distinct ethnic groups, we must be sure that our coverage across the languages is consistently balanced and that we in no way imply partisanship.

Objective II – Update and Enforce Journalism Standards

Credibility over time is achieved by being seen by our audiences as an accurate, objective and comprehensive news agency. Ensuring that that happens requires setting standards for our journalists.

- Each broadcast entity will maintain and annually update a programming handbook that contains standards and guidelines for high quality journalism and programming. As we increasingly program to the audience, and as we find solutions to firewall issues, these standards and guidelines will need to change.
- Editorial supervisors will continuously train employees in the highest standards of journalism and ensure they are followed.

Objective III – Perform Annual Program Reviews of all Broadcast Services

Quality control must be at the very heart of managing effective broadcast services. It is the crucial vehicle through which listener feedback and environmental assessment come together to provide a measuring stick. We exercise quality control through program reviews.

- At least once each year, each language service will undergo a program review, one purpose of which is to continuously improve the quality of programs targeted to each market area. While the program review will cover all aspects of programming, delivery and impact, the programming quality will be sampled and assessed by external and internal evaluators and listeners as part of the International Audience Research contract.
- Four months after seeing the program review and listening panel results, broadcast management will perform a second review to ensure that all programming quality deficiencies have been addressed and that the programming has improved markedly. The procedures for this programming quality review will be standardized throughout BBG to ensure highest quality reviews.

Goal V -- Revitalize “Telling of America’s Story” to the World

In the wake of September 11, 2001 it appears widely accepted that America is losing the "hearts and minds" war. Congress has commissioned a study by GAO of the effectiveness of public diplomacy programs to learn what has gone wrong. Whatever the eventual findings of this study, we know from audience research that U.S. international broadcasting needs to make programs in support of this part of the mission resonate better with intended audiences.

- *Be a model of a free press and democracy in action.* Populations in countries having less than free access to information tend to need a great deal of support in building democratic societies. That also means they have a critical need to know the truth about the U.S., its values, policies, and institutions. In part, this is because as globalization spreads, decisions taken in America often affect their standard of living and even their way of life. But in a larger sense, they need a model.
- *Concentrate on those aspects of America that research tells us interest individual audiences.* First we must understand our audiences – both current and potential audiences – their local context, values, tastes, issues and needs. What is their specific interest in America and how do we make programs that appeal to them? Audience research is key.
- *Present targeted editorials that are relevant to local and regional concerns.* Based on the research, we must select content that is appropriate, relevant, and will connect with our target audiences. Here especially, one size does not fit all. Audiences just across borders will have widely differing interests and concerns.
- *Use formats, presentation techniques, and on-air presence that will appeal to audiences.* Editorials, call-in shows, stories of countrymen’s lives in America, travel and business features, features on problems that audiences face in their internal affairs and how the U.S. has approached similar ones, and reports on the activities and actions of foreign officials when they visit Washington, are but a few of the examples.
- *Maximize interactive use of the Internet with radio and TV as a ready reference source for presidential speeches and other vital documents.*

Great innovation and creativity is needed in this area. We must study past and present successes and be open to using new approaches. Perhaps more than any other element of our programs, explaining America to the world takes extraordinary skill.

Goal VI – Shore Up Our Surge Capability

The BBG needs to be better prepared for crisis broadcasting wherever it is needed. In 2000, the BBG issued its Crisis Broadcasting Plan with a set of standing procedures to manage crises whenever they occur. Now, the BBG needs to ensure that we have the technical means to respond to the transmission requirements of crises.

Numerous crises have demonstrated that US international broadcasting requires flexible and rapid "surge" capability, totally under BBG control. September 11, 2001, and the US response in Afghanistan are only the most recent examples of critical, high priority needs emerging rapidly in political hot spots around the globe. Earlier examples since 1989 include China, Iraq, Haiti, Rwanda and the Balkans.

In most cases, the needs are for an external delivery system that can broadcast across a national border. In those instances we need to broadcast over the heads of the local government to reach the population. Sometimes, as in Afghanistan, the need is for an in-country broadcast capability. It is not possible to predict which of those cases will apply next.

It is, however, safe to say that BBG needs to create a rapid response capability that does not exist right now, and that this needs to be under the control of the BBG. We cannot, as we have learned in the case of Afghanistan, rely on other U.S. Government agencies to move speedily to help us fill that void, even with the best of will.

Objective I – Upgrade Our Existing Shortwave Transmitters and Support Systems.

In troubled times, despotic governments quickly move to block access to local affiliates. In those cases the BBG must be able to rely on shortwave. Existing shortwave transmitters must be refurbished. Many of the existing BBG shortwave transmitters are about 30 years old. Because of jamming and the crisis in the Balkans and now throughout the Middle East, these transmitters now broadcast many more hours per day. Some of them have been on the air 24 hours a day to the Middle East since September 11, 2001. Refurbishing these shortwave transmitters to extend their life would cost approximately \$50 million in a one-time capital improvement expenditure.

Objective II – Develop a Rapid Response Capability.

We must become able to quickly mobilize, transport and deploy complete AM and FM broadcast stations to any location on the globe. The BBG should have ready and waiting for surge needs a transportable, moderate-power (300KW) medium wave transmitter with all its support gear as well as a number of lower power FM transmitters.

Goal VII – Ensure Broad Federal Support

The BBG is both independent and dependent within the U.S. government. Congress made us an independent agency in order to preserve our journalistic integrity and credibility with audiences. Yet we serve U.S. foreign policy interests and require support from other agencies to further our mission -- gaining, say, the support of the U.S. government to end Chinese jamming. We need to work together within an overall relationship of mutual respect and trust.

Key to getting the support we need from other Federal agencies is effective intra-governmental communications. While the BBG may have many recognized spokespersons, to be effective there must be a coordinated message. The BBG will provide the coordination while enlisting the full participation of broadcasting service management.

In addition, the Board should ensure that the BBG is a participant in key policy circles so that we can obtain the necessary support for our broadcasting initiatives.

BBG Performance Indicators

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires that all government agencies establish indicators, or measures, that provide a meaningful reading of how good the entity is doing. The BBG's performance indicators are a best effort to measure each broadcast element's level of effectiveness now and where it is targeted to be in the future. The indicators are verified and validated through independent evaluations of the different measurement techniques. What follows is a detailed description of each of the principal performance indicators used by the BBG.

Overall Weekly Audiences

This indicator is based upon measurement of the "regular listening audience," a statistical standard long used to report international radio audience reach. "Regular listening audience" has over the years been consistently defined as "all adults listening at least once a week," as determined by an audience survey that has an adequately designed sample.

Depending on the country, measurement of audience size can be quite direct or extremely difficult, depending on political, social and media conditions there. From both a financial and a logistical point of view, it is impossible to survey every country every year, and political considerations preclude any research at all in certain key regions. The increasing reliance on local re-broadcasts via affiliate stations and the addition of television outlets to the broadcast distribution scheme further complicate the picture in many countries. For example, shortwave delivery used to mean that a single national survey of Russia could be used to produce an accurate audience measurement. Now, most of the listening audience tunes in via local FM affiliates. This necessitates multiple city surveys at a much greater cost.

A complicating factor in reporting audiences for U.S. international broadcasting is that they must be unduplicated as they are aggregated. Inevitably there is a certain amount of overlap in listeners among international broadcasters, and this is only increased when we must consider television and the Internet as well as radio. In other words, there is the danger of counting the same listener/viewer twice when computing country, region, or worldwide audience figures. However, since this performance plan specifies targets at the broadcast entity level (i.e., VOA, VOA-TV, RFE/RL, etc.), each is reported separately. Internet figures are not yet reported, as the survey technique is under development, but the measure will be the same – number of people listening and/or viewing once a week.

Program Quality

This indicator presents the percent of a station's language services whose programming is assessed as being of good-or-better quality. Ratings are based upon two broad criteria: (1) *content*, and (2) *presentation*. The *content* criterion includes evaluations of accuracy, reliability, authoritativeness, objectivity, comprehensiveness and other variables reflecting distinct statutory, policy, and mission mandates for the different stations. The *presentation* criterion involves separate sub-criteria for each production unit unique to its media and the program. These are averaged and summarized on a scale from 1 – 4, where 1 to 1.5 is poor, 1.5 to 2.5 is fair, 2.5 to 3.5 is good, and 3.5 to 4 is excellent.

Measuring program quality required developing standardized criteria applicable to very different media and methods of delivery while minimizing subjective judgments on content and presentation. With the inauguration by BBG in 2001 of a single outside research provider, and definition by the Board of program review schedules and standards, harmonization of program quality techniques among the entities took a large step forward.

Signal Strength

This statistic refers exclusively to radio signal monitoring by IBB staff of shortwave and medium wave signals in or near target areas. In the future, FM will be added. It is an important register of whether the programs are capable of being heard by the target audiences. The IBB routinely compiles a "program reception" statistic for each language service. Typically this is done for each of two "broadcast seasons": April to September, and October to March. The summary statistic aggregates the most recent readings for each service and averages them. While signal delivery lends itself well to GPRA measurement, since monitoring data is regularly collected, U.S. international broadcasting continues to examine this approach with an eye to improving its accuracy, sensitivity and usefulness as an analytical tool. Survey research data provides an independent source of data, yet to be integrated into the statistic. The scale is 1 – 1.5, nil; 1.5 – 2.5 poor; 2.5 – 3.5 fair or average; 3.5 – 4.5 good; and 4.5 – 5 excellent.

Satellite Network Performance Index

This index provides a quantitative measure of the ability of the satellite network to access the population of TV households. The measure accounts for TV population, total satellite network capacity, signal strength, and prime-time flexibility. This involves five criteria: (1) coverage of the satellite in channel-hours; (2) coverage to small (3 meters or less) antennas; (3) time-zone flexibility to ensure prime-time coverage; (4) TV households reached; and (5) ability to feed other satellites as part of the network. This index was developed by IBB's Office of Engineering in cooperation with the Broadcasting Satellite Users' Board to improve on an earlier index which

had several weaknesses. The index represents a refined, more useful planning tool than an original formula. The theoretical upper limit of the index is unknown since the potential number of TV channels and TV audiences around the world is unknown.

Affiliations

As shortwave usage wanes in parts of the world, the importance of affiliations with local AM and FM stations grows. Types and degrees of affiliations are many, ranging from live simulcasts at scheduled times to occasional use of taped segments of programs. The GPRA indicator counts only stations with good contracts regularly rebroadcasting identified programs of U.S. international broadcasting elements on competitive media in or near prime time nationally or in important parts of the country in an uncensored manner.

Internet Usage

The elements of U.S. international broadcasting are actively engaged in producing programs for the Internet, and this activity will increase further in the near future as that medium's penetration increases around the world. After carefully studying the issue, BBG has decided that measurement of our audiences achieved via the Internet will be accomplished not electronically through "page views" and "hits" but rather through scientific sampling of populations using survey research. The vehicle for this is the structured and comprehensive program of audience research established in 2002, but the sampling and reporting are under development.

Transmission Network Consumable Expense

This is the total annual cost of power and parts to operate the transmitters in the network around the world. Jamming by host governments drives the number up, as does a proliferation of media in the target market areas which requires more diverse delivery systems on our part to successfully compete there.

The following three performance measures are not used to measure aggregate, top-level performance, but are used to evaluate individual language services.

Target Audiences

Target audiences are used to measure the weekly listening rate of a specific population subgroup. These target audiences can vary by service and market area, depending on the demographics of the particular population and the relative importance of reaching them. As program decisions by BBG entities become more research-driven, it is increasingly possible to narrow the focus on specific demographic groups that may be particularly important. For radio services with considerable airtime, this will shape the whole sound of the program, as the principle of

"formatics" is used to shape listeners' expectations about what they will hear, whatever time they tune in. When broadcasters can define the population they are broadcasting to, they can tailor the programs to that population and be more effective. In many markets, listeners to international broadcasting are older elites on shortwave. As media proliferates and the older generations die off, the international broadcasting audience withers unless substantial attempts are made to reach new demographic groups on new media.

Cost Per Listener (or Audience Head)

This statistic divides the total cost of creating and delivering programs by the regular weekly audience to derive the cost per audience head, or listener, in the case of radio. There is no magic number, no standard, but a high cost per audience head can indicate several kinds of problems, such as unattractive programming that reaches few people, poor delivery systems, or intensive jamming by the host government. The figure is expressed in dollars and cents.

Awareness

It is increasingly obvious that often where U.S. international broadcasters have lower audience levels, it is because the potential listeners do not know of the stations or where to find them. Therefore, the Board is emphasizing advertising campaigns, concomitant with revised programming on better and more powerful media. BBG's regular annual surveys in each target country routinely ask whether respondents have heard of BBG stations. The question is asked two ways – picking from a list (prompted) or voluntary mention (unprompted). "Total" awareness means either prompted or unprompted acknowledgement of BBG station names. Low awareness indicates a need for advertising. Historically, BBG has not been able to afford advertising, and it is taking steps to economize in such a way as to afford this important effort. The statistic is expressed as a percent of the sampled population.

Verification and Validation of Indicators

The performance indicators are a best effort to measure in a meaningful way each broadcast element's level of effectiveness now and where it will be in the future. To achieve maximum objectivity, measurement is performed at a remove from the elements being evaluated. VOA, RFE/RL, RFA and OCB audience research is carried out by InterMedia, an outside research provider under contract to the BBG. Calculation of the Satellite Effectiveness Index is performed by the Broadcasting Satellite Users' Group, a multi-element working group-- not by the Engineering organization. The IBB Office of Program Review, which reports to the IBB Director, carries out evaluation of program quality for VOA. RFE/RL, RFA and OCB management rate their services based on formal program reviews, with research input from InterMedia. Evaluation is structurally independent of the individual language services. Each performance indicator requires different measurement techniques.

Key Values

As we pursue our mission, we will observe certain values as an organization:

Integrity

Integrity is vital for an organization that espouses a mission to tell the truth. Our integrity is the key to our credibility with our audiences. We hold ourselves to a very high standard. From Board members who provide a “firewall” against pressures to influence our content to front-line journalists who scrupulously source their reports, we take personal responsibility to safeguard our mission.

Innovation

Rapid changes in geopolitics, broadcasting techniques and technologies, and the media environments of our target markets require us continually to be alert to new ways of doing business. We welcome the risk-taking that accompanies innovation. We tolerate mistakes made in the pursuit of fresh ideas. We aim at ever-more dynamic and effective means of accomplishing our mission.

Achievement

We are not content simply to do our jobs. We acknowledge there is a desired, measurable outcome of the work we do. That outcome is achieving impact in our priority markets. Collectively, we are committed to doing what it takes – reprogramming and reallocating resources as necessary – to be successful.

Service

Service takes two forms. First, we care deeply about serving our audiences. We sympathize with the plight so many of them suffer of being deprived of information vital to their well being. We know we are often their only, or one of their few sources, of credible and relevant information. Second, this service in turn relies on the highest levels of internal service – that provided by our many support offices in the areas of transmission, affiliate recruitment, marketing, personnel, administration, and technology. We realize that our success often ultimately depends on them.

Teamwork

As an amalgam of broadcasting organizations with differing origins and rationales, BBG entities share a commitment to working together effectively. We readily pursue joint broadcasting

ventures, share stringer reporters and other resources, and facilitate an ongoing integration of broadcasting activities to yield progressively a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

Sense of Urgency

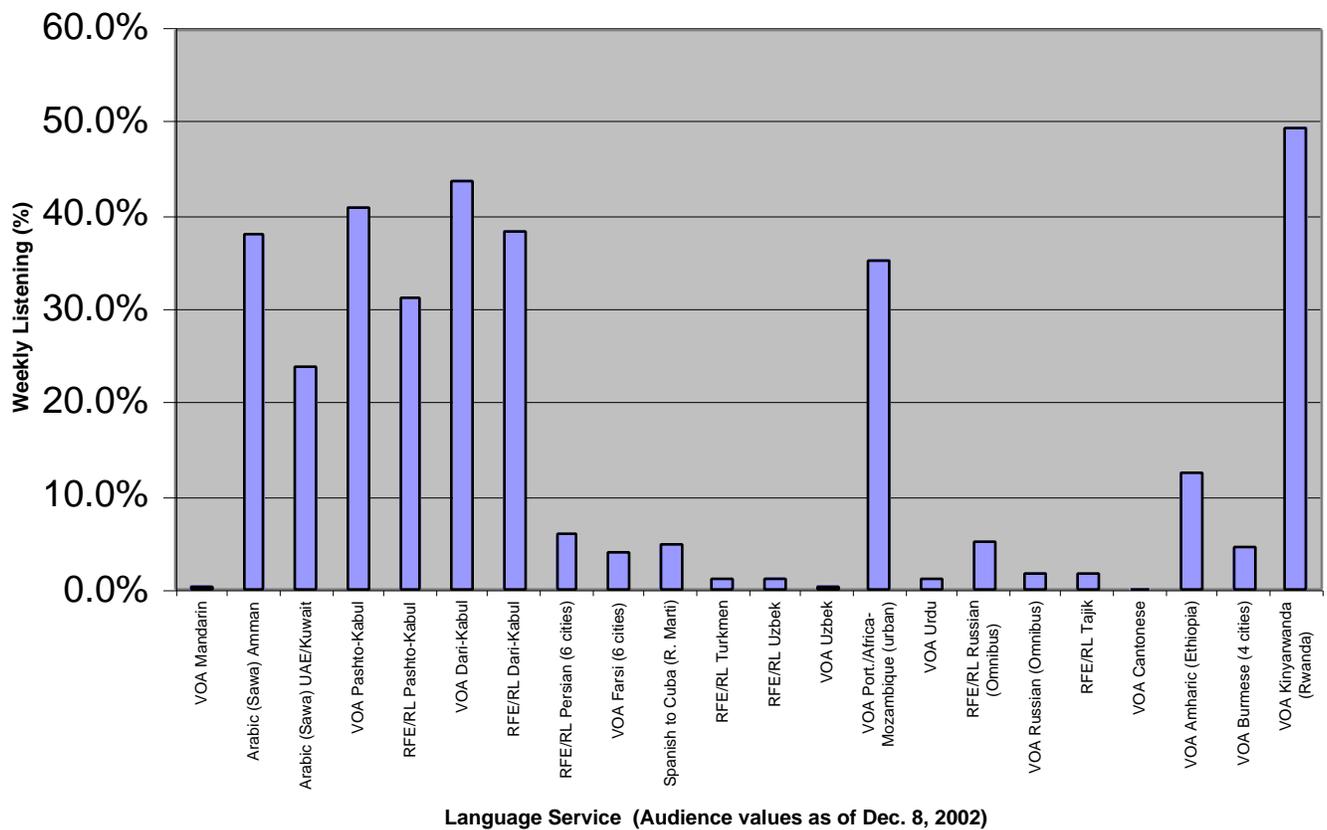
As the war on terrorism and other foreign policy challenges facing our nation illustrate, our country must act now, not tomorrow. We in U.S. international broadcasting share this sense of urgency. We have little patience for lingering problems that go without solutions. We combat the temptation to be complacent that can come from being thousands of miles from the people we serve. We readily take ownership of obstacles in our way. And we get on with the ever-present task at hand of achieving impact in our priority markets.

Diversity

Diversity is one of our strengths, as it must be in a multi-cultural, worldwide broadcasting organization. We are proud to be among the most diverse of all organizations, public or private, in terms of having broad representation of the world's nationalities and ethnic groups. We are truly strong, however, when we also manifest diversity with regard to race, gender, and sexual orientation. We accept nothing less than full compliance with our diversity standards.

Appendix: Listening Rate Charts

Weekly Listening in Higher Priority Languages



Top Weekly Listening Rates

