

RECORD OF DECISIONS

From: Broadcasting Board of Governors
Date: October 13, 2011
Subject: **Decisions of Board at BBG Meeting of October 13, 2011**

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) met today at BBG Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The meeting was open for public observation via streaming on the BBG website.

The meeting was attended by the following Board members:

Chairman Walter Isaacson
Governor Victor Ashe
Governor Michael Lynton
Governor Susan McCue
Governor Michael Meehan
Governor Dennis Mulhaupt

Governors Dana Perino and S. Enders Wimbush and Acting Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Ann Stock were not in attendance at the meeting.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors agreed to the following decision elements (all decisions were adopted by a unanimous vote unless otherwise indicated):

1. Adoption of September 15, 2011 Minutes. The Board adopted the minutes of September 15, 2011 meeting as set forth in Attachment 1.
2. Revising 2011 BBG Meeting Schedule. The Board voted to adopt the revised BBG meeting schedule for the remaining 2011 calendar year by meeting on November 18 and canceling the December meeting. The Board also asked the Governance Committee to revisit and make recommendations to the plenary Board about the 2012 meeting schedule.
3. Adoption of Strategy and Budget Committee Report on the 2010-2011 Strategic Review and Mission Statement (as amended).
 - a. The Board noted the comprehensive strategy review led by the Strategy and Budget Committee from September 2010 to May 2011. The process included a detailed study of the global environment in which the BBG operates, an examination of the Agency's mission statement, and consideration of the Agency's distribution and technology efforts. The review also included regional reviews with in-depth

consultations engaging senior-management and language service heads and staff at each broadcast organization, as well as panels of experts who provided assessments of leading strategic and media factors in BBG's broadcast areas and the BBG's unique value and impact.

- b. The Board noted the participation of all elements of United States international broadcasting throughout the many phases of the strategic review– from the discussion of the mission statement, to the IBB Coordinating Committee's efforts on distribution and technology issues, to participation in the many regional reviews.
- c. The Board adopts the amended Report of the BBG Strategy and Budget Committee on the 2010-2011 Strategic Review as set forth in Attachment 2.
- d. The Board endorses the recommendations from the Committee Report and adopts the following recommendations as key elements of the BBG Strategic Plan for 2012-2016:

1. Consolidating/Streamlining Management: The Board will make agency management more efficient and effective, pursuing ways to move from a stove-piped bureaucracy of separate, semi-autonomous entities to an integrated media network with multiple brands and a board of directors attending to broad strategic issues. Toward this effort:

- The agency's part-time board of directors will attend to broad strategic issues, maintenance of the firewall to protect the independence and integrity of the agency's journalism, as well as oversight of the BBG mission; a CEO selected by the Board and subject to the Board's supervision will manage the agency's day-to-day affairs.
- All senior administrative and management functions will consolidate into one, integrated network management operation.
- The Agency has begun a study to explore the feasibility of consolidating the three grantee organizations (RFE/RL, RFA, and MBN), pending due diligence, into a single corporate structure sharing a unified administrative and legal framework, while retaining their journalistic missions. The due diligence will include a preliminary look at the short- and long-term financial ramifications and the other benefits and costs of consolidation.
- The agency will begin a feasibility study to explore de-federalization of agency components, with the goal of optimizing flexibility, efficiency and compatibility with non-federal elements.

2. Ending Language Services and Minimizing Language Service

Duplication: The Board will seek to end language services in countries with more developed, independent media, and that are no longer strategic priorities.

Where the agency has two U.S.-funded media properties operating in a given country, they should cooperate, with shared bureaus, stringers, and distribution networks where feasible. Each will provide complementary, not duplicative, content.

- 3. Rationalizing Distribution:** Noting the importance of reaching audiences on their preferred media, the Board will develop innovative methods for distributing content with limited resources. This approach should include devoting resources to the platforms global media-use strongly favors – television, internet, FM, and social media – as well as maintaining shortwave broadcasts in regions where it remains a critical platform. Where shortwave is vital, it will remain. Elsewhere, resource reallocations will support the platforms audiences use.
- 4. Launching the Global News Network:** The Board will endeavor to harness the agency’s original reporting now spread across 59 different language services to power an unprecedented Web-based global newsroom. The Global News Network will aggregate content from the agency’s regional divisions and distribute branded news products – radio, television, website, social media/engagement, and enterprise products – for use by Voice of America, Radio and TV Marti, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and Middle East Broadcasting Networks.
- 5. Elevating and Expanding Social Media:** Recognizing the role information technology and access have played in empowering citizens to develop their own news and stories, the Board will promote the role of social media as a key component of U.S. international broadcasting through citizen discourse, peer-to-peer sharing, user-generated content, and other innovations.
- 6. Combating Internet Censorship and Jamming:** The BBG will develop, obtain and enhance agency tools and programs to counter Internet censorship, to provide millions of users in China, Iran, Vietnam, and other countries unfettered access to the Internet.
- 7. Deploying Forward:** The BBG will seek to forward deploy the agency’s news gathering and reporting and program production assets toward its target markets. This effort will involve establishing regional hubs and expanding overseas bureaus in order to enable more comprehensive and timely coverage of local issues and events and drive the implementation of the Global News Network.
- 8. Repealing Smith-Mundt:** The BBG will seek to repeal the ban on domestic dissemination contained in the 1948 U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act (“Smith-Mundt” Act). Adopted in the age of cross-border communication via radio, this Act did not envision either the Internet or satellite broadcasting, which do not honor national boundaries. With all of the

BBG's 59 language services available via the web, the agency cannot comply with this outdated statute. In addition, to the extent that BBG-sponsored programming should be available to significant expatriate communities in the United States, we are unable to do so without acting counter to the limitation. The BBG has proposed, and the Administration approved, draft legislation to repeal the Smith-Mundt domestic dissemination ban as it applies to the BBG.

9. Mission Statement

- a. Noting that (i) information and engagement and (ii) free press and free expression will be the twin BBG mission pillars that equally serve to advance freedom and democracy, the Board adopts the following mission statement: *to inform, engage, and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy.*

10. Strategic Objective & Performance Goal

- Consistent with the agency's strategic review and future direction, the Board adopt the following over-arching strategic objective for the agency: *to become the world's leading international news agency by 2016, focused on the agency's mission and impact.*
- In support of this strategic objective and as a principal measure of its accomplishment, the agency also set the following performance goal: *to reach 216 million in global weekly audience by 2016.*

11. Implementation Plan. The Board directs the IBB Director to develop a detailed implementation plan for the key tenets of the BBG strategic plan described in the Committee's report.

Walter Isaacson
Chairman

Witnessed:

Paul Kollmer-Dorsey
Secretary

Attachments:

1. Minutes of September 15, 2011 meeting
2. Amended Report of the BBG Strategy & Budget Committee on the 2010-2011 Strategic Review