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Syracuse University is pleased to offer an exciting dual degree program geared for students interested in Public Diplomacy. This option affords students the opportunity to complete an MS in Public Relations from Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications along with an MA in International Relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs within only two years of study. As part of their academic and professional preparation, students complete challenging internships & policy-oriented seminars in Washington, DC.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The international exchange of people and ideas remains the core of public diplomacy. When such an exchange creates a spark, inspires interest, or is otherwise able to engage an audience, it can be used strategically to encourage dialogue outside of the traditional bounds of the diplomatic table and can be leveraged as a means to enhance mutual understanding among nations and peoples. This notion of “exchange” helps minimize misperceptions and misunderstandings that impede mutually beneficial relations among the actors involved.

International interest in public diplomacy is growing, and a focus on exchange in all its forms is critical. Without a continued emphasis on exchange, academic advocates of public diplomacy will find themselves preaching into an echo chamber of obscurity, practitioners will fall short of their potential, and the promise of public diplomacy will go unrealized. This prospect is unacceptable and will require many bright minds and talented voices to prevent it from becoming a reality.

It is with this sense of shared purpose and belief in the necessity of collaboration that our editorial team is pleased to announce the launch of the inaugural issue of Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy.

Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy is a graduate student-run online publication of the Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars (APDS) at Syracuse University. The mission of Exchange is to provide a forum for scholars and practitioners of public diplomacy to share their research, experience, and insights in order to expand and advance the body of public diplomacy literature and analysis. Exchange seeks to define a unique intellectual space - alongside its peer publications - that can integrate purely academic papers along with featured articles authored by experienced public diplomacy practitioners.

Through the exceptional discursive latitude offered by online media, our team intends for Exchange to encourage an environment of fair public critique and collaboration on challenges that the international community faces as they relate to public diplomacy. At the same time, the field of public diplomacy remains a profession in flux and an academic pursuit at the dawn of a bright period of insight. In this regard, Exchange does not presume to offer the reader a source of indisputable research and professional gleanings, nor does it rigidly conform to the molds of more traditional peer-reviewed scholarly journals. While the papers and articles presented here undergo a robust vetting process, Exchange will rely on you, the reader, to bring your own knowledge and expertise to challenge, reinforce, or advance the ideas presented in this forum. Together, we will continue to work to elevate public diplomacy to the intellectual and professional prominence it deserves in global affairs.

Accordingly, our staff will strive to facilitate dialogue through our website and across the pages of subsequent issues of Exchange to debate the relevant topics and research that you believe are deserving of further inquiry. Likewise, we would appreciate your comments and suggestions in the ongoing development of this publication, we encourage you to critique what you read, and we welcome you to submit your own written work to be considered for future publication. It is our sincere hope that Exchange will provide you with a compelling outlet and a credible resource as the host of an ongoing conversation in the advancement of public diplomacy.

Best regards,

Nicole Landers
Editor-in-Chief

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Managing Editor

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Syracuse University’s online journal Exchange comes at a propitious time. No longer an afterthought, public diplomacy is now central to diplomatic practice worldwide. A growing global interest in the academic study of public diplomacy is beyond doubt. Graduate degree programs, more and more courses, a robust online discourse, and a stunning array of new books and articles each year are just a few of many indicators. That public diplomacy is under-researched and under-theorized is also beyond doubt. A comprehensive list of interesting questions to study would be very long indeed. A rich debate exists on conceptual boundaries and interdisciplinary issues. And there are misunderstandings aplenty among scholars and practitioners on roles, methods, and the respective contributions of study and practice. So there is much work to be done. To the editors, contributors, and readers of Exchange, a warm welcome.

In reflecting on the academic study and professional practice of public diplomacy, let’s consider three issues. First, scholars and practitioners approach what they do in different ways. This may seem obvious, but an appreciation of the implications of these differences can help reduce misunderstandings and create greater awareness of distinctive challenges and opportunities. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger understood key differences to be driven by choice and time. Scholars can choose what they wish to study; the problems of practitioners are often imposed. Within broad limits, and publication deadlines aside, scholars can take the time they need to reach their conclusions. If they are wrong, they can go on with their research. Practitioners make choices about the future, often risky choices, under demanding time pressures with incomplete information. They act at busy intersections of international and domestic politics. New actors, mediated environments, multiple issues, and accelerated globalization shape their milieu. Their decisions cannot be undone, and history renders judgment on how well they managed. Scholars have the advantage of hindsight, and they are judged on the merits of their analysis.

There are differences as well in the risks they take. Canada’s Michael Ignatieff, an accomplished scholar and practitioner, suggests that for practitioners theory often “gets in the way.” Wrong ideas can ruin lives, and useless ideas “can waste precious resources.” Scholars have greater freedom to imagine. They can follow ideas wherever they may lead, and useless ideas “can be fun to play with.” The acclaimed British political philosopher Isaiah Berlin drew attention to differences in reasoning and qualities of judgment. Politics is a sphere characterized by “practical wisdom, practical reason, perhaps, a sense of what will ‘work,’ and what will not.” Learning is advanced in the university through inductive and deductive reasoning, qualitative and quantitative methods, and a host of theoretical approaches on which there is remarkable lack of consensus. Study and practice both have great value, and both bring their own pleasures and disappointments. Understanding their differences is useful in public diplomacy where boundaries are crossed by practitioners who teach and by scholars who engage in government practice.

Second, the academic study of public diplomacy should not be confused with training. A course or a Masters degree in public diplomacy is no substitute for the skills, tradecraft, language, and area studies courses offered in foreign ministry training institutes. Nor does academic study replace the valuable apprenticeships, used so successfully by the U.S. Information Agency, in which junior officers understudied experienced officers.

debating the extent to which the Foreign Service should be more “expeditionary” in the context of humanitarian crises and armed conflict. The need for more and different kinds of training is assumed. Their focus is on who should be trained and what kinds of training are needed.\(^4\)

Whether this will mean more opportunities for professional diplomatic education as well as for training remains to be seen. State also has expanded its public diplomacy training with somewhat greater emphasis on substantive courses. A few universities benefit from the assignment of senior public diplomacy officers as diplomats in residence. During these assignments, funded by the Department, they teach public diplomacy courses, write articles, mentor students, and learn from their daily association with students and faculty colleagues.

Diplomats have long participated as students and teachers at the National Defense University and U.S. military service colleges where, in contrast to the Department of State, the Department of Defense gives high priority to professional education. Military officers assigned to civilian universities and military colleges usually earn master’s degrees and gain experiences that improve their career advancement and future performance. High standards of academic freedom and learning cultures that foster civility and dialogue in military education are fully comparable to those in civilian universities. International students routinely attend U.S. military colleges with military and civilian counterparts. A lot of public diplomacy takes place in and out of the seminar rooms.

What then does academic study offer? It certainly does not offer a theory of public diplomacy. By general agreement, no such theory exists.\(^5\) Nor does it offer a well-defined academic discipline. There is no research consensus on analytical boundaries or on centrally relevant ideas, conceptual frameworks, and analytical tools. What public diplomacy scholarship does provide, as Craig Hayden observes, is an eclectic gathering of researchers from communication studies, political science, and international studies.

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international relations, public relations, American studies, history, psychology and other disciplines that have a great deal to contribute in “thinking about public diplomacy.” These researchers and disciplines offer “theory-inspired contributions that can be applied to public diplomacy.” By way of example Hayden provides a long list of relevant considerations from his own discipline of communication studies.7 Many other contributions can be found in what Kristin Lord has described similarly as “a substantial record of scholarship in a range of disciplines [that] bears on public diplomacy and holds important insights.”9

Whether or not public diplomacy is becoming, or should become, an academic field is far from clear.10 What is clear is that public diplomacy is attracting significant academic attention. There is a substantial and growing body of relevant scholarship, practical literature, and research material. Each year scholarly associations include more papers and panels on public diplomacy themes. In a competitive process, the International Studies Association has agreed to sponsor a Working Group on “Public Diplomacy: Interdisciplinary Research, Teaching, and Practice,” one of three “extended and focused” discussion groups intended to help develop new communities of scholars, at its 2011 annual conference in Montreal. Debate on the study of public diplomacy is lively and promising.

Academic study not only helps us understand public diplomacy, it helps us understand what is “around” public diplomacy. Networks are becoming the dominant architecture of society and politics, challenging hierarchies in governance, diplomacy, and armed conflict. More governance and more diplomacy occur above, below, and beyond the state. The Internet, mobile phones, and social media are changing how people connect, compete, and collaborate. Globalization and a rich variety of transnational issues have created an environment that is changing not only the context in which public diplomacy is carried out, they are challenging the methods and institutions of diplomacy. The students, teachers, and researchers who are discovering and sharing knowledge on these issues are contributing to thinking about public diplomacy and the new world in which it is used.

In studying public diplomacy, what sorts of questions should we be asking? The following list is suggestive. What is the “public” in public diplomacy and who is a public diplomacy actor? How can the U.S. discourse on public diplomacy broaden beyond its largely self-referential focus on the American experience? What can be learned from comparison of the public diplomacy practices of small, medium, and large states? What kinds of diplomats are required in 21st century diplomacy? How should embassies and foreign ministries be structured? What are the strengths, limitations, and situational relevance of tools and methods? What analytical boundaries, if any, ought to exist between diplomacy and public diplomacy? What are useful distinctions between the ways state and stateless actors communicate and engage through diplomacy, and the ways corporate, religious, educational, and media actors communicate and engage in civil society apart from diplomacy? What are the descriptive and evaluative meanings of the terms we use? How are networks and relational approaches to “global public engagement” changing diplomacy? Is the concept of dialogue a universal tool of communication or is it culturally specific? In relations within and among groups where does diplomacy end and internal political communication begin? There are many more such questions.

A third issue worth considering relates to how academic knowledge is used in public diplomacy practice and modes of collaboration between practitioners and scholars. Public diplomacy fundamentally is an instrument of power that serves strategies of political actors and a society’s public interests. Universities and scholars likewise have obligations to society, which they fulfill primarily by providing the best education possible for students and research that expands human knowledge. But scholars also contribute to society in ways that are more direct and utilitarian. Harvard professor Joseph Nye argues there are benefits for society (as well as for teaching and research) when scholars focus on policy and engage in periodic government service. He finds a worrisome trend, however, in which academics increasingly study theoretical models and privilege career paths that have little “real world relevance.”11

When scholars pay attention to government, public diplomacy can be the beneficiary. For example, scholars can help to achieve deep comprehension of complex foreign attitudes, cultures, and media environments. An
understanding of communication patterns, kinship ties in traditional societies, uses of social media, influence analysis methods, and a host of other things that practitioners must know to be effective can be enhanced through collaboration with academic experts.

The insights of scholars can also improve public diplomacy policies and practice. Academic consultants serve on advisory panels such as the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and task force studies of the Defense Science Board. Working in universities and think tanks, and as government contractors, they evaluate public diplomacy strategies, structures, and activities such as the Alhurra Arabic language television network and the State Department’s uses of social media.

Most importantly, of course, students and scholars are the fabric of government-sponsored educational exchanges and related activities. And renowned senior scholars on leave from their universities occasionally serve in embassies opening doors and fostering engagement at very high levels in other societies. These students and scholars are selected through peer review and other merit-based systems that preserve the academic integrity and non-political character of their participation. At the same time, strategic interests appropriately drive such considerations as geographic priorities and resource decisions. The systems that sustain academic excellence in public diplomacy practice benefit both scholars and practitioners in this collaborative process.

Scholars also provide knowledge that enables military support for public diplomacy and military information operations that include media training and human terrain teams in armed conflict. Academic expertise, particularly in the social sciences, is increasingly important to civilian and military practitioners seeking to understand, engage, and persuade populations in combat zones. Many scholars and practitioners accept this collaboration as beneficial to society. But today, as in the past, there are contested issues on the extent to which academics should focus on the government’s policy concerns and participate in carrying out national security strategies.

Public diplomacy and open military operations are legitimate and essential instruments in national security strategy. Covert operations and military deception also have appropriate roles. In American history, diplomacy and higher education have been part of all of these activities. Benjamin Franklin, America’s first and perhaps greatest public diplomat, forged documents and wrote publications for others to sign when it suited his purposes. The Central Intelligence Agency covertly funded a variety of international educational and cultural activities during the first two decades of the Cold War.

Society needs both open and covert instruments – as well as a bright line between them. But global transparency makes covert information operations difficult to sustain, and they can be harmful to public diplomacy and counter-productive to society’s interests. There has been too little discussion by scholars and practitioners about how these instruments should be used. We need a better understanding of where and how they should connect and remain separate in today’s “whole of government” interagency process. We also need to address how independent, non-profit institutions can serve as ways for public diplomacy to capitalize on knowledge and creative imagination in civil society at a remove from partisan politics and the special pleadings of government organizations. This is challenging work for practitioner and academic communities – and for online journals of public diplomacy.

Scholars have much to contribute to public diplomacy through collaboration with practitioners, but in doing so they should honor their commitments to academic integrity and educational priorities, and with full recognition that their theories may not be useful or may be counter-productive. Practitioners for their part can foster collaboration by openness to academic knowledge that benefits practice, by providing information that is useful to academic research, and by taking full advantage of relevant scholarship in the transformation of public diplomacy. Going forward, it is useful to keep in mind the differences between what scholars and practitioners do, the distinction between education and training, how knowledge can be used wisely, and responsibilities in mutually beneficial collaboration.

Bruce Gregory teaches courses on public diplomacy at Georgetown and George Washington Universities and on strategic communication at the U.S. Naval War College.

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12 In a practice that deserves greater use today, the U.S. benefited from the cultural diplomacy of many academic CAOs (cultural affairs officers) during the 1950s and 1960s. See Richard T. Arndt, The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century, (Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), pp. 310-313 and 458-479.


WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD: PD AS IT IS PRACTICED ABROAD

WILLIAM KIEHL, ED. D. PRESIDENT & CEO PD WORLDWIDE

As a long time practitioner of public diplomacy (PD), I have watched, sometimes in awe, sometimes in horror, sometimes in sheer incomprehension, as the discipline of public diplomacy rapidly has become a recognized and legitimate part of the academic world. Before you consign me to the rank of dinosaurs, curmudgeons and cranks that sometime declare that public diplomacy is such an art form that it cannot be “studied”, let me disabuse you of any such notion. Indeed, there is of course an element of “art” to public diplomacy but in large measure it is a science, and not rocket science either, I assure you—and thus quite capable of being studied, replicated and measured for effectiveness by ordinary mortals.

When I began what became a career—who knew?—in “public diplomacy”, there was no academic discipline called public diplomacy. Moreover, public diplomacy was pretty much the exclusive territory of national governments, not the academy, NGOs or “citizens.” In those days of the 1960s, 70s and 80s, public diplomacy was how clever and capable nation states, and especially the United States through the U.S. Information Agency, informed, persuaded and influenced the publics of friends and enemies alike with the sole object of benefiting their long-term national interests.

Today, public diplomacy is often considered the natural right of NGOs, the military, development specialists, academics, foundations, citizen groups and individual citizens. Terms such as nation-branding, global engagement, strategic communication, influence operations, public affairs, information operations, Psyops, and its current designation MISO (military information support operations), are all used interchangeably with public diplomacy. If everything is public diplomacy, then perhaps nothing is public diplomacy. Without getting mired in semantics, I will refer to public diplomacy in the classic sense, i.e. “Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest and the national security of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.”

If we can agree on a definition of public diplomacy, those of us who worked in the field with the U.S. Information Agency through 1999 and the Department of State thereafter would have a hard time to explain our chosen profession in any great detail.

Indeed it is with some embarrassment that most practitioners of public diplomacy will admit that they cannot precisely explain how they do their work to the layman. As I wrote recently,

Public diplomacy professionals are trained to stay out of the limelight themselves in order to utilize better the tools of public diplomacy to inform and persuade their audiences. They know that it is the message, not the messenger, that is the key. And to the extent that the messenger is someone other than an American diplomat or official, it is so much the better to provide credibility. Thus there is an “institutionalized reluctance” to speak about what one does. As the Wizard of Oz hastily shouted to Dorothy and her friends, “Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!”

Even more so, the public diplomat, like so many other professionals, simply does not know how to explain his or her work to the layman. As Lisbeth B. Schorr wrote: “Even the best practitioners often can’t give usable descriptions of what they do. Many successful [organizational and societal] interventions reflect the secret the fox confided to Saint Exupery’s Little Prince: What is essential is invisible to the eye. The practitioners know more than they can say.”

In this essay, through a few examples of how I attempted to pursue those long-term interests of the United States

1 This is the USIA definition. See: “What is Public Diplomacy?” http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm.
through public diplomacy over the course of more than three decades, perhaps some additional light may be shed on the mysteries of the art and science of PD.

It has become fashionable to state that every diplomat must be a public diplomat because public diplomacy is really the diplomacy of the 21st century. That is just one of the many myths concerning PD and we might as well explode it right now. Yes, every diplomat can have a part to play in a public diplomacy strategy and most if not all diplomats can perform one or more of the functions usually ascribed to public diplomacy whether it is talking to the local press, giving a speech to the local Rotary club or participating in the selection of young potential leaders for further exposure to the people and institutions of the diplomat’s country. But that is not to say that every diplomat is a public diplomat.

The strategy of public diplomacy is a complex and delicate affair and without training and experience in public diplomacy it is likely to fail. It has been said that good PD officers are born, not made. There is some truth to that statement because the PD personality is one that is open, engaging and perhaps even charming and that personality unfortunately is in short supply among the more traditional diplomats of most foreign services. Personality alone will only take the aspiring PD officer so far, however. Training in the proven techniques and operations of public diplomacy is necessary and as the PD officer rises through the ranks, his or her own experiences shape and color those basic elements of PD tradecraft until the experienced officer is able to look at a situation and see a clear path to exploit it in a PD sense. So the public diplomat begins with the right personal traits, acquires training and experience sufficient to plan and conduct a PD strategy using the talents of traditional diplomats and public diplomats alike toward a common goal.

Without any false modesty I will confirm that I entered the United States Foreign Service with USIA already in possession of a “PD personality.” I was interested in people, their culture, their society and why they thought and acted as they did. I actively tried to understand their thinking and opinions on issues of importance to my country. Whenever they and we had a commonality of interest that provided an avenue for active public diplomacy. In those areas of disagreement, at least I felt it was important that I understood their motivations for their opinion and they in turn understood my country’s position clearly and the motivations we had for taking our position. Perhaps, in time, I believed, they would “see it our way” or changing circumstances might bring our views closer together.

My USIA training in public diplomacy, like that of other new “Foreign Service Information Officers” as we were then known, took place both in Washington and abroad at my first Foreign Service post in Belgrade. In Washington, we newly minted FSIOs, mainly with backgrounds in academia, media or government, were taught such elementary tasks as how to thread a 16 mm. projector, how to take high quality photographs and create a multi-media display, how to “light” a speaker and figure out how to get the best out of a sound system— all things that just don’t come up in classes on political theory, print journalism or most government service. But following language training and area studies for most of us, our real training was to be conducted at our first post of assignment as a Public Affairs Trainee (PAT) for a year or longer.

In my case it was in Belgrade, capital of the Federated Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and my PAT assignment lasted almost two years before an opening occurred at the United States Information Service (USIS) in Yugoslavia. In this lengthy training assignment I had the opportunity to work as an Assistant Information Officer (AIO) in press affairs, dealing with the Serbian print and electronic media; as an Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer (ACAO) I put together an exhibit of the art of Push Pin Studios (Milton Glaser and Seymour Chwast among others), worked with “The Giants of Jazz”, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald other performing artists under our sponsorship in Belgrade and around the country, and also worked on a series of academic exchange programs; back in an AIO role, this time in publications, I worked as an assistant to the editor of Pregled, the USIS Yugoslavia monthly magazine with a circulation of more than 40,000; and I finished out my training as the Acting Executive Officer, learning how to manage the finances and personnel of one of the USIA’s larger overseas operations (21 Americans, more than 140 Yugoslav employees and a program budget in excess of three million dollars).

I had the good fortune to be at a large and complex post with a very talented array of American and Yugoslav staff to work for and with, to try out new ideas, and to catch my mistakes before any real damage was done. I did not have one mentor—I had a dozen mentors. Among the many things that went wrong following the absorption of public diplomacy into the Department of State was the elimination of these training years for new PD officers.

By the time a job opening as Branch Cultural Affairs Officer (later Deputy Branch Public Affairs Officer (DBPAO) at the Consulate General in Zagreb appeared, I had an excellent grounding in the practical side of public diplomacy work to go along with my PD personality. Now only years of experience would be required for the completion of all that was necessary to be prepared for
the planning and execution of complex public diplomacy strategies.

In order to give you the flavor of what actually happens in public diplomacy in a field operation, I will summarize four experiences from my own career. 3 I’ve used these case studies in other works4 but I could choose any of dozens of similar stories to make the same point. They are experiences not unique to me. In fact, nearly any public diplomacy officer during the period of the 1950s to the 1990s likely has similar field operation experiences about which they could write if only they would. In part, this exposition of my experiences may encourage others who worked in the public diplomacy arena to put down their own experiences for posterity.

1976
Sri Lanka was in the mid 1970s a nation with an early promise that had been squandered. Emerging from colonialism as Ceylon in 1948, it began life with a high literacy rate (over 80 percent), a prosperous economy and a democratic form of government. Then, following victory in the 1956 election, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike’s socialist and anti-Western party imposed a “Sinhala-only” language policy on the government and the schools. In one blow, Bandaranaike eliminated English as the medium of instruction and government business, and disenfranchised the sizeable Tamil-speaking minority; an act would sow the seeds for the civil war, which lasted for more than three decades on the island nation.

By the 1970s successive governments of various political stripes had failed to come to grips with Sri Lanka’s growing problems. The economy fell even further behind its neighbors, exports stagnated, imports were in short supply, and the future looked dismal indeed.

For the United States, obsessed with the Cold War struggle, there were only two strategic interests: First, to ensure that the huge natural harbor at Trincomalee not become a naval base for the Soviet Union. And second, that the Voice of America’s relay station just north of Colombo continue to broadcast its messages to the peoples of Soviet Central Asia, the Urals, and much of communist China.

The Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy, had a long and distinguished international career from ambulance driver for the American Field Service during World War II (WWII) to diplomat through much of the Cold War era, but he was best known as one of the world’s leading numismatists.

He knew that he was outgunned in the struggle for “hearts and minds” on the island of Ceylon. The U.S. Embassy, without an AID Mission and with fewer than 40 American staff members was overshadowed by the large Soviet Embassy and the even larger Chinese Embassy. The Chinese fielded more than 500 “experts,” who fanned out across the island bringing a modest amount of aid and a large supply of Mao’s “little red book” to the rural population.

It was in this context that a small staff of public diplomacy officers and their locally employed staff set about to show the people of Sri Lanka that the U.S. cared about them. A year before the 1976 Bicentennial Year, the PAO determined to use this anniversary not just to celebrate 200 years of American independence but to demonstrate American interest in and commitment to Sri Lanka. The concept he chose was “An American Bicentennial Salute to Sri Lanka” with a distinctive logo, which would appear on every U.S. Information Service product from daily news releases and cultural programs to a full scale book and two 35 mm. theatrical release films.

As the PAO explained it to me, his newly arrived Press Attaché, no new money would be coming from Washington for programs in Sri Lanka, but if we could link all of the many things we do in cultural, educational, and informational programs under a common theme and logo, the impact of these programs would be maximized. A series of routine and rather ordinary public diplomacy programs had a common link and a common purpose to “salute” the people of Sri Lanka on this the 200th anniversary of American independence. Independence was a theme, which registered with Sri Lankans across the political spectrum. Their own independence from Britain was still a living memory for the older generations and young people were eager to learn more about their own history.

Much of Sri Lanka’s history had an American connection, from the American theosophist Henry Steele Olcott’s role in founding Ananda College and in spurring the Buddhist revival movement in the 19th century, to the American missionaries in the Tamil north who ministered to the needs of the people there, to the visits by American clipper ships bringing goods from around the world to the shops of Colombo.

USIS Colombo used these connections to bring
Sri Lankans to a greater understanding of the role that Americans had played in their past and could play in their future.

In thinking about ways to pull all the connections between Americans and Sri Lankans together in an easily understood way, our USIS Press Section hit upon the notion of an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia from the earliest days of American independence to the present day. The concept was easy enough to create but one could see that its execution might be a daunting task. There was to be no help from Washington except perhaps some photographs from the archives. The content of the exhibition and its physical structure had to be created on the spot in Sri Lanka. While the Press Attaché and his staff combed the island nation for photographs and memorabilia to place in the exhibit, the administrative section commandeered a team of carpenters to assemble a series of 300 wooden panels and frames. The exhibition was a huge success; current and future crowds to the exhibit. Amazingly the Ambassador agreed and gave up his residence’s lower level for two weeks of construction of the wooden panels and displays, and several more weeks of tours of the exhibition following the July 4 opening. Of course today in the over zealous security environment that cordon off U.S. diplomats from the people they need to talk with, such a location for a public exhibition would be unthinkable.

The exhibition was a huge success; current and future government leaders were in attendance and were stunned by the number and variety of American connections with their history and society. Everything from early photos of American missionaries and visitors to the island to more substantial items like a 600 pound church bell from one of the American churches near Jaffna, trade goods, such as 19th century Seth Thomas clocks, and even a huge block of ice in sawdust representing the tons of ice shipped to Sri Lanka by clipper ship from the frozen ponds of New England in the 19th century. As World War Two was coming to an end, Czechoslovakia, especially hilly western and southern Bohemia, was to become one of the last redoubts of the Nazis. Both the Russians and the Americans moved aggressively to eliminate this potential hold out. The U.S. Third Army under General George Patton moved into western Bohemia and for a time it appeared that the Yanks would be the first to enter Prague and liberate that city. The communist-dominated partisans in Prague, alarmed at the notion that they might be replaced by pro-American administrators, called for the Red Army to liberate the city. Patton’s tanks met up with the Red Army in the town of Rokycany just east of Plzen (Pilsen), an hour’s drive west of the capital city.

At the end of the war, American GIs occupied western and southern Bohemia and the Red Army occupied the remainder of Czechoslovakia. The Red Army was reluctant to leave these rich lands, so the American GIs also stayed on until there was a mutual withdrawal in 1946. During that idyll, the GIs and the residents of western Bohemia seemed to have formed some close friendships. Indeed after the war, dozens of monuments were erected spontaneously by local townspeople as tributes to their American liberators.

Following the Communist “coup” of February 1948, the regime wished to create the myth that it was the Red Army alone which had liberated all of Czechoslovakia from fascism. Honoring the American GIs as liberators was actively discouraged. After crushing the Prague Spring with a Russian-led Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the authorities took even more drastic measures. Ostensibly in “outrage” over the Vietnam War, local officials had many of the monuments to American liberators removed and/or destroyed. Memories are much harder to erase.

In part to examine the history of the American liberation of Western and Southern Bohemia and in part as a convenient cover for American military attaches’ travel to border areas and other districts of military interest, in the late 1970s the Defense Attaché’s Office at the American Embassy in Prague began a series of automobile trips each May to towns and villages in Western Bohemia liberated by U.S. forces. A similar series of journeys was organized in November annually to visit crash sites and monuments to fallen U.S. airmen in Slovakia. Initially only Defense Department personnel made these journeys, but in the early 1980s other personnel from the Embassy, including the U.S. Ambassador joined the motorcade to Bohemia in May each year. The visits to the sites where
markers once stood and to the small towns and villages was very low key and attracted little notice, except for the ubiquitous STB (Statny Tanjy Bezpechnosti or State Secret Security) detail which shadowed the Americans. Where a monument still remained, a small wreath “from the American people” was placed on the marker.

In 1983, as the newly arrived Public Affairs Officer (PAO), I joined the motor trips in May and November, which by now included a few key Embassy officers. I realized the potential that these events might have for the U.S. to remind the people of Czechoslovakia of America’s role in their liberation from the Nazis and also to demonstrate the interest and concern on the part of the U.S. for the oppressed people of this communist state. Thus, beginning in 1984, the Embassy’s May and November “wreath-lyings”—as they came to be called—took on a higher profile and a different character. Embassy employees and their families were encouraged to join the motorcades, which grew much larger with up to two dozen vehicles moving through the back roads and byways of Bohemia. Dates and times of the “wreath-laying” ceremonies were announced through the Czechoslovak Service of the Voice of America (VOA)—the most widely listened-to foreign radio station in Czechoslovakia. The Czech and Slovak services of Radio Free Europe (RFE) also publicized the events. The Press and Cultural Service of the U.S. Embassy (as the U.S. Information Service was called in Eastern Europe and the USSR) was able to obtain thousands of Czechoslovak–American crossed-flag lapel pins from a U.S.–Canadian émigré organization the Czechoslovak National Congress, as well as Voice of America bumper stickers, lapel pins, ballpoint pens, and other “souvenirs” for distribution to well-wishers along the route.

By 1986, the Press and Cultural Service was printing a special liberation supplement to the Czech-language magazine Spektrum distributed by the Embassy, and special commemorative postcards by the thousands at a USIS facility in Vienna, complete with a photo of GIs liberating Pilsen. These postcards were produced for mass distribution to thousands of Czechs now lining the route and participating in the ceremonies at each site. Wreaths from “the American people” were placed in each location where there had been a monument, whether removed or not. The American Ambassador addressed large audiences in Czech recalling the long friendship between Americans and the people of Czechoslovakia. The crowds were now too large to intimidate. The secret police filming and taping the events was hardly a secret but these tactics were largely ignored by the crowds who often displayed American flags and other expressions of support. The VOA and RFE broadcast detailed reports of the growing crowds and their enthusiasm back to Czechoslovakia.

This local initiative, from the early forays into the Bohemian countryside in the late 1970s and especially after 1984 brought the events to the level of a major public diplomacy program, proved to be a huge success. An early indication of the effectiveness of these trips was the repeated and ever more threatening attempts on the part of the Czechoslovak authorities to prevent them from happening. The program reinforced the belief among the people of Czechoslovakia that the U.S. and the West had not abandoned them and was actively demonstrating that fact. After the successful Velvet Revolution in December 1989, which toppled the communist government, the annual “wreath-lyings” continued into 1990 and culminated in an event in Pilsen at a newly restored Liberation Monument in front of the city hall. More than 100,000 Czechs honored the American liberators of their city and their nation at the event. The events are still commemorated today.

1988

In the year 1638 a small band of Swedish colonists (the majority happened to be Finns, under the rule of the Kingdom of Sweden) founded New Sweden on the Delaware River, south of today’s Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Nearly 350 years later, a rather low-key but well organized effort was to have commemorated this event in both Sweden and Finland. The two countries and the U.S. postal authorities had approved the issuance of stamps to mark the occasion in 1988 and various Swedish–American and Finnish–American organizations were making plans to commemorate the event on both sides of the Atlantic.

While studying Finnish language and culture in preparation for my assignment beginning in July 1987, this future Public Affairs Officer (PAO) learned about the 1988 anniversary and it triggered a series of ideas and plans to increase the American profile in Finland and reinforce the positive feelings for the U.S. that existed there. Recalling the “America’s Bicentennial Salute to Sri Lanka” from an earlier assignment, I recognized how successful it had been to bring all public diplomacy programs—the routine ones as well as those created just for the event—under a single banner as the PAO had done in Sri Lanka in 1976.

Using this “Salute” formula as a model, in our on-going discussions with the Finnish Embassy in Washington and the U.S. Information Agency and Department of State, we began to focus on 1988 as “The National Year of Friendship with Finland.” Upon arrival in Finland I was able to convince the Ambassador and the
Country Team of the value of using this event to further U.S. public diplomacy and traditional diplomatic goals in Finland. Within a few months, an elaborate program of the National Year of Friendship with Finland was announced and underway. Both the U.S. Embassy and the Finnish Foreign Ministry adopted an identical logo for the Finnish–American Year of Friendship and soon this logo was on everything from cultural presentations to educational exchanges to publications and special events.

The U.S. Information Service alone listed some 38 separate programs in honor of the “Year of Friendship.” The agenda included an all-star program at the prestigious Finlandia Hall featuring a video address to the audience (and a national TV audience) by President Ronald Reagan on the importance of the relationship between Finland and the United States over the 350 years since the first Finn set foot in the New World. The event also kicked off a five-year $5 million dollar fund-raising campaign to increase the number of Fulbright grantees between Finland and the U.S. The “Year of Friendship” culminated in a visit to Finland by President Reagan, the first-ever by a sitting U.S. president.

Among the benefits of this elaborate program in cooperation with the Finnish Government was an increased favorability rating for the U.S. as a nation and for specific U.S. foreign policies as measured by public opinion polls. The high level of favorability proved to be important as Finland assumed the Presidency of the Security Council just prior to the Gulf War, and Finland played an important and positive role, which supported U.S. positions. Shortly thereafter Finland bought their first-ever U.S. military aircraft when a contract was awarded for the F-16. This era of good feeling between Finland and the U.S. “Year of Friendship” easily if the underlying fundamentals of the economy are sound. But in Thailand’s case the fundamentals were in a shambles thanks to the crony capitalism and corruption of the banking and securities sectors.

Thailand became the first of the Asian Tigers to fall, but it soon had plenty of company. Indonesia and then South Korea followed in Thailand’s footsteps and for many of the same reasons. When the dust had settled the Thai baht went from about 24 to the dollar to about 55 to the dollar. Thousands of workers in the financial sector were suddenly without a job when their banks and securities firms closed their doors overnight.

This is essentially an economic story but it relates to public diplomacy because at its heart is the pi–non relationship. When Thailand’s economy crashed, Thailand looked to the U.S. for help. But the U.S. Treasury Department, looking through the framework of economics and finance, not public diplomacy or diplomatic relations, examined Thailand and saw that it basically got what it deserved for not having its house in order. The State Department then as now defers to the Treasury in all things having to do with economics and finance. So the U.S. did absolutely nothing when Thailand’s crash came. Puzzled and resentful, the Thai saw the U.S. as abandoning Thailand and renouncing the pi–non relationship just when the going got tough.

Newspaper editorials pointed to the U.S. as the “real” cause of Thailand’s woes. Western currency traders were vilified, and by implication Western governments,

1997

The Thai economy was one of the fastest growing of the so-called Asian Tigers in the 1990s. Construction cranes were seen in every direction in Bangkok, which went from a charming backwater to a tropical New York in less than a decade. Fifty and sixty-story buildings replaced wooden houses and tropical gardens in the capital and similar scenes could be seen in other urban centers throughout the country.

Thailand became the “Detroit of Asia” as dozens of automobile brands were manufactured there for the Asian market, and auto parts makers proliferated. But this was a house of cards built on speculation and what came to be called “crony capitalism” with loose banking practices, slip-shod securities laws and massive corruption, and much of it was about to come crashing down.

The U.S.–Thai relationship had its ups and downs in the 165-year history of diplomatic relations. Essentially, the relationship in Thai eyes was a classic pi–non relationship, that is, an elder brother–younger brother relationship with the U.S. as the pi and Thailand as the non. It was the pi’s responsibility to look out for the non, to assist when needed, to protect and to guide the non. The non’s responsibility was to be loyal to the pi and to follow the pi’s lead. This pi–non relationship survived the military dictatorships in Thailand’s post-war era, the Vietnam War, and American withdrawal from Southeast Asia, and seemed unshakeable in July 1997.

Earlier in the year there had been “runs” on several international currencies by hedge fund operators. In July 1997 it became the Thai baht’s turn to be attacked by currency traders and it proved to be the beginning of a cascade of economic troubles that caused first the Thai baht to crumble and then the Thai financial system to crash and eventually the Thai economy to come tumbling down. A run on a country’s currency can be overcome if the underlying fundamentals of the economy are sound. But in Thailand’s case the fundamentals were in a shambles thanks to the crony capitalism and corruption of the banking and securities sectors.

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Newspaper editorials pointed to the U.S. as the “real” cause of Thailand’s woes. Western currency traders were vilified, and by implication Western governments,
especially the U.S., were seen as responsible for the collapse throughout Asia. As if this was not bad enough, the U.S. Government decided that things were indeed beginning to get out of hand in Asia, and the White House announced that it would bail out Indonesia and South Korea with billions of dollars in credit. This was like throwing gasoline on a fire in Thailand. The Thai media and influential Thais across the spectrum of society exploded in indignation. The U.S. would not help Thailand but would help Indonesia! Thailand was one of the five treaty allies of the U.S. in the Pacific; it was a functioning democracy; Thailand was a loyal ally of the U.S. and took its lead from the U.S. Indonesia was none of these things—not a treaty ally nor even an informal ally, a dictatorship not a democracy, and Indonesia, more often than not, was at odds with the U.S.

A major financial decision had been made in Washington without input from two very important sources—first there was no consultation with regard to the public diplomacy dimension of this decision in Thailand or indeed in any of the countries affected, and, second, there was no consultation with the Embassy in Bangkok which actually understood the situation in Thailand. Even before this unfortunate decision was made, as Public Affairs Officer, I had outlined a series of public diplomacy strategic and tactical measures to explain U.S. policy to the Thai and limit the damage to the bilateral relationship. Following the announcement about aid for Indonesia, the Ambassador, the fluent Thai-speaking Deputy Chief of Mission, the Embassy’s key editorial boards and influential columnists were all mobilized to this effort. In the end, it was the Thai columnists, commentators, and editorial writers who put the Asian financial debacle into context and into the proper perspective for their readers, listeners, and viewers.

USIS Thailand proposed to Washington that a special high profile scholarship program be established for 165 students selected by the Thai Government for three years to attend U.S. universities. The 165 were linked to the 165 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and the total funding for the scholarship program provided through Economic Assistance Funds and administered by USAID came to about $3 million. This is a tiny sum when compared to the $4 billion in loan guarantees provided to Thailand or the nearly $1 billion in debt cancelled by recalling the F-16 contract, but because it involved people, not hardware or loans, it registered with the Thai public as real help from America. Other smaller exchange programs, too, were augmented, like the Fulbright Program and other government-funded internships, but the 165 scholarships made the biggest headlines.

Determined to demonstrate that the U.S. had not abandoned Thailand, the Embassy encouraged as many high level visitors as possible to visit Bangkok. For its part the U.S. Information Service used each of these cabinet level or equivalent visits to get the message out that the U.S. was interested in Thailand and would do whatever it could to ease the burden during a difficult economic time. Every high level visitor held a press conference and interviews with Thai media, made highly visible public appearances, and consistently expressed the deep concern of the U.S. for Thailand and the Thai people. It was a rare week in 1998 when a U.S. cabinet-level official, congressional delegation or senior military officer did not visit Thailand with a full public diplomacy program.

Recognizing that there was a reservoir of good will in Thailand built up over many years and reinforced by the visit by U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1996, another key component of the public diplomacy strategy focused on reaching out to the gatekeepers of information and the “influencers” in the society to make the case for the United States. The PAO arranged a series of lunches with key editorial boards and influential columnists to provide them with Embassy-produced briefings on the complexities of international finance and currency speculation. The U.S. Ambassador, the fluent Thai-speaking Deputy Chief of Mission, the Embassy’s entire economic reporting section, and public diplomacy officers were all mobilized to this effort. In the end, it was the Thai columnists, commentators, and editorial writers who put the Asian financial debacle into context and into the proper perspective for their readers, listeners, and viewers.

The U.S. emerged not as the villain it appeared to be
When it ignored Thailand’s crisis in the summer of 1997 but rather as the prime mover in rectifying a corrupt and mismanaged financial system in Thailand and in other Asian countries. This was seen as an act of responsibility worthy of the pi. In opinion polling following the resolution of the financial crisis, the U.S. favorability level was nearly identical with the high mark it had reached immediately after the Clinton visit in 1996.

2010

In the years since these events took place, there have been some significant changes in the public diplomacy landscape. The Cold War ended and the Age of Terrorism began. New Internet and social networking tools have proliferated and the world is on a 24/7-news cycle. The independent agency that handled America’s public diplomacy was abolished and the remnants of PD are now in the hands of the State Department, with international civilian broadcasting overseen by the independent Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). The Department of Defense now has a major role in strategic communications. USAID and other agencies have their own public diplomacy efforts abroad. NGOs and individual citizens feel empowered to conduct a type of public diplomacy on their own terms.

Despite all of this change, the PD tactics, techniques and procedures used in these examples are still valid. New technological tools would be employed today of course and the stricter security environment would affect some of the means to our ends.

These four examples had other elements in common, along with being highly successful public diplomacy strategies. Each of the examples took an aspect of the unique relationship between the host country and the United States and used it as a bridge between the two societies and the two nations. Each of the examples was “field-driven”, not “Washington-directed.” Washington financial and other resources were used for public diplomacy to be sure but the ideas behind each PD strategy and the strategy itself was created in the field. Each of the examples used local resources to the maximum, including other members and agencies of the U.S. Mission. The strategies were designed and implemented by experienced public diplomacy professionals but other officers and staff of the Embassy also were pressed into service toward a common goal. And this is precisely the art and science of public diplomacy.

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During a 33 year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, he served as diplomat in Residence at the U.S. Army War College’s Center for Strategic Leadership and was a Senior Fellow of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute. Dr. Kiehl was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State, Acting Deputy Associate Director of USAID and Staff Director of the Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training. Overseas, he was the Director of the U.S. Information Service in Bangkok and was also Counselor for Public Affairs in London, Helsinki and Prague. His early postings included Belgrade, Zagreb and Colombo. He escorted the exhibition “Agriculture USA” throughout the former Soviet Union and served as Press Officer in Moscow. A decade later he was Public Affairs Advisor to the U.S. Delegation to the CSCE Moscow Conference on the Human Dimension.

In addition to his Ed.D. degree from Penn, Dr. Kiehl earned an honors degree from the University of Scranton and an M.A. in Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia. He was Honorary Visiting Fellow at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. Recent publications include: “Unfinished Business: Foreign Affairs Consolidation was only the Beginning”, National Security Studies Quarterly, “Peacekeeper or Occupier? U.S. Experience with Information Operations in the Balkans” International Peacekeeping; Information Operations: Time for a Redefinition? USAPKI; “Partnership: Information Operations and Civil-Military Cooperation in Peacekeeping”, Cornwallis VIII, “Can Humpty Dumpty Be Saved?”, American Diplomacy, book chapters in Affairs of State and The Public Diplomacy Handbook, reviews in Parameters, American Diplomacy and The Foreign Service Journal. He is the editor of the PDC book America’s Dialogue with the World and the author of Global Intentions Local Results: How Colleges Can Create International Communities.
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE DIGITAL ERA: TOWARD NEW PARTNERSHIPS

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These and other population shifts imply a period of instability as well as invention.

II.) Accelerated Globalization is changing the parameters of communication – economic – technological, communications – have intensified the pace and complexity of international interactions and decision making. Actions in one part of the globe are almost instantaneously known in others, and have a ripple effect on relations and behavior. As publics realize the interconnections, they can feel quite anxious about forces well beyond their control (see below V). In particular the new communication technologies have contributed to the growth of multilateral non-state actors, which affect relations within nation-states and on a regional and trans-regional basis.

III.) Rising Demands for Social Justice and Democratization have engaged publics as never before – The growing younger populations in the developing world want increased social and cultural freedoms, greater participation in decisions and more transparency as a way to achieve greater social justice and improved economic opportunity. Regimes might stifle these impulses, but inevitably they will be challenged. With the approval of many governments, transnational advocacy organizations already respond to these needs almost everywhere in the world. In turn publics have become increasingly empowered, particularly through the new communication technologies. U.S. support is often available to meet these rising expectations, but sometimes is absent or wanting, much to the disappointment of activists who were encouraged by American institutions.

IV.) The Struggle for Resources threatens political and social stability – Another global challenge that has important implications for public diplomacy is the increasingly competitive struggle for access to natural resources with its harmful impact on global sustainability. This is especially true for energy needs that compete with environmental and social concerns. As modern economies emerge, publics will be stirred by intensified

DIPLOMACY

Five broad global challenges can be seen at play internationally.

I.) A Younger Demographic Signifies Changes in Audiences – Young people under 25 living in urban areas of developing nations comprise the bulk of a burgeoning world population. Audiences for public diplomacy are younger and not necessarily identified with specific career paths or leadership. Their hopes and fears, needs and inclinations are set against the significant needs of the increasingly elderly cohort in the developed world. A youthful population commotes greater energy, more intense competition and conflict, more experimentation, more intense ideology. Audiences are more mobile, less rooted in time and place, with higher expectations for advancement; they make greater demands for personal freedom, education, social and physical well-being.

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debate over constraints on growth. These issues will cut across almost all bilateral and regional concerns, and require education, improved public awareness, often painful choices, and most of all, long-term vision – all tasks for public diplomacy.

V) The Search for Identity and Control adds volatility – Finally, there is a global struggle for identity underway. At its most extreme are the violent radical groups such as al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, the FARC, M13 and others. Although many publicized groups profess an Islamic connection, these groups have hijacked affiliation with Islam to attract young recruits and sway larger publics. The grievances involve questions about well-being, fair-play, and self-worth. The aggrieved perceive threats against the community from rival communities, external powers or out-of-control economic and technological forces. The current wave of globalization has intensified awareness of change and fears about the future.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In the U.S. Government The Department of State Needs to Exert Greater Leadership – State is responsible for PD and should take the lead within the U.S. Government and with other institutions. The State Department is undertaking a number of very exciting initiatives through social media. Officers in State are directly interacting with Arabic websites. A small staff looks for new technologies that the U.S. needs to consider. Another group develops coordinated video campaigns in support of important speeches, visits or initiatives by senior officials. And others work on video challenges such as a contest to define democracy, and on Internet support activities for exchanges. “Apps-for-Africa,” E-journals, podcasts, twitter feeds, SMS feeds – all the uses of digital communication are in play at State.

There are shortcomings and insufficiencies. State remains seriously short of funds, and is unlikely to see an increase in the current budgetary climate. Absent a major increase, PD functions, like others, will suffer and the Department will not have the clout within the U.S. Government and internationally that it, and the nation, deserve. Funding limitations raise the concern that PD officials abroad and their national employees are drawn off for other work in short-staffed embassies, or isolated for security reasons in so many embassies. Social media can complement but not substitute for personal ties that build trusting relationships with opinion leaders.

Another important ongoing question is how to employ public diplomacy advice better in U.S. Government foreign policy making. After decades of hit and miss participation in policy decisions, there should be a way to mandate public diplomacy inputs into the consideration of options as well as policy support. Policy makers carefully calibrate American public opinion, and need more consistent advice about international opinion, especially in the DC inter-agency process.

Under the banner of “strategic communication,” the Department of Defense (DoD) has invested heavily in international communication activities since 9-11, some of which overlap with the PD functions of State. While respecting State as the lead agency in this field, DoD officials grow impatient at perceived lethargy at State, the inability at times to “get the message out” or the difficulty in providing personnel and assets in conflict situations. DoD professionals debate the boundaries of PD and public affairs, psyops and information operations. Each element represents a legitimate responsibility, but on occasion they overlap and compete. It is not clear how these diverse activities fit under the “Global Engagement” approach established by Under Secretary Michele Flournoy.

DoD and State need, once again, to sort out the communication functions each is best suited to carry out, and who deals with which audiences. In conflict and counter-insurgency situations, should State assume civilian communication responsibilities that have fallen to DoD? Where will the funds and the mandate, the recruitment and training come from? What mix of State, DoD and USAID staff is best?

New Audiences and New Media Merit Careful Analysis – Across the board comprehensive analysis of international audiences, particularly youth, is needed – who are they, how numerous, how influential in relevant countries? What are their media habits, cultural styles, hopes and fears? This pertains to both government and private sector interests.

A significant challenge for both government and other institutions involved in public communication is how to surmount the pressures of the 60/24/7 action/reaction news cycle. In the long run, rapid-fire messaging is a necessary but minor element in the flow of information and the construction of trust. The ideal should be credible sustained communication that builds enduring relationships. A recent GAO report calls upon the Department of State to compare the many communication platforms in use, their relative effectiveness and cost. These range from American libraries in embassies and private venues abroad to the many forms of digital communication, and, yes, to traditional print publications. A fresh comprehensive look at this ongoing concern would be timely.
Increased Public Involvement and Expanded International Education Are Essential: The key element in building enduring relationships that broadly serve the national interest is the U.S. international exchange program. Under-funded for decades, the program has only begun to catch up with increased funding after 9/11. Beyond current crises, a long-term plan and additional funding increases are imperative to build the latitude of exchanges. One really important element in such a review would examine how to encourage more Americans to study abroad. Even with more students going abroad, and a growing bi-cultural populace, we still suffer from huge gaps in our understanding of other nations, languages and cultures. Isn’t it time for another serious review of how educational systems at all levels can further build international perspectives into their curriculum? Can a partnership of major foundations, educational organizations, the State and Education Departments lead this re-examination?

These several recommendations lead to the question of whether the nation would be well-served by a new independent organization that would bring government and non-government institutions together in an ongoing examination of America’s international engagement. Several recent studies have called for such an approach. The idea has merit, whether led by the government, or the initiative of the private sector.

Ongoing exploration of these and other issues will hopefully produce more consensus on public diplomacy among practitioners and analysts. Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy is one such exploratory forum that will bring fresh insights from around the world about the practical challenges and the conceptual underpinnings of this rich field of endeavor.

Several recent studies and articles deal with the current state of PD in greater depth: See:


- Anne Marie Slaughter, Foreign Affairs Magazine Jan-Feb 2009, America’s Edge: http://www.educ.msu.edu/epfp/meet/10_08_09files/America’s%20Edge%20Foreign%20Affairs.pdf

For additional commentary on PD concepts, see also my paper, “Public Diplomacy Concepts, Principles and Practices – A Brief Tour of the Territory.” Comments and critique are welcomed, to mismhei@maxwell.syr.edu.

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If you are a member of the professional public diplomacy community, you are guaranteed to have developed a love-hate relationship with the discipline. If you are like me, you have sat in conference upon conference, hoping to gain valuable lessons about successful case studies and have been disappointed to find that, yet again, the value of its contribution is called into question. We are intimately familiar with the argument that “soft power” is too soft because it supposedly lacks an evidence base, is driven too much by intuition, and cannot provide the short-term returns which are so important to the day-to-day political process. (It is no wonder that practitioners develop a complex about what it is that we do). I would argue however, that while our practices may not be uniform, or uniformly understood, there is a new surge in international engagement activity driven by an enlightened recognition of the necessity for public diplomacy and cultural relations. I would assert that we are in the midst of a Public Diplomacy Enlightenment.

The rate of global information flow has drawn more attention to the world’s cultures and value systems, thereby creating space for the slow-burn of mutually-beneficial international engagement where there had previously only been room for short-term wins and zero-sum game thinking. Many of the common complaints with our discipline are being addressed with more sophisticated metrics and targeted strategies. And, while our conference discussions may sometimes feel painful, they are the precise evidence that we are grappling with the refinement of a truism, and ultimately, the means by which we create a fairer, more mutually beneficial globalization.

The 18th century Age of the Enlightenment was the turning point in modern, Western thought. Without disappearing down the rabbit hole on an in-depth academic analysis, I believe there are three elements of the Enlightenment which we are experiencing in present day public diplomacy:

1) Identified by a set of common values, the Enlightenment was not a uniform movement, rather a questioning of traditional ways of thinking and doing things which spread across the western world over decades. It was, in essence, a pattern of international progress.

2) The rise of what Jurgen Habermas has called the "public sphere" was a central theme of Enlightenment thought – developing a new era of civic engagement beyond the elite authorities based on issues of "common concern."

3) Platforms for exchange, based upon the values of the Enlightenment, flourished in the 18th century – such as coffeehouses, debate societies and the French “salon” promoting organized dialogue.

All these elements of the Enlightenment we can see mirrored in the way that the international community are communicating, and in so doing we are producing a new, almost unrecognizable system of thought that will influence the course of international affairs.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS

Like the Enlightenment of three centuries ago, what defines the changes in public diplomacy today is a loose collection of new values. Individual countries and institutions have varying interpretations of these values and thus, are adopting their own approach. As a practitioner, I would argue that value has been placed upon transparency of operation and thought, inclusiveness of cultures and people en mass, and what MountainRunner Institute President Matt Armstrong and others have called “Now” communication.

Individual nations have embraced these values in different ways: From the Twittering diplomats of Israel, to the public-private partnership driven focus of the U.S. State Department, foreign ministries have responded to the emergence of these values with a slew of new public...

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diplomacy programming that increase transparency and operate in real-time. New Cultural Relations bodies such as the Polish Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Turkey’s Yunus Emre Institute are going from strength to strength, and there is now a significant amount of interest in China’s rapidly expanding Confucius Institute. Perhaps the most indicative of national cultural responses, earlier this year, marked the opening of the first Iraqi Cultural Center of the post-Saddam Hussein period in Washington DC.

But it isn’t just individual countries that are part of this Public Diplomacy Enlightenment. In 2005, Turkey and Spain initiated the Alliance of Civilizations under the auspices of the UN to “to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today.” Today, the Alliance counts among its ranks more than 120 countries and multinational entities as “friends.” Multiple departments within the UN system are utilizing their convening power to conduct multilateral people-to-people diplomacy and cultural relations, but the Alliance of Civilizations has been created to exclusively concentrate on dialogue and exchange between cultures for the sole purpose of breaking down barriers and improving relationships between all cultures and countries.

The effect can also be seen in military institutions. NATO is currently rethinking its strategy to reflect a “Comprehensive Approach” – one which accounts for the multiple roles military personnel are now playing in the theatre – from soldier to policeman, from peacemaker to community organizer. This is a response to the reality on the ground: the mission must be achieved by any means necessary, and those means now include public diplomacy and cultural relations practices. Military doctrine and institutional strategies such as NATO’s are changing as a result.

We are not seeing a uniform shift in practices within the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment, but we are seeing a general progression which is driven by a new collection of values.

**“COMMON CONCERN”**

Today’s most pressing challenges know no boundaries: nuclear proliferation, climate change, immigration, poverty and terrorism are global phenomena. Global problems require global solutions, and it is in every country’s interest to ensure that these solutions are brought forth as quickly and effectively as possible. The “common concern” of the 21st century is a global concern, and thus, efforts to influence the course of policy must be multilateral in nature, as are the cultural relations efforts needed to create the space for dialogue. And yet, similar to the 18th Century Enlightenment, it is not just the traditional elites and authorities that are the key players in this process: influence has decentralized and the role of government has diminished. More important is the ability to draw in stakeholders across the “public sphere” as Habermas observed of the 18th century – government, business and civil society – often times from the bottom, up. This puts public diplomacy and cultural relations activities – which can appeal en-mass, create dialogue, encourage cooperation, and ensure impact – in the driver’s seat.

In the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment, we have a new era of public participation in international affairs – from international disaster relief to citizen journalism, from populist campaigns to global philanthropy. Individuals no longer leave their governments to address the globe’s pressing problems; they take them on – either intentionally on behalf of their neighbors, communities and countries, or independently of any national orientation, as a function of a new-found responsibility towards global citizenship. And thus, traditional institutions within the public sector must adapt to make way for the citizenry of the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment. In many cases, this means acting as a platform to collect and distribute information, to create dialogue, and to enable that which might not happen to happen; ultimately, to scale the efforts of the public in partnership with the public. The British Council’s own citizenship programming such as Global Changemakers, Transatlantic Network 2020 and Active Citizens reflect the adoption of this approach on a large-scale.

**PLATFORMS FOR DIALOGUE**

One of the marks of the Age of Enlightenment was the rise of new platforms of dialogue and debate, to advance reasonable discussion. Coffeehouses, the debate societies of universities in Britain, and the French salon all became popularized at this time. Similarly, one might point to the new community platforms of the 21st century Information Age as a variation on this theme: Twitter as the global water-cooler, the ever-more influential blogosphere, and the 500 million citizens of Facebook – which, if it were considered a country, would be one of the most populous in the world.

Author Clay Shirky has written eloquently on the rise of these sorts of platforms, and their affects on the shift in power away from institutions and towards the individual citizen through online organization. Foreign Policy contributor Evgeny Morozov provides a differing opinion which questions the use of new media in international affairs, and is especially skeptical of over-emphasizing...
their role in democratic political movements in fragile states. Still, the very existence and mass adoption of new media platforms is undeniable, and the ability to dialogue and organize at an increasing pace is a new addition to the international affairs landscape; so much so in fact that institutions have joined the fray so that they aren’t left out, and so they can engage with their target audiences in new ways – the Fortune 500, foreign ministries and NGOs alike.

What does this all mean for myself and others, as practitioners? How is the British Council participating in the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment? I realize that one of the complications of our fields is the lack of uniformly understood definitions – specifically of the term “public diplomacy.” Some may say that public diplomacy is strictly a practice implemented by governments to achieve policy goals by engagement with foreign publics; others say that “new” public diplomacy is the practice of building relations between countries regardless of the actor in question. The British Council builds trust and engagement for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide. We call this Cultural Relations, and we think it is complementary to, but overlaps with, the practice of public diplomacy because of its end goal: long-term trust.

Sometimes Cultural Relations is about helping and trends towards a development orientation around capacity building; other times it’s about boasting and showcasing the best about the British creative economy; most of the time though, it’s about sharing ideas and knowledge between people and cultures. Education, society, arts and English language programming that increases prosperity and stability in a mutually beneficial way, creates trust in the long-term. It is one such approach (adopted by the UK in this instance) to address the problems of the times but, like the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment more widely, it is reacting to and drawing strength from a questioning of traditional ways of doing things – an international shift around a loose collection of new values.

Cultural relations is not delivered in isolation, nor can it be implemented without listening or consultation. For that reason, as a practitioner, my future will be about working in partnership. The international progress of the Public Diplomacy Enlightenment towards more effective international engagement means more capacity and resource for co-delivered cultural relations: governments, corporations, multilateral institutions and individuals are all potential partners. The recognition of global issues of “common concern” mean that bilateral relations is not necessarily the primary mode of delivery anymore. Multilateral programming that seeks to achieve a common purpose – whether it be mobilization of young people around an international issue, or increasing understanding between cultures – is becoming the preferred approach. And, last but not least, new digital platforms for dialogue are unlocking the potential for cultural relations at scale. No longer can we be satisfied with the ability of face-to-face programming alone, though we recognize it will always be the most visceral experience.

The professional public diplomacy community is undergoing an Enlightenment, producing a new system of thought that will influence the course of international affairs. May we forge on through conferences and existential questioning, drawing upon one another’s experiences and best practices to maximize impact together. We are nearing a fairer, more inclusive international engagement which will rely on partnership as its essential vehicle; and I, for one, choose Cultural Relations to get there.

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THE IMPACT OF VISUAL IMAGES ON NON-U.S. CITIZENS’ ATTITUDES ABOUT THE UNITED STATES: A Q-STUDY IN VISUAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT
This visual public diplomacy study explores the impact of photographs on perceptions about the United States. A structured Q sample of 46 photos represented: (1) pop culture, (2) business, (3) people and sports, (4) landmarks and monuments, (5) conflict, (6) politicians, and (7) pro- and anti-American demonstrations. Thirty-three non-U.S. citizens from 20 countries sorted the Q sample from (-4) “makes me feel bad about the United States” to (+4) “makes me feel good about the United States.” Two factors emerged: (A) Iconic America, and (B) Anti-Government / Pro-Celebrity. Factor A participants associate classic images such as national monuments and famous Americans with positive feelings, whereas Factor B participants put a positive emphasis on entertainment personalities. Additionally, those in Factor B perceive as hypocritical any depictions of government’s diplomacy efforts.
Combining our interests in both public diplomacy and operant subjectivity, in this study we explore the extent to which images impact individuals’ perceptions, attitudes and opinions about foreign countries. Specifically, we examine how individual consumers of visual imagery feel about the United States when they look at photos of its people and places. In addition, we try to understand what kinds of visual images trigger more positive thoughts about this country.

Although the role of visual images in public diplomacy has been acknowledged by scholars and practitioners (Cowan and Arsenault 2008; Lord 2006; Nye 2004), the degree to which visual communications affect people’s understanding of a foreign country has not been explored extensively. Nor have the ways of effectively employing visual communications been addressed in the public diplomacy literature.

Nevertheless, several communication scholars have looked at the visual aspects of such concepts as national image (Edwards and Winkler 2008; James 2006; Kamalipour 1999; Kennedy 2008); propaganda and ideology (Cloud 2008; Davis 2005; Hariman and Lucaites 2007, 2008; Michalski and Gow 2007); media and strategic communications (Hariman and Lucaites 2007; Kennedy 2008; Michalski and Gow 2007); and political rhetoric (Edwards and Winkler 2008; Erickson 2008). Hariman and Lucaites (2007) observed that photojournalism can shape our understanding of foreign affairs.

Insight in subjective perspectives about the United States and its people could make U.S. public diplomacy efforts more competitive in today’s marketplace of visual communications. We employ Q methodology to test what kinds of pictures are perceived representative of the United States and what sorts of emotions those pictures evoke about America among people of different cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Conceptualizing Visual Public Diplomacy

Visual public diplomacy refers to state and non-state actors’ communications with overseas publics by means of pictures, rather than words, to convey or support messages about these actors, their country, policies, culture, businesses, etc. Our definition builds on the public diplomacy and visual communication literature that helps us understand (1) who crafts and controls public diplomacy’s visual messages; (2) what channels are used to communicate visual images to overseas audiences; and (3) why visual images are important in public diplomacy.

Unlike traditional diplomacy, which involves government-to-government interactions, public diplomacy interacts with citizens of other countries seeking to gain a better understanding of one another (Cull 2008; Tuch 1990), build a positive image or brand for the country (Anholt 2005; Arndt 2005; Kunczik 1997; Lord 2006; Nye 2004;), shape a favorable public opinion overseas (Malone 1988; Manheim 1994; Osgood 2006; Pigman and Deos 2008), and influence the policies of foreign governments by influencing the opinions of their citizens (Malone 1988; Manheim 1994; Tuch 1990).

Public diplomacy’s international outreach involves a variety of strategies and tactics employed by state and non-state actors such as governments, businesses and nonprofit nongovernmental organizations (Cowan and Arsenault 2008; Cull 2008; Malone 1988). Referring to governments’ public diplomacy, Malone (1988) distinguished: strategic communications, international broadcasting, and cultural and educational exchanges. Cull (2008) described a five-element taxonomy of public diplomacy: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international news broadcasting. Cowan and Arsenault (2008) proposed three strategies or layers of public diplomacy: monologue, dialogue and collaboration.

Our concept of visual public diplomacy ties in with what Cowan and Arsenault (2008) described as monologue or monologic, one-way communication (e.g., speeches, press releases, movies, books, works of visual-art, etc.). In Cowan and Arsenault (2008), monologic communications are designed to clearly present ideas, visions, and perspectives, and to target mass audiences in other countries. Although the effects of a monologue are rather limited compared to a dialogue or a collaboration, the one-way communication strategy has its advantages, time and place in public diplomacy: “Dialogue and collaboration, while invaluable, will never fully supplant one-way communication strategies” (Cowan and Arsenault 2008, 13).

National Competition for International Audiences/ Who Produces and Controls Visual Images

Visual imagery is often viewed as an ideological tool used—intentionally or unintentionally—by both those in power or those in opposition to the dominant power (Davis 2005; Cloud 2008; Edwards and Winkler 2008; Erickson 2008; Hariman and Lucaites 2008). Most images—from explicitly propagandistic to seemingly neutral—are said to contain ideological messages (Davis 2005; James 2006; Cloud 2008) and reflect the society in which they were created (Edwards and Winkler 2008). The explicit
message contained in an image notwithstanding, it is up to viewers to perceive and understand the implicit meanings in the image they see (Hariman and Lucaites 2008). Moreover, in the digital age, media play a greater role in the presentation and interpretation of political messages (Michalski and Gow 2007; Kennedy 2008).

As state and not-state public diplomacy practitioners seek to communicate with citizens of other countries, shape foreign public opinions, and manage national images overseas, their efforts face tremendous challenges from media industries both domestically and internationally. By definition intended for very large audiences, mass media industries extend their markets beyond national borders transforming the entire world into their consumers. As an additional benefit of their global expansion, mass media are better positioned than public diplomacy’s sources to influence opinions and images. Because of the limited firsthand experiences most people have with other countries, media portrayals have been found to impact their opinions and images of those countries tremendously (Anholt 2005; Brown 2003; Dizard 2004; Harris and Karafa 1999; Kamalipour 1999; Kunczik 1997; Lord 2006; Manheim and Albritton 1984; Malone 1988; Richmond 2008; Usluata 1999).

Visual coverage of world events, places, and cultures is particularly important in shaping people’s perceptions about the world outside of their countries (Cloud 2008; Hariman and Lucaites 2006; Kennedy 2008; Michalski and Gow 2007). Edwards and Winkler (2008) observed, “Images used strategically in the public sphere reflect not only beliefs, attitudes, and values of their creators, but those of the society at large” (119).

Kamalipour (1999) observed that “when it comes to production of images, no nation holds more power than the United States in terms of reach and penetration into cultures of the world” (xxiii). Considering the unrivaled private resources U.S. mass media enjoy, public diplomacy—and particularly governmental public diplomacy—could not possibly match media’s influence beyond the country’s borders. In addition to being powerful nationally and internationally, U.S. mass media often counter the U.S. government’s involvement in the management of information (Brown 2003; Lord 2006).

While such internal competition for overseas publics is certainly beneficial for developing and maintaining a rich national market of ideas, it doesn’t make the public diplomacy practitioner’s job easier. Recognizing the inevitability and inequality of competition between public diplomacy and commercial media, those concerned with the U.S. standing abroad advocate for public-private partnerships in public diplomacy (Dizard 2004; Lord 2006; Malone 1988; Nye 2004; Pigman and Deos 2008; Richmond 2008).

Notwithstanding the source (i.e., public diplomacy or media), monologic forms of communications targeting international publics offer the public diplomacy practitioners the least control over the message:

Popu: Popular entertainment products, global news flows, and the private circulation of information (and often misinformation) about the domestic sphere are just a few among many critical factors in shaping national reputations. There are many times when thoughtless or inadvertent forms of monologues, including those by private actors, or by public actors in private moments, contribute to a country’s reputation abroad (Cowan and Arsenault 2008, 14).

Michalski and Gow (2007) argued that the way people perceive visual images is “affected at least as much by the unintentional as by intentional” (4) efforts to manage information. In times of war or crisis more than ever, it becomes almost impossible to control mass media-generated visual discourse or lack thereof (Martin 2006; Michalski and Gow 2007).

The truis: The truism that a picture paints a thousand words has a darker twin. For, it is just as likely that while apparently substituting iconic simplicity and clarity in terms of communicating a message, the reality is that the image may well be hiding at least a thousand words (Michalski and Gow 2007, 218).

Indeed, the absence of visual images of weapons of mass destruction following the U.S.-led engagement in Iraq was critical in challenging the legitimacy of invasion. Television news is the dominant means of delivering images and, thus, those images—or, in the case of the Iraq invasion, their absence—were the key to the perceived success or failure of the government to justify its actions, argued Michalski and Gow (2007).

Nonetheless, one-way communications could become an opportunity for public diplomacy practitioners to turn monologue into a dialogue (Cowan and Arsenault 2008). In an increasingly complex and competitive transnational media environment, public diplomacy practitioners could use truthful albeit negative stories in the media as a way to build trust and credibility among international audiences—without employing propaganda (Brown 2003).
Iconic Photographs

Hariman and Lucaites (2006, 2007) referred to the images of the civilians in pain in Vietnam, a child eating ice cream cone in front of an American flag, and firefighters looking up at the flag raised at Ground Zero as iconic. Iconic images in Hariman and Lucaites are: (1) widely recognized, (2) understood to be representations of historically significant events, (3) inducing strong emotional identification or response, (4) used to orient the individual within a context of collective identity and power; and (5) reproduced across a range of media, genres, or topics (2007, 27). “They have more than documentary value, for they bear witness to something that exceeds words” (Hariman and Lucaites 2007, 1).

Hariman and Lucaites also identified five “vectors of influence” for photojournalism and iconic photographs: (1) reproducing ideology, (2) communicating social knowledge, (3) shaping collective memory, (4) modeling citizenship, and (5) providing figural resources for communication action (2007, 9). In this study, we use Hariman and Lucaites’s definition, along with some recent photography books (Carter 2008; Hilfiger and Lois 2007), as benchmarks to describe as “iconic America” those images of the United States and its people that seem to transcend genres, generations and borders and represent certain aspects of U.S. identity—as perceived by our participants.

METHOD


The photos were organized into seven categories, each consisting of six images:

1) Pop culture (i.e., Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse; actors Angelina Jolie and Jack Black; Elvis Presley; Ella Fitzgerald; pop band Pussycat Dolls; and rapper/actor Ice-T);

2) Business (i.e., Starbucks; Chevron; Ford; Apple; NYSE; and McDonald’s);

3) People and sports (i.e., man in fish market holding lobster; boy in wheelchair; 4th of July parade scene; St. Louis Cardinals’ first baseman Albert Pujols; tennis star Serena Williams; and Nathan’s hotdog eating contest winner Joey Chestnut);

4) Landmarks and monuments (i.e., Utah Monument Valley; Hollywood sign; Cherry Blossoms in Washington DC with Jefferson and Washington Monuments; Neil Armstrong on the Moon; Statue of Liberty; and Mark Twain Book and Gift Shop in Hannibal Missouri);

5) Conflict (i.e., Abu Ghraib; Guantanamo; US military on the streets of Iraq; US military and Iraqi translator; US soldier taking cover from enemy fire; and Iraqi girl standing in front of US military personnel);

6) Politicians (i.e., person holding “Obama for Kanzler” poster in Germany; then presidential candidate Barak Obama; Mexican and US governors including Arnold Schwarzenegger; then First lady Laura Bush in Ghana; President Bush and Liberian President; and Presidents Clinton and Putin);

7) Pro- or anti-American demonstrations (i.e., a Hamas fighter burning US flag; anti-Bush poster in Europe; two people wearing suits made with US dollars/wearing US flag hats/drinking from McDonalds cups; “Thank-you Bush” placard in Liberia; “Thank-you U.S.A.” placard in the Czech Republic,” and man carrying US humanitarian aid box).

A convenience, non-probability sample of 33 individuals was recruited at a large Northeastern university. A call for volunteers was published in the weekly newsletter distributed among both undergraduate and graduate international students. Interested respondents replied by email to one of the authors and were invited to take part in a Q session. Eleven male and 22 female students, ranging in age from 18 to 45 years old, volunteered for the study. Participants represented 20 countries including Afghanistan, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Guatemala, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Moldova, Peru, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, and the United Kingdom.

Four small-group and five individual Q sessions were conducted in October-December 2008. Participants were asked to sort the 42 images from (4) “those that make me feel bad about the United States,” to (4) “those that make me feel good about the United States” in the fol-
The completed Q sorts were correlated and factor analyzed using centroid extraction and rotated to simplest structure with PCQ, a Q analysis software program (Stricklin 2006).

RESULTS

Two factors emerged from the subsequent correlation and factor analysis of the 33 Q sorts. Twenty-seven participants were significantly loaded on Factor A. Twenty-one participants were significantly loaded on Factor B. This adds to more than 33 because of confounded Q sorts. The factors are highly correlated ($r = .71$) and we considered a one-factor solution. However, the reason for the high correlation seems to be the striking similarity in each factors sorting of the negative end of the Q sort—that is, “What makes you feel bad about the United States.” Our two-factor solution, while maintaining the negative consensus items, also reveals differences between factors on “What makes you feel good about the United States.” Therefore, we opted for a two-factor solution to tease out these differences (and subsequently point to our next research project). Let’s start by analyzing the negative consensus items.

Negative Consensus Items

All six of the “conflict” images were negative consensus items as indicated below (scores in parenthesis for Factors A and B, respectively):

(-4, -4) 25. Abu Ghraib
(-4, -4) 26. Guantanamo
(-4, -3) 28. US soldier taking cover from enemy fire
(-3, -3) 27. US military patrolling streets in Iraq
(-3, -4) 29. Iraqi girl standing in front of US military personnel
(-3, -3) 30. US military and Iraqi translator

Clearly, both factors indicated that the conflict images make them feel bad about the United States. This is fairly consistent with the literature (Michalski and Gow 2007; Nye 2004). These images (e.g., Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo) are not only the images that made headlines and generated considerable discussion in the news media but also became the focus of some academic research in mass communication and on U.S. reputation.

Our participants indicated that these images depicted “violence,” “hypocrisy,” “disregard for human rights,” “imperialism,” “American bringing terrible wars to the world,” “that it is sad to see the pictures about wars started by the U.S… can’t believe they did that,” “the U.S. is acting like the owner of the world,” “Guantanamo pictures represent the worst of America, what happens when you scare people,” “shows people too young to go to war,” “getting involved in too many issues around the world,” “pictures indicate the U.S. is terrible country that pressures people abroad,” “the war and their torture tactics appall me.”

Despite the strong negative consensus on the “conflict” images, the positively scored images helped differentiate the two factors and their perspectives.

Factor A: Iconic America

The ultimate symbol of American liberty, freedom and justice (i.e., the Statue of Liberty), and the ultimate illustration of American innovation, determination and “can-do” spirit, (i.e., the moon landing) are what make Factor A respondents feel good about America. Factor A respondents went out of their way to score the image of Neil Armstrong setting foot on the Sea of Tranquility and the image of the Statue of Liberty at the most positive end of their Q sorts (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(4, 0) 34. Neil Armstrong on the Moon
(4, 1) 36. Statue of Liberty

Further evidence of the appeal of iconic American images for Factor A can be seen in the positive scoring of other national monuments (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(3, 3) 31. Jefferson and Washington Monuments
(2, 3) 35. Utah Monument Valley

Additionally, Factor A scored such famous Americans as Mark Twain and Walt Disney quite high. One could argue that these people are, in fact, iconic American figures (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(3, 4) 32. Mark Twain Book and Gift Shop in Hannibal Missouri
(3, 4) 7. Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse

At first, we were confused by the high scoring of one image—i.e., a boy in the wheelchair (scores in parenthe-
ses for Factors A and B, respectively)—because we did not think this photo fit the Iconic America category:

(4, 3) 17. Boy in wheelchair

We asked participants and other international visitors about why this image might make one feel good about America. It is viewed as a symbol of respect and civil rights for people with disabilities. One person said, “Disabled people have much more opportunities and support in the US than in most places around the world.” Other participants also indicated that America treats people with disabilities better than do most other countries and this made them feel good about America.

Other positively scored and differentiating items for Factor A were the pictures of Laura Bush in Ghana and two pro-American rallies (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(3, -2) 23. Laura Bush in Ghana
(2, -2) 42. Thank-you U.S. placard in the Czech Republic
(1, -2) 41. Thank-you Bush placard in Liberia

These images underscore America’s traditional and public diplomacy, and its positive involvement around the world. One participant framed it as “helping” developing countries.

To summarize, Factor A participants highlight the classic iconic images as what makes them feel good about America. They also associate other national monuments and famous Americans with positive feelings. And finally, this Factor responds favorably to the public diplomacy images of America.

Factor B: Anti-Government / Pro-Celebrity

Along with rejecting all the “conflict” images, Factor B participants also rejected most of the images depicting U.S. diplomacy and public diplomacy (i.e., Laura Bush in Ghana, and thank-you placards in the Czech Republic and in Liberia). These were the images that factor A pointed to as America “helping” developing countries or positive involvement (please see above). In addition, Factor B participants scored other U.S. diplomacy images lower than did Factor A respondents (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(-1, -3) 22. President Bush and Liberian President
(-1, -2) 37. Man carrying U.S. aid box

Factor B participants find almost any depiction of U.S. government’s traditional and public diplomacy insincere, hypocritical and tied to imperialism. Some Factor B participants indicated that President Bush “pretends” to care and associate him with war and torture. One person said, “I don’t like seeing some people in poor countries waving U.S. flags just because of small help while U.S. is sacking their resources and acting like the owner of world.”

Factor B participants put a positive emphasis on entertainment personalities. Similar to Factor A, Factor B participants scored high Walt Disney and Mark Twain. But in addition to those two personalities, Factor B also scored music legends Elvis Presley and Ella Fitzgerald very high (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(1, 4) 10. Elvis Presley
(0, 3) 12. Ella Fitzgerald

Additionally, celebrities from other fields, such as film and sports, were also scored somewhat high by Factor B participants (scores in parentheses for Factors A and B, respectively):

(-1, 2) 8. Angelina Jolie and Jack Black
(2, 2) 18. Tennis star Serena Williams
(1, 1) 16. St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Albert Pujols

In summary, unlike Factor A, Factor B responds unfavorably to the images associated with the government, finding them insincere and hypocritical. Celebrities from music, to film and to sports evoke positive feelings of America for Factor B participants.

CONCLUSION

We sought to explore the extent to which visual images impact individuals’ perceptions, attitudes and opinions about the United States. We did not provide captions or news stories: Participants responded to the image alone supporting the idea that picture is a story in and of itself (Hariman and Lucaites 2007). Although every viewer evaluated the same images in a different fashion, their responses were not necessarily unique.

As we expected, the images of Abu Ghraib, conflict and war triggered negative feelings toward the United States (Michalski and Gow 2007; Nye 2004). Nevertheless, the reaction to some other images was less predictable. It may seem that photos depicting U.S. government aid for developing countries or humanitarian involvement would be good images to use in public diplomacy efforts. One might expect those images would make peo-
people feel good about the United States. However, for some respondents these types of pictures represented government’s hypocrisy rather than sincere intent. This is obviously not the message a public diplomacy practitioner wants to convey.

It appears harder to predict positively viewed images of a country. For example, in our study some respondents focused on national monuments and others focused on celebrities – but not all monuments and not all celebrities. Additionally, the picture of a boy in wheelchair scored high for all respondents.

Media rarely cover positive news. Negative news is often accompanied by photos illustrating the story. Thus, there is a scarcity of positive images in the media. As a result, public diplomacy sources are often the only supplier of positive visual images about a country. This suggests that, perhaps, despite the widely accepted assumption (Cowan and Arsenault 2008; Michalski and Gow 2007) public diplomacy practitioners might have certain control in the marketplace of images. Although one might expect that any positive images originating from public diplomacy sources would be perceived as propaganda, our study found that this is not necessarily the case. Some audiences seem to be comfortable with the source of images that makes them feel good about this country being its government. We believe this finding is worth exploring further. Although public diplomacy practitioners may not be able to control the negative or even positive images, having a handle on what images evoke positive and what images evoke negative feelings toward one’s country would enhance their efforts.

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SEE FOR YOURSELF: REBRANDING NORTHERN BAJA THROUGH PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

Baja Norte has been experiencing drastic drops in tourism and business volumes during the last few years due to the negative mediated reality among the American audience created by some events and media coverage. With an attempt to revive the tourism industry and to build a community spirit, the local administration asked for the support of communication scholars. “Baja, California: See for Yourself” is a project which aims to alter the mediated reality and to provide solutions to the local administration through creating a new regional brand. This case study introduces how the project makes use of public diplomacy and grassroots movements in order to raise awareness about the current situation and improvements in the region as well as to fight the negative stereotypes created by the media. See for Yourself targets mainly the American audience in Southern California because of the geographical proximity and tourism market structure. Rosarito en Positivo, RediscoveRosarito, Northern Baja Student Film Festival, and Southern California Campus Events constitute the project’s fundamental public diplomacy and public outreach attempts. The research demonstrates the importance of grassroots movements and two-way communication in place branding attempts after crisis situations.

Key words: Rosarito, Mexico, crisis management, place branding, public diplomacy, grassroots communication
This paper sets out to discuss the importance of public diplomacy in place branding after a crisis situation by introducing “Baja, California: See for Yourself” as a case study. The author has been actively involved in strategic planning and implementation phases of the project, therefore, aims to connect his experience on the grassroots components of place branding campaigns with the academic literature.

Place branding concept is being widely used both by scholars and academicians especially during the last few decades. In today’s world economy, places – let it be regions, countries, or cities – are expected to compete with each other for limited resources. A brand, in this sense, supposedly creates a better reputation and more favorable position as places can communicate values and manage perceptions through their brands.

Place branding is a rapidly growing field and the concept has been discussed by several scholars with various backgrounds. Consequently, it became virtually impossible to create a consensus about the definition of the term. This research argues that it is possible to categorize different definitions under three main categories based on their communication understanding and inclusiveness of the branding concept.

The first school tends to see place branding as a marketing activity. In other words, place branding is a sum of public relations, promotion, and advertising endeavors with specific objectives. Such strategic place marketing concerns the enhancement of a country’s position in the global market place. Scholars and practitioners in this school of thought aim to increase the media presence of a place to send its messages to target audiences. A successful campaign includes a mix of public relations and marketing. Brand experts are expected to situate their places in a better and a more appealing position than their competitors.

The second school treats place branding as a crisis communication plan. Given the fact that majority of the place branding attempts start after a crisis, the mere understanding of creating a proactive crisis management program to revive tourism and business is indeed a reasonable approach. One of the most famous cases belongs to Miami and its attempts to reshape public perception after the unfortunate events in early 1990s. Several tourists were attacked during their stay and lost their lives. As a result, South Florida employed a successful crisis communication project to change perceptions. See for Yourself, the place branding initiative for Northern Baja region, started out as a proactive crisis management plan shortly after drastic drops in tourism and business revenues in Rosarito, Mexico due to drug-related violence in the country. Southern Californians were the primary target audience, therefore the best way of action was stated as to “communicate with the media about issues in questionable reporting.”

The last school includes both marketing and crisis management understandings and searches for a community spirit in order to fight the mediated reality. The fundamental step to create a place brand is seen as creating a community involving all the stakeholders. If a place branding campaign fails to motivate local people and include them in the process, the campaign is less likely to succeed. On the other hand, it is another fact that “place brands are socially and culturally embedded, and co-created and reified by social actors.” Thus, the brand of a place is created through a negotiation process firstly among brand owners and subsequently between brand owners and targeted audiences. It is possible to skip the first step and design the brand identity based on customer demands, however, this approach creates legitimacy and ownership problems. Due to the fact that places do no have certain owners, no one single group, including elected officials, has the authority to create an identity. Therefore, message crafting and dissemination processes are quite complicated.

The decreasing levels of in-person social interaction strengthen the validity of mediated reality. In other words, similar to Lippmann’s explanation of picture in

people’s heads, the actual reality became less important than what was reported by the news media – the mediated reality. In case of Rosarito, drug related wars included only drug cartels and took place on the other side of the country. Unless tourists become involved in drug dealing and go around 600 miles north of Baja, there is no imminent danger. However, at the end of the day, the place was perceived no longer as safe by the American public. Suffice to say, mediated reality beat the actual reality.\textsuperscript{11}

This is why public diplomacy can and should be an important part of place branding campaigns. The brand is practically based on the perceptions of the people. It is possible to manage these perceptions through creating communication bridges between brand owners and target audiences. One of the most effective ways to increase the presence and persuasiveness of actual reality is grassroots/people-to-people communication.\textsuperscript{12}

This case study explores four grassroots communication projects under the \textit{See for Yourself} project. Believing that place brand is created through communication among local stakeholders and between local people and target audiences, these four projects – Rosarito en Positivo, RediscoverRosarito, Northern Baja Student Film Festival, and Southern California Campus Events – have been carried out with a special focus on Rosarito for three years. With \textit{See for Yourself}, the entire Northern Baja region will be included in the project.

**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

Public diplomacy is generally defined by a comparison to traditional diplomacy. The latter stands for relations between nations at a professional diplomatic level whereas the former involves publics as well as diplomats, and in some cases, excludes the diplomatic corps entirely. Succinctly stated, public diplomacy covers all international communications but traditional diplomacy. This differentiation encourages scholars and practitioners to look at public diplomacy at a macro level. During the last few decades, public diplomacy has become a top priority at governmental agendas and especially as War on Terror strategists started to point out public diplomacy as a vital part of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{13}

Public diplomacy involves the attempts of governmental bodies to reach foreign publics and to influence public opinion. Fortner\textsuperscript{14} describes public diplomacy as an attempt to win the hearts and minds of people. However, there is an ongoing debated over whether public diplomacy is solely a program of the government – or that an NGO, business and corporation, or private individuals can sponsor such public diplomacy initiatives.\textsuperscript{15}

"Practically speaking, public diplomacy is built on “intensive exchange of information, neutralization of clichés and prejudices about one’s nation.”\textsuperscript{16} All such attempts rely on informing, influencing, and engaging\textsuperscript{17} with the public. Hence, this paper is not interested in the political implications and governmental strategies about public diplomacy. In the case of \textit{See for Yourself}, public diplomacy is about engaging with target audiences to inform them about the reality in Northern Baja and to influence their perception.

When it comes to message transfer between the project team and audience, ethos\textsuperscript{18} has the utmost importance. Even in creating first contact and building up a relation with the audience, credibility is vital for Emerson College students – the outside experts -. By grassroots public diplomacy projects, the project aims to establish credibility and trustworthiness as well as to demonstrate its knowledge about the region. Eventually, grassroots movements will increase the persuasiveness of the branding messages about Mexico vis-à-vis the mediated Mexico.

Public diplomacy, as an effective method, “is a two-way street with reciprocal influence on both the source and receiver involved in the ongoing communication process.”\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, the audience in these projects will likely affect the ongoing of the overall branding project. Public diplomacy will not only carry the messages to audiences but also act as a focus group, a field work for the other parts of \textit{See for Yourself}. In addition, as the place brand meaning welcomes the feedback from the audience, it is more likely to get an appealing, convincing, and realistic brand. Shortly speaking, Northern Baja community spirit and the communication bridges between Northern Baja and Southern

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\textsuperscript{13} Christopher W.S. Ross, “Public Diplomacy Comes of Age,” \textit{The Washington Quarterly} 25, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 75-83.
\textsuperscript{18} Ethos, meaning the credibility of the source, is one of three main fundamental of Aristotelian rhetoric.
\textsuperscript{19} Nancy Snow, \textit{Persuader-in-Chief}, 4.
California are created through grassroots movements.

**GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN PLACE BRANDING**

Place branding is not merely employing branding and marketing techniques to a product of different nature. As discussed in the introduction part, the political nature of communication and the existence of a mediated reality necessitate further endeavors than corporate branding. The first step involves creating a consensus among internal stakeholders to build up a competitive identity. Competitive identity is “the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investment, tourism and export promotion.” Unless all the stakeholders are aware of the situation and agree on the main pillars of brand promises, it is not possible to talk about creating a brand identity or a competitive identity.

Rebranding of Northern Baja started after its image was drastically shattered by the drug-related violence. After a crisis, Benoît introduces five courses of action for image restoration. The first one is simply denial. Places can deny the responsibility or harmful nature of the event. Another avoidance course of action is evading responsibility. Places will try to reflect blame to others and refuse to take any further action for restoring their images. These first two actions point out to inertia or lack of action.

It is also possible to work toward reducing the offensiveness of the act. Either by claiming the crisis to be an accident or circumstantial, it is possible to ameliorate the crisis situation. As a fourth course of action, places can choose the path of taking corrective action and try to alter the reality. Lastly, one can choose mortification, where the party or parties take whole responsibility and ask for public forgiveness.

Based on the severity of the situation and public reaction, it is possible to take one or more of these actions. In Mexico, there is not a strong tradition of crisis management or place branding. Therefore, authorities chose to deny that the crisis situation was important and necessitated action. Even when American media increased their news coverage of drug wars and tourism was lower than ever, “Californians heard[d] radio ads telling them that ‘the lobster tastes good,’ and ‘to come to the Baja and stroll down the streets of Avenida Revolucion in Tijuana.’” When the local stakeholders denied the existence of a problem and a need, it is not possible for outsiders to work for rebranding.

Three years before starting the See for Yourself project for the entire region, Mayor Hugo Torres of Rosarito realized the importance of crisis communication and public diplomacy for the city. The first public diplomacy project was Rosarito Film Festival. The theme of the festival was Mi Rosarito – My Rosarito. With the support of Emerson College, students and young people from Rosarito were invited to film how they saw their hometown and craft their own messages to share. Students, together with learning about the effects of media in today’s global village, enjoyed the opportunity to share their stories with the American public. In 2008, 12 students participated in the festival. Their films were shown in Southern Californian campuses, community centers, tourism conventions, and several academic conferences. As of this writing, the next screenings are scheduled to take place in Las Vegas (April 2010), Barcelona (June, 2010), London (July, 2010), and San Francisco (November, 2010).

Eventually, Emerson College students led by Dr. Gregory Payne demonstrated their expertise and established credibility among local stakeholders. Lured by the success and finally aware of the crisis situation, other cities in Northern Baja region decided to seek for professional help.

**SEE FOR YOURSELF: GRASSROOTS IN ACTION**

Baja Norte is suffering a major decline in tourism revenue as a result of Americans’ recently increased fears for their personal safety. The news media focused on drug wars and street violence in Mexico. Consequently, Mexico was declared as a dangerous place to visit. As the decline in tourism volume shows, several visitors seem to be affected by the media images, and they choose to stay away from the country.

*Baja California: See For Yourself* aims to contain the crisis situation, to avert further deteriorating effects, to bring back tourism and business revenues, as well as to create a sense of pride within the community. Its main strategy is to build a community around “Baja” and refuse to take any further action for restoring their images.

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21 Ibid., 3.
through targeting of influential traditional and social media; reaching opinion leaders in education, religious communities, and sports; and building up partnerships with key individuals in business and civil society on both sides of the border. The main target audiences are Northern Baja and Southern California residents and college students. Northern Baja is a tourism destination for summer and spring break vacations. Moreover, the existence of affordable real estate market increases the region’s attractiveness for senior citizens. In short, this is an integrated crisis management and rebranding project targeting the aforementioned audiences.

The project has five fields of action: Infrastructural Improvements, Public Affairs, Mass Media Marketing, Online Marketing, and Grassroots Projects. After years of silence, a comprehensive rebranding plan is necessary to restore the regions image. Infrastructural improvements include all the projects that will be carried out in order to ensure the safety and the security of the visitors as well as to enhance the accessibility of the region. Public Affairs focuses on lobbying for a stronger Baja brand and for attracting events and investments to the region. Online and mass media marketing pillars aim to promote the region as a touristic destination and a retirement community on different media platforms. The last field of action, Grassroots Projects, is the main topic of this paper. After the success of Rosarito Film Festival, a people-to-people communication attempt in building up communication bridges between societies,28 See for Yourself project decided to increase the number of grassroots public diplomacy initiatives.

Rosarito en Positivo

Rosarito en Positivo, like Rosarito Film Festival, started out with a limited focus and is expanding in order to cover the entire region with See for Yourself. Rosarito en Positivo aims to collect testimonials from local people to reflect the positive sides of the region and to broadcast them online and through traditional media both in Northern Baja and in Southern California. By doing so, the aim is to realize three objectives.

Firstly, in order to create the competitive identity and general brand promises, it is vital to know what local people think about their own homes. Thanks to the Spanish-speaking members, the project team was able to reach residents directly and to ask their opinions. Given the fact that other components of grassroots movements are carried out in English, Rosarito en Positivo targets the non-English speaking population in the region. Therefore, by not excluding any group, the main aim is to promote a sense of personal involvement and community pride.

Secondly, accompanying mass media and online marketing messages, real-faces were to the Rosarito brand. Considering that hospitality and friendly community concepts are included into the brand, these testimonials about the positive sides of Rosarito constitute an important part of the branding messages.

Last but not the least, Rosarito en Positivo gives the team from Emerson College – the outside experts – the opportunity to talk with the local residents. Therefore, the team not only introduces themselves and the project but also learn more about audience expectations. See for Yourself cannot succeed unless there is trust and support in the region.

In Summer 2010, Ensenada and Tijuana residents will be included in the project with the same objectives. They will be asked to share their views on their cities in specific and Northern Baja region in general. The findings, in other words local opinion on the image of Northern Baja, will be compared and contrasted with the image on the other side of the border to demonstrate the difference between mediated realities. The testimonials will be distributed through appropriate media.

RediscoveRosarito

RediscoveRosarito.org, soon to be replaced by SeeforYourself.org, is a collaborative effort of Ron Raposa, Mayor Hugo Torres’s Press Consultant, and Emerson College graduate students. The website started out as a portal for Rosarito, including details about lodging, travel, events, as well as crisis communication attempts. The former website was a good start for a place with no outreach attempts but is unfortunately outdated in terms of web technologies.

See For Yourself web portal, on the other hand, is composed of three different parts. The first part uses Web 1.0 understanding and acts as a travel guide to the region. The remaining three are Web 2.0 projects – encouraging user contribution, participation, and dialogue.

As the project is trying to manage perception caused by mediated reality, the website includes a media watch part. Selected contributors from both Emerson College and Northern Baja will be monitoring the news about the region through a news aggregator. The news will be filtered and fact-checked. The media by choosing what events to report and how to report them shape their outcomes.29 Unfortunately, in case of Northern Baja,

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media was more interested in action-movie type news than the beauties of the region. Therefore, a media-check is a necessary part in a struggle to change the mediated reality. The main goal is eventually to reach a reputation for being a reliable and accurate news resource and to build up strong relations with the media on both sides of the border through reacting to news and editorials at an official level.

The last part of the website introduces a social networking opportunity, using Ning framework. Users will be able to create personal accounts, to keep blogs, and to share their stories with the website visitors. Locals will be able to talk about how they view their region and visitors will be able to share their experiences. Hence, create communication bridges will be created among people without necessarily being at the same place.

An online presence is necessary for several reasons. First of all given the rising importance of online social media, a comprehensive branding campaign cannot ignore this prominent medium. Compared to other forms of media, online media tools are more affordable than traditional media. In addition to all these, online platforms gather people together without being bound by geographical borders.

Northern Baja Student Film Festival

As introduced above, in 2008, Emerson College successfully carried out Rosarito Film Festival with the participation of 12 students from Rosarito. In summer 2010, call for participation will be made to the region in general. Campus Movie Fest will be the equipment sponsor and Emerson College graduate students will be leading the students and training them in film production.

The main objective is to create dialogue between the region and targeted audiences via film. For two weeks, a group of 20 students will be tutored by Emerson College students, a Campus Movie Fest liaison, and volunteers. The 2008 Film Festival produced documentaries highlighting unique perspectives of the city such as its handicrafts and ironwork traditions and historical landmarks, and short films featuring Rosarito as the backdrop of fictional short stories. These films indeed helped to bridge the gap between the reality and the mediated reality through creating first hand experiences.

The Student Film Festival will reveal another reality about the region – the reality from the eyes of the youth. Moreover, students’ involvement in the rebranding process and in their communities will create a sense of involvement and accomplishment.

The screenings will take place on university campuses, community centers, and academic conventions. The audience will face the reality and their reactions and interpretations of regional reality will be used for the other parts of the project. The movies will be available online, therefore, everyone interested in the region will have access.

Southern California Campus Events

Campus events are grassroots meetings with the objective of enhancing and reviving spring break tourism. Mediated reality affected college students as well, causing a major drop in tourism revenues. This is another vital market that cannot be neglected by the rebranding project.

In order to fight the mediated reality, Southern California Campus events – starting as early as September 2010 – will bring the actual reality to the colleges in San Diego and Los Angeles. A group of presenters, including residents, expatriates, and students from Northern Baja, will hold casual meetings with their American counterparts and share parts of their daily lives.

Relationships and networks are fundamental components of grassroots movements. By creating rapport and direct communication bridges with target audience, See for Yourself, will have the ethos to alter the mediated reality. College-level students are critical thinkers. A government-sponsored public diplomacy project is likely to create distrust. As the messages lack ethos, they are unlikely to alter perceptions. Moreover, regional representatives will have direct contact with their audience and will be able to exchange ideas.

CONCLUSION

See for Yourself is a comprehensive rebranding project and an integrated crisis communication project. After the crisis situation in Northern Baja, although the authorities first decided not to react, shortly after they realized their mistake and asked for expert advice. Based on the reputation Emerson College gained by working with Rosarito, they were asked to come up with a new plan for the region. In order to restore the image, the decision was to take corrective action. Public diplomacy and grassroots communication stand at the heart of the corrective actions.

Altering the mediated reality cannot be done solely by outside experts. Therefore, by executing Rosarito en Positivo (and Baja Norte en Positivo), the project team chose to talk directly with the residents and to listen to their perceptions of the region. Also, through several

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30 Payne and Georgaki, Yes We Can.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
presentations, local authorities and influential people were made aware that there was a definite need for action. By engaging with local population through grassroots communication, the main aim is to create a strong brand ownership and community spirit. The project’s inside-out branding approach ensures legitimacy and efficiency based on “local involvement and feelings of ownership.”

The next step was to combine the images portrayed by locals with the call for action. The best communication method was public diplomacy. Public diplomacy does not always necessitate governmental sponsorship or high-level involvement. Taking public diplomacy down to the people-to-people level, the aim was to get over credibility issues. The main aim, replacing mediated reality with the actual reality, demands ethos and expertise. The media is strong enough to shape the outcomes of the events by their agenda-setting abilities, however, grassroots movements, direct contact with the audience is likely to decrease the effectiveness of negative news coverage and to challenge the mediated reality.

As discussed above, public diplomacy is informing, influencing, and engaging. See for Yourself aims to inform the audiences in both sides of the border about the situation, and to influence their perception by actively engaging in dialogue. The messages, the rhetorical mechanisms, start with an identification process with Northern Baja and Southern California residents. By identifying with the stakeholders’ interests, consubstantiality in the messages was achieved.

Grassroots public diplomacy projects are indispensible for the success of the entire project. Firstly, by creating direct or indirect (via internet) people-to-people communication bridges, the daily life in the region is presented. This dialogue enables both sides to better understand each other and creates a community spirit in Northern Baja. Moreover, as project team members and locals are able to listen to the views of target audiences, public diplomacy does not only act as a tool to disseminate messages but also as a focus group.

In short, rebranding places after a crisis has to challenge the mediated reality. Especially in a region like Mexico where there is no tradition of crisis management, grassroots public diplomacy can be utilized to create a consensus among local stakeholders, to build up communication bridges, and to manage the perceptions of target audiences.

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ABSTRACT

While public diplomacy has emerged as the subject of much attention internationally, Australia appears disengaged from the discussions and Australia's public diplomacy program appears to be lagging behind. Closer examination of Australia's public diplomacy program, coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reveals that public diplomacy is not well understood within bureaucratic and academic circles; is lacking in strategic coordination, and is consistently under-resourced. Indeed, when it comes to Australia's public diplomacy, it appears that the whole may not be greater than the sum of the parts.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the current understanding and nature of Australia’s public diplomacy program, including key systemic shortcomings, in light of broader international trends and discussions. The paper aims to:

1. build upon a limited body of knowledge around the Australian experience of public diplomacy; and
2. engage Australia in broader scholarly and practice based discussion in an effort to deepen understanding and facilitate a reshaping of the program to better leverage public diplomacy as an instrument of strategic foreign policy.

Keywords: Australia, middle power, foreign policy, public diplomacy
PREFACE: Political Update

Since writing the paper, “Not Quite the Sum of its Parts: Public Diplomacy from an Australian Perspective”, the Australian political landscape has changed dramatically and quickly. While the outcome of such political change is as yet uncertain, the new environment and its potential impact on Australian public diplomacy over the short and medium terms require attention. This brief update highlights the key changes that have occurred, and concludes that while there will be an increasing role for Australian diplomats to inform, engage with and reassure foreign audiences, the opportunities to move towards creative and strategic Australian public diplomacy in the short term at least, have diminished.

Much to the dismay of those embedded at the epicentre of Australia’s political machinery, the close of the 2009 financial year saw former prime minister Kevin Rudd deposed by his own party ranks, and stable government turned on its head, all in a matter of weeks. Swift political manoeuvring within the Australian Labor Party (ALP) factions led former deputy prime minister, Julia Gillard to challenge Kevin Rudd for his leadership role on the evening of 23 June 2010. Gillard rationalised the move by claiming that under Rudd, “a good government was losing its way”, and faced the real danger of losing the confidence of the Australian people at the next election. The following day with overwhelming party support, Gillard was installed as Australia’s first female prime minister. Meanwhile, the high profile, internationally regarded Rudd was relegated to the back-benches of parliament.

As Prime Minister, Gillard shifted the tenor of Australian political debate to core domestic issues, and within weeks of her instalment had scheduled a national election to maximise her early popularity. In contrast to her predecessor, Gillard’s strong track record in national policy issues ranging from indigenous affairs, health and education to industrial relations, has left little room for budget savings, Abbott has indicated his opposition to the pursuit of public sector reforms. Such an outcome is likely to disable moves towards more flexible, innovative and joined-up bureaucracy, which would ultimately be positive for effective public diplomacy.

More than a week after the nation election of 21 August 2010, with about 85 percent of the vote counted; Australia’s parliament still hangs in limbo. Neither Gillard nor Abbott has secured a sufficient majority of the vote to claim the mandate to govern. Consequently, both leaders remain locked in the contest to woo independent candidates and build at best, fragile stability...
through a minority government. Analysts do not expect a clear outcome for some weeks. If stable government is not delivered by the political parties within a matter of weeks, a politically fatigued Australian electorate may be required to return to the voting booths for a second time. Despite the uncertain nature of this environment, some conclusions regarding prospects for Australian public diplomacy might be drawn. In the short-term, with Gillard as a caretaker prime minister, Australia’s traditional and public diplomacy programs will be slowed, if not immobilised, as is likely in the case of the campaign for the UNSC. However, in the absence of strategic leadership and formal program implementation, the pressure on informal and grassroots public diplomacy will intensify. Ironically, this pressure will be borne primarily by those with their heads quite squarely on the chopping block, Australian diplomats overseas.

Indeed quite apart from the stalemate produced at the national election, foreign audiences are still grappling with the complexities of Australian political factionalism and parliamentary democracy, played out to full effect through the political decapitation of Kevin Rudd. Anecdotal advice from Australian diplomats is that foreign audiences with an interest in Australia keep returning with the question, “but, tell me again, whatever happened to Kevin?”.

Managing external confusion about Australia’s political process and structure is a significant challenge for the nation’s diplomats, and will require substantial efforts both in the traditional and public diplomacy spheres. Such efforts will include the provision of timely, relevant and accurate information on the status of the Australian political situation. Of greater importance will be the need to provide credible reassurance to a range of foreign audiences on a number of issues, including: 1) the inherent stability of Australia’s democratic processes and system of governance; 2) Australia’s commitment to key bilateral relationships, such as China, India and Japan, and Indonesia, as well to the Pacific region; and 3) the competence of potential leaders from all sides of politics to continue to engage in and progress positive outcomes within regional and international fora.

Fortunately, Australia currently trades on a reasonably strong and positive reputation overseas, derived largely from a range of people-to-people interactions, and the international successes of our policy-makers, scientists, celebrities and sportspeople. Australian diplomats are generally highly regarded, and form relationships with official counterparts, foreign media and broader elite audiences easily.

At the very least, these inherent competencies might be enough to buy Australian leaders the necessary time to sort through the current domestic deadlock and associated international ambivalence. The effectiveness of such competencies might be measured in how openly and quickly the incoming Australian government, of whatever make-up, is welcomed and received by foreign publics across the globe when Australia determines to re-engage on the international stage.

The medium to longer term prospects for Australian public diplomacy are less clear, and will depend upon the outcome of the current political deadlock and implementation of election commitments. As noted, both major parties have signalled their intent to pull back on Australian diplomacy, whether through a raft of budget savings from overseas representation, the discontinuance of significant international programs, like the bid for the UNSC, or the abandonment of public sector reforms. For this reason, regardless of the ultimate political direction, prospects for strategic improvement across the leadership, structural design and resourcing of Australia’s government-driven public diplomacy program are somewhat diminished. That is, at least until domestic confidence in the Australian political system is restored, and a fresh vision of Australia’s strategic role on the international stage established.

7 This point was made during informal and confidential discussions with senior Australian diplomatic officials overseas. There is also value in noting at this point that since his departure from the role of prime minister, Kevin Rudd has been active in the international sphere, including in discussions with the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. Rudd has accepted a part-time, unpaid role as a member of a new United Nations panel on global sustainability.
Recent incidents of violence against Indian students in Australia, alongside serious international education scams and migration crackdowns have challenged the credibility of Australia’s image within the region, and revealed strategic shortcomings in Australia’s approach to public diplomacy. The extensive international and domestic media coverage of these issues has attracted wide criticism of Australia. Not only has the attention damaged Australia’s reputation as a safe and credible destination for international students (putting at risk the A$15 billion dollar international education industry), but has reinforced lingering stereotypes in the Asian region of Australia as a racist nation.

The few but prominent instances of violent attacks and exploitation targeting Indian students during 2009 has grabbed the attention not only of foreign political leaders, but of business and industry leaders, opinion leaders, and importantly the overseas communities and families who might otherwise trade with, travel to or support their children moving temporarily to Australia. Australian international policy expert Dr. Michael Wesley, notes the potential impact of the problem as, “students who return to their country with negative experiences could become a poisoned alumni, conveying critical attitudes in other countries about Australian society and poor impressions about Australia’s reputation as an education provider. They could ultimately destroy a strong export product.” This is the point at which Australian public diplomacy most visibly takes its cue in issues management mode.

The issues relating to Indian students have sparked a full offensive and crisis management response from Australian diplomatic officials led initially by veteran (and retired) Australian diplomat John McCarthy AO. As reported, “the Government ‘damage-control’ efforts and expenditures in the wake of the violence and media coverage included sending officials to India, hosting Indian journalists in Australia, and forming a specific taskforce.” In addition, since August 2009 high profile Australian political leaders, including Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard and Foreign Minister Stephan Smith have all included India on their international visits schedule. The crisis nature and urgent pace of the Australian response appears to have had a mitigating effect, and at the very least demonstrated that at a political level, Australia is concerned about its identity within India and the rest of the region. However, the crisis has exposed deeper issues within Australia’s public diplomacy approach, including gaps in strategic understanding, political commitment and resourcing behind Australia’s broad public diplomacy efforts. In particular, the response to the Indian crisis revealed a typically Australian “short-termist” and crisis driven approach to building the Australian image and reputation from the margins; images and reputation that might otherwise advance national interests on the global stage.

As an active middle power with ambitious global interests, Australia political and bureaucratic leaders aspire for Australia to be “smart and creative in the exercise of its international influence.” In delivering upon this vision, Australian politicians, policy-makers and elites agree that Australia could better utilise public diplomacy instruments to build soft power and influence that will assist in meeting the challenges ahead.

3 For example, see Heath Gilmore, “China Speaks Out on Student Attacks,” Sydney Morning Herald, June 4, 2009.
4 Dubey, “Bollywood to Skip Shoots”, Bolt, “We’re Not the Racists.”
6 Senior diplomat, Peter Varghese has most recently been appointed as Australia’s High Commissioner to India to take retiring diplomat, John McCarthy’s place. See also Mark Dodd, “Veteran Diplomat Peter Varghese Appointed High Commissioner to India,” The Australian, June 9, 2009.
By virtue of geographic and geopolitical positioning, Australia’s current and emerging strategic foreign policy challenges are increasingly global in nature. These challenges include for example, shifts in global and regional power dynamics as the Group of 20 (G-20) takes on a more powerful and active role in navigating a way through global governance, economic and environmental issues; as China and India assert their economic, political and military influence; and as other threats to national interests are posed in the form of terrorism, climate change, resource scarcity and health pandemics. Within this environment, international relations scholars and practitioners recognise that there is value in pursuing foreign policy objectives and addressing global challenges through collaborative approaches that engage with broader foreign audiences, including foreign publics.

However, significant tensions exist between the aspirations of the Australian political, business and broad domestic community and the reality of Australia’s current capacity in diplomatic practice, with specific regard to public diplomacy. Indeed commentators have made the compelling observation that when it comes to Australia’s public diplomacy program “perhaps the whole is simply not as great as the sum of its parts.” This terminology of fragmentation suggests a “phenomenon that pulls apart something which is whole.” More specifically, “fragmentation suggests a condition in which the people involved see themselves as more separate than united, and in which information and knowledge are chaotic and scattered.” Australia’s approach to public diplomacy ostensibly led and coordinated by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), while active, is fragmented. The program is described by Australian academics a “hotch potch,” where a vast range of messages and activities are generated across some 18-19 government agencies to undefined and random domestic and foreign audiences, with only limited strategic input and coordination provided by DFAT.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the current understanding and nature of Australia’s public diplomacy program, including key systemic shortcomings, in light of broader international trends and discussions. The paper aims to (1) build upon a limited body of knowledge around the Australian experience of public diplomacy; and (2) engage Australia in broader scholarly and practice based discussion in an effort to deepen understanding and facilitate a reshaping of the program to better leverage public diplomacy as an instrument of strategic foreign policy.

Drawing upon international and national literature, including the findings of the 2007 Australian Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia’s public diplomacy program (Senate Inquiry), and interviews with Australian policy-makers and diplomats, core systemic shortcomings in Australia’s program of public diplomacy appear to be twofold (1) poor engagement by Australian academics and practitioners in the broader discussion and conceptual understanding of public diplomacy; and (2) conflicting messages from Australia’s political leadership about the place, significance and value of public diplomacy.

As a result of these overarching gaps, Australian public diplomacy program is seen by commentators in the field of international policy to be a “conceptual muddle.” The lack of cohesive understanding and direction for Australian practitioners has resulted in active, yet poorly focused and under-resourced program that occurs quite separately from areas of practice aligned to foreign policy outcomes. The opportunity lost for Australia’s strategic interests, particularly within the Asia Pacific region and in addressing global challenges is significant. As one commentator asserts, “the reality is that Australian public diplomacy has been relegated to a level of importance equivalent to that of Embassy gardens...under DFAT this incredibly important function will remain in the domain of the garden shed while the increasingly redundant work..."

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13 Such tensions are highlighted through reading of the Australian community aspirations for the pursuit of Australia’s national interests via foreign policy as reflected through the Australia 2020 Summit, “Australia’s Future Security and Prosperity in a Rapidly Changing World,” in Australia 2020 Summit – Final Report: 357-399; when contrasted with the harsh critique of Australia’s current diplomatic capacity set out in Lowy Institute for International Policy, “Australia’s Diplomatic Deficit: Reinvesting in our Instruments of International Policy.”
14 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, March 15, 2007: 9.
16 Ibid.
17 Alison Broinowski quoted in Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, April 11, 2007: 27.
20 Ibid.
of the traditional diplomat will maintain its place in the ivory tower.” 21

WE’RE ALL FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY! BUT WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

A number of international conferences convened in recent years, have seen academics and high profile practitioners working together in dialogue on the emerging role of modern public diplomacy as a tool for achieving foreign policy priorities. 22 The discussions, which have engaged a range of small, medium and large power states consistently highlight the fact that public diplomacy is no longer on the periphery of diplomatic activity, but has “acquired greater prominence on the agenda of [international] policy-makers since 2001.” 3 Scholars internationally are recognising that public diplomacy, because of its potential to reach and influence a wider public audience through cost effective media, has a “key role to play [in] meeting some of the grand geo-political challenges of our day.” 24

At a time when public diplomacy has been labelled as “one of the hottest topics under discussion in the world’s diplomatic services,” 25 Australian academics and practitioners remain notably absent and disengaged from the international discussions. 26 While DFAT officials remain abreast of latest trends and developments through journal subscriptions, there is limited budget within the area to support practitioner participation in such conferences. 27 Non-participation in high level conferences and discussions represents not only a loss for Australian practitioners in the field in terms of the informal development of understanding, networks and sharing of knowledge and experience; but also an opportunity lost in terms of engaging in the more formal rigour and scrutiny of other practitioners within a learning environment. This represents a net cumulative loss to the Australia’s practice of diplomacy.

Contemporary Australian academic discussion and published literature regarding the Australian position on and practice of public diplomacy is virtually non-existent. Dr Pauline Kerr, of the Asia Pacific College of Diplomacy at the Australian National University (ANU), admits that “little has been written on the subject domestically.” 28 She continues that “it is quite noticeable, when looking through the diplomatic literature that public diplomacy really is not a topic that Australian academics find all that interesting.” 29

From the outset, the 2007 Senate Inquiry revealed an absence of any formalised definition of Australian public diplomacy, and revealed that practitioners found difficulty in articulating what public diplomacy is and why public diplomacy matters, beyond a quantitative analysis of the number of media reports about Australia appearing in certain parts of the world. Informal attempts at defining Australian public diplomacy assert that public diplomacy is a learning environment. This represents a net cumulative loss to the Australia’s practice of diplomacy.
“spans…everything from integrated promotions,… encompassing culture, business and politics, all the way through to quite specific, targeted activities,” and is “spread across a large canvass with many contributors,”

all trying to project a positive image of Australia to the world. These comments align with the Senate Committee’s view that “clearly public diplomacy is not a term commonly used or understood within Australia.”

As expected, there exists a general sense of confusion and misunderstanding within the Australian public about the terminology ‘public diplomacy’ and its real meaning for government policy development and delivery. During the Inquiry, Senate Committee member, Senator Hogg noted his own “doubt… as to what public diplomacy is really about,” and a “concern that government departments and institutions jump on the bandwagon and say, ‘Yes, that’s a good catchphrase. We will use that this month. We’re all for public diplomacy,’ but really no-one quite has a real idea as to what it is all about.”

The lack of clarity evident in official statements around public diplomacy resonate with the small number of academics currently engaged in and observing Australia’s public diplomacy activities. Dr Julie Wells, of RMIT University notes that “[public diplomacy] is not a term that is well understood by the people we would expect to be the government’s partners in the project.”

In the absence of any formal or consistent statement about the meaning or understanding of public diplomacy, a key outcome of the Senate Inquiry was the establishment of an agreed definition that might be applied to public diplomacy in an Australian context. The Senate Committee drew from the themes and experiences of Britain, Canada and the United States of America in undertaking similar tasks, and ultimately negotiated a conservative hybrid statement of Australian public diplomacy. In tabling the Final Report to the Australian Parliament regarding the nature and conduct of Australia’s public diplomacy program, the Senate Committee therefore addressed this gap and defined Australian public diplomacy as, “work or activities undertaken to understand, engage and inform individuals and organisations in other countries in order to shape their perceptions in ways that will promote Australia’s foreign policy goals.”

In reaching their agreed statement of public diplomacy the Senate Inquiry exposed the ‘serendipitous approach’ taken within Australia to public diplomacy outcomes, particularly with regard to DFAT coordination of activities. Indeed, this is no revelation in the analysis of Australia’s approach to foreign policy and diplomacy outcomes. The “lucky country syndrome,” or “…‘culture of serendipity’ that infects much thinking about Australia’s place in the world,” and influences the approach taken to international policy planning and development. Wesley builds upon this common theme in the analysis of Australia’s approach to foreign policy, pointing out that Australia has benefited from “remarkable luck in its international progress,” and has not been subjected to the full hardships or international challenges that have beset other nation states, whether security or resource driven. Australia has not had to plan to forge out a new path for itself in the aftermath of war or conflict as many other states have, and is “not naturally disposed to think hard about the future.”

Wesley’s comments are relevant both to this discussion, and provide some context to Australia’s lack of participation in international discussions on public diplomacy. In the case of Australia, greater effort is focused on the day to day activities and actions related to public diplomacy across government (frequently in the form of issues management), than the more theoretical study and discussion, let alone planning or forecasting for long term lasting relationships. As the Indian example demonstrates, such an approach does have drawbacks, particularly in the development of shared understanding of what public diplomacy is, and can

30 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, March 14, 2007: 2.
31 Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; Australia’s Public Diplomacy: Building Our Image, 201.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 30.
34 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, March 15, 2007: 34. Of interest, Senator Trood noted during interview that he had embarked on an education program to provide his Senate Committee colleagues with a basic level of understanding of public diplomacy prior to the Inquiry because of the low levels of understanding that existed amongst them at that stage. Also confirmed in interview with Senator Russell Trood, January 13, 2008 and June 30, 2009.
35 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard: March 15, 2007: 34.
36 Ibid., 28.
37 Australian Senate, Hansard, August 16, 2007, 56.
38 In this particular instance, Senator Trood made comment on the fact that DFAT had no mechanism in place to maintain networks between those participants in the youth ambassadors exchange program. As noted by Senator Trood, “it seems to me if you wait for serendipitous encounters… they might not be around the particular corner that you turn.” As Trood further commented to the DFAT official, “you have an extraordinary pool of people who have had quite remarkable experiences, compared to the rest of the Australian population going to places where we are making long term investments in both aid and defence and generally in foreign affairs engagement, and it seems to me that we could look at doing a lot more with them.” Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, March 14, 2007: 8.
39 Interview, Michael Wesley, July 13, 2009.
40 Wesley, “Planning Australia’s Foreign Policy Future,” 2.
41 Ibid., 3.
achieve, the articulation of coherent public diplomacy related objectives, and coordination of efforts to align with those objectives.

Furthermore, as the evidence provided through departmental portfolio statements suggests, “there is a lot of activity in the international arena conducted by Australian organisations which might be broadly characterised as public diplomacy,” yet many organisations are not fully aware that the activities they are undertaking are public diplomacy activities, and may be linked into a broader Australian public diplomacy agenda. As a result, those activities are likely to hit only a superficial target, and any linkages that do occur between activities tend to be the obvious linkages (generally driven through the major government departments based in Canberra) or linkages that occur on an ad hoc basis without regard to strategic foreign policy objectives or priorities.

DRIVING THE AUSTRALIAN IMAGE: POLITICAL WILL AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Despite the sense of general confusion within the Australian bureaucracy and outlying agencies about public diplomacy, there is one key actor within the Australian political scene who, in particular demonstrates an innate understanding for and flair in the field. Since his arrival to the political leadership in 2007, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has dominated Australia’s foreign policy agenda. Rudd employs rhetoric and aspirations with a strong public diplomacy flavour (including speaking to key foreign audiences in their own language). Rudd’s ‘ambitious’ agenda has emerged after a decade of strong realist tradition in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives, and has renewed Australia’s interest and engagement in multilateral systems, and re-established a role for Australia in shaping international outcomes based upon previous traits of good international citizenship fostered in the 1990s. To achieve this agenda, Rudd has embraced the language of creative and collaborative diplomacy and regional community building and has set an ambitious program for the Australian diplomatic corps. Rudd’s strategy “requires extensive coalition building and a diplomacy with a global reach,” which extends outside the boundaries of traditional diplomacy, and brings public diplomacy to the centre of Rudd’s political practice. Early initiatives delivered after Rudd took office as Prime Minister, including Australia’s signing of the Kyoto Protocol, high profile official presentations to the Chinese Government and Chinese students in fluent Mandarin, and the formal Parliamentary apology delivered to Australia’s Stolen Generation, (the latter of which secured the front page of the Wall Street Journal), presented an early positive outlook for a highly visible public diplomacy program. Rudd has since articulated his vision for Australia to be seated on the United Nations Security Council for the 2013-14 term, pledged Australia’s commitment to the establishment of a regional institution that will span the entire Asia-Pacific region, and committed to the reinvigorating of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations.

Rudd has set out a firm and ambitious strategic policy direction through statements, speeches and actions on the international stage. Through his statements Rudd has alluded to a strong role for public diplomacy, for example in “creative middle power diplomacy” in which Australia “should use its influence to build coalitions of support with others on issues of global significance.” As political commentator, Allan Gyngell notes, “Rudd speaks about Australia as a ‘regional power prosecuting global interests’.” In support of Australia’s foreign policy objectives at the regional and international level, Rudd has pointed to activities that will enable greater people-to-people linkages, understanding and engagement within the region. For example, Rudd has pointed with some urgency to the need for Australia to pursue greater understanding of regional cultures and to “become the most Asia literate country in the collective West.”

42 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, April 12, 2007: 41.
43 Ibid., 42.
46 For example, see Ferguson, “Kevin Rudd’s Mandarin words impress China APEC delegates,” Herald Sun, September 7, 2007.
49 Gyngell provides a detailed list of key speeches and interviews undertaken by Rudd that demonstrate his ambitious foreign policy agenda in Gyngell, “Ambition: The Emerging Foreign Policy of the Rudd Government,” 17-18.
50 Ibid., 7. Such a statement is further supported through government rhetoric, for example see Julia Gillard, “Call to Action: Asia Literacy for Every Young Australian,” (presentation to the
At the strategic level, Rudd could be said to be driving Australia’s strategic public diplomacy program. He has involved several senior government ministers through a hectic travel agenda over the past six months enabling high level meetings with leaders in India, Brazil, Chile, China, Russia, Peru and the United States, all in an effort to build new relations and strengthen Australia’s position vis-à-vis critical international regimes such as the G20.53

Such a campaign, founded in public diplomacy has substantially increased the international standing and profile of both Kevin Rudd and of Australia.54 A position which may be further strengthened should Australia be successful in its bid for a seat on the UN Security Council (for which a separate and equally intense travel agenda has commenced). To be effective in the long term, public diplomacy program relies upon more than travel and high level meetings. For that matter, success in the advancing Australia’s UN Security Council campaign will depend upon how well Australia engages and influences the rest of the world on a range of other levels. However, the importance that Rudd attaches to public diplomacy in the political sphere is not mirrored further within the Australian policy process. It appears that “Rudd intends to…single-handedly elevate Australia’s international profile, as seen in his initiatives on the G-20, Asia-Pacific architecture and nuclear weapons.”55

Consequently, what appears to be lacking from the current strategic picture is the opportunity for robust debate, engagement and consensus building beyond the boundaries of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to incorporate Australian government policy heads and opinion leaders. There is a sense of disconnect and confusion that exists between these. At present, while Rudd’s strategic public diplomacy agenda appears to promote strategic foreign policy outcomes, the lack of clear and broad based understanding of the goals is proving to be problematic, and DFAT along with the rest of the bureaucracy appear to be lagging behind. As reported in Australian media, much of the current work in foreign policy, and indeed in the underpinning public diplomacy is “stemming from Kevin Rudd’s office, with the constant complaint from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that they are out of the loop.”56

Furthermore, while public diplomacy clearly features in Rudd’s strategic approach, it is undermined by a significantly reduced funding allocation to DFAT. Significant budget cuts across the board have been made as a part of DFAT’s ongoing contribution to the cost-cutting anti-inflationary measures in the face of the global financial crisis.57 Australia’s international policy and diplomacy capacity has been seriously eroded and Australian diplomat and foreign policy-makers are not supported at the most basic funding and resource levels to engage, influence and inform other governments let alone foreign audiences. The overall shrinkage in resources and diplomatic positions sends a distinct message through the bureaucracy that foreign policy delivery via DFAT and Australian diplomatic practice, including public diplomacy practice is not high on the agenda.

COORDINATION CONCERNS

Regardless of the obvious concerns surrounding budgetary deficits, DFAT points to an “extremely wide range of activities which are focussed on promoting Australia’s national interest, on shaping and influencing opinion, and on building long term relationships.”58 These include the funding and support of eight bilateral Foundations, Councils and Institutes (FCIs), the coordination of the Australian International Cultural Council (AICC), and the International Media Centre, along with support to a range of cultural and media exchanges, and dissemination of information through publications, Internet and annual reports.59 Such activities are identified across the three key categories identified by Nye in the wielding of soft power and encompass:

53 Dennis Shanahan, “Kevin Rudd Looks for Wider Role in G20 as He Launches Global Campaign,” The Australian, September 10, 2009; Glenn Milne, “Kevin Rudd’s G20 Force Shifts World Order,” The Australian, September 27, 2009. The international travel agenda has included senior members of Rudd’s cabinet, including Julia Gillard, Stephen Smith, Simon Crean, and Martin Ferguson. The G20 was created during the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis as a mechanism for bringing finance ministers together. As a founding member of the grouping at that time, Australia won significant recognition and according to Paul Kelly’s review of the Howard decade gained soft power credibility within the region for the role played in assisting Asian nations manage the financial crisis.

54 Milne, “Rudd’s G20 Force Shifts World Order.”


56 Flitton, “Stretched to the Limit.”

57 For information on recent cuts to the DFAT budget, refer to Australian Government, 2009-2010 Portfolio Budget Statement: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, June 2009).

58 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, March 14, 2007: 2.

59 The following nine FCIs have been established under legislation since 1979: Australia-Japan Foundation, Australia-China Council, Australia-India Council, Australia-Indonesia Institute, Australia-Korea Foundation, Council on Australia-Latin America Relations, Council for Australian-Arab Relations, Australia-Malaysia Institute, and Australia-Thailand Institute. 

1. daily communications and issues management – evident through the response to the Indian students crisis;

2. strategic communications – with the recent A$45 million Australia movie and associated tourism marketing campaign providing just one recent high profile example; and

3. building lasting relationships – including through people-to-people exchanges such as the ongoing Youth Endeavour Ambassador program, or linkages promoted through the FCI grants schemes.

DFAT not only holds lead responsibility for delivering the Australian public diplomacy program across these categories, but is also responsible for coordinating this public diplomacy program across a significant number of Government agencies. DFAT’s role in leading and coordinating foreign policy responses has become more complex in an environment where “almost every conceivable policy issue has an international dimension,” and “18 of 19 Commonwealth Department’s now have a dedicated international policy area.”\(^{60}\) When considering the use of public diplomacy in foreign policy development and delivery, and the additional overlap it brings with strategic communications and public relations, the complexity of this task intensifies significantly. As a result, it becomes more difficult for DFAT with lead responsibility, to identify and drive the key policy objectives across Government, and align the Government’s public diplomacy program accordingly. The existing coordination mechanism, an Inter-departmental Committee (IDC) that meets twice yearly, chaired by DFAT and represented at officer level by each of the government agencies with an interest in public diplomacy activities, does not represent strategic clout.

At this point strategic coordination is frequently reduced to information exchange.

The sheer volume of activity taking place within the current fragmented public diplomacy system is evidence that public diplomacy is on the Australian agenda, and activities and outputs may be coordinated and quantified on the ground. Yet, as Dr Alison Broinowski, reiterates, Australia’s public diplomacy program is at best, “a hotch potch”… “some education centre here, and there a little information office, and over here something else. In one country there will be somebody doing cultural relations and in another country there will be none.”\(^{60}\) In her view, “Australia looks like little bits and pieces of little bits of departments instead of one identifiable thing.”\(^{60}\) Because of gaps in understanding, strategic commitment and direction, and resourcing, public diplomacy activities and outputs do not necessarily flow into meaningful outcomes for Australia’s national interests. This is the point at which Australia’s public diplomacy program demonstrates the potential to become unhinged.

**AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: THE SUM OF THE PARTS…**

Public diplomacy will play an increasingly strategic role as Australia strives to builds relationships with foreign audiences to progress foreign policy goals in a chaotic, complex and less predictable world. Moving forward, the growing “influence of non state actors and the complexity of [international] policy problems we face mean that Australia will need to become more adept at informal multilateralism - the ability to assemble coalitions including other governments but also non-government groups.”\(^{63}\) Australia’s ability to work beyond traditional diplomatic practice and outside traditional diplomatic structures, to persuade not only states, but the audiences that those states represent, will be severely tested in coming years. The traditional boundaries of diplomacy are eroding, yet the expectations of and challenges ahead of the international community are growing progressively more complex and difficult. Public diplomacy, or the ability to inform, understand, engage foreign audiences to shape their perceptions, will therefore become increasingly more important as a tool for progressing “arguments, developing ideas, crafting compromises and putting together coalitions of support” in ways that will underpin Australia’s national and global interests.\(^ {64}\)

\(^{60}\) Lowy Institute for International Policy, “Australia’s Diplomatic Deficit: Reinvesting in our Instruments of International Policy,” ix.

\(^{61}\) Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, April 11 2007: 4. The Australian film festival in Beijing in late 2009 is an example of such public diplomacy at work. Embassy officials informally commented about their uncertainty as to the message or image that was being conveyed about Australia through the films, or the clear strategic objectives of the activity more broadly. Australian diplomats and representatives of the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, Responses to questions and conversation following briefing on Australia-China relations, Australia Chamber of Commerce, Beijing, October 28, 2009.

\(^{62}\) Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Committee Hansard, April 11 2007: 27.

\(^{63}\) Lowy Institute for International Policy, “Australia’s Diplomatic Deficit: Reinvesting in our Instruments of International Policy,” 12.

Developing and promoting a ‘smart and creative’ Australia that has significant impact on the world stage, or in advancing foreign policy interests during a challenging and turbulent period of international relations, will come from smart and creative connections to audiences across the globe. This requires Australia to move outside the ‘culture of serendipity’ and for practitioners and academics engage more deeply with the concept and practice of public diplomacy, and in the dialogue and understanding surrounding it. For example, as middle power with an ambitious international policy agenda, it is appropriate for Australian practitioners to be visible at and engaged in international discussions and conferences dealing with public diplomacy trends and challenges.

Australia requires a coherent, well articulated, coordinated and funded long-term public diplomacy program grounded in foreign policy priorities. At a practical level, the incorporation of public diplomacy into a coherent policy framework presents an opportunity for the Australian Government to move beyond the ‘hotch potch’ parts and activities that make up public diplomacy in Australia, and view public diplomacy as a whole and coherent program that is increasingly important in progressing Australia’s international interests. Without such strategic alignment, public diplomacy is likely to continue to float around the fringe of foreign policy, appearing only at a superficial level in rhetoric and symbolic gestures, one-off or randomly planned events and activities, and crisis media management.

By incorporating public diplomacy into an overarching policy framework, DFAT might be better positioned to take on an effective and long-term planning and coordination role. Such a shift role requires an understanding and articulation of the broad themes and purpose of the public diplomacy program against strategic priorities, the identification of key audiences and their needs, and the identification of key government and non-government partners for development and delivery of various aspects of the program. Only once each of these key policy-based processes has been addressed should the actual public diplomacy activities or methods be employed, and over time their impact and effectiveness measured.

The leadership role of DFAT is central to the effectiveness and coherence of Australia’s public diplomacy program. The current structure and organisation of public diplomacy within DFAT reflects the fragmented nature of the Australian public diplomacy program itself. For example, within DFAT’s existing organisational structure, the public diplomacy working unit sits alongside consular operations and parliamentary affairs, and well outside the policy development areas, providing little opportunity for linkages between the two to naturally emerge. Similarly, the current structure and terms of reference of the IDC has been criticised as having limited strategic value. Further attention could be given to additional training and redistribution of internal public diplomacy resources, and the redesign of the IDC as an overarching governance and planning body. The latter could incorporate fewer, but more strategic participants from government and non-government sectors, with mechanisms and resources for outreach and consultation on Australia’s public diplomacy programs. In particular, such a body might play a critical role in delivering and reporting on the evaluation of Australia’s public diplomacy program, including vis-a-vis the achievement of strategic foreign policy priorities.

Australia has an impressive story to tell, and a positive role to play in international politics. The recent G20 discussions aptly demonstrated Australia’s willingness and creativity in playing a niche role to bring key players together and negotiate outcomes on the world stage. The values of freedom, egalitarianism, tolerance, mateship and resilience that define the Australian experience are intrinsic to Australia’s diplomatic approach, and might well position our practitioners and leaders to nimbly manoeuvre and build bridges between the more confrontational and widely divergent approaches taken by the key powers of the globalised world, including for example, between a rising China and the United States of America.

However, at the present time Australia has many public diplomacy activities occurring as separate parts, generally in isolation from each other, and more specifically in isolation from strategic policy priorities. Developing and promoting a ‘smart and creative’ Australia that has significant impact on the world stage, or in advancing foreign policy interests during a challenging period of international relations, will come from smart and creative connections to audiences across the globe. With political

65 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence, Committee Hansard, April 2007 11: 45.
66 Building for example on the policy process framework identified by Allan Gynell and Michael Wesley, which identifies four distinct, but not always sequential phases in the foreign policy making process, including the strategic, the contextual, the organisation and the operational, public diplomacy might be viewed as more than just an activity-based concept centred on media releases and high profile visits. Refer to Allan Gynell and Michael Wesley, Making Australian Foreign Policy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
67 See discussion about the effectiveness of the IDC and Recommendation made by the Senate Committee: Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, “Australia’s Public Diplomacy: Building Our Image,” 103-110.
leadership, additional resourcing and structural redesign, the complex and multilayered puzzle that is public diplomacy might gain credibility as an increasingly important tool of strategic international policy value. Indeed, with consideration, the many parts that currently make up Australia’s public diplomacy program might be brought together to create a substantially greater whole.

Dr. Caitlin Byrne is a former Australian diplomat, having served in a range of legal policy, diplomatic and management roles with the Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade from 1994 to 2001. From 2001, Caitlin continued her career in business management consulting, strategic social policy development, legislation reform, and community development projects; and has worked across a range of state government, private sector and community sector organisations across Australia. In 2010, Caitlin completed her PhD entitled “Public diplomacy in the Australian context: a policy based framework for understanding and practice.” Caitlin is currently Assistant Professor of International Relations at Bond University, Queensland, Australia.

REFERENCES


CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN CZECH PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

Public diplomacy can be seen as a very good instrument for small and medium-sized states to be seen and to gain influence beyond limits of their hard power resources. The paper focuses on main characteristics of Public Diplomacy (PD) and specifics of Czech approach to PD strategy. The author examines which characteristics of the public diplomacy model for small states have direct connection to public diplomacy in the Czech Republic and to what extent. In its other part the paper touches new trends in the international environment and possible reaction of the Czech public diplomacy to these changes, and new perspectives of public diplomacy in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: public diplomacy, Czech Republic, small states, strategy
This paper focuses on the Czech public diplomacy. It is not necessary to repeat here what public diplomacy is or that its main goal is to support and create a good and positive image of a state. Public diplomacy, as a special area of international relations, is definitely not “hot news.” But what has changed is its role in international relations, its role in diplomacy. Public diplomacy in its practice has to react to new trends, to changes in international relations. Therefore, this paper aims to sketch how these changes can influence practice of public diplomacy in the Czech Republic.

The first part of this paper introduces characteristics of public diplomacy in the practice of small states. The second part summarizes public diplomacy activities in the Czech Republic in recent history and provides an overview of existing conditions for public diplomacy. The third part of the paper concentrates on recent significant changes of international relations (e.g. globalization, innovations in communication and information technologies or the rising importance of public opinion) and their impact on public diplomacy, in new general trends and changes, such as multiplicity of actors, aspects of cooperation or the relation between public diplomacy and foreign policy. Therefore, the paper also includes the fundamental issue of how these new trends could be incorporated in the practice of Czech public diplomacy. The last part of the paper introduces, as a case study, the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union from the public diplomacy’s point of view.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND
Public diplomacy relates very closely to the foreign policy of state. In this way it becomes more than just a means of promoting national interests or guaranteeing national security. Multilateralism of today’s world emphasizes very much mutual trust between states, trust in fulfillment of proclaimed commitments. It is inevitable for participants of international relations to have credibility and good image to induce such trust.

So it is not the military or economic power, but the attractiveness of offered ideas and values in association with the image of speakers that is now seen as the best way to get a support from other members of the international community. Joseph S. Nye is often cited in respect to this side of foreign policy as he states:

“Soft power works by convincing others to follow, or getting them to agree to, norms and institutions that produce the desired behavior. Soft power can rest on the appeal of one’s ideas or the ability to set the agenda in ways that shape the preferences of others. If a state can make its power legitimate in the perception of others and establish international institutions that encourage them to channel or limit their activities, it may not need to expend so many of its costly traditional economic or military resources.”

With growing importance, effective communication with foreign publics is a significant part of most diplomatic strategy. Public diplomacy offers a new strategy for diplomatic activities, making one’s own priorities attractive enough also for others. The international politics should be seen more as a network of strong mutual relations and not only as a win/lose game. In any case it does not mean that the time of intergovernmental diplomacy is over. Rather it represents the effort of cooperation and harmony of both types of diplomacy and their use in appropriate situations.

The Czech Republic definitely belongs among small states and it is foremost small states that can benefit from using public diplomacy in their foreign policy. For small states, public diplomacy represents “an opportunity to gain influence and shape international agenda in ways that go beyond their limited hard power resources (related to size, military and economic strength).” Jozef Bátora introduced in his work several distinct features of public diplomacy in small and medium-sized states. These distinct features include: core mission, volume or breadth of messages and images, and outset legitimacy.

For small and medium-sized states, their core mission is to be visible, to say that they exist and what values are important for them. Public diplomacy is closely associated with foreign policy activities and helps to create such a profile of state. Small states also have to deal with another problem and that is their limited financial and human resources even for public diplomacy activities. The solution is to specialize and focus all accessible resources on one or several topics only. It means that their volume or breadth of messages and images is or should be very narrow. The outset legitimacy of small states public diplomacy is high because due to their limited hard power resources they are not suspected to have power ambitions and their ideas or intentions are declared as cooperative.

Also, such legitimacy positively influences the capability of states to cooperate with other subjects

3 Peterková, “Czech Strategy in Public Diplomacy.”
4 Nye, Bound to Lead, 37.
5 Bátora, “Between Home and Abroad,” 54-55.
6 Ibid., 60-63.
7 Leonard, Diplomacy by Other Means; Leonard, Stead, and Smewing, Public Diplomacy, 3,28,60.
8 Bátora, “Between Home and Abroad,” 60-63.
2. CZECH REPUBLIC AND ITS SITUATION

In the Czech Republic there have also been initiatives and activities, first concerning promotion and then foreign presentation of a state. Then the Czech government and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) decided to change not only the logo or one particular feature of its image, but to create a completely new system of the state public diplomacy. To create a comprehensive new strategy is not an easy task; it is a complicated long-term mission. Much of work has been already done (system of coordination and cooperation at the state level, new visible logo of the state etc.).

Context – Starting Conditions

This part is devoted to existing conditions (social, political, economical) that any perspective of future public diplomacy should take into account. The Czech Republic has to take into account some characteristics of the existing development of the state, some characteristics of public diplomacy belonging to small and medium-sized states and there are also some foreign policy priorities that have their value in creating a public diplomacy strategy.

The Czech Republic, according to its territory, its hard power resources, belongs most probably to small states in the international community. From this point of view it has to accept its limitations. According to Jozef Bátor’s opinion, mentioned above, there are core mission (be visible), volume or breadth of messages and images (niche diplomacy) and outset legitimacy as the main dissimilarities of small state’s and medium-sized state’s public diplomacy in comparison to that of great powers. All of these differences evidently also form the strategy or applied tools.

Existing public diplomacy practice in the Czech Republic corresponds to public diplomacy of small states just in part. The disintegration of former Czechoslovakia, the period of transformation in 1990s and other societal factors have resulted in belated development of public diplomacy as a concept and also of all strategies in this

Participants and the principle of partnership at the domestic level, in the sense of collaboration of state with private sector, nongovernmental organizations or movements, represent yet another level of collaboration in public diplomacy activities. It refers foremost to the system of creation and realization of procedures in which foreign policy is performed. The question is whether the system is centralized, involving only the state, or if there are also other entities, nonstate participants (private entities or nongovernmental organizations) and to what degree they are involved. It is not possible to ignore the role of the public in creating and promoting issues at the international scene. The question is whether and how these features are presented in Czech public diplomacy activities.

10 Ibid., 23.
11 Fiske de Gouveia and Plumridge, European Infopolitik, 7, 11, 15, 16.
12 Rudderham, Middle-Power Pull, 1, 15, 16, 18; Henrikson, “Niche Diplomacy in Public Arena,” 68.
16 Kutscherauer, Disparity malé země.
17 Bátor, “Between Home and Abroad,” 60-63.
area.

What corresponds to the practice of small states is definitely the mission – to be visible. But formulation of their messages is of strategic influence to small states. Messages should be formulated very narrowly and profiled to enable a state to concentrate on strong features of its identity and to use its resources effectively. The Czech Republic has a framework objective – to be seen as a democratic country, but does not have a concrete message. Even the Concept for a Unified Presentation of the Czech Republic, a government framework strategy for public diplomacy, has formulated only areas such as economy, tourism and natural beauty, culture and science, but no specific theme as e.g. Norway has (Humanitarian superpower). The Czech Republic does not have any theme for its “niche diplomacy.” It is, from my point of view, the biggest problem of Czech practice.

With respect to specification of target groups and geographic priorities, from a long-term point of view there were formulated, in the Concept, by the MFA four basic groups (foreign investors, trade partners and consumers abroad; tourists; influential individuals and institutions; journalists). Opinion formers and opinion leaders were formulated and added to target groups in the last strategy of 2007. These groups are, due to their multiplication effect, very important especially for small states. Czech strategy has also its geographic priorities (the EU countries, USA, Russia and some others) chosen according to the country’s long-lasting political, economical and cultural aims, and we could see them in governmental documents. It is possible to say that in this point the Czech strategy and practice correspond to the model of public diplomacy of small states.

In relation to the outset legitimacy, the Czech situation is not so clear. At the international scene, according to course of contemporary practice (economy, trade and tourism) the Czech public diplomacy is mainly competitive and does not use its cooperative potential, corresponding to outset legitimacy, very often and in a broad way. It differs from the domestic scene where cooperation with nonstate actors, mainly in export and foreign trade, works very well. The non-profit organizations cooperate with the state administration quite often and very well mainly in areas such as development cooperation, humanitarian aid, transformation, which belong also to priorities of the Czech foreign policy.

3. NEW TRENDS IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY – PERSPECTIVES OF THE CZECH PRACTICE

Many significant changes have quite recently taken place in the international environment. Undoubtedly, these include globalization; influence of new trends and innovations in communication and information technologies on foreign policy and diplomacy; growing role of the public and importance of the public opinion, capability of the public to influence governmental policy through nonstate actors; increasing value of image in the world politics; difficulties with getting attention; expanding group of actors in international relations at international or domestic levels – nonstate actors, paradiplomacy, the public; possible broadening of public diplomacy from “economic” tasks (tourism, economic diplomacy) to “political” ones (human rights protection); transition of the task of electronic media from “just” a tool of foreign policy to an instrument able to define such a policy. Public diplomacy has to adequately react to such changes and that is the reason for new trends in public diplomacy. Some researchers even speak about a “new public diplomacy.”

It is possible to identify the following trends in contemporary public diplomacy:

- Multiplicity of actors (especially at the

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19 Ibid.
22 Peterková, Veřejná diplomacie malých států a realita České republiky, 21-22.
26 Tuch, Communicating with the World, 3; Melissen, “Wielding
international scene) – states, supranational entities, international governmental organizations, nonstate actors (nongovernmental (non-profitable) organizations, private subjects (firms, brands), other types (political parties, diasporas etc.);

• Aspects of cooperation in public diplomacy. We speak about competitive public diplomacy in areas such as tourism or economic interests, and about cooperative public diplomacy in such themes as development of democracy, protection of human rights etc. The question is whether or not there are also some changes in subjects or in groups of possible partners or rivals;

• Relation to the foreign policy (questions of themes of specialization in public diplomacy);

• Perspectives of further development (educating and training public diplomacy professionals, evaluation of results).

How can the Czech public diplomacy react to these trends? What are the prospects of the Czech public diplomacy in the near future? There are some points, which should be reflected by thinking about expectations of the Czech public diplomacy.

The first one, even though it is not a new one, is the question of harmonizing terminology relating to public diplomacy. At that time of accessing the EU the Czech MFA used the term “foreign presentation” for all activities targeting the foreign public and the term “communication strategy” for activities intended for the domestic public. Now the MFA speaks also about public diplomacy. Moreover, some people from the Czech Parliament sometimes also mention public diplomacy as diplomatic activities done by public – ordinary people or in the meaning of foreign activities done solely by the foreign service. So, it is necessary to say what words we will use and to define their meaning. People need to know what they are talking about.

There is yet another aspect connected with terminology or meaning of public diplomacy as a concept. It is necessary to know that public diplomacy is of great significance to state’s position in the international community and that is why, among other reasons, it is so important to connect public diplomacy and its activities with foreign policy priorities. In this respect information on web pages of the MFA can be seen as highly interesting – there is a document (mentioned above) about strategic management of the MFA where public diplomacy is mentioned among its strategic priorities together with economic diplomacy and the document lists quite concrete aims for public diplomacy, such as concept presentation of the Czech Republic abroad, establishing communication strategy of the MFA with the domestic public or effective cooperation of state administration institutions. This document also brings a brief description of a system of Czech export promotion activities, of the system of state services abroad, including institutional arrangement with all related subjects. These aims, with no doubt, can have an impact on other fundamental points mentioned below, e.g. organizational structure or recognition of a two-dimensional character of public diplomacy, mutual influence of and relation between the impact on foreign and domestic scene as well, and the important role of domestic actors, mainly that of the domestic public.

As mentioned above, the next point is the organizational structure where the main role still belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Considering among other things the history of activities referring to public diplomacy in the Czech Republic it is possible to say that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should remain the central institution for this issue. Nevertheless, it is key to restore activities of the Commission for Presentation as a coordination body of state administration and all related subjects. Because without the cooperation and coordination among related subjects, there will be only a set of independent

31 Bátora, “Multistakeholder Public Diplomacy.”
activities, perhaps sometimes overlapping or duplicating each other. In addition, there has been created a new position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself — it is the position of a Public Diplomacy Coordinator. As it is a relatively new position it is not a public knowledge what its duties and competencies are but we can imagine that this person could be responsible for the new public diplomacy strategy of the MFA. Yet another dimension is the organizational structure of MFA itself, where there is nothing similar to communication department or public diplomacy department responsible for all activities connected with public diplomacy. There is a spokesman department, responsible for relations with the media, Czech as well as foreign, and also for information policy to the public, but not for communication activities abroad.

The other trend mentioned above is the multiplicity of actors, not only on the international scene but also at the domestic level. So the cooperation of state administration with other levels, involving local administration, regions, and cities, and also with nonstate actors (private companies or nongovernmental organizations) is essential for efficient public diplomacy. On the other hand, collaboration with private nonstate actors in the economic sphere (trade, tourism) works very well. And we have to say that much has been done to engage non-profit organizations as well. For example the Czech Centers, an agency affiliated to the MFA and entrusted with cultural cooperation and presentation of Czech culture abroad, cooperate very successfully with a lot of artistic companies, independent artists or universities. In addition, the MFA cooperates closely with Czech regions and encourages their participation, e.g. at the EXPO exhibition in Shanghai in 2010. However, a deeper, constant and conscious engagement of domestic public needs to be ensured and promoted.

Besides the cooperation at the domestic scene it is necessary to take into account some aspects of cooperation at the international level. In this connection we speak about so-called competitive and cooperative public diplomacy as mentioned above. For the Czech Republic there may be a great potential for cooperation with its neighbors, e.g. in using culture for public diplomacy purposes (joint cultural presentations of the Czech Republic and its neighbors) or in presenting Central Europe as a great tourist destination.

Multilateral dimension of public diplomacy has a great potential. Small states have a great capacity and tendency to cooperate with other similar actors partly because of their outset legitimacy. The other reason could be also in their personal or financial limitations and the opportunity to share their costs through multilateral cooperation. The Czech Republic could collaborate with other member states in the European Union and prepare common projects on the European level, especially in third countries outside the EU. E.g. “The Night of Literature” used to be a project of Czech Centres only, but now a lot of its partner cultural centers from the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) network takes part in this project of reading Czech literature in the original language or translated. Plus, the Czech Republic should make a better use of potential cooperation on the regional level and in groups such as the Visegrad Group, so called “Visegrad Four,” a group of several Central European countries, connected also by their common interests and common geographic position in the world.

Message is yet another feature, at intervals discussed by MFA representatives, academics, public relations and branding professionals. The Czech Republic has no specific message (e.g. such as Norway), but needs to be visible; needs something to identify with. However, possible topic for the Czech foreign policy in terms

33 Czech Centres, “Czech Stars,” http://www.export.cz/exportcz/Projekt%C4%8Cesn%C3%A9%hv%C4%9Bdov%C4%8Cek%C3%A9%hv%C4%9Bdov%C3%A1%e%C3%A1vez%C4%8De%C3%A1zpr%C3%A1va/tabid/174/Default.aspx; Export.cz, “Home,” http://www.export.cz/EXPORTEN (accessed May 10, 2010).
of niche diplomacy remains unclear. Existing public diplomacy activities are closely connected to economy, tourism, natural beauty or culture. As a possibility for the future we can see more political themes or political relations in general. Protection of human rights in all its consequences can also become a theme. Nevertheless, protection of human rights cannot be perceived as a unique and the only theme in foreign policy.

It is clear that such a theme should be understandable for other partners, for other members of international community. In this aspect protection of human rights is a good example because protection of human rights is let say a global theme. People know how important it is to protect human rights. The Czech Republic and its public experienced a totalitarian system and a subsequent transition period, thus this question or topic is important for us and the protection of human rights is a part of Czech identity and of the Czech values. That is why the Czech Republic should be considered to be a good member of international community as mentioned by Gareth Evans. The former Australian Foreign Minister added to two “classical” categories of national interests the third one “the national interest in being, and being seen to be, a good international citizen.” In addition to human rights there is also the issue and potential of development or humanitarian aid. This question has to be discussed not only at the government and MFA, but also among foreign relations experts and other nonstate actors.

The process of looking for a message started in the Czech Republic with several discussions last year. The discussions took place mainly on an academic level, at workshops or conferences, but with participation of members of private companies, state administration or non-profit organizations and even the domestic public. „Public Relations and the image of the Czech Republic” conference (October 2008) can be seen as a good example of such activities. Starting a dialogue and general discussion of further orientation of Czech public diplomacy was one of its goals. It is an example of how different levels of the Czech society can cooperate in public diplomacy activities, even if only on a theoretical level at this moment. In December 2008 there was also the very first meeting of a discussion panel called the “Czech Brand” where its participants discussed the theme of public diplomacy, its development and future, its connection and blending with cultural diplomacy and possible cooperation also in other areas such as economic diplomacy, or more generally in every area where the state can influence positive image of its existence among the foreign public. This panel had its continuation in a “Czech Idea2” project in year 2009, orientated also on public diplomacy activities and themes or values suitable for the Czech public diplomacy.

4. CZECH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

All member states consider the presidency of the Council of the European Union to be a unique opportunity to present their country, its culture, values and exceptional factors through cultural projects. In the same way, the Czech Republic saw a successful presidency as its priority and as a culmination of a long period of preparation. From January 2009 till June 2009, projects accompanying activities of the Czech administration and presenting cultural richness of the Czech Republic in an international context were an outstanding opportunity to present and explain the Czech Republic to international audience, and to strengthen its position on the international scene by using its positive image.

The aim to generate a positive image of the Czech Republic during the Presidency had such a strong appeal that something previously unbelievable in the Czech practice happened. All involved actors were capable to cooperate, to meet regularly and to discuss related topics and to inform each other about their own activities. The Office of the Government in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assumed the role of a coordination center. The question is whether such initial mechanisms of cooperation and coordination will survive in the future. The problem is that there is probably not, at least from the point of view of the political representation, such a strong motive as the Presidency certainly was.

The Czech Presidency also confirmed that it is no longer possible to divide campaigns or projects or

42 Evans and Grant, Australia’s Foreign Relations, 36.
speeches to those orientated only on domestic audience and to those targeting the foreign audience. The example was the Czech domestic campaign trying to arouse interest in the European Union among the Czech public. This campaign had a slogan “We will sweeten Europe.”

Certainly it reflects a specific sense of humor, but it is a little bit controversial. When reaction mostly abroad were restrained or even critical, the Czech government started to explain that it is mainly a domestic campaign, that it reflects our specific sense of humor and the main goal of this campaign was to provoke the interest of the Czech public.

The fall of the Czech government in the middle of the Czech Presidency and its negative influence on the big picture and impression of Presidency and its evaluation also serves as an evidence of the influence of domestic scene on the image of state abroad and the evidence of connection between the foreign and domestic dimensions of public diplomacy.

Communication strategy of the Czech Presidency as a whole, it means both its domestic and foreign parts, was evaluated rather positively. It includes a whole spectrum of elements from regional information campaign in Czech towns to exhibitions in Brussels. Further, the web page of the Czech Presidency was nominated among the best ten European internet projects in a category “European eDemocracy Award.”

The Presidency also confirmed some important features of every working public diplomacy strategy, which are cardinal also for the public face of the Presidency and of the Czech Republic in general. The first one is the need to have long-term strategies and work in a conceptual and strategic way. There were two main strategies of communication, one for the foreign public, the other one for the domestic audience. Both of them were prepared and discussed long time before the Presidency started. The second feature shows that cooperation and consensual approach of all relevant actors or subjects, operating participants, involved is not only useful but that it is actually possible. And that it works.

What is required even more is the agreement of all members or participants of the political scene about the importance of activities and strategies connected with public or cultural diplomacy. And that their permanent support, their political will is essential. It is required regardless to changes on the political scene or to personal changes. The other relevant feature is the willingness of political representatives to hold back their mutual antagonisms and particular interests, and to cooperate for a more effective public diplomacy of the state. Only such cooperation can yield long-term results. But it is more an ideal than realistic expectation.

Long-term and continual activity is highly important for effective public and cultural diplomacy. That is why a country needs also a long-term financial strategy and the ability to provide all financial means necessary. However, this is not easy in the time of financial crisis. But public diplomacy can be successful only when it has a long term and continual support. The financial crisis of 2009 caused a cca 20% cut of public expanses on public diplomacy in MFA funds for 2010. It will certainly have a negative impact at least on number of organized presentations or projects. Where financial means oscillate, there is no chance to propose and to implement long-term programs.


49 Czech Presidency of the European Union, “Claus Sorensen, Director General for Communication, European Commission,” Contradiction and particular interests, and to cooperate for a more effective public diplomacy of the state. Only such cooperation can yield long-term results. But it is more an ideal than realistic expectation.

50 “Portal of the Czech Presidency EU2009.cz Ranks Among the Best European Websites Changing the World of the Internet and  

51 Gonesh and Melissen, Public Diplomacy: Improving Practice.  

52 Melissen and D’Hooghe, Public Diplomacy in Practice.  


54 An interview of the author at Czech Centres, (September 23, 2009) and at MFA (October 22, 2009).
Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that long-term programs in particular form the base for every public diplomacy effort.

**CONCLUSION**
The Czech Republic needs public diplomacy and needs to react to new trends in the development of public diplomacy. What still has to be done is to fully understand public diplomacy as a complex activity with very close relation to foreign policy goals and interests. A shift is needed or better progress in understanding the importance and spirit of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy has to be seen as an inseparable element of state’s foreign relations and not only as a fashion element needed from time to time. The second main task is to understand the necessity to collaborate with all stakeholders, including civil society. Both these features are necessary for creation of a long-term complex strategy as a foundation stone for better image and understanding of the Czech Republic, and consequently they are necessary to meet the interests of the country.

From all new aspects mentioned above, it is possible to see the multilateral dimension and possible cooperation at the domestic or international levels as those with the biggest potential. Regional cooperation like the Visegrad Group is a wonderful possibility for cooperation even in competitive areas such as tourism, e.g. they could organize a joint campaign in a distant territory, or joint cultural projects etc.

The question of harmonizing terminology is not so easy and perhaps it will take some time because it requires coordination between all subjects, people and institutions involved as they use somewhat incompatible expressions. The matter of message is very similar but there have been some discussions already and the state administration is very well aware that the Czech Republic really needs a message to have a successful public diplomacy.

The exceptional period of Presidency of the Council of the European Union can be seen as evidence of previously unprecedented working partnership and coordination of all activities. However, we cannot be sure whether such spirit of cooperation and mutual awareness will endure and will be capitalized in future projects, or whether it was just an exception and without the imperative of remarkable political action the cooperation will not continue. What is pleasant is the existence of academic and also non-professional discussions about the public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and about the image of the Czech Republic. But what the Czech Republic really needs is the understanding of political representatives that public diplomacy is not only a marginal thing, but that good public diplomacy can do a lot for a country and its position on the international scene.
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