

PROFILE

**NAME:****Jeff Trimble****JOB TITLE: Executive Director****COMPANY: US Broadcasting Board of Governors****MY CAREER**

During more than ten years in US international broadcasting, I've rarely met an employee who came to this business for money or career. For most it is a calling, a mixture of passion and idealism. My path to international broadcasting came via a career in private-sector journalism that took me throughout much of the world as a correspondent and editor at US News & World Report magazine. Assignments ranged from township riots in apartheid South Africa to the Iran-Iraq war to the Gorbachev era and collapse of the Soviet Union. The locations and details were varied but there was one constant: the urgent desire that people have for comprehensive, timely news to inform their decisions about what kind of societies in which they want to live. I joined Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in 1997 at its broadcasting headquarters in Prague, Czech Republic. From November 2005 until March 2007 I was Acting President. My other posts were Counselor to the President for Programs and Policy, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, Director of Broadcasting, and Associate Director of Broadcasting. I shifted to the Broadcasting Board of Governors in October 2007, as Director of Programming, to manage the development of BBG-

wide strategies, plans and objectives for coordinating, developing and improving the broadcast programmes of the BBG's broadcast entities. The Board appointed me BBG Executive Director in April 2008. My duties include advising the Board on developments in international broadcasting and managing the BBG staff, which provides the Board with technical, professional, and administrative support as well as strategic guidance and programme oversight.

ABOUT THE BBG

The BBG is the independent US federal agency that oversees the civilian international broadcasting funded by the US government. The agency comprises three key components. First, the broadcasting organisations, including the Voice of America (VOA), RFE/RL, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN: Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB: Radio and TV Marti), and Radio Free Asia (RFA); second, the operational support arm, in the form of the International Broadcasting Bureau, which provides personnel and administrative services for VOA, OCB and the Board as well as transmission and marketing support for all the broadcasters; and thirdly the head of agency, the Board itself, a nine-member, part-time, bipartisan body of eight private citizens and the US Secretary of State (ex officio), served by an executive director and other professional staff for strategic, budgetary, legal, and other operational support and oversight. The BBG is one of the largest newsgathering and reporting operations in the world. It distributes content in 60 languages targeted to some 75 countries on an annual budget of about \$700m. The BBG employs over 3,400 journalists, producers, technicians, and support personnel in headquarters in Washington, DC (for VOA, IBB, RFA, and the Board), Miami (for OCB), and Prague (for RFE/RL) as well as some 90 news bureaux and offices worldwide. Correspondents and

stringer reporters number an additional 3,000.

BOOSTING AUDIENCES

New broadcasting services developed by the BBG since 2001 include Radio Sawa and Alhurra TV in Arabic for the Middle East, Radio Farda and expanded VOA TV in Persian for Iran, Aap ki Duniya Radio and TV in Urdu for Pakistan, a joint RFE/RL-VOA 24/7 programming stream to Afghanistan, and new broadcasting programmes and content streams for countries including Indonesia, Nigeria, and Somalia. Collectively, this additional broadcasting has boosted the BBG's global audience levels from 100m to 155m in the past six years.

FUTURE STRATEGY

To meet the challenges of the digital, multiple-media world, the BBG has adopted a new strategic plan for the next five years. Its main elements include enhancing programme delivery across all relevant platforms; launching new and expanded broadcasts to better reach audiences in the Muslim world; helping audiences in authoritarian countries understand the principles and practices of democratic societies; facilitating interactive discourse utilising the Internet on PCs and hand-held devices with e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, and other methods; engaging the world in conversation about America, emphasizing dialogue; and rationalizing the broadcast enterprise by continuing to consolidate transmissions and programme delivery and to eliminate or reduce lower-priority language broadcasts while adding and expanding higher-priority services. When VOA first went on the air, in German, in 1942, it did so with the pledge: "The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth." This has been the credo of US international broadcasting ever since. For all the changes and modernisation, we stick closely to our core competency of professional, objective journalism. And we do it all with passion. ■