



From: Broadcasting Board of Governors
Date: October 30, 2014
Subject: **Minutes of the BBG Meeting of October 30, 2014**

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) met today in the auditorium of the Cohen Building (BBG headquarters) in Washington, D.C. The meeting was open for public attendance as seating capacity allowed and for public observation via streaming on the BBG website.

The meeting was attended by the following Board members:

Chairman Jeffrey Shell
Governor Matthew Armstrong (via telephone)
Governor Ryan Crocker (via telephone)
Governor Michael Meehan
Governor Kenneth Weinstein
Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel

Other persons in attendance are listed at the end of these minutes.

The agenda of the meeting is set forth in Attachment 1.

The Chairman called the meeting to order and noted that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Act and streamed live over the Internet at the BBG website.

Chairman Shell noted that, in September, the Board had announced its intent to name Andy Lack as Chief Executive Officer of U.S. international media. The Chairman said that, while the details of Mr. Lack's appointment were still being finalized, the Board anticipates his attendance at the December 2014 Board meeting.

Before moving to Board business, the Chairman reported on the threats BBG journalists have faced since the last Board meeting. He noted that the BBG networks operate in media environments where authoritarian countries, struggling to control both information and their citizens, seek to censor objective voices and crack down on civil society, including independent press. He highlighted the following incidents: (1) In Azerbaijan, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) correspondent Khadija Ismayilova, according to her, was recently detained and charged with libel because of her reporting on corruption within the Azeri government and has been blocked from travelling outside the country; (2) In Crimea, RFE/RL journalists have repeatedly been harassed for their reporting on sensitive issues; (3) In Cuba, Radio/TV Marti contributors have been detained, and activists have been threatened for speaking with Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) reporters; (4) In China, police tried to intimidate Voice of America (VOA) correspondent Fred Wang with two hours of questioning, following his news report about Uyghurs; and (5) In the Middle East, journalists are being jailed under fabricated charges, ISIL is

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executing journalists, and Alhurra's Bashar Fahmi, who disappeared while reporting in Aleppo, Syria, has been missing for over two years.

The Chairman announced the recent launch of a new program that delivers news and information to Russian-language audiences to combat Russian media attempts to spread propaganda and misinformation. He also acknowledged that the BBG has been the only news source for people on mainland China to rely upon during the ongoing protests in Hong Kong. Lastly, he recognized VOA correspondents' efforts to report on the continuing Ebola crisis in Guinea and Liberia, and reiterated the Board's standing belief in the power of a free press. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked all BBG journalists for their commitment and dedicated efforts, despite the threats they continue to face throughout the course of their work.

Chairman Shell paid tribute to legendary journalist and former executive editor of The Washington Post, Ben Bradlee, who passed away on October 21, 2014.

Moving to Board business, the Chairman stated that the presence of five or more Governors satisfies the Board's quorum requirement, permitting the Board to conduct business based on majority vote, a quorum being present. He said that the Board had received by email materials for the consent agenda, and that he did not receive comments from any Governors.

Chairman Shell described the two items on the consent agenda for the Board's consideration: (1) Draft minutes of the August 13, 2014 Board meeting; and (2) Resolution proposing BBG meeting dates in 2015. He noted that one of the meetings will be held at the RFE/RL headquarters in Prague, so the date of that meeting may be amended. Governor Meehan clarified that BBG Committees will continue to meet in alternating months, though those dates have not been determined. There being no further comments, Chairman Shell made a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Governor Meehan seconded. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the consent agenda.

The Chairman shifted the discussion to the creation of a Special Committee on the Future of VOA. He noted that, in September, the Advisory Committee had considered two topics for a future special committee. The Advisory Committee then agreed to establish a Special Committee on the Future of VOA to undertake a comprehensive review of VOA as an element of U.S. international media. A draft resolution to establish such a special committee had been provided to the Board for its consideration, but upon receipt of several comments by VOA Director David Ensor, an amended resolution was then circulated again to the Board on October 29, 2014. At Chairman Shell's invitation, Governor Meehan expressed that he appreciates both versions of the resolution and hopes that the special committee will specifically consider the role of VOA, a "legacy organization," in the digital age. Chairman Shell noted that there is a clause in the resolution that states the special committee will assess VOA in the context of the other BBG networks and consider the regions or countries in which multiple BBG networks have a presence, in an attempt to determine the best approach or strategy in that region. Governor Armstrong commented that this special committee should focus on how to strengthen the VOA brand. Following comments from the Governors, Chairman Shell volunteered to be a member and proposed that Governor Armstrong would serve as Committee Chair. The Board voted to

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adopt the amended resolution to establish a Special Committee on Voice of America in the 21st Century with five (5) votes, while Governor Crocker abstained because he did not receive the amended resolution. Governors Meehan and Weinstein also volunteered to serve on the special committee.

Before allowing time for public comments, Chairman Shell acknowledged the departure of Director of Communications and External Affairs Lynne Weil. The Chairman, as well as Governors Armstrong and Meehan, thanked Ms. Weil for her service and wished her well in her next endeavor.

In accordance with the Board's prior protocol for allowing members of the public to speak at meetings, the Chairman invited Ann Noonan, Co-founder and Executive Director of Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting; Alan Heil, Public Diplomacy Council; Jingsheng Wei, Chairman of the Overseas Chinese Democracy Coalition; and Gregory Burns, AFSCME Local 1418 Union to address the Board for three minutes each.

Following public comment, Governor Meehan requested that the Special Committee on VOA in the 21st Century allow members of the public to participate in the committee's review process. He also suggested a response to Ann Noonan on the case of the 2009 reduction in force at OCB. Chairman Shell reaffirmed the Board's commitment to implement the arbitrator's award but acknowledged that the information is attorney-client privileged.

The Board took a short recess and reconvened for a panel discussion titled, "What's the Secret to Media Brand Loyalty? Storytelling in the Digital Age."

At the conclusion of the panel discussion, the Chairman thanked the panelists for their participation and noted that the next meeting of the plenary Board will be held on December 18, 2014. Chairman Shell then adjourned the meeting.

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

1. Adoption of Minutes of August 13, 2014. The Board adopted the minutes of the August 13, 2014 meeting of the plenary Board as set forth in Attachment 2.
2. Resolution Proposing BBG Meeting Dates in 2015. The Board adopted the resolution proposing BBG meeting dates in 2015 as set forth in Attachment 3.
3. Resolution Establishing a Special Committee on Voice of America in the 21st Century. Chairman Shell made a motion to adopt the amended resolution to establish a Special Committee on Voice of America in the 21st Century. Governor Weinstein seconded the motion. Governor Crocker abstained. The amended resolution was adopted by the Board as set forth in Attachment 4.

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Other Attendees:

The following persons were also present during all or part of the meeting: IBB Director of Global Communications and BBG Executive Director Suzie Carroll; IBB Director of Global Operations Andre Mendes; IBB Director of Global Strategy Robert Bole; General Counsel and Board Secretary Paul Kollmer-Dorsey; Director of Board Operations Oanh Tran; Director of Public Affairs Letitia King; Director of Communications and External Affairs Lynne Weil; Public Affairs Specialist Anastasia Kolobrodova; David Ensor, Director of the Voice of America; Carlos Garcia-Perez, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting; John Giambalvo, Interim Manager for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL); Nenad Pejic, RFE/RL Interim Manager; Libby Liu, President of Radio Free Asia; Brian Conniff, President of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks; and Dan Sreebny, Senior Advisor for BBG, Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs.

Approved:

Jeffrey Shell
Chairman

Witnessed:

Paul Kollmer-Dorsey
Board Secretary

Attachments:

1. Agenda for October 30, 2014 Meeting
2. Minutes of the August 13, 2014 Board Meeting
3. Resolution Proposing BBG Meeting Dates in 2015
4. Resolution Establishing a Special Committee on Voice of America in the 21st Century

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ATTACHMENT 1

BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS

October 2014 Meeting Agenda

(ALL MEETINGS ARE AT THE COHEN BUILDING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.)

Thursday, October 30

9:30 - 12:00 Broadcasting Board of Governors' Open Meeting (Cohen Auditorium, 1st Floor)

Chairman's Remarks

A. Consent Agenda

- Minutes of August 13, 2014 Meeting
- Resolution Proposing BBG Meeting Dates in 2015

B. Discussion Item - Resolution Establishing A Special Committee on the Future of VOA

C. Public Comments

10:00 - 10:15 Break

10:15 - 12:00 BBG Open Meeting Continued

D. Panel Discussion

What's the Secret to Media Brand Loyalty? Storytelling in the Digital Age

E. Other Items for Consideration at Next Board Meeting

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ATTACHMENT 2

From: Broadcasting Board of Governors
Date: August 13, 2014
Subject: **Minutes of the BBG Meeting of August 13, 2014**

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) met today at the BBG headquarters in Washington, D.C. The meeting was open for public attendance as seating capacity allowed and for public observation via streaming on the BBG website.

The meeting was attended by the following Board members:

Chairman Jeffrey Shell
Governor Matthew Armstrong
Governor Ryan Crocker
Governor Michael Meehan
Governor Kenneth Weinstein
Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel

Other persons in attendance are listed at the end of these minutes.

The agenda of the meeting is set forth in Attachment 1.

The Chairman called the meeting to order and noted that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Act and streamed live over the Internet at the BBG website.

Chairman Shell noted that the meeting will include a “deep dive” on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and that the RFE/RL presentation will be the fifth and final “deep dive” on the BBG’s networks, a process that began with VOA in December 2013. He added that, depending on the scheduling of a “deep dive” on the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), a “deep dive” on VOA would occur in December 2013 or February 2014, which then would start the process all over again. He said that the “deep dive” session is typically conducted at the network’s headquarters. Because RFE/RL headquarters is located in Prague, Czech Republic and the Board is unable to travel there this year, today’s meeting is being held at the Cohen Building in Washington, D.C. He added that the Board is committed to visit RFE/RL headquarters in Prague sometime next year. He acknowledged that earlier today the Board held a town hall meeting via video conference with RFE/RL employees both in Prague and D.C., where the Board remembered Dr. Al-Shammari, Baghdad Bureau Chief of RFE/RL’s Radio Free Iraq and recognized the 60th anniversary of RFE/RL’s Ukrainian Service, Radio Svoboda.

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Before moving to Board business, the Chairman reported on the threats against BBG journalists and repeated attempts to suppress their ability to report the news. He noted that this was a difficult time around the world for journalists, and as such, honoring the courage of BBG networks' reporters is a high priority for the Board.

Chairman Shell highlighted the following incidents: (1) In Iraq, Alhurra's correspondent, Maithem Al Shibani, suffered shrapnel injuries to his hand when he and an AP cameraman were embedded with an Iraqi military convoy when clashes broke out between the Iraq military and ISIS; (2) In Cuba, there have been a number of disturbing actions taken against citizen journalists who contribute to the *Martí*, including five reporters who frequently contribute to *Martí Noticias* were assaulted and contributing reporters to OCB's citizen journalism initiative *Reporta Cuba* also faced harassment and threats; (3) In Kazakhstan, RFE/RL's correspondent Orken Bissenov was detained for four days while reporting on a protest against Kazakhstan's entry into the Eurasian Economic Union; (4) In Crimea, the elderly mother of a stringer for RFE/RL Ukraine Service was harassed by Crimean police, who threatened that the FSB – Russia's security service – would retaliate against her son if he didn't stop writing "bad things," and another journalist of RFE/RL Ukrainian Service, Oleksiy Matsuka, received death threats for his reporting; (5) In Vietnam, VOA's reporter Reasey Poch was reporting on anti-Chinese riots and the officials forced him to falsify a confession of wrongdoing before he was allowed to leave the country; and (6) In South Sudan, a stringer for VOA's *South Sudan in Focus* program has been harassed by officials for his reporting on rebel activities and is now in hiding. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman condemned any violence, threats, and other attempts to silence or intimidate our journalists and called on governments worldwide to offer full protection to all working journalists and to cease interfering in reporting activities.

The Chairman noted an upcoming two-year anniversary of the disappearance of Alhurra's correspondent, Bashar Fahmi, who went missing in August 2012 while reporting in Aleppo, Syria, as well as the two-year anniversary of the disappearance of U.S. journalist, Austin Tice, who remains missing in Syria, along with approximately 25 other journalists. He called on anyone with information on the whereabouts of those missing journalists to come forward.

Chairman Shell paid tribute to VOA Greek Service, which aired its final broadcast on Monday, August 11, 2014. He noted that the VOA Greek Service was identified in the fiscal year 2014 budget for closure as part of the strategic cuts. He expressed the Board's appreciation for the Service's legacy, dating to World War II, of bringing unbiased news and information to people who had no other reliable news source. He noted that Governor Armstrong was able to meet with members of the Service after they recorded their final broadcast and to thank them for their critical work.

The Chairman stated that the presence of five or more Governors satisfies the Board's quorum requirement, permitting the Board to conduct business based on majority vote, a quorum being present. He said that the Board had received by email materials for the consent agenda, and that he did not receive comments from any Governors.

Chairman Shell described the two items on the consent agenda for the Board's consideration: (1) Draft minutes of the June 20, 2014 Board meeting; and (2) Resolution to change the BBG

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meeting date in October 2014. He said that the October 2014 meeting date was changed in order to accommodate the panelists who are scheduled to discuss at the October meeting on how they tell stories in order to connect with international audiences. There being no further comments, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel made a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Governor Crocker seconded. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the consent agenda.

The Chairman shifted the discussion to the 2014 Strategy Review that was completed in June and noted that the Office of Strategy and Development (OSD) had led a comprehensive review of how the BBG mission is carried out by the networks in each target country and region, taking into account input from language services, network management, IBB, and selected parties in the interagency, particularly U.S. Department of State. At the Chairman's invitation, Governor Armstrong and OSD Director Bruce Sherman gave an overview on the process, outcomes, and next steps. Governor Armstrong commented that the strategic review was a highly collaborative process and acknowledged the hard work of the networks, individual language services, OSD, and the Director of Global Strategy. Mr. Sherman gave a presentation highlighting the strategy review process which involved developing country and regional strategies within the BBG's overall strategic framework, identifying specific goals and targets set by the target market, and measuring performance based on research. The presentation included Ukraine and Venezuela as case studies for the development of country goals and targets. Governor Armstrong and Mr. Sherman closed by thanking everyone who participated in the review and their hard work, making it possible for a well-organized and collaborative process. Governor Meehan added that he also had participated in many of the sessions in person or by phone and congratulated the staff for the job well done.

Chairman Shell noted that in October 2013, the Board established a Special Committee on the Future of Shortwave Radio Broadcasting (the "Shortwave Committee") to undertake a comprehensive review of the efficacy of shortwave radio as a distribution platform for U.S. International Media, and that the Shortwave Committee has completed its work. He said that the Board often has to make difficult decisions about where to deploy agency resources, and that the Shortwave Committee's work of gathering information on the shortwave audience and the medium's effectiveness and broadcast costs, the Board is able to make well-informed decisions when contemplating the budget. At the Chairman's invitation, Governor Armstrong, who served as Chair of the Shortwave Committee, briefed on the Committee's findings and announced the availability of its final report on the BBG website for additional details. In the interest of time, Governor Armstrong spoke to the legacy of the platform and noted its continued importance in reaching audiences in regions where shortwave is the only reliable medium available. He highlighted the need for shortwave in critical regions, but also acknowledged the role of the Board to ensure that the BBG's resources are used responsibly and to be certain its networks are reaching audiences on the platforms they use. He noted that the Shortwave Committee's work was arguably the most in-depth, comprehensive, and inclusive analysis of shortwave that has been completed to date, evaluating shortwave as a platform to reach target audiences and developing a conceptual framework to support the continuation, or discontinuation, of shortwave broadcasts to specific markets. He stated that, while the intent from the outset was to focus on the audiences in individual markets, the Committee had sought input from across the agency,

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from Congress, U.S. Department of State and external stakeholders, to be better informed, and had the BBG's strategy team and networks look at specific markets and whether the target audiences rely on shortwave. There were two questions driving the Committee's work: Does the audience we are trying to reach rely on shortwave? And what, if any, are the opportunity costs of using shortwave to reach these audiences? Upon summarizing the Committee's findings, Governor Armstrong stated that the Committee recommends that the BBG take an aggressive and strategic approach to reduce or eliminate shortwave broadcasts where there is either minimal audience reach or the audience is not a target audience based on the BBG's support of U.S. foreign policy. He added that the Committee finds that shortwave continues to be a relevant and necessary platform in many places around the world such as North Korea, Burma, Tibet, China, Afghanistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, Cuba, and much of Africa, including but not limited to Sudan, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Guinea, the DRC, and Northern Nigeria. In closing, Governor Armstrong thanked the BBG leadership and staff, in particular Ashley Lancaster of the Board Operations staff, who worked hard on the report, as well as those outside the building who sent in their comments and those who sat down with the Committee to share their insights. Chairman Shell reiterated that the review was a difficult process but the final report has provided a roadmap for the Board, praised Governor Armstrong and the staff for their efforts, and dissolved the Special Committee on the Future of Shortwave Broadcasting upon its final report to the plenary Board per the BBG By-Laws. He said that the Advisory Committee will consider suggestions for specific issues of strategic interest that could be the focus of potential new Special Committees.

Before allowing time for public comments, Chairman Shell announced that the Board had recently approved the appointment of Rob Bole as the Director of Global Strategy and commended Director of Global Operations Andre Mendes on the budget briefing and Director of Communications Suzie Carroll for the support she provided to the Board as well as the communications efforts on the Hill. The Chairman praised and Governor Armstrong echoed the great work by the Interim Management Team.

In accordance with the Board's prior protocol for allowing members of the public to speak at meetings, the Chairman invited Ann Noonan, Co-founder and Executive Director of Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting, and Jim Malone, National Correspondent for VOA's Central Newsroom, to address the Board for three minutes.

The Board took a short recess and reconvened for an overview of RFE/RL led by Interim Managers for RFE/RL, John Giambalvo and Nenad Pejic.

At the conclusion of the RFE/RL overview, the Chairman noted that he will adjourn the meeting momentarily due to the imminent departure of some Governors. The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the plenary Board will be held on October 30, 2014, and then adjourned the meeting.

The Board then took a brief recess and reconvened for a discussion with Ben Rhodes, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Speechwriting. The Broadcasting Board of Governors agreed to the following decision elements (all decisions were adopted by a unanimous vote unless otherwise indicated):

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1. Adoption of Minutes of June 20, 2014. The Board adopted the minutes of the June 20, 2014 meeting of the plenary Board as set forth in Attachment 2.
2. Resolution Changing the BBG Meeting Date in October 2014. The Board adopted the resolution to change the BBG meeting date in October 2014 as set forth in Attachment 3.

Other Attendees:

The following persons were also present during all or part of the meeting: IBB Director of Global Communications and BBG Executive Director Suzie Carroll; IBB Director of Global Operations Andre Mendes; General Counsel and Board Secretary Paul Kollmer-Dorsey; Director of Board Operations Oanh Tran; IBB Chief of Staff Marie Lennon; IBB Deputy Director Jeff Trimble; IBB Director of Strategy and Development Bruce Sherman; Board Operations and Policy Adviser Ashley Lancaster; Director of Public Affairs Letitia King; Public Affairs Specialist Anastasia Kolobrodova; IBB Director of the Office of Civil Rights Delia Johnson; Barbara Brady, Voice of America (VOA) Chief of Staff; Carlos Garcia-Perez, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting; John Giambalvo, Interim Manager for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL); Nenad Pejic, RFE/RL Interim Manager; Ben Herman, RFE/RL Acting General Counsel; Martins Zvaners, RFE/RL Deputy Director of Communications & External Relations; Christine Fetzko, RFE/RL Director of Corporate Strategy and Operations; Stephanie Schmidt, RFE/RL Budget Officer; Libby Liu, President of Radio Free Asia (RFA); Bernadette Burns, RFA General Counsel; Brian Conniff, President of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks; Dan Sreebny, Senior Advisor for BBG, Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs; Robert Torres, Coordinator for International Broadcasting, Office of Inspector General; Bryant Jones, Examiner, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Jessica Menter, OMB Deputy Associate Director for Legislative Affairs, Senate; and Brett Bruen, Director of Global Engagement, National Security Council.

Approved:

Jeffrey Shell
Chairman

Witnessed:

Paul Kollmer-Dorsey
Board Secretary

Attachments:

1. Agenda for August 13, 2014 Meeting
2. Minutes of the June 20, 2014 Board Meeting
3. Resolution for Changing the BBG Meeting Date in October 2014

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ATTACHMENT 3

RESOLUTION PROPOSING BBG MEETING DATES IN 2015 (ALL MEETINGS ARE AT THE COHEN BUILDING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.)

February 18 (Wednesday)¹

April 29 (Wednesday)

June 25 (Thursday)

August 20 (Thursday)

October 21 (Wednesday)

December 17 (Thursday)

¹ February Board meeting will be held at the headquarters of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks in Springfield, VA.

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ATTACHMENT 4

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON VOICE OF AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

OCTOBER 30, 2014

WHEREAS, the Voice of America (VOA) has 45 language services and a weekly global audience of 165 million people, the largest of any Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)-funded entity;

WHEREAS, the United States International Broadcasting Act of 1994 (“the Act”) incorporates the VOA Charter which provides for VOA to (i) serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news; (ii) present U.S. policy and a responsible discussion thereof; and (iii) represent America to the world;

WHEREAS, the roles of VOA and the other U.S. international media (USIM) in supporting United States foreign policy are becoming increasingly important in globalized media markets and markets that are increasingly censored;

WHEREAS, VOA and the other U.S. international media in supporting United States foreign policy broadcast to some of the same markets, and that overlap is a source of ongoing inquiry within and outside of BBG;

WHEREAS, the rapid growth of both public and private sector international and local media, as well as the growth of digital media, have dramatically changed the competitive environment in which the VOA operates; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to undertake a comprehensive review on the future roles for Voice of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Broadcasting Board of Governors hereby establishes a Special Committee on the Future of Voice of America (the “VOA Committee”). The VOA Committee members shall be Governor Armstrong (who shall also serve as Committee Chair), Governor Jeff Shell, Governor Ken Weinstein, and Governor Meehan. The Committee shall meet at such times and with such frequency as proposed by the Committee Chair and agreed by the Committee members.
2. The VOA Committee shall undertake a comprehensive review of VOA as an element of USIM by considering the following:

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- a. The role and purpose of VOA as defined in law and regulation and by stakeholders within and outside of the BBG;
 - b. VOA as an element of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy;
 - c. The consequences of increased competition and a crowded media landscape to reach and engage audiences in strategic media markets, as well as with global audiences;
 - d. The preparedness and agility of VOA to utilize existing and emerging media platforms and channels in rapidly evolving media environments;
 - e. The opportunities and risks afforded by VOA's affiliate distribution model, as well as its role and collaboration vis a vis USIM media and other commercial and state international organizations; and
 - f. VOA's structure, organization and the disposition and adequacy of VOA resources.
3. Based on the foregoing, the VOA Committee shall develop recommendations for consideration by the plenary Board on the future of VOA, including recommendations regarding VOA's role within USIM, how the VOA Charter should be understood and implemented, and how VOA can become more effective in the 21st century.