PDiN MONITOR

A Review & Analysis of Current Public Diplomacy in the News

Featuring a closer look at:

Digital Diplomacy

Contents

Volume 1, Issue 6

> **Digital diplomacy must be embraced and
> encouraged and its practitioners educated,
> empowered, properly equipped, and not muzzled.**
> *- Matt Armstrong*

Digital media constitute some of the most important tools of modern diplomacy and also have themselves become, collectively, a diplomatic issue. If the world's democracies are serious about enhancing freedom around the globe, they must champion the right to communicate as fully as technology allows. If, on the other hand, authoritarian states wish to continue to smother freedom, they need to restrict the ability to communicate.

Thus, the battle lines are drawn. Democracies must persist in their public diplomacy efforts that rely on digital media and encourage their proliferation. Publics throughout the world are increasingly making these media part of their lives and there is much to be gained by being seen to be on the public's side rather than viewed as supporting governments – even those of putative allies – that seek to block the spread of these media.

Among the new media technologies, mobile phones are, at least for now, the easiest to acquire and use. The connectivity they foster is redefining "community" and allowing public diplomacy efforts to reach a more comprehensive audience. As this month's *PDiN Monitor* underscores, these are among the reasons that digital freedom and public diplomacy have become inextricably linked.

Philip Seib
Director, USC Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD)

A New Breed of Foreign Policy

by Tori Horton

In January 2010, just after the Haitian earthquake and Chinese government attempts to hack into Google, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave a major speech outlining the United States' foreign policy concerning Internet Freedom. She presented five freedoms that allow open communication platforms and facilitate a world-view focusing on the Internet as the great equalizer. Clinton revisited the idea of the Internet and its networks, saying, "Providing people with access to knowledge and potential markets, networks can create opportunities where none exist." In the speech Clinton committed the State Department to fostering open communication through technology.

Clinton's speech, at the time, had little impact in the media; however, in July The New York Times Magazine ran a story on digital diplomacy. The article highlighted how Clinton's call to action is being carried out by two *digital diplomats,* Jared Cohen and Alec Ross, who are evangelizing new Web 2.0 tools to bolster U.S. public diplomacy. The piece touted the successes of digital diplomacy in bringing together leaders from across industries into teams that travel to foreign countries as "Tech.dels". The Tech.dels learn how technology can best be utilized to solve problems and then commit team members to "deliverables" in order to make those ideas a reality. Cohen and Ross believe 21st –century statecraft "represents a shift in form and in strategy — a way to amplify traditional diplomatic efforts, develop tech-based policy solutions and encourage cyberactivism." They are aware that engaging in these spaces requires giving up a level of control, but they have found an audience that wants to receive information via new technology. They make the case that if the State Department is not willing to speak to that audience, a significant opportunity will be lost. In an earlier interview for the Department of State website, Alec Ross said, "Today, in the 21st century, there are literally millions of sources of information. People look at blogs; people have favorite websites; people get information from list serves, from smaller publications, as well now as from 200 TV channels. And so what it means is that we have to be more nimble but also reach people where they are because as audiences are now able to get information from new and diverse sources, they're able to apply their specialized tastes and they just won't tune in to things that don't speak to them."

Shortly after *The New York Times Magazine* article appeared, blog-

PDiN Round Up: Africa

Nigeria to establish cultural centres in U.S, China, Brazil
Nigerian Compass
In a bid to use the arts and culture effectively in global diplomatic roles, Nigeria is planning to set up cultural centres in such countries as U.S.A., China and Brazil.
Categories : Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific

Rwanda to promote cultural tourism
East African Business Week
With thousands of people from the region and the rest of the world expected to attend the 7th Edition of the Pan African Dance Festival, FESPAD 2010, Rwanda says will market its rich cultural heritage.
Categories : Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Africa

Journalists from Maghreb Attend Writers Workshop in Tunisia
U.S. AFRICOM Public Affairs
Thirty-three journalists from the Maghreb region of Africa, including Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, entered into sometimes impassioned debate during the third annual Magharebia.com Writers Workshop, July 29 - August 1 at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis.
Categories : Government PD, Media & PD, New Technology, Non-State PD, Africa

Ghana to host an International Cultural Exchange and Exhibition in November
GhanaWeb
The management of Solid Rock Association (SRA), an Accra-based NGO dedicated to the development of art and culture is to organise an International Cultural Exchange and Exhibition in Accra from November 12 to 14 this year.
Categories : Cultural Diplomacy, Non-State PD, Africa

Proposed Restrictions on the News Media Cause Alarm in South Africa
The New York Times
After spending billions of dollars to successfully host the World Cup — and reveling in how the monthlong global coverage burnished the country's reputation as a democratic beacon — the government is finding that it has created a major public relations problem.
Categories: Government PD, Public Opinion, Africa

gers responded voicing both criticism and support. *The Economist's* blog, Babbage voiced concern that perhaps the medium was changing but America's foreign policy and narcissistic message remained much the same. Even tech all-star Craig Newmark, founder of Craig's List, felt the need to chime in to support Ross and Cohen, stating, "I bear witness that they're doing a great job, I've seen it first hand."

Two weeks after the digital diplomacy article ran, Emmanuel Yujuico and Betsy Gelb called out the United States on a number of policies and initiatives that diverge from the optimistic talk of Cohen and Ross. In an article that ran in *Foreign Affairs,* they criticized what they deemed to be "go-it-alone grand designs" with ethnocentric world views that historically fail. Yujuico and Gelb called for "small wins" that allow for trial and error.

Most recently digital media consultant Andrew Rosen chimed in, writing "Messy Digital Diplomacy" for *The Huffington Post*. Rosen criticized the Administration for *not* having a grand strategy and for focusing on smaller disparate projects. Referring to Cohen and Ross' approach he states, "This evangelism is seductive in its simplicity and passion, and is being mistaken for a proactive strategy instead of the isolated and abstract tactic that 21st century statecraft should be."

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"Digital Diplomacy", © *The New York Times,* 16 July 2010

PDiN Round Up: Americas

Why Canada shouldn't strut on the global stage
The Globe and Mail
Canada has a new, confident strut. We held the world spotlight for a few days at the G8 and G20 meetings in Muskoka and Toronto, where we asserted our impressive record on fiscal management and led an international consensus on deficit reduction. Canada, some say, has finally found its footing on the global stage after years of stumbling.
Categories: Government PD, Public Opinion, Americas

Website linking Latin American scientists launches
ECN
The new website CienciAmérican (Science of the Americas) -- the brainchild of a Cornell neurobiologist -- combines some functions of Facebook and Craigslist. It launched Aug. 16 to help Latin American scientists exchange ideas among themselves and their North American colleagues.
Categories : Non-State PD, Americas

Cuba's Cash-for-Doctors Program
Canada Free Press
These "missionaries of the revolution" are well-received in host countries from Algeria to South Africa to Venezuela. Yet those who hail Cuba's generosity overlook the uglier aspects of Cuba's health diplomacy.
Categories : Government PD, Non-State PD, Public Opinion, Americas

India, Mexico agree to cooperate in tourism sector
NetIndia
India and Mexico today agreed to promote cooperation between the two countries in the tourism sector and look at renewing the agreement they signed in this regard in 1996.
Categories : Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Americas, South Asia

Indonesian Muslims React to NYC Mosque Debate with Moderation
Voice of America
There is concern that protests in the United States against the construction of a mosque near the site of the 2001 terrorist attacks could bolster anti-American extremists in the Muslim world.
Categories: Non-State PD, Public Opinion, Americas, South Asia

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In short, the U.S. State Department innovation team has had a rough summer being both criticized for having too large a vision and then attacked for not having sufficient vision. Perhaps one of the best papers articulating the changes Cohen and Ross have been working to implement and explain comes from Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter, the current Director of Policy Planning for the State Department. She wrote a paper prior to her appointment at the State Department titled, "America's Edge: Power in the Networked Century." In this paper she makes a compelling argument for the U.S. to harness the power of networks, particularly the new online networks and "reinvent itself" as a "central player in an integrated world". It explores advantages the U.S. can have in a power-sharing, networked world. So when Cohen and Ross try to articulate why digital diplomacy has potential to reshape international politics they are imagining a world where public diplomacy is dominant and collaboration between countries is the new normative behavior.

> **To date the State Department does have a number of small wins made possible through networking and new technology...**

As many recent articles have noted, creating a networked government prepared to collaborate with foreign governments and their publics to address policy issues and democratize the world is no easy task. While there is little doubt that networks are taking on a more prominent role in an information society, it is also unclear how far-reaching or ultimately influential these networks will become.

Provided leaders adopt this paradigm, we can expect to see a blurring among industries. Tech gurus, corporate CEOs, NGO leaders, government officials and even journalists have already found themselves assuming non-traditional roles as broadly defined civil society leaders.

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PDiN Round Up: Asia Pacific

Taiwan turns to celebrity diplomacy
Los Angeles Times
One is a chubby amateur singer with a bowl haircut, the other a vegetable seller with a big heart. Together, they may have done more to put Taiwan in an international spotlight than years of checkbook diplomacy by the previous government.
Categories: *Government PD, Asia Pacific*

China: from soft power to superpower
Telegraph Journal
A superpower is generally understood to be a nation, empire, or civilization that can project power globally; that is, a nation that possesses economic, political and cultural or "soft" power along with overwhelming military or "hard" power. It's certainly not hard to appreciate China's emerging economic power.
Categories: *Government PD, Public Opinion, Soft Power, Asia Pacific*

Warning: This fad may kill you
Global Post
In the mascaraed eyes of Thai teenyboppers, South Korea is ground zero of hip. More than Lady Gaga, more than any local act, Bangkok kids aspire to the saccharine perfection of Korean pop. Thai authorities, however, have proven less welcoming of the "K-Pop" phenomenon. With each new Korean fashion craze comes official warnings that the new fad may blind, disfigure or even kill
Categories : *Cultural Diplomacy, Asia Pacific*

North Korea Tells Forbes That It Is Not Using Twitter, Facebook Or YouTube
Forbes (blog)
For the last two weeks, North Korean propaganda has flooded the Internet–courtesy of the Internet, interestingly enough, and not North Korea. A North Korea government official tells Forbes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not using Twitter, Facebook and YouTube...
Categories : *Government PD, New Technology, Non-State PD, Asia Pacific*

South Korea offers aid to flooded North
BBC
South Korea has made its first offer of aid to North Korea since it accused Pyongyang of sinking one of its warships in March. South Korea's Red Cross has offered 10bn won ($8.3m, £5.3m) worth of flood aid to its impoverished neighbour.
Categories : *Government PD, Asia Pacific*

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> **"…creating a networked government prepared to collaborate with foreign governments and their publics to address policy issues and democratize the world is no easy task."**

Furthermore, large governments and corporations will struggle with the challenge to become flexible and relate to individuals in ways the 20th century never allowed. One obstacle that has yet to be overcome is allowing employees to become the face of an organization, knowing that organizations outlast employees. The State Department has struggled to replace Jared Cohen after his departure to Google. It has yet to be seen whether an organization can become "personable" enough to emotionally engage individuals; or whether those connections will ever be able to substantially impact policies that are important to foreign publics in a way that is satisfactory and representative of a true partnership with give and take. Additionally, organizations and countries may find the need to become more flat and flexible, especially as related to communication outreach and response. The rate of change and innovation is continuing to climb, and as it does, the expectations and ability of future generations to adapt will increase exponentially. ◆

About the Author

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PDiN Round Up: Europe

War of Culture Promoters in Georgia
The Financial
Great Britain, France and Germany are the most active in promoting their cultural relations with Georgia, according to The Financial's study. British Council, Goethe-Institute Georgia and A. Dumas Centre conducted the majority of cultural awareness events since 2008. Germany generally spends the most.
Categories: *Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Public Opinion, Europe*

How hostile is Britain to Israel?
Haaretz
U.K. envoy to Israel Tom Phillips says British public does not automatically assume everything Israel does is wrong, but adds that the debate isn't one of PR but of substance.
Categories: *Government PD, Public Opinion, Middle East, Europe*

Russia launches new PR initiative aimed at attracting foreign investment
Foreign Policy
The Kremlin is getting more Internet-savvy every day. Not only has President Dmitry Medvedev joined Twitter, the Russia government now has an English language web portal to help funnel business and advertise their foray into the information age.
Categories: *Government PD, New Technology, Americas, Europe*

Switzerland Summer Camp Becomes Basketball Melting Pot
nba.fanhouse.com
Coaches and players often travel the globe -- Asia, Africa, Europe -- this time of year to spread the NBA gospel, promoting basketball camps that attract adoring youngsters eager to learn the game. Rarely do they find anything as diverse and far-reaching as they do in the little hamlet of Zofingen, Switzerland, which becomes a very popular basketball melting pot for two weeks every summer.
Categories: *Cultural Diplomacy, Europe*

International journalists visit Finland
Helsinki Times
The programme aims at deepening the understanding of Finland and to create a positive attitude towards it. In the long run it is an investment into future media relations that are an integral part of the Ministry's public diplomacy.
Categories: *Government PD, Media & PD, Europe*

Beyond the BlackBerry Ban: Realpolitik and the Negotiation of Digital Rights

by Shawn Powers

There is a battle brewing in international politics that includes a number of important stakeholders and leaders in the global arena. And it is not about how long the U.S. led coalition should stay in Afghanistan or Iraq, or about the need for greater regulations of the international financial sector. Rather, it is about information sovereignty. As Monroe Price notes, the battle lines for this debate were drawn earlier this year when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave a speech at the Smithsonian's Newseum, on the heels of Google's decision to challenge China's control of the Internet within its borders, making the case for a universal freedom to connect: "the idea that governments should not prevent people from connecting to the internet, to websites, or to each other." The current controversy surrounding the potential ban on BlackBerry services in several countries is an important chapter in the conversation of what information sovereignty means in today's Network Society, and may provide some important foreshadowing as to how the debate will play out moving forward.

On August 1, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced its intention to ban e-mail, web browsing and messaging for all BlackBerry smartphones, beginning on October 11. Just hours later, Saudi Arabia's telecommunications regulatory authority, the Communications and Information Technology Commission followed suit, declaring its intention to restrict the use of BlackBerry's messenger (BBM) service, as well as all other BlackBerry enabled data communication, beginning on August 6 (BBM is an instant messaging tool available on BlackBerry smartphones that allows for instantaneous and secure communications between BlackBerry users around the world at no cost to either user). In the ensuing weeks, Turkey, Kuwait, India, Lebanon, Indonesia and Algeria have each indicated that they are considering similar restrictions.

In the wake of these announcements, all eyes have turned towards Research in Motion (RIM), the Canadian telecommunication and wireless device company that develops and manages BlackBerry mobile services. RIM policy, to date, has been to route all data exchanged on its BlackBerry devices directly from the handset to its servers in Canada, the U.S. and the UK where it can tightly control who has access to the encrypted information stored on the servers, and thus the security of the communications. This highly protected

PDiN Round Up: Middle East

Record tourism to Israel in first half of 2010
Globes
Minister of Tourism Stas Misezhnikov said, "The increase in incoming tourism... is the result of massive investment in marketing activities around the world with significant budgets, especially against the background of the public diplomacy challenges that Israel is facing."
Categories: Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Non-State PD, Public Opinion, Middle East

Syria, Venezuela bolstering tourism cooperation
Global Arab Network
Syrian Minister of Tourism, Saadallah Agha al-Qalaa has discussed with his Venezuelan counterpart Alejandro Fleming means of bolstering the tourist relations between Syria and Venezuela. Talks also dealt with the possibility of exchanging tourist delegations and expertise in a way that contributes to the formation of an integrated tourist system between the two countries.
Categories: Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Americas, Middle East

Free the Tabouleh
The New York Times
"We need recognition for what we achieve in the normal run of life," Abdulhadi says. "Like people everywhere we love our children, we're chefs, businessmen, carpenters, farmers, industrialists, shopkeepers, we're participants in the society of the world. We're not just a resistance movement fighting the occupation."
Categories: Cultural Diplomacy, Nation Branding, Non-State PD, Middle East

With Ramadan, the drama begins
Global Post
It is a blow to Syria's soft power as well as its fledgling entertainment industry. With an extremely small theater and cinema scene, the Muslim dramas are the country's primary cultural export. They have sparked debate at home and are enormously popular across the whole Arab world, broadening Syria's cultural reach.
Categories : Cultural Diplomacy, Non-State PD, Public Opinion, Soft Power, Middle East

Israeli PM joins social networking era
Xinhua
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday officially joined the social networking era with the launching of a new YouTube channel, as well as Facebook, Twitter and flickr accounts.
Categories : Government PD, Media & PD, Middle East

"Untangling the BlackBerry ban", © BBC News. 14 August 2010

network is an essential component of the success of its BlackBerry products. RIM's encryption technologies have instilled confidence in corporations and even the United States secret service, both of which trust the network to exchange proprietary and top secret information from any where in the world. Today, Blackberries account for 18.2% of worldwide smartphone sales, second only to Nokia's Symbian OS.

Now, RIMs greatest strength looks to become its greatest weakness, as governments move to increase monitoring mobile communications within their borders. The UAE government called for a ban on BlackBerry services because the encryption technology prevents its security services from adequately monitoring dissident or illegal (for example, promoting violence) political communication. It alleges that BlackBerry smartphones—and BBM in particular—are now the go-to technology for expressing and organizing political protests, including a recent coordinated protest over the high price of gasoline. Last year, Bahrain expressed similar concerns, outlawing the exchange of local news via BBM after a BlackBerry user generated a following of 11,000 fellow BlackBerry users that used the untraceable BBM feature to exchange controversial local news about the Emirate. Governmental fears are not unwarranted. UAE-based blogger Ahmed Mansour argues that BlackBerries were a boon for political activism in the region: "When BlackBerry came, I started to get messages criticizing the government from people I'd never seen involved in activism...Regular people started discussing taboo subjects."

Concerns about BlackBerry are not limited to its utility for political activism. India has also indicated a need to closely monitor mobile communication networks, pointing towards the critical role of mobile phones (though, non-BlackBerry) in the organization and carrying-out of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. Saudi Arabian officials

PDiN Round Up: South Asia

A Beloved Bollywood Extra Draws Indians
The New York Times
For years, Bollywood's producers and directors have favored the pristine backdrop of Switzerland for their films... In the process, they have created an enormous curiosity about things Swiss in generations of middle-class Indians, who are now earning enough to travel here in search of their dreams.
Categories: *Cultural Diplomacy, Non-State PD, Soft Power, South Asia, Europe*

Teenage ambassadors seek to promote cross-border understanding
The Hindu
Green T-shirts flooded the State Department on Wednesday during an event that celebrated the graduation of teenage "Peace Ambassadors" from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan from a programme aimed at promoting cross-border understanding in the leaders of the future.
Categories: *Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Americas, South Asia*

Families stretch across India-Pakistan divide
Global Post
What often gets overlooked is how the tensions between the countries affect ordinary people every day. With the hostilities come tough security measures and visa restrictions that deeply impact people like Tasleem, who have family members living on both sides of the border.
Categories: *Non-State PD, Public Opinion, South Asia*

'Three cups of tea' a byword for U.S. effort to win Afghan hearts and minds
Los Angeles Times
'Three cups of tea' has entered the U.S. troop lexicon as shorthand for a trust-building chat with locals. It is drawn from the bestseller by Greg Mortenson, who sets up girls schools in the region.
Categories: *Cultural Diplomacy, Government PD, Soft Power, Americas, South Asia*

Hosting The Commonwealth Games: Will It Boost India's Soft Power?
Eurasia Review
India's decision to host the Commonwealth Games seems to have become less popular in the country for its reported oganisational failures in the run-up to the Games. Staging the Games will not help much to advance its soft power.
Categories : *Government PD, Public Opinion, Soft Power, South Asia*

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are also concerned with the use of BlackBerry smartphones to by-pass web filters to access politically and sexually provocative websites. There have also been reports about Saudi youth using BBM to circumvent cultural and religious mores by securely texting and sending photos back and forth between members of the opposite sex.

As a possible solution, India, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have each asked RIM to establish a Network Operation Center (NOC)—otherwise known as a proxy server—within each of the countries in order to allow for better access to data exchanged on the Black-Berry network. Their logic is fairly straightforward. Since data exchanged on the BlackBerry network was the only digital information accessible within the UAE that was not routed through local, government operated, servers, its Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) actually required that RIM set up a local NOC in 2007. According to the UAE's TRA, "Today's decision is based on the fact that, in their current form, certain BlackBerry services allow users to act without any legal accountability, causing judicial, social and national-security concerns."

Put another way, it could very well be the case that RIM, via its BlackBerry devices, has set up the only global communications network that could actually be relatively secure from government monitoring and/or interference. Isn't this exactly the type of network that Hillary Clinton called for in January when she argued for an international recognition of the right to connect to and converse freely via the global World Wide Web? If so, shouldn't we be talking about the importance of maintaining the sanctity of such a network, and even thinking through how to get more secure, Black-Berry devices in the hands of civil society advocates and leaders in the Middle East? Or would such a strategy backfire, similar to the way U.S. arms sales to mujahidin during the Cold War continue to thwart American policy in Afghanistan today?

In the days following the UAE's proposed BlackBerry ban, State Department Press Secretary Phillip J. Crowley connected the issue to Clinton's speech on Global Internet Freedom, saying "We're disappointed at the announcement...It's about what we think is an important element of democracy, human rights, and freedom of information and the flow of information in the 21st century." The fact that the State Department came to the defense of a Canadian company that competes directly with several American companies—

PDiN Extras: World Cup Wrap-Up

After the final match of the 2010 World Cup games ended on July 11 there was much discussion regarding the impact of hosting such a monumental event on South Africa. Criticism focused on the vast socioeconomic inequalities that remain in the country and doubted that the World Cup provided any relief to these differences. However, media sources also commended the ability of the South African government to handle such a massive undertaking and focused on the positive implications for the country's self-image. Below is a selection of stories related to the World Cup aggregated by CPD's PDiN Research Team:

SONY HELPS BRING 3D WORLD CUP GAMES TO LIFE
Arabian Business

GAMES GIVE SOUTH AFRICA HOPE IN FIGHTING WOES
The New York Times

WORLD CUP DOUBTERS WERE WRONG: SOUTH AFRICA HOSTED A GREAT TOURNAMENT
The Christian Science Monitor

AFRICAN YOUTH GET ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CHANCE TO WATCH WORLD CUP FINAL
UN News Centre

WORLD CUP 2010: GHANA THE PRIDE OF AFRICA
Global Post

Google and Apple, just to mention two—in the name of an amorphous commitment to the free flow of digital communications speaks to the growing importance of digital rights in U.S. foreign policy thinking. As a recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* outlined, Hillary Clinton—"the Godmother of 21st century statecraft"—puts digital technologies and networks at the center of the modern foreign policy decision-making process. But what would a world with ubiquitous secure, mobile communications actually look like? Would democracy and civil society flourish, or would hateful and violent groups be better able to organize and plan their terrorizing of society?

Turns out, we may never know. Following a path trail-blazed by Google in its acquiescence to Chinese authorities starting in 2006, it appears that RIM will capitulate to authoritarian governments in order to continue to compete in developing markets. Moreover, increased scrutiny instigated by the current kerfuffle has revealed that this will not be the first time that RIM has caved in to government demands in order to expand its market share. For example, it provided encryption keys and local proxy servers to Russian and Chinese authorities in order to comply with local telecommunication regulations. In the last week, Saudi officials leaked that RIM had also caved, agreeing to put a proxy server in the Kingdom that would enable Saudi monitoring of BlackBerry data. And a similar deal has been struck with India too, with ones for the UAE, Turkey, Kuwait, Bahrain, Indonesia and Algeria likely to follow. Moreover, this debate will not end with RIM or BlackBerry. News has already surfaced that Indian authorities plan on going after Google and Skype as well, for fear that encrypted data shared on their networks also constitute a national security threat.

But it's not just foreign governments that are struggling to reassert their right to information sovereignty in the name of national security. Just last month, the Obama administration attacked WikiLeaks for its online disclosure of over 91,000 classified documents about the war in Afghanistan as a threat to national security, vowing to pur-

Cheon Fong Liew © *Flickr* 2010

PDiN Extras: Floods in Pakistan & Aid Diplomacy

Pakistan has been submerged by the worst flooding in the country's history and an estimated 1/5th of the country remain underwater. The United Nations has appealed for nearly $460 million in emergency aid for victims as an estimated 20 million people have been affected-with 2,000 killed and millions left homeless. The natural disaster has led to much international discussion about humanitarian relief and aid diplomacy. The following is an aggregation of PDiN stories related to the floods in Pakistan and aid diplomacy:

FLOOD DISASTER CREATES OPPORTUNITY FOR U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS
Foreign Policy (blog)

U.S. INCREASES AID TO PAKISTAN, WARY OF FLOOD FALLOUT
Reuters

ISLAMIC CHARITIES LEAD IN PAKISTAN AID BATTLE
AFP

U.S. MARINES ARRIVE TO HELP PAKISTAN FLOOD SURVIVORS
The Associated Press

PAKISTAN FLOODS: AN EMERGENCY FOR THE WEST
The Daily Telegraph

HOPE AMID PAKISTAN'S TRAGEDY
The Washington Post

INDIA STILL DEBATING WHETHER TO SEND AID TO PAKISTAN
The Times of India

PAKISTAN ACCEPTS FLOOD AID MONEY FROM RIVAL INDIA
The Christian Science Monitor

4 REASONS WHY AMERICANS AREN'T GIVING FOR PAKISTAN FLOOD RELIEF
The Atlantic

FLOOD AID FOR PAK PEOPLE, NOT POLITICS
Deccan Chronicle

UK PUBLIC 'SHAMING WORLD POLITICIANS' OVER PAKISTAN AID
BBC News

sue a criminal investigation of the organization and its founder, Julian Assange. The White House continues to press the matter, and now is soliciting international cooperation to help crack down on Assange and his "stateless news organization." Thus, in one breath, the Obama administration is highly critical of foreign governments' (such as Iran and China) efforts to control the flow of information within their borders and in another calls for international cooperation in cracking down on a non-governmental organization whose primary mission is to enhance democratic deliberations and accountability through transparency. If there are substantive differences between the Obama administration's handling of the WikiLeaks controversy, the growing clamp down on encrypted mobile communications (i.e. BlackBerries) and the Chinese development of a controlled and indigenous Intranet, they are certainly not being discussed by the stakeholders with any level of nuance.

> **There is a real need for a credible, vocal government advocate able to argue for and, perhaps, even implement Internet freedoms...**

How this debate plays out—the rights of governments to monitor and control the flow and exchange of information within their borders—will have important and direct consequences for questions of national security, civil society, governance, and finance. In two recent controversies noted here—China/Google, the BlackBerry ban— governments uninterested in the protection of digital rights have prevailed, mostly because corporations responsible for enabling global communications have acquiesced for the sake of potential profits down the road. Indeed, only WikiLeaks—a non-profit, "stateless" organization—has successfully managed to maintain its mission of furthering transparent governance without caving in to government authorities. It is unfortunate—and ironic—that WikiLeaks success comes at the expense of the Obama administra-

tion, one of the most vocal government advocates for a global regime protecting the free flow of communication.

Controversies related to international Internet freedom and digital rights continue to creep into everyday foreign policy debates and have important geopolitical consequences. Moving forward, the Obama administration needs to think through its policies related to information sovereignty so it has a clear and consistent approach. If the U.S. really wants to be an advocate for global norms defending and protecting digital rights of global civil society, including the right to connect and freely communicate, then it can't also attack WikiLeaks—an organization that embodies the exact principles Secretary Clinton called for—when it uses a free and open Internet to disseminate information harmful towards American foreign policy. When it comes to Internet freedoms, U.S. hypocrisy has consequences that extend beyond these immediate foreign policy controversies. There is a real need for a credible, vocal government advocate able to argue for and, perhaps, even implement Internet freedoms in parts of the world that have clamped too far down on democratic discourse, and if the U.S. does not have a clear and consistent approach to these questions, the powerful government advocates who fear a free and global Internet will win the debate. ◆

About the Author

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Everybody's Diplomacy

by Matt Armstrong

A now famous cartoon from 1993 showed two dogs, one sitting at a computer and saying to another sitting on the floor, "On the Internet, no one knows you're a dog." The simple statement captured the anonymity and ambiguity made possible by the Internet and highlighted the new ability to transcend geography, language, culture, and time (and species for the literate pet).

Nearly two decades later, the advent of participatory, voyeuristic, and visceral social media has democratized influence and flattened hierarchies to the point even a dog may shape the agendas of senior leaders around the world. This subverts old practices of governments and traditional media as gatekeepers of information as roles of news producer and news consumer blur and become interchangeable. Traditional communicators who continue to grasp at controlling a message are increasingly bypassed, marginalized, or kept on their heels in today's increasingly fast, hyperactive, and shallow information environment.

The information revolution, now over 10 years old, promised greater unity as connectivity was to create bridges of common understanding. Instead, it led to "fragmegration" of audiences simultaneously fragmented and integrated into smaller associations. Empowered by modern communications, cheap travel, and decreased demands to assimilate, the groups were no longer constrained by traditional barriers: geography, culture, ethnicity, language, religion, or even time. Whether Granfalloons or traditional diasporas, members can participate or observe, overtly or covertly, in multiple overlapping and even competing groups based on virtually any affinity.

In matters of international affairs, diplomats are forced to engage in open forums as distinctions of "domestic" and "foreign" and private and public are overwritten with "global." This gives rise to online engagement increasingly – and erroneously – labeled "digital diplomacy." It is better described as public-public diplomacy as content will jump mediums and will not be constrained at creation, dissemination, or consumption, within any particular digital do-

main.

The concept of open engagement upsets the traditional hierarchies and entrenched bureaucratic cultures of institutions like the State Department. Never comfortable with public diplomacy, digital diplomacy is now forced on it as a kind of public "public diplomacy." Everyone from "front office" diplomats and public affairs officers to "back office" staff are potential communicators with audiences who may be anywhere in the world, hold any rank, and reuse and manipulate anything conveyed. In other words, regardless of title, experience, or employment status (contractor, government service, Foreign Service, or political appointee), virtually anyone can, intentionally or not, shape conversations about critical topics.

Merging professional and personal lives does increase risk. Humanizing the speaker requires not being a dog and giving a name (even if not the true name if security is an issue), just as it is with in-person conversations. This personalization of the speaker, and by extension government, has the potential of disseminating "too much information" or the perception of unprofessional conduct. Where there was privacy among discrete audiences, there is now transparency on a global scale that facilitates recall of short messages about a great frappacino north of Damascus by a State Department official or about drugs or Toyotas from an official State Department channel. Online, enduring engagement requires not being a dog: a public affairs officer would not refuse to give her name (or their real name if personal, or familial, security was an issue) in a conversation. Properly managed, however, the opportunities out-

> **The concept of open engagement upsets the traditional hierarchies and entrenched bureaucratic cultures of institutions like the State Department.**

weigh the risks.

Digital diplomacy must be embraced and encouraged and its practitioners educated, empowered, properly equipped, and not muzzled. The online world can be used to inform all sides of an issue or be the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Alerts, trends, and unguarded comments are more likely to be available and shared widely than ever before.

Bureaucratic reticence is understandable. Governments, particularly foreign ministries who strive to make sure nothing happens, are naturally risk adverse. But today's hyperactive environment where perceptions often trump truth, require active and established networks to engage (or counter) the cacophony of online and offline voices as information jumps mediums with greater speed and efficiency every day. This is an uncomfortable environment where information, and thus influence, is both immediate (similar to the past with radio) and persistent (unlike the past). Users can now insulate themselves and share selective content on their schedule rather than on the schedule of the transmitter. While the goal is to encourage networks to become your torchbearer, the danger is of course they will turn on you and burn down your house. Often, however, the need is to simply provide actionable knowledge to dispel misinformation, counter disinformation, or simply lay foundations for future mobilization.

This "digital diplomacy" is hampered by the obvious bureaucratic and cultural barriers and in the U.S. by law, the Smith-Mundt Act. As amended, this legislation imposes an imaginary construct of two distinct homogeneous worlds: one inside U.S. borders and the other outside. This artificial bifurcation leads State Department (and the Broadcasting Board of Governors') lawyers to block or curtail online activities that are required to engage the "outside" that may potentially "spillover" into the U.S. This, for example, limits online "exchanges" hosted by State's public diplomacy organization. It also inhibits broader awareness, and thus effectiveness, of State's successful use of Facebook and other mediums.

More visible and mundane is a requirement suffered by no foreign ministry other than the State Department: segre-

gated websites based on the location of the audience. Despite the fact that 30 percent of the visitors to www.State.gov, a website run by the State Department's public affairs, are outside America's borders, it may not link to the website Smith-Mundt implicitly requires because of the bifurcation of audiences: www.America.gov. Paradoxically, these barriers implicitly encourage digital diplomacy by State's individuals, including the "back office" staff, as the institution itself is hidebound by both law and lawyers.

This diplomacy that originates as relatively inexpensive bits and bytes with incalculable reach is heavily relied upon by our adversaries, often to great effect. Insurgents and terrorists regularly engage audiences online to identify and empower supporters and undermine adversaries. These efforts are not constrained to virtual activities. IEDs, or improvised explosive devices, would not have become a household name had so-called "digital diplomacy" not been available. Perhaps the best example of the power of the digital domain is the fact that propagandists, from terrorist to Wikileaks, drive the media's agenda instead of the other way around.

Whether acting against terrorism, negotiating nuclear weapons, or simply managing a conversation, United States "digital diplomacy," like regular public diplomacy, will be handicapped, reactive, and marginal until we break through bureaucratic, cultural and legislative barriers that inhibit effective global, persistent, and multiple medium engagement. We will know success when the phrase "digital diplomacy" is no longer used and nobody wonders if you're a dog. ◆

About the Author

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A No Simple App for Public Diplomacy

by Anoush Rima Tatevossian

There is growing focus on social media and mobile technology as promising mediums for engagement and interaction in the public diplomacy toolbox. However, citizens and governments around the world are still experimenting with how best to use, and treat, these new communication tools. The process is certainly drawing media attention, and observers and practitioners alike are curious about the experiment. This spotlight overviews what types of mobile and social media initiatives have been undertaken recently, and what reactions and responses they have yielded.

Capitalizing on the so-called mobile phone revolution in Africa, this summer, the U.S. Department of State launched "Apps4Africa", tapping into the emerging regional community of civic-minded technology leaders (by partnering with *Appfrica Labs*, based in Kampala, the *iHub* and the Social Development Network [SODNET], in Nairobi). Apps4Africa is a contest that challenges local coders and software developers to create software tools and applications that can meet the social and economic development needs of citizens across East Africa. Interestingly, Apps4Africa, whose concept and goals might seem to fall within the domain of "development work" (USAID), is in fact being spearheaded directly by Judith McHale's Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs office. The initiative is an example of an emerging overlap, or blurring of lines, between the use of mobile/new technology (tech) tools for engagement and the use of mobile/new tech tools for international development. As described by diplomat Suzanne Hall, "21st Century Statecraft is about reaching beyond typical government-to-government interactions. Under Secretary Clinton's leadership, we are using technology to connect directly with people and empower them to take the lead in their own development."

The State Department also solidified a new series of networking events called Tech@State. The August event in this series was yet another exploration of how mobiles can be used to improve livelihoods around the world, by way of

"m-banking" as a mechanism for financial inclusion-as nearly 5 billion of the world's 6.6 billion people have mobile phones, only about 1.6 billion have bank accounts.

Alongside the flurry of activity in the realm of social media and mobile tech, there are ongoing debates about the benefits and effectiveness of new media based initiatives interventions. Recently, Sheldon Himelfarb, of the U.S. Institute for Peace, was quoted in the BBC emphasizing the need to moderate promise and potential of new and social media, with the reality that we are still in an experimental stage in this "brave new world public diplomacy." He explained, "It is an opportunity to engage with the next generation of peace builders. And that's really valuable." But it remains difficult to quantify the benefits of conducting public diplomacy through social media. The reach may be wider but the impact and benefit are still unknown. Similarly, while there is growing interest in the arena of mobiles for development (or "M4D"), the field is checkered with some success but, certainly, many failures. Few initiatives are able to achieve the scale and sustainability required to truly produce meaningful social change or measurable development goals in this still experimental and inherently complex area of development work, which varies greatly from country to country.

As in any public diplomacy strategy design, the advisable position is to take a realistic perspective in approaching and implementing programs that leverage mobile tech and social media: moderate expectations, and focus on implementing strategic and careful initiatives which take political and cultural specificities into consideration.

In addition to debating the measures of success of social media and mobile technology as mechanisms for public diplomacy, it is just as (if not more) important to soberly

consider the potential pitfalls as well as security and political implications around the promotion of new communication technologies. What implications are there if the State Department puts its seal of approval on various new tech tools—both by actively promoting them and encouraging their widespread adoption, and by bringing tech company representatives on official delegations to visit foreign countries as a means to conduct public diplomacy, by enabling, empowering and connecting civil societies in countries abroad?

A State Department official was quoted in *The New York Times Magazine* article expressing the conundrum, "[if] there's a perception that Twitter or Facebook is a tool of the U.S. government, that becomes dangerous for the company, and it becomes dangerous for people who are using that tool."

The danger for citizens can take many shapes, the most basic being that these tools can allow authoritarian governments to spy, control, suppress or imprison dissidents and citizens expressing their opinions. While Secretary Clinton eventually did get involved in this delicate public diplo-

macy dance and spoke out in response to the recent RIM/BlackBerry controversy in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, acknowledging security concerns but also stressing citizens' rights of 'free use and access.' Rami G. Khouri, editor-at-large of Lebanon's *The Daily Star*, foreshadowed the conflict of interest in a July International Herald Tribune opinion piece "Feeding both the jailer and the prisoner is not a sustainable or sensible policy. I would not be surprised if some wise-guy young Arab soon sends a tweet to Hillary Clinton saying, "you're either with us, or you're with the security state.""

The issue is thornier still when the same government that is encouraging citizens to use mobiles more heavily to interact, is also pro-electronic surveillance. In an op-ed by Richard A. Falkenrath, "Texting With Terrorists," reminds us that, "the United Arab Emirates is in no way unique in wanting a back door into the telecommunications services used inside its borders to allow officials to eavesdrop on users." This reality of the digital age is certainly sticky when observed from the perspective of individual citizens' privacy.

It is too early to tell exactly what implications these issues will have for public diplomacy (and digital diplomacy overall) in the mid to long-term, as the age of connecting and seeking new ways to provide services over mobile and social media is only just beginning. It is certain that international dialogue will increasingly occur in the palm of our hands, and both *strategic* and *responsible* approaches to engaging over mobile and social media technologies will be critical. ◆

"Digital Diplomacy," © Foreign Policy. 3 August 2010

About the Author

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PD Magazine

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In July, *PD* announced the launch of the Summer 2010 issue: "Pursuing Human Rights Through Public Diplomacy." This publication presents the views of scholars and practitioners from around the globe while examining key concepts in the field of public diplomacy. Included in the Summer issue are articles from a broad range of human rights organizations working around the world, as well as an endnote by Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jody Williams. The entire issue can be found online at www.publicdiplomacymagazine.org.

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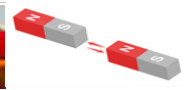
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