The first step toward achieving an adequate diplomacy is conceptualizing it.\textsuperscript{1}

The question of how public diplomacy should be structured has probably sparked more controversy than any other among practitioners, policymakers, scholars, and interested observers of U.S. public diplomacy. That may seem odd to those unfamiliar with American public diplomacy. Indeed, the issue is one that easily might be dismissed as a secondary concern that should be sorted out after other more important matters are resolved. But to those who have witnessed or been a part of—or spent time studying—the evolution of American public diplomacy, it is an issue that matters greatly. It is also an issue that seems to defy resolution.\textsuperscript{2}

Throughout the past half century, American public diplomacy has been shuffled back and forth between the State Department and the USIA, with other offices charged with public diplomacy responsibilities springing up and then shutting down from time to time. Of course, a defining moment for U.S. public diplomacy came in 1999 with the dissolution of the USIA and integration of public diplomacy functions back into the State Department, and the broadcast units spun off into an independent entity.

Although the marriage between the State Department and the USIA is widely viewed as a flawed arrangement, there is some question about whether divorce makes sense. The issue, of course, is determining what a better structure would look like. On that matter, heated debate continues.

Numerous post-9/11 reports on U.S. public diplomacy have addressed the issue of structure, with most offering recommendations for reform. Proposed options include: 1) reestablishing the USIA; 2) developing a


new government body; 3) forming a quasi-private agency; 4) turning over a significant portion of public diplomacy functions to a nonprofit or other private sector entity; 5) restructuring public diplomacy within the State Department; 6) splitting up the public diplomacy functions and developing separate government entities responsible for information/advocacy programs, exchange programs, and policy advisement, respectively; increasing through organizational changes the emphasis on public diplomacy throughout all government agencies (e.g., White House, National Security Council, Defense Department); and 7) maintaining the status quo.3

A significant problem in sorting out the various proposals is that there are no specific criteria or benchmarks by which various proposals might be judged. Diverse views regarding public diplomacy’s role and function in national strategy, as well as the proper role of the private sector in public diplomacy, have contributed to a lack of progress on the structural front. In an effort to move the discussion forward, this chapter examines structural and organizational factors that contributed to U.S. public diplomacy’s effectiveness in the past and considers recent proposals for how public diplomacy resources should be structured in the future.

Structural insights

The USIA Alumni Study (see Appendix One), which solicited the anonymous views of former USIA officers on a range of issues related to public diplomacy, provided significant insights into the structural and operational qualities that contributed to the USIA’s success—and the qualities that were lost with the integration of public diplomacy into the State Department. According to the study, only 3 percent of America’s former public diplomats thought the dissolution of the USIA was a good idea, and more than three-fourths (79 percent) thought the merger with the State Department was a “disaster.” Nearly all (91 percent) of the former public diplomats agreed that the integration did not enhance public diplomacy policy’s role, a key reason for the consolidation.