

Our Crippled Public Diplomacy

Our public diplomacy instrument is broken. Established by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower to both “tell America’s story” and to promote our foreign policy objectives, our information program needs fixing. Especially in the wake of September 11th, our government’s ability to influence foreign public opinion has been profoundly questioned. President Bush, Chairman Biden, and Congressmen Hyde and Lantos have asked in various forums, “Why can’t America state its case overseas” and be convincing?

We think we know why

We think we know why. The agency long dealing with public diplomacy, the U.S. Information Agency, saw its resources reduced steadily for more than a decade, with many of its overseas posts in the Middle East and elsewhere cut back by one-third to one-half. Then in 1999, the agency was merged into the Department of State where its functions have been fragmented and its resources further depleted. Three former USIA components were placed under the direction of a new Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, but this position has no direct control over field posts and their operations.

Though effective public diplomacy operations have crucially depended on overseas field posts, the Under Secretary has only an indirect relationship to the field, with geographic supervision relegated to the regional Bureaus of State. Compounding these problems, State’s budgetary and management systems are not “user-friendly” to public diplomacy; they are rigid, slow, and difficult to apply to the requirements of what should be a fast, flexible, and responsive information operation.

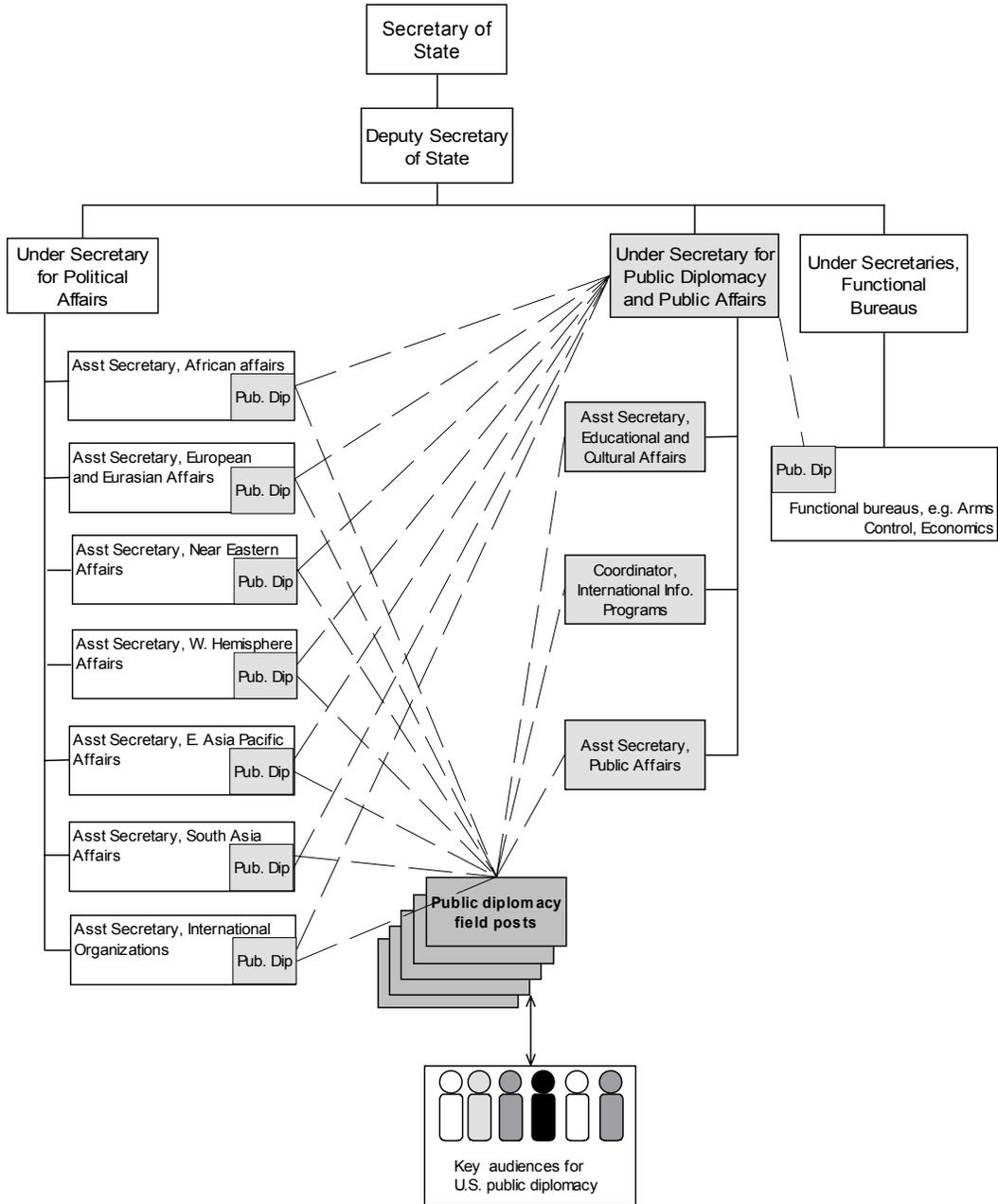
Proactive, responsive, professional instrument of foreign policy

To be effective, public diplomacy must be proactive and nimble, but also work for the mid- and long-term as well as respond to immediate demands.

In order to be speedily supportive to field operations, a restructuring of the Under Secretary function is essential. By placing all of those elements assigned to public diplomacy – resources, budgets, personnel, and executive management staff – under the direction of a newly-empowered Under Secretary or director answering to the Secretary of State, public diplomacy could again be an important instrument of foreign policy. The Congress should provide the Under Secretary the tools needed to be effective.

Public diplomacy cannot be operated on the cheap. It must have a major increase in resources to rebuild decimated field operations in key countries.

U.S. Department of State Current organization chart for public diplomacy



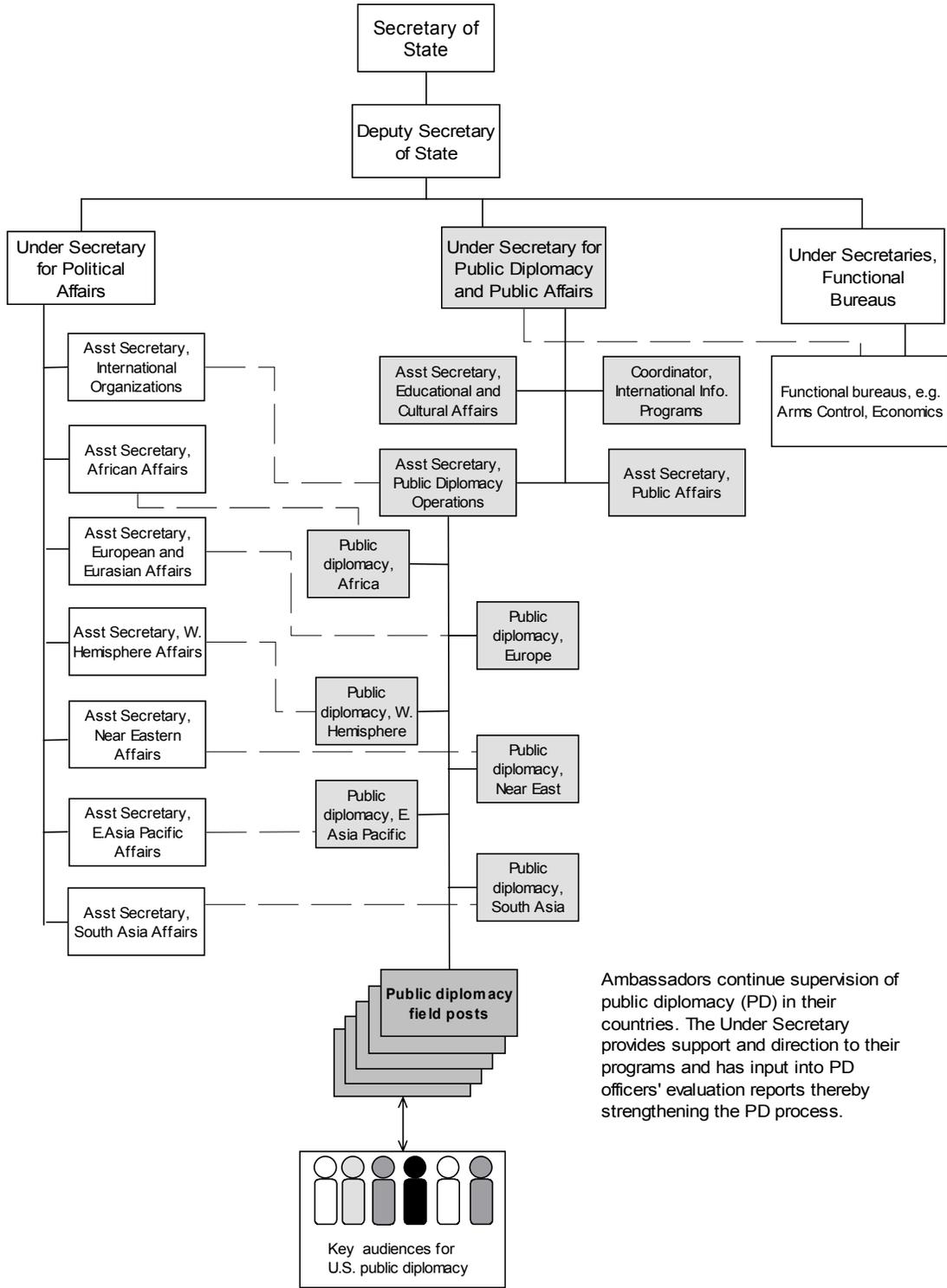
No key unit of the military or other department of government could countenance the lack of operational authority and control of its resources now confronting the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy.

Recommendations for an effective U.S. public diplomacy

Towards creating the more nimble, capable, and synergistic information service, we offer the following recommendations:

- Reorganize and redesign the public diplomacy organization to locate all its components into one bureau or entity under the Under Secretary.
- Give direct responsibility for field programs to the Under Secretary and staff.
- Give the Under Secretary control of all public diplomacy activities within State. Provide an executive/management staff and establish an assistant secretary position to deal with worldwide field operations.
- Relocate the public diplomacy offices now in the regional bureaus to the office of the Under Secretary thus providing country and regional expertise necessary for that office (The public diplomacy director of each office would continue a close relationship with the assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretaries in the corresponding regional bureaus.) The Under secretary would be better positioned to coordinate and support field programs as well as be responsive to State's policy guidance and initiatives.
- Relocate officers now in the functional bureaus in to the International Information Programs (IIP). Through close coordination with the bureaus, produce thematic products for the field.
- Maintain both Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and International Information Programs (IIP) under the Under Secretary. Increase the budget allotments so that exchanges and thematic programs better support field-driven and Washington-originated programs.
- Give the Under Secretary a major voice in training and assignments for public diplomacy officers.

U.S. Department of State Proposed organization chart to strengthen U.S. Public Diplomacy



- Institute a firewall around public diplomacy's budget and resources.
- Rebuild field operations by establishing much needed modern libraries . Information centers, branch posts operations, book programs, and other information activities necessary to broadly expose target audiences to American institutions, values, and policies. Enhance all-important personal contact by adding new public diplomacy officers to field posts.

Credits

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Endorsed by the USIA Alumni Association (525 members) – <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org> –
and many other public diplomacy professionals