

allowing seniors to use their home equity to pay for premiums and enhanced home- and community-based care. Low-income seniors would need less insurance coverage due to the new catastrophic benefit, and thus would pay lower premiums. States could buy qualifying Medicaid beneficiaries into this program as well by paying for their premiums and cost sharing.

To offset its new federal costs, the Partnership would be a “swap”: Beneficiaries who opt for it would forfeit Medicare’s home-health benefit, which would be covered by the private insurance plan. In addition, the increase in Medicare spending would be partially paid for by the resulting decrease in Medicaid spending.

The Medicare Long-Term Care Partnership would offer the possibility of jump-starting long-term care insurance for seniors. It would provide sliding-scale premium assistance for low- and middle-income people through an income-related catastrophic benefit, and it would encourage consumer confidence by ensuring long-lasting and reliable benefits. It would redirect existing public funding to paying for the highest-cost care, arguably the right role for government. And, most important, it would restructure the relationship between private and public coverage—a necessary relationship if the nation is to adequately finance long-term care for Baby Boomers. ▀

Public Diplomacy Cabinet Post

William Galston

If our time is truly the “information age,” why are we conducting our foreign policy as though we don’t believe it? Evidence abounds showing that borderless, near-instantaneous flows of information have a significant impact on international public opinion, and as democracy spreads, that opinion matters more than ever. Yet we have all but ceded the struggle for global opinion to our adversaries. It is time to regain the initiative.

In an important speech in Kansas last year, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates argued that in waging and winning the cold war, new institutions like a unified Defense Department, the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the United States Information Agency (USIA) mattered as much as people and

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policies. But in the wake of the cold war, we weakened not only our military and intelligence capabilities, but also the institutions of “soft power” that enabled us to communicate effectively with other parts of the world.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many scholars argued that the age of ideological conflict had ended and that liberal democracy had emerged as the sole legitimate model. What was the point of maintaining the ability to wage a struggle that we had won? The USIA contributed to its own demise by failing to define a compelling new mission for the post-cold war world. By 1999, as Secretary Gates put it, “the U.S. Information Agency was abolished as an independent entity, split into pieces, and many of its capabilities folded into a small corner of the State Department.”

If the USIA had survived until 9/11, it would have been strengthened, not abolished. Today, the United States is engaged in new ideological struggles against authoritarian populism as well as Islamist radicalism. Global public opinion surveys show that we are on the defensive and losing ground. While inherently unpopular policies on our part are largely responsible, our failure to build bridges to other peoples has made matters worse. In the twenty-first century, spreading global public understanding of America’s institutions, culture, and political values is as important as the work of traditional diplomats and warriors. But our weakened institutions of public diplomacy are not up to the task.

What’s needed instead is a dedicated, Cabinet-level agency—call it the Department of Global Information and Communications (DGIC). Its mission would be to make the case for America as a force for peace, prosperity, and political reform, an America whose policies serve global interests as well as its own. Its functions would include training public diplomacy officers for embassies and consulates around the world; assuming responsibility for international broadcasting; monitoring global public opinion through regular surveys as well as qualitative assessments; expanding vital people-to-people programs, including speaker tours, English language teaching, and exchanges of scholars, students, and cultural institutions; and launching a massive new translation program, an “American Knowledge Library Initiative,” to make the best of our thought and culture available abroad. As a cabinet-level agency, a DGIC’s representative would be at the table—with equal standing—during interagency meetings, articulating in advance the likely consequences of policy options for our standing in the world.

The total spending on all public diplomacy activities today amounts to less than one-third of 1 percent of the Defense Department’s budget. During its first five years, the DGIC’s annual appropriation should be ramped up to roughly \$10

billion, about six times today's public diplomacy spending. Costly, to be sure, but if we truly believe that our policies benefit other nations and that our values have global appeal, we should be prepared to do what it takes to make that case effectively around the world.

Various objections may be raised. Some scholars argue that public diplomacy adds little to public policy: If what we are doing is truly advantageous and attractive to other peoples, our merits will shine on their own; if not, nothing we say can help. But USIA's effectiveness during the Cold War suggests otherwise. Others claim that in this age of instant information, public diplomacy is obsolete. But there is a difference between information and argument: Public diplomacy states America's case, organizing information in light of our principles and purposes.

Finally, some undoubtedly will argue that the costs of creating a new cabinet agency would outweigh the benefits. It is useful, they say, for the Secretary of State to command all the instruments of diplomacy; a new department would fragment our diplomacy without enhancing its public dimension. This argument understates both the advantages of reform and the costs of the status quo. Institutions with a single focus are more likely to succeed than multi-purpose conglomerates. If public diplomacy remains within the State Department, it will remain subordinate to more traditional concerns. It is impossible to imagine an Undersecretary of State for public diplomacy with stronger links to the White House than Karen Hughes, yet the results have been meager. Without fundamental institutional reform, the next president will do no better. ▀

Middle-Class Schools for All

Richard Kahlenberg

Most conventional education reforms concentrate on achieving equality between separate schools for rich and poor. From private-school vouchers and charter schools to class-size reduction and education testing, mainstream efforts ignore a central finding of education research: that schools that are majority poor tend to fail to produce high levels of academic achievement, no matter the level of funding or model of school governance employed. Forty years ago, legendary sociologist James Coleman found that,

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