

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1253

To modernize and streamline the public diplomacy capabilities of the Department of State, increase evaluation of public diplomacy programming, enhance strategic planning for the Department's public diplomacy physical presence abroad, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Mr. MEUSER (for himself and Mr. McCAUL) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To modernize and streamline the public diplomacy capabilities of the Department of State, increase evaluation of public diplomacy programming, enhance strategic planning for the Department's public diplomacy physical presence abroad, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Public Diplomacy Mod-
5 ernization Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. AVOIDING DUPLICATION OF PROGRAMS AND EF-**
2 **FORTS.**

3 The Secretary of State shall—

4 (1) identify opportunities for greater efficiency
5 of operations, including through improved coordina-
6 tion of efforts across public diplomacy bureaus and
7 offices of the Department of State; and

8 (2) maximize shared use of resources between,
9 and within, such public diplomacy bureaus and of-
10 fices in cases in which programs, facilities, or admin-
11 istrative functions are duplicative or substantially
12 overlapping.

13 **SEC. 3. IMPROVING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF PUB-**
14 **LIC DIPLOMACY.**

15 (a) RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.—The
16 Secretary of State, acting through the Director of Re-
17 search and Evaluation appointed pursuant to subsection
18 (b), shall—

19 (1) conduct regular research and evaluation of
20 public diplomacy programs and activities of the De-
21 partment, including through the routine use of audi-
22 ence research, digital analytics, and impact evalua-
23 tions, to plan and execute such programs and activi-
24 ties; and

1 (2) make available to Congress the findings of
2 the research and evaluations conducted under para-
3 graph (1).

4 (b) DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

5 (1) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 90 days
6 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
7 retary of State shall appoint a Director of Research
8 and Evaluation (referred to in this subsection as the
9 “Director”) in the Office of Policy, Planning, and
10 Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
11 of the Department.

12 (2) LIMITATION ON APPOINTMENT.—The ap-
13 pointment of the Director pursuant to paragraph (1)
14 shall not result in an increase in the overall full-time
15 equivalent positions within the Department of State.

16 (3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall—

17 (A) coordinate and oversee the research
18 and evaluation of public diplomacy programs
19 and activities of the Department of State in
20 order to—

21 (i) improve public diplomacy strate-
22 gies and tactics; and

23 (ii) ensure that such programs and
24 activities are increasing the knowledge, un-

1 derstanding, and trust of the United
2 States by relevant target audiences;

3 (B) routinely organize and oversee audi-
4 ence research, digital analytics, and impact
5 evaluations across all public diplomacy bureaus
6 and offices of the Department;

7 (C) support United States diplomatic
8 posts' public affairs sections;

9 (D) share appropriate public diplomacy re-
10 search and evaluation information within the
11 Department and with other appropriate Federal
12 departments and agencies;

13 (E) regularly design and coordinate stand-
14 ardized research questions, methodologies, and
15 procedures to ensure that public diplomacy pro-
16 grams and activities across all public diplomacy
17 bureaus and offices are designed to meet appro-
18 priate foreign policy objectives; and

19 (F) report biannually to the United States
20 Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy,
21 through the Subcommittee on Research and
22 Evaluation established pursuant to subsection
23 (f), regarding the research and evaluation of all
24 public diplomacy bureaus and offices.

1 (4) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.—Not later than
2 one year after the appointment of the Director pur-
3 suant to paragraph (1), the Director shall develop
4 guidance and training, including curriculum for use
5 by the Foreign Service Institute, for all public diplo-
6 macy officers of the Department regarding the read-
7 ing and interpretation of public diplomacy program
8 and activity evaluation findings to ensure that such
9 findings and related lessons learned are implemented
10 in the planning and evaluation of all public diplo-
11 macy programs and activities of the Department.

12 (c) PRIORITIZING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The head of the Office of
14 Policy, Planning, and Resources for Public Diplo-
15 macy and Public Affairs of the Department of State
16 shall ensure that research and evaluation of public
17 diplomacy and activities of the Department, as co-
18 ordinated and overseen by the Director pursuant to
19 subsection (b), supports strategic planning and re-
20 source allocation across all public diplomacy bureaus
21 and offices of the Department.

22 (2) ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.—Amounts al-
23 located for the purpose of research and evaluation of
24 public diplomacy programs and activities of the De-
25 partment of State pursuant to subsection (b) shall

1 be made available to be disbursed at the direction of
2 the Director of Research and Evaluation among the
3 research and evaluation staff across all public diplo-
4 macy bureaus and offices of the Department.

5 (3) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
6 Congress that the Department of State should
7 gradually increase its allocation of funds made avail-
8 able under the headings “Educational and Cultural
9 Exchange Programs” and “Diplomatic Programs”
10 for research and evaluation of public diplomacy pro-
11 grams and activities of the Department pursuant to
12 subsection (b) to a percentage of program funds that
13 is commensurate with Federal Government best
14 practices.

15 (d) LIMITED EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE PAPER-
16 WORK REDUCTION ACT.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United
17 States Code (commonly known as the “Paperwork Reduc-
18 tion Act”) shall not apply to the collection of information
19 directed at any individuals conducted by, or on behalf of,
20 the Department of State for the purpose of audience re-
21 search, monitoring, and evaluations, and in connection
22 with the Department’s activities conducted pursuant to
23 any of the following:

24 (1) The Mutual Educational and Cultural Ex-
25 change Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.).

1 (2) Section 1287 of the National Defense Au-
2 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law
3 114–328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

4 (3) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22
5 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.).

6 (e) LIMITED EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE PRI-
7 VACY ACT.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Department of State
9 shall maintain, collect, use, and disseminate records
10 (as such term is defined in section 552a(a)(4) of
11 title 5, United States Code) for audience research,
12 digital analytics, and impact evaluation of commu-
13 nications related to public diplomacy efforts intended
14 for foreign audiences.

15 (2) CONDITIONS.—Audience research, digital
16 analytics, and impact evaluations under paragraph
17 (1) shall be—

18 (A) reasonably tailored to meet the pur-
19 poses of this subsection; and

20 (B) carried out with due regard for privacy
21 and civil liberties guidance and oversight.

22 (f) UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUB-
23 LIC DIPLOMACY.—

24 (1) SUBCOMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND EVAL-
25 UATION.—The United States Advisory Commission

1 on Public Diplomacy shall establish a Subcommittee
2 on Research and Evaluation to monitor and advise
3 regarding audience research, digital analytics, and
4 impact evaluations carried out by the Department of
5 State and the United States Agency for Global
6 Media.

7 (2) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Subcommittee on
8 Research and Evaluation established pursuant to
9 paragraph (1) shall submit to the Committee on
10 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and
11 the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate
12 an annual report, in conjunction with the United
13 States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy’s
14 Comprehensive Annual Report on the performance
15 of the Department of State and the United States
16 Agency for Global Media, describing all actions
17 taken by the Subcommittee pursuant to paragraph
18 (1) and any findings made as a result of such ac-
19 tions.

20 **SEC. 4. PERMANENT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE UNITED**
21 **STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC**
22 **DIPLOMACY.**

23 Section 1334 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Re-
24 structuring Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6553) is amended—

- 1 (1) in the section heading, by striking “**SUN-**
2 **SET**” and inserting “**CONTINUATION**”; and
3 (2) by striking “until October 1, 2021”.

4 **SEC. 5. STREAMLINING OF SUPPORT FUNCTIONS.**

5 (a) WORKING GROUP ESTABLISHED.—Not later than
6 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
7 Secretary of State shall establish a working group to ex-
8 plore the possibilities and cost-benefit analysis of transi-
9 tioning to a shared services model as such pertains to
10 human resources, travel, purchasing, budgetary planning,
11 and all other executive support functions for all bureaus
12 of the Department of State that report to the Under Sec-
13 retary for Public Diplomacy of the Department.

14 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall
16 submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
17 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-
18 tions of the Senate a plan to implement any such findings
19 of the working group established under subsection (a).

20 **SEC. 6. GUIDANCE FOR CLOSURE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**
21 **FACILITIES.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
24 shall adopt, and include in the Foreign Affairs Manual,
25 guidelines to collect and utilize information from each dip-

1 lomatic post at which the construction of a new embassy
2 compound or new consulate compound would result in the
3 closure or co-location of an American Space, American
4 Center, American Corner, or any other public diplomacy
5 facility under the Secure Embassy Construction and
6 Counterterrorism Act of 1999 (22 U.S.C. 4865 et seq.).

7 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The guidelines required by
8 subsection (a) shall include the following:

9 (1) Standardized notification to each chief of
10 mission at a diplomatic post describing the require-
11 ments of the Secure Embassy Construction and
12 Counterterrorism Act of 1999 and the impact on the
13 mission footprint of such requirements.

14 (2) An assessment and recommendations from
15 each chief of mission of potential impacts to public
16 diplomacy programming at such diplomatic post if
17 any public diplomacy facility referred to in section
18 (a) is closed or staff is co-located in accordance with
19 such Act.

20 (3) A process by which assessments and rec-
21 ommendations under paragraph (2) are considered
22 by the Secretary of State and the appropriate Under
23 Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of the Depart-
24 ment of State.

1 (4) Notification to the Committee on Foreign
2 Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
3 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, prior
4 to the initiation of a new embassy compound or new
5 consulate compound design, of the intent to close
6 any such public diplomacy facility or co-locate public
7 diplomacy staff in accordance with such Act.

8 (c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall
10 submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
11 of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Rela-
12 tions of the Senate a report containing the guidelines re-
13 quired under subsection (a) and any recommendations for
14 any modifications to such guidelines.

15 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

16 In this Act:

17 (1) AUDIENCE RESEARCH.—The term “audi-
18 ence research” means research conducted at the out-
19 set of a public diplomacy program or the outset of
20 campaign planning and design regarding specific au-
21 dience segments to understand the attitudes, inter-
22 ests, knowledge, and behaviors of such audience seg-
23 ments.

24 (2) DIGITAL ANALYTICS.—The term “digital
25 analytics” means the analysis of qualitative and

1 quantitative data, accumulated in digital format, to
2 indicate the outputs and outcomes of a public diplo-
3 macy program or campaign.

4 (3) IMPACT EVALUATION.—The term “impact
5 evaluation” means an assessment of the changes in
6 the audience targeted by a public diplomacy program
7 or campaign that can be attributed to such program
8 or campaign.

9 (4) PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BUREAUS AND OF-
10 FICES.—The term “public diplomacy bureaus and
11 offices” means, with respect to the Department, the
12 following:

13 (A) The Bureau of Educational and Cul-
14 tural Affairs.

15 (B) The Bureau of Global Public Affairs.

16 (C) The Office of Policy, Planning, and
17 Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Af-
18 fairs.

19 (D) The Global Engagement Center.

20 (E) The public diplomacy functions within
21 the regional and functional bureaus.

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