

Nov 04, 2016 by [Mark Dillen](#)

The Year in Review ^[1]

The year 2009 in public diplomacy was a year for re-branding America in the world. The first African-American in the White House, who also happened to be the most eloquent U.S. President since John Kennedy, would have made for an auspicious year for the international image of the U.S. in any event. In fact, however, it was even more significant, since Barack Obama followed George W. Bush, whose tenure had coincided with a marked drop in U.S. prestige in much of the world. By year's end, as Obama's popularity fell at home, his – and America's – popularity overseas recovered from the "Bush effect." At home, Obama's winning the Nobel Peace Prize was controversial; overseas, for many, it was an expression of hope. Obama and Hillary Clinton were an unlikely couple, perhaps, but they "re-set" relations and engaged the world. To achieve this much was a public relations success, one that must now be followed by real political results. Unfortunately, 2009 did not see much progress in more traditional forms of public diplomacy, whether government run, or people-to-people. This should be a focus in 2010.

Person of the Year:

Barack Hussein Obama, 44th President of the United States and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
(runner up: Greg Mortenson, author of *Stones into Schools*.)

Most Unexpected Event:

The uprising (though predictably and brutally suppressed) in Iran

What to Watch for in 2010:

Revival of U.S. international broadcasting

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