



UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

2015 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting

Focus on Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Data

Near East Asia Region

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The Views represented herein are those of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission's administrative home, the Department of State.

FIELD-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES



U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE NEAR EAST ASIA REGION

A young Algerian girl takes a shot on a professional soccer goalie after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry spoke about the value of sports in life and State Department Sports Diplomacy programs during a visit to a Nike flagship store in Algiers - the largest in the African continent - on April 3, 2014. [State Department photo/ Public Domain]

U.S. Public Diplomacy in Near East Asia

The Department of State aims to carry out robust public diplomacy programming in the Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) region despite challenges such as weak partner institutions; host government suspicion of, and in some cases hostility toward, public diplomacy programming; and the need to implement activities in high-threat security environments. Yet programs that foster economic growth and integration through the teaching of English and entrepreneurial skills are in high demand throughout the region. Young people especially are eager participants in exchange programs to the United States, and American scholars and students are welcome in many countries. U.S. embassies engage in social as well as traditional media outreach. Sports and cultural diplomacy, carefully used, allow access to underserved communities that may be vulnerable to radicalization.

More than 30 percent of the population in the region is between the ages of 15 and 29, and these youth are increasingly connected to each other and to the world via technology. There are 105 mobile phones for every 100 people, and the region has an Internet penetration rate of roughly 40 percent. Traditional media, however, remains largely not free, according to Freedom House. With the exception of Israel (84 percent), U.S. favorability is well below 50 percent according to the Pew Global Attitudes Project: Tunisia (42 percent), Lebanon (41 percent), Palestinian Territories (30 percent), Jordan (12 percent) and Egypt (10 percent). With this environment as the backdrop, the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy in the NEA Bureau provides guidance and support to Public Affairs Sections in consulates and embassies in 18 countries.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY GOALS

U.S. interests in the region are to: promote the free flow of commerce and ensure global energy security; combat terrorism, violent extremism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; preserve Israel's security and achieve a comprehensive and lasting Middle East Peace between Israel and its neighbors; and support successful and sustainable democratic transitions. Supporting private sector-led economic growth and job creation is a top priority to address the region's persistent high unemployment and promote stability. Nurturing nascent civil society groups, and encouraging governments to allow them the space to operate freely, is another key goal. A strong private sector and civil society can produce partners with whom governments can engage to advance the cause of reform. The search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, while difficult, is an element of the U.S. commitment to, and strong support for, Israel's security. The United

States has also adopted a comprehensive strategy to degrade and defeat ISIL so that it can no longer threaten the region, the United States, and our allies and partners around the world.

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GOALS

Public diplomacy and strategic communications are core to U.S. foreign policy efforts to support stability, democracy, and security in the region. Public diplomacy and public affairs programming aims to:

1. Ensure clear, articulate messaging on U.S. foreign policy, especially during times of crisis and transition;
2. Support democratic transitions and empower an informed, active citizenry;
3. Promote and support U.S. economic statecraft in partnership with embassy economic and commercial counterparts; and
4. Counter extremist messaging.

Public diplomacy activities have been used in a variety of ways to support these goals. The State Department has provided economic and educational opportunities to underserved and marginalized populations through English-language and entrepreneurial training and promoted alternatives to violence through TV and radio talk shows in the Arabic language. Many programs operate through the region's 63 American spaces. The ECA Bureau also currently operates more than 15 programs in the region, five of which are targeted towards youth: the English Access Microscholarship, the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Abroad, the TechGirls program, the Youth Leadership Program (YLP), and the Fulbright program. Other academic programs include Critical Language Scholarships and EducationUSA advising.

**See Academic Programs: Fulbright Students & Scholars (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen); UGRAD Middle East (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen); UGRAD Tunisia; Fulbright Short-Term Visiting Scholar Program for Iraq and Libya; Teachers of Critical Languages Program; Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program; Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program; EducationUSA NEA - 546,845 in-person and 238,016 virtual contacts. *See Professional & Cultural Programs: IVLP; National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y); Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES); TechGirls; TechWomen; American Youth Leadership Program; International*

Writing Program (IWP); IWP Between The Lines; Center Stage.

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

FY14 U.S. Public Diplomacy Spending by Country

Country	Actual Expenditures
Iraq	\$10.713 million*
Israel	\$4.242 million
Palestinian Territories	\$3.757 million
Egypt	\$2.702 million
Morocco	\$2.159 million
Jordan	\$2.068 million
Saudi Arabia	\$2.053 million
Lebanon	\$1.492 million
United Arab Emirates	\$1.471 million
Yemen	\$1.140 million
Qatar	\$948,775
Tunisia	\$898,345
Kuwait	\$690,598
Algeria	\$689,955
Bahrain	\$686,916
Oman	\$456,751
Libya	\$330,517
Syria	\$214,050

(Data in this table is from PDRP and was within 3 percent of the data we received from the the Bureau except where noted with an asterisk. Iraq budget includes OCO funding.)

The largest public diplomacy programs in FY 2014 were Iraq (\$10.713 million), Israel (\$4.242 million), Palestinian Territories (\$3.757 million), Egypt (\$2.702 million), Morocco (\$2.159 million) and Jordan (\$2.068 million). Activities in Iraq were funded by Congress through a separate appropriation. As this designated funding is phased out, public diplomacy funds will become necessary to support activities in Iraq.

Regional spending was focused in four strategic areas: countering violent extremism; culture, sports, and American society; democracy, good governance, and the rule of law; and education and youth engagement. Lesser amounts of funding went to categories such as evaluation; audience research and public opinion polling; educational advising and promoting study in the

United States; alumni outreach; American Centers; public-private partnerships; speaker programs (post generated); and supplementing educational and cultural affairs.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PROGRAM SAMPLES:

Countering ISIL (DAESH) and Extremism: Communications are a critical aspect of the broader fight against Daesh. U.S. public diplomacy in the Near East Asia Bureau has taken a leading role in the U.S. government's comprehensive efforts to degrade ISIL, or Daesh. NEA has implemented exchange programs with visiting leaders from anti-ISIL coalition countries, spokesperson trainings to sharpen anti-extremist messaging, and social media workshops in the region to coordinate anti-Daesh messaging and amplify a counter narrative of tolerance and coexistence online. In April 2015, NEA hosted a countering violent extremism training workshop in Amman in collaboration with the government of Jordan, civil society, and other U.S. government agencies. The hands-on, two-day training brought together more than 75 senior Jordanian government leaders, entrepreneurs, media officials and civil society leaders from all sectors and parts of Jordan. Organized in close coordination with the Jordanian government, the TechCamp focused on bridging the long-standing lack of trust and absence of cooperation between government and civil society, in this case to tackle the shared problem of countering extremist messaging and recruiting.

Entrepreneurship Outreach: Regional economic empowerment is one of U.S. foreign policy's highest priorities. In FY 2015, for the first time, female businesswomen from North Africa joined Sub-Saharan counterparts for the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) IVLP. This fostered regional cooperation while providing all the participants with useful advice on navigating bureaucracies, raising capital, marketing, and other topics. Angie Chang, a co-founder of "Women 2.0," also recently conducted a workshop with Gaza Sky Geeks, an organization that supports tech entrepreneurs in Gaza and in Jerusalem. Chang led workshops for more than 30 Gazans, sharing her experiences working in the heart of the Silicon Valley tech industry. In addition, she also met with international investors to help generate funding for Gaza start-up companies.

English Language Learning in Iraq: Recent PD initiatives in Iraq have concentrated on expanding and improving English language learning opportunities around the country. In April 2015, a noted English language specialist visited the country, providing workshops on technology utilization and other teaching techniques in person in Basrah, as well as over Skype to Najaf, Kirkuk and elsewhere. English language

programs provide a crucial opportunity for educational outreach that also boosts long-term economic development prospects.

Youth-Targeted Programming in Algeria: NEA continues to work with youth communities across the region. In Algeria, Delia Dunlap, a Senior English Language Fellow, led a team of 16 youth on a four-day retreat. The program built on the success of the initial October 2014 Algerian Youth Voices training, which was funded by the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs' Innovation Fund. During the three day program, the participants produced eight creative and insightful audio recordings that covered a range of topics, including traveling, family, conflict resolution, recreation, and friendship.

Educational Innovation in Lebanon: Expanding knowledge of innovative higher education opportunities is a critical NEA priority. In the fall semester of 2014, the U.S. embassy in Beirut began an initiative to promote Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) as a way to encourage education and online learning, particularly given the challenging security environment. NEA selected courses from the publicly available MOOCs—Introduction to Environmental Science and Shaping the Way We Teach English—and then encouraged the general public to sign up for these selected courses. In addition to following the online course, students who enroll in PD's "MOOC camp" were then invited to attend supplementary facilitated sessions in

collaboration with Notre Dame University (NDU) and Beirut Arab University (BAU), and offered by alumni of U.S. government programming, on the same topic. A total of 31 participants attended the facilitated sessions and 20 attended a final reception to receive embassy certificates that highlighted the U.S. government's commitment to supporting education as a tool to counter the mounting extremism in the region.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Initiatives in Qatar: Over the past year, the U.S. embassy in Doha has conducted a series of youth programs promoting STEM education in Qatar, engaging students and sparking interest in science and math. These programs have helped to build long-lasting relationships between Qatari and American institutions and to support our joint goals to promote a strong, free, knowledge-based economy in Qatar. The programs also further mission-wide strategic efforts to combat violent extremism by engaging vulnerable youth and providing them with alternative opportunities. To commemorate NASA's achievements in space exploration, and promote Qatari youth's interest in space science and engineering, the U.S. embassy brought George F. Gabrielle, program engineer at the Kennedy Space Center, to conduct a speaking tour of Qatar, accompanied by a roving exhibition of spacecraft models and an IIP poster show called "Exploring Mars." Upon learning of the successful program with George Gabrielle, Boeing's Middle East office suggested a collaboration with the U.S. embassy to promote STEM education.

International Broadcasting in the Near East Asia Region

In FY 2014, the BBG had eight services in the Middle East: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Radio Farda (Persian), RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq, Voice of America's (VOA) Persian Service, VOA's Kurdish Service, Middle East Broadcasting Networks' (MBN) Alhurra, Alhurra Iraq, and Radio Sawa, and MBN Digital. While Afia Darfur is focused in the Africa region, Alhurra also broadcasts in Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan. In FY 2015, RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq service was combined with Radio Sawa.

RFE/RL spent \$12.976 million with program

delivery in FY 2014; VOA spent \$21.559 million with program delivery; and MBN spent \$53.75 million via its television and radio services in the region. [Note: MBN's total agency cost is \$106.178 million.]

Programs cover local and international news, as well as focusing on topics such as health, youth, technology, economics, democracy, culture, and gender. Most of the services incorporate public call-in shows to engage listeners and question local political leaders. The services reach audiences via radio, television, the Internet and social media.

MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORKS

Arabic

MBN ALHURRA TV

FY 2014 \$28.015 million (\$29.089 million with program delivery)

Origin: 2004

Delivery Method: Satellite Television (Nilesat, Arabsat and in HD on Eutelsat), Website, Mobile Site and Social Media

TV Original Programming: 59 hours/week; 15 hours/week of acquired programming

TV Total Broadcast: 168 hours/week

Alhurra reaches the entire Arabic-speaking world from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf. Recent BBG research shows that it has more than 20 million weekly viewers. MBN's mission is to provide objective, accurate, and relevant news and information to the people of the Middle East about the region, the world, and the United States, and to support democratic values. Alhurra Television broadcasts Arabic-language news and information to 22 countries throughout the Middle East on the Nilesat and Arabsat satellite systems; it is also available in HD on Eutelsat. In addition to reporting on world events, Alhurra provides context and analysis to give viewers a broader understanding of the actions impacting the region. MBN's Arabic-speaking editorial staff generates much of the news from a facility in Springfield, Va. Alhurra also has bureaus and production centers in Baghdad, Dubai, Beirut, Cairo and Jerusalem, and bureaus in Rabat and Erbil will be operational in the next few months. MBN has correspondents and stringers throughout the Middle East, as well as in Europe and the United States.

Sample Programs on Alhurra:

- **Al Youm ("Today"):** A three-hour live daily program that originates simultaneously from five countries in three continents including Dubai, Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem and Alhurra's headquarters in Springfield, Va. The program provides viewers coverage of the latest news from the Middle East, the United States and the world; as well as topics such as health, entertainment news, sports, technology, social and cultural issues. The program also includes interviews with everyone from politicians to athletes; leaders in business and the arts. Located in Dubai's Media City, *Al Youm* is co-anchored by Nabila Kilani and Basel Sabri, who are joined by Mona Wehbi in Beirut, Osama Yossef in Cairo and Eman Haddad in Jerusalem, along with news updates from Alhurra's headquarters.
- **Hunna ("Women's Views"):** An hour-long program that brings together lively and engaging women to discuss social and political issues that are sensitive in the region. Each week, "Women's Views" provides viewers an intimate look at these issues through interviews with brave women who are living the topics they discuss.
- **Street Pulse:** Takes a unique look at the most important social and cultural issues; examining a single topic each week. The program goes from the streets of Cairo to the most rural villages. It takes experts and interviewees out of their formal offices and speaks with them in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- **Sa'aa Hurra ("Free Hour"):** Alhurra's flagship talk show examining latest news and issues of the day, with expert analysis and debate. "Free Hour" airs five times a week.

MBN ALHURRA IRAQ

FY 2014 \$4.329 million (\$5.903 million with program delivery)

Origin: 2004

Delivery Method: Satellite Television (Nilesat and Arabsat), Terrestrial Transmitters, Website, Mobile Site and Social Media

TV Original Programming: 73 hours/week; 12.5 hours/week of acquired programming

TV Total Broadcast: 168 hours/week

Alhurra-Iraq Television is broadcast via satellite, as well as via terrestrial transmitters in five Iraqi cities. Alhurra-Iraq's news and current affairs programs concentrate on issues facing the Iraqi viewers. It was launched to address the specific challenges facing the Iraqi people and to give the United States a voice in overwhelming anti-U.S. rhetoric found on the other Iraqi channels. Alhurra-Iraq programming includes a mix of current affairs, political, and news programs, that cover a variety of topics including health, technology, business, democracy, entertainment, sports, gender issues, culture, economics, and science. Programs are produced in Alhurra's Baghdad Bureau and in Springfield, Va. A team of approximately 20 correspondents across the country report on the Iraqi news, provide analysis of Iraqi issues and highlight Iraq's rich cultural history. Nearly 40 percent of the Alhurra-Iraq programming schedule is Iraq specific, including almost all of prime time, which is anchored by a daily hour-long Iraq-centric newscast. Alhurra.com has an Iraq-specific page to provide the latest news from Iraq.

Sample of Programs on Alhurra-Iraq include:

- **Aliraq Alyoum ("Iraq Today"):** A daily newscast on the events happening in Iraq.
- **Beliraqi ("In Iraqi"):** Based in Iraq, this talk show that airs weekdays following the daily Iraqi newscast to provide viewers in-depth analysis of the most important political events in Iraq. The show hosts a variety of voices to give Iraqis a broad spectrum of opinions.
- **Hadith Annahrain ("Talk Of Two Rivers"):** This weekly talk show examines issues facing Iraqi society, such as poverty, the lack of basic services, the rights of women and the differences between social classes.

MBN Digital: (FY 2014 \$2.793 million) MBN Digital's cost covers Alhurra and Radio Sawa websites, mobile sites and social media sites, which launch topical campaigns for special events, such as elections, and seeks conversation with consumers. Alhurra also has a YouTube channel. The Alhurra and Radio Sawa are all news websites that include news and information from across the region, the United States and the world. In addition to original reporting, Alhurra.com live streams Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq and RadioSawa.com live streams all eight of Radio Sawa's streams.

MBN RADIO SAWA

FY 2014 \$9.641 million (\$18.758 million with program delivery)

Origin: 2002

Delivery Method: Radio (AM, FM), Satellite Television (Nilesat and Arabsat), Website, Mobile Site and Social Media

Radio Original Programming: 168 hours/week

Radio Total Broadcast: 168 hours/week

Radio Sawa targets Middle Eastern publics under the age of 35. Broadcasting 24/7, mostly on FM, it provides news and a blend of Western and Arabic popular music. Radio Sawa broadcasts nearly six hours of pan-Arab news and information each day via eight targeted, regional streams: 1) Iraq (FM and AM); 2) Levant, including Jordan and the West Bank (FM); 3) the Gulf (FM and AM); 4) Egypt (AM); 5) Morocco (FM); 6) Sudan, Libya, Djibouti and Yemen (FM and AM); 7) Lebanon and Syria (FM); and 8) Mauritania (FM). Additionally, Radio Sawa Iraq broadcasts Iraq-specific news and information to Iraqis. Radio Sawa's all news website also provides news and information in Arabic in print, in addition to live broadcasts of its regional streams. MBN's Arabic-speaking editorial staff generates much of the news from a facility in Springfield, Va. Along with Alhurra, Radio Sawa's Iraq-based staff works out of a bureau in Baghdad and has correspondents and stringers throughout the Middle East, as well as in Europe and the United States.

Sample programs of Radio Sawa include:

- **Al-Mintaqa Al-Hurra ("Free Zone"):** Radio Sawa's signature program on freedom and democracy issues in the Middle East, including the democratization process, elections, women's rights, human rights, freedom of the press, and other subjects. This is the only Arabic-language program broadcast in the region on freedom and democracy issues. It is broadcast for 20 minutes once a week.
- **Isaal Al-Alaim Al-Yaoum ("Ask The World Now")** – Uses broadcast quotes from senior administration policymakers—including President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary of State Kerry, and others—to answer questions about a range of policy issues pertinent to the overall U.S. relationship to the Middle East. Runs on all streams three times, for two-three minutes each time, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- **Radio Sawa Iraq: Shono Rayek ("What is Your Opinion"):** A hour-long daily call-in program on Radio Sawa's Iraq stream during evening drive time. The program's two Iraqi hosts field calls and social media interaction throughout the program. This program discusses topics that serve as the underlying causes of Daesh's existence.

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

Persian, Arabic

RFE/RL RADIO FARDA (PERSIAN)

FY 2014 \$6.967 million (\$10.857 million with program delivery)

Origin: 2002

Delivery Method: Radio (SW, MW, satellite), Television (satellite), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

Radio Original Programming: 140.56 hours/week

Radio Total Broadcast: 168 hours/week

Radio Farda is the only 24/7 Persian-language international broadcaster available to Iranian audiences via satellite, shortwave, medium wave/AM, and online or mobile apps. Programming provides professional news, analysis and reporting on events in and related to Iran, in addition to news from the Middle East and the world. It offers popular music, interviews with banned artists and performers, as well daily cultural news, features and programs. Free thinkers, intellectuals and the political opposition also discuss their views on various issues. An average of 11.5 million pages were viewed on Radio Farda's website during FY 2014, and its main Facebook page has 1.3 million fans. Despite an official Iranian government ban on the site, the need for a proxy to access it, and deliberately slow internet speeds, more than two-thirds of visitors to the website came from inside Iran in 2013. Iran has set up imitation websites to discredit Farda reporting, and has targeted Farda journalists in over 15 cases of online harassment. Sample programs include: "Pas Farda," an award-winning satire show with more than 200,000 Facebook fans, hosted by Farshid Manafi; the documentary series "30 Presidential Controversies," which examined Mahmud Ahmadinejad's eight years in office; and the documentary "Born in Prison," which tells the story of a young man born in prison to parents who were later executed. Radio Farda also airs a visualized "radio-on-TV" version of its morning news magazine "Breakfast with News" at 7:00 in Iran on VOA Persian's satellite channels as well as Farda's own satellite channel. Farda expanded its television production in 2015 with seven 5-minute newscasts that run at the top of the hour from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Iran, and is preparing to launch a 15-minute midday news magazine.

RFE/RL RADIO FREE IRAQ* (ARABIC)

FY 2014 \$2.089 million (\$2.119 million with program delivery)

Origin: 1998

Delivery Method: Radio (FM, AM, satellite), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

Radio Original Programming: 36 hours/week

Radio Total Broadcasting: 98 hours/week

**On August 1, 2015 Radio Free Iraq was merged with MBN's Radio Sawa Iraq service.*

Radio Free Iraq (RFI) leads local Iraqi media in live coverage of important events such as local and national elections, the ISIL insurgency and anti-government protests. It provides news and analysis, fosters informed debate of issues that are not otherwise covered, and reports on cultural and social issues other Iraqi media often ignore, such as discrimination, honor killings, domestic violence and corruption. CNN, Reuters, Vice News and other respected international media outlets have featured Radio Free Iraq video reporting as part of their coverage of the restive region. The tone of analysis and discussion is constructive and engaged in furthering debate through promoting tolerance and civic activity, covering the local and national perspectives, and providing regional and international context. Coverage of civil society initiatives and the activities of local NGOs helps to distinguish RFI from local media outlets. RFI's weekly program "Human Rights in Iraq" is the first of its kind not only in Iraq but in the region. Its content encourages a constructive search for solutions.

VOICE OF AMERICA

Persian, Kurdish

VOA PERSIAN SERVICE

FY 2014 \$15.133 million (\$19.821 million with program delivery)

Origin: 1979, (also 1942-1945; 1949-1960; and 1964-1966). Became a TV network in 2007.

Delivery Method: Satellite Television, Satellite Radio,* Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

Radio Original Programming: 14 hours/week*

Radio Total Broadcast: 14 hours/week*

Television Original Programming: 54.5 hours/week (reduced to 38.9 hours/week in FY2015)

Television Total Broadcast: 168 hours/week

*Note: Satellite radio broadcasts were dropped in FY 2015.

The VOA Persian Service provides for direct communication via television with the people of Iran, who have limited access to free media. BBG research shows that 24 percent of the adult population in Iran watches VOA Persian weekly for coverage of American, Iranian, and international developments. Programs can be accessed on direct-to-home satellite, streaming sites, radio and a host of social media sites. VOA Persian maintains a multimedia website with text, audio, video, live streaming, reporters' and TV host's blogs; YouTube Channel with 36.8 million total views; and social media presence with 2.6 million followers (Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Instagram). VOA Persian highlights U.S. policies, critical issues within Iran, including human rights and democracy, in addition to featuring Iranian achievements in the arts, culture, science and academics. The service also reports on U.S. values, culture and society to deliver a comprehensive view of life in America. Sample programs include "Early News & Late News," which features top stories from around the world; "NewsHour," a flagship news program that delves into the top stories of the day; "Straight Talk," which is an audience engagement show driven by social media; and "Tablet," a youthful, energetic show that originates from VOA's New York City bureau, and focuses on cultural and social issues involving young people in Iran and the United States.

VOA KURDISH SERVICE

FY 2014 \$1.642 million (\$1.6351.738 million with program delivery)

Origin: 1992

Delivery Method: Radio (SW, AM, FM, television), Website and Mobile Site, Social Media

Radio Original Programming: 14 hours/week

Radio Total Broadcast: 21 hours/week*

TV Original Programming: 1 hour/week

TV Total Broadcast: 1 hour/week*

*Note: In FY 2016, broadcast times will increase with the affiliate partnership with Kurdish broadcaster NRT.

The VOA Kurdish Service's primary target audience is Iraqi Kurds, but it also produces special programming relevant to Kurdish speaking populations in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Eurasia and the approximately one million Kurds in Europe and North America. The Kurdish Service has expanded its staffing in Washington and stringer network in the region in order to focus on extremism, ISIL activities and U.S. policies toward the region and ISIL. BBG research in 2014 shows that the weekly audience reach among Iraqi Kurds is 14.9 percent. FM affiliates in Arbil, Sulaimania, Kirkuk, Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra broadcast VOA content and video reports are streamed on its website. It is the only international broadcaster that speaks to the Kurds of the Middle East in their main dialects, Sorani and Kurmanji. It promotes the Kurdish language that has been neglected in the Kurdish-speaking regions and offers regional and international news coverage, interviews with experts and newsmakers, stringer reports, panel discussions with Kurds in the greater Middle East and in the diaspora, and call-in shows that link listeners with guests who discuss topics of interest. The shows also include daily sports news and press reviews from U.S., regional, and international newspapers. Sample programs include "Hello Washington," an hour-long weekly current affairs program with expert guests taking calls from the Middle East and other areas of the world; "Kurd Connection," a 15-minute television/web program which includes a roundup of news-related material and features of interest to the Kurdish region, and which is expanding to twice weekly, live broadcast on NRT, one of Kurdistan's premier television networks; "Smart Living," a three- to four-minute television/web program including health, new technology, women and lifestyle news; and "Social Media," a 5-minute television/web program which discusses the various social media websites including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

COUNTRY PROFILES

NEAR EAST ASIA REGION COUNTRY BY COUNTRY PROFILES

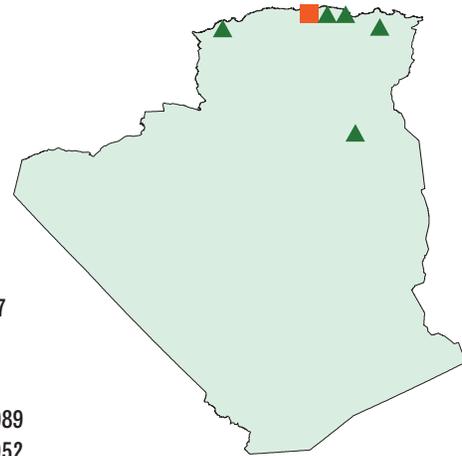
Algeria

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 2381740
 Population: 39928947
 Below 24 yrs. old: 45.80%
 Refugee population: 94150
 Urban population: 70%
 GDP/capita: \$5,361
 Unemployment: 10%
 Below poverty line: 23% (2006)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

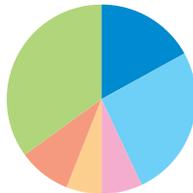
FH Media Freedom: **Partly Free**
 Internet users/100 people:
 Mobile phones/100 people: 101
 Literacy: (2006) 73% (F: 64%, M:81%)
 Avg. years of education: 14 (F: 14, M: 12)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$612,426 FY14 ACTUAL: \$689,956 FY15 PLANNED: \$663,497

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$154,089
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$96,952
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$72,188
American Spaces (not centers)	\$70,618
Other	\$62,393

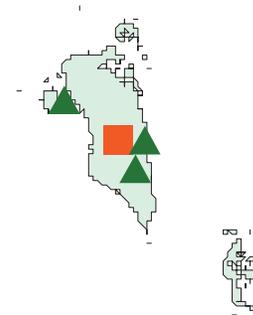
Bahrain

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 760
 Population: 1344111
 Below 24 yrs. old: 35.60%
 Refugee population: 294
 Urban population: 89%
 GDP/capita: \$25,198
 Unemployment: 7%
 Below poverty line: NA% ()

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

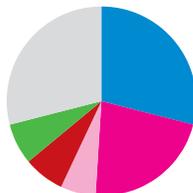
FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**
 Internet users/100 people: 90
 Mobile phones/100 people: 166
 Literacy: (2010) 95% (F: 92%, M:96%)
 Avg. years of education: (F:, M:)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$654,170 FY14 ACTUAL: \$686,916 FY15 PLANNED: \$700,541

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$160,944
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$92,169
Alumni Outreach	\$89,700
Other	\$81,007
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$51,477

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

Map Key

■ Embassy ● Consulate
▲ American Space

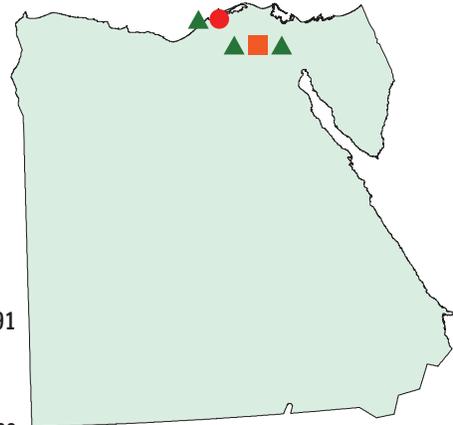
Egypt

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 995450
 Population: 83386739
 Below 24 yrs. old: 49.90%
 Refugee population: 230086
 Urban population: 43%
 GDP/capita: \$3,436
 Unemployment: 13%
 Below poverty line: 25% (2011)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

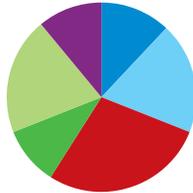
FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**
 Internet users/100 people: 49.56
 Mobile phones/100 people: 122
 Literacy: (2012) 74% (F: 66%, M:82%)
 Avg. years of education: 13 (F: 13, M: 13)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$2,565,128 FY14 ACTUAL: \$2,702,563 FY15 PLANNED: \$2,705,491

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$1,404,360
Media/Press Activities	\$150,796
Books & Publications	\$141,226
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$137,122
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$113,760

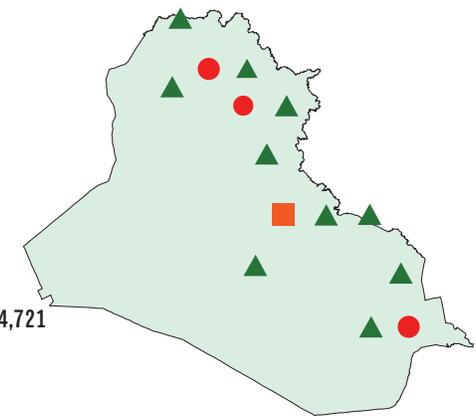
Iraq

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 434320
 Population: 34278364
 Below 24 yrs. old: 56.30%
 Refugee population: 246298
 Urban population: 69%
 GDP/capita: \$6,433
 Unemployment: 16%
 Below poverty line: 25% (2008)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: **Not Free**
 Internet users/100 people: 9.2
 Mobile phones/100 people: 96
 Literacy: (2012) 79% (F: 72%, M:86%)
 Avg. years of education: 10 (F: 9, M: 11)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$10,713,000 FY14 ACTUAL: \$10,713,000* FY15 PLANNED: \$10,884,721

*Data provided by NEA Bureau. Includes Economic Support Funds.

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

Supplementing ECA Programs	\$347,211
Media/Press Activities	\$230,696
Post-Generated Exchanges	\$184,954
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$112,945
Educational Advising & Promoting Study in the U.S.	\$82,498

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

Map Key

■ Embassy ● Consulate
▲ American Space

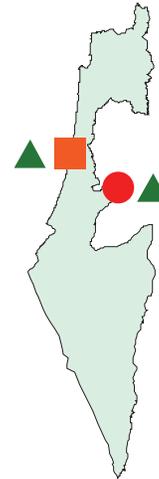
Israel

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 21640
 Population: 8215300
 Below 24 yrs. old: 42.80%
 Refugee population: 48325
 Urban population: 92%
 GDP/capita: \$37,032
 Unemployment: 6%
 Below poverty line: 21% (2012)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Free
 Internet users/100 people: 70.8
 Mobile phones/100 people: 123
 Literacy: (2011) 98% (F: 97%, M: 99%)
 Avg. years of education: 16 (F: 16, M: 15)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$4,162,260 FY14 ACTUAL: \$4,242,046 FY15 PLANNED: \$3,800,663

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$718,679
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$596,835
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$523,662
Media/Press Activities	\$428,526
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$400,276

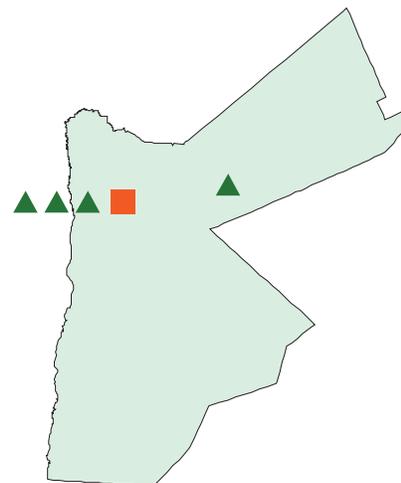
Jordan

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 88780
 Population: 6607000
 Below 24 yrs. old: 56.20%
 Refugee population: 2712888
 Urban population: 83%
 GDP/capita: \$5,423
 Unemployment: 13%
 Below poverty line: 14% (2002)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 44.2
 Mobile phones/100 people: 142
 Literacy: (2012) 98% (F: 97%, M: 98%)
 Avg. years of education: 13 (F: 14, M: 13)



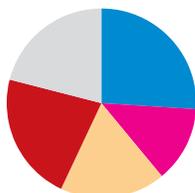
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,342,501 FY14 ACTUAL: \$2,068,571 FY15 PLANNED: \$965,500

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

American Spaces (not centers)	\$805,712
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$378,662
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$242,767
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$135,795
Media/Press Activities	\$125,911



Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

Map Key

■ Embassy ● Consulate
▲ American Space

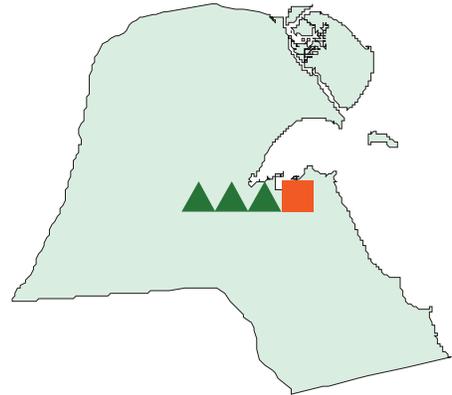
Kuwait

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 17820
 Population: 3479371
 Below 24 yrs. old: 40.70%
 Refugee population: 635
 Urban population: 98%
 GDP/capita: \$52,196
 Unemployment: 3%
 Below poverty line: NA% ()

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Partly Free
 Internet users/100 people: 75.46
 Mobile phones/100 people: 190
 Literacy: (2012) 96% (F: 95%, M: 96%)
 Avg. years of education: 15 (F: 15, M: 14)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$655,090 FY14 ACTUAL: \$690,599 FY15 PLANNED: \$681,654

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Educational Advising & Promoting Study in the U.S.	\$82,783
Other	\$68,621
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$65,294
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$56,768
Digital Outreach	\$51,552

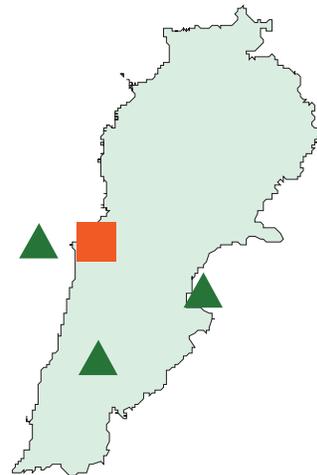
Lebanon

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 10230
 Population: 4510301
 Below 24 yrs. old: 42.40%
 Refugee population: 447328
 Urban population: 88%
 GDP/capita: \$10,139
 Unemployment: 7%
 Below poverty line: 29% (2004)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

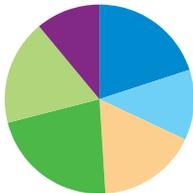
FH Media Freedom: Partly Free
 Internet users/100 people: 70.5
 Mobile phones/100 people: 81
 Literacy: (2007) 90% (F: 86%, M: 93%)
 Avg. years of education: 13 (F: 13, M: 13)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,559,666 FY14 ACTUAL: \$1,492,412 FY15 PLANNED: \$1,042,889

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$1,056,410
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$133,012
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$60,151
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$49,966
Other	\$38,879

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

Map Key

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▲ American Space

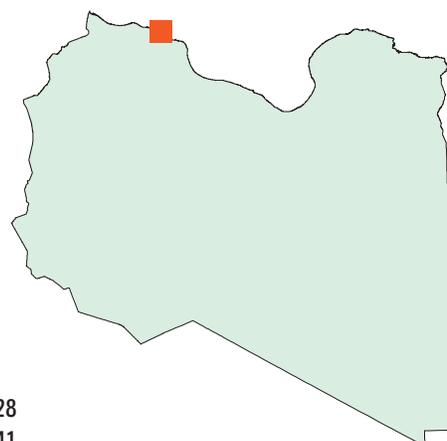
Libya

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 1759540
 Population: 6253452
 Below 24 yrs. old: 45.10%
 Refugee population: 25561
 Urban population: 78%
 GDP/capita: \$6,575
 Unemployment: 20%
 Below poverty line: 33% (estimated)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

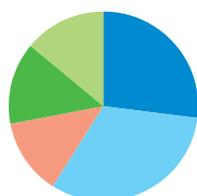
FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 16.5
 Mobile phones/100 people: 165
 Literacy: (2012) 90% (F: 84%, M:96%)
 Avg. years of education: 16 (F: 16, M: 16)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$507,235 FY14 ACTUAL: \$330,517 FY15 PLANNED: \$303,044

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$81,128
Digital Outreach	\$39,341
Alumni Outreach	\$32,312
Media/Press Activities	\$32,023
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$28,082

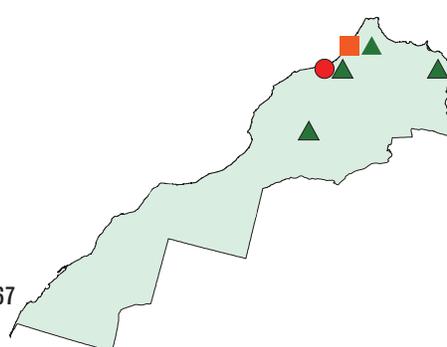
Morocco

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 446300
 Population: 33492909
 Below 24 yrs. old: 44.40%
 Refugee population: 1470
 Urban population: 60%
 GDP/capita: \$3,140
 Unemployment: 9%
 Below poverty line: 15% (2007)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

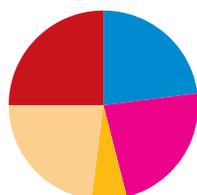
FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 56
 Mobile phones/100 people: 129
 Literacy: (2011) 67% (F: 58%, M:76%)
 Avg. years of education: 11 (F: 11, M: 12)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,995,103 FY14 ACTUAL: \$2,159,958 FY15 PLANNED: \$2,007,467

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$548,779
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$365,524
Other	\$223,200
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$207,160
Media/Press Activities	\$168,911

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
- Education
- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

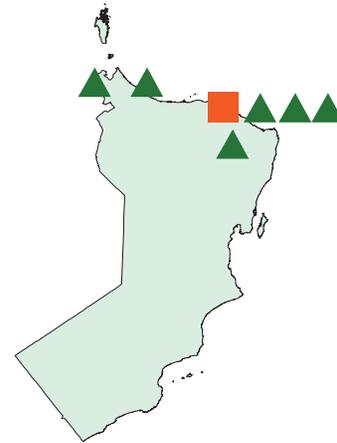
Oman

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 309500
 Population: 3926492
 Below 24 yrs. old: 50.30%
 Refugee population: 138
 Urban population: 77%
 GDP/capita: \$20,832
 Unemployment: 8%
 Below poverty line: NA% ()

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

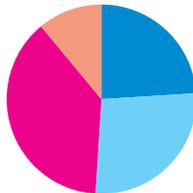
FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 66.45
 Mobile phones/100 people: 155
 Literacy: (2010) 87% (F: 82%, M:90%)
 Avg. years of education: 14 (F: 14, M: 13)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$476,783 FY14 ACTUAL: \$456,752 FY15 PLANNED: \$462,624

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$105,237
Public-Private Partnerships	\$81,133
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$39,853
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$35,441
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$35,162

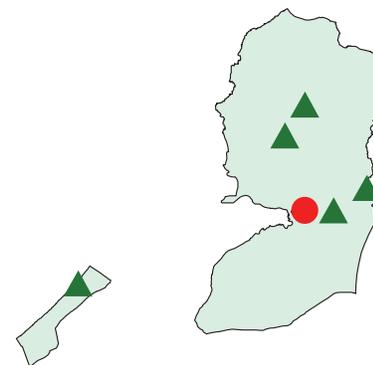
Palestinian Territories

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.):
 Population: 4294682
 Below 24 yrs. old: 55.40%
 Refugee population: 1994493
 Urban population: 75%
 GDP/capita: \$2,966
 Unemployment: 23%
 Below poverty line: 18% (2011)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 46.6
 Mobile phones/100 people: 74
 Literacy: (2012) 96% (F: 94%, M:98%)
 Avg. years of education: (F:, M:)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$3,446,156 FY14 ACTUAL: \$3,757,841 FY15 PLANNED: \$2,882,973

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$1,130,879
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$599,624
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$441,151
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$250,447
Media/Press Activities	\$212,360

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
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Map Key

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▲ American Space

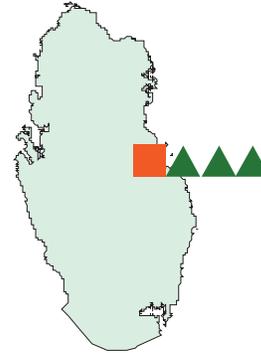
Qatar

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 11610
 Population: 2267916
 Below 24 yrs. old: 25.90%
 Refugee population: 130
 Urban population: 99%
 GDP/capita: \$93,397
 Unemployment: 1%
 Below poverty line: N/A

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

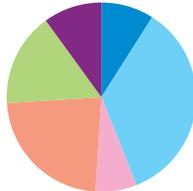
FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 85.3
 Mobile phones/100 people: 153
 Literacy: (2012) 97% (F: 96%, M: 97%)
 Avg. years of education: 14 (F: 14, M: 14)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$855,095 FY14 ACTUAL: \$948,776 FY15 PLANNED: \$842,522

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$130,253
Media/Press Activities	\$111,654
Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$109,769
American Spaces (not centers)	\$108,532
Public-Private Partnerships	\$98,276

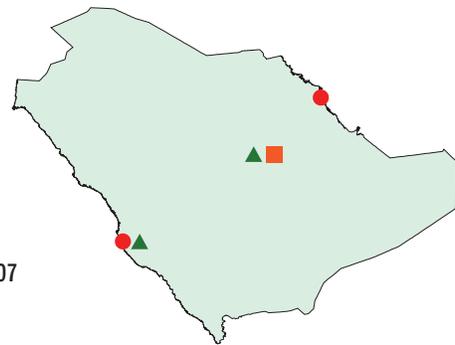
Saudi Arabia

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 2149690
 Population: 29369428
 Below 24 yrs. old: 46.90%
 Refugee population: 559
 Urban population: 83%
 GDP/capita: \$25,409
 Unemployment: 6%
 Below poverty line: N/A

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 60.5
 Mobile phones/100 people: 184
 Literacy: (2013) 94% (F: 91%, M: 97%)
 Avg. years of education: 16 (F: 16, M: 15)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,992,987 FY14 ACTUAL: \$2,053,954 FY15 PLANNED: \$2,156,707

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$564,239
Post-Generated Exchanges	\$416,620
Educational Advising & Promoting Study in the U.S.	\$244,554
Digital Outreach	\$134,797
Alumni Outreach	\$110,587

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
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- Economics
- Science
- Military
- CVE
- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

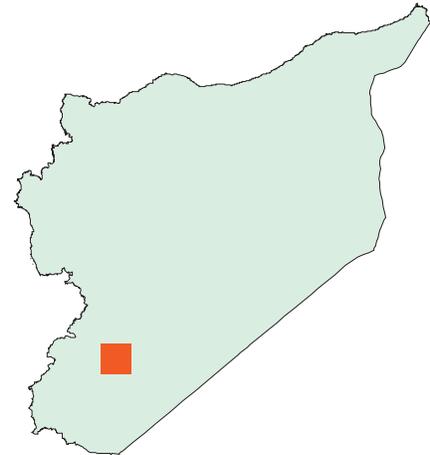
Syria

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 183630
 Population: 23300738
 Below 24 yrs. old: 53.30%
 Refugee population: 517255
 Urban population: 57%
 GDP/capita: \$2,066
 Unemployment: 11%
 Below poverty line: 12% (2006)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

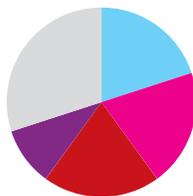
FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 26.2
 Mobile phones/100 people: 56
 Literacy: (2012) 85% (F: 79%, M: 91%)
 Avg. years of education: 12 (F: 12, M: 12)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$280,998 FY14 ACTUAL: \$214,051 FY15 PLANNED: \$577,167

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

VIP Visits (Press Support)	\$24,425
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$22,298
Alumni Outreach	\$20,202
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs Programs	\$18,728
Digital Outreach	\$15,725

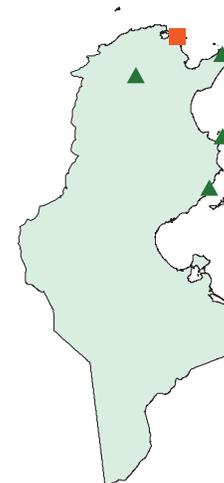
Tunisia

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 155360
 Population: 10996600
 Below 24 yrs. old: 39.00%
 Refugee population: 730
 Urban population: 67%
 GDP/capita: \$4,317
 Unemployment: 13%
 Below poverty line: 4% (2005)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Partly Free
 Internet users/100 people: 43.8
 Mobile phones/100 people: 116
 Literacy: (2011) 80% (F: 72%, M: 88%)
 Avg. years of education: 15 (F: 15, M: 14)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$930,808 FY14 ACTUAL: \$898,345 FY15 PLANNED: \$881,574

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

Educational Initiatives (not including English Language programs)	\$307,028
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$81,848
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$80,193
Other	\$69,893
American Centers	\$45,326

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

■ Culture ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Science ■ Military ■ CVE
■ Democracy ■ Civil Society ■ Women ■ Youth ■ Religious ■ Other

Map Key

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▲ American Space

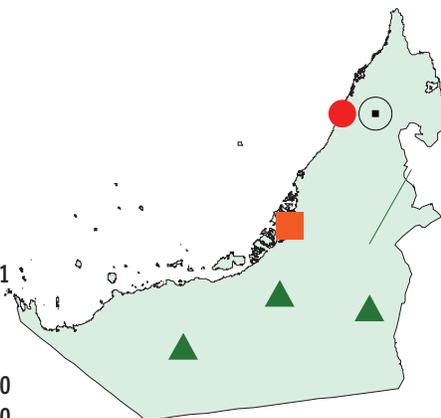
United Arab Emirates

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 83600
 Population: 9445624
 Below 24 yrs. old:
 Refugee population: 603
 Urban population: 85%
 GDP/capita: \$42,522
 Unemployment: 4%
 Below poverty line: 20% (2013)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 88
 Mobile phones/100 people: 172
 Literacy: (2005) 90% (F: 91%, M: 89%)
 Avg. years of education: (F: , M:)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,630,585 FY14 ACTUAL: \$1,471,583 FY15 PLANNED: \$2,187,861

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$397,120
Media/Press Activities	\$383,650
Educational Advising & Promoting	\$101,339
Study in the U.S.	
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$101,212
Supplementing ECA Programs	\$85,091

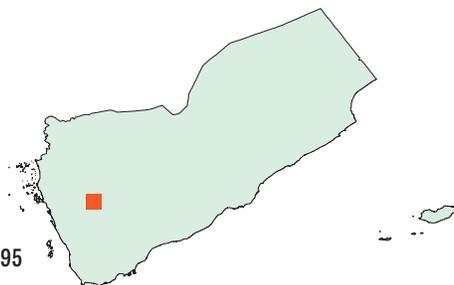
Yemen

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area (sq. km.): 527970
 Population: 24968508
 Below 24 yrs. old: 62.80%
 Refugee population: 241288
 Urban population: 34%
 GDP/capita: \$1,473
 Unemployment: 17%
 Below poverty line: 54% (2014)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Not Free
 Internet users/100 people: 20
 Mobile phones/100 people: 69
 Literacy: (2012) 66% (F: 50%, M: 83%)
 Avg. years of education: 9 (F: 8, M: 11)



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$1,389,403 FY14 ACTUAL: \$1,140,940 FY15 PLANNED: \$1,209,895

Total PD Spending by Theme

Top Spending by Activity

Other	\$444,671
Support for Mission Initiatives	\$141,658
Media/Press Activities	\$126,275
Support for English Language	\$106,606
Teaching/Learning	
Supplementing Bureau of Public Affairs	\$53,574
Programs	

Piechart Key: PD Spending by Theme

- Culture
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- Democracy
- Civil Society
- Women
- Youth
- Religious
- Other

Map Key

- Embassy
- Consulate
- ▲ American Space

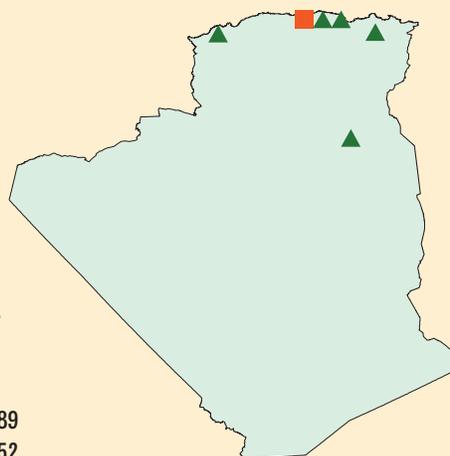
SPOTLIGHT COUNTRY: ALGERIA

DEMOGRAPHICS

Geographic area: 2381740 sq. km.
 Population: 39,928,947
 Below 24 yrs. old: 45.80%
 Refugee population: 94150
 Urban population: 70%
 GDP/capita: \$5,361
 Unemployment: 10%
 Below poverty line: 23% (2006)

COMMUNICATIONS AND LITERACY

FH Media Freedom: Partly Free
 Internet users/100 people:
 Mobile phones/100 people: 101
 Literacy: (2006) 73% (F: 64%, M:81%)
 Avg. years of education: 14 (F: 14, M: 12)



2015: 12

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SPENDING

TOTALS FY13 ACTUAL: \$612,426 FY14 ACTUAL: \$689,956 FY15 PLANNED: \$663,497

Total PD Spending by Theme



Top Spending by Activity

Support for Mission Initiatives	\$154,089
Support for English Language Teaching/Learning	\$96,952
Cultural Programs (Post Generated)	\$72,188
American Spaces (not centers)	\$70,618
Other	\$62,393

RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASE THE MISSION'S BASE BUDGET: The base PD budget for Algeria should be increased closer to the median of \$1.4 million in worldwide PD spending to account for the enormous demand for engagement with the United States and for English-language education, which provides a vehicle for messages about liberal democratic principles about countering violent extremism.

HIGHLIGHT AMERICAN SPACES: Given its new and welcome prioritization from Washington as a "top-tier" space, the Information Resource Center in Algiers should be receiving more funding and support for program development. The mission should examine how to best use this increase in funding to expand the IRCs reach throughout the country through other American Spaces.

INCREASE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FELLOWS FROM ONE TO FOUR: With the enormous demand for English-language in Algeria and the restrictive travel environment that impedes embassy staff's mobility, the number of English Language Fellows should increase from one to four.

ADD LOCAL MEDIA SPECIALISTS TO PAS: The Public Affairs Section at the U.S. embassy in Algeria has a small team of roughly 17 people, which will likely grow to 19 by 2016 with the arrival of an Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer and an Alumni Coordinator. The PAS needs two additional local media specialists to ensure that the section has the bandwidth to engage with print, broadcast and social media simultaneously.

OVERVIEW

With nearly 40 million citizens, a median age of 27, the largest landmass on the continent of Africa, and an extraordinarily high demand for English-language instruction, Algeria provides prime opportunity to expand U.S. public diplomacy programs in a critical region for U.S. national security. The Public Affairs Section in Algeria has been working on limited resources. Its base budget at roughly \$600,000 a year is the third smallest at any functioning U.S. mission in the Near East Asia region, followed only by the missions in Bahrain and Oman, both of which have significantly smaller populations. Yet ACPD found during its May 2015 visit that the section has been able to do extraordinary work that merits more attention and resources to target Algerian youth who are eager to connect with the United States.

The U.S. mission in Algeria works to support the country's regional objectives to bring security to the region, especially in neighboring Mali and Libya, and to eliminate terrorist safe havens in Northern Africa. Algeria has become an ally in global counterterrorism and is an eager leader in countering violent extremism activities. Once defined by its "dark decade" of the 1990s, Algeria has made progress as a democracy, although its statist economy and lack of liberal institutions keep many Algerians isolated from international financial, education, and communications networks. Algerians are not very familiar with the United States, but the youth especially are more open to U.S. values and PD programs that advance foreign policy goals.

The Public Affairs Section is appropriately responding to the high demand for English-language to connect with Algerian youth, especially disadvantaged youth who may be targets for violent extremist activities. It has built a robust platform in its IRC to cultivate and

maintain relationships with Algerians through a variety of programs, despite the IRC being based inside the U.S. embassy compound. Given that much of the U.S. mission's focus is on people, and the stifling bureaucracy that can impede daily diplomatic interaction, ACPD recommends that the base budget for Algeria be increased closer to the median of \$1.4 million to account for the enormous demand for engagement with the United States and for English-language education, which provides a vehicle for messages about countering violent extremism and the principles of a liberal democracy.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GOALS

The U.S. mission has five core public diplomacy goals, which are closely connected to its mission strategic objectives related to countering terrorism and violent extremism, building closer bilateral commercial ties, and supporting civil society. First, build capacity of English language teaching in Algeria through teacher training programs and partner with the government of Algeria to strategically meet the high demand for English language teaching throughout the country. Second, counter violent extremism among Algerian youth by giving them constructive alternative activities and providing examples of alternative livelihoods. Third, provide Algerians with access to American expertise in the fields of education, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement, which could support Algeria's development as a liberal democratic society. Fourth, expand engagement with Algerians, particularly through electronic and social media. And fifth, support the professionalization of the Algerian news media. The target audience for most of these activities are youth, who, according to recent polls, have a more positive view of the United States than older generations.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

The PAS's actual funds spent in FY 2014 were \$689,955, but its base budget was \$495,878, which meant that the post applied regularly for supplemental funding. While we salute the creativity of the mission to acquire these funds, we acknowledge that the applications take up a great amount of administrative time that could be better used in actually engaging Algerian people. This engagement takes an especially long time in Algeria, as it is difficult for embassy staff to travel throughout the country and to coordinate activities with the Algerian government, which communicates primarily by diplomatic note and has a long response time.

The Public Affairs Section at the U.S. embassy in Algeria has a small team of roughly 17 people. This includes a core team of a Public Affairs Officer, Information Officer and Cultural Affairs Officer, and then 14 local staff and non-Foreign Service staff. A new Assistant

Cultural Affairs Officer will arrive at post in September and there is a vacancy for an Alumni Coordinator. The PAS needs two additional local media specialists to ensure that the section has the bandwidth to engage with print, broadcast and social media simultaneously.

Information Programs: Algeria's four languages—French, Arabic, Djerid and Berber—are reflected on the news media, which remains largely under state control. There are a number of private television stations that broadcast from offshore locations via satellite. The government controls all radio, including several national stations and dozens of local radio stations. Print press is more robust but self-censorship is a norm since the government maintains the power to close news agencies if it disapproves of its reportage and it controls advertising dollars. According to the Algerian government's Post and Telecommunications Regulation Authority (ARPT) at least 4% (1.6 million people) have Internet access, although this number is rapidly increasing. The PAS works to support the development of professional journalism, and has done so utilizing ECA programs such as IVLP, and through a unique partnership with the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Recognizing that short-term training for journalists and news media representatives does not replace a professional education, PAS is working with the university to establish a sister school relationship with the Algerian universities that have a School of Journalism. This initiative received super-funded approval from the "R Priority Fund" in FY 2014.

Another major public diplomacy goal is to engage with Algerians via social media. Starting in 2014, the embassy focused its social media messages on U.S. foreign policy issues and saw its Facebook followers increased from 130,000 to 177,000. The mission also noted an increase in the quality of the engagement, so that followers can learn more about U.S. issues. The mission recognizes that far more can be done to increase its engagement with the Algerian public through social media and, as mentioned, seeks additional LES staff to focus on this critical goal.

Educational and Cultural Programs: The small PAS facilitates 40 ECA and Washington-oriented programs, including the Middle East Partnership Initiative. There is a large imbalance in flows of Algerians that go to the United States vs. Americans who go to Algeria. Between FY 2013 and FY 2015, roughly 15 Americans traveled to Algeria on U.S. sponsored educational programs, while nearly 450 Algerians have come to the United States on IVLP, SUSI, TechWomen, Fulbright, and other programs. Half of the programs focus on youth and leadership development. There is no Fulbright Board in Algeria, meaning that the Fulbright programs are directly administered through the U.S. mission, in addition to the roughly 39 other programs.

EducationUSA is a challenge for the PAS given the

free higher education system in Algeria and the bureaucratic hurdles limiting timely recognition of American university degrees by the Algerian government. While PAS is working through its American Spaces to increase the number of Algerians studying in the United States, the high cost of study in the United States, coupled with the uncertainty that their degrees would be merited in Algeria, means the trickle of Algerian college students will likely remain. Given these hurdles, PAS is strategically seeking to create one-semester and one-year “study abroad” partnerships, focusing on a “gap year” concept to help lower the bar to encourage more Algerians to study in the United States.

The mission has done some breakthrough programming using culture to further not only people-to-people relationships, but also to amplify key messages. In one extraordinary performance that was lauded by Algerian media, PAS Algiers reunited an Algerian orchestra of Jewish and Arab musicians who had not played together in Algeria since the Jewish musicians fled after the War of Independence. Any U.S.-embassy-supported performance includes a fusion of American and Algerian artists to show the strength of both cultures. Additionally, the mission has successfully encouraged significant cost-sharing with the Algerian government, whereby the Algerian government covers, at minimum, all in-country costs for U.S. performers participating in its many government-sponsored performing arts festivals. The government of Algeria also provides at no cost performance venues for visiting U.S. performers.

A space where PAS could use considerable help is through alumni engagement. Currently 55 percent of the alumni are women and there is a strong, sizable, and engaged core group of Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and PD exchange alumni around the country. The alumni ACPD met with were doing phenomenal things to promote the values and lessons they learned from their time in the United States, including sponsoring an English-language TEDx conference focused on women’s issues. Each year, PAS holds a fair about the 40 ECA programs so that potential recruits can learn about the programs from various alumni. It is critical to the success of PD efforts in Algeria that these alumni stay engaged in promoting and supporting travel, study, and work in the United States. While the alumni currently feel as if there is sufficient follow-through from the U.S. embassy, a full-time alumni coordinator is necessary in order to maintain these relationship. Currently, an American from the State Department’s Expanded Professional Associates Program (EPAP) is filling that role, which is critical.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION & COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Algerian youth are focused on economic stability, which plays into their high demand for English, the lingua franca of international business and the Internet,

which is their gateway to connect with the wider world after years of isolation. Since ECA recently doubled Algeria’s English Access Microscholarship Program through a pilot program, the U.S. mission in Algeria plans to reach more than 400 disadvantaged youth, ages 13 to 20, in English classes at 19 locations nationwide. World Learning organizes half of the programs. The embassy also partners with Berlitz on the Amel Project, which provides free intensive English-language summer school and enrichment programs to 200 economically disadvantaged high school students. It also partners on the Access program in Algiers and Oran. In 2014, the U.S. mission also launched five new “PLUS” schools, which build on the Access model by incorporating soft CVE components like diversity, civic engagement, and employability into the English language curriculum. Current programming levels should continue, if not be increased.

ACPD visited Access schools and found the students to be enthusiastic, grateful, and, given their penchant for Algeria’s four languages, quick to pick up English. With the Plus program especially, we found students using English to expand their critical thinking skills and to learn about liberal democratic values like transparency, pluralism, tolerance, debate and individual empowerment. Another strong benefit of the Access program is that it targets deeper into society than traditional PD programs and gives the non-elite opportunities to learn English. This makes them eligible to participate in other U.S. exchange programs and to stay connected to the U.S. mission in the future. The program has already proven its success, with Access alumni successfully applying to several exchange and other mission programs.

The U.S. mission has one English Language Fellow (ELF) who was officially assigned to the Ministry of Youth and Sport, but who, in her second year, focused the majority of her time teaching future English language teachers at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Algeria’s elite teaching institute. On her own volition, she also visits the Access sites in country to provide teacher training and to meet with students. While observing her volunteer book club, it was evident that she was working to satisfy a high demand for English language. PAS would benefit from at least four other ELF in the country, and ideally several more.

Last, the U.S. mission is working with seven Algerian government ministries (Foreign Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Vocational Technical Education, Communications, Youth and Religious Affairs) to build Algeria’s capacity for English language teaching. This is a long-term process, but it demonstrates the importance of public diplomacy programs to the bilateral relationship. There are a great deal of opportunities to expand the reach of these programs into the South and areas where there is the threat of violent extremism. Finally, there is enormous potential for promoting English language through television and radio programming, a need that VOA could potentially help fulfill.

AMERICAN SPACES

The IRC is co-located on the embassy compound and there are also American Corners at universities in Oran, Constantine and Ouargla. The IRC opened in 2011 and has more than 3,000 members. Since January 2014, the number of visitors has expanded from 300 to 1,000 a month. In the IRC is an EducationUSA advising center, staffed by a professional associate. IRC hosts roughly five programs a day, the majority of which are organized by volunteer members.

This IRC was the most well utilized one ACPD has visited in the last year and we applaud the recent decision to designate it as a tier-one space. It did receive IIP funds for a renovation, which included new furniture to provide maximum space for the growing audience, in addition to new eReaders. It provides important resources, both print and digital, that reach young professionals and youth-at-risk. Most importantly, the mission has created a safe place where Algerian youth can find their own voice and develop critical leadership and community engagement skills. It also delivers a platform for English-language education, studying in the United States, and accurate information about the United States. It could benefit from the Open Access Principles to ensure that the eager visitors have easier entry to the space and are able to use their portable devices.