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ENGAGEMENT

Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World

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FOREWORD

By Jim Murphy MP, Minister for Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

There are two responses to globalisation. One is to run and hide and the other is to engage.

Our vision is of 'engagement': with the British public, with other governments and, increasingly, with publics overseas. It is engagement with publics overseas that is the theme of this publication, building on the principles set out by Lord Carter in his review of public diplomacy for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in December 2005.

For foreign and domestic policy goals are becoming interdependent and global, and there are broad constituencies beyond governments who not only have an interest in achieving them but whose everyday decisions and actions will determine whether they can be met.

In parallel, technological change is making it possible for governments and publics to engage, in their own countries and globally, more rapidly and directly than ever before.

In this new context, public diplomacy must become an integral part of policy-making and delivery. Governments must go beyond simple messaging, towards dialogue and cooperation, in collective effort to find solutions to the global challenges exemplified by climate change, violent extremism or poverty.

My aim in commissioning this collection of essays, which is freely available online, is to generate debate and stimulate thinking on this issue in a way which will inform and inspire policy-makers. The individual chapters and case-studies represent a range of views and insights from practitioners and experts. None has the final word on the subject. But all reinforce the relevance, importance – and potential – of public diplomacy in a world subject to the forces of globalisation. I am very grateful to them for their contributions.

JIM MURPHY MP

Minister for Europe, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Jim Murphy has been a Member of Parliament since 1997 and represents East Renfrewshire. He was appointed Minister for Europe at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in June 2007 where his portfolio includes responsibility for public diplomacy. His previous government positions have been as Government Whip, Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office and Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform at the Department for Work and Pensions.

1 ENGAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We need a public diplomacy which fits our time. The policy issues which confront us are increasingly global. Systematic engagement with publics both at home and abroad will be required if we are to identify and implement solutions. Policy-makers and diplomats must work with a wider range of constituencies beyond government, moving towards a more open, inclusive style of policy-making and implementation. Understanding of complexity, difference, networks and cultural heritage will be needed, alongside more imaginative use of technology. Engagement, conducted with energy, ambition and creativity, must be the hallmark of contemporary public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy isn't new. The Roman republic invited the sons of neighbouring kings to be educated in Rome.[1] Napoleon, when he invaded Egypt, planned to order the entire French army to convert to Islam to help establish French rule.[2] During the Second World War, Winston Churchill successfully presented the largest empire the world had ever known as a plucky underdog to win over US hearts and minds. These were three different strategies, each designed for the challenges of its time and place.

The challenge of our own era is to recognise that we can help achieve our foreign policy goals through engagement with foreign publics and that our success depends on cooperation.

Faced with global challenges, many people become fatalistic: there's nothing we can do about global warming, or radicalisation or hunger; so let's do nothing. But governments and diplomats can't stick their heads in the sand and hope that the internet will go away. That carbon emissions will cease overnight. That the 191 million individuals living outside their countries of birth will suddenly pack up and go home.[3] That avian flu can be turned away at a border for not having a valid visa.

We can stand against new-age fatalism and assert our ability to change the world for the better – if we engage with others. We need to hone our diplomacy to fit our time, our environment and our challenges.

The hallmark of a successful state, and of a successful diplomat, lies in this capacity to adapt. This isn't new. In 1620, Francis Bacon warned that the invention of printing, gunpowder and the compass had 'changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world', adding that 'it is well to observe the force, virtue and consequence of discovery'.

Connecting with the global public

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's foreign policy priorities respond to the key threats facing our interests today: to stop terrorism and weapons proliferation and tackle their causes; to prevent and resolve conflict; to promote a low-carbon, high-growth, global economy; and to develop effective international institutions.

These objectives – and the threats behind them – are shared with other states. If I substitute for 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office' in the preceding paragraph, the French 'Quai d'Orsay' or the US 'State Department' or the 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs of South Africa', wouldn't these priorities still make sense? The days of diplomacy as a means just of delivering narrow national self-interest are gone. The basis for joint action is unprecedented in peacetime.

More than ever before, publics have become vital players in international policy. Publics are ultimately the winners or losers when the world succeeds or fails in tackling global challenges. A rise in sea levels will affect us all; but it is the poorest people who will be hit first.

But we should not view the public simply as being passive recipients of diplomacy. Today, publics have a much greater say in the decisions their

governments make than they have ever had. And terrorism, climate insecurity, conflict, poverty are man-made problems. The decisions people make about their own lives can have a direct impact on the rest of the world, whether by repudiating terrorism or by changing their own behaviour to prevent climate change.

It's important not to underestimate the extent of this shift. David Kelly, a former British ambassador to Moscow, who served in 1920 as Third Secretary at the British representation in Buenos Aires, set out that the 'primary business [of diplomats] has been and always will be to cultivate whatever groups actually influence policy'.[4] Kelly was right. But in 1920s Latin America, he concluded, influence was vested in a small cabal of powerful men. So in a sense, his diplomacy was easy. It was about getting access to these men and talking to them. Writing his memoirs in 1952, Kelly derided as a 'pathetic fallacy' the 'notion that the Ambassador should cruise around trying to get contacts with "the man in the street"'.

There are still some states today where this might hold true. But over recent decades, in many countries, power has shifted from the elites to the public. The 'pathetic fallacy' has become a strategic necessity.

Governments still need to talk to other governments. And they will still need to engage small groups of particularly influential individuals. From time to time, governments will still need to bring military force to bear in international affairs. But we need also to reach out to the public – to all those whose actions affect our ability to deliver – and work with them to develop and implement international policy solutions.

Putting the public back into public diplomacy

It's easy to talk about engagement. Who could argue that engagement is a bad thing? But often we claim to be engaging when what we're really doing is broadcasting.

I believe the key is for us to take the model with which the best diplomats are already very familiar, finding and implementing solutions with other governments and small groups, often of elites, outside government, and to apply it to engagement with a more diverse range of stakeholders and, where necessary, with the broader public.

First, foreign ministries must stop seeing public diplomacy as a form of public relations, shouting out core messages and top lines, louder and louder, in the false belief that they haven't been heard clearly enough. To succeed in today's world, we need genuine engagement, not clumsy propaganda.

Second, they must also recognise that adopting an old fashioned nation-branding approach to public diplomacy doesn't change what people really think of other countries. And even if it did, it would not address our real objectives. There is value in niche messaging to specific groups about aspects of our countries, for example to encourage tourism or inward investment. But this only works in tightly circumscribed areas.

Third, we must engage genuinely at all stages in the policy cycle, from research and analysis through policy formulation to policy implementation and finally evaluation. The era of generating policies in a Foreign Office silo has gone. The answers to global challenges are out there in the world.

Foreign ministries and embassies will be at their most valuable as global or local hubs for knowledge and for co-creation and co-implementation of solutions, not purporting to be experts on the detail of the vast range of issues they deal with nor to have themselves the ability to impose fixes on the rest of the world.

Finally, we need to understand that different situations will require different approaches. Sometimes the most effective public diplomacy will be conducted in the media spotlight. But sometimes public diplomacy is more effective when it isn't carried out **in** public.

The modern public diplomat

So far in this chapter I have talked about the changing environment for diplomacy and the need to bring more people into foreign policy. All this implies change for the way foreign ministries, embassies and diplomats do business themselves.

The best diplomats are specialised generalists, who excel in a range of core skills that equip them to tackle any situation thrown at them. We expect diplomatic staff to move seamlessly from negotiating trade agreements to organising international conferences to evacuating their nationals in a crisis to running development programmes.

These core skills remain as valid as ever. But as the world changes around them, diplomats need to adapt; to find new ways of working and to develop additional skills.

The biggest single challenge for the world's diplomats is to deliver real – and timely – progress on global problems like climate change and poverty.

Of course, this will not be easy. International relations are vulnerable to inertia and the pursuit of the lowest common denominator; too often, legacy counts more than what's on the horizon. This has to change. In the future, the most effective diplomatic services will be driven by a new sense of activism, operating nimbly and flexibly, and able to show clear victories in delivering real-world change.

Identifying key stakeholders was once relatively straightforward. We knew who affected our interests and where to find them – normally in the smart clubs and large houses of capital cities. Now the range of stakeholders on the important issues of the day can be huge – inhabiting every corner of a country – not just the corridors of power, but the slums, the business districts and the suburbs. And it's much more difficult to work out who among them

are our key partners – where's the knowledge, where's the influence, who can make things happen? Malcolm Gladwell and Mark Earls have both written fascinating studies on influence and change.[5] Foreign ministries need to learn from other organisations – particularly campaigning NGOs, which are experts in this field.

Diplomacy is often seen as a secretive business, by both those within and those outside the diplomatic world. This made sense when diplomacy was a zero-sum game of narrow national interest. And of course there will always be diplomatic secrets. But if we want to bring more people, with their knowledge and energy and creativity, into policy-making and policy delivery (for example, in the way that Nicholas Stern has managed to do on climate change),[6] our default position must be to open up our doors for dialogue.

The most damaging charge that can be made against diplomats is that they have been co-opted by their hosts – no longer seeing the world from the perspective of their own foreign ministries or treasuries. But this ability, to see the world from others' perspectives and to use this knowledge, not just to find better ways of persuading them but to inform our own policy-making, is a vital diplomatic role. When global problems require global solutions, how can we make international policy unless we understand how the world looks standing in others' shoes? Or, put another way, what is people's motivation to act responsibly on climate security or radicalisation if they have no shoes?

A more interconnected world is becoming more complex. As people are faced with worldwide brands and products, many think more about their own unique heritage and define themselves more by it. So cultural heritage becomes more important, and often more fruitful, as an avenue for engagement. A deep-rooted respect for land, a cultural tradition of justice, an underlying religious pacifism, may be sound bases for discussion of the environment, law or terrorism. Cultural heritage and personal identity are increasingly important drivers of behaviour. Engaged public diplomacy is sensitive to values-based behaviour.

This approach to public diplomacy means that gaining an understanding of other people becomes increasingly challenging. Diplomats need to understand radicalised youth, energy consumers, rainforest loggers. They need to find out what motivates people, where our common interests lie. They need, for example, to know in some detail what might cause an Afghan tribesman to reject the Taleban and buy into a long-term democratic vision for Afghanistan.

Diplomats have traditionally used the same suite of tools to do their jobs. There's nothing wrong with these. Conferences and visits have their place. A busy hour spent at a cocktail party by a junior political officer soaking up information can deliver as much as a week of calls and meetings. Ambassadors' dinner parties, bringing the leading figures on a particular issue around a table for an informal discussion, can still be one of the fastest ways of developing common solutions to shared problems. All of these established diplomatic practices are necessary, but they are no longer sufficient.

But diplomats are less good at engaging larger and more diverse groups. One of the big challenges for diplomats will be to get more creative, to attract interest, to listen, to engage and to explain, to compete against the noise of thousands of other voices. In particular, diplomats need to learn how to use the internet.

Ambassador to the World Wide Web

Engaged public diplomacy is more than internet activism, but better use of the internet is essential. Until now, in common with most diplomatic services, we at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have used the internet as a cost-effective way of providing services and information. And we have done this very successfully, reaching far more people more cheaply, more quickly and more easily than ever before. But we are only scratching the surface of what's possible.

If the internet were a foreign country – the largest country in the world – our presence in it would be the equivalent of a static information booth. This is fine for those who want a visa, or travel advice, or to see what we've been saying publicly about the UN or the Middle East. But we need to use the internet in an entirely new way – to connect with those who don't get invited to diplomatic dinners and receptions on the policy issues which matter most. We need to use the internet to invite people into the policy-making process, to work with them to implement solutions. And we need to get out and about more on the web, recognising that we need to go to where other people are, rather than expecting them to come to us.

Civilian surge

We have set ourselves an enormous task – genuine engagement with people around the world to solve the challenges of our time. This engagement should be based on ideas and knowledge, on the development of solutions to common problems, rooted in a belief that the future of the world is in the hands of its people.

We must, of course, as in the past, continue to engage with foreign governments, and do so effectively. But we will also work with new partners, understanding and using what our Foreign Secretary has called a 'civilian surge in foreign policy'.

Where in the past diplomacy was often about fissures, in the twenty-first century it will be increasingly about fusion – the fusion of diplomatic challenges into big global issues which affect us all; the fusion of domestic and international agendas; and, if we are successful, the fusion of governments and publics around the world in the pursuit and implementation of solutions. Fusion diplomacy understands that our biggest threat still comes from other states – the states of inertia, inaction, indifference and withdrawal. Here lies the real challenge that the new public diplomacy must address.

Notes

1 See chapter 2 in this volume by Nicholas Cull.

2 For a full account of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, see Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of empire* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), pp. 132–48.

3 See UN report, *Trends in total migrant stock: the 2005 revision*, CD-ROM (New York and Geneva: United Nations, Feb. 2007).

4 David Kelly, *The ruling few, or the human background to diplomacy* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1952), pp. 117–118.

5 Malcolm Gladwell, *The tipping point: how little things can make a big difference* (Boston and London: Little, Brown, 2000); Mark Earls, *Herd: How to change mass behaviour by harnessing our true nature* (New York: Wiley, 2007).

6 Nicholas Stern, *The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

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2 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: SEVEN LESSONS FOR ITS FUTURE FROM ITS PAST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This essay examines the history of public diplomacy and identifies seven lessons from that history. These are: (1) Public diplomacy begins with listening. (2) Public diplomacy must be connected to policy. (3) Public diplomacy is not a performance for domestic consumption. (4) Effective public diplomacy requires credibility, but that has implications for the bureaucratic structure around the activity. (5) Sometimes the most credible voice in public diplomacy is not one's own. (6) Public diplomacy is not always 'about you'. (7) Public diplomacy is everyone's business. The essay considers the relevance of these lessons for the 'new public diplomacy' that has emerged over the last decade. It concludes that this new era has opened up fresh possibilities, but has not erased the relevance of the history of public diplomacy. On the contrary, the lessons of the past seem even more relevant in an age in which communications play an unprecedented role.

Edmund Gullion had a problem. It was the spring of 1965 and, newly retired from a distinguished diplomatic career crowned by service as the US ambassador to the Congo, he had accepted the post of Dean of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. He was eager to set up a research and teaching centre to focus on an emerging dimension of international relations – that which concerned the conduct of foreign policy through engagement with international publics.

In the past he had toyed with the term 'total diplomacy' for such work, but the phrase seemed clumsy and did not carry the nuance that he needed. The term that sprang most often to his mind was 'propaganda', but its negative connotations – shades of Dr Goebbels – placed it beyond the pale. In the event, he picked a phrase that had been bubbling under the surface since the days of Woodrow Wilson: 'public diplomacy'.

For Gullion and his colleagues this term was sufficiently new to allow them to develop their own definition and fill it with benign meaning. Henceforth Americans would do public diplomacy and the communists were left peddling propaganda.[1]

While the term was new, the activity was old. States had sought to engage foreign publics for centuries. The core practices of public diplomacy – listening, advocacy, cultural and exchange diplomacy, and even international broadcasting – all had deep roots in the statecraft of Europe and Asia. It is easy to see the Roman practice of educating the sons of 'friendly kings' on their borders as the forebear of modern educational exchange programmes; or the Greek construction of the great library of Alexandria as a forerunner of the British Council or Confucius Institute; or the newsletters circulated by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II as a medieval 'World Service'.[2]

Public diplomacy activity is less a new chapter in the history of foreign policy than an element of foreign policy – identifiable in all times and places – which has simply become more prominent with the increased role of the public in the affairs of state and the proliferation of mechanisms for communication.

Gullion's original sense of 'public diplomacy' as a more acceptable term for 'propaganda' reflected the extreme circumstances of the Cold War. Since that moment of coining, the differences between the two concepts have become more evident and the two terms are not now seen as synonyms. Like propaganda, public diplomacy is about 'influence'; but unlike propaganda, in public diplomacy influence is not necessarily a one-way street from the speaker to his or her target. At its best, public diplomacy is a two-way street: a process of mutual influence whereby a state (or other international player) facilitates engagement between publics or tunes its own policies to the map of foreign public opinion. In the ideal case, public diplomacy treats the foreign public as an active participant – not just as a flock of sheep waiting to be ideologically shorn.

The 40 years that have passed since Gullion's phrase-making constitute a formidable historical record; and, while that record can be interpreted in a number of ways, seven lessons for today's public diplomats may be readily discerned.[3]

Lesson One: public diplomacy begins with listening

For most governments contemplating public diplomacy, their first thought is to speak. This is a mistake. The best public diplomacy begins with listening: systematically collecting and analysing the opinions of foreign publics.

Cases of governments failing to listen and pursuing a foreign policy with no attention to world opinion abound. North Korea, for example, has spent decades ignoring world opinion. Cases where listening has shaped the highest levels of policy are harder to find. Postwar Germany had no alternative but to listen, when it began the slow ascent from its international pariah status, and has kept the habit. The United States listened successfully in the 1950s and early 1960s as an awareness of international concern over American racism drove first Eisenhower and then Kennedy not merely to speak differently about civil rights, but to take practical steps to address the problem.[4]

The best listening must be seen to be done. And it must be genuine. The chief pitfall in listening is that it becomes merely a ritual, like the nagged spouse simply nodding and saying 'yes, dear' to a litany of instruction or complaint. Listening that does not appear to inform the policy process can quickly be interpreted as patronising and can become counterproductive. This was the experience of the US Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes, when, on taking up her position in mid-2005, she undertook a 'listening tour' of the Middle East, during which she was, unfortunately, perceived by many in the region as attempting principally to defend the American way of life. Actually, she **was** listening and apparently, as a direct result, stressed the importance of the

Palestinian issue to the President on her return; but the poor images of the tour overshadowed positive moves behind the scenes.

Lesson Two: public diplomacy must be connected to policy

The golden rule of public diplomacy is that **what counts is not what you say but what you do.** There is no substitute for sound policy, and a ruler with the reputation for sound policy will find his or her power in the world enhanced. This was noted by Confucius 2,500 years ago, when he spoke of wise emperors 'attracting by virtue': 'it is for this reason that, when distant subjects are not submissive, one cultivates one's moral quality in order to attract them'.[5] This is the insight at the heart of Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power'.

By extension, the most important link in any public diplomacy structure is that which connects 'listening' to policy-making and ensures that foreign opinion is weighed in the foreign policy process. Edward R. Murrow, Director of the US Information Agency in the early 1960s, recognised this when he famously told President Kennedy that his agency had to be 'in on the take-offs of policy' if it was going to be expected to be 'in on the crash landings'.

It is also possible for sound policies to make no difference to a nation's influence, if they are not publicised or coordinated with public diplomacy. There is, in addition, a need to coordinate with partners whose role could be considered 'public diplomacy by deed' – for example, international development agencies.

Lesson Three: public diplomacy is not a performance for domestic consumption

One of the major problems facing public diplomats today is the tendency of some governments to conceive of their work not as a means to engage

international publics but rather as a mechanism to impress domestic audiences. These governments are keen to show their own people all that is being done to educate the world or to correct the misperceptions of 'ignorant foreigners'. They conduct public diplomacy overseas for the purposes of propaganda at home. Some nations have built up immense bureaucracies, whose aim is not to engage foreigners but to build a reassuring (but fictitious) image, for domestic consumption, of global admiration for their country. This was the case with Brezhnev-era Soviet public diplomacy and seems to be the dominant motive of contemporary Chinese public diplomacy.

Today, the political context of much public diplomacy requires that it yield measurable results, which in turn threatens to create a bias towards those elements of public diplomacy that can most easily show short-term effectiveness. This bias has placed cultural diplomacy – with its long horizon – at a disadvantage.

Lesson Four: effective public diplomacy requires credibility, but that has implications . . .

It is obvious that effective public diplomacy requires credibility. The value of credibility has been proverbial since the day Aesop's shepherd first cried 'Wolf!' Perhaps the strongest example of the value of a reputation for credibility is the reputation of the BBC, which through its telling of bad news – as well as good – throughout the Second World War effectively reversed the reputation for creativity with the truth that Britain had earned in the First World War.

The problem is that the ways of achieving credibility differ from one element of public diplomacy to another. International broadcasters are credible when they adhere to journalistic ethics and are perceived to be free from political influence. Listening and advocacy elements are credible when they are perceived as being close to the source of foreign policy and hence able to feed into policy or speak about it with real authority. Agents of cultural diplomacy

draw credibility from their artistic integrity and are harmed by any perception of politicisation. Exchange programmes are also harmed by politicisation and draw credibility from the symmetry of their reciprocity. Many public diplomats have discovered to their cost that all aspects of their work are harmed if it is tainted by practices of covert information-gathering, intelligence work or psychological warfare.

The incompatibility of the various elements of public diplomacy has led to intense difficulties in devising effective structures to manage the work. The history of public diplomacy agencies around the world often seems like an endless tussle between centrifugal impulses towards independence of action and the centripetal pull of policy coordination. This is especially obvious in the history of the Voice of America and its struggle to operate under a charter equivalent to that which protects the editorial independence of the BBC.[6] The structure of public diplomacy adopted within the UK, with a clear division of labour by function – Foreign and Commonwealth Office for listening and advocacy, British Council for culture and exchange, BBC for international broadcasting – with its agreed firewalls and a sensible system of strategic cooperation at the executive level, seems like an excellent model which others would do well to consider.

Lesson Five: sometimes the most credible voice is not one's own

The understandable desire to be seen to be effective has been one of the factors that have historically pushed governments to place themselves at centre stage in their public diplomacy – regardless of whether their voice is best suited to advance the cause they wish to help. Some of the most effective cases of public diplomacy have occurred when the state has stepped back or empowered others to tell its story.

For example, Britain's highly successful public diplomacy towards the neutral United States before Pearl Harbor rested in the first instance on assisting

American journalists to cover the war from London. In the 1980s, when the United States needed to bring European opinion round to accepting the deployment of intermediate nuclear forces, it wisely chose to avoid a direct approach and to allow the case to be made by local voices. The key figure in the campaign, the US ambassador to NATO David Abshire, worked with regional opinion-makers, especially journalists and think-tankers with whom he had particular credibility as the founder of Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies. The campaign did not succeed in getting Europeans to love cruise missiles, but it shifted opinion enough to allow the weapons to be deployed – a manoeuvre that now looks like the winning move in bringing the Soviet Union back to the negotiating table for the final act of the Cold War.[7]

State public diplomacy sometimes does well to privilege voices from its regions, as in the British Council's work overseas with Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish voices.[8]

Lesson Six: public diplomacy is not always 'about you'

Public diplomacy is about advancing foreign policy, and that foreign policy may not necessarily concern the image of the state: it may be directed rather at engineering a general improvement of the international environment, or empowering indigenous voices within a target state or states. A historical example of innovative work of this kind that falls within the category of exchange is the work of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's conference centre Wilton Park as a zone for free international exchange of views on key issues of the day – issues that may have nothing directly to do with Britain. This facility played a special role in postwar German democratisation and Anglo-German reconciliation.[9]

Contemporary British public diplomacy has, since the Carter review of 2005,[10] turned decisively towards a concentration on issues, focusing British

work on a small number of strategic objectives, such as climate security or nuclear non-proliferation, rather than on the project of teaching the world to value Albion.

Lesson Seven: public diplomacy is everyone's business

It is tempting to compartmentalise public diplomacy as the exclusive preserve of those who draw salary cheques for working in the field; but this is to ignore both the contribution of 'citizen diplomats' and the 'people-to-people' public diplomacy carried out through work like town twinning. Arguably the greatest achievement of public diplomacy in the last half-century is the reconciliation between Germany and France – a process in which the local town-to-town exchanges preceded the nationally organised youth exchange schemes of the 1963 Élysée Treaty by over a decade and a half.[11]

No less significantly, the citizen plays a role in promoting the message or image which the public diplomat is seeking to project to the world. Just as public diplomacy is vulnerable to bad policy, so it is vulnerable to bad people. If a nation fails to conform to its 'brand', any messaging will be undermined. A small number of people can cause a great deal of damage, as witnessed by the impact of the small number of Americans and Britons prosecuted for human rights violations in the Iraq War on the overall reputation of their respective nations. Sometimes the key battle in public diplomacy lies not in projecting a reputation overseas, but rather in persuading the population at home to live up to a reputation that they already have.

The relevance of these lessons for the new public diplomacy

Scholars now speak of 'the **new** public diplomacy'.[12] This term draws attention to changes in the context and practice of public diplomacy over the last decade or so. These shifts include: the end of the bipolar Cold War world; the proliferation of international actors (including international organisations, non-governmental organisations and corporations); the arrival

of global digital and real-time technologies, which have blurred the lines between the domestic and international news spheres; and the rise of theoretical models derived from marketing, such as 'place branding'.

Yet none of these changes is as challenging as the reorientation of public diplomacy away from the top-down communication patterns of the Cold War era to an even greater emphasis on people-to-people contact, especially given the rise of peer-to-peer media. The rise of the new public diplomacy does not negate the lessons of the old; rather, it redoubles their significance.

Public diplomacy begins with listening
New technology has made listening easier for public diplomats. Software is now available to monitor blogs in real time and track the treatment of an issue around the world on a daily basis. The need to be seen to be listening remains undiminished; if anything, it is increased by the new risk that technology may somehow place new distance between the public diplomat and his or her target audience. In public diplomacy, human relationships remain paramount.

Public diplomacy must be connected to policy
It is more important than ever that public diplomacy has a role in the formation of policy. In the world of global real-time news, where boundaries between the various theatres of news around the world have largely collapsed, a policy error is not restricted to any one region but can be seen globally, instantly.

Public diplomacy is not a performance for domestic consumption
We now live in a world where a speech crafted for Kansas or Liverpool is heard in Kandahar, and one in which clumsy attempts to address a domestic audience can have negative consequences abroad. For public diplomacy to remain distinct from the clamour of short-term political gain will require restraint on the part of political leaders and effective firewalls between the various elements of public diplomacy.

Effective public diplomacy requires credibility, but that has implications . . .
Credibility remains the foundation of all effective public diplomacy, and the world of the new public diplomacy provides even greater scope for that credibility to resonate. As the volume of information available over the internet grows, the provenance of that information becomes ever more significant. Public diplomacy has its own brands – in the case of the UK, the Foreign Office, the British Council and the BBC are the most obvious; information provided under those brands has special authority and is consequently more likely to be voluntarily passed by one internet user to a peer, so long as the credibility of those brands is upheld.

Sometimes the most credible voice is not one's own
In the era of peer-to-peer technology, the ultimate credibility seems to rest with 'people like me'.[13] This means that effective public diplomacy will be that which enrols 'people like me' and provides them with information that they can pass to their peers. The corresponding conceptualisation of public diplomacy is that of a mechanism not for making single communications to a target audience, but for introducing a reproducible idea into a matrix so that it can be passed among a target group.

Public diplomacy is not always 'about you'
Once liberated from a narrow obsession with national image, the new public diplomacy holds the potential to address a wide range of global issues. It is one of the few tools available to the state or any other international actor wishing to establish an interface with the international public – who hold the fate of the earth in their hands as never before.

Public diplomacy is everyone's business
This final point is also writ large in the world of the new public diplomacy. Government-sponsored messages are only one mechanism by which to communicate across frontiers today. Opinion is also built by the direct experience of individuals meeting in cyberspace or in the real world.

A country's image can be shaped as much by the experience of a returning migrant or asylum seeker as by the words of its highest-ranking officials. There is less opportunity to maintain an image that is not underwritten by demonstrable experience. For a society to prosper in the international marketplace of ideas, it is necessary not only to strive to say the right thing or even to do the right thing, but, in the concluding words of Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,* to 'be the right thing inside'.

Conclusion

The world of the new public diplomacy has opened up fresh possibilities, but it has not erased the relevance of the history of public diplomacy. On the contrary, the lessons of the past seem even more relevant in an age in which communications play an unprecedented role. Whether the communications travel digitally at the speed of light or in hand-delivered notes written with quills, the foundations of public diplomacy, and the seven central lessons, remain as valid today as they were when the term 'public diplomacy' was coined in the 1960s – or as they were in the previous centuries, when generations practised the art oblivious to its name.

Notes

1 For an account of Gullion and the origins of the term 'public diplomacy', see Nicholas J. Cull, '"Public Diplomacy" before Gullion: the evolution of a phrase', in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, eds, *The handbook of public diplomacy* (London: Routledge, forthcoming); available online at http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/pdfs/gullion.pdf.

2 This taxonomy is explored in Nicholas J. Cull, 'Public diplomacy: taxonomies and histories,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616: 1, March 2008, special issue on 'Public diplomacy in a changing world', co-edited with Geoffrey Cowan.

3 The conclusion to Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945–1989* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) also identifies seven lessons from the history of US public diplomacy, many of which are US-specific. The international scope of the present volume has enabled more general observations to be made and a wider set of lessons to be drawn here.

4 The classic exposition of this case is Mary Dudziak, *Cold War civil rights: race and the image of American democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

5 *Analects of Confucius (Lun Yu)* XVI: 1 (434).

6 For a detailed history, see Alan L. Heil Jr, *Voice of America: a history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

7 This case is explored in Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency.*

8 For a case-study of recent use of Scottish voices, see Nicholas J. Cull, *The National Theatre of Scotland's Black Watch: theatre as cultural diplomacy* (London and Los Angeles: University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy/British Council, 2008); available online at http://www.britishcouncil.org/files/documents/usa-arts-theater-black-watch-cultural-pub.pdf.

9 For a detailed study, see Richard Mayne, *In victory, magnanimity, in peace, goodwill: a history of Wilton Park* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

10 Lord Carter of Coles was asked by the Foreign Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to conduct 'an independent review of Public Diplomacy' and examine the effectiveness of current public diplomacy activities. His *Public diplomacy review* was completed in December 2005.

11 See Ulrich Krotz, *Ties that bind: the parapublic underpinnings of Franco-German relations as construction of international value* (Cambridge, MA: Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, Oct. 2002); available online at http://www.ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/Krotz4.pdf. Also Antoine Vion, 'Europe from the bottom up: town twinning in France during the Cold War', *Contemporary European History* 2: 4 (2002), pp. 623–40.

12 The key exploration of this idea is Jan Melissen, ed., *The new public diplomacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

13 On the credibility of 'people like me', as indicated by the Edelman Trust Barometer survey, see http://www.edelman.com/news/ShowOne.asp?ID=102.

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3 THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL REPUTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the advance of globalisation, national image and reputation have become ever more critical assets in the modern world. Attempts to enhance these assets are sometimes pursued by governments under the name of 'nation branding' – all too often a naive, ineffectual and wasteful application of commercial marketing techniques – and sometimes in a narrow and primitive form of public diplomacy. However, new forms of public diplomacy and a more sophisticated approach to nation branding or competitive identity can work together to help create prosperity, improve international relations and ultimately address some of the 'grand challenges' of our age.

When I started writing about an idea I called 'nation brand' more than twelve years ago, my observation was a simple one: that the reputations of countries are analogous to the brand images of companies and products, and are equally critical to the progress and prosperity of those countries because of their influence on the opinions and behaviours of each country's 'target audiences': foreign investors, tourists, consumers, students, entrepreneurs, trading partners, the media, other governments, donors, multilateral agencies, and so on.

The need for understanding in this area is critical. Today, the world is one market; the advance of globalisation means that every country, city and region must compete with every other for its share of the world's commercial, political, social and cultural transactions. In such an environment, as in any busy marketplace, brand image becomes a critical factor, providing a vital short cut to an informed buying decision.

Countries, cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier: their brand goes before them like a calling

card that opens doors, creates trust and respect, and raises the expectation of quality, competence and integrity.

Places with a reputation – no matter how ill-deserved – for being poor, uncultured, backward, dangerous or corrupt will find that everything they or their citizens try to achieve outside their own neighbourhood is harder, and the onus is always on them to prove that they don't conform to the national stereotype. Compare the experiences of a Swedish and an Iranian manager on the international job market, or the struggles of an exporter from Bangladesh with one from Canada. Compare the ease with which a mediocre tourist resort in a highly regarded country can gain glowing media coverage and celebrity endorsement with the difficulties experienced by an unspoiled and unique destination in a country with a weak reputation. Compare the way consumers in Europe or America will willingly pay more for an unknown 'Japanese' product than for an identical 'Korean' product that was probably made in the same Chinese factory. Compare how the international media will report positively on an ordinary piece of policy from the government of a country reputed to be fair, rich and stable, with the silence or sharp criticism that greets a wise, brave and innovative policy from a country saddled with a negative image.

Brand vs. branding

Places certainly **have** their brand images; but the extent to which they can be **branded** is still, quite properly, the subject of intense debate. The idea of nation as brand has created much excitement in the public sector, thanks to the tantalising but largely illusory prospect of a quick fix for a weak or negative national image. Many governments, most consultants and even some scholars persist in a naive and superficial notion of 'place branding' that is nothing more than ordinary marketing and corporate identity, where the product just happens to be a country, a city or a region rather than a bank or a running shoe.

It's easy to see why governments are attracted by the idea of branding. Admiring glances have often been cast by the public sector at the creativity, speed, efficiency and lack of ceremony with which companies appear able to hire and fire, restructure, reinvent themselves, build and implement strategies, raise and spend capital, develop new products and get them to market, respond to competition and react to disasters. What really impresses politicians, as they struggle to squeeze a few extra votes from an increasingly apathetic electorate, is the apparent ability of certain companies to shape public discourse, to manipulate their own images at will, and to inspire unwavering respect, loyalty, even love for their brands.

This power, it must be said, is partly imaginary: companies find it easier to be popular with their audiences simply because they are offering something which those audiences actually want to buy.

Moreover, there is little or no evidence to suggest that private-sector marketing techniques can change national images. It is remarkable how many governments are prepared to spend large amounts of taxpayers' and donors' money on such campaigns without the support of any proper case-studies – there are none in the literature – and often without even the most rudimentary success criteria or mechanisms for performance measurement.

Sectoral marketing and branding campaigns can, it is true, have an indirect influence on national image, if they are carried out well and consistently – for example, the tourism and export promotions of New Zealand and Spain have helped to raise the profiles of those countries in recent decades – but such successes should not be conflated with 'nation branding'. They are simply instances of countries whose reputation has been enhanced as a result of their high-quality products and services being sold around the world. When, on the one hand, the task is to sell a product (and a product can just as well be a holiday or an investment location as fast-moving consumer goods), then advertising is not only legitimate and useful but also necessary. When, on

the other hand, the task is to persuade people to change their minds about a country, advertising becomes propaganda, which most people instinctively recognise and resist.

National image as a fixed asset

In reality, the images of places appear to be remarkably stable, and highly resilient in the face of any kind of deliberate manipulation. The Anholt Nation Brands Index (NBI), a survey I have been running quarterly since early 2005 to track and analyse the global images of 40 countries using a panel of nearly 30,000 respondents in 35 countries, shows that almost no country's image has changed by more than 1 or 2 percentage points during this period.

Part of the reason why national image is so stable – more of a fixed asset than a liquid currency – is because we all seem to need these comforting stereotypes that enable us to put countries in convenient pigeon-holes, and will abandon them only if we really have no other choice. The relevance of foreign countries to most people is limited; if people in Spain or South Africa or India spend only a few minutes each year thinking about, say, Britain, it's not surprising if their perceptions of Britain remain largely unchanged for years on end. Images of foreign countries are in fact part of the culture of the country that holds the perceptions: Japan's image in China, for example, is part of Chinese culture, and vice versa. National reputation truly cannot be constructed; it can only be earned. Imagining that such a deeply rooted phenomenon can be shifted by so weak an instrument as marketing communications is an extravagant delusion. As Socrates observed, 'the way to achieve a better reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear'.

Image change usually takes place over decades and generations, not months or years. The high international esteem in which Japan and Germany are held today (respectively they currently rank eighth and first overall in the NBI)

contrasts dramatically with their pariah status after the Second World War, but the process has been a long and painful one: in both cases, image change took place as a consequence of a deliberate, long-term programme of political reform, improved social stability, economic growth and, indispensably, a retreat into non-militarism. Interestingly, it was through the politically neutral medium of consumer products that both Japan and Germany were able to start the process of rebuilding international trust; today they respectively rank first and third worldwide in the NBI for export preference.

It is, of course, by no means certain that building trust in one area will lead to wider acceptance for a nation; there are many countries that remain typecast for generations under a single reputational asset, and for whom success in a single sector proves a dead-end in the attempt to build broader international esteem. Jamaica, for example, has been known for decades as a world-class tourist destination, but still has difficulty earning a reputation for other areas in which it undoubtedly excels, such as higher education, customer service centres and IT support.

Nobody doubts that an improved reality will, eventually, result in an improved image, at least in some sectors. But it is because this process can take many decades if left to 'natural' forces, and even then may not benefit the country as a whole, that the idea of a technique with the power to accelerate it – perhaps to the point where it could occur within the term of office of a democratically elected government – and to broaden the base of the country's international reputation and leverage it to the benefit of every sector, creates so much interest.

Competitive identity

Once it is accepted that communication alone cannot alter a negative or outdated national image, the critical question becomes whether it is indeed possible to close that gap by other means (assuming, of course, that the

country in question does actually deserve a better reputation than it has). Hence the concept of '**competitive identity**', a phrase I have coined in preference to the misleading term 'nation branding' to describe what is essentially a plan for mobilising the strategies, activities, investments, innovations and communications of as many national sectors as possible, both public and private, in a concerted drive to **prove** to the world that the nation deserves a different, broader and more positive image.

The theory of competitive identity takes its cue from the way in which country images are 'naturally' formed. By accident more often than by design, most countries engage with the outside world, and thus create their images, through six basic areas of activity:

1 their tourism promotion (often the loudest voice in 'branding' the nation or region, as tourist boards usually have the biggest budgets and the most competent marketers), along with people's first-hand experience of visiting the country as tourists or business travellers;

2 their exported products and services, which – when their place of origin is explicit – act as powerful ambassadors for each country and region;

3 the policy decisions of the country's government, whether foreign policy which directly affects the 'audience', or domestic policy reported in the international media;

4 for business audiences, the way the country solicits inward investment, and the way it recruits foreign entrepreneurs, workers, researchers and students;

5 cultural exchange, cultural exports and sport; and

6 the people of the country themselves – politicians, media and sports stars, as well as the population in general: how they behave when abroad and how they treat visitors to their country.

For clarity, these 'natural' channels of influence, communication or representation can be shown as the points of a hexagon (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: The hexagon of competitive identity

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The theory of competitive identity is based on a three-pronged approach of strategy, substance and symbolic actions, planned and executed through a close and long-term coalition between all the stakeholders around the hexagon:

- **strategy:** the coalition needs to form a clear, inspiring, truthful narrative of what the country and its people really are, what they stand for, where they are going and how they are going to get there;

- **substance:** the coalition must find ways to stimulate and coordinate the policies, strategies, investments, behaviours and, above all, innovations – because it is **new** things that most interest the media and public opinion – of all six points of the hexagon to realise and reinforce this narrative; and

- **symbolic actions:** a certain proportion of the substance produced by each point of the hexagon must have an intrinsic communicative power: innovations, structures, legislation, reforms, investments, institutions or policies that are especially suggestive, daring, memorable, picturesque, inspiring or otherwise 'media-friendly'.

Of course, it is not possible for a democratic government to interfere with the operation of any of these sectors (especially private business) to the extent of dictating their sector-specific strategies or communications; nor would it be wise to attempt to do so. The only way in which such a course can be pursued is through a 'soft power' approach, where the fundamental attraction – and ultimate benefits – of a shared national strategy are communicated well enough to stir a genuine motivation on the part of the various stakeholders, both public and private, to join forces. Improved coordination between the points of the hexagon, the joint development of a national strategy, more sharing of resources and expertise, the encouragement of innovation, and the establishment of common standards and quality measures can achieve a great deal. Even a modest amount of such 'joining up' tends to result in a more effective management of national reputation than most countries currently achieve, or ever have achieved.

Interspersing the substance with occasional symbolic actions can be highly effective in projecting an enhanced or updated image of the country. Examples of this include: the Slovenian government donating financial aid to its Balkan neighbours to prove that Slovenia was not part of the Balkans; Spain legalising single-sex marriages to demonstrate that its values had modernised to a point diametrically opposed to those of the Franco period; the decision of the Irish government to exempt artists, writers and poets

from income tax to prove the state's respect for creative talent; or The Hague hosting the European Court of Human Rights to cement the Netherlands' reputation as a global bastion of the rule of law. Even a building such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao or the Sydney Opera House may have a symbolic value for its city and country well beyond its economic footprint. But for every truly resonant project of this kind there are dozens of expensive glass towers – anonymous trophy buildings that add nothing to the image of a city, because they are emblematic of nothing but the desire to look wealthy and 'western', and that communicate nothing of the true narrative of the country or city in which they are built.

Certainly, engaging some or all points of the hexagon (see Figure 3.1) in a national strategy is an ambitious project, and is a more realistic aspiration for smaller and poorer countries with fewer and leaner institutions, as well as simpler aims and more direct forms of engagement with the rest of the world; happily, these are also the countries that are most likely to benefit from such a project.

For countries like Britain or the United States, uniting a large, complex and mature bureaucracy around a shared national narrative is probably beyond the realms of possibility: their complex and sophisticated interactions with other states and regions are more likely to be hampered than strengthened by a single 'positioning', and in any case, their reputations are probably too substantial to be amenable to deliberate influence.

Competitive identity and public diplomacy

Clearly, national reputation is a critical issue for governments today; but the means by which it can be meaningfully influenced during any administration's term of office are neither well nor widely understood. 'Competitive identity' and its precursor, 'nation branding,' are recent constructs – I coined the latter phrase in a 1998 academic paper,[1] and the former is the title of a book I published in 2007[2] – but the need for, and

the desire of, leaders to wield some influence over the external images of the places they rule are, of course, as old as civilisation itself.

The only other systematic approach in history for tackling this kind of issue is public diplomacy, which has been recognised and practised as a discipline for well over 50 years. The relationship between nation branding and public diplomacy has, however, never been very clearly defined or described, mainly because there is little consensus on the definition of either term.

Interpretations of nation branding, as I have shown, vacillate uneasily between private-sector marketing communications crudely transposed to the public sector and the more ambitious concept of strategic, cross-sectoral national policy-making implied by competitive identity. Public diplomacy, for its part, has been subject to a number of different interpretations through its longer history; and, depending on which definition one selects for each discipline, one could equally claim that public diplomacy is a subset of nation branding; that nation branding is a subset of public diplomacy; that they are virtually synonymous; or indeed that they are largely unrelated. My preferred interpretation of the two terms, as I will show, leads me to conclude that they are more distantly related than is often assumed.

The way many governments speak about public diplomacy today makes it sound like nothing more than a decorous euphemism for nation branding of the most primitive, sector-specific, communications-oriented type. Ministries of state don't like to use words like 'brand', but national or sectoral brand management is precisely what many of them are trying – and generally failing – to perform.

Treating public diplomacy as essentially sector-specific marketing may, if competently carried out, produce short-term benefits for the sector in question, and it can certainly improve the country's **outputs**. But **outcomes** are another matter, and it is doubtful whether such approaches do much to address the foreign policy challenges faced by governments today, or can

achieve any lasting traction in the intensely competitive environment of the global marketplace.

The core of competitive identity lies in considering how the nation **as a whole** behaves towards, interacts with, and presents and represents itself to other nations, whereas what most countries call public diplomacy concentrates exclusively on the presentation of government policy to foreign publics: what David Steven calls 'the publicization of diplomacy'. Policy is simply one point of the competitive identity hexagon, so this 'primitive' public diplomacy is a weak subset of the whole, a diplomatic monologue whose audience happens to be society at large rather than other diplomats.

Happily, this narrow interpretation of public diplomacy as a subtype of nation branding is not the end of the story. More recent varieties are concerned with broader and longer-term effects: the discipline has evolved from the initially rather primitive government PR practised by the United States Information Agency after the Second World War, through something closer to nation branding (which recognises the importance played by national image and attempts to influence this, as well as understanding that a one-way sales pitch can't rebrand the nation, and that actions speak louder than words), to the more radical redefinition of public diplomacy now being explored in the United Kingdom. Following Lord Carter's review in 2005,[3] we have defined a new approach to public diplomacy, which aims to use it as an **instrument of policy**, rather than as a method of communication.

The importance of credibility

This new approach is fundamentally different from nation branding, since its primary purpose is neither to present government policies nor to build, enhance or preserve national reputation. At first sight it might be assumed that it has no connection whatsoever with nation branding, an approach which, no matter how sophisticated and policy-driven it becomes, has reputation as its ultimate concern.

Yet of course there is a connection: the success of the 'new public diplomacy', in common with other and earlier forms of the discipline, is predicated entirely on the credibility of its perceived source. As Anthony Trollope wrote in his 1881 novel *Dr Wortle's School*:

> *'So much in this world depends on character that attention has to be paid to bad character even when it is not deserved. In dealing with men and women, we have to consider what they believe, as well as what we believe ourselves. The utility of a sermon depends much on the idea that the audience has of the piety of the man who preaches it. Though the words of God should never have come with greater power from the mouth of man, they will come in vain if they be uttered by one who is known as a breaker of the Commandments; – they will come in vain from the mouth of one who is even suspected to be so.'*

The credibility of the perceived source of any message or action is as significant in determining its impact as the cultural lens through which it is observed; and, just like the cultural factor, we ignore it at our peril.

A nation's credibility is virtually synonymous with its 'brand image'; so even countries such as Britain, which eschew narrow self-promotion for the sake of the more collaborative, more global aspirations of the 'new public diplomacy', will still find that they are severely hampered in their aims without the support of an international reputation that is as strong, true, fair and positive as it can be.

Managing national reputation is by any standards a gigantic task, demanding a rare combination of vision, authority, patience, consensus, creativity and organisational skill; but it is no longer a matter of choice. Countries must either take some control over their good name or allow it to be controlled by public opinion and public ignorance; governments must either learn to value and cherish this precious asset of international reputation, or find that every action they perform, no matter how disinterested, is interpreted according to whatever negative attribute is currently ascribed to their nation.

Not every government, and indeed not every population, treats international approval as an important goal in its own right; but when we speak of the images of places, we are talking about something more significant than mere popularity. The only sort of government that can afford to ignore the impact of its national reputation is one that has no interest in participating in the global community, and no desire for its economy, its culture or its citizens to benefit from the influences and opportunities that the rest of the world offers them.

It is the duty of every responsible government in the age of globalisation to recognise that the nation's reputation, one of the most valuable assets of its people, is given to it in trust for the duration of its period in office. Its duty is to hand that reputation down to its successors, whatever their political persuasion, in at least as good health as it received it, and to improve it if possible for the benefit of future generations.

Whether we are speaking of competitive identity or public diplomacy, there seems little doubt that if the world's governments placed even half the value that most wise corporations have learned to place on their good names, the world would be a safer and quieter place than it is today.

Notes

1 Simon Anholt, 'Nation-brands of the 21st century', *Journal of Brand Management* 5: 6, July 1998, pp. 395–406.

2 Simon Anholt, *Competitive identity: the new brand management for nations, cities and regions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

3 Lord Carter of Coles was asked by the Foreign Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to conduct 'an independent review of Public Diplomacy' and examine the effectiveness of current public diplomacy activities. His *Public diplomacy review* was completed in December 2005.

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4 TOWARDS A THEORY OF INFLUENCE FOR TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY FOREIGN POLICY: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global issues are diffuse and rest on the decisions and behaviour of millions, if not billions, of people. Governments must respond by changing the way they practise diplomacy, offer development assistance and deploy force. This means making the new public diplomacy a core foreign policy tool.

For any issue, there will typically be three goals. The first is to build shared awareness, a common understanding of an issue around which networks of state and non-state actors can coalesce. With that in place, a shared platform can be built to campaign for change. The end point is a shared operating system: a framework for a collective response to a joint problem.

These goals can be pursued through distinct public diplomacy strategies that sit on a continuum that runs from consensual and open at the one end to covert and controlling at the other. Together, these strategies form the kernel of a theory of influence for twenty-first-century diplomacy.

Look at today's biggest global issues – climate change, pandemics, energy security, terrorism and other 'shadow sides' of globalisation – and it's striking that the challenges governments find it hardest to deal with are highly diffuse, involving the actions and beliefs of millions (if not billions) of people.[1]

Take climate change. The difference between success and failure in this case is about the spending, investment and behavioural decisions made by countless businesses and individuals. Consider AIDS/HIV, where the long-term outlook depends on how successful states are at influencing the most personal issue imaginable: their citizens' sexual behaviour. Or think of the challenge of good governance in developing countries, where it is the nature of the political **culture** – as much as organisations and laws – that makes the difference.

As issues have become increasingly distributed, the way governments work is having to change too.[2] Diplomats are breaking out of a comfort zone within which they have focused much of their energy on talking to their peers. Soldiers are confronting the limitations of force, as 'war among the people' overtakes the old paradigm of interstate conflict.[3] Development specialists are facing the fact that, in fragile states, development cannot simply be 'bought' through large transfers of resources.[4] In all three fields, there is a renewed focus on culture; on the power of ideas and values; and on the complex relationship between hierarchical organisations and informal networks.

But there are still hard questions for governments to consider about their role in a globalised world. What influence do they have? How can they best exert it? How do countries integrate all aspects of their hard and soft power? And how can they animate loose coalitions of state and non-state actors in pursuit of a common goal? It is these questions that lie at the heart of today's public diplomacy.

Three types of public diplomacy challenge

In thinking about these questions, we need to understand the nature of the global issues that now dominate the international agenda. Three can be used to illustrate the breadth of the challenge: first, the threat posed by Al-Qaeda, its affiliates – and in the future, no doubt, its successors; second, the need for effective states in developing countries; and third, the unprecedented risk posed by climate change.

These are different classes of problem. Al-Qaeda's global jihad represents a targeted attempt to undermine, and ultimately replace, the institutions at the heart of the current world order. The intended direction of change, from the perspective of the UK, is **inbound**.

Poor governance in developing countries can drag them into chaos – in a worst-case scenario, exporting disorder to neighbours and beyond. Outside

intervention aims to help these countries escape from their development traps and is motivated by enlightened self-interest. Here, the desired direction of change (again from the point of view of the UK) is **outbound**.

A stable climate is a global public good. Although some parts of the world (mostly the poorer ones) will suffer disproportionately as climatic conditions become more hostile, the bottom line is a simple choice: everyone enjoys the fruits of a stable climate, or no one does. Thus change needs to flow in **all directions**, both across states and within them.

Taken together, then, this triad is a representative sample of the type of problem a new agenda for influence will need to tackle. So what can they tell us about the new public diplomacy?

Terrorism as public diplomacy

Let us start with terrorism. Modern terror movements are designed to probe societies to find and exploit their physical and psychological weaknesses. They use powerful ideologies and narratives to motivate their supporters to act. Under pressure, they adopt decentralised organisational structures and seek to develop alternative sources of authority. And they are innovative communicators, weaving together the propaganda of word and deed, and exploiting the potential of new communication channels. Perhaps most importantly, they rely on provoking their host societies into an adverse response. The state is expected to carry most of the burden of undermining its own legitimacy.[5]

The Islamist terrorist movement, with Al-Qaeda as its vanguard, has learned these lessons well. Al-Qaeda's aim is to become what David Kilcullen calls 'a holding company and clearing house for world revolution'.[6] In his 1994 declaration of jihad, Osama bin Laden attempted to yoke a series of local grievances into a single narrative of oppression. Muslims are confronted by a Judaeo-Christian alliance that believes their 'blood is the cheapest and that

their property and wealth is merely loot'.[7] Al-Qaeda, which has steadily degraded from a centralised organisation to an amorphous network, has set out a simple strategy:[8] entangle 'the ponderous American elephant' in conflict overseas, thus radicalising potential recruits and creating a cycle of violence that aims to 'make America bleed to the point of bankruptcy'.[9] Mischievously, bin Laden quotes an unnamed British diplomat speaking at Chatham House to support his assertion that 'it seems as if we and the White House are on the same team shooting at the United States' own goal'.[10]

Bin Laden is the quintessential public diplomat, not least in how he speaks **past** governments. In an address to the 'peoples of Europe' after the 2004 Spanish election (when José María Aznar was defeated in the wake of the Madrid bombing), he said:

> *'In response to the positive initiatives that have been reflected in recent events and opinion polls showing that most people in Europe want peace, I call upon just men, especially scholars, media, and businessmen, to form a permanent commission to raise awareness among Europeans of the justice of our causes, especially Palestine, making full use of the enormous potential of the media.'* [11]

Al-Qaeda's message is also segmented. Violent imagery plays an important role in radicalising potential supporters ('the youth'), with the internet providing new avenues for the peer-to-peer distribution of unmediated communications.[12] Traditional sources of authority within Muslim societies are undermined, dismissed as 'scholars of evil, corrupt court ministers, writers-for-hire and the like'.[13] The message to non-Muslims is a simple, if uncompromising, one: 'the road to safety begins with the cessation of hostilities'. Citizens of western countries must prevail on their governments to accede to Al-Qaeda's demands if they are ever to see peace.

In Al-Qaeda, we see an example of a minority that is trying to universalise its world-view. Promotion is therefore critical. Its communications are carefully

polished, branded and presented, with even the Taleban – once careless of its image – sending members to Iraq for training in modern communications techniques from Al-Sahab, Al-Qaeda's video production arm.[14] More importantly, its actions are themselves crafted to achieve influence. As David Kilcullen warns: 'Beware the "scripted enemy", who plays to a global audience and seeks to defeat you in the court of global public opinion'.[15]

Development as public diplomacy

Second, let us consider the need for better governance in many developing countries. On the one hand, 'developmental states' are a cornerstone of success in poverty reduction – as numerous Asian countries have demonstrated. On the other, when fragile states implode, the resulting vacuum threatens not only their own citizens, but neighbouring states too – as well as providing a haven for organised crime or terrorism, and an engine of unmanaged migration. As Robert Cooper puts it, 'We may not be interested in chaos, but chaos is interested in us.'[16]

But if effective states are the desired destination, we lack a clear road map that shows how to get there – as demonstrated by the intensity of recent debates over post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq and by the violence and civil unrest in Kenya at the start of 2008.[17] Governance work supported by European donors tends to be relatively technical, focused on the executive branch of government, and geared towards areas such as public service reform or budgetary processes. Anything overtly political is often seen as too risky to get drawn into. The United States, meanwhile, has developed a discourse of 'transformational diplomacy', but has yet to flesh out exactly what this approach means in practice.

What **is** clear is that the challenge of promoting effective states is very much about influence – and only partly about disbursing money. Indeed, given the risk that aid spending can prop up entrenched systems of corruption and

patronage (as was clearly the case in Kenya), it could be argued that it is easier for money to affect governance for the worse unless aid donors have the right mechanisms in place to 'first do no harm'.

What might a more sophisticated theory of influence conducive to good governance in developing countries look like? What international actors seeking to influence governance in fragile states need is twofold: first, a clear account of how much influence they **can** wield; and second, clear limits on how much influence they **should** try to wield.

Assessments of the former need to start from a realistic sense of the limits to how much influence external players can hope to have on states in which they are guests. Tip O'Neill famously observed that 'all politics is local', and this applies in developing countries as much as anywhere else.[18] At best, international actors can exert influence at the margins, and usually only when they are prepared to act in concert. Only very rarely will they be able to effect a U-turn in a country's fortunes – and when they can, it can as easily be a change for the worse as for the better.

On the latter point, international actors need a clearer story about sovereignty, and what they will and won't do. Where outside countries are considered to be meddling in internal affairs, they risk strong push-back. In these cases – and there are many of them – **unintended** public diplomacy undercuts official policy goals. The experience of the United States in Pakistan, where America has haemorrhaged legitimacy, is a good example: fewer than one in ten Pakistanis now believe the country should cooperate with the United States in the war on terror, down from nearly five in ten just 18 months ago.[19]

As with terrorism, the key need here is for international actors to begin by understanding the context in which they are operating: who has influence, which ideas and narratives have traction, and what sort of leverage they can hope to exert.

Climate mitigation as public diplomacy

Climate change poses even greater dangers to our collective security than fragile states. Faced with a problem of such unprecedented scale and difficulty, it is remarkable that the world has come so far in developing a collective understanding of the issues. That it has is testament to the effectiveness of some powerful examples of non-traditional diplomacy.

Take the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a mechanism for institutionalising the part played in the climate debate by a non-governmental community – climate scientists. It has played a crucial role in creating a deliberative platform for international engagement with the issue. The Stern Review on the economics of climate change, in turn, has helped bring together the economic and environmental narratives, shaping a debate about the respective costs of action and inaction. Together with Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth,* it helped create the political space for the international community to begin negotiations on a new post-Kyoto climate deal.

At the same time, considerable effort has been devoted to disrupting an emerging consensus against urgent action, which hardened in the United States in the wake of President Bush's repudiation of Kyoto. New players were brought into the debate, with a particular focus on energising faith, scientific and business communities and directing attention towards political structures at state and city level. The climate 'agreement' struck between the UK and the State of California epitomised this work, with Tony Blair and Arnold Schwarzenegger posing for the cameras as a group of senior business leaders looked on.

In the wake of the Bali climate summit, we have reached a critical point. Focus is now switching from the relatively settled 'problem debate' to a 'solutions debate' that is still immature and muddled.[20] A new 'game' is about to begin, one that has the opposite dynamic to chess. With every step

that is taken towards an endgame (painful cuts in emissions; proposals for international agreement; new types of regulation, market mechanism, or tax), the number of pieces on the board will grow, not shrink. **Swarming** behaviour will become increasingly evident, as factions of all kinds are suddenly, and with unpredictable effect, galvanised into a passionate attempt to protect their interests.

The game is also asymmetric, with deal-makers needing to 'win' (get a deal internationally, legislate domestically, etc.), while deal-breakers only need to stop them (a stalemate suits them fine). Failure is inevitable if governments allow themselves to focus too much energy on the negotiating 'bubble'. Governments that are committed to a global deal have to find a way of influencing the evolving debate in tens, if not hundreds, of countries, while using domestic policy to indicate the strength of their commitment. Success relies on building coalitions and keeping them focused on the big picture, whether that is the extent of the collective dangers we face or the opportunities that lie in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The public diplomacy challenge

So what commonalities can we identify across our three global challenges?

The most fundamental point is the obvious one: when policy-makers deal with the primary global issues of the twenty-first century, they are inevitably engaging in public diplomacy. The ability to understand, engage with and influence non-state actors is central to making progress on all three of the issues discussed above.

Second, we should note fundamental difficulties in understanding problems and describing solutions. On issues as multifaceted as climate change, development or terrorism, there is no one agency, government or area of expertise that has the whole picture. As a result, part of the challenge for tomorrow's public diplomats is about how they synthesise information – and

how they share it with allies. In Pakistan, for instance, internationally funded polling provided a yardstick for measuring extraordinary shifts in opinion in the run-up to the February 2008 election. This resource could potentially evolve into an open-source knowledge-bank that helps to coordinate efforts to support the country's frail democracy.

Third, if the challenge of 'jointness' and harmonised collective action applies strongly to information-gathering, then the same is doubly true when the actual exertion of influence is considered. Here too, there are real limits to how much any one government (or agency, or individual) can achieve on its own. Indeed, since 9/11 the West has been remarkably poor at uniting behind a common set of values and ideas, and its 'brand' has suffered both at home and abroad. Instead, as Al-Qaeda shows, the key is working in **coalitions** that could include governments, media, civil society groups and many others.

Fourth, it should be clear that the quality of content is everything in effective public diplomacy. Only compelling narratives and visions of the future can animate networks over the long term. So are our stories more powerful than those told by the other side? This is why seizing the initiative and constantly emphasising the big picture is so important. On climate change, the European Union – itself a coalition – has used the offer of a pre-emptive cut in emissions to attempt to force the pace on a new global deal. But Europe's approach also offers a cautionary tale. European governments are yet to start behaving as if they expect to make the fast and deep cuts that a deal will require. This creates uncertainty, weakens the coalitions they need to build, and saps their influence at the negotiating table.[21]

Public diplomacy's goals

All this leaves public diplomacy at a crossroads. On the one hand, its mission has never seemed so important. Governments face a series of sprawling and complex challenges in an international sphere they no longer monopolise.

State-to-state diplomacy is still of great importance, of course, but it holds only some of the answers – especially as governments find that their power is shifting both upwards to the international level and downwards to non-state actors.

But confusion abounds about what public diplomacy is and what it can do. Again and again, governments are lured into quixotic attempts to burnish their countries' images, as if a superficial and short-lived marketing campaign could shift the tectonic plates beneath a national brand.[22] Or they attempt to spin otherwise unpopular policies, in the vain hope that actions no longer speak louder than words. Public diplomacy is seldom used **strategically**. Governments rarely align all their deeds, words and resources behind the impact they wish to achieve.

So what types of goal should be set for public diplomacy in a globalised world (see Figure 4.1)?

First, public diplomacy is about building **shared awareness** – a common understanding of an issue around which a coalition can coalesce. The task here is not simply to accumulate information, which often exists in

Figure 4.1: Goals for the new public diplomacy

Shared operating system	A framework for a collective response to a joint problem
Shared platform	A network of state and non-state actors who campaign for a collective vision or preferred solution
Shared awareness	A common understanding of an issue around which a coalition can coalesce

abundance, but rather to invest in analysis, synthesis and dissemination. Are state and non-state actors using the same data? Has a common language emerged? Is there a hub for discussion and debate?

Shared awareness should be the precursor to the construction of a **shared platform**. The new public diplomacy will usually – perhaps invariably – be a multilateral pursuit. The objective is to build a network of state and non-state actors around a shared vision or set of solutions: something a bilateral programme will seldom be able to do. This vision or solution need not be provided by a particular government and then 'sold' to its partners. The approach is less top-down that that: a really compelling vision will in itself have sufficient power to draw together a network and motivate it to campaign for change.

The end point is institutionalising this network's beliefs, thinking and structures into a framework for managing a particular problem. Given the amorphous and dynamic nature of the challenges we face, this framework will seldom be a permanent one. Rather, it will involve the creation of a **shared operating system** that distributes our response to a risk, and is flexible enough to evolve as that risk evolves. The result should be a change in the structure of globalisation, a rewiring of our ability to act together in the face of a collective challenge.[23]

Public diplomacy strategy

It is helpful to think of four distinct ways in which these goals can be achieved. Together, they form a typology of generic **influencing strategies** (see Figure 4.2).

Engagement strategies are public diplomacy's bread and butter. For most important international challenges, a response of sufficient scale is lacking. Effort is therefore needed to energise the debate, thus increasing the attention paid to an issue, developing solutions and increasing capacity to respond.

Figure 4.2: Strategies for the new public diplomacy

	Engagement	Shaping	Disruptive	Destructive
When to do it	Unformed debate – content lacking, energy low	Sterile or diffuse debate – no ideas, lack of direction	Unwelcome consensus – deadlock, no way through	Insuperable differences – debate not an option
Aims (content)	Inject new thinking and ideas; create shared resources; promote dialogue; fashion a common language	Create a fresh perspective; develop new concepts; change the language	Probe points of weakness; exploit wedge issues; redefine the terms of the debate; create a counter-narrative	Use mis-information to sow confusion, fear and panic
Aims (networks)	Build networks; add capacity at key points	Bring new players into the game; build unexpected alliances	Galvanise allies; divide, co-opt or marginalise opponents	Encourage dissension and defection; isolate enemies
Organisation's role	Convenor – mobilise others	Campaigner – catalyse change	Director – act behind the scenes	Director – act in covert and deniable ways
Programme style	Multilateral, cooperative, consensual	Focused on pursuit of shared interests	Unilateral, but making tactical use of alliances	Subversive and coercive
Climate example	IPCC	The Stern Review	The 'California' climate strategy	Industry-funded climate disinformation

Public diplomacy's task is to create analytical resources, promote dialogue and build coalitions. This requires substantial resources. Public diplomats must find multiple ways to initiate, feed and broaden a conversation – and sustain it until a tipping point is reached.

What, though, if a broad range of actors is engaged in an issue, but this is not leading towards a solution? What if the conversation has become stuck at some point short of resolution? In this case, a **shaping** strategy is needed to focus the conversation and drive it towards a consensus that can support action. Shaping strategies involve a deliberate attempt to 'reframe' the debate. Public diplomacy's task is therefore to inject new content, change the composition of key networks, or do both simultaneously – given that a new narrative is the best way to bring new voices into a debate. Shaping strategies focus on solutions not problems, and aim to achieve a particular result. Public diplomacy, in other words, takes on a campaigning guise.

Disruptive strategies must be employed when a consensus has been reached on an issue but a government finds this consensus opposed to its interests (or what it interprets as the wider interest). This is a more confrontational form of public diplomacy. The aim is to marginalise or co-opt opposing interests, or fundamentally to shift the terms of a debate. The pre-existing consensus must be dissolved or rendered irrelevant, clearing space in which a new one can be constructed. Disruption demands discipline and tolerance for risk. It is not easy to force a change in the rules of the game, especially from a position in the middle of play.

Finally, we reach **destructive** strategies which are deployed against declared adversaries. They are used only when further debate is not seen as an option. The aim of public diplomacy is to deny an opponent space, sow dissent and encourage defection from his ranks. This is public diplomacy as propaganda or psy-ops. Deceptive tactics can be used to confuse and undermine the adversary. Alternatively, we may see a refusal to accept that a group has any legitimacy, as it is ignored, belittled and otherwise marginalised.

The new public diplomat

These generic strategies sit along a nice–nasty continuum, where 'nice' strategies are consensual, open and transparent, and 'nasty' strategies are covert, controlling and one-sided. Nasty strategies **always** have a cost and should be used only when there is no alternative. In an interdependent world, a collaborative approach will usually make most sense.

But this does not mean that governments can afford to be passive, stuck in a 'listening' mode that becomes an excuse for delay and inaction. Quite the opposite. Effective public diplomacy is an active pursuit. It requires bold and determined action to reframe debates and to circumvent or attack obstacles to change – as well as a clear understanding of the different tools available.

What we are reaching for is a **theory of influence** for contemporary international relations, with the new public diplomacy at its heart. The new public diplomat should therefore not be seen as a particular **kind** of diplomat, but rather, simply, as **tomorrow's** diplomat. He or she understands that other governments are one of many target audiences (albeit an especially important one), is at ease with the chaotic, fluid nature of today's global issues, and tends naturally towards a search for the strategic synthesis. This diplomat is constantly looking both inwards, at our policy stance – is it coherent and compelling? – and outwards, at whether people are joining forces with us, or with other tribes.

The new public diplomat brings to the task a willingness to pull together all the tools of international relations and mix them together to create a coherent whole. The aim is to blend analysis, policy-making and communications; the focus is more on what the country does than on what it says. And with the job comes a new investment mindset. Instead of behaving like a bank manager – with a large portfolio, low-risk appetite and a desire for incremental returns – the new public diplomat acts like a venture

capitalist, focusing on a smaller portfolio, tolerating risk and aspiring to achieve transformational change.

The stakes, after all, are high. Globalisation has brought with it a series of ever more complex challenges. Above all, therefore, the new public diplomat must be genuinely at ease with discussion of values (rather than mere interests), understanding that without clearly stated principles – and consistent adherence to them – it will be impossible to animate coalitions of state and non-state actors, and even harder for members of that coalition to work together to deliver a common goal.

Notes

1 This essay draws heavily on work completed as part of our Demos project, 'The New Public Diplomacy', and our forthcoming pamphlet on the subject, which discusses these issues in greater detail.

2 Alex Evans and David Steven, 'Fixing the UK's foreign policy apparatus: a memo to Gordon Brown', http://www.globaldashboard.org, April 2007. See also Alex Evans and David Steven, 'How to fix the Foreign Office', http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk, 8 May 2007.

3 Rupert Smith, *The utility of force: the art of war in the modern world* (London: Allen Lane, 2005).

4 Department for International Development, *Making governance work for the poor* (London: DFID, 2006).

5 For a good historical account that emphasises the continuities between Islamist terrorism and previous waves, see Michael Burleigh, *Blood and rage: a cultural history of terrorism* (London: Harper Press, 2008).

6 David Kilcullen, 'Countering global insurgency,' version 2.2, 30 Nov. 2004, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen.pdf.

7 Osama bin Laden, 'Declaration of jihad', 23 Aug. 1996, in Bruce Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the world: the statements of Osama bin Laden* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 25.

8 As Marc Sageman has shown in a recent study, the Islamist threat continues to evolve in this direction, as Al-Qaeda the 'organisation' degrades into Al-Qaeda 'the movement'. See Marc Sageman, *Leaderless jihad: terror networks in the twenty-first century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

9 Abdel Bari Atwan, *The secret history of al-Qa'ida* (London: Saqi Books, 2006).

10 Osama bin Laden, 'The towers of Lebanon', 29 Oct. 2004, in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the world,* p. 242.

11 Osama bin Laden, 'To the peoples of Europe', 15 April 2004, in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the world,* p. 235.

12 For a good discussion, see Daniel Kimmage, *The Al-Qaeda media nexus: the virtual network behind the global message* (Washington DC: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, forthcoming 2008).

13 Osama bin Laden, 'Among a band of knights', 14 Feb. 2003, in Lawrence, ed., *Messages to the world,* p. 196.

14 Steve Tatham, UK Defence Academy Advanced Research Group, pers. comm.

15 David Kilcullen, 'Twenty-eight articles: fundamentals of company-level counterinsurgency', *Military Review,* May–June 2006, pp. 103–8.

16 Robert Cooper, *The breaking of nations: order and chaos in the twenty-first century* (New York: Atlantic Books, 2004).

17 Francis Fukuyama has dubbed this the problem of 'getting to Denmark': see Francis Fukuyama, *State-building: governance and world order in the 21st century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

18 Tip O'Neill, Thomas O'Neill and Gary Hymel, *All politics is local* (London: Crown, 1994).

19 Pakistan public opinion poll, conducted 19–29 Jan. 2008, International Republican Institute, Washington DC.

20 Alex Evans and David Steven, 'Climate change: state of the debate', in Michael Mainelli and Jan Peter Onstwedder, eds, *The London Accord: sustainable finance and climate change, final report* (London: City of London, 2007).

21 Alex Evans and David Steven, 'Beyond a zero-sum game', in British Council, ed., *Talking transatlantic* (London: British Council, 2008).

22 This is a fruitful way of seeing the intersection between nation branding and public diplomacy. See the essay by Simon Anholt in this volume.

23 Alex Evans and David Steven, 'Shooting the rapids: multilateralism and global risks', paper presented to the Progressive Governance summit, London, 5 April 2008.

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5 RECONFIGURING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: FROM COMPETITION TO COLLABORATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diplomacy has continually adapted to change in the international system, in states and in societies. A growing concern with public diplomacy has to be seen in this context. For decades, foreign ministries and other government agencies have focused on projecting national images for a variety of purposes. The growing integration of economies and societies has enhanced the perceived need to project national brands in a competitive global environment. But alongside this, another perspective on public diplomacy is emerging, which views it in terms of a different way of conducting international policy. This recognises both the need to operate within more complex domestic and international networks and, at the same time, the challenges this environment poses. Working with a more diverse set of stakeholders raises questions about the structures and processes of national diplomatic systems and their policy capacity. More fundamentally, it touches on the principles and norms underpinning a world order in flux.

Current preoccupations with public diplomacy are not hard to understand. Events following the wave of terrorist attacks that began in September 2001 have focused attention on the centrality of identities and values in world politics and, consequently, on the significance of images and ideas. Add to this the impact of globalisation and regionalisation, the proliferation of actors seeking a voice on the world stage, and the dramatic changes in communications and information technology underpinning these developments, and it is clear that the business of diplomacy is far more complex than it was even a quarter of a century ago.

As is the case with so much in a rapidly transforming environment, the implications of observable change are not always easy to interpret. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify two interlinked but distinct images of diplomacy emerging within the discourse of public diplomacy. One of these flows from a traditional conception of diplomacy as a predominantly hierarchical and intergovernmental process. The other sees public diplomacy

as one facet of an environment in which international policy is increasingly conducted through complex policy networks. In the latter image, publics are partners in and 'producers' of diplomatic processes. Although the two images coexist, the second is gaining more and more attention. What implications flow from this situation for those who have to operate within the labyrinth of relationships spanning domestic and international policy arenas?

Public diplomacy scenarios: hierarchies and networks

The hierarchical image of public diplomacy presents it predominantly in terms of top-down information flows, using techniques founded on theories of strategic political communication.[1] Much of the public diplomacy debate – particularly in the United States – rests on state-centred models in which people are seen as targets and instruments of foreign policy. The dominant question is how to target them more effectively. The answer usually involves allocating more resources to public diplomacy programmes, adopting a better-coordinated or 'holistic' approach, and responding more rapidly and more flexibly to crisis situations.[2]

The network model of public diplomacy rests on a fundamentally different picture of how diplomacy works in the twenty-first century. It recognises the importance of policy networks in managing increasingly complex policy environments through the promotion of communication, dialogue and trust. Globalisation – despite some views to the contrary – has not rendered national governments irrelevant, but it has highlighted their deficiencies in terms of knowledge, flexibility and speed in responding to global problems, and often the limits of their legitimacy in the eyes of those for whom they claim to act. The more diverse membership and non-hierarchical quality of public policy networks promote collaboration and learning, and speed up the acquisition and processing of knowledge.[3] In contrast to the assumption (inherent in the hierarchical model) that government controls international policy, the emphasis here is on bringing together government agencies and non-governmental stakeholders. In short, public diplomacy becomes more

than a component in the power inventory and suggests a different way of conceptualising the framing and implementation of international policy – and thus of conducting diplomacy in general.

Competition and collaboration

A first step in this process of reconceptualisation is to understand the fundamental characteristics of public diplomacy as a modality of power. As other chapters in this book demonstrate, public diplomacy is widely equated with the concept of 'soft' power. However, the picture is more complex, since 'hard' and 'soft' power are often difficult to differentiate and, in practice, need to be integrated. Hence the growing emphasis in the US on 'smart' power, which seeks to combine the two.[4]

Alongside these conceptual debates runs the need to differentiate forms of public diplomacy and the objectives they are intended to achieve. Governments have at their disposal two fundamental diplomatic strategies: bilateral and multilateral modes of action and influence. The latter have become increasingly important and complex, but the former remain significant, and in many contexts the two are intertwined. Consequently, some dimensions of public diplomacy will be competitive, in the sense that they are primarily intended to serve national interests and are pursued in predominantly bilateral contexts. The obvious examples are the quest for foreign investment, and the promotion of trade and international tourism, associated with public diplomacy and defined as 'branding and reputation management'.

The network image offers a different slant on public diplomacy, one in which competition is complemented by collaborative strategies. These are exemplified in **multiparty** or **multistakeholder** forms of interaction, which are familiar features of multilateral institutions, not least the United Nations.[5] At the national level, the Canadian and Norwegian experiences with the Ottawa Process relating to landmines offer a frequently cited

example of collaborative public diplomacy spanning the domestic and international policy arenas and the public and private spheres. The Kimberley Process provides another example. In this case a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Global Witness, acted as a catalyst in a process involving national diplomats, the European Commission, journalists and the global diamond firm De Beers, all of which contributed to the establishment of a regime to control the sale of 'conflict' diamonds. In the very different context of internet governance, negotiators at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), meeting in Geneva in 2003, found it necessary, given the complexity of the issues, to establish the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) under the aegis of the UN. According to one participant this was the most significant event in the WSIS process, as it moved the centre of gravity away from government negotiators and into a multistakeholder environment: 'It meant that representatives from government were sitting around the same table as industry and civil society to discuss the issues that had caused so much controversy in the run-up to the Geneva negotiations.'[6]

The key differences between these examples and narrower forms of traditional intergovernmental diplomacy lie in patterns of participation and communication. In the network image, the focus is on the identification of policy objectives in specific areas and of 'stakeholders' who possess interests and expertise related to them. These stakeholders are viewed less as targets or **consumers** of government-generated messages than as possible partners and **producers** of diplomatic outcomes. Hierarchical communication flows are replaced by multidirectional flows that are not directly aimed at policy elites, although the ultimate goal will often be to influence elite attitudes and policy choices. This model is more in tune with the demands of the global governance agenda, in which national governments remain key but not the sole players. It poses challenges for governments and their diplomatic systems at several levels – from bureaucratic structures and working practices down to the most fundamental assumptions regarding the operation of a diplomatic system driven by the principles of national sovereignty.

Structures

At the level of bureaucratic structures, we enter familiar territory. How best can governments organise themselves to operate in rapidly changing policy environments, where distinctions between international and domestic agendas have become weaker? Viewing 'public diplomacy' as a different style of diplomacy, rather than as a set of activities intended to reinforce traditional models, sharpens these debates. This perspective highlights a point that has long been obvious: the conduct of international policy is not the preserve of foreign ministries. Global policy networks are shadowed by increasingly complex national policy networks made up of a growing range of departments with international interests and links to civil society groups and the business community.

At the bureaucratic level, then, the conduct of international policy is now commonly seen as a 'whole of government' activity. But this raises the problem of coherence and coordination. Who, if anyone, takes the lead?[7] Not surprisingly, foreign ministries may claim this role; but they are confronting simultaneously growing demands and shrinking resources. Moreover, by the nature of their work they are not naturally linked to domestic constituencies. A common strategy is to strengthen central coordinating agencies, such as prime ministerial and other executive offices. Moving in this direction can lead (as did one analysis of the Norwegian foreign ministry) to the conclusion that the functions of the foreign ministry are best relocated to a central agency, which draws together all the international responsibilities of government departments. But there is no obvious reason why this model should provide a better structure for meeting the demands of operating in a diplomatic environment comprising a complex mix of public and private actors.

Furthermore, overcentralisation brings its own problems. Where coordination demands that public diplomacy strategies be 'on message', it may stifle adequate exploration of policy options and strategies in the

domestic environment and create a perception in foreign audiences that this commitment to policy dialogue is lacking. In both environments, the notion of 'partnership' conveys the aims of a mode of public diplomacy that is not top-down, is not hierarchical, and is more consistent with the objectives set out above. In one sense, this requires the deployment of traditional diplomatic advocacy skills within the domestic as much as the international arena, with the aim of developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships. Fundamentally, this is a reformulation of an old problem: how to integrate the demand for specialist skills with the generalist skills assocated with the profession of diplomacy. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has identified one answer in the establishment within the foreign ministry of 'docking points' – that is, staff who combine generalist skills with sufficient specialist knowledge to engage with other government departments and non-governmental actors and networks.[8]

Policy capacity

Underpinning these structural issues are more profound problems concerning the capacity of governments to respond to the demands posed by the increasing integration of economies and societies. As the recent 'capability reviews' of UK government departments illustrate, there is a strong sense that governments are not sufficiently flexible, adaptable or equipped with the necessary expertise to meet the challenges posed by rapidly changing policy environments.[9]

This is a huge issue, but there are several obvious points that can be made. Probably the most important is the need to integrate multistakeholder strategies into the policy cycle at an early stage. This was one of the key themes of the 2005 Carter Review of UK public diplomacy, and the Public Diplomacy Board established after the review has stressed the importance of associating public diplomacy with the delivery of governmental goals.[10] Similarly, in the United States this has been a consistent theme of numerous reports, and significant changes have occurred. The Under Secretary for

Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs now sits in the Secretary of State's policy decision meetings and meets weekly with senior members of operating bureaus.

Another way of enhancing policy capacity is to reinforce the research strengths of national diplomatic systems. This cuts across all departments with significant international responsibilities, but impinges particularly on foreign ministries, which, though often seen as the logical repositories of the skills needed in integrating domestic and international perspectives on policy, frequently fail to perform this critical function. In part this reflects the dominance of day-to-day operational demands. Some foreign ministries have strong centralised research units (these include the US State Department and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which has recently re-established its policy planning staff), while some (for example those of Norway and Germany) outsource much of their policy research to external think-tanks. Others, such as the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, have no policy planning unit, relying instead on desk officers meeting the demand for research as and when it is needed. Arguments can be advanced in support of each model; but, however research is commissioned and undertaken, the demands of multistakeholder diplomacy place added importance on the capacity to identify policy objectives and the strategies through which they can be achieved.

Other resources outside national settings can be tapped. Collaborative public diplomacy involves working with others, and experience in operating in multistakeholder environments is much more developed in international organisations. The UN, the World Trade Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are well aware that dialogue-based diplomacy is demanding and requires not only clarity of objectives but also an awareness of which interlocutors are relevant and how relations with them can be developed and managed. One way that national diplomatic systems can strengthen their capacity in this area is to draw on this experience through exchanging ideas for best practice with practitioners in multilateral institutions.

Working with stakeholders

Diplomats have long been accustomed to interacting with a range of constituencies. However, the logic of the stakeholder model requires not only that this engagement intensifies, but also that fundamental elements of diplomatic structures and processes are rethought. Developing dialogues with other stakeholders is challenging, particularly where this involves the meeting of very different cultures – at home as well as overseas. Identifying stakeholders, and their interests and needs in international policy, is an obvious first step. In the UK, two 'stakeholder surveys' have been conducted by the FCO, and these reveal interesting perspectives on what different groups expect from a foreign ministry. Two of the key themes that emerge from the surveys are the need to form better networks with stakeholders both at home and abroad; and – more fundamentally – the need to recognise that they can be partners in diplomatic processes.[11] In 2006 the FCO appointed a former senior Oxfam official as 'strategic stakeholder manager', charged with developing a set of structures and strategies for engagement with NGOs and other stakeholders.

There are many opportunities for building bridges through institutionalising consultative processes, as exemplified in trade policy consultations. Many countries have developed advisory groups that embrace business and NGO membership, and the EU has for several years operated a Trade–Civil Society Dialogue attended by officials from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade and representatives of civil society groups and business. In the past, Sweden has had an ambassador tasked with the role of communicating with NGOs, and former NGO officials are commonly appointed to specific functional areas in foreign ministries. Although the practice is not as widespread as many NGOs would like, there has also been a trend towards including relevant stakeholders in delegations to international organisations where their expertise is recognised. Thus at least two delegations to the WSIS/WGIG negotiations (the Canadian and Swiss) included NGO representatives. A further feature of the stakeholder

diplomatic environment lies in the transnationalisation of patterns of communication. It is now far harder to insulate 'publics' in separate international and domestic environments, with the result that communications with organisations overseas leak back into the domestic environment. This suggests that the distinction maintained in some countries – such as the United States – between 'public affairs' directed to domestic constituencies and 'public diplomacy' directed to foreign audiences is no longer helpful or sustainable.

Tasking the diplomatic network

The developments we have been examining have obvious implications in redefining the role and responsibilities of the diplomatic network. A 'whole of government' perspective on international policy emphasises the fact that these networks are the representatives not of foreign ministries but of an increasing number of 'domestic' departments. In many diplomatic missions there may be very few professional diplomats. The restructuring of networks is a common preoccupation of governments as they respond to global and regional changes – hence the arguments advanced for US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's 'transformational diplomacy' initiative. Today's posts are more flexible and adaptable than anything associated with the traditional image of the embassy.[12]

Alongside governmental and resource-driven change, the logic of a stakeholder image of public diplomacy has an impact on the role of posts – in both multilateral and bilateral contexts. This reaches beyond enhancing the public diplomacy capacity of posts, by designating responsibility for programmes to a person or unit. Not only is tasking the network a more diffuse process than it once was in purely governmental terms (and some governments have found it necessary to stress to government departments the overall coordinating role of the head of mission), but also the demands of working with stakeholders in the field add another dimension. This works in several ways. At one level, domestic stakeholders now hold increasing

expectations of what the network can deliver – particularly in crisis situations such as in the wake of the South-East Asian tsunami of December 2004 or the Lebanon crisis of 2006. Beyond this, the 2006 FCO stakeholder survey indicates that UK stakeholders have definite views about the network and the functions it performs, and in particular expect to be consulted about significant resourcing decisions.

If domestic stakeholders have expectations regarding the role of the diplomatic network, this is equally true of foreign stakeholders. Obviously, a multistakeholder perspective on public diplomacy places a premium on developing working relationships with, for example, overseas NGOs. But this poses questions about the status of those who want to develop a relationship with a post and, in particular, about their relationship with the host government. One response, suggested by a seasoned Canadian observer of interactions between diplomats and NGOs in the field, is for diplomats to develop a 'checklist' of questions intended to establish the legitimacy and capacity of an NGO and the capacity of the post to respond to overtures from it. This recognises the complexity of civil society and its relations with foreign governments, and also the need to relate stakeholder strategies to policy objectives set by the home government. A traditional diplomatic function, to be sure; but the interlocutors are different, and determining their status and credentials demands much more research.[13] To a degree, this can be facilitated by the trend towards greater use of locally engaged staff in overseas posts.

Rules and norms

A major issue confronting the multistakeholder model of diplomacy lies in the rules and norms of behaviour that underpin it. The diplomatic system remains one founded ultimately on principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, however much these have become modified in practice. Non-state actors, such as NGOs, work to different norms, often rooted in the rejection of these principles. Developing working relationships in

the context of multistakeholder relations therefore implies adaptation by governments and their agents, as well as by the range of stakeholders with whom they interact.

One example of how this works in practice can be seen in the WSIS/WGIG negotiations referred to on page 66. These produced the Geneva Declaration of Principles, which provided a road map for the emerging multistakeholder process. While the declaration affirmed the intergovernmental status of internet-related public policy issues, representatives of business and civil society – originally treated as peripheral observers – were acknowledged as having an important role in the negotiations. In short, this was a diplomatic learning process; moreover, it was regarded by many of those who took part as the most significant legacy of WSIS.

What this suggests is the need to develop 'rules of engagement' between the agents of government and non-governmental actors that reconcile the norms and patterns of behaviour associated with traditional diplomatic processes with the emerging principles associated with multistakeholder modes of interaction. One locus of tension between the two approaches lies where the traditional preoccupation of foreign ministries with secrecy meets the requirements of openness and transparency on which public diplomacy strategies rest. While diplomatic confidentiality remains important in some contexts, in others it (and the mindset that goes with it) is not only less relevant but it is also counterproductive. Frequently, the real challenge lies in managing 'openness' constructively. One significant and necessary change in this respect made by the US Foreign Service was the issuing in 2006 of new guidelines, enabling staff in overseas posts to operate, and speak, more freely without waiting for guidance from Washington.

Twenty-first-century diplomacy is being conducted in an environment where national and international knowledge networks are proliferating. A central challenge for national governments, international organisations and NGOs alike is knowing how to connect to them, build alliances and utilise these

networks to exercise effective advocacy in support of policy objectives. This requires recognition of the evolving nature of public diplomacy. Once an extension of the pursuit of national interests through a range of techniques intended to direct messages towards target audiences, it now increasingly emphasises the establishment of interactive dialogues and collaborative relationships with other institutions and groups in both private and public sectors. In one sense this is a reworking of traditional diplomacy, in that its ultimate objective may well be to influence the policy choices of other governments. But it poses questions concerning the principles on which the diplomatic system operates, the policy capacity of governments and the role of the professional diplomat. This has to be redefined as that of mediator, facilitator and important node in the complex networks constituting contemporary world politics. It is very different from the mindset, still not unfamiliar in foreign ministries, which sees the diplomat's role as that of gatekeeper, jealously guarding the interface between domestic and international policy arenas.

Notes

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2 M. Leonard and V. Alakeson, *Going public: diplomacy for the information society* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2000), pp. 86–98.

3 W. Reinecke, *Global public policy: governing without government?* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1998); A.-M. Slaughter, *A new world order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

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7 B. Hocking, ed., *Foreign ministries: change and adaptation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); B. Hocking and D. Spence, eds, *Foreign ministries in the European Union: integrating diplomats,* rev. edn (Basingstoke:Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

8 'Six imperatives for change', statement by Peter Harder, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, 18 March 2005.

9 Cabinet Office Capability Reviews Team, *Capability review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office,* March 2007.

10 Lord Carter of Coles was asked by the Foreign Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to conduct 'an independent review of Public Diplomacy' and examine the effectiveness of current public diplomacy activities. His *Public diplomacy review* was completed in December 2005.

11 *Stakeholder survey 2006: a report for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office* (London: Indepen and Accent, June 2006).

12 Center for Strategic and International Studies, *The embassy of the future* (Washington DC, 2007).

13 A. Van Rooy, 'A new diplomacy? How ambassadors (should) deal with civil society organisations', in R. Wolfe, ed., *Diplomatic missions: the ambassador on Canadian foreign policy* (Kingston, Ont.: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 1998), pp. 155–9.

MARTIN DAVIDSON
Chief Executive, British Council

Martin Davidson took up the role of Chief Executive of the British Council in April 2007, having been Deputy Director General since September 2005.

Martin's commitment to international relationships has been a constant feature of his career, since as a young English graduate he went to Hong Kong as Administrative Officer. He joined the British Council as Assistant Representative in Beijing in 1984, returning to Beijing in 1995 as Director of the Council's expanded operation in China.

He has also held various posts in the British Council's Geographical Directorate with responsibilities that have included south-east Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and the Americas.

6 CULTURAL RELATIONS: BUILDING NETWORKS TO FACE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY CHALLENGES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many of the challenges facing governments in the twenty-first century are, and will continue to be, transnational. Cultural relations, with its emphasis on developing long-term, mutually beneficial relationships, can contribute to the development of solutions by building the networks through which diverse communities can develop new approaches to their common challenges. It achieves this by connecting people, emphasising a willingness to listen, and focusing on mutual benefit. Cultural relations not only develops greater mutual understanding, but can also provide the platform on which collective action on issues such as climate change can be based. The ability to construct networks through cultural relations will be a key component of the conduct and future development of public diplomacy.

The Cold War saw the end of one world; globalisation and the associated communications revolution has heralded the start of another. Recognising these rapid changes, David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla called for a 'revolution in diplomatic affairs' (RDA).[1] Their concept of *noöpolitik* emphasised the importance of engaging with non-state actors in a way which focused on cooperation, shared interests and common goals. While the changing context requires continuous innovation, many of the ideas upon which the call for an RDA was based have long been familiar to those committed to cultural relations. Foremost among these ideas is the need to construct and sustain networks through which collective effort and collaboration can thrive across cultures and national borders.

Cultural relations builds engagement and trust between people of different cultures by exchanging knowledge and ideas. It empowers transnational communities and connects them to networks. In doing so, cultural relations contributes to the collective enterprise that is public diplomacy, by developing the networks upon which solutions to common challenges can be based. Many of the challenges with which governments across the world are struggling derive from issues that they cannot address without influencing

and engaging the broader global public. Equally, government-led activity alone is unlikely to produce all the solutions to these challenges – which include climate change, mass unplanned urbanisation and violent extremism. It is in precisely this context that cultural relations matters most; for it is at its core a relationship between peoples. It engages through shared interests and enables communities to search for solutions to their common challenges.

This chapter considers the key attributes that equip cultural relations to build networks through which some of the solutions to contemporary challenges can be developed. These attributes are the abilities to connect people, to foster active listening and to focus on mutual benefit. In doing so, it demonstrates the contribution that cultural relations can make to the future development of public diplomacy, drawing on the experience of the British Council, which has been active in this field for 70 years.

Connecting people

The first question to be asked is why we should want to connect people and create networks. Networks are important, because they provide the means to multiply the effort of individuals. When disconnected, each person must rely on his or her own resources and ability. However, once connected to a network, individuals both benefit from collective information and shared knowledge and avoid duplication of effort.[2] This exposition echoes Pierre Bourdieu's argument that greater interconnectivity leads to greater trust and willingness to share resources and information, which benefit the whole community.[3] As a result, the network allows people to understand each other better and to share resources. This ultimately creates the potential for innovation in facing common challenges.

The international purview of cultural relations is also a vital part of fostering innovation, as more diverse networks tend to be more innovative. Cultural relations creates the opportunity for what social network analysts call 'boundary spanners': individuals who create the links between

communities which allow the sharing of ideas and subsequent innovation.[4] This bridging activity can take the form of academic and scientific exchange programmes or initiatives to bring artists of different backgrounds together. For example, the British Council programme 'Music Matbakh' focused on 'bringing Arab and UK musicians together for a residency in London to create a new work, drawing on modern and traditional influences'.[5] While this was a programme conducted in the physical world, it also used the internet social networking site MySpace to engage a wider network, thus creating a format for further innovation.[6] The participants had the opportunity to innovate through the interaction itself and then to share that experience with other members of their local communities, creating a second opportunity for innovation.

Networked organisations operating in virtual spaces, such as Avaaz.org with its 2 million members, highlight the potential of online network-building for future cultural relations activity.[7] However, experience from the past demonstrates the concrete and long-term benefits that can be gained from developing networks of empowered individuals on the ground. During the period of international sanctions against apartheid South Africa, and in the face of considerable criticism, the British Council remained active in the country, connecting ordinary South Africans with the outside world. This not only gave us the chance to work with groups excluded from power, particularly in the areas of education and governance; but our work in creating these networks also enabled the British Council to contribute to the development of the country after the end of apartheid and the introduction of democracy.

Effective cultural relations creates the opportunity for genuine exchange across cultural and political barriers, which in turn generates insight, dialogue and, over time, trust. This capacity to make connections and build long-term trust is crucial when intergovernmental relationships are difficult. For example, the British Council continues to operate in Zimbabwe, Iran and Burma, drawing on a fund of experience and goodwill that has been earned

over generations. When, in the future, diplomatic relations with these countries become closer, these pre-existing relationships and networks, developed between communities within and beyond their borders, will be available to support the diplomatic process.

Having grasped why we should build networks, we need to understand how in practice to facilitate the connections between people. Building productive networks of empowered individuals is about more than having long lists of contacts; it is about connecting the right people with one another in the right way. An effective cultural relations organisation needs to act as what June Holley and Valdis Krebs term a 'network weaver': an actor who develops empowering connections within a network.[8] To do this, those working in cultural relations have to combine their clear rationale for connecting people with the other key attributes of this approach to public diplomacy, namely listening and mutual benefit. Through this combination they are able to connect the right people in ways which resonate with their diverse communities to produce a conduit for the flow of information and understanding and, ultimately, a platform for innovation.

Listening

The power of cultural relations is that it can turn listening from a passive into an active notion yielding positive benefit. Some may confuse this active form of listening with audience analysis and research on public opinion. Joseph Nye refers to the passive kind of listening when he states that 'by definition, soft power means getting others to want the outcomes you want, and that requires understanding how they are hearing your message, and fine-tuning it accordingly'.[9] In contrast, listening as part of cultural relations 'reflects a genuine interest in the other's perspective' and 'demonstrates that different viewpoints are taken seriously and that other perspectives are given consideration'.[10] Developing a network through building relationships requires that we listen carefully.

To argue for the importance of this active form of listening is not to deny that persuasion is an important part of public diplomacy. Rather, it is to emphasise that developing a relationship requires both sides to be willing to identify shared goals and common interests through listening receptively to alternative perspectives. The benefit of this approach is clear from the following comment from the Minister of Islamic Affairs in a Middle Eastern country:

> *'The British Council is one of the few institutions that understood the role of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and dealt with staff with great respect, encouraged their participation, and greatly valued their ideas. Unlike others, they listened . . . some of us had hostile attitudes towards foreigners based on doubting and distrusting their objective, but after . . . this attitude changed, and they have become more receptive to foreigners.'*

Multiplied over many such encounters, the explicit emphasis on this form of listening generates the insight and trust upon which strong networks can be built.

Mutual benefit

The idea of mutuality, of benefit for all, is a fundamental organising principle in cultural relations. Cultural relations activity is based on exchange, from which each partner gets something tangible.[11] As Jan Melissen noted in describing this type of public diplomacy, 'success requires listening to others, recognising the "value of other cultures," showing a desire to learn from them, and conducting programs as a "two-way street".'[12]

To partners of the British Council, this exchange offers access to the skills, knowledge and opportunities needed to prosper in a globalised world. This means access to high-quality training for those who want to learn the English language; to globally recognised qualifications and, through these, access to

employment and trade in a global economy; to leadership and citizenship skills; and to the culture and arts of a developed liberal democracy.

While the benefit for partners is apparent, how does this benefit the UK?
First, offering such access reinforces the capacity of cultural relations to build connections and trust. This is why the British Council is providing support for teaching at Al-Azhar, the centre for Islamic thought in Cairo, in the form of English classes to enhance international communication. This is why work continues with madrasas (Muslim religious schools) in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Second, the exchange helps to build and maintain a network of opinion-formers, agents for change and future leaders across the world. For example, as its website makes clear, the British Council's InterAction programme, which offers leadership training and development in sub-Saharan Africa, aspires to create a network that will increasingly see the UK's commitments to Africa in a positive light, and the UK as a country worth partnering in pursuit of positive social change.[13]

Clearly, future leaders who take part in cultural relations projects are not automatically going to factor the interests of (in this instance) the UK into their decisions and actions. However, such participation gives future opinion-formers an instinctive understanding of the UK's position, develops contacts which may be useful to diplomats in the future, and creates the space for persuasion and influence.

Furthermore, while this form of exchange makes a vital contribution to public diplomacy, this is not the only role for mutual benefit. Cultural relations also has the potential to go beyond exchange to foster the creation of networks based on collective action. This in turn offers the potential of innovation based on collaboration, drawing on the strengths of all participants in a dynamic attempt to address shared challenges.

This type of collective action is exemplified by the Global Xchange programme (GX), run as a managed partnership between the British Council and the international volunteering and development charity VSO. GX is a 'six-month exchange programme which gives young people from different countries a unique opportunity to work together, to develop and share valuable skills and to make a practical contribution where it is needed in local communities'.[14] As the networks grow, this type of collaboration has the potential, for example, to contribute to the development of mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change, through bringing together experience from around the world. While the potential which these networks offer is in line with the strategic objectives of the UK government, they will not function effectively if they are designed solely to promote a specific policy. This is because specific direction of the network would limit both the exchange of the 'two-way street' and the power of collective action.

Autonomy equals credibility

The credibility required to develop trust and genuine exchange in turn requires an operational space distinct from that of policy advocacy. This operational space gives a cultural relations organisation the capacity to engage with networks of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who also vigorously defend their independence from government control. This role for cultural relations is becoming increasingly important, given the rapid growth in global civil society, the concomitant increase in the number of NGOs and the development of networks to link together the efforts of individual NGOs to produce greater impact through collective action.[15] The importance of these transnational networks has been demonstrated by Canadian engagement with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and by the regular Norwegian public diplomacy engagement with NGOs.[16] While advocacy initiatives are best pursued through public diplomacy conducted by foreign ministries, which have the authority to make policy, there are other initiatives that would better be conducted by cultural relations agencies.

While these must complement, not undermine, government's strategic objectives, they are most effective when the agency is operating on terms of parity with other transnational NGOs and not functioning – or perceived as functioning – as a government stalking horse.

As the British Palestinian academic Sultan Barakat wrote in a report commissioned by Counterpoint, the British Council's think-tank, 'If the British Council simply parrots what the Embassy says about Britain we are not interested. But there's a Britain we'd like it to show us – the Britain of the million marchers against the [Iraq] war in February 2003.'[17] The autonomy to develop the networks vital to future engagement, rather than pressure to function within an official policy perspective, provides the potential to work towards longer-term benefit.

Even within an atmosphere of trust, connecting people and building networks is difficult. At times, the essential focus on mutual benefit and listening may not produce the specific image of the UK that would have been selected for policy promotion. However, it is only by allowing – indeed, encouraging – individuals to share their own images that authentic cross-border networks and understanding can be built. This was the rationale for a British Council project which invited young British photographers to record aspects of Muslim experience in the UK. They were free to choose any area of life they wanted and no attempt was made to guide or censor their images. The resulting exhibition, called 'Common Ground', opened in Indonesia and Malaysia, and has since toured many parts of the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East and Gulf states.[18]

The resulting media debate suggested that this approach fostered a degree of interest and debate around shared values that a more didactic approach might not have achieved. A review in the *Independent* argued that the exhibition was 'ground breaking . . . its impact on Arab viewers cannot be overestimated. For Saudi Arabia, it is the first significant collection to be imported from the West in more than three decades.'[19] Achieving this level of engagement

requires cultural relations to emphasise the development of networks and relationships over the insistence on specific policy advocacy.

The relevance of cultural relations in today's world

Cultural relations makes a vital contribution to the public diplomacy of the twenty-first century. Many of the challenges that nations will face in the future will cross borders and cultures; they will be shared by many diverse and dispersed populations around the world. To be effective in facing these challenges we need to be clear that there are several distinctly different approaches to public diplomacy. This chapter has set out the key attributes of cultural relations that allow it to build networks as a basis upon which some of the solutions to contemporary and future challenges can be developed. This is not to say it is the only answer; on the contrary, the contribution that cultural relations makes is enhanced when it is considered in conjunction with other forms of public diplomacy. This is because public diplomacy is most effective when civil societies are interconnected.[20]

Aiding the development of connections between civil societies both creates the potential for innovation and provides a context in which the persuasion approach, to which cultural relations is less well suited, actually thrives. This is because the assertive approach has a greater likelihood of success where networks already exist that are sympathetic to that type of messaging.[21] Experience tells us that the approaches will at times overlap and at other times come into tension. Nevertheless, effective public diplomacy will recognise the respective strengths of the different approaches.

Climate change and the response to it offer a clear example of the complementary roles of the two approaches, and of the particular value of cultural relations. The negotiation of a post-Kyoto agreement is clearly a responsibility of governments. Likewise, persuading populations of the need for specific provisions in any such treaty is a role for government-led public diplomacy. However, the building of networks to raise understanding

of climate change, and to facilitate innovation that can produce mitigation and adaptation responses, is an area where cultural relations can contribute, through its emphasis on both exchange and collective action.

When practitioners of the different approaches come together so that each can benefit from the work of the other, the combination offers the potential to create an impact greater than the individual approaches working alone. This synergetic outcome has been summarised by Krebs and Holley in their phrase: 'Connect through your similarity and innovate through your diversity.'[22] This not only describes the way in which cultural relations can interact with other forms of public diplomacy to create the greatest impact; it also describes the approach that must be adopted to engage effectively in cultural relations.

I would contend that one clear result of the combined forces of globalisation and the revolution in communication technology is a change in how people want to interact. They want a conversation rather than a message; they are no longer prepared, if they ever were, to sit passively and absorb others' influences.[23] People want to challenge and be challenged. Traditional approaches to influencing seem rigid by comparison, often appear incapable of accepting alternative views and can be all too easily dismissed as spin or propaganda, thereby losing credibility and, most importantly, trust. The ability to build networks will be central to the conduct and future development of public diplomacy, both in the UK and elsewhere, as we seek to develop solutions to the challenges that confront us all.

Notes

1 The call for RDA was based on the rapid pace of technological innovation, the massive expansion of new organisations, particularly NGOs, engaging with populations overseas, and the 'recognition that "information" and "power" are increasingly intertwined'. See David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, 'The promise of noöpolitik', *First Monday* 12: 8, Aug. 2007, http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue12_8/ronfeldt/index.html. See also the chapter by David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla in Nancy Snow and Philip Taylor, eds, *Handbook of public diplomacy* (London: Routledge, forthcoming 2008).

2 This argument has been made effectively by Martin Kearns, co-founder of the Green Media Toolshed: see http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org/.

3 Pierre Bourdieu, 'The forms of social capital', in John G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (New York: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 241–58, quoted in R. S. Zaharna, 'The soft power differential: mass communication and network communication' (forthcoming).

4 See, for example, Valdis Krebs and June Holley, *Building sustainable communities through network building,* 2002, http://www.ccnreno.org/rflyer/BuildingNetworks.pdf; Henry J. Steadman, 'Boundary spanners: a key component for the effective interactions of the justice and mental health systems', *Law and Human Behavior* 16: 1, 1992, pp. 75–87; Paul Williams, 'The competent boundary spanner', *Public Administration* 80: 1, 2002, pp. 103–24.

5 See http://www.britishcouncil.org/musicmatbakh.

6 See http://www.myspace.com/musicmatbakh.

7 Avaaz.org (http://www.avaaz.org) is a community of global citizens who use the internet to take action on the major issues facing the world today.

8 Krebs and Holley, *Building sustainable communities through network building*.

9 Joseph Nye, *Soft power: the means to success in world politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), p. 111.

10 Ali Fisher and Aurélie Bröckerhoff, *Options for influence: global campaigns of persuasion in the new worlds of public diplomacy* (London: Counterpoint, 2008) p. 23. See also Wandren PD, 'Power down the transmitter: the potential of listening exercises', 9 April 2008, http://wandrenpd.com.

11 For a full discussion of mutuality, see Martin Rose and Nick Wadham-Smith, *Mutuality, trust and cultural relations* (London: Counterpoint, 2004).

12 Jan Melissen, 'The new public diplomacy: between theory and practice' in Jan Mellissen, ed., *The new public diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 18.

13 See http://www.bc-interaction.org/.

14 See http://www.vso.org.uk/globalxchange/.

15 Ronfeldt and Arquilla, 'The promise of noöpolitik'.

16 See, for example, Alan Henrikson, 'Niche diplomacy in the public arena: Canada and Norway', in Melissen, ed., *The new public diplomacy.*

17 Sultan Barakat, *Recreating trust in the Middle East* (London: Counterpoint, 2004).

18 The exhibition began its tour in Indonesia, Bangladesh and Malaysia in 2003 and 2004, moving on to Bahrain (Nov. 2005), Sharjah (Feb. 2006), Abu Dhabi (March 2006), Saudi Arabia (April 2006) and Oman (June 2006).

19 'Photo exhibition depicting the lives of British Muslim women tours the globe', *Independent,* 27 June 2006, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/photo-exhibition-depicting-the-lives-of-british-muslim-women-tours-the-globe-405604.html.

20 Melissen, 'The new public diplomacy', p. 10.

21 See Zaharna, 'The soft power differential'.

22 Krebs and Holley, *Building sustainable communities through network building.*

23 See Fisher and Bröckerhoff, *Options for influence,* pp. 42–3; Ali Fisher, 'Music for a jilted generation: open source public diplomacy', *Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, forthcoming.

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The views expressed in this chapter are those of the individual contributor and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is not responsible for the content.

7 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The chapter summarises certain key characteristics of cross-cultural communication and presents a model frequently used in the analysis of cultural differences. In doing so, it attempts to underline the importance of cultural understanding to effective communication, influence and dialogue across national borders.

For international public diplomacy activities to be effective, it is necessary to know how national culture influences interaction and communication between people of different cultures. This chapter will argue that:

- there is no universal model of communication;
- the 'western' model of communication doesn't work equally well in other parts of the world;
- communication will be more effective if it is adapted to the communication behaviour of those at whom it is targeted; and
- we can draw on a growing body of knowledge from cross-cultural psychology, anthropology and international business to learn how national culture influences human motives, behaviour, and interpersonal and mass communication.

The future: a global village peopled by uniform citizens?

The concept of the 'global village' was coined by the Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan,[1] who argued that new technology acts as an extension of human beings and enhances existing human activities. He never said that, in this global village, people would be uniform. However, the assumption persists that global media, the World Wide Web and increased travel are gradually leading to a convergence of values and lifestyles across the globe.

In reality, the degree of convergence is limited. In 2007 only 27 per cent of the inhabitants of 25 European countries said they had travelled abroad three times in the previous three years.[2] Only 9 per cent had a job that involved contact with organisations or people in other countries. The proportion of people around the world who regularly watch international television programmes is small relative to the size of potential audience. Television channels that might be expected to shape people's opinions and lifestyles, such as CNN, were envisaged as global standard channels but have localised content and language. Increasingly, the World Wide Web recognises the country where a computer is based, and tailors the information it offers to local circumstances. How people use the internet also varies. According to the search engine Technorati,[3] in 2006 there were more blogs in the Japanese language than in the English language. A few ubiquitous global brands are frequently used as examples of the success of global business in a global market. However, in most countries it is local brands that are most highly valued and trusted.[4] In 2008 the most trusted car in France was Renault; in Germany and Austria it was Volkswagen; in the Czech Republic, Skoda; in India, Maruti; and in most of East Asia, Toyota or Honda.

Nor has increased wealth led to greater uniformity. On the contrary, rises in income levels have tended to reinforce existing cultural values. Additional income gives people greater freedom of choice and self-expression, but their choices (including how they adopt new technology) tend to conform to traditional values and patterns of behaviour. The result is divergence, rather than convergence, of behaviour across national cultures.[5] For example, countries have converged in respect of the number of television sets owned per 1,000 people, but diverged in respect of the time those people spend watching television.

This persistent resistance to uniformity implies that effective interaction across national boundaries requires an understanding of differences in human behaviour and of the **cultural values** that give rise to these differences.

Cultural values

A **value**, in the context of this chapter, is a preference of one state of being over another.[6] We want to be happy, not sad. We want to be healthy, not sick. Values are learned early in life. By the age of ten most children have their basic values firmly in place. As a result, values remain stable through generations. These values guide and determine **attitudes** and **behaviour**. We are not usually aware of our values; they operate unconsciously, like an automatic pilot.

In the English language the term '**culture**' usually refers to the arts, education and science. In the context of this chapter, it is used in the broad anthropological sense and taken to mean a set of shared values (**value system**) of a group, as well as the manifestation of these values. A **group** can be constituted by the family, or by a profession, company, region or nation. Hence we speak of family culture, professional culture, corporate culture or national culture (the last being the focus of this chapter). In a value system, values are ordered in priority with respect to other values. For example, in North America individual happiness is a value of high priority, its pursuit a constitutional right, whereas in East Asia personal happiness has lower priority than perseverance and harmony.

Individuals are partly products of the value systems of the societies in which they grow up, and partly products of unique individual personality and experience. A society's institutions reflect the value system shared by its individual members. Individuals are in turn guided by their shared culture and, in their behaviour, reinforce the society's value system.[7]

In looking at how values drive behaviour, we need to recognise that there is a distinction between what people think ought to be desired and what they actually desire. The **desirable** reflects the general norms of a society and is interpreted and presented in terms of right or wrong. The **desired** is what we

consider important for ourselves and what the majority actually do. The desirable and the desired do not always overlap.

We also need to recognise that the values that drive behaviour are not necessarily visible to the outside observer. When people point at what they call changing **values**, these are often changes in **cultural practice**. Roland gives the example of how an Indian man at work may dress in western clothes and disregard intercaste rules in eating and other rituals, while strictly observing all these codes and dressing traditionally at home.[8]

Comparison of national cultures requires us to look at the **average value priorities** of the individual members of a given national group in relation to those of the individual members of other national groups. A single national boundary can often encompass a range of diverse cultural groupings. But differences between nations tend to be larger than differences within nations and are reinforced over time, particularly in longer-established nations, by forces towards further integration (for example, a dominant language, common mass media, a national education system, and national markets for products and services).

Comparing national cultures: the Hofstede model

The best-known – and most frequently applied – model for comparing national cultures is that developed by the Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede.[9] This model, first conceived in 1973, had by 2001 been validated by over 400 studies.[10]

Hofstede distinguishes five dimensions of national culture:

- individualism vs. collectivism;
- power distance;
- uncertainty avoidance;

- masculinity vs. femininity; and
- long-term vs. short-term orientation.

Countries are given a position on each dimension in the form of a score on a scale from 0 to 100. The combined scores for each country offer a picture of its national culture that enables it to be distinguished from that of other countries. The different national scores represent the different cultures; the differences in culture in turn explain differences in behaviour. Scores are currently available for 74 countries. The principal features of each dimension are set out below, together with some implications for cross-cultural communication.

Individualism vs. collectivism
In individualistic cultures, people grow up with the notion that they should each develop a unique personality and identity. People are 'I'-conscious, express private opinions, and attach importance to self-actualisation. In collectivistic cultures, identities are based on the social system to which people belong. People are fundamentally interdependent and harmony is a key virtue.

The nations that score most highly on individualism are the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. (It could be argued that individualism originated in the UK.[11] The English language is the only language in the world that spells 'I' with a capital letter!) Asian, Latin American and African nations, by contrast, have low scores on individualism, identifying them as collectivistic. This means that 70–80 per cent of the world's population share a broadly collectivistic culture.

Large vs. small power distance
Power distance is defined as the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally, and indeed expect this to be the case. It is reflected in the values of both the less powerful and the

more powerful members of that society. Asian, Latin American and African nations score highly on the 'power distance' scale. In Europe there is a divide, with high scores for France, Belgium and the Mediterranean nations, and low scores for the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries.

Strong vs. weak uncertainty avoidance
Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the extent to which people feel threatened by, and try to avoid, situations that give rise to uncertainty and ambiguity. In some national cultures, people cope with uncertainty with relative ease. In others, people attempt to limit it by making rules and prescribing behaviour. The countries of southern and eastern Europe and of Latin America score high on uncertainty avoidance, as do South Korea and Japan, whereas the UK, Scandinavia and China have low scores.

Masculinity vs. femininity
A high score on this dimension indicates a national culture in which the dominant values are achievement and success. A low score represents a culture in which the dominant values are concern for others and quality of life, allied to a tendency to strive for consensus. Examples of nations with predominantly 'masculine' values are the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Mexico and Japan. Examples of nations with predominantly 'feminine' values are the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Portugal, Spain, Chile and Thailand.

Long-term vs. short-term orientation
This fifth dimension measures variations in long-term versus short-term thinking. Characteristics of national cultures that think long-term are pragmatism, perseverance and thrift. National cultures that think short-term have a 'buy now, pay later' approach. National cultures in the West tend towards a short-term orientation and those in East Asia towards a long-term orientation.

Insights

Using the Hofstede model as a means of analysing and comparing different national cultures serves to convey to all who wish to engage across national boundaries the importance of a detailed understanding of the values and consequent behavioural patterns of one's audience, interlocutor, colleague or partner. Some examples of the insights that it generates are listed below.

- Children who grow up in individualistic cultures are expected to develop a **critical mind**, whereas children growing up in collectivistic cultures are expected to develop a **receptive mind**. As a result, their world-views are different. In collectivistic cultures, the group, family or tribe comes first. It constitutes a person's identity.

- In individualistic cultures, people tend to assess identity and personality in abstract terms.[12] 'Collectivists' will describe themselves in relation to others, and the description will vary with the context.[13] For example, Chinese and Japanese languages have no equivalent term for 'personality' in the western sense.

- In the political context, concepts of 'nation-building' may have less resonance in collectivistic cultures (in which relationships are rooted in group structures such as the family or tribe) than in individualistic cultures (where the abstract concept of the nation as a unique expression of a society may be more easily grasped).

- Because of the high priority accorded to harmony, members of collectivistic cultures will not easily say 'no' explicitly. They have ways of saying 'yes' that to another insider mean 'no'. An outsider may draw the wrong conclusion.

- In the individualistic West, consistency is highly valued: attitudes are relatively consistent, and attitudes tend to predict behaviour. In collectivistic cultures, people's attitudes, and also their behaviour, will vary more with social context. Thus measuring attitudes as a way of predicting behaviour will not be equally effective in all cultures.

- The combination of scores on 'power distance' and 'uncertainty avoidance' shows up variations in the extent to which people in different national cultures consider that events and outcomes are the result of their own actions and behaviour or, conversely, are a function of factors outside their control – chance or fate, other more powerful people – or simply unpredictable. In western culture, where power distance tends to be low and uncertainty avoidance weak, the former attitude tends to prevail. In many other cultures, the belief that fate, or other, more powerful, actors, may intervene at any time reinforces the potential disjuncture between intentions and behaviour, as expressed intention has less importance or value.

- Hospitality is very important in collectivistic cultures. A guest is welcome at any time. In individualistic cultures, one makes an appointment for a visit. Collectivists visiting an individualistic culture may feel neglected or even offended. However, because they deem it essential to maintain harmony they will adapt to the situation, and individualists will all too easily think that their visitors are like themselves.

- In order to accomplish change in a collectivistic culture, whether in business or in politics, time has to be invested in building relationships and trust. It takes a long time to develop the harmonious relationships that facilitate effective cooperation.

- Communication in individualistic cultures is explicit and verbal. But in collectivistic cultures communication is more indirect, again in order to preserve harmony. A direct communication style may be perceived as offensive.

- People from individualistic cultures tend to believe that there are universal values that should be shared by all.[14] They want other peoples to see the world the way they do. People from collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, more readily accept that different cultures have different values. In individualistic cultures, laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all members and applied indiscriminately to everybody. In collectivistic societies, laws and rights may differ from one category of people to another – if not in theory, then in the way laws are administered – and this is often not seen as wrong.[15]

- In national cultures that score highly on the power distance scale, every one has their 'rightful place' in a social hierarchy. As a result, both the exercise and the acceptance of authority come naturally. In cultures with lower scores on this scale, independence and equality of rights and opportunity are highly valued. Western-style participatory democracy flourishes in national cultures that score high on individualism and low on power distance. In collectivistic cultures that score highly on power distance, leadership in both business and politics is more paternalistic. In 2004 a public opinion survey by a UN development programme found, to the dismay of North American journalists, that more than half of Latin American citizens would opt for an authoritarian regime in preference to a democratic government if that would solve their economic problems.[16]

- Cultures characterised by strong uncertainty avoidance need rules and formality to structure life. This need is expressed in a search for truth and a belief in experts. Conflict and competition are perceived as threatening. In these cultures there is a greater respect for formal qualifications as signifiers of expertise and authority. Cultures characterised by low uncertainty avoidance are more innovative and open to change, and put a lower premium on externally defined 'expertise'.

- Nations with low scores on uncertainty avoidance can be successful because of their innovativeness (the United Kingdom, China) and nations with high scores can be successful because of their expertise in precision technology (Germany, Japan, South Korea). Different positions on this dimension of national culture are reflected in differing approaches to the adoption of new technology. Among developed countries, ownership of personal computers and internet penetration has been highest in nations that score low on uncertainty avoidance.

Cross-cultural communication

Some of these insights can usefully be drawn together to illuminate thinking about how to maximise the effectiveness of communication strategies, whether in a business or a political context.

For example, significant differences become apparent in how people receive and evaluate information. Whereas in western, individualistic cultures people acquire and process information more or less rationally and consciously via the media and opinion-formers, in collectivistic cultures people acquire information via implicit, interpersonal communication and base their decisions more on feelings and trust. In collectivistic cultures there is a continuous, almost unconscious flow of information between people – to the extent that when collectivists are asked for the source of their information in surveys, they frequently say they 'don't know'.[17] For outsiders, a collectivistic culture in which so much information circulates implicitly can be confusing.

The lesson here is the importance of finding a trusted intermediary who is integrated into the communication system. This is doubly important given that, in a collectivistic culture, the objectivity of a message may often be less significant than who is giving it: the effectiveness of the message will be gauged by the level of trust in the sender.

Another example relates to the extent to which people can think in conceptual and abstract terms. To take an example from a commercial context, asking people to connect abstract associations to brands will yield different results in different national cultures.[18] Western marketers have adopted concepts of 'personality' or 'identity' to differentiate their brands and position them *vis-à-vis* competing brands. But these concepts have less impact in collectivistic cultures. Because of different communication styles among countries, global businesses have had to adapt their advertising (in terms of both message and medium) to local context.

This understanding of cultural difference, and of the consequent variance in patterns of behaviour, is also crucial when deciding which media to use in support of commercial or political communication and engagement strategies. In individualistic cultures people read more than in collectivistic cultures; in the latter, people tend to be more visually oriented. Consequently, in the former, press media are effective channels of influence; in the latter, television is a more important medium. There are implications also for use of the World Wide Web: effective website design is more visual, and less verbal, in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The new interactive possibilities of the Web brought together under the rubric of 'Web 2.0' demand even more cultural understanding, as online users should expect to encounter unfamiliar communication behaviour, based on cultural difference, in their virtual encounters with other users across the world.

Cultural difference must also be factored into how businesses that want to understand their markets, and governments that want to listen to foreign publics, conduct survey research. Variations in the extent to which people

will be ready to give a positive or negative answer to a direct question, or to which expressed attitudes will predict behaviour, must be taken into account. For example, culture influences the way people respond to scales, such that some nationalities may habitually opt for high scores, or middling scores, and this means that data collected in different parts of the world may not be comparable.[19]

Conclusion

The brief survey in this chapter has attempted to lodge in the mind of the reader three propositions:

- Differences in national culture, and the values that underpin them, are resilient. Modernisation can result in evolution of cultural practice, but underlying values are less susceptible to rapid change. Chinese teenagers may wear jeans, but this doesn't necessarily affect their attitudes towards authority. Moreover, the increased wealth brought by globalisation is likely to reinforce, rather than diminish, differences in behaviour between national cultures.

- These differences mean that there can be no universal model for communicating and influencing effectively across national boundaries. Strategies for communication and influence need to be rooted in a detailed, context-specific understanding of **both** the behavioural patterns **and** the underlying cultural values of those with whom we want to engage.

- Recognition of this is a vital first step for professionals, whether in the commercial, the political or the diplomatic arena, who want to exert influence upon and engage with others across the globe.

Notes

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An authority on branding in government, Conrad is also responsible for improving standards of professional communication across government. To this end, he has produced a number of programmes, including: 'Engage: people-centred people communication', 'Using an employee engagement approach to build a high-performing civil service' and 'A government review of social media'.

Prior to joining the Cabinet Office, Conrad worked in the strategic consultancy unit of the Central Office of Information (COI). This followed 18 years in the private sector as an advertising planner, both in large advertising and branding agencies and in his own consultancy.

8 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE: LESSONS FROM DOMESTIC POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter reviews the role of strategic communication in recent efforts by the British government to promote behaviour change in support of domestic policy priorities. It draws out a set of key principles for effective strategic communication, and argues that they are applicable outside the domestic context.

Behaviour change is an enormous subject: the goal of many policy-makers throughout the world, and a life's work for academics, social psychologists, think-tank researchers and an array of other professionals.

Just as large, however, is the gap that persists in many cases between theory and practice. Despite the existence of many models and some well-documented case-studies, especially from the fields of health and education, professionals seeking to adapt this learning for application in other areas can find it difficult to do so. So often, the particular nature of the individual issue to be tackled, and the pressure to achieve results quickly, can obscure the underlying principles at work.

Nevertheless, it **is** possible to apply some of the lessons learned from the British government's domestic policy experience to international issues such as globalisation, international terrorism and climate change. Indeed, in the UK sophisticated tools are already being employed to tackle some of these issues in the domestic context.

The importance of strategic communication

In trying to achieve behaviour change on a societal level, the British government has learned that a broad and complex mix of measures and tools is needed. Communication is only one element of this mix. For example,

the government drive to reduce smoking has been arguably one of the most successful behaviour change campaigns. It has taken a range of interventions – from price controls, legislation and enforcement against tobacco smuggling to bans on smoking and restrictions on advertising – as well as hard-hitting information and advertising campaigns, to change social norms and drive down smoking to its current levels. And still there is more to do.

As this example shows, communication is truly successful only when it works together with other elements in pursuit of a common objective. Involving communicators early in the policy creation process accordingly pays dividends for all parties. This is evident in the work of the Department for Transport, which has a great deal of experience in integrating policy-making, policy delivery and communication in tackling key behaviour change issues: over the years it has been responsible for many highly effective campaigns to combat drink-driving and improve road safety, and has adopted an 'education, enforcement, engineering' model to tackle road safety.

For their part, if they are to play an effective role at the policy table, communicators have to think **beyond** their specialisation and channel their skills towards how communication can deliver business strategy or policy objectives.

This is the role of **strategic communication**, which can be defined as a 'systematic approach to delivering business objectives by generating more effective understanding of audiences and more effective methods of connecting with them to develop solutions that shift attitudes and change behaviours'.

An audience-focused approach

Strategic communication is a discipline that puts genuine understanding of audience behaviour at the heart of its approach. It is based on a combination

of social marketing principles (that is, those applicable to not-for-profit activities), derived from work mainly in the fields of health and education, and private sector marketing tools that have been adapted to meet the specific challenges of the public sector. It involves working to meet long-term, complex social challenges rather than short-term sales targets, and recognises the fact that government needs to reach **all** sectors of the population (and usually weights its efforts towards the most socially disadvantaged) rather than just targeting those consumers most likely to buy a product.

This modern approach to communication has developed out of necessity. Governments and institutions around the world are facing challenges and opportunities presented by rapidly fragmenting media landscapes, 24/7 news machines and, most significantly, the huge impact of the internet and the possibilities for local and global networking offered by the new levels of interactivity available in the online environment commonly referred to as 'Web 2.0'. These factors are dramatically altering the relationship between government and citizens, lending new urgency to the need for government to engage credibly with the public in order to change behaviours for the common good. Older, more established communication techniques simply cannot deliver in this modern environment.

The programme to apply this strategic approach to communication in the UK domestic policy context, called 'Engage', has been driven by the Permanent Secretary for Government Communication, Howell James, and endorsed at a high level in the British government. In the words of Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service, 'We need a much more strategic approach to communication to ensure that communication is at the heart of the policy process. It needs to be there at the start when we're trying to work out what the policy is for. It needs to be there in the middle when we're sorting out what the solution is and we're engaging with people to get their views about how to make policy work best, and it needs to be there at the end.'

The key principles of strategic communication

1. Generating insight
At the heart of strategic communication lies a simple truth: great communication starts with an open mind and a listening ear. Genuine insight into our audiences is the first – and most important – requirement.

Seeking insight involves a systematic attempt to identify deep truths about people that, when acted upon, resonate powerfully enough to bring about a change in behaviour. As well as conducting research and analysis, it involves thinking like your audience, understanding their experience, mapping out the journey (mental and physical) you want to lead them along, and developing propositions that truly resonate with their interests and preoccupations.

The process of generating insight entails a combination of rigorous data analysis and well-honed intuition. An insight team will take audience data from a number of sources (for example government social and market research, environmental analysis and syndicated data banks) and combine these with the personal experience of the audience in order to transform data into understanding. The potential insights thus generated are then tested with audiences and refined further. The skills required are both analytical and instinctual and are not confined to strategic communicators; with the right support, policy-makers are potentially excellent insight generators.

For communicators, insight can make the difference between success and failure. A good example is furnished by how the Department for Transport responded to the widespread disregard among 15–30-year-olds of legislation that made wearing rear seat-belts in cars compulsory.

Research revealed an alarming ignorance of the threat posed by unbelted back-seat passengers to others in an accident. Catapulted forward, they can kill the driver. Faced with the fact that their own behaviour could make

victims of their best friends, an audience hitherto hard to impress was profoundly shocked. When translated into an integrated media campaign, this insight (summed up as 'no one wants to live with the guilt of killing someone else') delivered an actual increase in rear seat-belt usage of 23 per cent in just one year.

Work on generating insights will also reveal the influences on audiences of factors such as pricing, legislation and peer pressure: information useful for policy-makers as well as for people on the front line delivering services. Insights into smokers show that, somewhat counter-intuitively, routine and manual workers are less susceptible to price changes than professional and managerial workers. The reason is the prevalence of smuggled goods in these communities.

When government needs to address a new issue, early insights can play a key role in helping prepare an overall response: for instance, insight teams at the Department of Health have been involved early in working out how to address the problem of childhood obesity. Their findings can be distilled into four overarching insights which are revealing and suggest some of the key parental perceptions that need to be overcome:

- while parents acknowledge that obesity is a problem, they do not think of it as their problem (only 17 per cent of parents with obese children can diagnose their child's weight status);
- parents underestimate the amount they and their children eat and overestimate the amount of activity the family does;
- parents believe their children are healthy as long as they are happy; and
- parents do not perceive as risky a host of unhealthy behaviours (such as sedentary lifestyle, eating large portion sizes and snacking).

To give another example, insights recognising the public's need for a simple online channel through which they could access all public services in one place led to the creation of Directgov. Today, this channel has moved beyond information to transactions: 7 million motorists now apply for car tax online every year, saving both public and government considerable time and expense.

The private sector has recognised the power of insight to transform corporate thinking and shift audience behaviour. One successful UK retailer has a customer insight unit of over 300 staff. Government is also more formally recognising its potential impact, and a number of departments have already set up dedicated insight units.

The process of generating insight can be used to interrogate an issue quickly or to lay the foundations for a long-term programme. Insights generated may be confined to a single segment of a population or be universally applicable. Wherever there are people, there is insight to be gained.

2. Segmenting audiences

In the modern communications environment, one size no longer fits all. People require activities and messages to be tailored to their own unique needs. Breaking audiences down into smaller, more homogeneous groups gives government a far better chance of reaching them with the right policies and propositions.

Segmentation is therefore another important principle of strategic communication. It involves categorising audiences according to who they are (socio-demographics), what they do (their behaviour), and how they think and feel (their attitudes) in relation to a specific issue.

Tackling climate change provides a good recent example. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and others have undertaken a large-scale exercise to identify the differences within the UK public in

individuals' willingness and ability to take personal actions to reduce their carbon footprint.

Seven clusters have been identified, ranging from the most positively engaged and able – labelled as 'positive greens', who will do everything they can to limit their carbon footprint and constitute 18 per cent of the population – to the most negative and resistant – the 'honestly disengaged', whose attitude can be summed up as: 'Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. Makes no difference to me, I'm just living life the way I want to.' Unfortunately, they also represent 18 per cent of the population.

This disaggregation enables far more specific objectives to be set against each of these sub-groups, while the research underlying it yields rich detail of the approaches and communication techniques that are most likely to work, estimates of the degrees of success to be expected, and an idea of the investment needed to be balanced against the likely return in terms of 'pro-social' behaviour.

3. Developing propositions

The combination of insight and segmentation can then lead to the development of targeted propositions. These ensure a policy is expressed in a way that makes sense to a particular set of people and gives them a clear understanding of 'what's in it for them' or for society as whole. Equally important is that these propositions are expressed in compelling, appropriate language that not only resonates with audiences but also motivates them to take action.

A powerful recent example was a police recruitment campaign that aimed to increase the quality of applicants, enhance the reputation of the police and increase morale within the police service. The proposition centred on the bold objective of 'making 999 people out of every 1,000 realise they couldn't be a police officer, but respect like hell the one who could'.

It was conveyed in advertising in which role models such as the boxer Lennox Lewis and the campaigner Bob Geldof admitted to viewers that they couldn't do some of the incredibly hard things police officers have to do, such as going round to someone's house to tell a man that his wife and child had been killed in a car crash; this was summed up in the phrase: 'I couldn't do that. Could you?'

This polarising strategy and powerful proposition paid off. Applications to join the service increased by 52 per cent, with a substantial increase in quality. The campaign represented a 10 per cent better return on investment than previous police recruitment campaigns. Internal police morale increased, as evidenced by a noticeable drop in resignations. And 70 per cent of police forces claimed their recruitment activity was more effective as a result of the campaign.

Propositions can also help to reframe policies and issues for the public. For example, one strand of a strategy developed by the FCO to facilitate a more mature debate on the EU was to concentrate on issues where people felt the EU had a natural role to play, such as the environment.

A particularly powerful way of illustrating this was used by David Miliband in a speech made in Berlin in October 2006 entitled 'Building an Environmental Union', in which he stated: 'Europe has a strong environmental record on which to build. From air pollution and water quality to recycling. But in future, we should go further. Its *raison d'être* in the twenty-first century must be to prevent the exploitation of the planet. The European Union must become the Environmental Union.'[1]

4. Stakeholders and credible voices

Government's relationship with its stakeholders is critical to successful policy-making and delivery. However, to involve them constructively, one needs to be clear who they are and what their level of interest and influence is.

This process of stakeholder identification, mapping and prioritisation is an essential strategic communication skill.[2]

In campaigns aimed at changing behaviour, effective stakeholder management can yield high dividends. Positive stakeholders endorse and support policies, often using their own communication efforts and channels to magnify the communication effort of government (as they can, conversely, to negate it if they are not on board). Stakeholders can also be valuable as powerful voices more credible to audiences than the government, as illustrated by the role of Muslim community leaders in the UK in preventing radicalisation.

In working with stakeholders ranging from supermarkets advocating the merits of eating 'five fruit and veg' a day to the British Heart Foundation running 'no smoking' advertising, the government has realised that its role in changing behaviour can be as effective when it acts as a conductor orchestrating the collective efforts of other organisations as when it intervenes directly.

5. Making the right connection

An approach that puts people first has another benefit: namely, the generation of a more media-neutral perspective in planning a communications campaign. Armed with the knowledge that a press announcement, TV and national newspaper campaigns and some leaflets no longer constitute effective communication, strategic planners will set out to identify the most influential ways of engaging with audiences and then work out the most powerful combination of elements to achieve measurable success.

These elements will invariably include a variety of stakeholders, potential partners and other credible voices, peer influences, and a range of non-traditional (and often overlooked) channels such as front-line staff, local

events and social networking sites. Traditional channels such as TV may still be used, but in a far more integrated, interactive way – perhaps including, for example, advertiser-funded broadcasting.

This 'media-neutral' planning perspective encourages the greater flexibility and innovation that are required when attempting to reach audiences in a world cluttered with messages and media. For example, campaigns now regularly use social networking sites such as Bebo to connect with younger audiences, or to encourage online audiences to calculate their personal carbon emissions. Away from the internet, outreach activities, events and town hall meetings are all part of the communication mix.

An interesting new media development in the UK is the use of advertiser-funded programming. For instance, instead of relying on traditional TV advertising to recruit Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), the Home Office has worked with ITV to produce a series of 45-minute episodes called *Beat, Life on the Street,* featuring the daily lives of a group of PCSOs. The series has attracted weekly audiences of between 2 million and 3 million viewers and is playing a part in the Home Office's policy of helping people feel safer in their homes and local communities as well as supporting visible, responsive and accountable policing.

Awareness of and confidence in neighbourhood policing teams have soared among regular viewers, with research showing that 80 per cent think they are a good idea and 70 per cent believing they provide a good service. If the airtime had been bought as advertising, it would have cost £3.5 million; the series cost a fraction of this.

6. Collaboration, participation and co-creation

The more interactive, collaborative and experiential a communication is, the more successful it will be. Government needs to look beyond one-way 'announcement-style' communication and start the process of engagement, participation and collaboration in pursuit of joint outcomes.

While this may present challenges for government – and indeed for any institution that operates a command and control structure – the pay-offs from ceding control and sharing problems with citizens can be immense. Fuelled by Web 2.0, communities are beginning to solve problems themselves – whether in the form of all the inhabitants in a street setting up a web-based community in order to tackle issues ranging from rubbish collection to crime, or scientists collaborating worldwide to crack the genome sequence of the *C. elegans* worm.

Government needs to facilitate and catalyse the efforts both of its citizens and of those who work for government. Much work in the field of employee engagement has proved that a more open approach that invites staff to help solve problems faced by management can result in greater innovation and better performance – as well as reduced absenteeism, increased personal motivation and a genuine willingness to go the extra mile. This insight is especially applicable in the public sector, which so many people have joined in order to make a difference to society.

A recent example from the Department for Transport's 'Think' campaign demonstrates the potential for gearing impact through collaboration. Instead of producing communications **for** teenagers, the department worked **with** teenagers to create a campaign that illustrated the dangers of not paying attention when crossing the road. One TV advertisement was recorded on mobile phones in a reportage style and also posted on YouTube. Within five days of appearing, it had been seen by 29 per cent of all teenagers in the UK – at no extra cost.

This graphically demonstrates that authentic propositions, created with the audience and using channels that connect with their lives, can cut through the thousands of messages we receive every day and move us to action.

Conclusion

Strategic communication has a key role to play in securing behaviour change. Although the examples used above are from the UK domestic policy context, the principles that underlie strategic communication can be applied universally. Where there are people, there is insight to be generated – all the more so if we are working with peoples of differing cultures, ethnicities and religions. And we will always need to work out how to segment our audiences so that we can craft and tailor compelling propositions.

Stakeholder management, making the right connections and identification of opportunities for closer collaboration are not just the discipline of a strategic communicator: they are principles relevant to all policy-makers who want to secure change.

The tools and techniques that can enable you to apply these principles are now readily available, regardless of your discipline or where you work: simply visit http://www.comms.gov.uk.

Notes

1 Speech by the Rt Hon. David Miliband MP, 'Building an Environmental Union', Berlin, 19 October 2006, http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/speeches/david-miliband/dm061019.htm.

2 Definitions of stakeholders vary, but the most useful is Freeman's: 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (R. Edward Freeman, *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach,* London: Financial Times/Prentice-Hall, 1983). In the present context, stakeholders may be distinguished from the audience on whom we are directly acting (in the police service example, potential recruits), and also from any very closely involved group: in the same example, we would probably call the police service a delivery partner, which is a more involved subset of stakeholder.

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9 WEB 2.0 AND THE NEW PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: IMPACT AND OPPORTUNITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter highlights the innovative potential of Web 2.0, and the experiences of governments actively using new online social networking applications, in order to examine the prospects, benefits and risks of Web 2.0-enabled public diplomacy. It concludes that the future of public diplomacy lies in collaboration, whereby governments and 'global citizens' build relationships and use them to develop cross-national initiatives to address policy challenges. A growing proportion of such collaborative activity will be online in virtual worlds. The discussion will be speculative, asking: Does it still makes sense to consider online and offline worlds as separate? What are the benefits and risks of using online tools for advocacy and policy development? How will traditional diplomatic skills, premised on understanding of local cultures and networks, adapt to virtual worlds?

Collaboration is increasingly the hallmark of a networked world.[1] The rise of **virtual worlds** (terms in bold are explained under 'Glossary' towards the end of this chapter) and an online culture of open sharing offer policy-makers new opportunities to move from one-way messaging (the speeches, statements and press releases of ministers and ministries) towards dialogue and cross-national engagement.[2]

A second generation of internet-based software, sometimes known as '**Web 2.0**', has the potential to change fundamentally how foreign ministries manage knowledge and communicate with more connected, yet more diverse and fragmented, domestic and global publics. Web 2.0 applications – online collaborative working ('**wikis**'), web logs ('**blogs**'), and **social networking sites** such as Facebook, **YouTube** and Second Life – can reinforce existing relationships and build new ones by educating and mobilising citizens, and encouraging the co-creation of policy.

Web 2.0 will redefine how foreign ministries communicate and collaborate with publics (and their own employees) more than any previous technologies. Why? Because Web 2.0 enables interaction.

The credibility of the web

The recent wholesale reversal of the previous decade's mistrust of the web is a profound change. In the 1990s, the questionable reliability of some of the web's self-generated content was a barrier to using it as a platform. Today, 80 per cent of Americans believe the internet is the most important source of information (up from 66 per cent in 2006). Fifty-eight per cent of Canadians think information on the web is just as reliable as that obtained from traditional media.[3] These levels of trust are mirrored in surveys of internet use in other countries as well.[4] Meanwhile, the credibility of branded media online has actually benefited from the proliferation of commentary and fact on the web, pushing people to seek authoritative online sources, such as the *New York Times* and CNN.[5]

The rise of online social networking

The exponential growth in online social networking (in 2007 cited by Americans as the most important use of the web after electronic mail), with a demographic skewed to those between the ages of 19 and 31, is marked. According to the *2008 Digital Future Report*, membership of online communities in the United States more than doubled in only three years, and visits to blogs by young people under 18 years old quadrupled to 27 per cent between 2003 and 2007.[6] It is predicted that eight out of ten active internet users and Fortune 500 companies will have a 'second life' in a virtual world by the end of 2011.[7]

Data from the *2008 Digital Future Report* reveal some significant trends, particularly with respect to the high correlation between membership of online communities and participation in social causes. A clear majority

(71 per cent) of members of online communities consider these communities to be very important or extremely important to them, with over half logging into their communities at least once a day. Fifty-six per cent claim to have met online counterparts in person. Three-quarters use the web to participate in offline communities related to social causes; almost 90 per cent of online community members are participating in social causes that are new to them since their online involvement began. Most strikingly, a large and growing proportion – 55 per cent – say they feel as strongly about their online communities as they do about their real-world communities. These findings have led Jeffrey Cole, Director of the Center for the Digital Future at the University of Southern California, to conclude that 'The emergence of online communities is demonstrating that opportunities to be involved in common projects and idea sharing about any subject we choose and with people anywhere on Earth is possible and practical.'[8]

Social networking is therefore growing in scale; it is also growing in complexity. International communication, which since the dawn of the motion picture has been premised on a one-to-many broadcasting model, is now moving ineluctably towards a web-enabled many-to-many format. The much-publicised Facebook is now the world's largest social networking site, with a reported 67 million individuals registered as active users. At its current growth rate, the total number of users could exceed 460 million by 2013.[9]

Advances in information and communication technologies have spurred a further evolution, creating three-dimensional virtual worlds in which individuals interact with one another through their virtual representatives ('**avatars**'). The popular Second Life (with 13.5 million 'residents' in May 2008) is a virtual world containing digitally mediated 'third spaces' similar to real-life pubs, community centres and clubs where people can socialise, create and trade.[10] Anecdotal evidence suggests that social networking sites may allow individuals (for example, women in closed societies) to use the anonymity of the web to communicate ideas and perspectives across traditional boundaries.

What these developments portend is a growing global membership of online communities (especially as the costs in time and effort of joining decline), and a gradual increase in the extent to which people integrate their online activity into the rest of their lives, with online activity providing a direct stimulus for real-world decision-making and action.

Implications for public diplomacy

How can diplomats make best use of the advantages of scale offered by the ever-expanding array of online social networks? How can they work with existing online communities of interest and develop new ones to research, develop, advocate, deliver and review policy?

Effective diplomacy demands an ability to access, analyse and contextualise information; to build and maintain a wide range of relationships; to communicate, convene and negotiate across cultures, borders and institutions; and to review and understand the impact of policy and events.

At first sight, the web promises to be a 'force multiplier' across all these activities. But for the purpose of this chapter, I want to look in particular at the extent to which online social networks may transform diplomats' ability to advocate policy and to access, engage with and mobilise new and wider constituencies in the making and implementation of policy. The evidence to date is piecemeal, and there are important caveats. However, some indications of trends are emerging.

Online public diplomacy: new terrain for advocacy and policy development

According to John Seely Brown, of Xerox PARC, new web-based applications have created a 'powerful surge of "tinkering" and sharing among ordinary people as an enjoyable social activity'.[11] This is the profound difference

between the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 environments. In the former, 'professionals' dominated the creation of online content. In the latter, 'amateurs' are the dominant creators, and they create because they enjoy it, not because they have to.

This shift offers new opportunities for online public diplomacy in terms of advocacy and, especially, policy development – through online collaboration among policy-makers **within** governments, and also **between** governments and citizens across the globe, to address cross-national policy challenges such as resource competition, sustainable development and interethnic conflict. Online advocacy and policy development provide governments with clear benefits, but also carry risks.

Informing online debate

Growing online global activism puts foreign ministries under pressure to take a decision on whether and how to engage with it. A basic tenet of strategic communication is that absence from a debate opens one to the risk of having one's policies reinterpreted or misinterpreted, by allies and competitors alike. The same holds true for governments. For example, in 2007 the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) built an online meeting space in Second Life to protest at the Canadian harp seal hunt. The Canadian government did not directly counter the IFAW's advocacy campaign in this virtual world domain, leaving itself at a potential disadvantage in the arena of public opinion.

To be sure, a virtual world campaign in which site traffic is relatively low (as measured in the participation of hundreds of individuals) will not have damaging consequences for governments. However, once such virtual world campaigns by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attract thousands of visitors, and begin to spill over into mass media coverage and real-world activism, then governments will be forced to mount sophisticated counter-advocacy campaigns in the same virtual worlds.

Correcting misunderstandings
In 2006 the US Department of State launched a 'Digital Outreach' team aimed at countering ideological support for terrorism. The team mitigated the risk of being regarded as irrelevant by adopting a 'culturally sensitive approach' and using native speakers in the languages of its target audience. They participated in online discussions on mainstream websites that carried the heaviest traffic on US policy, such as BBC Arabic, Al-Jazeera Talk and Elaph On-Line News.

Widening the debate, to obtain new thinking
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) was the first foreign ministry to experiment with an online interactive platform to engage citizens directly in the foreign policy-making process. Its 2003 interactive discussion, 'A Foreign Policy Dialogue', featured a significant online component, using the web to enable citizens to respond publicly to the government's foreign policy discussion paper and to debate with one another in moderated online fora. The experiment's success spurred DFAIT to create a permanent 'e-discussion' website to ensure that public comment on Canada's foreign policy priorities was a matter of routine rather than ad hoc initiatives.
The time-bound nature of the discussions, and the feedback given on contributions, make it less likely that participants will fear that their input is sought for reasons of presentation rather than substance.

Joining with activists to enhance campaigns
The emerging potential of global virtual platforms to generate and mobilise policy and policy activism was recently demonstrated in the context of the World Climate Change Conference in Bali. The vision is one of global 'smart crowds' – that is, individuals and/or organisations from different countries with different experiences and sources of expertise – generating online policy thinking and advocacy aimed at influencing real-world decision-making. Tightly defining the area of collaboration can lessen the risk that governments and NGOs will both be criticised for compromising their independence by working with each other.

Collaborating with other experts to recommend policy solutions
Another potential form of 'policy mobilisation' is the development of wikis. To date, experimentation by foreign ministries has limited these to internal users. For example, inspired by the success of Wikipedia, the US Department of State has established an internal 'Diplopedia' as a resource from which information on the department, its services and its policies may be acquired. The State Department is also using blog software to strengthen specific internal user communities. Wikis, because they are constantly updated (unlike physical briefing papers), can offer officials and ministers a rapid and comprehensive institutional perspective. In addition, given the regular rotation of staff, this form of collective intelligence-gathering can address the perennial problem of ensuring 'institutional memory'. Internal wikis are, of course, prey to the same pitfalls as publicly accessible ones, above all, inaccuracy. But the finding by the science magazine *Nature* in 2005 that there was no significant difference between the accuracy of Wikipedia and that of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* is instructive.

Experimenting with new approaches
Sweden has taken a different approach and has created a virtual embassy, the Second House of Sweden, in Second Life. But the practical benefits in policy terms – apart from burnishing a reputation for being technologically avant-garde – are difficult to discern. The early lessons suggest that countries should not replicate the old web's static content in this type of virtual environment, and that virtual worlds are not easily used for policy development, being better suited to cultural engagement (such as talks, film festivals or live music recitals). In short, the Swedish experiment points to the use of Second Life as another communications platform – an extension of Sweden's real-world public diplomacy in the form of information and cultural/educational programming – rather than as a platform by which to establish a collaborative project to help Sweden to develop particular policies.

Being an online diplomat

Given the blurring of online boundaries between users and producers, authority and amateurism, play and work, and the attendant concerns about privacy and security, foreign ministries will have to proceed cautiously and develop content for each online intervention that is appropriate for that specific application.

Diplomats will have to spend as much time gaining an understanding of the cultures, values and languages of social networking as they will in preparing for new assignments in foreign countries. On ministry blogs, officials will have to balance the need to engage in the local idiom with the requirement to stick to existing policy.

Since websites are 'leaky containers', through which personal data on political views, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and other life preferences are often readily available, any interaction between government officials and individuals online must be bound by strict guidelines. One of the most important differences between online and offline social networking is that the former is 'eternal'. In other words, all interactions between public officials and their online interlocutors will be searchable, replicable and captured permanently.[12]

Foreign ministries are already struggling to keep pace with web innovation and the anticipated additional expenditures associated with the convergence of online and offline activity. But the spiralling costs associated with being present in myriad virtual spaces will force governments to be very selective about their online representation. As more textured and sophisticated Web 2.0 applications become widespread, and given the intense competition for smaller shares of the public's attention, foreign ministry websites must look, feel and perform like the most advanced media sites in the world. More and more, countries will become the images that they project in the online world.

Future directions

Having barely absorbed the operational, capital and organisational pressures of two generations of web technology over the course of a single decade, foreign ministries need to look ahead to the next wave of innovation: **Web 3.0**, or what some have called 'Web 2.0 on steroids'. This latest generation of software heralds easier, cheaper and more pervasive connectivity, leading, conceivably, to the seamless integration of online and offline living by adding the full sensory dimension.[13] Though simulated, this third dimension holds out the possibility of authentic emotional engagement online. **Telehaptic** or simulated touch technology in a virtual setting may alter the very idea of a nation's foreign representation and increase the capacity to engage in cross-national collaboration. Might we see, after all, foreign ministry personnel interacting routinely with counterparts and the public via virtual embassies?

Setting debate about the likelihood of this vision to one side, my central proposition is that diplomats must be active participants in the growing global online conversation. The web is unprecedented in its power to circulate information and ideas, generate debate and influence opinion. The values of online interaction (free, non-hierarchical sharing) will challenge aspects of diplomatic practice (for example, the distinction between private and public negotiation). But online technologies do not undermine classic diplomacy; rather, they are essential instruments in the virtual age.

Glossary

avatar: a computer-simulated representation of the 'self' that may be in the form of a three-dimensional model (as in the case of virtual environments) or a two-dimensional icon.

blog: short for 'web log', a blog is a web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual.

social networking site: a web-based site designed to enable users to connect and bond with each other. Such sites create communities of interest through instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, blogs, file-sharing, videos and so on. Some of the more popular social networking sites are Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, orkut, Bebo and Xanga.

telehaptics: computer-generated tactile (touch) sensations (haptics) transmitted over a network, allowing 'physical' contact between a local user and remote location. Telehaptics are being incorporated in the creation of virtual worlds.

virtual world: an artificial environment created by computer hardware and software and presented to the user in such a way that it appears and feels like a real, physical environment. Virtual reality is sometimes referred to more generally as any virtual world represented in a computer, even if it is only a text-based or graphical representation (for example using an avatar in a virtual-world social networking site such as Second Life or in an online game).

Web 2.0: the term given to a second generation of the **World Wide Web** that allows users to collaborate and share information online. Blogs and wikis are components of Web 2.0.

Web 3.0: there is, as yet, no single, accepted definition of Web 3.0. However, if Web 1.0 refers to a 'read-only' web, with content being produced in large part by the organisations supporting any given site, and Web 2.0 is an extension into the 'read–write' web that engages users in an active role, then Web 3.0 represents the further evolutionary movement of the web into the development of a consolidated global database, three-dimensional collaborative spaces and artificial intelligence. Web 3.0 will lead to a much more porous border between the real and online worlds as a result of

ubiquitous connectivity (mobile devices), open-source software platforms, roaming portable identity and intelligent applications through machines that can reason.

wiki: a collaborative website comprising the perpetual collective work of many authors. A wiki allows anyone to edit, delete or modify content that has been placed on the website. In contrast, a blog, typically authored by one person, does not allow visitors to change the original posted material, only to add content to the original material.

World Wide Web (**the web**): a system of internet servers that support specially formatted documents. The documents are formatted in a markup language that supports links to other documents, as well as graphics, audio and video files. Not all internet servers are part of the World Wide Web.

YouTube: a popular free video-sharing website that lets registered users upload and share video clips online at the YouTube.com website.

Notes

1 The assumption is that collaboration produces a result that is qualitatively different from that which would be produced by individuals working alone. It is an unpredictable process in which partners relinquish some level of control, something that would concern risk-averse bureaucracies. On collaboration as the 'third layer' of public diplomacy, see Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, 'Moving from monologue to dialogue to collaboration: the three layers of public diplomacy', in Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull, eds, *Public diplomacy in a changing world, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 616, March 2008, pp. 10–30.

2 The culture of open sharing refers to a wide variety of educational resources, including open repositories for scholarly work, peer-to-peer platforms for collaborative learning, and open-source communities formed to share computer source code.

3 Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc., 'New technologies and Government of Canada communications: Phase II – quantitative research and online surveys', April 2008, p. iii. This report, which was prepared for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is available at http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/agriculture_agri-food/2008/130-07/index.html (accessed May 2008).

4 The perception that levels of trust in the internet have increased markedly is corroborated by the Oxford Internet Institute's 2007 survey of the UK, which states that 'trust in the Internet has remained stable and rather high from 2003 through 2007'. See William H. Dutton and Ellen J. Helsper, *The internet in Britain 2007* (Oxford: Oxford Internet Institute, 2007), p. 28.

5 Center for the Digital Future, 'How much of the information on news pages posted by established media (New York Times, CNN etc.) are generally reliable and accurate?' *Web Insight,* 4 Feb. 2008.

6 Presentation by Jeffrey Cole, Director of the Center for the Digital Future, on the *2008 Digital Future Report,* given at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, 7 March 2008. See highlights from the *2008 Digital Future Report* at http://www.digitalcenter.org/pdf/2008-Digital-Future-Report-Final-Release.pdf (accessed March 2008).

7 Gartner, Inc., online press release, 'Gartner says 80 per cent of active internet users will have a "second life" in the virtual world by the end of 2011', 24 April 2007.

8 This does not mean that users self-consciously participate in online social networking sites to seek out new friends from far and wide. Research on a sample of Facebook members has concluded that their primary motivation is to search for people with whom they have a pre-existing real-world connection rather than to browse for complete strangers.

9 However, Facebook has yet to capture substantial portions of the non-English-speaking world such as China and Russia. In March 2008 the number of Facebook users in China and Russia were 146,780 and 63,160 respectively.

10 A cautionary note on the use of statistics to gauge participation in virtual worlds is in order. Linden Lab, the creator of Second Life, does not distinguish between residents who have registered a unique avatar and used it once and residents who are frequent users of this virtual world.

11 As quoted in David Bollier, 'The rise of collective intelligence: decentralised co-creation of value as a new paradigm of commerce and culture', *Report of the Sixteenth Annual Aspen Institute Roundtable on Information Technology,* 2007, p. 30.

12 See Danah Boyd, 'Social network sites: public, private, or what?' *The Knowledge Tree,* 13 May 2007, http://kt.flexiblelearning.net.au/tkt2007/?page_id=28 (accessed 11 March 2008).

13 The Distributed and Collaborative Virtual Environments Research Laboratory (DISCOVER) at the University of Ottawa, Canada, estimates that a fully immersive virtual environment (with the simultaneous simulation of all senses) may be achieved by 2018. See demonstrations of this virtual technology at http://www.discover.uottawa.ca/. The following video clips on this site illuminate the potential of this technology: 'Virtualised environments' (narration in French); 'Hapto virtual environments research' (narration in French); and 'Virtual reality prototypes for human interaction, training and e-commerce'.

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10 NO DANGLING CONVERSATION: PORTRAIT OF THE PUBLIC DIPLOMAT

'If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.'
William Blake

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much has been said in recent years of public diplomacy; very little of the public diplomat. The author has tried to remedy that imbalance by crystallising the former and elaborating the latter, in part by applying some new thinking (and interpreting some not so new observations) about the role and conduct of political communications in asymmetrical conflict zones. Counterinsurgency represents, in the author's view, the leading edge of public diplomacy tradecraft. It requires on the part of practitioners a particular combination of knowledge, skills, values and personal attributes, which is examined in this chapter.

Public diplomacy in a world on fire

At a dinner party not long ago I asked the guests what they knew or thought of public diplomacy. I received a variety of responses, ranging from eyes glazing over, to bewilderment, to requests to repeat the question. Most had no idea what I was on about, nor any obvious interest in finding out.

This experience, if sobering, was not entirely surprising. Yet I expect that in a year or two things could be quite different. The age of globalisation is stimulating somewhat of a public diplomacy renaissance.

It's about time.

How relevant is public diplomacy in today's world?

Extremely.[1]

Our brief concerns **public** diplomacy, which I consider to be the conduct of international relations – the pursuit of interests, promotion of policies and

projection of values – through the engineering of popular influence rather than the use of force or incentives. This has always been part of the diplomat's repertoire. But it has never been more important.

Why this, why now?

As other chapters in this volume have underlined, all kinds of contemporary factors are forcing foreign ministries to rethink their role and refocus their activity: the increasing constraints on states as actors in the international system; the blurring of the international and the domestic; the revolution in communications; and the rise of transnational issues, many rooted in science and driven by technology (climate change, pandemic disease, alternative energy, genomics). Perhaps most important, vexing and complex of all is the indivisible link between development and security.

Of special interest to me are the particular challenges that, as a result, beset 'traditional' diplomacy – which, while still effective within its increasingly circumscribed ambit, is simply not delivering satisfactory results beyond it.

I consider the days of set-piece, ritualistic encounters across green-felt tables and identikit forms of diplomatic representation to be passing. Diplomacy may still begin and end with interstate relations, especially in authoritarian and underdeveloped settings, but the effective exercise of influence is related increasingly to forging partnerships, leveraging private sector support, managing networks and shaping public opinion. Few foreign policy objectives can now be achieved in the absence of initiatives designed to engage, understand, advocate, influence and cooperate. Whether a country needs to build international coalitions, cooperate to protect the ecosphere or compete to attract foreign investment, skilled workers and students, the cultivation of a broad cross-section of civic support has become essential to success. For it is people and populations that drive insecurity, create wealth and strengthen governments – or change them.

Listening to Lawrence?

Here I want to take you on a short diversion.

In the 14th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* published in 1929, T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia) wrote the entry on guerrilla warfare.[2] He concluded: 'Granted mobility, security . . . time, and doctrine . . . victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain.'[3]

Almost a century later, it is has become painfully clear that Lawrence's chilling lesson has gone unlearned, or been forgotten. Although recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has got some theorists – and military establishments – thinking hard about counterinsurgency,[4] the record to date suggests that most contemporary commanders are still struggling to know how to use regular armies against an elusive, mainly indigenous enemy that enjoys a degree of popular support and intimate familiarity with life in distant, culturally complex and historically alien environments. Countering insurgency in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories and elsewhere is a very different proposition from, for instance – in diplomatic terms – negotiating a trade deal or – in military terms – modelling confrontations between colossal armoured formations facing off in places like the Fulda Gap.

It is at precisely this juncture that the public diplomat goes to work.

And here is the bridge. As militaries relearn the use of unconventional responses to the irregular threats and challenges typical of counterinsurgency, they are rediscovering the importance of political communication.[5] In the emerging doctrines on asymmetrical conflict, the emphasis is increasingly on talking rather than, or at least in addition to, fighting; on dialogue rather than diktat; and on proximate engagement and understanding rather than the proclamation of imported truths.

Is all of this sounding more familiar now?

Public diplomacy as political warfare: two sides of the same coin?

Although not everyone will associate public diplomacy with the resolution of asymmetrical conflict,[6] the apparent convergence in thinking about political counterinsurgency (COIN) and military public diplomacy is unprecedented. The intensity of interaction and the speed of events that typify counterinsurgency[7] have created a huge opportunity for public diplomacy.

This association of public diplomacy with COIN is not as much of a stretch as it might initially appear. Conflict situations in many ways represent the leading edge of the craft, with useful insights to be gleaned for application to mainstream public diplomacy practice.

Creative, empathetic public diplomats, fully aware of the background and details of a given conflict, can use local knowledge to learn to think like, and in certain respects identify with, the insurgents. The potential for intelligence generation to inform policy, particularly in the critically important area of **human intelligence**, is real and substantial.

The more familiar, garden variety elements of public diplomacy – lobbying and advocacy; the strategic use of the media; building relationships with non-state actors; and managing networks of contacts – also have a crucial role. Furthermore, it is through these activities that diverse foreign publics have been connected to the **idea** of international society, and from there to attempts to build coalitions and forge consensus around shared interests, mutual gain and common values and norms.[8]

To wrap up this short analytical road trip, I see public diplomacy as an indispensable tool in tackling global challenges, in particular the nexus of underdevelopment and insecurity. It is equipped to shine in the adversarial, hard-power-riven, contested conditions that the latter creates. And the

extreme context of counterinsurgency only highlights how integral public diplomacy is to achieving political outcomes in such a conflicted world.

But in the erstwhile international system, which is now looking less like a global village and more like a ragged patchwork quilt of gated communities and unkempt barrios, the public diplomat has her or his work cut out.

Curiously, though, the **human** dimension of the piece, by which I refer to the essence of the public diplomat as a **person** and as a **professional**, has attracted almost no notice.

This is an omission. How to fill that gap?

Parsing the public diplomat

I would respond by first asking: What are the essential skills and personal attributes of the public diplomat? What are the knowledge requirements? Is there an associated set of core public diplomacy values? And how might any of the above be acquired?

Some people are simply born with the personal qualities essential to effective political communication. Others develop them through education, experience, training and professional development. The best public diplomats probably demonstrate a winning combination of the two, displaying strong suits in both nature and nurture.

It is my conviction that, to be effective, the modern public diplomat must be characterised by the following broad competences:

1. *Values – who the public diplomat is: what matters*
The public diplomat's core values and ideals include continuous and lifelong learning, historical knowledge and cultural understanding. Public service will serve as a primary motivator, although the desire to pursue national

interests will not be far behind. Dialogue and communication will be favoured over compulsion or force, just as cooperation and teamwork will be preferred over 'one-upmanship' and showboating. A dedication to reason, fairness and the rule of law will be a prominent professional characteristic. Professional integrity, or the absence of a 'say–do gap' between words and deeds, and moral courage, by which I mean the wherewithal to stand up both for one's country abroad and, when necessary, to one's country at home, will be central. Humanism, a real interest in people and an abiding commitment to humanitarian thought and action provide the firm foundation upon which these values rest.

2. *Personal qualities – how the public diplomat behaves: supple force*
The public diplomat must be capable not just of exchanging views with interlocutors at the foreign ministry or chatting with other diplomats, but of swimming without effort in the sea of the people beyond the embassy gates. Personable and enthusiastic, the public diplomat will display a set of clearly defined attributes which flow from vitality and a positive disposition, as well as the possession of natural curiosity, an open, enquiring mind and a critical consciousness. Cultural sensitivity and personal awareness will lead naturally to the display of empathy and compassion, just as the capacity for quick study will find expression in improvisation, creativity and innovation.
This kind of work will require ample and equal reserves of determination and commitment, energy and resilience, flexibility and adaptability. An affinity for risk management, collaboration and team-building will be crucial in establishing partnerships and mobilising coalitions of the similarly inclined. A high tolerance of, if not taste for, uncertainty and ambiguity will be essential.

3. S*kills and abilities – what the public diplomat can do: new age polymath*
The public diplomat will be master of the latest developments in information and communications technologies, and able, among many things, to assess the public and political environments. Before acting, the public diplomat will research and analyse, frame and position the players and issues, situate them

within a strategy, and then make a plan to follow through with representation, contact-making and the activation of existing networks. Effective dialogue will require deployment of listening and feedback skills in order to negotiate and compromise, advocate and persuade. The experienced public diplomacy specialist will initiate, promote and lead, resolving challenges to project a coherent image, burnish a reputation and attain objectives. In all cases performance will be managed, metrics defined, and results recorded and evaluated.

4. *Knowledge – cultivating the mind of the public diplomat: acquiring versatile expertise*
I have never met a foreign service officer who regretted studying international affairs, political science or economics, history, geography or law. But the public diplomat's intellectual interests may be engaged in any of the arts or the social or natural sciences, from ethnology and anthropology to communications and languages to philosophy and literature. One understudied area relates to themes rooted in science and driven by technology which are driving the diplomatic agenda in the globalisation age: climate change, pandemic disease, weapons of mass destruction, biotechnology, genomics, energy and resource use. The important thing is to develop not only the core knowledge but the instincts, the analytical habits of mind and the educated imagination necessary for the management of the complex issues and fast-breaking situations in which public diplomacy must typically be exercised.

The new diplomat?

The perfectly formed public diplomat, then, should combine the skills of a professional negotiator with the attributes of a renaissance humanist and the temperament of a hardy handyman. For the public diplomat, developing a capacity for something referred to in French as *'aisance',* a combination of personal and social comfort and ease, is crucial. And whether nurtured in university or developed in the field, nothing in public diplomacy has greater

utility than having learned how to think (reflection, analysis and praxis), communicate persuasively and act effectively.

From this it might well be observed that the public diplomat will need all the skills, abilities and qualities of the traditional diplomat – tact, judgement, intellect, objectivity, political sense, discretion – plus a good many more. All true. But doing things 'by the book' and according to standard operating procedures will not always be among the public diplomat's favoured tactics. Awaiting instructions, following orders and referring to operating manuals won't necessarily produce results in the sorts of fast-paced, high-risk environments best suited, for instance, to public diplomacy's irregular expression – guerrilla diplomacy.

After Hegel and Marx, and many, many social scientists since, the public diplomat might be thought of as a work in progress, an emerging professional **synthesis** resulting from the dialectic relationship between security and development and an inevitable twenty-first-century collision involving the conventions of traditional diplomacy (**thesis**) and the requirements of globalisation (**antithesis**).

Envoi

For better or worse, the requirement to manage better the impact of globalisation has placed the public diplomat very near the tilting and unstable epicentre of international relations – and, by extension, of contemporary diplomatic practice. Now is the time to ride the storm. Or reap the whirlwind.

We may be sure that a new world order is emerging. Though the outline remains indistinct, it appears likely that the outcome will be multipolar, that there will be a substantial number of new players each wanting a place at the table, and that the defining feature will be a power shift to Asia, the rapidly

rising powerhouse of the integrated global economy. Add to this a daunting range of climatic, scientific and technological threats and challenges and all the ingredients are in place for a highly conflicted future.

Those in charge will need all the creative help they can get.

So . . . Portrait of a public diplomat? A high-functioning, well-educated, street-smart problem-solver, with an open mind, sharp instincts, a Blackberry and, when necessary . . . a Kevlar vest.

It's time to get kitted up.

Notes

1 The literature on public diplomacy has become extensive in recent years. For a general introduction, visit the websites of the University of Southern California Center for the Study of Public Diplomacy (http://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.com) and Bruce Gregory's Public Diplomacy Institute at George Washington University (http://pdi.gwu.edu/); peruse J. Melissen, ed., *The new public diplomacy: soft power in international relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and Simon Anholt, ed., *Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy.* See also the Centre for Strategic and International Studies study, 'Re-inventing diplomacy in the information age,' at http://www.csis.org. Phil Taylor has archived a vast, and exceptionally good, selection of articles on public diplomacy and many other communications issues. See http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/index.cfm?outfit=pmt.

2 Lawrence's remarks were based on his experience in leading the Arab revolt against the Turks in the Middle East during the First World War.

3 The complete entry is available at http://www.bellum.nu/literature/lawrence001.html.

4 In 2006, for instance, the US military issued a new counterinsurgency manual, available at http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24fd.pdf. See also United States Department of State, 'Counter-insurgency in the 21st century: creating a national framework', Bureau of Political–Military Affairs, 11 Sept. 2006.

5 For thoughtful, full-length treatments of these issues, see, for example, General Sir Rupert Smith, *The utility of force: the art of war in the modern world* (New York: Allen Lane, 2005); Philip Bobbit, *The shield of Achilles* (New York: Knopf, 2002). There is a profusion of more specialised references too numerous to catalogue here and themed variously around closely related notions of fourth-generation war, foreign internal defence, asymmetrical and guerrilla warfare, human terrain systems, three block war (combat, relief, reconstruction) and 3Ds (defence, diplomacy, development). Readers are invited to pursue these subjects independently.

6 These motifs common to public diplomacy and COIN are explored in more detail in Daryl Copeland, *Guerrilla diplomacy: global relations in an insecure world* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, forthcoming); Daryl Copeland and Evan Potter, 'Public diplomacy and political warfare: two sides of the same COIN?', paper prepared for presentation at the March 2008 meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco.

7 As the CIA and the US military learned during the implementation of the controversial Phoenix Program in Viet Nam, there is much scope for error and what Chalmers Johnson has termed 'blowback'. See Dale Andrade, *Ashes to ashes: the Phoenix Program and the Viet Nam War* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990); Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: the costs and consequences of American empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000).

8 In the second half of the 1990s the Canadian foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, brought forward what came to be known the 'human security agenda'. Through the deft use of the public diplomacy formula and a lot of help from officials, he was able to rack up a string of foreign policy achievements – an international treaty banning landmines; an International Criminal Court; major initiatives on conflict diamonds and child soldiers – often despite the objections of much greater powers. See Daryl Copeland, 'The Axworthy years: Canadian foreign policy in the era of diminished capability,' in Fen Hampson, Norman Hillmer and Maureen Molot, eds, *Canada among nations* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001).

CASE-STUDIES

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11 HOW GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS CAN WORK TOGETHER TO ADDRESS GLOBAL CHALLENGES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the emerging themes of modern diplomacy is the extent to which governments, businesses and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can increase their impact by working together collaboratively to address policy challenges. In this chapter we will look briefly at examples of how such collaboration has worked in practice in different contexts and the conclusions we can draw.

Elsewhere in this volume others have talked of the importance of engagement for the modern public diplomat: working with others to solve problems affecting us all. In this chapter we look at a particular model of engagement: collaboration between governments, businesses and NGOs.

At first, collaboration between these three sectors may seem unlikely. As Milton Friedman said, 'the business of business is business', and the popular image of the capitalist is of someone focused on commercial profit alone. One might caricature NGOs as wanting everyone to do good things which cost money (which people are reluctant to spend) and which may constrain other interests. Governments are the target of the ire both of businesses, for imposing rules and taxes, and of NGOs, for being insufficiently moral and engaged. In short, tension, rather than trust, might appear to be the norm governing relations between the three.

But one of the central themes brought out in this volume is that we are increasingly faced by challenges that are common to all of us. Moreover, there is growing recognition across government, business and the NGO community that working together, albeit at the expense of some trade-offs, may deliver results that benefit us all.

The case-studies described in this chapter show how such collaboration can come about and how it can be effective for all parties, turning competitive tension into constructive outcomes.

Elements of collaboration

There are three broad elements of collaboration running, to a varying degree, through the case-studies we examine. Together they serve as a generic model for effective partnership of this type. They are:

- convening – parties need to join together in order to be able to identify and understand the extent of their shared interests and potential for joint action. Convening power, the ability to bring the right people together, is a crucial attribute that must be possessed by at least one of the parties;

- co-creating solutions – parties need to work together to identify and design solutions to their shared problems, exploiting the diversity offered by their multiple perspectives, experiences, skills and creativity, and taking into account the particular requirements of each participant; and

- co-implementing solutions – parties need to take joint or separate action within an overall plan in order to deliver agreed outcomes.

Case-study 1: 'Le Grenelle de l'Environnement'

The 'Grenelle environment' initiative is an instructive example from France of how years of disagreement between stakeholders over sustainable development policies were put aside in recognition of the importance for all parties of developing solutions. It underlines, in particular, the importance of governments using their convening power.

In a presidential election pledge, Nicolas Sarkozy promised to work with NGOs, local authorities, trade unions and employers' associations in order to find solutions to key sustainable development issues. After his election as

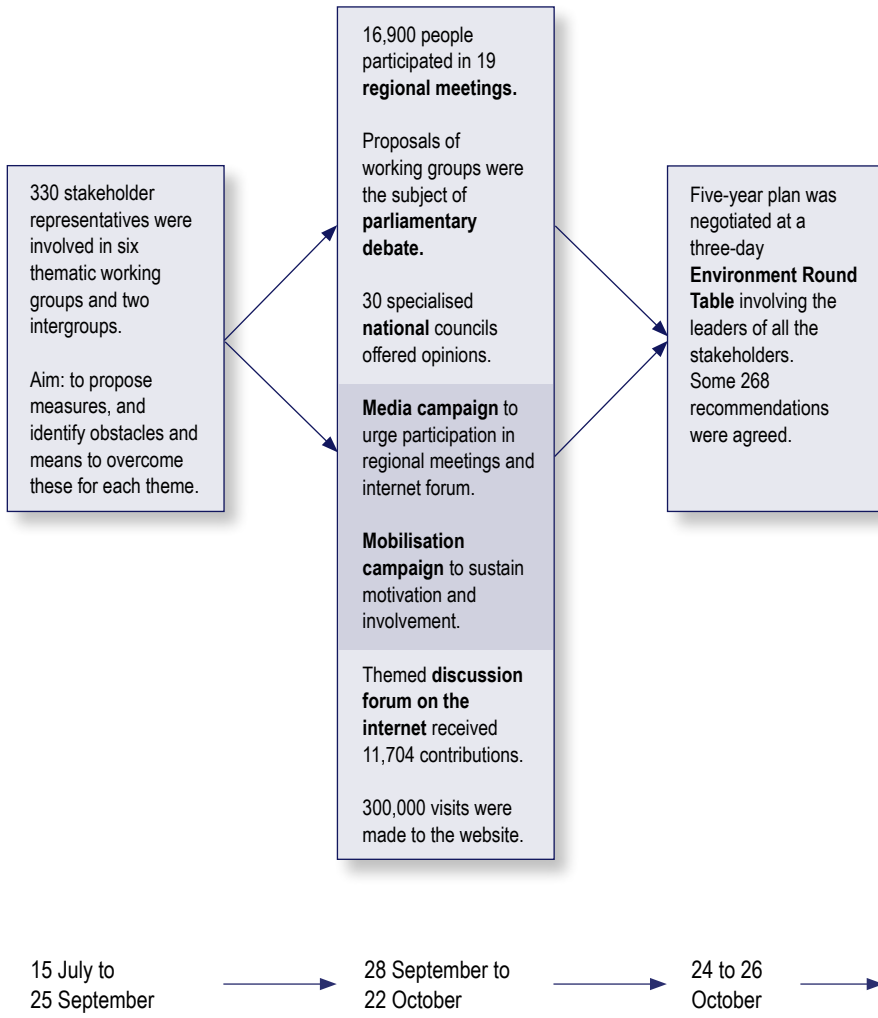
President, he established 'Le Grenelle de l'Environnement' (the name evoking the place where, in 1968, the French government met trade union representatives to address the social unrest of the time). The initiative started in July 2007 with the aim of defining a five-year plan for France's future environmental policy.[1]

There followed a four-month period of consultation, debate, negotiation and drafting of recommendations, involving all the stakeholders mentioned in the previous paragraph, alongside a broader public consultation. The purpose was to agree targeted policy measures under eight thematic headings: climate change and energy; biodiversity and natural resources; health; sustainable production and consumption; green democracy; green business development; waste; and genetically modified organisms. The scope and progress of this activity are summarised schematically in Figure 11.1.

The nature of this convening process, and the sheer number of people involved, was unprecedented. Considerable effort by the Ministry of Energy and Environment was needed to drive and sustain it.[2] President Sarkozy commented: 'Grenelle stands for shared discussion and shared proposals . . . a revolution in the way we think and the way we take decisions; a revolution in our behaviour, in our policies, in our objectives and in our criteria.'[3]

Until the 'Grenelle de l'Environnement', the prospect of environmental NGOs sitting down – in order to discuss and agree solutions to sustainable development issues – alongside powerful business lobby groups with potentially opposing interests, such as those representing the agricultural sector, would have been difficult to conceive. Nicolas Hulot, a well-known French environmentalist, commented: 'We are in the process of accomplishing in several days what we haven't been able to do in several years.'[4]

Figure 11.1: The 'Grenelle de l'Environnement' consultation process



In his address at the end of the four-month consultation process, President Sarkozy said:

> '*this Grenelle is a success. It is a success that we owe to environmental non-governmental organisations, which proved equal to taking on this unusual role. I am convinced that if we had said to a number of them, 'soon you will be working with such and such' [they would not have believed it] . . . It was not a foregone conclusion!'* [5]

What did the process achieve?
Broad public reaction to the detailed set of policy recommendations that constituted the Grenelle conclusions was overwhelmingly positive. Normally critical NGO and media voices were openly surprised that agreement had been reached on sensitive issues such as transport (restrictions on building of highways or airports, further development of the rail network), building (homeowners to be required by law to make homes energy efficient and given funding to do so), energy (the development of renewable energy to be prioritised over that of other energy sources) and agriculture (organic farming to increase from 2 per cent of cultivated land to 20 per cent; the use of pesticides to be reduced by 50 per cent; the growing of genetically modified organisms to cease).

The agreement was, of course, only the beginning of a longer process. A spokesman for Greenpeace France has acknowledged that while 'there is an ambition, [while] there is a change of culture at the state level, [and] at the parliamentary level . . . there is unfortunately still too much ambiguity for us not to be extremely vigilant about what comes next'.[6]

As we write, the French government and parliament still need to agree the administrative, budgetary and legislative changes necessary to implement the policy proposals. A legislative package comprising three draft 'Grenelle' laws was introduced for parliamentary debate in April 2008, and some tough political debate no doubt lies ahead.

But the fact that all political parties and relevant business and environmental interest groups were party to the Grenelle process means the legislative process should – in theory – be easier than it would have been without the Grenelle convention.

What does the case-study tell us?
First, it highlights the importance of **effective use of 'convening power'**. In this instance, the convening power of government, supported by intense government activity (from the President downwards) aimed at maintaining top-level engagement from all parties, was vital.

Second, the process was **genuinely inclusive,** bringing together all **key** stakeholders. This inclusivity provided reassurance to all parties, encouraging them to participate and, crucially, building trust. Inclusivity was further strengthened by innovative use of the World Wide Web and supporting media campaigns, enhancing the element of public consultation.

Third, convening all relevant stakeholders in an explicitly open forum helped bring to the fore a sense of underlying **shared interest** in finding solutions to sustainable development challenges.

Fourth, the consultation managed to convert this shared interest into a **shared appreciation that working together could lead to concrete results,** and was more likely to do so than each party pursuing its own agenda in isolation. Parties developed sufficient confidence to work round each other's 'red lines', with a willingness to accept and manage their differences and the risks to their individual agendas.

Case-study 2: AIDS/HIV in India

In October 2003 more than 200 professionals met in New Delhi in order to establish a coordinated approach for combating AIDS/HIV in India.[7] Participants comprised:

- business representatives from large corporations such as PepsiCo, Lafarge and the Tata Group, from the Confederation of Indian Industry and from the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS;
- civil society leaders from major global donor organisations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as local NGOs working in the cities and villages of India;
- Indian government health officials and military officers;
- representatives of international organisations, such as the World Bank, USAID, United Nations agencies and WHO; and
- community workers representing people living with AIDS/HIV in India.

The participants held no common view on how to stop the spread of the disease. However, they all understood its economic and social impact, and the risks of not taking action. They also recognised that a fragmented approach would not work, and that joint action was necessary.

As part of a simulated AIDS/HIV crisis, organised by the international consultancy firm Booz Allen Hamilton, each participant was assigned to a team representing a major stakeholder: for example, government, local community, business, donor, NGO or media. The core of each team was made up of experts from the relevant stakeholder group, but most participants had to assume roles that were unfamiliar to them. The premise of the simulation was the need for collaboration between government and

non-government actors, supported by a computer-designed model that kept track of events and tallied up the consequences of each move in the game.

What did the exercise achieve?
The two-day event started with much tension and debate about who was primarily responsible for the crisis – for example, the government for procrastinating, big business for not caring, or the media for publishing scare stories. As the game moved forward, participants remained focused on their own roles at the expense of cooperation with other stakeholder teams. The simulated crisis kept getting worse. New and unexpected problems were arising. Participants blamed each other.

Then a small change took place. One stakeholder team approached another group, asking for help ('Would the federal government be willing to direct the majority of funds to regions where they are most needed?'). Another team followed suit ('Could we use a corporation's facilities to help others?'). And so it continued. The participants started to understand the linkages, collaboration and managerial style that would be necessary to deal effectively with the crisis. Creative ideas flowed. Cooperation ensued, and the crisis abated.

Ratan Tata, chair of the Tata Group, said: 'The simulation exercise was so creative that it has motivated the 200 participants to make a new level of commitment to the AIDS/HIV issue. I believe there is a crucial need for an explosion of new initiatives and new partnerships in India, which will make an enormous difference in addressing this issue in the future.'[8]

Following the exercise, new initiatives were taken. Eight major companies expanded their workplace and community activities to encourage AIDS/HIV prevention and treatment programmes. A pharmaceutical company lowered the price of an AIDS/HIV drug. The organisations that participated in the simulation are still talking and working together to halt the spread of AIDS/HIV in India.

What does the case-study tell us?
Like the Grenelle case-study, this example highlights the importance of effective 'convening', allied to genuinely inclusive identification of stakeholders and emphasis on underlying shared interest, in establishing the conditions for successful cross-sector collaboration.

It also shows **the creative power that can be generated when stakeholders are given space and 'permission' to think outside their normal institutional and policy frameworks.** The simulation, by separating participants from different disciplines and organisations into mixed teams, and asking all to focus on solutions from the perspective of other stakeholders in a safe discussion environment, produced a range of responses that standard negotiation between stakeholders would have been unlikely to achieve, especially in such an accelerated timescale. It unlocked knowledge and made connections in a genuine process of 'co-creation'.

The simulation also highlighted the flexibility and rapid lesson-learning that such an environment can engender, through providing space for new ideas to emerge and be nurtured. The participants focused hard on what was working and what was not, rather than on issues of institutional boundaries and control, and were ready to adapt accordingly.

Case-study 3: Operation Climate Vote

Operation Climate Vote is a US-based example of a partnership between government and non-government partners, in which the parties (three US state governors and an NGO) had a shared purpose – to bring about national legislation to mitigate climate change – but in which 'traditional' roles were reversed.

Despite sustained lobbying by US environmental groups for legislation to stem climate change, by October 2007 neither the US House of Representatives nor the US Senate had tabled time to debate such legislation.

The Environmental Defense Action Fund, an environmental NGO known for filing lawsuits against the federal US government on environmental issues, decided to mount a US$3 million television advertising campaign.[9] The key difference between this campaign and previous advocacy of this type was that the advertisement was narrated by government figures. Three state governors – Arnold Schwarzenegger (California), Brian Schweitzer (Montana) and Jon Huntsman (Utah) – challenged Congress to cap America's global warming pollution, telling viewers that 'climate change is a test of leadership' and that 'it's time for Congress to act'. The advertisement was broadcast at times when members of Congress were judged most likely to be watching television. Organisations with similar goals were invited to place the YouTube version of the advertisement on their own websites and the public were encouraged to lobby members of Congress.

The campaign strategy was based on the premise that high-profile state government figures were likely to have greater influence and impact on members of Congress than NGOs could achieve working in isolation.

There was further role reversal. Whereas a traditional model might see government funding an NGO to undertake work on its behalf, in this example the Environmental Defense Action Fund used its own resources to fund the campaign.

The partners therefore brought different, but complementary, assets to the partnership. The governors brought their status and influence; and the Environmental Defense Action Fund brought its financial resources, campaigning ability and public backing.

In December 2007 the Climate Security Act passed the Senate committee stage, clearing an important legislative hurdle. The presumption is that the

campaign, demonstrating that the issue of climate change was not simply an NGO concern, played a part in generating this political momentum. To become law, of course, the legislation still needs to be debated and passed by both the Senate and House of Representatives, and subsequently signed into law by the president.

What does the case-study tell us?
To our mind, this case-study reinforces the importance, for successful cross-sector collaboration, of being prepared to step back and identify **'top-level' shared purpose** as a prerequisite for joint action. It also underlines the premium on **recognising, accepting and constructing joint action around partners' relative strengths and weaknesses**, together with a flexible approach to how the latter are deployed and managed. In this case, the stakeholders shared responsibility on the basis of an agreed understanding of their respective skills, resources and influence over the target audience, even if it resulted in some traditional roles being reversed.

Conclusion

Collaboration between government, business and NGOs is a growing phenomenon. The impact it can have suggests that it will be an increasingly important tool for the modern public diplomat.

We will be taking forward work to look in more detail at the dynamics of cross-sector collaboration and how it can best be initiated, managed and applied. However, we have tried in this chapter, by examining three brief case-studies, to identify some characteristics of successful collaboration in the hope of stimulating interest among foreign policy practitioners of the potential of this model for addressing global policy challenges.

We would summarise these characteristics as follows:

- the importance of effective use of 'convening power';
- the importance of accurately identifying stakeholders on the basis of shared interests and bringing them together in a genuinely inclusive process;
- the need to create a forum or process which can convert this shared interest into a shared appreciation that working together is more likely to generate concrete results than each party pursuing its own agenda in isolation;
- the need for each party to understand and be prepared to work with the core requirements of every other party (for example, the commercial imperative of business partners), working round each other's 'red lines';
- the value of creating space for stakeholders to think outside their normal institutional and policy frameworks and address common problems from the perspective of other stakeholders; and
- the premium put on constructing joint policy and programmes of action around partners' differing skills, resources, and relative strengths and weaknesses, together with a flexible approach to how the latter are deployed and managed.

Notes

1 See http://www.legrenelle-environnement.fr/grenelle-environnement/spip.php?rubrique112.

2 The full title of the ministry is the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Planning.

3 Transcript of speech by President Sarkozy, Paris, 25 Oct. 2007; see http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/Presentation-of-Grenelle.html.

4 Quotation published on La Vie Verte: see http://lavieverte.wordpress.com/category/grenelle/page/2/.

5 Transcript of speech by President Sarkozy, Paris, 25 Oct. 2007.

6 Quotation published on La Vie Verte: see http://lavieverte.wordpress.com/category/grenelle/page/2/.

7 See http://www.boozallen.com/about/article/9510078.

8 See http://www.boozallen.com/about/article/9510078.

9 See http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=17039.

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12 MEASURING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: CAN IT BE DONE?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the British Council have designed a pilot framework for planning and evaluating public diplomacy activity. This chapter sets out the rationale for the framework and how it is being tested.

The last ten years have seen a significant shift towards evidence-based policy-making in the UK. However, in the area of foreign policy, and public diplomacy in particular, there has been much debate over the extent to which measurement and evaluation techniques can, and should, be applied. In order to test some of the assumptions involved, the FCO and the British Council are jointly piloting, over a two-year period from April 2007, an evaluation framework designed to measure the impact of their public diplomacy activities. It is too early to draw conclusions, but this chapter sets out the rationale and techniques underpinning the experiment, in the hope that others working in the field can debate and draw on these.

The importance of measurement

The move towards evidence-based policy in the UK began in the late 1990s.[1] The 1999 White Paper *Modernising government* set out the requirement in the following terms: 'This Government expects more of policy makers. More new ideas, more willingness to question inherited ways of doing things, better use of evidence and research in policy making and better focus on policies that will deliver long term goals.'[2]

This principle was reflected in the independent review of public diplomacy commissioned by the FCO from Lord Carter of Coles in 2005. Lord Carter remarked that 'A better central strategy and an improved system for collective monitoring and evaluation should enable an informed assessment of the impact and value for money of public diplomacy efforts as a whole.'[3] Lord Carter reasoned that improved measurement would not only provide

a means of accountability but also enable policy-makers to develop strategy, and deploy resources, more effectively. At the operational level, it would give managers targeted feedback to enable them to improve performance and focus efforts on those kinds of intervention that have been shown to be most effective.

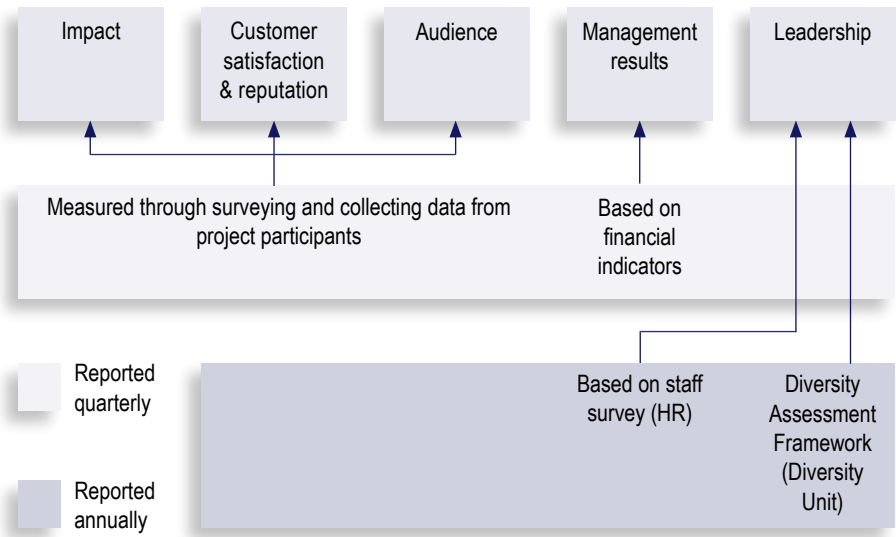
Where we started from

As a result of the Carter Review, a Public Diplomacy Board was established, comprising representatives of the FCO, the British Council and the BBC World Service, together with independent members from the private sector. One of its earliest decisions was to investigate the feasibility of a shared measurement system for public diplomacy, beginning with a review of systems already in place.

The FCO
The review team found that while the FCO did conduct regular narrative reporting against objectives, there was no accurate measure either of the effectiveness of public diplomacy activity in supporting FCO policy objectives or of the resources spent on it. A variety of evaluation techniques (such as opinion polling and media analysis) were being used, particularly in larger overseas missions and for bigger campaigns. But there was no systematic approach.

The British Council
The British Council had a more developed system in place. It operates a corporate performance scorecard, assessing performance across a range of factors including project impact, customer and stakeholder satisfaction, reputation, financial and management results, and the perceptions of staff. This focuses mainly on outputs, but, given that much of the Council's work requires the development of long-term relationships, the Council also uses evaluative research with leaders and influencers to try to measure longer-term outcomes (see Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1: The British Council's corporate performance scorecard



The difficulty of measurement

From the start, we were conscious of the obstacles. As Tim Banfield, Director of Value for Money Studies at the National Audit Office, has observed in relation to the British Council's work: 'Public diplomacy is about building relationships between diverse nations and cultures, and these are constantly influenced by many external factors. And because the full effect of the Council's activities may only become evident after long periods, its changing impact is very difficult to measure year-on-year.'

There are three inherent difficulties in measuring public diplomacy: its frequently long-term ambition; the challenge of measuring concepts that may be intangible; and the problem of attributing observable changes to one's own activities.

Professor Nick Cull has commented, in reference to the timescales involved in cultural diplomacy (and the same can be said of much public diplomacy): 'Attempts to evaluate cultural diplomacy can seem like a forester running out every morning to see how far his trees have grown overnight.'[4] Just as it would make little sense to require the forester to measure his trees daily, so it would be impractical to ask missions to quantify progress against such long-term policy goals as 'promoting a low carbon, high growth global economy', or 'countering terrorism, weapons proliferation and their causes'.[5]

The intangible nature of some public diplomacy objectives, such as increased 'trust' or improved 'relationships', adds further complication. To expand on the observation by Nick Cull, it makes attempts at evaluation seem like a forester going out to measure how far his trees have grown overnight **without a ruler**.

The question of attribution is the most difficult challenge of all. In a world where multiple organisations and influences are acting upon the same complex policy issues, how do we identify changes that can be attributed to our own actions, and, more specifically, to our public diplomacy activities? To add to this complexity, can or should we distinguish the impact of public diplomacy from that of other diplomatic work? In addition, there may be public diplomacy activity deliberately conducted at arm's length from government and for which public attribution would not be welcome.

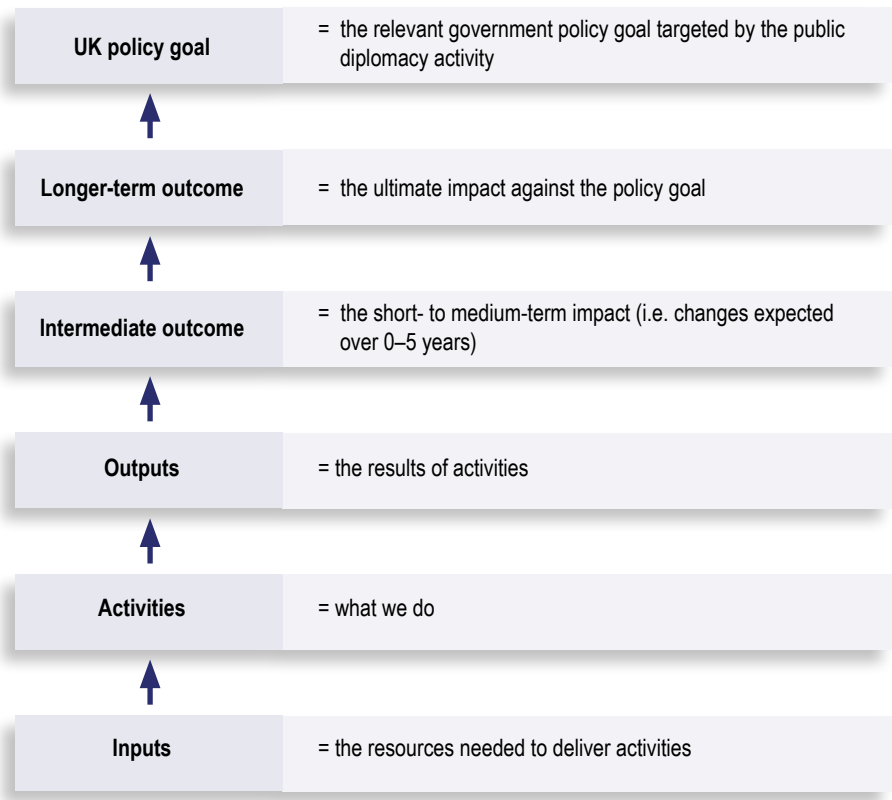
The new framework

With these challenges firmly in mind, the FCO and the British Council set about the task of creating and piloting a new evaluation framework.

The first, important, prerequisite was the development of **joint** FCO and British Council public diplomacy strategies in a number of agreed pilot countries, with the two organisations working together to reach jointly

agreed outcomes through their engagement with non-governmental audiences. These strategies were developed using a logical framework which traces a course from the UK government's policy goals, through long-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, outputs and activities, and back to inputs. This logical framework provides a common way of thinking about strategy, and the use of a common language helps the two organisations to develop a shared understanding of what they are trying to measure and how (see Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2: The logical framework for country public diplomacy strategies



Crucially, this framework also brings consistency to the way that public diplomacy activities are monitored and reported across the two organisations. At the level of input, resources are measured in terms of staff time and direct project spend. At the level of activity or outputs, the focus is on a **systematic** approach to monitoring media coverage, to the collection of feedback from participants in public diplomacy activities and to follow-up evaluation after completion of each such activity. The emphasis is at all times on evidence-based evaluation rather than narrative reporting.

It is at the level of intermediate outcome that one begins to home in on the measurement of 'impact', using a combination of three evaluation tools or 'trackers':

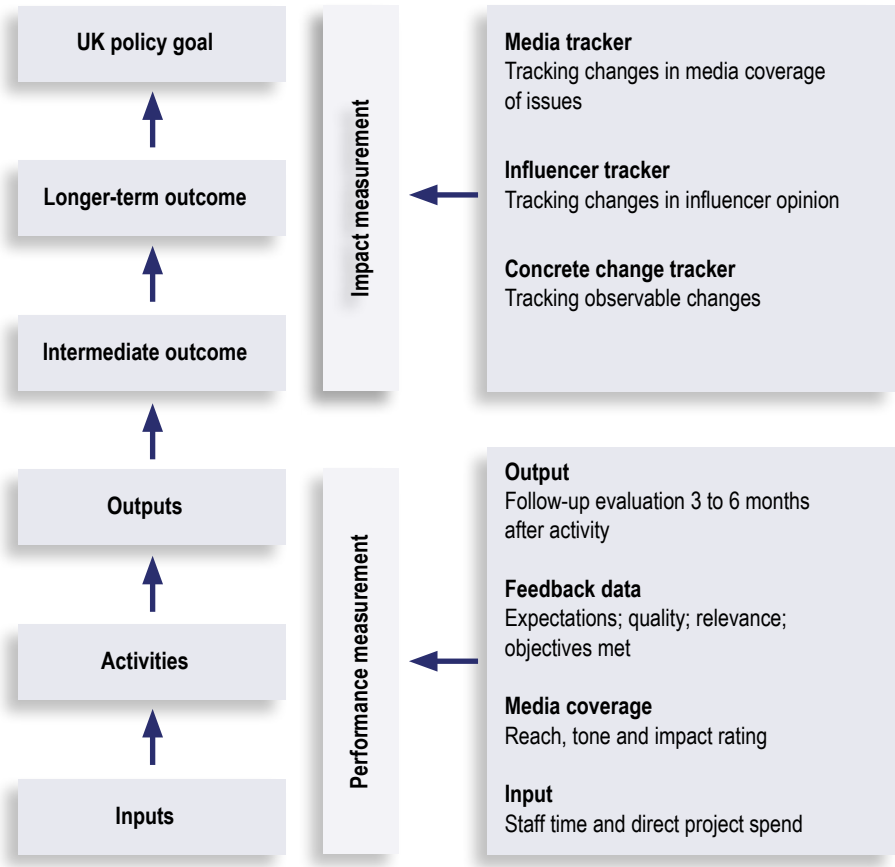
- a **media tracker** which seeks to identify changes in the nature and tone of coverage of targeted issues, and, where possible, the reasons for these changes;

- an **influencer tracker** to generate information on opinion change among those individuals considered key 'influencers' on policy issues related to the intermediate outcomes. This involves systematic mapping of influencers and semi-structured interviews, repeating the process year on year in order to track changes in opinion; and

- a **concrete changes tracker** for recording objectively verifiable changes in the environment that are related to the intermediate outcomes, whether positive or negative.

Figure 12.3 summarises how this evaluation framework fits into the logical framework for country public diplomacy strategies, illustrating how important it is for the strategic planning to have been done properly if the evaluation tools are to produce meaningful results.

Figure 12.3: The relationship between the evaluation framework and the logical framework for planning public diplomacy activity



The evaluation framework tackles the challenge of **long-term** ambition through its treatment of public diplomacy as a journey from input to policy goal, indicating the various staging posts along the way. The articulation of the links between each stage and the next is critical to the validity of the

evaluation process. Intermediate outcomes, the central focus for the measurement of impact, are staging posts in this sense and are defined as the medium-term changes (0–5 years) which the outputs from a programme of activity are expected to help deliver. They allow impact to be evaluated from a shorter-term perspective while still enabling the overall 'direction of travel' to be assessed in relation to longer-term outcomes.

The framework addresses the **intangibility** of certain measures by requiring strategies to be expressed in terms of outputs and intermediate outcomes that are achievable changes. In the case of the influencer tracker, the use of semi-structured interviews provides a means to explore complex issues with more nuance and shade.

The problem of attribution is managed by the recognition that public diplomacy activities are never carried out in isolation – and that what matters is in fact **contribution** rather than **attribution**. In analysing the evaluation data, one may need to interpret what are sometimes fairly weak signals. As Colin Wilding acknowledges in a paper on the subject, 'it may well be possible to demonstrate that public diplomacy activities have made a positive contribution even if the magnitude of the effect cannot be quantified precisely'.[6]

Overall, the framework seeks to 'triangulate' evidence using the three tracking tools so that, if there is a policy change, we will be able to capture this through recording concrete outcomes, see it reflected in the media, and test the significance of the change and the part played by public diplomacy through the influencer tracker interviews. The tools also try to identify the context of any observed change, and the other influences involved.

Early results

The pilot framework is still in the early stages of implementation, so it would be premature to start drawing conclusions about the extent to which

it will succeed in enhancing our ability to measure the impact of public diplomacy activity; accordingly, we do not in this chapter attempt to draw such conclusions.

The use of the new measurement framework has, however, helped to identify some links between activities, outputs and progress towards the outcomes we are seeking to achieve.

For example, in the area of evaluating media coverage, we have been using standard measures of reach, tone and prominence across all pilot countries, and have been able to pick up much more systematically the relationship between media campaigns, as part of individual strategies, and media coverage. This is then considered alongside more detailed content analysis from the media tracker, in order to assess the effectiveness of that coverage in influencing the overall media debate on an issue.

The structured sequencing of evaluation has also helped us to develop an evidence base linking outputs to outcomes. If we take the example of young people who participated in a climate change event, all reported – at the 'output' level – increased awareness and understanding of climate change. In follow-up interviews to explore outcomes, they reported behavioural changes in relation to their own carbon footprint, and, more importantly, all said they were engaging other people within their community to take action to tackle climate change. Another initiative has led to the development of new teaching and learning materials exploring the science of climate change, which have subsequently been used in schools, reaching thousands of children. In another example, activities engaging local government officials, again on the issue of climate change, can be seen to have led directly to the development by local governments of plans for making a transition towards a low-carbon economy.

Early experience has also shown some practical difficulties in implementing the evaluation framework. In particular, the influencer tracker is a

challenging tool requiring correct identification or mapping of influencers, interviews with often quite senior individuals, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Even though the research itself is outsourced, there are still implications for our organisations in terms of time and resources to manage the process.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to set out, in brief, the rationale underpinning the joint work of the FCO and the British Council to construct and pilot a new planning and evaluation framework for public diplomacy activity. A key principle has been that 'the systematic approach to planning can be expected to deliver benefits even if it proves to be impossible to establish strong causal links all the way along the chain from **inputs** to longer-term **outcomes**'.[7]

The aim is not a central data-gathering exercise but a framework that enables practitioners to understand the impact of their actions and provides an evidence base for decisions about strategy and activity. Given its expense, the framework is not intended as a tool to be employed comprehensively across the network. But we hope it will provide sufficient insight into what works and what doesn't to allow policy-makers to make more informed decisions in the planning of their public diplomacy activity.

Notes

1 William Solesbury, *Evidence based policy: whence it came and where it's going* (ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, Oct. 2001).

2 Cabinet Office, *Modernising government*, Cm 4310 (London: Stationery Office, 1999), ch. 2, para. 6. Available at http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/moderngov/whtpaper/index.htm.

3 Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, Dec. 2005.

4 Nicholas J. Cull, *Public diplomacy: lessons from the past* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, April 2007).

5 These are two of the FCO's four policy goals identified in FCO's Strategic Framework, which is in place from 1 April 2008.

6 Colin Wilding, 'Measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy: the UK approach', paper presented to the Annual Conference of International Radio Broadcasters, Nov. 2007.

7 Wilding, 'Measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy'.