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BATTLES TO BRIDGES

US Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11



R. S. Zaharna

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U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11

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Battles to Bridges

U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11

R. S. Zaharna
Associate Professor, American University

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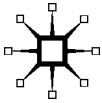

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Introduction

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. public diplomacy has experienced a steep learning curve. With smoke still rising from the fallen Twin Towers in Manhattan, U.S. officials struggled to grasp quite literally what hit them as well as how to respond. The realization that foreign perceptions had domestic consequence quickly made public diplomacy a national security issue. When the U.S. launched the war on terrorism, public diplomacy was second only to the military offensive and was the lead instrument in the battle for hearts and minds. As Lee Hamilton, the co-chair of the influential 9/11 Commission, described it, public diplomacy is "how we stop them from coming here to kill us."

Against this emotional backdrop, getting America's message out became Washington's goal, while the Arab and Islamic world became Washington's primary target audience. Not only were the hijackers from this area, but it was also where many believed the U.S. image was most distorted. The two-prong goal of U.S. public diplomacy entailed promoting U.S. values, while trying to marginalize and isolate the terrorists' messages. From the U.S. perspective, the battle lines between the United States and the terrorists were clearly drawn. Publics throughout the Islamic countries seemed less sure. They repeatedly voiced concerns that the war on terrorism appeared to be a war of civilizations pitting the West against Islam.

In rapid order, the Bush administration rolled out some of the most innovative public diplomacy initiatives in U.S. history. The new Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, a veteran ad executive, held out the promise of branding and selling America to the Islamic world through the first-ever international advertising campaign. The $12 million campaign incorporated radio, television, and print advertising with Internet publications, lecture tours, and other outreach programs.

Hi magazine (2003), a glossy lifestyle magazine with accompanying website, sought to promote a dialogue with Arab youth. Radio Sawa (2002) eschewed the traditional news focus of the Voice of America and sought to attract Arab youth through a mix of Arab and American pop music. In 2004, the United States launched an Arabic-language, satellite television station – Al-Hurra (the Free One) – to go head-to-head against the popular Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. Although introduced with great fanfare, none of the initiatives produced its expected results.

In 2005, observers expected a fresh start when the president's long-time communication advisor, Karen Hughes, took the helm of U.S. public diplomacy. Hughes immediately embarked on a "listening tour" to demonstrate the U.S. desire to reach out to people in the Arab and Islamic regions. During the trip, Hughes was described as painfully clueless about the cultures of the people and U.S. policies in the region. Hughes' other initiatives also pushed the boundaries of traditional public diplomacy and included "forward deploying SWAT teams" to counter misinformation, establishing regional media hubs, and building new public–private partnership initiatives and exchange programs. Under her helm, she enabled diplomats to respond to timely events and spearheaded the first U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication. After Hughes' unexpected departure, James Glassman took over. Glassman's push to integrate social media tools such as YouTube video contests, vlogging, and Twitter helped usher in U.S. public diplomacy 2.0.

Legacy of lessons

Despite the urgency and importance attached to public diplomacy in the war on terrorism and the impressive array of creative initiatives, U.S. public diplomacy under the Bush administration failed to crack the code for how to effectively communicate with publics in the Arab and Islamic regions. Anti-Americanism had intensified in the Arab world, and spread from Nigeria in West Africa to Indonesia in the Far East. As Bush prepared to leave office in early 2009, U.S. favorability ratings were at all-time lows.

The lifespan of some of the more innovative public diplomacy initiatives were unexpectedly short as the target audience patiently ignored or angrily dismissed them. U.S. public diplomacy appeared to have little understanding or appreciation for the intended audiences. The Islamic world was viewed as a broad, monolithic mass, unfamiliar and undefined. By using religion as the lowest common denominator to identify its

target audience, U.S. public diplomacy inadvertently united 1.3 billion people, who happened to be of a particular faith, in a shared fate and renewed sense of identity. Similarly, and equally ironically, U.S. public diplomacy's drive to promote American culture and values may have inadvertently fueled an awakening across the Islamic world to protect and promote their own cultures and values. The "brass-band" approach of the U.S. initiatives – which relied heavily on arm's length, mass-media tools, and self-promotional strategies – alienated the very same publics that U.S. public diplomacy sought to woo. Feeling neither understood nor respected, the audience repeatedly described U.S. communication attempts as "patronizing," "condescending," or "insulting."

U.S. public diplomacy initiatives were also surprisingly apolitical. American credibility suffered from the disconnect between U.S. public diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy. Public opinion polls repeatedly showed that discontent with U.S. policies, such as the war in Iraq and the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, was the principal impetus behind the negative U.S. image. The Bush administration, however, appeared to take pains to sever policy discussions from the discourse on U.S. public diplomacy. For the policymakers in Washington, the problem was not U.S. foreign policy, but rather how it was presented. The result was an ever-growing array of creative initiatives using new technologies and strategies, coupled with the ever-growing suspicion that U.S. public diplomacy was little more than a hoax, as a prominent Arab journalist called it.

Viewed together, the initiatives suffered on several accounts and offered a legacy of lessons during this critical period of U.S. public diplomacy. In retrospect, the importance and sense of urgency attached to public diplomacy during the Bush-era war on terrorism played a pivotal role in the founding of public diplomacy as an academic field. Despite the pressing need to communicate, there was a realization of how little actual scholarship existed on the subject. What literature did exist was based on U.S. public diplomacy during the Cold War era. While the Cold War enjoyed the luxury of implementing public diplomacy initiatives over a span of decades, the post-9/11 public diplomacy was operating on a crisis timeline. In addition to, as U.S. officials sought to apply the best practices of Cold War public diplomacy, the traditional media tools, and communication techniques that worked so well with Eastern European audiences appeared ineffectual with publics in the Arab and Islamic regions.

This book addresses the pressing need for an updated and more expansive vision of strategic U.S. public diplomacy. Perhaps one of the most

important lessons from the 9/11 period – is that public diplomacy, as a political and communication activity, needs to be strategically aligned to the political and communication dynamics of the international arena in order to be effective. This alignment needs to occur on the higher level of grand strategy as well as the lower levels of strategy and tactics. The grand strategy is the broad strategic vision that includes U.S. policies, issues, and publics. The viability of the grand strategy is not a matter of internal coordination (among U.S. agencies) but rather external alignment to the context (international arena). If the grand strategy is out of alignment, the overall results will be ineffectual and even counterproductive. The grand strategy carries additional weight because it serves as the larger strategic umbrella that guides the strategy and tactics of individual public diplomacy initiatives. If the grand strategy is outdated or does not match the external dynamics, even the most innovative initiatives are unlikely to yield success. It is not a matter of simply incorporating new communication technology and techniques into the individual initiatives as U.S. officials tried to do. Similarly, no amount of internal coordination of individual initiatives will enhance effectiveness if the overarching grand strategy is flawed.

It appears that, in its rush to respond to the 9/11 attacks, U.S. public diplomacy resurrected the Cold War information battle model as its overarching grand strategy. U.S. post-9/11 public diplomacy was essentially a one-way, mass media driven information assault on publics in the Arab and Islamic regions. What the U.S. failed to do was to assess whether that grand strategy was still viable today. As a grand strategy, waging a successful information battle rests on gaining the communication advantage by producing and disseminating information. The publics are little more than passive pawns in an effort to "out communicate" an opponent. With the rise of the social media, fighting information battles today has become the communication equivalent of conventional warfare. The grand strategy lacks the agility and persuasive power to navigate the dynamics of today's global communication era – defined by connectivity, interactivity, and cultural diversity. Connectivity and interactivity are the communication dynamics associated with new social media. Cultural diversity is a by-product of the end of the Cold War that unmasked cultural identities and expression. Whereas dominant cultural patterns or preferences may not have played a prominent role in communication with culturally diverse publics before, today culture does matter. Whereas information production and dissemination once were critical to gaining the communication advantage, today those who master a network and relational approach will command communication power.

In the chapters that follow, this book will explore why and how the U.S. post-9/11 public diplomacy suffered across the strategic levels. Initially, U.S. public diplomacy failing with publics in the Arab and Islamic regions appeared to be a matter of cultural incongruity and unfamiliarity. In the early years in particular (2001–2004), it was evident that the strategy and tactics of the individual U.S. initiatives were out of sync with the dominant communication preferences of culturally diverse publics in the Arab and Islamic regions, which favored interpersonal communication channels and a more relationship-centered rather than information-centered approach.[1] Although adoption of new communication technologies among publics in the Arab and Islamic regions is relatively low, the dominant cultural communication preference that favors an interpersonal, relational approach parallels the dynamics of the new social media. U.S. public diplomacy, however, was heavily invested in its major mass media initiatives and maintained an information-driven approach. Later, as the adoption and use of social media became a global phenomenon and the relational and networking dynamics of the social media became more pronounced, the failings of the U.S. grand strategy came into sharper focus.

Book overview

One of the central goals of this book is to develop a more strategic vision of U.S. public diplomacy. Without a comprehensive understanding of the overarching grand strategy, U.S. public diplomacy remains a trial-and-error process. Incorporating new technologies, modifying messaging strategies, coordinating efforts will not significantly enhance U.S. public diplomacy so long as the grand strategy remains unexamined and unimaginative. The strategy and tactics of the individual initiatives of U.S. public diplomacy are more likely to fail in the long run. Increasing the budget and intensifying communication efforts may only further alienate publics and magnify problems rather than ameliorate them.

The book is intended for students, scholars, and practitioners of the emerging field of public diplomacy. Currently, public diplomacy falls within both the international relations and the communication fields. In contrast to the many prominent reports and studies that have been written on U.S. public diplomacy from a political perspective, this study is informed from a communication perspective. It draws upon communication research and theory with the intent of bringing fresh insight into the political discussions.

There are two features of this book specifically intended for students and researchers. One feature is the historical review of the two critical post-9/11 periods of public diplomacy: from 2001 to 2004 and 2004 to 2008. The earlier period is particularly important because many of the original documents that were once readily available are rapidly disappearing from the Internet. The initial chapters reconstruct the rich detail of these early public diplomacy initiatives as well as their significance. In retrospect, the initiatives may appear woefully naive in their assumptions and execution. However, at the time, "public diplomacy" was still so unfamiliar it was presented in quotations along with a brief explanation of its meaning and importance.

Second, the book seeks to lay the groundwork for preliminary theory building in public diplomacy. While there has been an explosion of literature on public diplomacy, much of it has been descriptive, anecdotal, and even repetitive.[2] It is hoped that the conceptual and analytical tools presented in the latter chapters will provide students and researchers with the necessary theoretical lens for understanding the multiple strategic levels that define effective public diplomacy. Practitioners may also find the theoretical constructs helpful for better understanding when and why certain types of public diplomacy initiatives are likely to succeed and others fail.

The theoretical frameworks, as the book's title suggests, refers to strategic communication in general and public diplomacy in particular. Since 9/11, some observers have used the terms interchangeably. Increasingly, and particularly within discussions of U.S. military information efforts in conflict areas, writers have favored the term strategic communication. In this book, strategic communication has a less nuanced meaning and much broader application beyond a military context. Here, strategic communication is defined as *the systematic design and implementation of a communication initiative to achieve a pre-defined goal*.[3] Just as the contexts vary, so too do the designs and implementation strategies as well as the goals or objectives entities seek to achieve.

Not all communication is strategic, nor is it intended to be so. Sometimes the best or most memorable human communication is when it is not pre-planned, systematic, or goal-oriented. However when an organization or entity devotes considerable funds and effort to a communication initiative ideally it should be strategic communication. The entity needs to define the communication goal and lay out a systematic approach for achieving that goal. Public diplomacy is viewed as the strategic communication of a political entity – state or nonstate actor – in the international political arena.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I: Legacy of Lessons reviews the intensive, and now historic, post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy. Chapter 1 opens with the long-forgotten outpouring of support America initially received after the 9/11 attacks and then traces the political events that led to the gradual decline in public sentiment. While many analysts focused on the rise of anti-Americanism, a closer analysis of the polling trends reveals a host of communication phenomena that suggested U.S. public diplomacy's challenges were more complex and expansive than simply improving its own image. Chapter 2 surveys U.S. public diplomacy initiatives from 2001 to 2004. This period is particularly significant from a communication perspective because it set the tone and in some cases the parameters for how subsequent initiatives faired. Chapter 3 surveys the flurry of private and government studies and their search for answers. Viewed together, the reports provide a panoramic view of U.S. public diplomacy during this critical period. However, because the reports were strikingly similar in their focus, findings, recommendations – as well as cultural and communication blind spots – they may have inadvertently perpetuated U.S. public diplomacy's woes rather than alleviated them.

Part II of the book takes a closer look at how changes in the political and communication dynamics in the international arena directly affect U.S. public diplomacy. Chapter 4 provides a historical context of U.S. public diplomacy during earlier times of war and the new challenges U.S. public diplomacy faced by the transformation of the Information age into a global communication era. Chapter 5 focuses on the first two features of the new era, connectivity and interactivity, to illustrate how network communication is replacing mass communication as the new model of global persuasion. Chapter 6 focuses on culture as a force that shapes the style of U.S. communication in the international arena as well as the perceptions that culturally diverse publics may have of U.S. public diplomacy.

Part III is devoted to public diplomacy theory building across the three strategic levels of grand strategy, strategy, and tactics. Chapter 7 introduces two conceptual frameworks for analyzing the strategy and tactics of individual public diplomacy initiatives. Because the frameworks represent two fundamentally different ways societies perceive and solve communication problems, U.S. public diplomacy limits its effectiveness if it relies predominantly on one framework. The chapter discusses specific ways U.S. public diplomacy can expand its strategic vision by viewing communication from an alternative perspective or framework. Chapter 8 introduces theoretical tools for identifying grand

strategies and analyzing their strategic value. The chapter discusses the relationship between grand strategy, strategy, and tactics outlined in public communication theory and applies these theoretical constructs to an analysis of foreign publics and policies in U.S. public diplomacy in the post-9/11 period. The analysis reveals how the innovative strategies and tactics of the individual initiatives were repeatedly undermined by flaws in the larger grand strategy. Rather than trying to fight unwinnable information battles, U.S. public diplomacy could be more effective by building communication bridges with culturally diverse publics. The book concludes by proposing a new grand strategy and corresponding goals for U.S. strategic communication and public diplomacy.

Part I
Crisis Public Diplomacy

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1
America's Communication Problem

After the 9/11 attacks, Americans made the connection between America's image and its security. In the past, officials and scholars have repeatedly cited international public opinion polls, particularly U.S. favorability ratings, as an indication of the effectiveness of U.S. public diplomacy. The dramatic shift in the U.S. image alarmed officials. International sentiment toward America quickly went from an outpouring of global sympathy and support immediately after the 9/11 attacks to a palpable wave of anti-Americanism. America's stature continued to decline – despite its focused communication efforts. Looking beyond the numbers, communication dynamics that emerged during the critical first years (2001–2004) suggested that America's communication problem had less to do with its image and messages and more about its relationship with others in the international community.

From global sympathy

On the day after September 11, 2001, the French paper *Le Monde* banner headline read, "We are all Americans."[1] People rallied behind the United States in what the British newspaper *The Guardian* called "an enormous wave of sympathy and goodwill for America around the world."[2]

The support was both verbal and symbolic. In Britain, Queen Elizabeth, with the American ambassador at her side, witnessed the playing of the American national anthem as British subjects waved American flags during a moving ceremony of the changing of the palace guards. In Germany, 200,000 people gathered at the Brandenburg gate in Berlin. "Nobody knows more than the people of Berlin what America has done for freedom and democracy in Germany," said President Johannes Rau, adding, "That's why we say today from Berlin to all Americans: America is not alone."[3]

The immediate reaction in the Arab and Islamic world was one of shock and condemnation.[4] The second world leader to visit the White House after the attacks was President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population. She visited Washington, expressing her "deepest sympathies to the American people and pledged solidarity with the United States in this hour of grief."[5]

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad was one of the first to denounce the attacks. In Qatar, where the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet is based, Crown Prince Sheik Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa denounced the attacks as "unjustifiable under any conditions."[6] Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said the tragic actions "contradicted all human and religious values."[7] Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called them "horrible and unimaginable." Libyan President Muammar Al-Gaddafi called the attacks "horrifying" and urged international Muslim aid groups to join other international aid agencies in offering assistance to the United States "regardless of political considerations or differences between America and the peoples of the world."[8]

Around the world, Islamic religious scholars and lay people alike, feeling their religion maligned by the acts of others who did not represent them, passionately wrote against the attacks.[9] The Council of Religious Scholars in Jordan issued a fatwa (religious edict) saying it could not condone any party's effort to "terrorize or attack any people on Earth" and considered doing so "a heinous crime."[10]

During the initial two months following the attacks, more than a dozen world leaders visited the White House to personally convey their country's sympathy and support. The first to arrive, coming within days of the attack, was French President Jacque Chirac, who was followed the next day by the Indonesian President. Two days later, British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived and sat next to First Lady Laura Bush during the president's address to the joint sessions of Congress and the nation. When German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder visited the White House on October 9, 2001, President Bush thanked the German leader and the German people for their "outpouring of support for the victims," adding, "There is no more steadfast friend in this coalition than Germany, and I'm proud to have him here."[11] In capturing the importance of these visits, Mexican President Vicente Fox said that he wanted "to underscore personally Mexico's solidarity and steadfast support for the United States in the campaign against terrorism."

Support for America was reflected in foreign public opinion polls. In a Pew Research survey released in December 2001, two-thirds of the

opinion leaders in 24 countries said the majority of their people were "sympathetic with the United States."[12] The survey also showed "popular support for the struggle against terrorism" was widespread, ranging from a high of 91 percent in Western Europe to 41 percent in the Mid-East/Conflict area. In spite of negative perceptions of U.S. power and unilateralist policies, favorable opinion of the United States was relatively high: Western Europe 81 percent, Eastern Europe and Russia 73 percent, Latin America 63 percent, Asia 74 percent, Mid-East/Conflict area 48 percent, and all Islamic states 52 percent.[13]

Although President Bush had been criticized earlier for his unilateral approach and handling of international treaties such as the Kyoto environmental summit and International Court, he was lauded by the international community for his handling of the 9/11 tragedy. In a survey of European allies, approval for Bush's international policy jumped from 16 percent to 32 percent in France, 23 percent to 35 percent in Germany, 17 percent to 40 percent in Britain, and 29 percent to 44 percent in Italy from August 2001 to April 2002.[14]

When President Bush addressed the joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, he thanked the world for its outpouring of support, adding, "America will never forget the sounds of our National Anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris, and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo. We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia, and Africa and Latin America."[15]

As America made preparations to launch the war on terrorism, the world rallied behind America. For the first time in its 52-year history, NATO's European leaders invoked Article 5 of its Charter: "the 'all-for-one-and-one-for-all' commitment," calling the attack on America an attack on the 19-member alliance.[16] Russia offered support for U.S. operations in Afghanistan, including the use of former Soviet airbases in central Asia. The U.S. military established bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and was granted limited landing rights by Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged "all possible support" for America and swiftly pushed ad hoc antiterrorism legislation through its parliament, the Diet. For the first time since World War II (WWII), the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces deployed warships, including an Aegis destroyer and refueling ships, to provide logistical support for U.S. aircraft in the Indian Ocean.[17]

Meeting in late September 2001, foreign ministers from the Gulf Cooperation Council States, which includes Saudi Arabia, the United

Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, pledged "complete cooperation" to bring the perpetrators to justice. First the United Arab Emirates, and then Saudi Arabia severed relations with the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Other Arab leaders pledged assistance in providing the United States with intelligence and security services.

The Philippines offered the use of its military bases and airspace, as well as law enforcement aid.[18] Malaysia arrested dozens of suspected members of the extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah. Support from Pakistan, the Taliban government's former ally, made the U.S.-led attack on neighboring Afghanistan possible.

In preparing for the war in Afghanistan, more than forty countries in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and across Asia granted air transit or landing rights. Canada, Britain, Australia, France, and Germany promised troops. NATO provided U.S. forces unlimited access to member states' airspace, ports, air bases, and refueling facilities.[19] Overall, more than one hundred countries pledged support, ranging from direct military involvement to political, economic, and legal cooperation, to support what was truly an international war on terrorism.[20] On October 7, 2001, America launched "Operation Enduring Freedom" to crush the al-Qaeda terrorist network of Osama bin Laden and Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

To anti-American hostility

In his address before the United Nations on November 10, 2001, President Bush thanked the international community once again: "After tragedy, there is a time for sympathy and condolence. And my country has been very grateful for both. The memorials and vigils around the world will not be forgotten." Then, he signaled America's readiness for action, "the time for sympathy has now passed; the time for action has now arrived."[21]

While America was conducting an aggressive diplomatic campaign to launch a massive military initiative, the need for America to communicate with the affected publics in the region appeared to come as an afterthought.[22] As the U.S.-led military offensive in Afghanistan grew, concerns across the Arab and Islamic world began to grow as well. Many expressed alarm at what they saw, as America geared up for a full-fledged assault on Islam. For many Muslims, the common denominator of all the targets was "Muslim country," and American rhetoric appeared to interchange "terrorism" with "radical Islam." Anti-American demonstrations from Morocco to Pakistan to Indonesia began to occur with greater frequency and intensity under the unifying banner of Islam.

As America sought to build alliances, some leaders meshed their support for the global war on terrorism with long-simmering internal strife within their own country. Russia spoke fervently about its efforts to control terrorism in Chechnya. Beijing sought support for its own "war on terrorism" against Muslim separatists in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, bordering Afghanistan in western China.[23] Israel's Prime Minister Arial Sharon said Israel and America were fighting the same war and linked Palestinian groups to al-Qaeda. Similarly, the drug war in Latin America was absorbed by the war on terrorism when President Pastrana of Colombia described the rebel insurgents as terrorists for the first time in his country's 40-year-old civil war.

Amnesty International was alarmed by what it called a "subjective yardstick of terrorism" that ignored human rights violations as well as the underlying and deeply rooted political causes of these conflicts. As one commentator wrote, "governments maneuvered to get on Washington's good side in a way that maximized their own interests."[24] By linking such conflicts to the U.S. war on terror, these foreign leaders may have diluted, rather than strengthened America's moral standing.

As the American-led assault on the Taliban government in Afghanistan intensified, America signaled its resolve as well as intent. "Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun," said President Bush in his January 2002 State of the Union Address. "The most visible military action" is in Afghanistan, he said, but emphasized that the U.S. action was not limited to one country: "America is acting elsewhere," including training troops in the Philippines, seizing terrorists in Bosnia, and patrolling the coast of Africa.[25]

During his address, President Bush made clear the global expanse of America's war against terrorism. However, he largely ignored the individual contributions of countries that had rushed to America's side. He spoke instead in more general terms of "friends and allies from Europe to Asia, and Africa to Latin America." However, the three nations President Bush did single out – Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the "axis of evil" – made headlines around the globe.

The phrase "axis of evil," which harkened back to the Nazi era, reflected a pattern of strong and often aggressive rhetoric used by the U.S. president. While the American public tended to respond positively to the rhetoric, other nations were taken aback. Phrases such as "wanted dead or alive" in reference to "the hunt for Osama bin Laden," and "you're either with us or with the terrorists," contributed to the international community's "cowboy" image of the U.S. president.[26] "He comes up with all kinds of metaphors which are way off the mark, not

just for the Arabs but also for the entire international community," said commentator Marwan Bishara.[27]

As America forged ahead, rather than rallying international support, America appeared to be steadily losing it. By the summer of 2002, less than a year after the September 2001 attacks, signs of global discontent with America emerged in a series of documented studies from around the globe.[28] "America has a serious image problem," said the Council of Foreign Relations in its July 2002 report, adding "America's image problem is not only regional. It is global."[29] Americans were increasingly being negatively stereotyped as "arrogant, self-indulgent, hypocritical, inattentive, and unwilling or unable to engage in cross-cultural dialogue."[30]

In mid-September 2002, President Bush addressed the UN General Assembly to put America's case against Iraq as part of the war on terrorism. He challenged the international body: "Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding, or will it be irrelevant?" A week later, on September 20, the Bush administration presented the U.S. National Security Strategy, which stated America desired to act within international bodies and with international allies, but that America "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively."[31]

In early November 2002, America secured the unanimous vote of the UN Security Council Resolution 1441 requiring Iraq to reinstate weapons inspectors. In late December, the United States accused Saddam Hussein of being in "material breach" of the UN resolution, even though the UN inspection team headed by Hans Blix said it found no evidence of weapons of mass destruction.

By December 2002, the Pew Research Center found that the "initial outpouring of public sympathy for America" after the 9/11 attacks had changed to growing "discontent with the United States around the world."[32] Although there was a "reserve of goodwill," the study found that the favorability rating for America had declined in 19 of 27 countries during the 15-month period.

In January 2003, America appeared to be on a rapidly accelerating collision course with international public opinion. The antiwar movement took on global proportions as the United States intensified the military buildup in the Arab Gulf region. On January 18, demonstrators from Tokyo to London to San Francisco joined together for the first organized international antiwar protest. On February 15, more than 600 antiwar rallies were held in cities around the globe as people turned out in record numbers to protest the American-led military action in Iraq.

In February 2003, the United States was accused of bringing NATO to its worst crisis ever – whether to provide protection status for Turkey as part of America's preparations for entering Iraq. In early March, America and Britain tried unsuccessfully to secure a second UN resolution that would have provided international backing for military action against Iraq. In the strongest terms, France, Germany, and Russia voiced their objections to the use of force against Iraq without international backing from the United Nations.[33] Then, on March 18, Bush gave Saddam Hussein "48 hours" to leave Iraq or face invasion. On March 20, shortly after the 48-hour deadline passed, the war in Iraq began with a series of U.S. air strikes on Baghdad.

When America took the war on terrorism to Iraq, instead of having the majority of world public opinion behind it, as was the case during the first Gulf War or the Afghan offensive, America entered Iraq with minimal support and vocal opposition. Paradoxically, it was during the six-month period when America had advocated its case the strongest that it progressively lost the very support it was seeking to secure.

The willingness of America to act alone – with or without the international community – confirmed some international observers' worst fears about U.S. military prowess. For many, the Bush's doctrine of preemptive strike changed America's image from victim to aggressor. In Europe, the perception of America acting unilaterally was a recurring concern that intensified.[34] Niall Ferguson, in his book on the American empire, claimed that Europeans had "come to view the United States simply as a rogue colossus."[35] The Strategic Council, a Toronto-based polling firm, found almost seven in ten Canadians believed the United States was "starting to act like a bully with the rest of the world."[36]

Throughout the build-up to the war in Iraq, America had struggled politically and publicly with other major powers. Whereas Europeans perceived Americans as impatient, the American's perceived the Europeans as impediments. America's frustration with the lack of support from its traditional allies became particularly pointed, and at times, personal. Cutting at their national and cultural symbols, Americans emptied bottles of French wine in the streets and changed their order of "French fries" to "freedom fries." In a much-publicized statement that sparked criticism across Europe, the U.S. Secretary of Defense took a direct jab at Germany and France by referring to them as "old Europe."[37]

The declining popularity of America in Europe and widening rift between America and Europe was not new, but it represented a significsant and growing concern. As early as August 2002, Jessica Mathews of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace said the "most significant and

least expected" result of the 9/11 attacks was how they had "widened a transatlantic gap that had opened years ago in the way Americans and Europeans view the international system."[38] In its December 2002 report, the Pew Research Center noted that "critical assessments" of America among the publics of its traditional allies were more widespread than in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. In March 2003, the Pew Research Center reported America's favorability rating had "plummeted" among publics of key allies.[39] "For those of us who care about NATO, this is a red flag," said former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who chaired the Pew study.[40] In March 2004, a Council on Foreign Relations task force reported that the transatlantic relationship was "under greater strain today than at any point in at least a generation," and that the war in Iraq had "brought these strains to the point of crisis."[41]

In the Arab and Islamic world – the very region of America's most intensive public diplomacy efforts – anti-American sentiment had not only intensified but had also spread from predominantly Muslim countries in the Middle East to Indonesia in the Far East and Nigeria in Africa.[42] As the Pew Research Center concluded "the bottom has fallen out of support for America in most of the Muslim world."[43]

By September 2003, Zogby International found that American popularity in the Arab and Islamic worlds had reached "rock bottom," affecting perceptions of America as a whole as well as its policies.[44] Previous studies had shown that while the Arab public disliked U.S. policies, it liked American people, values, science, technology, and democracy. "Now," pollster John Zogby stated, "they just don't like us."[45]

Throughout the remainder of 2003 and into 2004, the continuing turmoil in Iraq fueled anti-Americanism in the Arab and Islamic world and strained relations with America's traditional European allies. "The war in Iraq has undermined America's credibility," reported the Pew Research Center in March 2004, and "mistrust of America" in Europe has grown.[46] For political as well as security reasons, countries that had been members of the "coalition of the willing" began withdrawing their personnel. In April 2004, the positive image of "America as liberators" in Iraq all but dissipated when graphic photos of U.S. military personnel maltreating Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib prison surfaced and circled the globe.

The 2004 presidential campaign, followed closely by the international community, did little to improve America's image. Global discontent grew increasingly focused on the incumbent U.S. president as "anti-American" sentiment was often qualified as "anti-Bush." President Bush's drive to remove the Iraqi leader from power was seen

by many abroad as a personal vendetta, true to the cowboy image they say he sought to personify. After the United States entered Iraq, the Pew Research Center found criticism of the Bush administration's policy had become almost universal.[47] An international poll conducted by ten leading newspapers across the globe found that America's image had "suffered collateral damage," and that the majority of international opposition was directed at the White House.[48]

When Bush was reelected in November 2004, many international observers were stunned. In much the same way that the election campaign highlighted the divide between "red" and "blue" America, so the reelection of President Bush highlighted the divide between America and the international community. In the same way that many Americans were asking after 9/11, "Why do they hate us?" foreign publics were asking, "How could an American leader who alienated so many in the world and dismissed international sentiment be re-elected?" "What do Americans see in Bush?" asked a writer in Egypt's *Al-Ahram Weekly*.[49] Britain's *Daily Mirror* was less discreet: "How could 59,054,087 people be so DUMB?"

Beyond image – The bigger picture

After the 9/11 attacks and throughout this critical period, many analysts highlighted the implications of what anti-American sentiment meant for the United States. Politically, a decline in U.S. favorability ratings restricted and limited America's foreign policy options. Militarily, hostile public attitudes toward America meant nations were less willing or able to commit troops in the U.S.-led military operations. Economically, anti-Americanism diminished the appeal of American brands, products, and services. Given these far-reaching repercussions, it is understandable why officials and analysts were so intent on improving America's image and edging America's favorability ratings up. However, a closer look at the polling data suggests that U.S. public diplomacy had a much more complex communication problem that went well beyond just a narrow focus on its own image. Trends that surfaced soon after 9/11 were more readily evident in later years.

The question of America's image – "What do international publics think of America?" – focuses only on one side of the communication equation. The other side of the equation is equally important – "What do Americans think of international publics?" This question is significant given the "mirror phenomenon" in communication. How one party in a communication relationship feels about the other is often mirrored in

how the other feels. Because mirror images tend to be mutually reinforcing, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to change one image without changing the image of the other as well.

While the mirror phenomenon is well known in interpersonal communication and captured in the popular expression, "the feeling is mutual," mirror images are also evident in international relations. The Cold War was punctuated by draconian mirror images of the superpower rivalry between the United States and the United Sovereign Soviet Republic. Michael Kunczik, who wrote on the images of nations, spoke of the difficulty as well as the ease of changing shared perceptions, depending on whether the images were positive or negative.[50]

The important link between images and relationships becomes even more critical when the media is factored into the equation. Kunczik speculated that the mass media "are probably the strongest image shapers."[51] In one of the few edited collections compiled before 9/11 on the image of the United States in other countries, Purdue University Professor Yahya Kamalipour noted a common thread between media coverage and political relations: "Perhaps more than any other factor, political relations determine what citizens of the other nations see, read, or hear in their domestic media about the United States and vice versa. In other words the quality of political relations between two countries is a critical factor in the images that they portray of each other in their mass media."[52]

Throughout the period from September 2001 to 2004, the mirror phenomenon is uncanny in its pervasiveness. Side-by-side comparisons of surveys conducted in the United States and abroad reveal that in the regions and even individual countries where America's favorability was low or had declined, American public opinion of those regions or countries were similarly low or had declined. In several instances not only do the polling numbers match, but so do adjectives, attitudes, and stereotypes each held of the other.

For example, shortly after 9/11, President Bush said "I am amazed that there is so much misunderstanding about America" in reference to the Arab world.[53] Ironically, prior to 9/11, misunderstandings about the Arab world had been a common refrain by scholars who studied American and Arab relations. Columbia University Professor Edward Said wrote about the phenomenon of "Orientalism," a characterization of the Arab world and Islam that perpetuated cultural stereotypes and misunderstandings.[54] Douglas Little, in his book *American Orientalism*, showed how a diet of negative Arab stereotypes in American popular media over the past fifty years had contributed to "profound cultural

misunderstandings" of the Arab world, and hampered U.S. political activity in the region.[55]

Both Americans and Arabs mirror each other in their concern about negative stereotypes, particularly those portrayed on television and in movies. In the first Congressional hearings on public diplomacy, Chairman Henry Hyde lashed out at the Arab media, for spreading a "cacophony of hate and misinformation."[56] Al-Jazeera, the popular satellite news network in the Arab world, was labeled "Jihad TV" and became the focus of American scorn in spreading negative stereotypes of America. Ironically, the impetus behind Al-Jazeera's founding was rooted in CNN's coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, which according to Arab viewers gave only the U.S. perspective and was laden with Western biases. Congressman Hyde's and other American officials' dismay of American stereotypes in the Arab media, however, mirrors the long-time frustration of mass media professor Jack Shaheen who extensively documented what he called the "stereotypical, uninformed, malicious and dangerous" images of Arabs in the American media.[57]

America's negative polling numbers in the Arab world similarly corresponded to numbers found among Americans when asked about Arab-Americans and various Arab countries. A double-negative sentence in a Harris poll press release on September 19, 2001, captured the less-than-positive sentiments of Americans about Arabs: "While most Americans appear not to distrust Arab Americans generally ... a third of the public say they now trust them less than they did previously."[58] The awkwardness of the wording ("not to distrust") perhaps reflects American pride in tolerance and diversity, despite the prevalence of anti-Arab sentiment among Americans. Tolerance.org, in partnership with the University of Washington and Yale University psychologists developed "The Arab Muslim test" to measure hidden biases. They found that while only 33 percent of the test takers admitted a conscious bias against Arab Muslims, 53 percent showed some degree of unconscious or automatic negative reactions.[59] The researchers also found that "Americans are more willing to be explicit about their negativity toward Arab Muslims than toward other groups."[60]

Similarly, while U.S. officials were expressing alarm at America's plummeting numbers in the Arab world, support for America's traditional allies in the Arab world were declining in American public opinion polls.[61] In May 2004, Zogby International recorded its lowest ever levels of American support for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, two longtime U.S. allies in the region. Saudi Arabia dropped from 56 percent in 2001 to 24 percent in 2004.[62]

The mirror images of how Islam was viewed by the U.S. public and how the United States was viewed by publics across the Islamic world are equally striking. What is particularly interesting is that, while U.S. officials have strenuously argued that the war on terrorism was not connected to religion, Islam and Muslims figure prominently in the survey questionnaires, more so than Arab. Perhaps more interesting still is the frequent association between "Arab" and "the Islamic world." However, Arabs account for only 25 percent of the Islamic world. The largest Islamic country is in Asia, not the Middle East.[63] In the United States, the majority of Americans of Arab origin are Christian (almost 70 percent), not Muslim, while the majority of Muslims in America are not Arabs, but from countries outside the Arab world.[64]

The misconceptions between "Arab" and "Islam" appeared to have affected both sides of the mirror: the American image in the Islamic world and the image of Islam in America. From 2002 to 2004, the Pew Research Center reported on how anti-American sentiments had intensified in the Arab world and spread to Muslim populations in Indonesia and Nigeria. During the same period, the Pew Research Center found that the number of Americans who felt that Islam was more likely than other religions to encourage violence had risen from 22 percent in March 2002 to 46 percent by September 2004.[65] When it came to respecting each other's values, CNN called two Gallup poll results "virtual mirrors," saying "the majority of Americans don't believe Muslims respect Western values, while the majority of people in Islamic countries don't believe Americans respect Islamic values."[66]

Ironically, concurrent with America's alarm over how to improve the U.S. image in the Arab and Islamic world, Arab leaders and commentators were alarmed over how to protect and improve the image of Islam among Americans. In fall 2002, just as America was gearing up to launch a major advertising campaign to improve the U.S. image campaign in the Arab and Islamic world, Saudi Arabia, with the help of a Madison Avenue ad agency, unveiled its image campaign in America.[67]

Interestingly, the mirror phenomenon was evident not only in the Arab world but also with America's longtime European allies and partners in the war on terrorism. "If anti-American Europeans see 'the Americans' as bullying cowboys," wrote one American commentator about American stereotypes in Europe, "anti-European Americans see the Europeans as limp-wristed pansies."[68] The same Pew Research survey that highlighted the "markedly lower" opinions of Europeans of the United States also contained data showing that American opinions of Europe were also more negative.[69] In fact, anti-French and anti-German

sentiments among Americans were more prevalent than anti-American sentiment was among either the French or the Germans.

The mirror phenomenon slices both ways – positive as well as negative. Countries with a relatively stable and high public opinion of America tended to be the same countries that most Americans had a relatively consistent high regard for as well. The consistent and strong support for Israel by U.S. political leaders and the American public corresponded to a 97 percent favorability of America in Israeli opinion polls.[70] Similarly, the comparatively high favorability ratings of the United States among the British public were matched with the high regard most Americans have for Britain. In one 2004 survey, Britain's prime minister was "the most admired foreign leader" among Americans.[71]

Another telling feature found in the survey research that suggested that America's communication problem was more than an image problem was the disconnect in the perceptual gaps between American and international public opinion. In analyzing the data, the critical question is not what other publics think, but how close or far apart are their views from those held by the U.S. publics? How do American perceptions correspond with those of the international community?

The significance of this question relates to the ease and effectiveness of communication. When two parties share similar perceptions and opinions, not only do they tend to work cooperatively but also tend to find their exchanges mutually rewarding and reinforcing. Conversely, large perceptual gaps can exacerbate differences, straining and frustrating communication to the point of open hostility. Trust, likeability, and credibility all tend to be higher when two people see eye to eye than when they view the same picture from opposite ends of the telescope.

Kunczik highlighted the importance of shared perceptions. He noted that "nations seem to understand each other better the more similar their auto-stereotypes, the closer their image of the other is to their image of themselves, and the greater the similarity between the images the two nations have of a third."[72] The shared view of a "third" country, in this case, Iraq, proved to be a particularly important perceptual gap between the United States and other nations that had strained relations. While having perceptual gaps between Americans and non-Americans is to be expected, what was noteworthy was how many gaps there were and how those gaps encompassed very fundamental, yet emotionally laden issues.

In this regard, crises often have a way of exposing perceptual gaps and exacerbating unanticipated tensions. During any crisis situation, differences in how the various parties view the problem can magnify

their differences and frustrate their attempts to find a common solution. Tensions grow as the parties become actively engaged, narrowly focused, and emotionally invested in solving the crisis. Despite the intensity of their efforts, the parties find themselves often working at cross-purposes as each struggles to solve the crisis in opposing ways.

The first and most frequently cited gap between America and the international community, particularly Europe, is the perception of "power." Overwhelmingly, the Americans viewed U.S. power as a positive feature and perhaps understandably do not feel threatened by it. In fact, the events of 9/11, which exposed the vulnerability of America, may have made the projection of U.S. power appealing to many Americans. "We need to err on the side of being strong," said conservative American commentator, Bill Kristol.[73] However, he was not that far removed from the prevailing sentiment among Americans at the time, which showed most Americans strongly endorsing the use of force. Retired U.S. ambassador Chas Freeman captured America's mood, "We have a national mentality now that says, if you see a problem, shoot it! Because we know we are very, very good at shooting things."[74]

This American perspective of U.S. power and even vulnerability contrasted sharply with the majority of global public opinion. Not only did large majorities in other countries perceive American power negatively, but some were even fearful of America using that power against them. "Something I never, ever thought I would see," said former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, "is the fear of American power."[75]

Not surprisingly, President Bush became a lightening rod for the contrasting perspectives most Americans and non-Americans held about American power. As was evident in the early polls and 2004 election results, the majority of Americans held favorable views of their leader. In contrast, according to a Pew Research study conducted shortly before the 2004 U.S. presidential elections, "large majorities in every country surveyed – except for the U.S. – held unfavorable opinion of Bush." Ironically, many of the very same attributes that American supporters for Bush found most appealing were the very same ones that his international detractors found the most offensive. For example, what many Americans positively perceived as Bush's "projection of strength," non-Americans negatively perceived as "an over-reliance on strong arm solutions." What American supporters saw as "strong and decisive," others viewed as an "arrogant, single-minded and insensitive deployment of power."[76] What many Americans lauded as resolute, others outside America perceived as simply stubborn.

While the negative perception of American power among Europeans is not new – the characterization of America as a "hyperpower" was coined during the Clinton presidency – it is noteworthy that the potential of this perceptual gap to critically strain American-European relations was evident in the very first opinion polls taken after the 9/11 attacks. According to Harris polls, most Americans described their reactions to the attacks as "anger, shock, horror, devastation or stunned."[77] The reaction outside the United States, according to a concurrent Pew Research study found that while two-thirds of the opinion leaders in 24 countries said the majority in their countries were "sympathetic with the U.S.," the same majority also thought it was "good for the U.S. to feel vulnerable."[78] The question of whether it was "good to feel vulnerable" was not even asked to Americans. Instead, American pollsters were measuring domestic favorability on the timing and extent of using U.S. military power.

Another gap, and perhaps related to perceptions of power, was the extent to which America consulted with its allies. A poll taken shortly after the 9/11 attacks found among Americans "much more support of a multilateral foreign policy than before 9/11, with roughly six-in-ten (59 percent) saying that the interests of allies should be taken into account."[79] Despite allegations of "American unilateralism" before and after 9/11, subsequent polls found that most Americans did believe that "the U.S. takes into account the interests of other countries when making international policy."[80] This American perception, as the Pew Research Center noted, was "strikingly at odds" with international sentiment which saw America acting in its own interest. The European phrase, "that's American," said Susan Steele, head of London-based Forum management company, became shorthand for "not taking anyone else into consideration."[81]

The perceptual disconnect between Americans and non-Americans on the war on terrorism was evident on several levels during this critical early period. The majority of Americans differed with the international community on how they viewed the war in Iraq and the larger war on terrorism. A March 2004 Pew survey found that while large majorities in countries surveyed were against the war in Iraq, the majority (60 percent) of Americans continued to back the war.[82] In addition, whereas a large majority of populations overseas believed that the conflict in Iraq "undermined the war on terrorism," the majority of the Americans believed that it "helped in the fight against terrorism."[83] Exit polls conducted by the Associated Press found that Bush supporters felt that "things were going well for the U.S. in Iraq," and "that the war has made America more secure."[84]

Americans and non-Americans also appeared to differ in what they focused on when criticizing the Bush administration's rationale for entering Iraq. Americans concentrated on analyzing the Bush administration's messages, what was said when, where, and by whom. Analysts dissected the president's rhetoric for evidence of deception or manipulation of information given to the American public. In contrast, the international community focused less on the details of U.S. president's message and more on the possible political motives behind the U.S.-led war in Iraq and U.S. intentions in the Middle East.[85] As the Pew Center noted, "other than the United States," publics across the globe expressed "considerable skepticism of America's motives in the global struggle against terrorism."[86]

There also appeared to be a disconnect between the appeal to values versus policy as a basis for gaining support. As many pointed out, the 2004 Bush reelection campaign placed more emphasis on values – moral values, family values, even Christian values. The strategy of appealing to values provided an overarching theme that Bush supporters could readily identify with and helped to simplify complex issues. Bush's appeal to values resonated positively with many American voters. Exit polls in 2004 showed that Bush supporters believed that values were more important than terrorism.[87] In some states, for example Ohio, voters responded positively to shared values with the American president, even though they acknowledged losing their job as a result of the administration's economic policies in that state.

In many ways, the tactics and appeal to the domestic public for shared values, while minimizing policy, during Bush's reelection campaign paralleled his administration's public diplomacy campaign aimed at foreign publics. The administration argued that if international audiences could understand and appreciate the values upon which U.S. policy was based, they would be more accepting of the policy.[88] However, unlike the American public, the international community appeared much more concerned with U.S. policy than U.S. values. In Europe, many associated the emphasis on values, particularly those with religious undertones, as misplaced in the realm of secular, liberal politics. As a 2003 Pew Research study noted "Opinion in the U.S. is closer to that in more developing countries, where agreement is nearly universal that personal morality is linked to belief in God."[89] In other parts of the globe, the public questioned promoting American values such as democracy, freedom, and human rights when American policies appeared to contradict those values. "It is the inconsistency (between values and performance)," said

Minxin Pei of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, "that is driving anti-Americanism abroad."[90]

A final salient feature that emerged in the American opinion polls, which is disconcerting from a communication vantage point, is the American indifference and knowledge of others in the international community.[91] One 2003 survey found that less than half of Americans had "a good understanding of and appreciation of other cultures."[92] Despite the U.S. concern about its image among Arab and Islamic publics, one study found that nearly half of the Americans polled said that "Muslims' opinions did not matter much to them," or "had no interest at all in Muslims' opinions."[93] Paradoxically, perceived indifference can be more lethal to communication relationship than perceived hostility. As the familiar saying goes "I'd rather be hated than ignored." Yet many in the world seemed to feel that they were being ignored by America. A common refrain in the international media and public opinion research was that Americans appeared to disregard or dismiss international sentiment. Some even accused the American president of treating international sentiment with disdain. Domestically, because the majority of Americans seemed to share his impervious response to international sentiment, President Bush was able ride out accusations that he was being dismissive of foreign opinion. Internationally, however, the American president's comments were perceived as disdain for international opinion and contributed to perceptions of American arrogance.[94]

American indifference – whether an international perception or American reality – greatly complicated America's ability to address the mirror images and perceptual gaps. It also created its own chicken-and-egg communication challenge, which with the exception of Rockefeller Brothers Fund initiative, few have tried to address.[95] Tackling America's image problem by *engaging* foreign publics proved difficult so long as the majority of Americans were *disengaged* from international discourse. The bigger challenge was not just how to engage foreign publics but also how to engage the U.S. domestic public as well.

Throughout the critical period (2001–2004), the U.S. image received much attention in the media and in official reports. Many observers use foreign public opinion, particularly the favorability of the U.S. image as a barometer for measuring U.S. public diplomacy effectiveness. However, such a concentrated focus on the U.S. image obscured important dynamics. Anti-Americanism was only one side of the communication equation and the U.S. "image problem"

appeared to be two-way. The pattern and intensity of the mirror images as well as the prevalence of perceptual gaps spoke volumes about America's relations with publics that U.S. public diplomacy was trying to reach. Failure to look beyond the U.S. image and see the global, more complex picture of America's relationship with the international community and individual nations may have hampered U.S. public diplomacy's strategic vision of the task it faced. The next chapter surveys the intensive efforts of the United States to reach publics in the Arab and Islamic countries.

2
Battle for Hearts and Minds

The post-9/11 public diplomacy campaign to win the hearts and minds of the Arab and Islamic world was one of the most intensive and expensive campaign in U.S. history. The early post-9/11 phase of public diplomacy (2001–2004) is particularly significant from a communication perspective because it set the tone and in some cases the parameters for how subsequent initiatives faired. U.S. public diplomacy launched ever more innovative initiatives to reach publics in the Arab and Islamic regions. Yet, rather than gaining audience's trust, the initiative appeared to generate more distrust and further eroded America's credibility. This chapter surveys the various initiatives as well as the public reaction.

Public diplomacy wake-up call

Prior to September 11, 2001, most Americans were blissfully unaware of how they were perceived or what the consequences could be of anti-American sentiment. For many Americans, it was inconceivable that other people could harbor such animosity against America. "Why do they hate us?" Americans asked. In their search for an explanation, many Americans concluded that other people "don't understand us." In his first public press conference after the attacks, President George W. Bush echoed the sentiments of a stunned nation when he said, "I am amazed that there is such misunderstanding about what our country is about. We have to do a better job of making our case."[1]

The terrorist attack on 9/11 that jolted the American psyche delivered a wake-up call for U.S. public diplomacy. In short order, one after another high-ranking U.S. official began showing up for interviews in the tiny Washington studios of the Arab-language satellite station, Al-Jazeera. On September 15, 2001, the U.S. Secretary of State Colin

Powell hastily granted an interview request that had been placed several months earlier. He was soon followed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General, the director of the Agency for International Development, the assistant secretary of state for the Near East, the White House National Security Advisor, and then finally by the Secretary of Defense.[2] In fact, more U.S. officials granted interviews to Al-Jazeera in the first two months after the attacks than in all of its previous years in Washington.

On October 2, 2001, the U.S. State Department introduced Charlotte Beers, a veteran advertising executive, as the new Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy. Beers' more than forty years of publicity experience included being the only female advertising executive to serve as the chair of two of the top-ten worldwide advertising agencies, J. Walter Thompson and Ogilvy & Mather.[3] "We need someone who can re-brand U.S. foreign policy, re-brand diplomacy," said Secretary of State Colin Powell, praising Beer's professional background.[4]

Within days of her appointment, Beers and other experts testified before Congress on U.S. public diplomacy. The prevailing conclusion reached during the hearing was that the world did not know or understand America. Baffled by America's communication predicament, Congressman Henry Hyde asked, "How is it that the country that invented Hollywood and Madison Avenue has such trouble promoting a positive image of itself overseas?"[5]

President Bush and others within the administration took pains to underscore that America's "war on terrorism" was not a "war against Islam." On September 17, days after the attack, he made a highly publicized visit to the mosque in Washington to personally deliver that message to the American-Muslim community. Later that fall, during the Holy month of Ramadan, Bush hosted a traditional dinner for those fasting. Yet, when Muslims looked at the targeted countries in the path of the war on terrorism and saw Muslim-majority countries as the common denominator, people from Morocco to Malaysia echoed concerns that America's war on terrorism was a disguised assault against Islam. This impression that emerged so early in the crisis persisted.

The State Department took the lead in developing and implementing America's public diplomacy campaign that incorporated radio, television, and print advertising with Internet publications, lecture tours, and other outreach programs. The Broadcast Board of Governors, responsible for America's international radio and television broadcasts, launched new Farsi, Pashtu, and Arabic-language broadcasts, including

the much-publicized Radio Sawa in 2002 and Al-Hurra satellite station in 2004. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also began working more closely with the State Department to highlight American charitable contributions as a means for improving America's image.

The Pentagon's contributions to America's public diplomacy efforts, discussed in later chapters, were most closely associated with America's military efforts, both in terms of their timing and focus. The White House established the Office of Global Communication in July 2002 in an attempt to coordinate America's message. Everyday the office distributed "talking points" to explain and clarify American policies. Both the House and Senate held numerous committee and subcommittee hearings on public diplomacy in the Middle East as well as other regions. Congress passed the new "Freedom Promotion Act of 2002," which injected $497 million annually into the budget of public diplomacy. During this critical, initial period, public diplomacy spending increased by more than 9 percent overall and more than 50 percent in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The battle

In October 2001, soon after Charlotte Beers assumed her position as Under Secretary of Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy, she outlined the broad goals of U.S. public diplomacy. The first priority of U.S. public diplomacy was "to inform the international world swiftly and accurately about the policies of the U.S. government," and then, "re-present the values and beliefs of the people of America, which inform our policies and practices."[6] Explaining American values to foreign audiences was a "special concern," said Beers, because "words like 'freedom' and 'tolerance' and 'diversity of human beings' are precious to us, and I don't think they're very well understood."[7]

The focus on promoting American values was underscored by President Bush. In the days after the terrorist attacks, he said the war on terrorism was a fight for preserving American values, which he claimed the terrorists hated.[8] Throughout 2002 in speeches around the country, the President told American audiences that the terrorists hated America and its values and did not understand America. As he told a crowd in South Carolina: "These are people who hate freedom ... And they can't stand the fact that we are tolerant of each other, that we worship freely and speak our minds. They hate that."[9] The President continued this theme and emphasized it again during the attacks in Madrid, Spain, in March 2004.[10]

Beers was credited with bringing new energy and focus to the Department. In April 2002, she brought Foreign Service officers from U.S. embassies back to Washington for the first time for training sessions and for discussing common problems. While Beers acknowledged that "communicating with Arab and Muslim audiences isn't going to be easy because of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East," she vehemently believed that "far more dangerous is silence." During 2003, the State Department sponsored 30,000 professional and other exchanges worldwide and facilitated nearly 500 interviews and press conferences with senior department officials in foreign media outlets. It had also organized more than a thousand digital videoconferences between U.S. officials and experts and international audiences during the initial three-year period.

Beers reflected the State Department's approach that favored information over persuasion. "The charter of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs is to inform and influence. We're better at the 'inform' than we are at 'influence.' We inform, often the same day, of key speeches and policies in six languages, and later in 30 languages to every country in the world," said Beers, "But we're not as comfortable at what it takes to influence others – especially when the audience is hostile."[11] Looking at the public diplomacy initiatives, informing appears central to all of the public diplomacy initiatives.

The network of terrorism

Among the first State Department projects was a "comprehensive fact book" entitled *The Network of Terrorism,* which illustrated the link between the 9/11 attacks and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.[12] The Office of International Information Programs prepared and translated the booklet into 36 languages and distributed more than 1.3 million copies. The booklet became the most widely distributed U.S. public diplomacy product ever produced.

The Internet quickly emerged as "a fundamental medium for communication" for the State Department.[13] The "web products," as they were called, were designed to "reach their intended audiences through news organizations, universities and other groups," which the State Department said, "Almost always have web access." The State Department worked overtime translating and distributing official policies via the daily *Washington File* news service, as well as through electronic pamphlets and journals. The sophistication of the State Department's web products impressed even web designers, who were surprised by the federal government's web expertise.[14]

Shared Values initiative

Another major public initiative launched by the State Department was the *Shared Values* initiative, proudly introduced as the "first major international ad campaign to promote the U.S."[15] Campaign planning had begun soon after the September 11 attacks with the goal of countering the widely held belief in the Arab and Islamic world that America was anti-Islam. "We cannot simply assert we are not anti-Islam," argued Beers, "To dislodge strongly held biases, we need to attain new information; provide it in a relevant manner; and deliver it through a credible source."[16]

The campaign sought to build bridges with the Arab and Muslim world by highlighting America's religious tolerance and "shared values" with them. "The status of Muslims in America," said State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher, "is maybe one of the most understood aspects of our society and one of the things we think that is important for us to tell America's story on."[17] The shared values – faith, family, and learning – were among the top six values ranked by both the American and Islamic cultures.[18]

The "shared values" theme was embedded in the personal narratives of Muslim-Americans and presented in print, electronic, and media advertisements. Beers, called the "driving force" behind the campaign, said that the ads showed "a real person telling their story in their own words, which is as close as you can get to visiting with them." She added that the "real impact" of the commercials would come when the ad's Muslim-American "stars" visited the region as part of a speaking tour.[19]

The $15-million campaign included a print booklet and web-based electronic pamphlet entitled "Muslim Life in America," which featured a collection of photos, statistics, feature articles, and statements by American Muslims who described America as a "friendly environment for Muslims."[20] A companion booklet was published in ten languages, and 300,000 copies were distributed to American embassies throughout the region. A website entitled "Islam in the United States" was designed to show how "Islam has become an integral part of U.S. society."[21] Print advertisements, each depicting the life of a Muslim living in America, consisted of a headline, one large visual of the main character(s), and three small visuals with 150–200 words of text.

A major component of the campaign was a series of five mini documentaries, each between one and two minutes long. The mini documentaries featured five U.S. citizens of Arab origin: a bakery owner in Ohio; a public schoolteacher also from Ohio; a paramedic in the New York Fire Department; a Muslim imam with the New York police;

and the head of the National Institute of Health, Dr. E. Zerhouni. The scripted messages emphasized the freedom and opportunity of living in America, and the respect shown by Americans toward the Muslim faith. The closing words of each clip read, "Presented by the Council for American Muslims for Understanding and the American people." The mini documentaries ran as paid television advertisements for five weeks, from October 28 to December 10, 2002, on private and government channels in only four countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Kuwait.

Amid controversy, the campaign ended in mid-January 2003. Explaining the rather abrupt end of the campaign, State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said the campaign "was completed successfully on schedule" adding, "we have generally felt that we have had the impact on the people we wanted to talk to."[22] He also described the campaign as "very successful," because "it was directed to talk to people on a different level, not to argue policy positions with them."[23] The State Department estimates that it reached more than 300,000 million people through the campaign.

Hi magazine

In July 2003, the State Department launched *Hi* magazine, a 72-page, full-color glossy lifestyle magazine aimed at the Arab youth market (18- to 35-year olds). Ambassador Ross, who spearheaded the initiative, stressed the need for creating a dialogue with Arab youth.[24] To facilitate that dialogue, an interactive website (www.himag.com) was developed for the magazine. As one State Department official explained, "One of the most important features of this magazine is its emphasis on interactivity, on connections ... Wherever it's possible, we have invited people to submit opinions, comments, recommendations, stories, questions about the U.S. ... it is all about dialogue, through the magazine and the website."[25] The very name of the magazine, "Hi" was supposed to be about starting that dialogue. The theme of the magazine, as well as the dialogue, was American lifestyle. Ambassador Ross called *Hi* a "subtle vehicle for American values."[26] The magazine's goal is "to promote a better understanding of who we are, of our diversity," said the State Department.[27] Features, which highlight the "ordinary life of Americans," included stories such as sand boarding, chefs cooking their signature vegetable dishes, the red meat diet craze, and yoga. Although the magazine's agenda covered topics on education, technology, health, lifestyle, and music, it deliberately excluded political topics. There are "plenty of political magazines," said the magazine's

editor Fadel Lamen, "a lifestyle magazine is a new phenomenon in the Arab world."[28]

The $4 million spent to launch the project, covered the production, marketing, and distribution, as well as an interactive website. A Washington-based firm, the Magazine Group, which also publishes magazines for 60 other private and public clients, handled production. The magazine's contents were written by State Department officials, contractors, freelance writers, and approved by a State Department editorial board before publication.[29] The magazine was printed in Manila, and shipped to the Arab world where it was distributed to 15 countries.

The magazine sold on street stands for about $2. The State Department, which normally distributes its publications free of charge, sold *Hi* magazine in "an attempt to boost its credibility."[30] Unlike some of the State Department's other public diplomacy initiatives, *Hi* magazine states that it is published "on behalf of the foreign media office of the United States State Department."

Despite the State Department's best efforts to promote the magazine, sales of the magazine languished. Stacks of unsold copies began to gather dust in storage facilities. In December 2005, after a shelf life of less than three years, *Hi* magazine as a print publication was suspended along with its English- and Arabic-language websites.

Outreach and exchange programs

The State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) also stepped up its programs in Arab and Islamic countries. During 2003, the State Department sponsored 30,000 professional and other exchanges worldwide. The Fulbright Hays scholarship and exchange program have long exemplified ECA's mission of promoting "mutual understanding" between America and people around the world. Other programs included the International Visitor, Humphrey Fellowship, and the Citizen Exchange programs. By 2004, exchange programs constituted the single largest part of U.S. public diplomacy budget.[31]

Because of the emphasis on youth, education exchanges expanded to reach the high school level and involved institutions as well as individuals through newly created youth-focused and Internet-based programs. ECA partnered with nongovernmental organizations working in the field of Internet-based education to incorporate youth from the Arab and Islamic region into a global network of "world citizens" and sponsor "virtual exchanges" on the Internet. The names of these programs – "PLUS," "BRIDGE," "P4L," "FLEX," and "YES" – were as creative as the websites of their partnering organizations are colorful.

The Partnerships for Learning (P4L), for example, extended the student exchange program from the college level to high school level. The School Connectivity Program, virtual exchange program, involved 26,000 high school students from the Middle East, South East Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus to collaborate with U.S. students on online projects in current affairs, entrepreneurship, health, and civic responsibility.

In addition, the ECA worked with other government agencies, particularly Homeland Security, to ease the difficulties of students wishing to obtain visas to study in the United States. In 2003 and 2004, the number of foreign students on American campuses began increasing instead of declining.

The State Department also sought to expand its outreach programs through the American Corners.[32] The American Corners are partnerships between the U.S. embassies and local host institutions such as libraries, universities, or chambers of commerce. Although the Corners are not staffed by American personnel, they do supply printed and electronic materials about America as well as feature special events such as films, lectures, and conferences. By 2004, there were about 130 American Corners, with plans to nearly double that number in the following year.

Another outreach program developed in 2002 by the then Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Patricia S. Harrison (who later served as acting Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy) was the CultureConnect program. The goal of the program was to reach younger audiences by sending accomplished American artists, athletes, and businesspersons as cultural ambassadors or envoys to conduct classes, concerts, and discussions in other countries. The envoys would continue to serve as mentors via the program's website (http://cultureconnect.state.gov). For example, Courtland Freeman and Omari Faulkner, two Georgetown University basketball players, joined the program as CultureConnect Envoys after they graduated and began conducting basketball clinics for youth around the globe. Cultural Ambassador Bernie Williams, star center fielder for the New York Yankees who is also an accomplished jazz and Latin guitarist not only conducted baseball clinics with youth in Venezuela but also performed with a prominent Venezuelan jazz band. By 2004, about ten Cultural Ambassadors and envoys had already traveled to over 40 countries.[33]

While the newly created youth programs were innovative in their approach and design, their tenure was short lived.[34] While the budget for cultural and educational exchange programs had increased to $245 million

in 2003, in real terms it was a contraction: the budget in 1993 was $242 million.[35] Similarly, while the number of Fulbright scholars had increased to 6,300 in 2003, it was slightly less that the number of participating scholars in 1994.[36] While the number of American Corners grew rapidly, security concerns grew as well with the rise of anti-American sentiment. In December 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell held a ceremony to honor the ambassadors and envoys of the CultureConnect program. Shortly thereafter the program, along with its website, disappeared.

Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)

Working along side the State Department was the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).[37] The BBG oversees all of America's international radio and television programs including the Voice of America (VOA), WorldNet Television, Radio/TV Marti, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. After 9/11, the BBG launched three new initiatives, the Afghan Radio Network, Radio Farda in Iran, and Radio Sawa in the Middle East, at an estimated cost of $116 million. Like the State Department, it too focused on the Arab and Muslim world, especially the youth. Radio Sawa and Al-Hurra satellite news network were not only the most prominent but also were among the most controversial of U.S. public diplomacy during this period.

Radio Sawa

Launched on March 23, 2002, Radio Sawa was quick to gain media attention for its innovative format and market-based approach to America's international broadcast tradition. The new station encapsulated BBG strategic plan's motto, "Marrying the mission to the market."[38] Prior to Radio Sawa, VOA's Arabic-language radio service had only about 2 percent of the region's listeners. With approximately 65 percent of the Arab population under the age 30, the BBG wanted to create a format to reach Arab youth.[39] The 24-hour station featured an unprecedented 50–50 mix of Western and Arabic pop music. Interspersed with the musical mix were more than 300 newscasts per week.

"Sawa," which means "together" in Arabic, was the brainchild of Norman Pattiz, member of the BBG and chair of Westwood One, the largest radio network in America. Launched with an initial budget of $35 million, Radio Sawa was called the star of America's public diplomacy initiatives, primarily because of the huge listening audience it garnered. Within six months, Radio Sawa was pulling more listeners than BBC and other local stations. In 2003, Radio Sawa led ratings in five Middle

Eastern countries with 31 percent listenership among the general population and 42 percent in the all-important 15–29 age group.

The goal of Radio Sawa according to Pattiz was not just to reach Arab youth but also to create a dialogue with them. "We have a saying on Radio Sawa, which is, 'you listen to us and we'll listen to you'," said Pattiz.[40] According to Moufiq Harb, Radio Sawa's original news director, the target audience "is not those who hate America, but those who resent it. If the audience likes what they hear, their resentment may turn to understanding."[41]

Just how successful Radio Sawa was in influencing its listeners was a recurring public diplomacy concern. U.S. critics were concerned that Radio Sawa had come at too high a cost with the loss of other VOA broadcasts, including Arabic and other critical languages in Eastern Europe.[42] The BBG described Radio Sawa as "one of the most innovative public diplomacy initiatives in a generation," and "an unqualified success, attracting millions of listeners."[43] However, several reports by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and State Department credited the station's success in drawing listeners, yet questioned the station's effectiveness in influencing public opinion. A 2004 report by the Inspector General of the State Department said the station had failed to meet its mandate of promoting democracy and pro-American attitudes.[44]

Al-Hurra satellite network

On February 14, 2004, the BBG launched a 24-hour Arabic-language satellite television station called "Al-Hurra" or "The Free One." At $62 million for the first year of operation, the station cost more than all of BBG's projects combined.[45] To date, Al-Hurra has been the largest and most expensive public diplomacy initiative since the creation of the VOA in 1942. Costs include a newly created production studio headquartered in Springfield, Virginia, outside of Washington, D.C., with a network of 150 reporters as well as programming for the 24-hour station. Al-Hurra is broadcast via Arabsat and Nilesat satellites and reaches a viewing audience of approximately 70 million in 22 countries throughout the region.

The station offers a mix of international news, current affairs, and documentaries, as well as political talk shows and magazine-format news programs. General interest features include programs on cooking, health, entertainment, sports, fashion, and science and technology.

The rationale for Al-Hurra stemmed from a two-fold concern of U.S. officials. First, U.S. officials felt that American perspective was absent. A second and more pronounced concern expressed by the U.S. officials

was that satellite stations in the region, particularly Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, were promoting an inaccurate, distorted, and even hateful image of America and fueling anti-American sentiment. Pentagon officials claimed that "Arabic-language news networks are inciting violence against U.S. troops in Iraq."[46]

Al-Hurra was seen as America's satellite television counterweight: protecting and promoting America's image in a hostile media environment. Norman Pattiz in an interview on CNN International said that the station would be a "balanced, credible and reliable" source of news with a "different perspective."[47] Speaking days before Al-Hurra's debut, President Bush said Al-Hurra would broadcast "the message of tolerance and truth ... and cut through hateful propaganda that fills the airwaves in the Muslim world."[48] In congressional testimony days later, on February 10, Kenneth Tomlinson, chairman of the BBG stated, "We will challenge the voices of hate and repression with truth and the voices of tolerance and moderation."[49]

Despite the great expectations (and large budget expenditures), Al-Hurra was met with widespread criticism and struggled to gain a foothold in the already crowded media market in the Arab world. In announcing Al-Hurra's debut, the State Department's *Washington File* reported that "Al-Hurra aims to deliver 'accuracy' and 'free and open debate.' " However, the *Washington File* also highlighted the challenges the station faced even before its launch: "The Al-Hurra project has been greeted with skepticism in much of the Middle Eastern press where many local pundits maintain that the station will be dismissed as government propaganda."[50] In a May 2004 poll conducted by Zogby International on where viewers in the Arab world turned for news, Al-Jazeera stood out with 51 percent. Surprisingly, the English-language CNN was well within the range of Arabic-language news competitors such as Al-Arabiya, Abu Dhabi TV, and even ranked above the well-established Middle East Broadcasting, an Arab-owned network in London. Al-Hurra "barely registered as a primary source of news," according to the study.[51]

While the GAO and many other reports on U.S. public diplomacy focused on the State Department, other agencies played a notable role during the critical 2001–2004 period.

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

One of the most striking shifts in U.S. public diplomacy was the growing collaboration between the State Department and the USAID. Telling

America's story through the aid and assistance programs had been another of Beers' ideas. It had been U.S. policy not to publicize its aid projects to the recipient population.[52] In addition, communication between USAID and State Department public diplomacy officers had been nominal at best, according to Harold Pachios, the former chair and long-time member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. That relationship appeared to change rather dramatically. Not only did the State Department and USAID established a coordinating committee but also began producing joint performance reports, and directly linking their activities in their press releases.[53] The shift to USAID, (responsible for U.S. foreign aid) from the BBG (charged with U.S. foriegn broadcasts) is noteworthy, because radio and television have historically played such a prominent role in U.S. public diplomacy. However, USAID's on-the-ground activities were beginning to be viewed as a potentially powerful tool for reaching and connecting with the people in ways that U.S. broadcasting programs could not.

In late 2002, the State Department, in cooperation with the USAID, launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Speaking at the launch of the program, Secretary Colin Powell said the goal of MEPI was "to bridge the job gap, the freedom gap, and knowledge gap."[54] MEPI worked closely with Arab governments, academic institutions, the private sector, and nongovernmental institutions and developed several grassroot pilot programs in education, political and economic reform, and women's empowerment. USAID also increased its activities focused on media development, including technical and journalism training, and fostering the reform of media laws and regulations.

USAID also launched an online initiative "Telling Our Stories," to help promote public awareness for USAID projects by posting stories submitted by people who have been involved in or who have benefited from USAID projects. According to USAID, "Telling Our Story is our effort to let everyone see the impact of USAID's work and meet the people whose lives it changed – it is also their effort to say 'thank you' for America's help."[55] By 2004, the initiative had posted over 1,000 country-specific stories.

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps, which has been a subtle but effective outreach program, also stepped up its activities and prominence. Since its establishment by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, more than 178,000 Peace Corps volunteers had served in 183 countries for an average of two

years. New efforts to highlight the Peace Corps contributions included establishing a dedicated section of public diplomacy on its official website. In July 2003, Congress expanded the Peace Corps budget to $367 million, with the goal of doubling the number of volunteers to 14,000 by 2007.

Department of Defense

The Pentagon's contributions to U.S. public diplomacy efforts were closely associated with America's military efforts, both in terms of timing and focus. The Defense Department's information activities are more commonly referred to as public affairs. With the largest budget of any government agency, and responsible for the welfare and safety of military personnel in the region, the Pentagon actively sought to win the hearts and minds of the people in the Arab and Islamic worlds. During the Afghan campaign in late 2001, the Pentagon contracted one of Washington's leading public relations counsels, the Rendon Group. The firm immediately established a global response team of spokespersons from Islamabad to London to Washington that would span the media time zones and counter misinformation and rumors damaging to the U.S. perspective. In late 2001, the Pentagon established (with the help of the Rendon Group) an Office of Strategic Influence with a mandate of helping to promote a favorable view of the U.S. military. On February 19, two *New York Times* reporters claimed that the office was disseminating false news items in order to influence public sentiment.[56] Days later, the office of strategic "disinformation" (as the media called it) was closed. In the lead-up to the U.S.-led military offensive in Iraq, which began on March 23, 2003, the Pentagon vigorously courted the Arabic-language media, arranging interviews with high-level military personnel and even hosting picnics.[57] However, after Al-Jazeera showed graphic photos of injured and killed U.S. military personnel, the Pentagon switched to an aggressive condemnation of the station. During the actual military offensive into Iraq, Pentagon spokesperson Victoria (Torie) Clarke was credited with developing the "embedded journalist" program. The program placed professional journalists with U.S. troops as they entered Iraq and advanced to the capital of Baghdad. Although the program was widely applauded by the American media and public, few studies at the time explored its effect on international publics.

One of the most significant public diplomacy initiatives of the Defense Department, often omitted from U.S. public diplomacy discussions, is the Iraqi Media Network (IMN). When the U.S. military took control of Baghdad in April 2003, it also took over the former media outlets in

Iraq and established the IMN. The IMN was originally envisioned as a type of public broadcast, which would include news bureaus, a radio and television network and newspaper, and training for Iraqi journalists. In February 2003, the Pentagon contracted the Science Application International Corporation (SAIC), a major defense firm specializing in command and control communications, to "establish a free and independent indigenous media network."[58]

The IMN had a difficult start, particularly with establishing its editorial independence and credibility. Journalists cited interference by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which was charged with stabilizing the political situation on the ground. The IMN was described as a "mouth piece for the CPA."[59] So much so that the Institute of War and Peace Reporting urged the CPA to distinguish between its public diplomacy goals of presenting information that enhanced the perceptions of the CPA and its obligation as an occupying power to adequately inform the population.[60]

By late fall 2003, SAIC was significantly over budget, and the IMN was failing to lure Iraqi viewers away from the more popular satellite stations Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya. After a scathing review of SAIC's performance by the Inspector General of the Defense Department, the Pentagon solicited new bids.

In January 2004, the Pentagon awarded a $96 million contract to Harris Corporation, a Florida-based communications equipment maker, to take over the IMN. Harris Corporation partnered with the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation to provide broadcast programming and training for IMN's radio and television components, and with the Kuwaiti Al-Fawares publishing and telecommunications company to run the newspaper and train its journalists. The television and radio networks were also renamed "Al-Iraqiya."

U.S. troops in Iraq

While all of the State Department's initiatives are readily recognizable as public diplomacy efforts aimed at the Arab and Islamic audiences, the U.S. military personnel in Iraq – the heart of the Arab world – quite literally became the face of U.S. public diplomacy for the people there, when the United States entered Iraq in March 2003. The direct interaction between U.S. military personnel and the local civilian population was the message as well as the medium. While the Pentagon took great strides to improve troop awareness of the cultural sensitivities of the people, violations of those sensitivities did occur and were spread by word of mouth as well as through satellite

television. Examples included American males physically touching Arab women during security body searches (a violation of customs forbidding public contact with the opposite sex); using dogs to search persons or homes (dogs are considered unclean); forcibly entering homes (trespassed on the sanctity of the home, especially the privacy accorded to females); forcing tribal leaders to lay on the ground (violated the respect due to community leaders); or putting boots on peoples' necks to force their head to the ground (shoes are unclean and one's forehead only touches the ground when offering prayers to God). All of the practices were done to ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel and their mission. However, in that they egregiously violated the cultural sensibilities of the people, the practices inflamed public sentiment against the U.S. troops on a much deeper level and negated the many goodwill efforts the troops were conducting to win public support.

In April 2004, photos of American soldiers mistreating Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib prison surfaced. The sexually explicit poses and behaviors captured in the photos stunned the American and international public. The U.S. officials repeatedly emphasized the incident was an "aberration," and only involved a "handful" of soldiers. In much of the Arab media, the photos were perceived as representing the U.S. army as well as America's unrestrained liberal views of sex. The Abu Ghraib scandal underscored the persuasive power of the U.S. military presence as the face of U.S. public diplomacy in the Arab world.

Campaign reaction

In September 2003, when it had become clear that America's public diplomacy initiatives were failing, a frustrated Senator Richard Lugar, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee remarked, "Americans are brilliant at communication. Why in the world we are all thumbs in this area just strikes me as one of the anomalies of history."[61] His frustrations were more than justified. The initiatives bear the hallmark of communication features that have made America a global leader in international marketing, advertising, public relations and more recently, political communication.

The initiatives were extremely innovative, ambitious, and expansive for a government. Although many complained of "government bureaucracy," the quality and sophistication of the campaign products reflected the best and brightest of American communication professionals. The graphics for Al-Hurra evoked praise by experts in television production. The concept of a pop radio station, Radio Sawa, was not

simply innovative as the BBG touted; it was revolutionary for a government-owned station.

Several of the initiatives followed what is known in the profession as "best practices," or successful strategies and techniques. The *Shared Values* initiative was a textbook case of effective campaign research, planning, and design. The campaign drew from extensive research, including focus groups used to identify thematic messages. The campaign sought to overcome the "credibility hurdle" by using Americans of Arab origin to deliver the message. The materials and ads were well-designed, professionally produced, and field-tested.

Finally, the initiatives aggressively exploited new communication technologies, particularly the Internet. The initiatives also relied on mass media channels. Funding for radio and television ventures comprised the majority of the public diplomacy budget. Several of the initiatives creatively capitalized on the interactive features of advanced communication technologies to stimulate a dialogue with foreign audiences. Even the print-based initiatives added an electronic component so that information would be available via the Internet. The State Department highlighted the importance of the Internet as a central component of its initiatives.

Given these features, combined with the infusion of funding as well as the enormous effort "to get America's message out," the U.S. post-9/11 public diplomacy should have been a success. America did achieve its information output goals. Never before had America's overseas information programs been able to generate and distribute so much information so quickly to such a large audience. However, rather than winning hearts and minds, the initiatives appeared to be doing the opposite.

The first initiative, the comprehensive fact book *The Network of Terrorism* was designed to discredit Osama bin Laden by negatively profiling the al-Qaeda network and highlighting the destruction it caused on September 11, 2001. Officials in Washington were stunned by a public opinion poll taken after the fact book's distribution that showed in some Muslim countries bin Laden had a higher favorability rating than President Bush[62] and that the U.S. president was viewed as a "greater threat to world order" than the al-Qaeda leader.[63]

Although the *Shared Values* initiative was truly grand in scale, it suffered on several accounts. First, many analysts were skeptical of the marketing approach, specifically using advertising in the practice of public diplomacy.[64] Beers' extensive background in advertising only seemed to fuel criticism of the campaign rather than lending it professional legitimacy. Naomi Klein, author of *Brand Logo*, rebuffed the idea

of branding America and predicted the approach was destined to fail.[65] "You can't sell Uncle Sam like Uncle Ben," remarked Nancy Snow, referring to Colin Powell's initial praise for Beer's branding skills that got him to buy Uncle Ben's rice.[66]

The television commercials themselves were not well received by the intended audience. Test audiences said that the ads did not touch on any of the main issues that divide America from the Muslim world.[67] According to Jihad Fakhreddine, a media researcher in the United Arab Emirates, "The communication did not illustrate the benefits of brand America the target audiences can derive from 'consuming' this brand outside the U.S."[68] For some, the ads became mockingly known as "the happy Muslim ads." The positive message the campaign conveyed of "Muslims life in America" contrasted sharply with the more powerful images of Muslim life in post-9/11America. Many of the security measures enacted by the Department of Justice and Homeland Security specifically targeted the Arabs and Muslims in America, causing alarm throughout those communities.[69] U.S. foreign policy in the Arab and Islamic world also stretched the credibility of the ads, including even the ads' spokespersons. Two of the intended goodwill ambassadors featured in the ads spoke about their misgivings about the U.S. war with Iraq.[70] Governments began refusing to run the television ads.

Hi magazine took an unprecedented step of selling the magazine in an effort to increase its credibility. However, by avoiding political issues, it only undermined its appeal as well as its credibility. According to Tim Cavanaugh of *Reason Online*, the magazine's apolitical tone has ironically turned out to be the most controversial aspect of the magazine. Informing Arab youth, or any youth, on American lifestyle did not strike critics as a novel or worthwhile venture. "There is nothing, not a single thing, *Hi* magazine can tell them about American life that they don't already know," said Cavanaugh.[71] In the Arab world, *Hi* magazine was called "silly U.S. publicity," by one youth, and "too naïve and superficial to bridge any gaps, not even cultural ones" by a prominent *Al-Ahram* columnist in Egypt.[72]

America's radio and television initiatives did not fare much better even though they received the lion's share of the public diplomacy budget as well as policymakers' attention. In the Arabic-speaking world, these initiatives got the lion's share of the criticism.[73] After Radio Sawa's launch, the influential Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* predicted that Arab youth would "take the U.S. sound and discard the U.S. agenda."[74] As Salameh Nematt, Washington bureau chief of *Al-Hayat* newspaper noted, "Everyone likes Michael Jackson and Jennifer Lopez, but they

hate George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice."[75] Indeed, interviews with Arab youth have said that while they liked the music, they found the news "slanted."[76]

Questions of Radio Sawa's journalistic integrity seemed to come from opposing angles for opposite reasons. The BBG claimed a "firewall" to protect its editorial independence from outside political influence. However, to Radio Sawa's listeners, the "firewall" was relatively meaningless. Radio Sawa was still a government-run station. In addition, the practice of carefully crafting and packaging information suggests Radio Sawa's communication goal was not just to inform but also to influence. BBG specifically described Radio Sawa's programming as a "*carefully* selected mix of popular Arabic and Western music,"[77] with newscasts delivered in a "non-inflammatory fashion, *carefully* using words and terminology that are not emotional but are fair."[78] Ironically, the fact that the Arab youth audience recognized Radio Sawa's intent to influence it may have been the very reason that the station was unable to do so.

Against the backdrop of Radio Sawa, Arab media commentators were quick to condemn Al-Hurra when it debuted two years later. Several analysts questioned whether Washington understood the audience or media environment.[79] In a region long dominated by government-owned media, most of the skepticism was prompted by the station being owned and operated by the U.S. government.[80] Ambassador William Rugh noted the irony of the U.S. government trying to counter biased government-run media in the region by introducing yet another government-run station.[81] For one observer, the parallels between the new American-run station and Arab government-run stations were uncanny: "The [American] presenter conducted the interview as if he were an Arab journalist meeting an Arab leader on his own official station."[82]

The irony of the station's name was not lost on critics either. Although Al-Hurra does not air commercials or generate any revenue, the station's website also stressed its financial independence, suggesting in a circular fashion even a disconnection from the U.S. government funding: "Al-Hurra is operated by a non-profit corporation called the Middle East Television Network, Inc. ... [which] is financed by the American people through the U.S. Congress."[83] Yet, as one observer noted, "Al-Hurra," or 'The Free One' is anything but a free enterprise" but is "fully dependent on the U.S. government."[84]

The harshest criticism appeared directed at the tone of the U.S.-run station. On its website, Al-Hurra says it "endeavors to broaden its viewers' perspective, enabling them to make more informed decisions."[85]

However, critics repeatedly used words such as "condescending" or "patronizing" to characterize Al-Hurra's approach to its Arab audience. The American station has "provoked distrust and skepticism"[86] and has been "dismissed as slanted, arrogant and condescending."[87] "Al-Hurra, like the U.S. government's Radio Sawa and *Hi* magazine before it, will be an entertaining, expensive, and irrelevant hoax," said Rami G. Khouri of Lebanon's *The Daily Star.* Then, capturing the sentiments of many, Khouri added, "Where do they get this stuff from? Why do they keep insulting us like this?"[88]

Public diplomacy challenges

Advanced communication technology and translation facilities enabled U.S. public diplomacy to get its message out and easily crossed geographical and linguistic hurdles. Yet, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be struggling with cultural and political barriers as well as its relationship with its audience.

Cultural hurdles

U.S. public diplomacy was very much a Washington-driven, or source-driven, rather than audience-driven campaign. Many of the initiatives, and indeed the campaign as a whole, appeared much more suited for the U.S. political and cultural setting than that of the Arab and Islamic countries and peoples. This is not surprising given that the campaign planners actually had two audiences – one was congressional and administration officials to whom planners had to sell the initiative to get funding, and two, the audience in the Arab and Islamic world. Of the two audiences, Washington appeared to be the priority. It is unlikely that planners could have sold an initiative that was not "innovative," "ambitious," and used advanced technology. Such features are hallmarks of effective public communication in America.

Message themes of American values that resonated so well in Washington may have been especially problematic in light of globalization and the surge among nations embracing their own national and cultural identity. Attempts to promote American values appeared to run head-on with a resurgence of Islamic values, and at times seemed ethnocentric. "There is a value system that cannot be compromised, and that is the values we praise," said President Bush, "and if the values are good enough for our people, they ought to be good enough for others."[89] As is often the case, when one cultural group moves to assert its values and identity, it triggers identity defense mechanisms in others, prompting

them to reassert their own cultural identity and discredit foreign values. The identity response is evident in the dramatic rise in Muslim awareness in East Asia and Africa.

Embedding messages of American values in a massive campaign targeted at foreign youth, aged 18–30 years, was also problematic. "Young people, those who are going to create the future, whose world views and mindsets are not yet fully formed," said Ambassador Christopher Ross of Muslim youth, are "perhaps the most important audience for our work."[90] The question is not whether America's message is right or wrong but rather the nature of the message and the intended audience. Promoting one's own national values to the youth of another nation or culture can set off alarm bells throughout a cultural region. Cultures, by definition, are a complex web of values that are transmitted from generation to generation. Youth are the carriers of culture and symbolically the future of a country. This tactic of targeting what is perceived as the most vulnerable members of another people's society by a foreign government raised troubling ethical questions that were not debated in the United States or U.S. public diplomacy discussions but were clear concerns in the targeted regions.

The message channels also were less than strategic. The initiatives relied primarily on impersonal "arm's length public diplomacy" – radio, television, the Internet – with publics who culturally tend to place a premium on face-to-face communication. America's emphasis on communication efficiency makes the mass media a natural choice for reaching a geographically dispersed public. Indeed, mass media channels play a pivotal role in U.S. domestic information campaigns. America's strong journalistic tradition has given the media an edge of credibility apart from the government. In other countries with a tradition of government-controlled media, the public does not share that same sense of trust in the mass media, particularly government-owned media.

In 2001, the Internet appeared to be the most efficient medium for getting the U.S. message out on a global scale in real time and thus initially, appeared the most promising medium for reaching foreign publics. In the Arab world, however, observers immediately questioned the State Department's focus on the Internet as a viable medium for reaching the Arab public. Although Arabic-speaking countries were among the fastest-growing number of Internet users, access was still among the lowest in the world.[91] According to the 2003 Arab Development Report, approximately 1.6 percent of the Arab population had Internet access, compared to 76 percent in the United States.[92]

Connected to the problem of message channels were the attempts to disassociate U.S. public diplomacy initiatives from the U.S. government. Perhaps the most serious aspect of the *Shared Values* initiative was how it dealt with the America's credibility problem. It appears the State Department opted for a persuasion short cut. Instead of trying to make the U.S. government a more credible messenger, the State Department created a new messenger or front group – The Council of American Muslims for Understanding (CAMU). CAMU was officially launched in May 2002 as a "non-profit, non-partisan and non-political organization." However, as reporter Mark O'Keefe of Newhouse News Service revealed, CAMU was conceived and funded by the State Department. While the State Department and CAMU's websites (www.opendialogue.org) were directly linked, the connection between the two appears conspicuously understated. Instead, CAMU highlighted the "telling the stories" from the *Shared Values* initiative "as the result of a unique partnership" between it and "the American people,"[93] with no mention of the U.S. State Department.

The State Department was not alone in trying to disguise itself as the communication source. The most frequent substitution for the various U.S. government agencies was "the American people." The BBG and USAID used similar phrasing to suggest that the U.S. government did not directly fund their programs. While the government may work in concert with private entities to promote America's image and messages, efforts to disguise the U.S. government's role in initiating, sponsoring, and funding information programs all come dangerously close to the propaganda tactics of concealing the information source.[94]

Political Hurdles

As daunting as crossing the cultural hurdle was for U.S. public diplomacy, crossing the political hurdle proved even more challenging. Politically, the U.S. government appeared to be working at cross-purposes with itself. U.S. public diplomacy was repeatedly undermined by the government's own domestic and foreign policy initiatives. At times, contradictory messages were sent to the same audience during the same time frame. For example, the State Department launched the *Shared Values* initiative featuring "Muslim Life in America" during the Muslim Holy month of Ramadan. During that same month, the Justice Department announced strict new restrictions on Muslim charities sending a much more powerful message about "Muslim Life in post 9/11 America." Almsgiving is an important component of Ramadan.

Although the U.S. officials repeatedly emphasized that the war on terrorism was not a "war against Islam," the perception for many Muslims was otherwise.[95] The number of Arabs and Muslims ousted from the U.S. nearly doubled after September.[96] More than 5,000 Muslim males were called for "voluntary questioning" by the FBI in 2001 and 2002.[97] The Immigration and Naturalization Service set February 21, 2003, as the deadline for a "special registration" for all males over the age of 16 years from 25 countries (all Muslim-majority nations, plus North Korea) living in America to be fingerprinted and photographed by the U.S. authorities. Violations of civil liberties and charges of "ethnic profiling" increasingly captured media headlines in the United States as well as abroad.[98]

At other times, U.S. foreign policy and political statements dealt a devastating blow to U.S. public diplomacy in the region. For example, in April 2002, with the region still reeling from the Israeli military assault in the Palestinian territories, President Bush called the Israeli leader Sharon "a man of peace." That description stunned the people of the region who had been closely following the Palestinian tragedy live on television.[99] Again, in April 2004, President Bush galvanized the region when he issued a letter reversing U.S. policy on the emotionally charged issue of the right of return of the Palestinians.[100]

The question of policy is particularly significant for the Arab and Islamic publics because the policies are tied to emotionally laden issues and concerns such as the plight of the Palestinians and the suffering of the Iraqis. Whereas U.S. officials spoke of policy in objective, rational arguments of U.S. national interests and goals, Arab publics tended to perceive the policies as ignoring, indifferent, or even hostile to their concerns. Rather than being political pronouncements, policy statements were seen as reflecting America's true sentiments toward the people.

Ironically, U.S. public diplomacy initiatives, although a tool for articulating foreign policy, were overwhelmingly and surprisingly apolitical. They focused more on American culture and values while avoiding questions of U.S. policy. *Hi* magazine is illustrative. Cavanaugh argued that the magazine played America's "weakest hand" at the expense of what should be the magazine's greatest selling point.[101] "The one thing that might make this magazine stand out would be political content," said Cavanaugh, "Lively and compelling presentation of U.S. political debate should be the magazine's strongest, and possibly only, selling point; questions about U.S. policy are the only questions Arabs have for Americans these days."[102]

Failure to address or overcome the political hurdles affected perceptions of credibility and sincerity of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives

in the region. A *Jordan Times* editorial titled "It's the Policy, Stupid," perhaps best captured U.S. public diplomacy's dilemma: "No amount of sweet words and pretty pictures will change the reality of an Israeli occupation or the chaos in Iraq, both of which can be directly attributed to U.S. policy ... It all seems so obvious, at least to most of the people of this region, that, to borrow the phrase of an American cultural icon, 'doh!' "[103]

Perception of target audience: Friend or foe?

Taken together, America's inability to cross the cultural and political hurdles of the region suggested a much deeper and more troubling problem: U.S. public diplomacy's perception of the public, indeed the people in the Arab and Islamic region. It is unclear how well U.S. planners understood the people and the region as evident in the above cultural and political examples. U.S. officials appeared to be working from the assumption that America's image problem was based on a lack of information and that the U.S. image would improve if the audience received more accurate information. Media analyst Marwan Bishara called it the "know us/love us" equation.[104] As intent as U.S. public diplomacy was in "telling our story," publics in the region did not see lack of information as the problem. If anything, America's position as a superpower and dominant player in regional politics had long focused regional attention on understanding America. Ironically, America's "brass-band" approach to public diplomacy may have been why it failed to resonate in a region where the subtle, melodic tones of the *oud* dominate.

U.S. public diplomacy may have further undermined its efforts by its vigorous pre-publicity for the initiatives. While advanced publicity may aid campaign visibility in the U.S. domestic setting, the practice may not transfer to foreign settings where the U.S. government lacks the same credibility or authority it enjoys at home. In fact, making such pronouncements to an unreceptive or hostile foreign audience allowed critics in the region – who do have credibility with the audience – to discredit an initiative prior to its public launch. This appears to be what happened with Al-Hurra, which became a magnet for criticism even before it aired.[105]

Perhaps most unsettling to the people in the region is that U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be engaged in a battle campaign – "a battle for the hearts and minds" and "a war of ideas." Moreover, the battle goal was to secure the people's most valuable possessions – their hearts and minds. It challenged the core of their identity – their values and religion. Finally, it targeted the most susceptible in their society – their youth.

This analogy permeates the comments in the Arab media. "This station [Al-Hurra] is part of a project to re-colonise the Arab homeland," said Syrian newspaper *Tishrin*.[106] It is "a media attack meant to complete the effect [domination] on the region's people, by controlling their minds and influencing their ideas and viewpoints," wrote Salaheddin Hafez, head of the Arab Journalists' Federation.[107] Advance publicity may have also fed into regional distrust. A prominent Egyptian columnist not only warned of "America's dangerous infiltration" but "equally dangerous was the audacity of doing so quite publicly."[108]

While U.S. planners not only did not appear to understand their audience, it is unclear whether they liked the audience. Marc Lynch raised this possibility in a *Foreign Affairs* commentary, urging U.S. officials to take the publics in the Arab world more seriously.[109] Mark Leonard of the Foreign Policy Centre in London voiced similar concerns about U.S. perceptions: "It will be impossible to win hearts and minds unless the people being targeted get a sense that America really cares about them as individuals – not just because Americans are scared that they might become terrorists."[110]

More serious than an audience's perception of not being understood are perceptions of not being liked, respected, or valued. Audience perceptions of American ignorance of their region and its people were reflected in the mildly negative descriptions such as "silly," "naïve," or "dumb" of some of the public diplomacy initiatives. The audience's descriptive characterizations of U.S. public diplomacy as condescending, patronizing, and even insulting suggest that they were not valued or respected. Not understanding one's audience is a precursor of a communication campaign disaster. Not liking one's audience, whether actual or perceived, can undermine a campaign before it gets off the ground.

U.S. officials appeared to focus on improving the presentation of their messages – but not the underlying relationships – between America and the people in the Arab and Islamic countries. Yet in doing so, U.S. public diplomacy got caught in a catch-22 scenario: without having the audience trust, U.S. public diplomacy was unable to establish credibility or cross critical cultural and political hurdles, yet the more U.S. public diplomacy tried to cross-cultural and political hurdles without having credibility, the more audience distrust it created. At the time, the initiatives were seen as offering great promise. When they began to appear ineffective and even counterproductive, an equally intensive search for answers began. The next chapter surveys some of the prominent reports by U.S. think tanks, institutions, and government agencies during this initial period.

3
Search for Answers

Concurrent with the ongoing public diplomacy initiatives was a mushrooming body of special reports. Historically, these reports constitute an important body of work that reveals some of America's best thinking on what was in 2001 a relatively new or "newly important" phenomenon and helped shape the direction of future U.S. public diplomacy initiatives. The reports provide a panoramic overview of U.S. public diplomacy during this critical period. Viewed together, the reports were strikingly similar in their focus, findings, recommendations and blind spots, which would continue to frustrate officials. Indeed, as the battle for hearts and minds continued into the 2005–2008 period, U.S. public diplomacy individual initiatives grew more creative and focused more on direct person-to-person contact, but overall U.S. public diplomacy still appeared to lack stability and effectiveness.

Reports and recommendations

As officials in Washington watched the numbers drop in the favorability ratings of the United States in foreign public opinion polls, Congress began demanding answers. Why were America's best communication efforts failing to stem the decline in America's image? What was wrong with U.S. public diplomacy? America's most prestigious think tanks and foreign policy associations initiated the search for answers. They formed special public diplomacy task forces and working groups, hastily arranged conferences and symposiums, and held round-table discussions.

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) was the first to issue a report, *Improving U.S. Public Diplomacy Campaign in the War against Terrorism* (November 2001).[1] In the CFR's view, the U.S. government at the time was not configured to handle a "major public diplomacy campaign."

The report was among the first to propose such tactics as a "listening tour," a "Public Diplomacy Advisory Board," and a U.S.-run television station. A year later, a CFR independent task force on public diplomacy chaired by Peter Peterson issued *Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform* (June 2002).[2] The Task Force recommended that the United States establish a coordinating structure for public diplomacy efforts, promote private-sector involvement through a "Corporation for Public Diplomacy," and again stressed the importance of listening as way of reducing foreign perceptions of American arrogance; this time they even included a listening diagram.

Later that year, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy issued its annual report. The bipartisan commission created by Congress during the Cold War had been issuing public diplomacy recommendations long before 9/11 sparked the public diplomacy crisis. The commission seized the newfound interest in public diplomacy to emphasize critical organizational and funding problems. Also in September 2002, America's public diplomacy practitioners weighed in.[3] The U.S. Information Agency (USIA) Alumni Association, composed of former ambassadors and field officers of the USIA , attributed America's communication dilemma to the loss of the USIA as an independent agency and its integration into the State Department's slow, cumbersome bureaucracy.

By 2003, the number of reports and studies grew at a rapid pace. Two Heritage Foundation analysts Steve Johnson and Helle Dale, who authored *How to Reinvigorate U.S. Public Diplomacy* (April 2003),[4] picked up on the structural and funding problems. The Center for the Study of the Presidency's report *Strengthening U.S.-Muslim Communications* (July 2003)[5] called for a new strategy that would encompass other agencies and draw upon the creativity of the nongovernmental sector. In September 2003, the CFR issued its third and strongest report *Finding America's Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U.S. Public Diplomacy*.[6] The CFR was clearly alarmed by the effect the growing anti-Americanism was having on America's ability to conduct foreign policy, not only in the Arab and Islamic world but also in Europe.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) also began issuing its assessments. In its review of the new U.S. news radio and television stations, the GAO lauded the market-driven strategy but said there was a lack of measurable objectives.[7] The GAO applauded the State Department's expanded efforts but detailed America's dismal standing in foreign public opinion polls as indicative of the "significant challenges" it still faced.[8] One of the most influential government reports

Changing Minds, Winning Peace was prepared by the congressionally mandated, 13-member advisory group chaired by former U.S. ambassador Edward P. Djerejian.[9] The Djerejian Commission, as it was referred to, not only included regional specialists but its members actually visited parts of the Arab and Islamic regions and included their first-hand observations in the report.

In late July 2004, the 9/11 Commission submitted an exhaustive 900-page examination of the events leading up to the terrorist attacks as well as the government's response, which included specific recommendations on what it characterized as "America's perennially troubled public diplomacy efforts in the Muslim world."[10] Finally, in late 2004, the Defense Science Board, a Pentagon advisory panel, submitted *Strategic Communication*.[11] The "harshly critical" report[12] said America's strategic communication was in "crisis."

Over the four years spanning from September 2001 to 2004, more than a dozen major studies and reports analyzing U.S. public diplomacy were issued[13]. With each new report, the criticism grew bolder and the recommendations more urgent. The reports are strikingly similar in their focus and perhaps because of their similarity, they miss the blind spots in U.S. public diplomacy as well.

The reports began by explaining what public diplomacy was and emphasizing its importance in U.S. foreign policy. It is important to remember that prior to September 11, 2001 the term public diplomacy was a relatively new or a "newly important" phenomenon and was not part of public or media discourse. References to diplomacy usually meant traditional diplomacy or diplomacy between governments. To underscore public diplomacy's importance, initial reports tied the concept to the 9/11 attacks and the war on terrorism. Winning the "war of ideas" was presented as a second front, as important as the military battles in the war on terrorism. Linking public diplomacy with the war on terrorism immediately raised its stature and underscored the urgency.

As international sympathy began to transform into hostility, public diplomacy became increasingly linked to safeguarding America's longer-term security. The reports opened with the latest public opinion polls showing the dramatic and unexpected rise in anti-Americanism in order to underscore public diplomacy's growing importance. "The amount of discontent in the world bears a direct relation to the amount of danger America faces," said the CFR in 2003.[14] Whereas weak public diplomacy leaves America vulnerable, strengthening U.S. public diplomacy, as the 9/11 Commission said, can make America safer. As anti-Americanism surfaced among publics of America's traditional European

allies, public diplomacy's role in achieving foreign policy objectives was stressed. Without the goodwill of the public, foreign leaders were restricted in their ability to join with the United States.

The reports show increasing impatience with the lack of progress and even backsliding of U.S. public diplomacy's performance. Initially, pleas to "fix," "repair," and "reinvigorate" U.S. public diplomacy were directed at "America" in general. As U.S. public diplomacy faltered in the face of growing anti-Americanism, the calls for action became more urgent and specifically focused on the White House. The 2003 Djerejian Commission, for example, called on the President to immediately issue a Presidential Directive on public diplomacy and advocated not only a new White House office but also a cabinet-level presidential advisor on public diplomacy.

The reports are fairly unanimous in identifying the central problems plaguing U.S. public diplomacy. In retrospect, not only were the problems interrelated but they also appeared to compound each other as the failure to address one problem literally led to another problem. The reports traced the origin of the problems back to the 1990s and the end of the Cold War, when the budget for international affairs was slashed and the USIA was dissolved as an independent information agency and incorporated into the State Department, depleting public diplomacy's resources and stature.

Funding was the first and most pressing priority. All the reports attributed the funding problem to dramatic cuts throughout the 1990s and made powerful comparisons to emphasize the magnitude of the problem. Comparisons were made between U.S. business expenditures and the public diplomacy budget to underscore the paltry sum America was spending to reach global audiences. Compared to the $222 billion U.S. firms were spending to promote their products, the U.S. government was only devoting $1 billion to promote America abroad.[15] Whereas U.S. firms were spending $6 billion annually on audience research, the State Department was spending only about $5 million.[16] Comparisons were made with the State Department and Pentagon budgets to highlight the imbalance between how the U.S. viewed "the war of ideas" versus the military war. The Defense Department's budget was 400 times greater than that of the State Department. "For every one dollar spent by the U.S. government on the military, only seven cents is spent on diplomacy, and out of that seven cents, only about a quarter of a penny is devoted to public diplomacy," testified Secretary of State Colin Powell.[17] "To state that American public diplomacy is under-funded," said the Djerejian Commission "is a gross understatement."[18]

A second area of concern focused on the organizational structure of public diplomacy. The reports underscored the concern for a centralized entity that could develop, coordinate, and implement public diplomacy initiatives. Many lamented the loss of USIA's bureaucratic agility and ability to respond to communication crises. Whereas the USIA had 50 years of experience and dedicated personnel whose sole mission was promoting America's message to foreign publics, the State Department was burdened by a complex bureaucracy and a mindset enamored with the prestige and secrecy of traditional state-to-state diplomacy. As one public diplomacy officer stated, "Public diplomacy is not seen as integral to the [State] department, rather peripheral."[19] The CFR noted in its 2001 report that public diplomacy was viewed as a low bureaucratic priority within the State Department as evidenced by the low level of its funding and personnel. Years later, in a 2008 survey of USIA veterans, an overwhelming majority (79 percent) described the integration of public diplomacy into the State Department as a "disaster."[20]

The structural dilemma created another problem – coordination. Without a clear organizational structure, it was nearly impossible to coordinate or manage the various public diplomacy activities of other government agencies. The Pentagon, the Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Trade Representative, as well as the CIA and newly created Homeland Security, all actively engaged in some form of public diplomacy. While the structural problems within the State Department hampered U.S. public diplomacy's responsiveness, the coordination problems among the various agencies within the U.S. government appeared to be undercutting U.S. public diplomacy's effectiveness.

The reports proposed varying solutions to achieve better coordination, including the creation of new entities devoted to public diplomacy. The USIA Alumni Association, which had followed the USIA-State Department consolidation closely, offered very specific and detailed organizational charts.[21] The Heritage Foundation advocated a "clearer command structure" for public diplomacy and related international broadcasting agencies."[22] The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy recommended creating a White House Office of Global Communication.[23] The Defense report called for an Office of Strategic Communication connected to the National Security Council. While the Center for the Study of the Presidency advanced more public-private initiatives, the Council on Foreign Relations promoted the idea of a Corporation of Public Diplomacy. The idea of resurrecting the USIA has been a recurrent one that continued even into the U.S. presidential elections.[24]

Another major concern was inadequate human resources. The reports highlighted America's lack of personnel to conduct public diplomacy programs, particularly in the Arab and Islamic regions, as well as the need for more training. In April 2003, the Heritage Foundation called for State Department personnel to receive "enhanced public diplomacy career training" similar to the extensive training public affairs officers receive in the Defense Department.[25] By that fall, the State Department did hold its first "historic" extended public diplomacy training and increased its recruitment efforts. The GAO highlighted the need for more language training. Its survey found that "about 21 percent of Foreign Service officers in language-designated public diplomacy positions overseas lack sufficient foreign language skills."[26] The Djerejian Commission noted that the State Department only had a small number of Arabic speakers; out of 54 officers with a reasonable level of fluency, only five were able and willing to participate in media discussions on Arab television and radio.[27] While the State Department has made strides to increase language proficiency through innovative programs for young Americans, the Department itself still has, what one observer called, an "Arabic handicap."[28]

While funding had been the central problem in early reports, the infusion of more funds was not producing the expected public diplomacy results. Problems of public diplomacy structure and coordination revealed another dilemma – lack of strategy. In the late summer and fall of 2003, strategy emerged as the number one priority. America "lacks a comprehensive and commonly understood public diplomacy strategy," said the GAO, and thus "cannot direct its multifaceted efforts toward concrete and measurable progress."[29] "First and foremost, America needs a new strategic direction," said the Djerejian Commission.[30] In 2004, the 9/11 Commission Report reiterated the need for "much stronger public diplomacy" through a short-term as well as long-term strategy, while the 2004 Defense report called for a "global strategy."

While the major problems – funding, structure, coordination, resources and strategy – as well as their solutions became increasingly clear, the reports struggled with several unresolved issues which simmered below the surface in ongoing public diplomacy debates. Other issues largely ignored by the reports, yet visible from a wide-angle lens, represent the blind spots in U.S. public diplomacy during this period.

Lingering issues and blind spots

The question of policy was the most prominent, persistent, and, at times, contentious issue. From the beginning, opinion research pointed to

discontent with U.S. policy as the main factor contributing to America's low standing among foreign publics.[31] Members of the various report task forces and advisory groups also commented on the sentiment against U.S. policy. "I was really shocked by the level of animosity over our policies," remarked James Glassman, who served on the Djerejian Commission in 2003 and later took charge of U.S. public diplomacy in 2008.[32] Whereas the Arab world was critical of the policies themselves, Europe criticized America's go-it-alone attitude in formulating policy. When the U.S. began military action in Iraq, discontent with U.S. foreign policy became a global phenomenon. Given the scale and intensity of the global protests before the Iraq war, the dramatic drop in U.S. favorability after the war should not have been that surprising – unless one discounts the connection between a country's policy and its image.

However, initial reports made a specific and deliberate attempt to avoid questions of policy and focused exclusively on public diplomacy or how the policy was presented. Public diplomacy was described as a tool for articulating foreign policy, not making or changing it. None of the reports suggested changes in policy. Several were scrupulous in avoiding it. "We must make an effort to separate questions of policy from questions of communicating that policy," said the Djerejain Commission, adding that it was not "the mandate of the Advisory Group to advise on foreign policy itself."[33]

Nevertheless, questions of policy continued as public opinion polls consistently revealed that policy, not public diplomacy, held greater sway in influencing people's perceptions of the United States. As Hans Tuch wrote in 1990 in one of the first books on public diplomacy, "Public diplomacy cannot convert unacceptable policies into acceptable ones."[34] Said one anonymous U.S. official in fall 2003, "Our policy is the issue, but no one wants to acknowledge that."[35] As part of an effort to address the question of policy, the Council on Foreign Relations in 2003 tactfully but forcefully recommended "the immediate integration of public diplomacy into the foreign policy making process rather than just trying to explain policies after the fact – present at the 'take offs, not just in the crash landings."[36] The 2004 Defense report was the strongest in stating the importance of policy. The report challenged a prevailing assumption about American values in the region: "They [Muslims] do not hate us for our values, but because of our policies."[37]

Another undercurrent in the debate was who or which agency was in control of U.S. public diplomacy. Technically, the State Department, specifically the Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Public

Diplomacy, was charged with the task of overseeing U.S. public diplomacy. Underscoring this assumption, the reports concentrated their analyses on public diplomacy activities of the State Department and the radio and television ventures of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). However, as the problem of coordination became clear, the State Department struggled to maintain control of the helm of public diplomacy.

Many other government agencies appeared to be involved in some form of public diplomacy activities. The Defense Department's budget and information activities in Iraq, for example, dwarfed those of the State Department. Domestic agencies such as the Justice Department, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security on several occasions initiated measures that directly undermined messages to foreign audiences from the State Department. The 2003 Djerejian Commission did call for greater "seriousness and commitment," especially on the part of the President and Congress as well as closer coordination among the State Department, Defense Department, and USAID.[38] However, with the exception of the later GOA and Defense Science Board reviews, most of the reports limited their focus to the State Department initiatives and BBG's broadcasting efforts.[39]

Equally important in the public diplomacy equation was the Office of the President. Several of the reports called for presidential leadership and even establishing White House entities to coordinate U.S. public diplomacy efforts. However, few reports spoke of the enormous impact that the president or other senior administration had in shaping foreign perceptions of America. As Brookings analyst Shibley Telhami observed, "one statement from the White House can carry more weight than all of our [public diplomacy] programs and the hundreds of millions of dollars we put behind them." What is interesting in the reports is that the strategic role of the president was not clearly defined nor integrated into a comprehensive public diplomacy scenario.

Rather than having a problem of coordination, as the reports portray, there appears to be a more serious problem of competition and even conflict over which entity or agency was actually in charge of U.S. public diplomacy. Under Secretary Beers, as a seasoned communication professional, had outlined a strategy earlier and articulated it repeatedly during her tenure.[40] However, the State Department struggled with interagency coordination or recognized authority to implement it. Perhaps indicative of the dilemma the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy faced, the position was vacant for 18 months during the critical three-year period. Beers was appointed in October 2001

and abruptly resigned in early March 2003 for health reasons. Margaret Tutwiler, a former communication professor, former State Department spokesperson during Secretary of State James Baker's tenure, assumed the position in February 2004, but left after four months.[41]

While all the reports called for a strategy, the idea of strategy appeared to be limited to coordinating among the various agencies and initiatives not on the overarching public diplomacy approach. With the notable exception of the 2004 Defense Science Board and Aspen Institute reports, the question of following the Cold War model in a post-Cold War era was not vigorously debated. In fact, because U.S. public diplomacy was credited in playing a major role in ending the Cold War, the Cold War model was presented as the model to emulate. The 9/11 Commission characterized the prevailing view: "Just as we did in the Cold War, we need to defend our ideas abroad vigorously."[42] While all the reports highlighted the new communication technologies, the Aspen Institute challenged the viability of the Cold War model when it suggested "Netpolitiks" as a replacement paradigm for "Realpolitiks" of the Cold War.[43] Without assessing the overall viability of following the Cold War model, discussions were largely confined to problems with the individual initiatives.

The focus on the individual initiatives was intense and specific. The GAO was among the few reports to include an actual communication model for U.S. public diplomacy. The GAO's first model in 2003 was adapted from Shadwick International, a major public relations firm.[44] The model mirrored generic corporate public relations. Compared to the public diplomacy of a nation, commercial entities even on a multinational scale have a narrower audience base, time frame, and purpose. Second, characteristic of marketing such models stress publicity and promotion of a concrete product or service, rather than building relationships or gaining acceptance on multiple levels for a comparatively abstract political ideology, which are both cornerstones of diplomacy.[45] Third, and unfortunately, international corporations, and U.S.-based corporations in particular, have traditionally ranked low on trust and credibility in public surveys, such as the prominent Edelman Trust Barometer. Rather than modeling public diplomacy on commercial corporations, a more apt model may be found with advocacy nongovernment organizations. Again, while there are major differences, the two do share important similarities in dealing with constituencies and publics, rather than consumers. There are also parallels in how to advocate policies rather than promote products. NGOs also enjoy the advantage of having the highest

trust and credibility rating among international players, including the international media.

The reports also struggled over messages, messengers, and audience. Finding the right message that would resonate with foreign publics appeared at times to be a U.S. public diplomacy obsession. Although the reports repeatedly stressed the need for listening, dialogue and two-way communication to engage foreign publics, U.S. message themes were primarily unidirectional and self-promotional. The Bush administration put American values, specifically democracy, freedom, and human rights, as its central message. Early reports echoed this theme. However, the more U.S. public diplomacy promoted American values, the more foreign publics questioned whether America itself was adhering to those values. Message themes continued to evolve, becoming more specific, yet remaining self-promotional. While the 2004 Pentagon report discounted the probability of finding the right message, it nevertheless offered suggestions for message themes: "respect for human dignity and individuals rights, individual education and economic opportunity and personal freedom, safety and mobility."[46]

Finding a suitable messenger to deliver America's message was another concern. From the outset, America recognized that it was not a credible messenger in reaching the Arab world. "If you don't trust the messenger, you won't trust the message," said the CFR in 2002, and suggested finding credible and independent proxy messengers.[47] Part of the impetus behind the proposals for developing a quasi-governmental and private-public diplomacy entities or even outsourcing public diplomacy was to create an alternative messenger for the U.S. government. The search for a credible messenger as opposed to addressing why the United States had a credibility problem and solving that may have been another blind spot. Public diplomacy, by definition, is primarily a foreign policy tool that governments use to communicate with foreign publics. While private entities or the private sector may assist in a government's effort, to act as a substitute for the government undermines the very premise of public diplomacy. Left unaddressed, the search for a credible messenger persisted. As the 2004 Defense Science Board report warned, the United States was "without a working channel of communication in the world of Muslims and of Islam."[48]

Part of the confusion with messages and messengers relates to the struggle to define the audience. The above quote "the world of Muslims and of Islam" exemplifies some of the confusion during this period: Muslims are, by definition, followers of the Islamic religion. Initially, the targeted audience was extremely broad: the populace of the Arab

and Muslim worlds. How to reach the Arab Street, as public opinion was referred to, represented a major hurdle given that U.S. public diplomacy traditionally tended toward cultivating the elites and opinion leaders, not the masses. When demographic data revealed that more than half the population in the region was under the age of 30, youth quickly became the prime audience. In 2003, the Djerejain Commission drew attention to the audience's diversity: the Arab world spans across 22 countries, and the Islamic world is 1.5 billion people spread from Morocco to Malaysia.[49] More than anything, these early studies were focused on defining and understanding the Arab and Muslim world as a consumer group for marketing U.S. messages.

In 2004, thinking about audience evolved as ideological distinctions were made within the Islamic world between the "small group of radical Islamic extremists" as the 9/11 Commission said, and the "vast majority" who were not extremists. In August 2004, Brookings' scholar Hady Amr raised the idea of switching from a consumer-based marketing model of "audiences" to instead trying to cultivate "a constituency."[50] In October 2004, two RAND scholars, Charles Wolf and Brian Rosen, proposed a persuasive strategy to separate "adversaries" from "constituents," and then spark an intra-Islamic struggle between the two.[51]

While the reports speak of U.S. diplomacy in general terms that suggested a global focus and approach, all of the reports concentrated on the publics in Arab and Islamic countries. Initially, the need to communicate with Arab and Islamic publics appeared the most pressing; hence, the focus is understandable. However, even as discontent with America metastasized to people across the globe, the reports remained focused on this particularpublic.

From a communication vantage point, concentrating on one foreign audience while ignoring other regions can be problematic in and of itself. The one receiving all the attention tends to go on the persuasion defensive, while the others become disengaged or even resentful. Not surprisingly, the Arab publics became more skeptical, the Europeans more critical, and the Asian, African, and South American audiences more alienated. It is noteworthy that given the limited funding and resources, the concentrated initiatives in the Arab and Islamic countries came at the expense of maintaining and strengthening support among the publics of traditional allies, as well as with newly cultivated allies in Eastern Europe.[52]

U.S. public diplomacy itself was also intensely focused on terrorism to the exclusion of other global issues. Why this myopic vision occurred

during this period may be related to another blind spot of U.S. public diplomacy during this time. Namely, the events of 9/11, combined with the fact that America was engaged in two wars within the same region it was trying to win over public sentiment, had radically transformed the communication environment and changed traditional public diplomacy into crisis public diplomacy.

Traditional public diplomacy, as practiced during the Cold War and outlined in a handful of texts pre-9/11, tended to focus on long-term education, culture, and information programs aimed at favorable or neutral publics. Crisis public diplomacy entails communicating with multiple audiences simultaneously – from highly favorable to extremely skeptical audiences – in a rapidly changing, highly visible, and contentious communication environment. The post-9/11 phase of U.S. public diplomacy, with its condensed response timeframe, was very much about crisis public diplomacy.

During a crisis or unstable political situation where events are rapidly evolving, the international media may accelerate the pace of communication, leaving government officials struggling to keep up. Government agencies, burdened by bureaucracy, are at a distinct disadvantage. Unless they have an agile response plan in place prior to the crisis, they will be bypassed in the communication frenzy. However, in trying to meet the immediacy of ongoing daily demands, officials have little time for reflection about the longer-term repercussions of their decisions.

However, during a crisis, the president, as well as high-ranking officials in close proximity to the president, carries the most communication weight in influencing domestic and foreign publics. Finally, during a crisis or wartime, a nation's own domestic public takes communication precedence over foreign audiences.

The biggest challenge posed by crisis public diplomacy is the problem of dealing with multiple audiences. America's communication efforts appeared to focus on the two extremes: the perceived "hostile audience" represented by the Arab and Islamic publics and the highly favorable audience – America's own domestic public. In addition, during a crisis or conflict situation, the first priority is rallying and solidifying the domestic public. Often, the most expedient means for galvanizing domestic support is by demonizing a foreign enemy.[53] Demonizing the "Islamic terrorists" as the enemy may have strengthened the resolve of the U.S. public, especially in the lead up to the Iraq war. However, it may have also served to alienate Muslim publics, who perceived that their religion was being demonized, not just the terrorists. This domestic-foreign communication polarity in

the media and public discourse appeared in full play throughout this critical period.

Ironically, in the search for answers, which focused exclusively on U.S. external communication with foreign publics, the reports failed to factor in the effect that the U.S. internal or domestic communication may have had on foreign publics. This domestic-foreign polarity had not been a factor during Cold War. The assumption that U.S. public diplomacy could still communicate separately with foreign and domestic publics appeared to hold, and with it the validity of the Cold War model. Failure to recognize post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy as crisis public diplomacy or question the validity of the Cold War model may have been the two major overarching blind spots in the reports. By calling on U.S. public diplomacy to intensify its efforts – without examining the underlying premises on which U.S. public diplomacy was based – the reports may have inadvertently compounded the problems of U.S. public diplomacy both during the 2001–2004 period and beyond.

The battle continues (2005–2008)

In July 2005, many observers had expected a fresh and powerful start when Karen Hughes, known for her adept communication skills and her position as President Bush's trusted communication advisor, took the helm of U.S. public diplomacy. Hughes sought to tackle America's image problem head-on. During her "Town Hall Meeting" at the State Department in early September 2005, she outlined an ambitious vision for U.S. public diplomacy.[54] The overall mission was to lay out a long-term strategy to "ensure that our ideas prevail." Her three-tiered strategic approach focused on getting America's message out, marginalizing the extremists, and fostering a sense of "common interests" between America and others. "First of all, we have to offer a positive vision of hope ... that's freedom *writ large*." Her tactics for achieving those goals rested on her "Four Es" – engage, exchange, education, and empowerment.

With goals in mind, Hughes set out on a high-profile "listening tour" to the Middle East, visiting three longtime U.S. allies – Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. "She is on this tour to understand what is wrong with the U.S. image in this part of the world and why U.S. messages are at times misunderstood," noted an U.S. embassy official in Cairo. Among the thirty-plus public diplomacy reports over the years, "listening" had been a recurring suggestion to counter foreign perceptions of

U.S. arrogance and insensitivity. Hughes was not unprepared for the trip. She had read all the reports, which in turn had urged her to do exactly what she did. Just days before her trip, she had flown out to the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy for a special pre-departure briefing. When she left for her trip, she took with her the new Assistant Secretary, Dina Powell, an Egyptian American and native Arabic speaker.

Her audiences' reaction, however, was not what she and others had prepared for or anticipated. Regional, international, and U.S. media described Hughes as "caught off guard,"[55] "taken aback,"[56] and "surprised on several accounts."[57] One prominent Arab writer lamented that Hughes was "painfully clueless" of her audience's concerns, cultural traditions, and strong feelings regarding U.S. policies.[58] In Saudi Arabia, when Hughes equated freedom with driving a car, a woman complained "I have a medical degree, why do I need a driver's license?"[59] The Saudi women became indignant when Hughes compared them with the "broken wing" of a bird, with the help of which America could fly.[60] In Turkey, a woman listening to Hughes explaining U.S. policies said "I felt wounded and insulted," after attending the session.[61] Fred Kaplan of *Slate* magazine summed up Hughes's maiden voyage to the Middle East as a "fiasco."[62]

Despite her initial setback and relatively short tenure, Hughes was successful in implementing several creative initiatives.[63] She was instrumental in removing many of the bureaucratic restrictions that had hampered U.S. officials' ability to respond quickly to media and public questions in the field. She created a new "Rapid Response Unit" to monitor and aggressively respond to damaging misinformation. The initiative, she described, was "to forward-deploy regional SWAT teams" to develop regional strategies that can "harness the power of today's technology to more effectively communicate our message."[64] She staffed a newly created Counter-Terrorism Communication Center with experts to develop culturally sensitive messages. She established new Regional Media Hubs in Dubai, Brussels, and London. She expanded the English-language program with the addition of a new youth-engagement program designed to reach children between 8 and 14 years.

Hughes was especially innovative in developing partnerships for U.S. public diplomacy initiatives. A new "Citizen Dialogue" initiative enabled Muslim Americans to travel and speak with Muslim communities abroad. An international journalism training partnership with the Aspen Institute and U.S. communication schools enabled foreign

journalists to come to America to study the profession. A mentoring collaboration was developed between prominent U.S. businesswomen and foreign mentees. In total, more than $800 million in public-private partnerships was leveraged for programs as participants in exchange programs increased from about 30,000 to 50,000.[65]

During her tenure, Hughes led the Policy Coordination Committee on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication established by the President in April 2006. The goal of the Committee was to coordinate interagency communication activities. In June 2007, the Committee issued the U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication – the first interagency approved communications plan for the United States after 9/11. The 34-page document detailed mission and priorities, strategic objectives, key audiences as well as messaging strategies and specific core messages.

After little more than 18 months in her position, Hughes left office on November 1, 2007. Again, the position of Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy remained vacant until James E. Glassman was sworn in on June 10, 2008. Glassman, who had been a member of the influential U.S. Public Diplomacy Task Force headed by Ambassador Djerejian, hit the ground running. His speech before the influential Council on Foreign Relations illustrated the 180-degree switch from Under Secretary Charlotte Beers' thinking about branding and U.S. public diplomacy: "In the war of ideas, our core task is not to promote our brand, but to destroy theirs."[66] In his address, he suggested the idea of exploring social networking and expanding on Hughes's idea of developing an alumni network of former exchange participants. Glassman also continued with the drive of U.S. public diplomacy to take advantage of the new technology. He initiated a YouTube video contest for people to submit entries on "What Democracy Means ..." In October 2008, a State Department official began the first vlogging or sharing video blogs.[67]

Earlier criticisms of the Broadcasting Board of Governors' radio and television ventures had intensified over the intervening years. Critics of Radio Sawa continued to question whether the station was worth the loss of the Voice of America's other language services or if the pop-music approach was really more effective. By 2008, Al-Hurra had yet to garner a sizeable market share or gain audience trust as a credible news outlet and was under increasing scrutiny.

The earlier efforts of the USAID to make its contributions known had served to gain the agency in a more prominent role in U.S. public diplomacy activities. In 2006, Hughes adopted and promoted the

phrase "Diplomacy of Deeds" to stress that U.S. public diplomacy was not only to talk about the good works of the American people and government but also to showcase those good deeds. The USAID's "Telling Our Stories" online campaign was one of the few early initiatives that not only had survived but also grown. The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) also began featuring its own success stories. Some scholars have suggested that MEPI's programs have an added value in that they are networked based.[68]

In December 2004, when a massive tsunami ravaged countries from India to Indonesia, U.S. public diplomacy prominently featured USAID's efforts to bring assistance to the victims. The high-profile visit of former presidents George Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton working together during the aid assistance helped put a personal face on USAID's efforts as well as garner additional media attention. U.S. officials were encouraged by the new more visible approach when public opinion polls in March 2005 showed an increased favorability rating among Indonesians for the United States.[69] While the positive sentiment later waned, the experience set an important precedent and fundamental shift from underplaying U.S. assistance to foreign publics to actively branding it. When Pakistan was hit by an earthquake, USAID and the U.S. military employed a similar high-profile approach to showcase their efforts as part of the diplomacy of deed.

The visibility and activities of the U.S. Peace Corps also grew during this time. It developed a dedicated public diplomacy section on its website. The volunteers are "practicing 'pure' public (people-to-people) diplomacy," according to the Peace Corps director, "... the relationship-building – putting a face on America ... is exactly what the Peace Corps is about."[70]

With the increasing emphasis on direct person-to-person contact as a feature of U.S. public diplomacy, the U.S. military also moved to introduce cultural training for its troops in their interaction with the civilian population in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lack of cultural awareness and cultural trespasses on local sensitivities was proving costly in terms of U.S. and civilian lives as well as to the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan.[71] In October 2004, the U.S. Marine Corps formed a "Cultural Awareness Working Group" to study ways to improve cultural awareness training. According to the Working Group, lessons learned from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq consistently pointed to a lack of cultural awareness as a major impediment to the mission's success; knowledge of the cultural terrain was seen as critical as that of the physical terrain. The Marine Corps has since established

a Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning, Training, and Educational Command in Quantico, Virginia.[72] The U.S. Air Force has established a Center for Regional and Cultural Studies with extensive online databases and resources for cultural learning.[73] The U.S. military's aggressive focus on cultural awareness in the U.S. military was highlighted in the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. The Review called for a "new breed of warriors" who were more proficient in irregular operations, more modular and "will understand foreign cultures and societies."[74]

Despite many innovative and vigorous public diplomacy initiatives, none of the initiatives appeared to have any measurable effect on increasing U.S. favorability ratings around the world. In 2006, Andrew Kohut, who had been the lead researcher and spokesperson for the Pew Global Attitudes Survey, along with Bruce Stokes published an analysis of the many public opinion polls related to the U.S. image and international opinion. They concluded that post-9/11 anti-Americanism was new and different, and likely to be long-lived;

> Anti-Americanism runs deeper and is qualitatively different than in the past, when it was largely attributable to opposition to unpopular U.S. policies, such as the Vietnam War. Several factors led to this conclusion. First, America's image had declined around the globe, not merely in Europe and among Muslim publics, where opposition to the invasion of Iraq and criticism of the Bush administration were the strongest. Second, attitudes toward the American people, in addition to the U.S. government, were adversely affected. Third, the United States was being criticized for its ideas as well as its policies. Fourth, citizens around the world feared America's unrivaled power and opposed not only what Washington did but also what it was capable of doing. And, possibly most troubling, this new found anti-Americanism was proving itself to be quite robust and long-lived.[75]

By the time the Bush administration readied to leave office in late 2008, little had changed in international public sentiment; if anything, the financial crisis that sent stock markets and economies plummeting around the world only heightened the animosity.

Despite the setback of the critical first years of post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy, there were expectations that the situation would turn around. However, much like the initial phase 2001–2004, the later phase 2005–2008 U.S. pub-

lic diplomacy individual initiatives grew more creative, but overall U.S. public diplomacy still appeared to lack stability and effectiveness. America's stature in the global arena continued to decline. How and why U.S. public diplomacy was continuing to struggle has as much to do with U.S. public diplomacy's overall approach as it does with the profound changes that had occurred in the global communication environment. The next chapter, and the remainder of this book, looks at how the communication and political dynamics of the international arena have changed and what these changes mean in terms of redefining the vision and goals of strategic U.S. public diplomacy.

Part II
Changing Dynamics

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4
Changing Dynamics and Strategic Vision

After 9/11, public diplomacy burst on the political radar screen as if it were a new phenomenon when actually it has been part of U.S. foreign policy since the American Revolution. A historical overview of U.S. public diplomacy reveals a peculiar pattern of re-inventing the public diplomacy wheel and recycling old debates. When it remerged on the political scene, not only was U.S. public diplomacy confronting recurring debates from the pre–Cold War and Cold War era, but it also faced a new set of challenges in the post–Cold War era with the shift from traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy to "new public diplomacy." U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be trying to catch up with the new public diplomacy by incorporating new communication technologies rather than by developing a new communication strategy. What was missing was an understanding of how the underlying communication and political dynamics in the international arena were fundamentally shifting from an Information Age to a global communication era.

U.S. public diplomacy in retrospect: Recurring trends and debates

Public diplomacy, or the need to inform and influence foreign publics, has long been a part of American history, particularly during times of war. In 1776, Benjamin Franklin actively engaged the French government and distributed pamphlets in an effort to gain support for American independence. Shortly after the War of 1812, Thomas Jefferson sought to counter the bad press America was receiving in Britain. In 1917, during World War I (WWI), President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information, also known

as the "Creel Commission," to build support at home and promote America's message abroad.[1]

Shortly before the start of World War II (WWII), President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of Coordinator of Information, followed by the U.S. Foreign Information Service (FIS).[2] Radio broadcasts to Asia began within days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Broadcasts in Europe began 79 days after the United States entered into the war. It was during the first radio broadcast to Germany that the Voice of America (VOA) obtained its name. The FIS and VOA were both absorbed into the Office of War Information in 1942, as part of an aggressive domestic and foreign campaign to build and sustain support for the war.[3]

During the Cold War, America's foreign information programs grew substantially. In 1953, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was established and conducted a wide range of public diplomacy activities, from sponsoring exchange visits to field-driven information initiatives. Harold C. Pachios, the Chairman of the U.S. Advisory Commission for Public Diplomacy, noted, "The height of USIA's prestige and acceptance probably occurred in the 1960s."[4] Not coincidentally, this was also the height of the Cold War.

In contrast to the steady growth of foreign information programs from the 1950s to the 1980s, the 1990s marked a decade of sharp decline in funds and interest in foreign information programs. Many of USIA's posts abroad were cut back by one- third to one-half.[5] American cultural centers and libraries overseas were closed, while positions dedicated to press and cultural affairs were eliminated.[6] From 1991 to 2001, the number of Foreign Service officers practicing public diplomacy dropped 40 percent.[7] During this same period, the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs appropriation declined in real terms by more than 33 percent.[8] In October 1999, the USIA was incorporated into the State Department, along with its budget and resources.

The dwindling resources and programs reflect a distinct historical trend in U.S. public diplomacy of recycling old debates each time America moves from peacetime to wartime and back to peacetime. During times of war, old debates regarding past public diplomacy practices are often swept aside by more pressing issues. As the war gradually draws to a close, the debates resurface with a vengeance, effectively ending not only the campaign but also destroying much of the apparatus for implementing the domestic and foreign information programs. Many of the recurring public diplomacy debates and issues that America has struggled with in previous times of war resurfaced in post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy.

Presidential start, Congressional halt

The first and most prominent trend is that information campaigns begin with a strong presidential initiative and end with equally strong congressional opposition. When the president makes the decision to go to war, the first priority is to mobilize domestic and foreign support. Information becomes a key component of the war effort. New resources are pooled together and funneled into an aggressive information initiative. Typically, the president creates a new office or agency and actively becomes involved with the campaign himself. President Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI or Creel Commission), President Truman created the Office of War Information (OWI), and President Eisenhower created the U.S. Information Agency (USIA).

As soon as America begins to move from war- to peacetime, Congress moves to halt information activities.[9] The CPI ended its domestic activities the day after the WWI pre-armistice agreement was signed and ended its foreign activities a few months later. Within months of the end of WWII, the OWI was abolished. Similarly, moves to cut USIA's budget and extensive programs began soon after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the Soviet Union in 1991, the symbolic end to the Cold War. "In the 1990s," commented the American Enterprise Institute scholar Joshua Muravchik, "we unilaterally disarmed ourselves of the weapons of ideological warfare."[10] It is perhaps because of this trend of reinventing the wheel that when U.S. policymakers woke up on the morning of 12 September 2001, they found U.S. public diplomacy "broken."[11]

Domestic opposition, foreign information repercussions

A second, perhaps less obvious, trend is that overseas information activities are cut not because of U.S. foreign policy objectives but because of U.S. domestic concerns. In the cases of WWI and WWII, domestic opposition to the war propaganda spurred Congressional action to halt all information activities, domestic as well as foreign. Americans not only appear to grow weary with the war effort, but also more so with the aggressive tactics used to sustain the drumbeat for the war. When the domestic campaign stops and America turns increasingly inward, Congress switches its focus from international to domestic concerns, cutting overseas information activities as well.

The information tactics used during WWI and WWII were indeed particularly aggressive and many of those involved in the wartime campaigns used their expertise to develop American advertising and public relations.[12] For example, Edward Bernays, known today as the "father of American public relations," was a member of the Creel Commission

during WWI. World War II spawned a new generation of scholars such as Carl Hovland at Yale University who focused on propaganda and persuasion.

Not surprising perhaps, the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 specifically stipulated that overseas information materials could not be disseminated to the American public. Since that time and throughout the Cold War, U.S. government-sponsored information activities were conducted on the basic assumption of a separation between foreign and domestic audiences. While the Internet has made the separation of the domestic and foreign audiences difficult, if not impossible, domestic concerns pique when the U.S. government appears to be disseminating or manipulating information domestically to gain American public support for overseas military action. Critics were vocal during the first Gulf War in 1991,[13] and have been vocal again in the Iraq war.[14] The Internet's disregard for the assumed boundaries between the U.S. domestic and foreign audiences is likely to continue to complicate U.S. public diplomacy's charge. In early 2009, blogger Matt Armstrong of Mountain Runner.us, organized a symposium to discuss the fate of the Smith-Mundt Act that still enforces those now hypothetical boundaries.

Interagency competition

Another prominent feature of America's past information activities that appears even today is the competition between government agencies and departments. As David Guth observed, "The control and direction of U.S. overseas information programs remain issues at the start of a new century (2001) as much as they were in the middle of the last."[15] The tension has been most acute between the State Department and Defense Department. While the State Department has technically been the lead agency, the Defense Department has been an active player.

Historically, it appears that the Defense Department, in close connection with the White House, has taken the lead in initiating information activities, especially in the conflict arena. Logically, this makes sense. Information activities are vital to the war effort because they secure and maintain domestic as well as foreign support for the war. Without such support, continuing the military operation would be difficult, if not impossible. Information campaigns also play a critical role in reducing domestic opposition to the war at home and maintaining troop morale abroad. On the battlefield, securing the information front may be vital to ensuring the safety of the troops.

Another interesting observation is that the nature and purpose of information appear to shift depending on whether the State Department

or Defense Department holds more sway within the administration. When the Defense Department is actively involved in the overseas information activities, the tendency is toward secrecy, control, and manipulation of information. For example, in the lead up to WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed William J. Donovan as Coordinator of Information and Robert Sherwood as head of the U.S. Foreign Information Service. Donovan, who had close ties with the military, advocated covert information and later helped establish the Central Intelligence Agency. Sherwood, who was in charge of America's overseas broadcasts, was a staunch proponent of overt information. In the first VOA broadcast to Germany, the announcer stated, "The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth."[16] The rivalry became so contentious that President Roosevelt eventually had to split the two men, as well as the department.

Competition has also been a factor for post-9/11 public diplomacy, as indicated earlier in the survey of reports. The 2007 National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication reflects the recognition of the competition as well as the need for U.S. agencies to coordinate rather than compete.

Propaganda versus truth

Among the most contentious debates within public diplomacy is the relationship or distinction between public diplomacy and propaganda. This debate also resurfaced in post-9/11 early writings. "Call it public diplomacy, or public affairs, or psychological warfare, or – if you really want to be blunt – propaganda," wrote Richard Holbrooke in a *Washington Post* piece in October 2001. [17] A year later, Kim Andrew Elliott began his piece in the *New York Times* with a similar line, "Public diplomacy – the current and gentler term for international propaganda ..."[18]

In writing about America's "anti-propaganda" tradition, John H. Brown notes that during times of war, the need to win increases the appeal and acceptance of propaganda.[19] As peace looms near, American suspicions of propaganda resurface with a vengeance. Propaganda again falls out of favor. The roots of America's distaste for propaganda suggest anthropologist William Beeman is in association with lies, deceit, and manipulation – the opposite of truth.[20]

Interestingly, Americans appear to label political messages as "propaganda" or "public diplomacy" not based on the actual *content* or its technical features, but rather the *source* of political messages. The source of a message implies the accuracy of its content. The focus on the source is perhaps no coincidence. The term entered American popular parlance tied

to sinister foreign sources, first Nazi propaganda, and later, Communist propaganda. This American tendency to define propaganda in terms of its source rather than its content or technical features is perhaps why the debate over public diplomacy and propaganda continues.

From a communication perspective, both propaganda and public diplomacy are persuasive tools that a government can use to inform and influence a foreign audience. The technical distinction between the two lies in their degree of transparency and control. Propaganda, skillfully designed and employed, deliberately manipulates the communication so that some aspect is hidden from the audience and the audience feels compelled to accept the message. Deception and coercion are the desired results of effective propaganda. Public diplomacy, by definition, is open and the audience is free to accept or reject the communication. The slightest hint of public deception or coercion would undermine public diplomacy's effectiveness. Context greatly suggests when and where a government should employ public diplomacy or propaganda.

Militarily, propaganda may be precisely the type of persuasive tool that is needed to defeat one's opponent. During war, military strategy demands secrecy and deception in order to keep the opponent off guard, demoralized, or confused. The need to deliberately manipulate information is what makes propaganda and psychological operations such invaluable strategic tools of information warfare.

Politically, public diplomacy is the tool of choice to communicate policy and gain civilian trust and support. To gain trust, public diplomacy must be absolutely credible if the government stands any chance for success. In fact, the persuasive value of public diplomacy is tied to its credibility: the more credible a government's public diplomacy is, the more persuasive it is.

Public diplomacy and public relations

Public diplomacy's relationship to public relations has been another ongoing debate. Given the negative public perception often associated with public relations, there have been efforts to distance public diplomacy from public relations. The last director of the USIA Joseph Duffy represented the sentiments of the public diplomacy officers: "Let me just say a word about public diplomacy. It is not public relations."[21] Not surprisingly, post-9/11 public diplomacy drew harsh criticism by observers who perceived U.S. communication efforts resembling public relations "spin."

However, well before 9/11, public relations scholars and practitioners had made a strong case for the similarity between public relations and

public diplomacy.[22] Both are forms of public communication and often involve advocacy, media relations, image enhancement, issue management to cultivate public favor or a positive image. In their often cited 1992 piece on the "conceptual convergences" between public relations and public diplomacy, Benno Signitzer and Timothy Coombs argued that "public relations and public diplomacy seek similar objectives and use similar tools."[23] L'Etang drew parallels based on three related functions of diplomacy and public relations: representational (rhetoric, oratory, advocacy), dialogic (negotiation, peacemaking), and advisory (counseling).[24] Both fields rely heavily on public opinion polls to design messages and both tend to rely predominantly on mass communication channels to deliver the message. Unlike propaganda and advertising that rely on control media formats, public diplomacy and public relations must often rely on the media as a third party to deliver their message. Media relations are critical for both.

Finally, governments often retain the services of public relations firms to perform public diplomacy activities such as lobbying and designing public campaigns on behalf of their country.[25] This phenomenon is not new or uncommon. In fact, it was while reading about such a case that led Jarol Manheim to write his book *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy*.[26] However, the practice of governments retaining a public relations firm does help to highlight an important distinction between public relations and public diplomacy. Despite their many shared functions, there is one fundamental and critical difference that distinguished public diplomacy as an emerging field in its own right. Public relations is a professional communication activity conducted *on behalf of* an organization, client, and even foreign government or political entity. As such it tends to focus on the strategy and tactics of individual campaigns. While public relations firms are often retained during crisis situations, these firms can and often readily disassociate themselves from their client when criticism or a crisis occurs because of questionable public relations activities. The client is left carrying the responsibility for the communication activities and results.[27]

In contrast, public diplomacy is the actual communication activity *by* a political entity. The way a political entity communicates – its public diplomacy – is integral to the identity of the political entity itself. Rather than dealing exclusively with campaign strategy and tactics, the political entity's policies and overarching vision is the master component. How a political entity communicates in the international political arena is a reflection of that entity's image, stature, and relations with others.

Additionally, as a political activity, public diplomacy is also more closely linked to international relations than to commercial businesses. Public relations origins are tied with the commercial sector. Many public relations departments are still housed in business schools as opposed to communication or journalism schools.[28] The two recently announced graduate degrees in Public Diplomacy are sponsored by communication and international relations academic units. In this respect, public diplomacy is closer to traditional diplomacy than to public relations.

While these factors help distinguish public diplomacy as an independent academic field it does not mean that public diplomacy cannot benefit from the wealth of public communication experience and scholarship. Public relations scholar Kathy Fitzpatrick has made perhaps the strongest case for borrowing public relations research.[29] As she points out, public diplomacy may specifically benefit from the past decade worth of research in relationship-building strategies and measurement tools.

Public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy

A final simmering debate that has risen once again revolves around the relationship between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy (see Chapter 6, culture). Some have argued, even quite vigorously, for keeping the two distinct.[30] They argue that public diplomacy's association with propaganda and deception undermines the legitimacy and credibility of cultural and education programs. This thinking is reflected in the structure of U.S. public diplomacy.

In 1999, after the USIA was consolidated into the State Department, America's information programs were administered by the U.S. State Department. America's foreign radio and television broadcasts were under the Broadcasting Board of Governors, a separate agency linked to the U.S. State Department.

From traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy

Not only was post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy having to deal with these pre–Cold War and Cold War issues and debates, it also faced a new set of challenges posed by the post–Cold War era. Ironically, throughout the 1990s, the same time that U.S. policymakers were turning inward to domestic concerns and decreasing the budget and resources for foreign affairs, a cascade of interrelated changes in the international arena were dramatically altering the practice of diplomacy. Not only was it the end

of the Cold War, but it was also the dawn of the Information Age. In 1999, two RAND scholars John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt suggested that the next "big revolution of the information age" would occur in the realm of diplomacy. [31] Given the level of technology within the diplomatic community at the time – "few diplomats even have computers with Internet connectivity or cellular phones" [32] – their writing was prophetic. A series of foreign policy reports, all written prior to September 11, 2001, captured these emerging forces and urged that U.S. public diplomacy be strengthened.[33]

The most dramatic development in the international arena was the information revolution spawned by advances in communication technology. The exponential growth of new technologies, such as the fax, cellular telephone, direct satellite television, and the Internet, gave rise to instantaneous communication on a global level. Almost overnight, people had more information from more diverse sources than at any other time in human history. The new technologies had little regard for national boundaries or media and political gatekeepers. The behind-closed-doors discussions of national leaders became fodder for speculation in the media spotlight. The official government voice became one of many, and the secrecy of traditional diplomacy became an anathema to global discourse.

Increased access to information spawned another development – people power. The new technologies suddenly accorded people access to information that was once the privy of governments. "The Information Age is rapidly giving power to the people…. in a way that only a few years ago seemed impossible," wrote Walter Wriston in his 1992 book, *The Twilight of Sovereignty*.[34] Information influenced public opinion and public opinion influenced domestic and foreign policies. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies noted in its 1998 report, "Virtually no major foreign affairs or domestic initiative is taken today without first testing public opinion."[35]

The reports also drew attention to the changing nature of the problems nations faced. Diplomacy was no longer about the advancement of purely national interests, but how to address issues that span across national boundaries. Diplomacy required the management of global issues such as environmental pollution, infectious diseases, global trade, and human security.[36]

The nature of power was also changing. In 1990, Professor Joseph Nye introduced the concept of "soft power."[37] He defined power as the ability to do things, control others, and get others to do what they otherwise would not. Traditionally, he said, the test of a great power was its strength

in war. Important power resources included geography, population and raw materials. The new sources of power, he suggested, were not in hard power but in soft power. A world of increasing interdependence, according to Nye, was making the use of military, political, and economic hard power less desirable. Soft power rested on persuasion and the appeal of one's ideas in shaping the preferences of others. In 1998, David J. Rothkopf also spoke of the shifting power dynamics in the Information Age. He proposed the term "cyberpolitiks" to describe the challenges new nonstate actors posed to nation-states: "The realpolitik of the new era is 'cyberpolitik', in which the actors are no longer just states and raw power can be countered or fortified by information power."[38]

Another major development was the heightened sense of cultural awareness and identity among peoples across the globe. While culture received passing attention in the public diplomacy reports of the 1990s, it was rapidly gaining prominence within political science circles. In 1995, former Secretary of State James A. Baker III highlighted the "realm of culture" as one of "three areas where international issues are undergoing transformations of historical proportions."[39] Five years later, his successor Madeleine Albright organized the first White House/State Department conference on Culture and Diplomacy, stating that "culture has become a serious foreign policy question." [40]

As several of the reports concluded, the cascade of interrelated changes in the international arena was prompting a shift and even a revolution in diplomacy.[41] Traditional government-to-government diplomacy was being superseded by a more open, public participatory form of government-to-people diplomacy. Whereas traditional diplomacy sought to secure the goodwill of a foreign government, public diplomacy meant securing the goodwill of a foreign public. As one report argued, "diplomacy must become increasingly public to serve the national interest."[42]

Despite the growing case that was being made for more public diplomacy, there was resistance of traditional diplomacy in recognizing or perhaps appreciating the value of public diplomacy. In the words of one former U.S. diplomat speaking of the "old diplomatic culture" in the U.S. State Department, "real men do not do public diplomacy – or human rights, or environment or refugees. Real men do politics and maybe economics."[43] Diplomatic scholar G.R. Berridge wrote "the term 'public diplomacy' is a euphemism for propaganda," and called "news management" a "black art."[44]

As diplomatic scholars struggled with what they saw as the decline of traditional diplomacy, they pondered its fate. In 1997, diplomatic

scholar Paul Sharp captured the academic assault on traditional diplomacy in a piece titled, "Who Needs Diplomats?"[45] Rather than viewing traditional and public diplomacy as complementary vehicles for communicating with governments as well as publics, there appeared to be a concern that public diplomacy was eclipsing traditional diplomacy. Against this backdrop, it is perhaps not surprising that public diplomacy was relegated to the background when the USIA was absorbed by the State Department in 1999.

From public diplomacy to the "new public diplomacy"

When America woke up to the importance of public diplomacy after 9/11, it was no longer a matter of simply needing more public diplomacy, but rather a "new" public diplomacy. In 2004, Dutch scholar Jan Melissen published the first edited collection on the new public diplomacy.[46] In the introduction, Melissen attempted to capture the essence of the new public diplomacy or the new approach to conducting public diplomacy:

> The new public diplomacy is no longer confined to messaging, promotion campaigns, or even direct governmental contacts with foreign publics serving foreign policy purposes. It is also about building relationships with civil society actors in other countries and about facilitating networks between non-governmental parties at home and abroad.[47]

If the shift from traditional to public diplomacy caught U.S. officials and diplomats off guard, the emergence of a "new public diplomacy" seemed even more elusive. While analysts had been struggling to make the case for more public diplomacy, less well recognized at the time was how the developments in the 1990 had fundamentally altered the underlying political and communication dynamics in the international arena. These dynamics are defined by the configuration of (1) the players and their political goals, (2) the communication technologies, and most importantly from a communication perspective, and (3) the way these new actors are organizing themselves and exploiting those technologies to achieve their political goals. If the shift from traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy had been about the *simple addition* of new elements, the shift from public diplomacy to the new public diplomacy was about the new *dynamic configuration* of those elements.

New players

Many of the earlier and more recent discussions of public diplomacy have highlighted a host of new communication players, both state and nonstate actors, which have entered the international arena. Transnational corporations were among the first nonstate actors recognized in the early public diplomacy reports.[48] Because of the globalization of finance and business, companies exchange more than a trillion dollars a day in international markets with little or no state intervention. E-commerce has multiplied the power and influence of businesses. By the early 1990s, more than 30 corporations had a GDP larger than 90 countries.[49]

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have been garnered the most attention among the new nonstate actors in public diplomacy. The rise of NGOs that began in the 1970s exploded during the 1990s.[50] By the late 1990s, the expansion of NGOs had become a "global phenomenon," capturing the attention of scholars around the world who tried to document and explain it. According to the Union of International Associations, which has been collecting information on international organizations since 1910, the number of international NGOs has exponentially risen from 176 in 1909, to 1718 in 1964, to 9521 in 1978, to 20,063 in 1989, to 43,958 in 1999, and to 62,036 in 2008.[51] The number of NGOs accorded consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council has grown from 377 in 1968 to more than 3000 by 2008.[52]

NGOs had grown in size as well as number. Membership in long-established international NGOs such as Amnesty International and the International Red Cross expanded even as a number of new NGOs with similar missions emerged. In 2004, Greenpeace, for example, claimed an international membership of over 2.8 million people, well beyond the populations of about one-third of the member states of the United Nations.[53]

As the number and size of NGOs grew, so did their public visibility. Throughout the 1990s, NGOs gained attention during a series of international conferences: Earth Summit in Rio (1992), Human Rights in Vienna (1993), Population in Cairo (1994), Social development in Copenhagen (1995), Women's Conference in Beijing (1995). Not all NGO visibility was positive though. NGO protest activities on particularly contentious issues such as globalization and trade brought global media criticism on several occasions: Geneva (May 1998), Seattle (November 1999), Prague (September 2000), and Quebec (April 2001).

Professor Lester Salamon of John Hopkins University, one of the leading scholars in the field of the third sector (to distinguish it from

the government and business sectors), labeled the "striking upsurge" around the globe of organized voluntary activity and the creation of NGOs as a global "associational revolution." In 1994, he predicted that the association revolution would prove to be as important to the latter 20th century as the rise of the nation-state was to the 19th.[54]

Many scholars tied the growth of NGOs with globalization and spread of communication technology such as computers, fax machines, mobile phones, and the Internet.[55] David Stark of Columbia University suggested there was a co-evolution of NGOs and interactive technology.[56] As he points out, prior to 1989, there were almost no NGOs in the conventional sense in Eastern Europe, and the Internet was in its infancy. By 2002, both NGOs and the Internet were experiencing "an exponential growth" throughout the region.

Another notable player with increasing prominence was the international media. The media has already challenged governments' ability to control the timing or pace of its communication.[57] The international media, as private, profit-oriented enterprises, are keenly responsive to a competitive news environment and to audience demand. News stories roll out 24/7, punctuated with up-to-the-minute breaking news. Governments, however, burdened by bureaucracy, international legal and diplomatic conventions, as well as domestic political constraints, tend to operate at a much more cautious pace.[58] Additionally, the media's reliance on advanced, high-volume, and instantaneous communication technology – combined with its high impact visuals – can command public attention in ways that governments cannot. In order to compete with the media, governments have had to either speed up their communication to meet real-time events and risk making errors on a global level, or maintain a more cautious pace and risk losing their voice in the global dialogue that shapes public opinion.

The newest nonstate actors in the public diplomacy playing field appear to be prominent individuals and private actors.[59] Writing in the *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman credited the emerging media for the growth of super-empowered individuals who can act on the world stage directly and independently of the state.[60] Andrew F. Cooper has drawn attention to the phenomenon of "celebrity diplomacy," as entertainers, sports figures, and high-profile individuals of a country have become increasingly visible in international causes.[61]

In addition to these new international players, America has its own internal set of new cast members. These include personnel from various government agencies, who are now working overseas, as administration officials and political leaders, and in the U.S. media. Often overlooked,

yet increasingly important, is the U.S. domestic public including the phenomenon of citizen diplomacy. While these domestic players were perhaps not originally figured into the traditional public diplomacy mix, these "domestic" U.S. players greatly influence – and complicate – U.S. public diplomacy communication with international publics.

The addition of these new players has greatly impacted the communication dynamics in the international arena. Each new player represents a source of information and perspective that can undermine or enhance a government's messages. NGOs can garner media coverage using highly creative and dramatic techniques and focus public attention on issues in ways that governments cannot. Both the international media and advocacy NGOs can attack a government's communication jugular, its credibility, and undercut its public diplomacy initiatives. International businesses, on the other hand, are often keen on protecting the communication efforts of their country of origin. For example, in November 2003, some of America's top advertising, marketing, and public relations executives formed American Business for Public Diplomacy to "help American corporations improve America's image in foreign lands."[62]

New communication tools

The second component of the changing communication dynamic is, of course, the emergence and global proliferation of advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs). The ICTs that have gained prominence throughout the 1990s include the Internet, the World Wide Web, mobile phone devices, and rapid simple syndication (RSS) feed. Common new media genres that emerged included websites, computer applications, video games, interactive multimedia, chat interfaces, cell phone interfaces, digital video, blogs, interactive mapping, training simulations, virtual reality, and multimedia presentations. While these new media may seem like old media given the pace of technology, in 2001 e-mail had only recently become a verb.

The "new media" as it was called differed from the "old media" (newspaper, radio, and television) in terms of their channels of distribution, modes of composition, and relationship between media and consumer.[63] Media scholar Denis McQuail notes that "traditional mass communication was essentially one-directional, while the new forms of communication are essentially interactive."[64] Scholars Steven Chaffee and Mariam Metzger argued that the contemporary media was "demassifying" the traditional mass media from its original defining features of mass production, lack of individual control, and finite number of

channels.[65] These changes, contended the scholars, were cracking the foundation of traditional mass communication theories.

Connectivity and interactivity have become the defining features of the new media, as well as the defining communication activity of their users.[66] Kassaye called the potential for interactivity the greatest point of contrast between traditional media and new media.[67] Not only were people interacting with the media (which at the time was new), but also were more importantly the public began using the media to interact with others to become empowered stakeholders.[68] "Interaction leads to a sense of participation, leading to the metaphor 'cybercommunity."[69] The immense surge in popularity of e-mails, blogs, chat rooms, instant messaging, mobile phones, and satellite television was about connecting and interacting with others.

Connectivity was another defining feature. Originally new media, including the Internet, were placed under the umbrella of the mass media because of their ability to reach mass audiences. However, it became increasingly apparent that the new media was less about technology and mass audiences and more about being connected on a personal and individual level. Scholars contend that people turn to the new media as an interpersonal medium – e-mails, file sharing, and text messaging – as opposed to mass medium of communication.[70] Understanding the connective strategies and potential of the "new media" prompted a migration to the term "social media" as vehicles for expression and social participation. Bloggers who post their web logs on the Internet, for example, derive their communication power not by disseminating information, but by expressing information in such way that it draws or pulled an audience. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, and Flickr as well as YouTube were similarly illustrative of information or content sharing.

Ronald Deibert drew attention to the impact of communication technology on society, and specifically on international politics.[71] Deibert spoke about changes in terms of medium theory, which suggested that media of communication are not neutral vessels or simple agents, but rather create communication environments.[72] Based on the medium theory, Deibert argued that shifts in technology favor certain trends, while causing others to wither. For example, the emergence of printing technology is associated with the rise of the nation-state.[73] In looking at digital communication, Deibert predicted that the nation-state would not fade away, but that new political trends "point *away* from single mass identities, linear political boundaries, and exclusive jurisdictions centered on territorial spaces, and *towards* multiple identities and

nonterritorial communities, overlapping boundaries, and nonexclusive jurisdictions."[74] Viewed from another angle, the new media technology created more than just the new political dynamics that Deibert outlines. The media, as medium theory would suggest, created a new communication dynamic in the international political arena.

Global communication era: New players, new tools, new dynamics

The interactive nature of the social media, coupled with the diversity of new players and the way these new actors are using the media, had arguably changed the communication dynamics in the international arena from an Information Age to a new global communication era.[75] This new dynamic configuration is behind the move from public diplomacy to the new public diplomacy.

The Information Age, as the name suggests, revolved around the production and dissemination of information, *a product*. The global communication era, as the name similarly implies, focuses on communication, *a process*. The transition from the Information Age to the global communication era represented a shift in focus from information or *message content* to communication or *message exchange*.

Message content has long been the focus of communication. Persuasion theory constitutes a vast field of scholarship, with strategic message design dating back to Aristotle. Similarly, propaganda, often mistaken for public diplomacy, focuses primarily on manipulating information or message content. As Deibert observed, "As in the field of communication proper, the overwhelming majority of studies in international relations and communications focus on some aspect of message content ... the specific message being transmitted is thought to be the important variable."[76] Indeed, strategic communication rests heavily on effectively designing and disseminating a message to achieve its persuasive objective.

Compared to the dedicated attention message content has received, message exchange has been virtually overlooked. However, in the new terrain, message exchange had changed dramatically. Message exchange now assumes a much more prominent role in the communication equation. For example, with the advent and global proliferation of the new technologies, message exchange has shifted from a hierarchal vertical, top-to-bottom pattern to a horizontal, multidirectional pattern. While hierarchies are effective for controlling information, they are laboriously bureaucratic and inefficient structures for exchanging information.

"When change was slow, and the future was pretty much like the present, hierarchal organizations were perfect structures for business and governments. The world is no longer predictable. Old structures are no longer sufficient for change," observes Valdis Krebs.[77] The more complex the environment becomes, according to Lawrence and Lorsch, the more flexible the structure should be to allow for rapid responses.[78] The importance of message exchange is in many ways associated with rise of the network.

The study of the network phenomenon mushroomed during the late 1990s and spread across disciplines. Castells, for his work, drew upon theoretical and empirical contributions made in economics, political science, communication, sociology, education, international relations, and even electrical engineering and computer science.[79] Recent works have similarly captured the prevalence of the network phenomenon from ant colonies, to brain neurons, to epidemics, to civil protests.[80] Kevin Kelly spoke of the symbolic shift from the atom to the net: "The atom is the icon of the 20th century. The atom whirls alone. It is the metaphor for individuality. But the atom is the past. The symbol of the next century is the net."[81] In *The Network Society*, van Dijk stated, "With little exaggeration, we may call the 21st century the age of networks. Networks are becoming the nervous system of our society."[82]

The power of networks lies in their agile and flexible organizational structure. Networks are resilient, adaptive, and robust. In contrast to rigid hierarchical structures, networks are fluid, an attribute that allows them to move quickly to exploit opportunities. Network communication blurs the distinction between senders and receivers and operates on a one-to-one as well as many-to-many communication dynamic. Traditional print and broadcast mass media are based on a one-to-many model that implies a concentration of power – a single voice speaking to many passive listeners.[83] The mass media represented power in the Information Age. Networks represent power in the global communication era.

Many of the new actors gaining access to the world stage illustrate the importance of message exchange and the network phenomenon. In "Power Shifts," Jessica Mathews at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace linked the rise of nonstate actors in the international arena to networks and new communication technologies. She argued that the new technologies favored the network organizational form over hierarchies. However, unlike business, citizens organizations, ethnic groups, and crime cartels, which were all readily employing a network approach, Mathews called governments the "quintessential hierarchies, wedded to

an organizational form incompatible with all that the new technologies make possible."[84]

Yet, the rising power of advocacy of NGOs goes beyond their network organizational structure. Unlike governments with a history of mass media ownership and pre-determined mass audiences, these actors exploited the interactive features of the new technologies to create their own audiences, promote their causes, influence policy, and even set political agenda. It was not about simply employing new communication technology, but rather, new communication strategies. Strategies such as net activism, cyber-advocacy, and e-advocacy are based on efficient message exchange using the new technology within a network structure; the underlying strategy is connective rather than technological.[85] Internet activism by nonstate actors, as Dorothy Denning pointed out, was altering the landscape of political discourse and advocacy.[86] Indeed, NGOs were demonstrating their power in setting political agendas (Jubilee 2000, G8-African debt 2005), framing debates (global warming, food security), and moving entrenched nation-states (Campaign to Ban Landmines 1997).

In 2001, Carnegie scholar, Jamie Metzl highlighted the growing importance of networked nonstate actors for states.[87] Rather than looking at other nations as potential threats, governments needed to be alert to the real threat that was coming from networked nonstate actors. Metzl specifically addressed U.S. diplomats:

> Governments have not yet come to fully appreciate the redistribution of power resulting from the rise of networks. U.S. State Department officials may look gleefully at other foreign ministries and note that the United States is far ahead of its perceived counterparts in responding to globalization and the information revolution. These officials, however, do not recognize that competition is not coming from other states, but from other forms of organization altogether.[88]

RAND analysts John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, in a prescient piece submitted days before al-Qaeda attacked the United States, warned of networks and "netwars."[89] The scholars originally introduced the term netwars in 1996 to describe an "emerging mode of conflict which uses the network forms of organizations, doctrine, strategy, and technology attuned to the information age."[90] In 2003, an Aspen Institute roundtable of experts also concluded the rules of the game were indeed changing. They linked the information technologies with network structure and suggested the term "Netpolitik" as an alternative to Realpolitik

to describe the significance of the network structure in international affairs.[91]

Indeed, the rules have changed. In the global communication era, those who facilitate and master the information exchange, as opposed to information production, are gaining the edge in the global communication era. With the stellar rise of these new networked nonstate actors as formidable players in international relations, the balance of power strategy once characterized by Realpolitiks is giving way to the diffused power of Netpolitiks.

The shift from message content to message exchange poses unique challenges for U.S. public diplomacy. Old public diplomacy is rooted in the primacy of message content. The new public diplomacy is inherently about message exchange. Understanding the underlying political and communication dynamics is critical to expanding the vision of strategic U.S. public diplomacy. The next two chapters take a look closer at the defining features of the global communication era – connectivity, interactivity, and cultural diversity.

5
The Soft Power Differential: Mass Communication and Network Communication

Throughout the post-9/11 period, public diplomacy became increasingly linked to discussions of soft power or how to influence others through persuasion rather than force. Observers claimed that ineffective U.S. public diplomacy was depleting the U.S. ability to exercise its soft power in the international arena. However, while U.S. analysts lamented the decline in U.S. soft power, the soft power of nonstate actors, particularly advocacy of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), appeared to be growing. Given the inherent role of communication in the notion of soft power, this chapter explores the communication approaches of the two actors as a means for understanding the soft power differential. Post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be trying to "wield" soft power by relying primarily on a mass communication approach and transmission strategy. In contrast, NGOs were creating soft power through a network communication approach and connective strategy. The analysis suggests that those who master relationship-building and networking strategies will command communication power in the global communication era.

The soft power dilemma

"As the information revolution deepens, the conduct and outcome of conflicts will increasingly depend on information and communication," Arquilla and Ronfeldt claim, adding that "more than ever before, conflicts revolve around 'knowledge' and soft power."[1] In his 2004 book, *Soft Power*, Nye discussed public diplomacy in terms of "wielding" soft power.[2] As well established, dominant players on the international stage, nation-states draw upon their "soft power resources," namely, the country's culture, political ideas, and policies, to influence others in

the international arena.[3] Nye defined three dimensions of public diplomacy: daily communication explaining policy decisions; political campaigns built on a few strategic themes; and long-term relationships with key individuals.

These three dimensions of public diplomacy were readily apparent in U.S. public diplomacy. The White House Office of Global Communication was daily issuing "Talking Points" to explain the context of U.S. policy decisions. Similarly, the State Department electronically disseminated policy statements, press statements and background papers. All U.S. public diplomacy initiatives stressed the strategic themes of democracy and freedom. The President and other administration officials highlighted freedom and democracy in their public statements and speeches. The increased budget and additional initiatives of the State Department's Education and Cultural Exchange programs reflected efforts to build long-term relationships with key individuals.

Yet, U.S. public diplomacy attempts to wield its soft power were proving frustrating as public perception of the U.S. remained overwhelmingly negative, particularly in Arab and Islamic countries – the primary target of the United States' intensive public diplomacy efforts. As Professor Nye cautioned, "Sometimes dissemination of information can quickly produce or prevent a desired outcome," but "soft-power resources are slower, more diffuse, and more cumbersome to wield than hard-power resources."[4] Typically, information campaigns do take time to yield results[5] and while intervening variables, including the U.S.-led Iraqi war and ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, may have hindered U.S. public diplomacy efforts, such a concentrated and sustained public diplomacy effort over a multiyear period should have at least stabilized, if not reversed, public sentiment. To be effective, public diplomacy must work not only in times of peace with favorable publics, but also in conflicts and instability with skeptical publics. The latter, in fact, may be more critical.

It may be that "wielding" soft power is more difficult than hard power, but it may also be a matter of approach. It stands to reason that if communication is a pivotal feature of soft power, a different communication approach can produce a different soft power result.

This appears to be the case with advocacy NGOs. In contrast to U.S. public diplomacy's efforts to *wield* its soft power, NGOs' vigorous communication activities appear to *generate* soft power. As discussed in the previous chapter, NGOs have enjoyed increasing success in defining international policy agendas and influencing recalcitrant nation-states. Compared to nation-states, NGOs do not have any initial power

reserves – hard or soft. Therefore, NGOs are not wielding soft power as an inherent resource, but rather as an acquired one. NGOs are "not powerful in the traditional sense of the word," observed Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, "they must use the power of their information, ideas, and strategies to alter the information and value contexts within which states make policies."[6] Consider the case of Jody Williams, a lone woman in Vermont, who helped forge the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). She initiated the campaign from her home with little more than a telephone and a fax machine. In order to influence and prod nation-states, ICBL and other NGOs had to *create* soft power.

To understand how NGOs such as ICBL create soft power, we can examine the inner workings of transnational advocacy networks or "TANs." TANs – much like government public diplomacy – rely on information and communication in order to persuade publics and advocate policy. TANs' advocacy activities target the public, the media, and the governments – audiences similar to that of government public diplomacy. Most importantly, TANs have demonstrated the ability to "set the political agenda."

"TAN activists do not seek to maintain collective mobilizations, but focus on communication and *exchange*."[7] TANs' focus on message exchange – as opposed to message content – is a critical distinction between "wielding" versus "creating" soft power in the global communication era. Unlike the Information Age, which emphasized message content (information), the global communication era emphasizes message exchange. Strategies that facilitate message exchange have an edge over strategies rooted in message content or information.

Mass communication dynamics – Wielding soft power

The underlying strategic approach for wielding U.S. soft power is essentially a mass communication approach to public diplomacy. The strategy relies on carefully crafted *messages* disseminated via *mass media vehicles* to a *target audience* with the goal of *changing attitudes or behavior.*

The mass communication approach, which is well documented in the literature and represents even a distinct major in the field of communication, has several prominent features. It rests on the premise of sender-message-receiver model. In 1954, Harold Lasswell proposed a verbal model, "Who says what to whom through what medium with what effect?"[8] Lasswell's model, still prevalent today, captures the basic elements of mass communication. These basic elements are also evident in U.S. public diplomacy. An identifiable, autonomous political entity

represents the source, of the "who" of Lasswell's model. The entity designs the public diplomacy initiative independently from the audience. The source bears responsibility for the communication initiative and its ultimate outcome.

"Says what" refers to the message component. The importance of message has been a reoccurring theme in U.S. public diplomacy reports. Even Nye underscores the centrality of message: "By definition, soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires understanding how they are hearing your message, and fine-tuning it accordingly."[9] Messages capture or reflect a nation's culture, policies, and values and the expression "staying on message" denotes maintaining control of message coherence and consistency.

"To whom" implies a specific target audience who digest the information but remain largely passive (i.e., Arab and Muslim youth). Communicators use public opinion polling and other forms of intelligence to meticulously craft messages for target audiences. Although mass communication models allow for feedback, it is characteristically delayed or indirect.

In the case of U.S. public diplomacy, the phrase "Through what medium" has primarily referred to a mass medium controlled by the U.S. government. Since 9/11, the United States has created Arabic-language mass media vehicles, including Radio Sawa (radio), Shared Values (print and broadcast advertising campaign), Hi magazine (print), and Al-Hurra (television). The "Washington File" and "Muslim Life in America" used the Internet as another means of delivering the U.S. message. The dominant focus on mass media places a parallel emphasis on media relations and media tools thereby increasing press conferences and media tours along with technological enhancements such as RSS (Real Simple Syndication) services.

Finally, the phrase "To what effect" reflects the goals of U.S. public diplomacy, such as seeking audience acceptance of policies, enhancing the nation's image, or achieving a policy objective. Control over message and medium are directly proportional to the mass communication's persuasive effect.

The main strength of the mass media (newspapers, radio, and television) was their audience reach. A single information source capable of transmitting a uniform message to the mass audience, literally millions of people, which may seem trite compared to the reach of the Internet, was a pivotal factor in the mass media's communication power. Today, the proliferation of media sources has fragmented the "mass" audience, thus greatly diminishing the potential audience reach. The proliferation

of alternative media sources has also diminished the mass media's role as information "gatekeepers" for audiences. No longer the dominant source of information, the mass media must now compete for audience attention and loyalty.

Communicators also value the mass media for its ability to generate public awareness and influence the public agenda. High-profile mass media campaigns remain prominent today, albeit, they are often combined with other media formats. The media still retains its agenda-setting function, influencing what people think about, if not how they actually think about it.[10] Research has consistently shown that people are selective in their exposure and interpretation of information.[11] In terms of effectiveness, interpersonal communication with trusted, respected sources remains the most persuasive medium of communication.[12]

Using the mass media to enhance a national image, which is often the stated purpose of international broadcasts, can prove particularly illusive. In early propaganda studies, scholars noted that the relations between governments corresponded to the images the publics have of those states.[13] Writing in 1963, specifically on U.S. public diplomacy efforts (then referred to as propaganda), W. Phillips Davidson's literature review affirmed that basic attitude changes "are brought about by changes in the social, political, or economic environment – not by propaganda."[14] This finding has remained intact.[15]

It is important to note that while a mass medium (i.e., television, radio) may be culturally neutral, the content or programming it carries remains culture-bound, or tied to the culture of its sponsor. An invisible cultural barrier between the sponsor and the audience acts as a filter through which the message must pass. This cultural barrier will likely distort, rather than simply deliver a message disseminated over mass media channels. It is this ability to generate awareness – to get the message out – and the corresponding inability to ultimately influence how the audience perceives that message that renders the mass media a particularly vulnerable communication channel in cross-cultural settings. Even domestic audiences can misinterpret mass media images,[16] and the likelihood of misinterpretation is only magnified when it comes to international audiences.[17]

Network communication dynamics: Creating soft power

The dynamics of the mass communication approach, which centers around information production and dissemination, are drastically

different from a network communication approach which focuses on information exchange. The following analysis is based on the growing body of scholarship investigating the activities and strategies of TANs,[18] as well as the tactical materials produced by these network organizations.[19] The network communication approach consists of three interrelated components: network structure, network synergy, and network strategy. At the heart of each component lies message exchange.

Network structure: Facilitating message exchange and information flow

Information is the lifeblood of TANs. They gather and use information to build credibility, gain recognition for their expertise, draw attention to issues, and outmaneuver nation-states. Most TANs recognize that for information to retain its value, it must be exchanged. The effectiveness of the TANs appears closely tied to how efficiently they can circulate the flow of information or exchange information. Communication structures that enhance the flow of information increase the overall effectiveness of the organization. The network structure is pivotal to TANs' ability to facilitate message exchange and efficiently circulate information.

There is a steadily growing wealth of research on social network analysis[20] and communication networks.[21] Network analysts have identified three basic types of networks: chain, hub or star, and all channels.[22] Martin Kearns, co-founder of the Green Media Toolshed and proponent of "network-centric advocacy," has matched these three generic network types with the major types of civic engagement that individuals use to influence society and government.[23] He associates the chain network with grassroots engagement, the hub network with organizational engagement, and the all-channel network with network-centric engagement.

For those unfamiliar with network topologies, the diagrams presented below are the three basic generic network topologies. However, to illustrate how changing a network formation changes the flow of information, I have adapted the basic network topologies to consist of only seven individuals, each with a fixed position or location. Although the diagrams may appear to suggest that the individuals have moved from their original locations, none of the individuals or their locations have changed. What has changed is the information flow or how the individual entities exchange information.

Kearns calls the most basic type of civic engagement "direct engagement." Each individual must rely on his own capacity to exert influence. If one looks at the communication dynamics (Figure 5.1), the individuals are not connected in a network, but rather work individually as

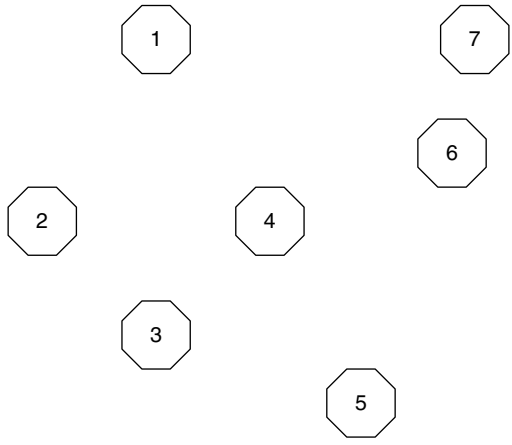

Figure 5.1 Individuals not networked

separate entities. Each individual is responsible for gathering, filtering, and processing all the information. The speed and capacity to handle the information depends on each individual. Finally, each individual must formulate and disseminate his message. Duplication can be high. Without the benefit of feedback or input from others, the message is often static.

For Kearns, the next level of civic engagement is grassroots engagement, in which "individuals work together with others to develop a strategy, collect necessary resources and implement action in an informal alliance."[24] Kearns associates grassroots engagement with the generic chain network. In a chain network (Figure 5.2), individual members form a simple chain network in which they are connected in a linear pattern and information flows sequentially from one member to the next.

From a communication perspective, the chain network carries an obvious advantage over individuals working alone. Individuals working together in a network can more efficiently monitor, gather, and process information than any one individual can. The availability of more information sources can enhance the overall quality of the information. However, it is important to note that there is no official leadership or control and work travels along a chain, creating inefficient duplication. In addition, the flow of information through the chain literally relies on the next person. The speed of information flow also depends on the next person. Accuracy is another concern. Anyone who has played the game of rumors, in which a message is passed from one person to the next, knows that the very act of passing information invites errors or distor-

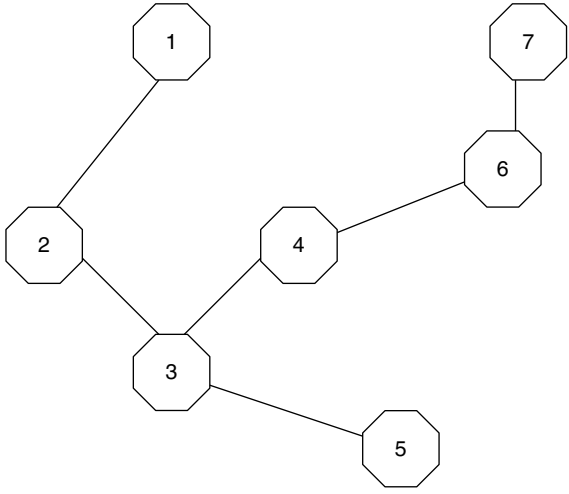

Figure 5.2 Chain network

tion. Often, the original version of the message bears no resemblance to the final version.

When examining the chain, as well as other network types, one must consider the distance of the communication path, in other words, the number of people through which the information must pass to reach its destination. As Krebs and Holley note, "Common wisdom about human networks – long communication paths lead to slow processing and distorted information."[25] The game of rumor illustrates possible distortion. The more people the message must filter through, the more distorted it becomes and the longer it takes. Collaboration within a chain network poses another disadvantage. If player #7 comes up with an idea, that idea will have to pass back and forth through several individuals to reach player #1 or #5. Developing a message or strategy becomes cumbersome and time-consuming as members relay information, offer input and receive feedback in a linear or sequential pattern.

In organizational engagement, individuals work through a central nonprofit or advocacy organization to affect change. Kearns associates organizational engagement with the hub network. In the hub or star network type (Figure 5.3), members communicate though a central position or "hub," which effectively controls the exchange of information. The hub provides leadership and develops governing structures to plan and coordinate work, recruit and manage members, solicit funds, and channel resources.

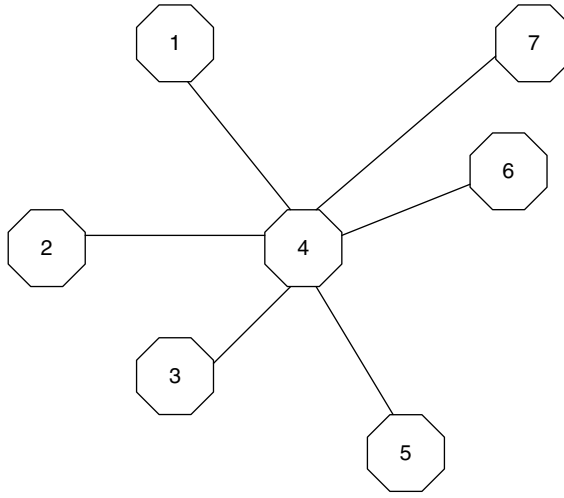

Figure 5.3 Hub or Star network

From a communication perspective, the ability of the hub to channel and coordinate information flow provides for communication efficiency, as the hub can simultaneously exchange information with all of the network members. However, because all communication from any of the members *must* pass through the hub, this position not only has all the power, but also all the responsibility for maintaining the information flow. As network analysts Krebs and Holley point out, the hub network is vulnerable or "fragile" because if anything happens to the lone hub, the network, as a whole, suffers.[26] For this reason, the analysts advise that the hub network is appropriate as an initial network formation, but should act as a transitory stage to a stronger network formation. They advocate a "network weaver," who can create links among the other members, and ultimately transform the other members into hubs within a larger network.

The final type of civic engagement Kearns speaks of is network-centric engagement. According to Kearns, network-centric engagement features lots of leadership and self-organizing teams, as information and resources flow in all directions. Network-centric engagement, says Kearns, "relies on dense communication ties to provide the synchronizing effects, prioritization and deployment roles of the organizations." Kearns associates network-centric engagement with the all-channel network topology. From a communication perspective, the all-channel network (Figure 5.4) clearly offers the most efficient information flow. Because each

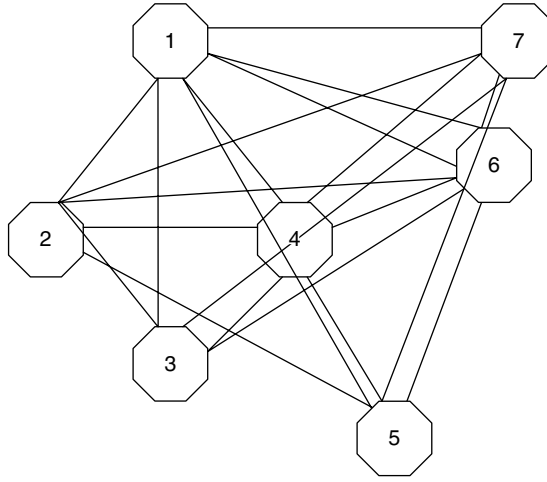

Figure 5.4 All-channel network

member is connected with all the other members, the information flow is direct, multidirectional, and simultaneous. However, the communication efficiency of the all-channel network relies on sharing, rather than controlling information. Hoarding information may make one member temporarily powerful, but ultimately others will devalue that member as a clog in the network.

Compared with the network communication models above, the information flow of the mass media illustrates an entirely different communication dynamic (Figure 5.5). The information flow is essentially one way or unidirectional, from single communication source to a mass audience, or the one-to-many. However, the diagram is somewhat deceiving in that it does not account for the communication dynamics of the audience. Rather than behaving as a mass of autonomous individuals, people are embedded in a vast web of social, professional, and personal networks. The audience, in effect, is an all-channel network or as Ali Fisher suggests a multihub network.[27] The combination of mass media and the all-channel network of the audience can amplify a media message (Figure. 5.6). This multiplier effect contributes to the mass media's effectiveness in communication campaigns. The mass media serves as an efficient vehicle for communicating with a large audience, if one assumes that the audience and the mass media organization share the same culture. A somewhat different communication dynamic emerges if both parties *do not* share the

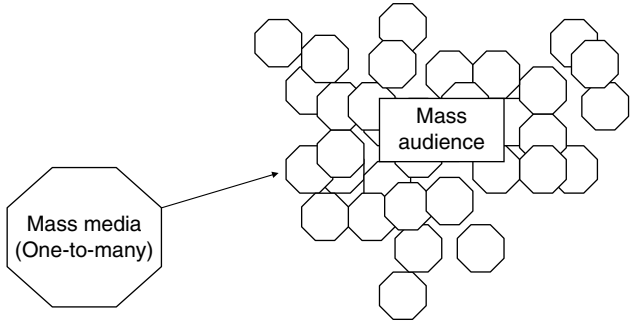

Figure 5.5 Mass media

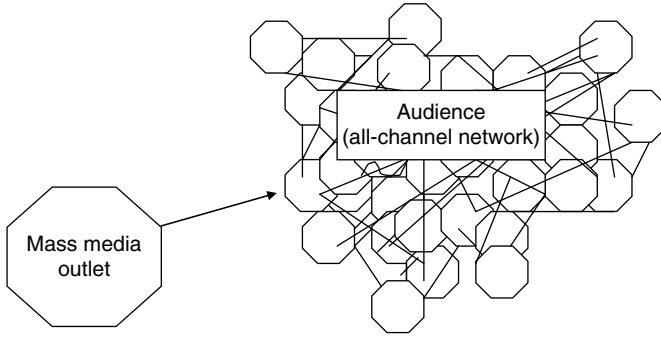

Figure 5.6 Mass media and networked audience

same cultural communication cues. Although television, as an electronic device for disseminating information, is culturally neutral, the information and programming is *culture-bound* or tied to its culture of origin. All information disseminated over mass media channels carries with it cultural baggage or implicit assumptions about content value, stylistic appeal, and other cultural beliefs.

Ideally, broadcasters, advertisers and campaign planners tailor messages to resonate with intended audiences. However, despite the sponsor's best efforts, more often than not, a hidden cultural filter emerges between the originating source on one side and the culturally diverse audience on the other. This filter inevitably modifies and may even distort information. The invisible cultural barrier's ability to distort messages helps explain some of the negative Arab public reaction to the U.S.-run station, Al-Hurra (Figure 5.7). The all-channel network of the audience

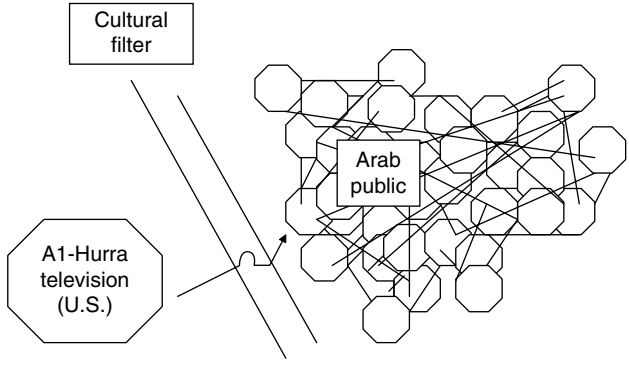

Figure 5.7 Distorted mass media message reinforced by networked audience

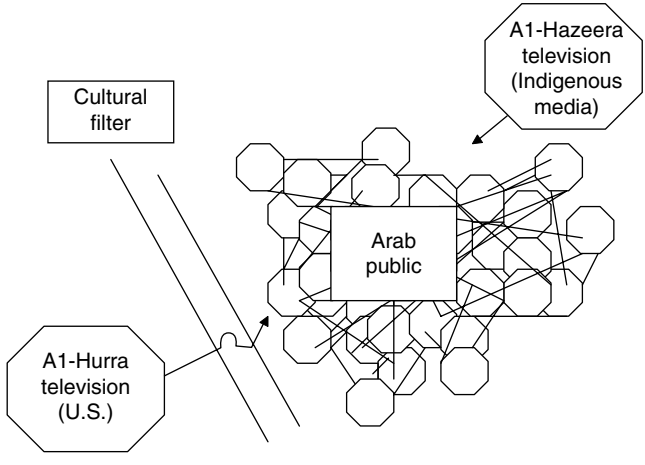

Figure 5.8 Cultural advantage of indigenous media

amplifies the problem of message distortion. A foreign-run mass media outlet, particularly newly created one, can be relatively powerless to circumvent a distorted message once it begins circulating within the all-channel network of the audience. If one views the audience as multihub network, as Fisher suggests, the potential distortion can be even worse across the cultural filter as these ultrapeer/hubs can agitate or exacerbate a distortion (perhaps deliberately).[28] Persistent efforts to try to use a mass media channel to counter distorted messages originally delivered over that same channel may only compound the problem. In contrast to the

cultural distortions a foreign entity faces, indigenous media sitting on the same side of the cultural barrier can find their message power – as well as their appeal – positively amplified (Figure 5.8). Longtime international broadcasters such as BBC, VOA, or Deutche Welt are often able to straddle the cultural barrier. By their continued presence, such entities can cultivate a reputation and establish their identity as a familiar voice in the public discourse.

Network synergy: Building relationships and incorporating diversity

Network synergy is the second dimension of the network communication approach that advocacy NGOs use to create soft power. Network synergy occurs when the individual efforts of the network members combine as a force multiplier: the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Network synergy emerges through the combined processes of cultivating relationships and incorporating diversity. Internal relationship-building among the network members helps transform a loose group of individuals into a dynamic team. External relationship-building, specifically coalition building, expands the network's resources and reach. Incorporating diversity through internal and external relationship-building also generates synergy.

Whereas the process of linking may occur naturally or mechanically in networks of inanimate objects, such as power grids, achieving connectivity and interactivity in human networks entails relationship-building. Valdis Krebs and June Holley discuss the phenomenon of "network weaver" who "catalyzes interactions in complex human systems via introductions, collaborations, and mentoring, creating new partnerships, clusters, innovations, and economic activity."[29]

TANs appear particularly adept at nurturing relationships, both internally and externally. The act of communicating with like-minded others takes precedence over the content of communication.[30] Internally, exchanging e-mails, attending meetings, or participating in online chats are inherently relationship-building activities. In the case of the landmine campaign, the ICBL members initially communicated via telephones and facsimile machines. In the mid-1990s, ICBL members began using the Internet for internal communication to coordinate events and committee functions, distribute petitions and action alerts, raise money, and educate the public media.[31]

As Bourdieu observed, the more interconnected actors in a network are to one another, the more those actors trust one another, and are willing to exchange resources (tangible and intangible), thus benefiting the

network overall.[32] As Williams stated, "... And it was, again, the follow up, the constant communication, the building of trust. Trust, trust, trust."[33]

These internal relationship-building activities transform a TAN from a group of random individuals working separately into a synergistic team.[34] The distinction between team versus group communication dynamics is important. "A working group relies primarily on the individual contributions of its members for group performance," observed Katzenbach and Smith, "whereas a team strives for a magnified impact that is incremental to what its members could achieve in their individual roles."[35] When network members work together as a team, they create a self-perpetuating type of energy that grows exponentially.

Gay and Donald Lumsden highlighted several characteristics of effective teams and their communication dynamics.[36] TANs share many of the same defining characteristics. First, "members of a team communicate intensively to develop a consensus on their goals and how to achieve them."[37] In the case of the landmine campaign, Williams' description of how ICBL members implemented action plans demonstrates the degree of diversity and teamwork within their network: "At every meeting, the group developed an action plan ... that that our people know what they should do next. They could choose to either do it in a big way or in a little way, but we were always clear about the next steps. It's a combination of letting them be free and giving them a little guidance."[38]

Second, while networks may or may not have an identifiable leader, teams tend to share leadership responsibilities. Shared leadership is also prevalent in TANs. As Bobby Muller of the ICBL remarked when informed of the Nobel Prize, "ICBL is a name given to the collective action of a lot of organizations. It doesn't exist as an organization. There is no president, vice president, secretary, treasurer; there's no board of directors."[39] This absence of hierarchal positions demonstrates effective leadership sharing.

Teams also create their own unique sense of identity. This identity often manifests itself as a "team spirit" or group persona which bonds the members together and reinforces their sense of purpose and belonging. The "storyline" or narrative that creates a shared identity and purpose for network members parallels this team spirit.[40] Finally, diversity serves as one of the hallmarks of dynamic and creative teams. Diversity broadens perspective and generates innovative ideas. Diverse perspectives can prove particularly valuable for finding solutions to complex or long-standing problems. The most obvious source of diversity in transnational networks is the combination of "local roots" with "global links."[41]

While internal relationship-building helps transform members of a TAN into a team, external relationship-building, specifically coalition building, boosts its reach, resources, and impact. Tarrow and his colleagues defined coalitions as "collaborative, means-oriented arrangements that permit distinct organizational entities to pool resources in order to effect change."[42] The nascent ICBL consisted of six prominent NGOs. By 1996, it had grown to more than 1,000 NGOs. ICBL's relationship-building strategies included gaining the support of nation-states. Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy headed a group of "like-minded" small- and medium-sized nations that grew to more than 60 countries.

Coalition building between embedded local NGOs (operating in the domestic sphere) with TANs (operating in the global sphere) represents a formidable force and multiplies the influence of each. The "boomerang effect," identified by Keck and Sikkink, exemplifies how domestic NGOs – unable to influence their own government – partner with larger transnational networks which can apply external pressure to influence the government. Local NGOs provide the real-time, ground-level information to TANs. These global networks then use their expertise and credibility to design campaigns that can apply external pressure on a government. By circulating ideas and information from global sources to local communities, local NGOs expand the reach and penetration of TANs, and vice versa.

Circulating information and building relationships between the local and the transnational actors creates another powerful source of synergy – knowledge creation. Johnathan Bach and David Stark describe NGOs in general as occupying a particularly strategic position: "They work upwards with governments and corporations (i.e., through lobbying, media campaigns, protests and participation in policy processes) and downwards with local and marginalized populations (i.e., through in-country projects, training, re-granting and consciousness-raising)."[43] In many instances, NGOs are more than simply "information brokers;" instead, they facilitate knowledge, creating "knowledge communities," according to the scholars.[44]

Each of these features of team building has the potential to augment the network's overall communication effectiveness, thus enhancing its soft power. However, it is the internal relationship-building dynamics of team synergy combined with the additional resources gained through coalition building that give TANs their enormous influence. When coalitions of networks become a team, their collective resources are multiplied exponentially. Synergy multiplies, as opposed to simply

adding, the contributions and efforts of the network, creating a formidable source of soft power.

A final and critical source of synergy – which emerges as a result of internal team building and external coalition building – is the incorporation and use of diversity. As mentioned previously, diversity is an important component for creating the synergistic effect found in teams. Diversity is also important for robust networks. According to Krebs and Holley, uniting with others who share a similar goal but who bring new and different perspectives and suggestions, creates the ideal environment for an effective network: "Similarity helps the communication and building of trust, while diversity presents new ideas and perspectives."[45] Plus, as Krebs and Holley add, "To get transformative ideas you often have to go outside of your group."[46] The importance of diversity in networks comes from Granovetter's theory of the "strength of weak ties." According to Granovetter, the people with whom a person has weak ties are more likely to offer information which is unique rather than redundant, thereby making weak ties "information rich."[47]

By spanning across cultures, cultural diversity augments team-coalition synergy. Diversity allows a network to capitalize on the innovative contributions of the various cultural perspectives needed to address complex, multifaceted problems.[48] Often times, individual members with links to culturally disparate networks serve as "cultural bridges."

The network synergy is one of the most notable features of the landmine campaign, which was also known as the Ottawa process. In contrast to other conventional arms treaties that took a decade or more, the ICBL treaty moved through the process in an astounding 18 months. "The (Ottawa) process was very much like the departure of a train; it was set in motion by a coalition of pro-ban states, and undecided nations were encouraged to board the train or risk being left behind at the station. The train was moving fast ..."[49] Thus culture – rather than being an impediment or liability as in the case of the mass media – is an asset in that it represents a synergistic source of diversity for TANs.

Network strategy: Co-creating credibility, master narratives, and identity

The third dimension of the network communication approach rests on a network strategy that *uses* – rather than simply disseminates – information. TANs strategically use information to co-create credibility, master narratives and identity.

The quantity and quality of credible information that a TAN is able to gather and supply is directly related to its value and legitimacy as a

nonstate actor in the international arena. Local network participants on the ground play a critical role in supplying timely and detailed information to their transnational counterparts who are aggressively monitoring and channeling information within the larger global forum. This method of circulating information sharing is a key component of "information politics," or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically useable information and move it to where it will have the most impact.[50] Essential components of information politics include credibility and drama. "To be credible, the information produced must be reliable and well documented ... To gain attention, the information must be timely and dramatic."[51] To build credibility and drama, TANs draw on two types of information: facts (documented technical and statistical information) and testimony (personal stories of people affected by the issue).[52] Linking the two types of information, Keck and Sikkink argue, is crucial for motivating people to seek policy changes.

Because of the plethora of information sources, faulty or manipulated information has become easier and faster to expose. Information that is not credible can rebound negatively on a TAN, affecting its own credibility and image. Because credibility is among the most valuable strategic assets advocacy networks possess, their training materials and handbooks devote considerable attention to explaining the importance of credibility and how to achieve it. The "Human Rights Institution-Building" highlights the salient factors for NGO credibility: accuracy of information; independence (maintaining impartiality, objectivity); accountability (being able to answer for one's actions); commitment and perseverance; inclusiveness (ensuring that the affected community participates meaningfully in project planning and implementation); transparency (being open to scrutiny); and realism (proposing solutions and goals that are achievable).[53]

The handbook, prepared by the Fund for Peace in 1994 and subsequently translated into several languages, offers two important reminders about credibility. One, credibility, like trust, is developed over time. Two, credibility is based on perceptions held by others, not on self-proclamations made by the organization. "An organization may in fact believe that it is credible, but if those outside the organization do not perceive it that way, the group's ability to obtain information, mobilize support, etc. will be weakened."[54] Because credibility is based on perception, it is inherently subjective. Divergent audiences can sit at opposite ends of the spectrum in assessing the credibility of a source.

Along with using information to establish credibility, TANs draw on information to create a master narrative. A master narrative begins with

a simple storyline that defines the problem, villain, victim, and solution. Keck and Sikkink speak of this in terms of the strategic portrayal of a "causal story."[55] Arquilla and Ronfeldt called it the narrative function of networks.[56] In social movement literature, it is often referred to as "framing."[57] The tactics TANs use to develop a storyline parallel the basic steps or sequence of persuasion.[58] This persuasion sequence exposes how TANs generate a simple storyline and then transform it into a master narrative that has global traction – and do so in such a way that their credibility is not only maintained but enhanced.

The initial step in the persuasion sequence, called the attention step, asks that the communicator capture the attention of the audience and establish credibility. There are a variety of ways in which information can be used to draw attention. However, TANs' ability to generate attention without manipulating or distorting the information sets them apart. The notion of "venue shopping," is an example.[59] Rather than altering the content of the information, which may not resonate in one particular venue, a network searches for a more receptive political venue to introduce an issue, thereby effectively preserving the integrity of the information while enhancing its strategic potential. For example, if the issue of access to clean water is not receiving visibility within the environmental discourse, activists may shift venues to promoting it as a human right.

The next step is to present the problem in such a way that is personally relevant for the audience and makes them uncomfortable with status quo. The tactic of gathering testimonials, mentioned earlier as part of information politics, is strategic. Personal testimonials by people directly affected by a problem imbue cold, technical data with an interpersonal texture, transforming abstract facts or distant problems with the immediacy of human drama. Keck and Sikkink argue that "issues involving physical harm to vulnerable or innocent individuals appear particularly compelling."[60] The critical goal in defining a problem for a TAN is how effectively it can capture the shared human dimension that binds those directly affected with a distant public who will then feel compelled to respond to the problem with the same intensity as if they were the aggrieved public.

The satisfaction step in the persuasion sequence requires that the communicator present a solution. Proposing clear and viable solutions or courses of action is a critical component in framing debates. A skilled communicator will identify reasons or causes of a problem followed by possible solutions. The visualization step projects into the future to show benefits of solving the problem or consequences of not addressing

the problem. For an advocacy network to retain or augment its credibility, the proposed solutions must be viable and even pragmatic. The team-coalition synergy which can involve nation-states, as well as locally embedded but culturally diverse participants, appears instrumental in an advocacy network's ability to devise solutions.

This sequential process exposes how TANs develop their storyline. The act of defining the problem, the main characters – particularly the victim, villain, and hero – and the desired outcome generates the initial storyline. Elements that carry emotional resonance provide the story with the traction needed to propel it beyond a particular cultural setting. Once others can identify with the problem, victims, hero, or desired outcome, a TAN has developed the momentum needed to transform a simple *local* storyline into a *global* master narrative capable of crossing national and cultural borders.

The third way that TANs use information in a network strategy is by using the storyline as a springboard for creating a shared identity. Identifying the storyline elements has a two-fold, mutually reinforcing role within networks. First, a concrete storyline attracts new members to the network. People who identify with the storyline are more likely to join the network mission and goals. Identification also helps the members partake in a shared sense of identity and co-create a network identity. As Martin Kerns explains in his discussion of network-centric advocacy, "The story perpetuates attraction to the network and bolsters commitment of workers and volunteers ... unifying the common story adds strength to the social ties, reinforces participation and helps individual participants to create additional message volume."[61] This co-created, shared identity – apart from cultural or national identity – enables individuals to join and participate in a network that spans across national and cultural borders.

The ICBL demonstrates the network strategy of using and circulating information to establish credibility, identity, and a master narrative. The ICBL had network members on the ground in affected areas as well as in political discussions. Members on the ground provided first-hand accounts, testimonies and statistics for their counterparts to use in policy discussions. Members strategically used information to create a storyline. Whereas before the issue of landmines had been a military defense issue, ICBL used the tactic of venue shopping to transform it into a humanitarian issue. As a humanitarian issue, the basic storyline became landmines kill people (problem), people killed by landmines are the victims, those who use landmine are villains, and governments across the globe ought to ban landmines (solution).

The soft power differential: Mass communication and network communication

The most important feature to note about network communication approach and the three interrelated components is their sequence. In contrast to the mass communication approach, which *begins* with a pre-determined message, the network paradigm *ends* with the message or story. Rather than trying to design a message independent of the intended audience and then use the mass media as a communication channel to cross the cultural barrier, networks *first* establish the structure and dynamics for effective communication channels, *then* members collaborate to craft the message. Because the message or story is co-created across cultures, it is not tied to any one culture. Rather than acting as a barrier or impediment, culture is incorporated into network dynamics and becomes a rich source of team-coalition synergy. With the addition of network synergy, a local story can evolve into a global master narrative, carrying with it the soft power that attracts and persuades across national and cultural borders.

The differences inherent in the mass communication and network communication approaches make it so that the first approach results in wielding soft power and the second in creating it. The mass communication approach, the dominant approach in U.S. public diplomacy, is inherently an information-centered transmission strategy. It focuses on message content or the production and dissemination of information. U.S. public diplomacy is trying to use a mass communication approach to wield soft power – thus far with disappointing results. The network communication approach employed by TANs is inherently a relations-centered connective strategy. By using a network communication approach, these resource-poor actors are effectively creating soft (communication) power.

Adopting a network communication approach to create soft power – as opposed to wield soft power via mass communication – is more strategic today for several reasons. First, the network communication approach is a much closer strategic match to the underlying dynamics of global communication, which emphasize message exchange over message production and dissemination. Network communication trumps mass communication in terms of efficiency of message exchange. The multidirectional capability of network exchanges is vastly superior to the mass media, which are primarily unidirectional with filtered feedback.

Second, a large part of creating soft power through the network communication approach is achieved through the different view of

"messaging." The mass communication approach relies on pre-defined, static messages crafted by the source and delivered to a passive receiver. The source tries its best to anticipate and respond to the audience's reaction to the message, but once the message leaves the source, the creator has very little, if any, control over how it is received. In contrast, the network communication approach views "messaging" as a creative, participatory process. No one source creates or controls a storyline. It is co-created and dynamic. More important than creating a "winning story" (message content) is building strong relationships (message exchange). By focusing first on message exchange, and then co-creating message content, these communicators retain the currency of the message content as it crosses national and cultural borders.

Third, the network communication approach of creating soft power draws upon culture as a positive force. From the perspective of wielding soft power, culture is an obstacle to overcome. As the earlier diagram illustrated, messages delivered over the mass media are particularly vulnerable to distortions as they pass through an invisible cultural filter. Whereas the mass media magnifies cultural differences, network communication structures tend to absorb and integrate cultural diversity. Network connections and the process of message exchange serve as boundary spanners across cultures. This ability to break through cultural walls, in an era of heightened cultural identity, gives network communication the edge over mass communication.

Finally, creating soft power can generate its own campaign momentum. Using the mass media to wield soft power requires a sustained effort on the part of the source to actively control and maintain campaign momentum. On rare and fortunate occasions, a campaign can generate a "buzz" in the audience that accelerates the communication mileage of the campaign. However, most campaigns require the source to keep the campaign going and audiences engaged. One of the most powerful aspects of network communication is its synergistic capacity. The more an actor can actively maintain and expand message exchange, the more likely the process of exchanging message can generate a momentum of its own and ultimately reach more people by using the mass media. Table 5.1 below summarizes the soft power differential between the dynamics of a mass communication and network communication approach. The network communication approach used primarily by nonstate actors to create soft power offers valuable insights for nation-states, and particularly the United States. During the post-9/11 period, most U.S. analysts focused on mass communication elements: the media (i.e., how to defeat Al-Jazeera), messages (i.e., how

Table 5.1 Soft power differential.

	Mass communication	**Network communication**
	Wielding soft power	**Creating soft power**
Actor	Nation-state	NGO (transnational advocacy network)
Goal	Message design and delivery	Message exchange
Focus	Information dissemination	Relationship-building
Communication channel	Mass media	Network
Information flow	Unidirectional	Multidirectional
Message	Pre-formed, static	Co-created, dynamic
Source credibility	Tied to nation-state/source	Co-created, dynamic
Audience	Passive	Active
Culture	Cultural barrier	Incorporate cultural diversity
Campaign momentum	Must be sustained by organization	Draws on network synergy

to frame the message) and image (i.e., how to raise the U.S. favorability rating). Until recently, media, messages, and image were the critical elements that defined the communication and political challenges. Today, they have been replaced by strong credibility, relationships, and networks. Network communication underscores the importance of relationship-building and focuses on message exchange over message content. For this reason, network communication, similar to more basic level dialogue and exchange programs, is likely to become prominent and sophisticated. Those who master connective, relational, and networking strategies will have the edge in the global communication era.

Understanding the underlying dynamics of network communication is critical if U.S. public diplomacy is to safeguard its position and policies in the international arena vis-a-vis network actors – both state and nonstate. While there are relatively few states with a pronounced networking strategy as part of their public diplomacy,[62] there are numerous highly networked nonstate actors. Some observers see the relationship between the state and nonstate actors as cooperative and positive. Jody

Williams of ICBL described the Ottawa Process as a "new model of diplomacy ... that makes smaller and mid-size countries working together with civil society a potential superpower."[63] Another veteran observer, Lester Salamon similarly characterized the relationship as more cooperative than conflictual.[64] Others do not see the relationship as so harmonious or nonstate actors – particularly networked actors – as so benign. As Castells quipped: "Networks, as social forms, are value-free or neutral. They can kiss or kill; nothing personal."[65] The phenomenon of netwars, as Arquilla and Ronfeldt warn, will not likely be a "passing fancy," and "as the information revolution spreads and deepens around the world, instances of netwar will cascade across the spectrum of conflict and crime."[66] This same reasoning implies that netpolitiks is likely to intensify in the political arena as well.

The more nonstate actors employ network communication, the more adept and sophisticated they are likely to become. U.S. public diplomacy, to operate effectively in an environment of highly networked and agile players, will need to become equally masterful in relational and networking strategies. In an era of network connectivity and interactivity, the greatest potential threat that the United States faces is being blindsided by highly networked transnational advocacy NGOs that will isolate and force the United States into an exposed or vulnerable position. For U.S. public diplomacy, this communication threat is as likely politically as the al-Qaeda network already is militarily.

Understanding the dynamics of how connectivity and interactivity have shifted public diplomacy from message content to message exchange is part of the impact of the global communication on public diplomacy. Another major dynamic, alluded to in this chapter, is the impact of culture. To be strategic in the global communication with culturally diverse publics requires keeping alert to invisible cultural barriers that may undermine public diplomacy initiatives. The next chapter explores some of the parameters and forces of culture and how they intervene in U.S. public diplomacy.

6
Communication, Culture, and Identity in Public Diplomacy

As international relations expand from nation-states to include more non-state actors, and communication and commerce erase national borders, culture becomes the new frontier for defining identities as well as allegiances. Culture is integral to communication between nations and foreign publics. Cultural diversity is also a defining feature of the global communication era. This chapter contrasts the wave of interest in culture that spread across international relations studies, with the relative narrow view of public diplomacy on culture as a tool, product, or vehicle for communication. Missing is the role of culture as a force that shapes and defines a nation's communication. U.S. public diplomacy appears to have its distinct style of communicating. This chapter explores some of the cultural features of U.S. public diplomacy and concludes with ways U.S. public diplomacy can develop a multicultural approach to help guard against unintended identity challenges with culturally diverse publics.

Culture in international relations and public diplomacy

Soon after the 9/11 attacks, when Americans were still asking, "Why do they hate us?" the refrain "clash of civilizations" slipped into public discourse. President Bush's use of the term "crusade" when launching the U.S. war on terrorism, and the Islamic world's perception that the war was being waged against Islam helped fuel the clash of civilizations thesis advanced by Samuel Huntington. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, Huntington hypothesized that the fundamental source of conflict will not be ideological or economic, but cultural.[1] He argued that civilizations, rather than nation-states, had become the primary source of identity and that the cultural fault lines dividing seven major civilizations would become the critical source of conflict.

Huntington's piece may be among the most prominent, if not most controversial, scholarly pieces highlighting the crucial role of culture in international relations (IR). Yet, rather than being a new phenomenon, some scholars argue that culture has always been an integral aspect of IR studies,[2] albeit a neglected aspect.[3] The 1990s witnessed a surge in IR scholarship on culture and its connection to identity. Michael J. Mazarr in his 1996 review of literature, called the focus on culture "the newest fad sweeping the literature on international relations, security studies, and international economics."[4]

Despite the growing interest in culture over the past decade, IR scholars still struggle with a conceptual definition. This is understandable. Within the discipline of anthropology, which is devoted to the study of culture, scholars have yet to agree on a universal definition.[5] Within the IR literature, variations on the term also exist, but all descriptions speak to the idea of culture as a set of values and beliefs that shape behaviors and perceptions.[6] While it is not possible within the scope of this discussion to survey the explosion of IR scholarship on culture, it is important to highlight some salient points to provide context for public diplomacy, and specifically U.S. public diplomacy.

The overwhelming majority of IR scholars suggest that the focus on culture will become more prominent in IR studies in the future. Many link the rise of cultural awareness with the end of the Cold War that masked cultural identities and grouped countries into either the United States or the Soviet bloc.[7] Other scholars credit the spread of globalization with stimulating greater cultural awareness. Benjamin Barber highlighted the complex interaction between globalism and local, tribal, and cultural identities in *Jihad vs. McWorld*.[8]

In comparative politics, the early works on "civic culture"[9] and "political culture"[10] drew attention to the role of culture in shaping political discourse and practices. In his 1956 seminal essay, Gabriel Almond spoke of political culture in terms of patterns of cognitive, affective, and evaluative political orientations.[11] Political orientations are influenced by such factors as traditions, historical memories, motives, norms, emotions, and symbols. Political culture has been used to explain the behavior of states and their leaders as well as foreign policy decision making.[12] Differences of political culture have been associated with cross-cultural misperceptions in foreign policy and international relations.[13]

In the area of peace and security studies, strategic culture incorporates cultural perceptions of threat, the use of force, and collective identities as a means for explaining security issues and actors' behavior. Scholars argue that traditional theories of IR, which focus on the balance of

power, containment, and deterrence, do little to explain the influence of culture on the behavior of states in the post-Cold War period. Peter Katzenstein, for example, contends that norms, culture, and identity have become increasingly salient in understanding security environments and strategies.[14]

Scholars studying conflict management are also turning to culture to understand how conflicts are perceived and managed around the globe.[15] As Christopher Leeds pointed out in his review of recent studies, the principles and practices once thought to be universal are actually Western and are not shared by other cultural groups.[16]

Within the study of traditional diplomacy, scholars are increasingly looking beyond the "diplomatic subculture" once thought to be shared among negotiators and have begun to explore cultural variations in negotiation assumptions and styles. Indian researcher R. P. Anand suggested treaties and other agreements between and among nations provided important cultural insights in that the very act of negotiating and compromising revealed aspects of a culture's most fundamental principles.[17] Scholars have noted differences between negotiating styles that tend to focus on procedure, concrete details, factual statements, and statistical information, and those that are characterized by emotion, exaggeration, imagery, ambiguity, and reference to history.[18]

Increasingly, scholars are highlighting culture's influence not only on political beliefs and behavior but also on identity.[19] "Identities," proposes Chris Farrands, "are complex webs of culture, economic necessity, political choice, experiences, and expectations."[20] He powerfully underscores the significance of identity to international relations:

> Our identity is not simply a nice question of where we feel comfortable. Our identity is about who we would kill, who we would kill for, what kind of moral community we identify with, or to touch on the greatest taboo, whom we would eat.[21]

The power of identity to define who we would kill or eat is perhaps why understanding identity has received increasing attention in peace and security studies.[22] Traditionally, identity has been linked to the nation-state, that is, "national identity." Globalization, however, has disrupted those links between identity and territorial-base entities such as nation-states.[23] Today's identity dynamics, suggests Richard Davies, are "played out both above and below, as well as at the level of the state."[24]

Religion is another feature related to culture and identity that is receiving renewed attention. The recognition of the role religion plays in

defining collective identities and conflicts has long been acknowledged, but largely and deliberately ignored in Western IR scholarship until recently.[25] The 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which concluded the religious wars that had plagued Europe, first codified the nation-state system and then relegated religion to the internal domain of the state. The result of "Westphalia's legacy," opine John Carlson and Erik Owens, was to effectively banish religion from international relations.[26] After 9/11, the religious undertones in the war on terrorism have reinserted religion back into the realm of international relations. What is particularly interesting about the return of religion to IR studies is that the Westphalian cultural prism that defines mainstream IR studies is derived from a unique, historical experience of Western Europe. Religion has always been central to the politics and statehood in other regions of the globe. While religion has been viewed as a main source of cultural conflict, other scholars contend that greater understanding of religion can help mitigate conflicts.[27]

Explicit and implicit culture in U.S. public diplomacy

Culture, identity, and religion are all critically important to public diplomacy. In much the same way that culture shapes a nation's political culture, policies, negotiating style, or conflict management approach. Culture also greatly influences a nation's public diplomacy strategies and tactics. Yet, unlike the wave of cultural awakening in other areas of international relations, public diplomacy appears to be only skimming the surface of the connection between culture and public diplomacy. Culture is primarily discussed as an explicit product or a tool, but rarely as an implicit attribute or force that shapes a nation's public diplomacy and communication with others in the international political arena.

The view of culture as a product is evident in the extensive public diplomacy literature on cultural diplomacy. Milton Cummings defined cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding."[28] Other aspects of culture include music, film, literature, language, dance, and drama. These aspects of culture that people can observe, listen to, or talk openly about represent the explicit side of culture. Anthropologists might refer to them as artifacts, manifestations, or even expressions of culture. In the context of cultural diplomacy, these expressions of culture can be seen as cultural products that countries can exchange, promote, or even export.

While cultural diplomacy may highlight the notion of exchange of cultural products, nations appear keener to export their cultural products

via cultural diplomacy rather than facilitate a mutual exchange. In a multicountry study of cultural diplomacy, the most frequent goals nations sought to achieve in promoting their cultural products were "to tell their own stories or to project their images and values abroad."[29] Joseph Nye included culture as one of the three primary sources of a nation's soft power.[30] Nye's conception of culture includes high culture (i.e., literature and art), popular culture (e.g., mass entertainment), and cultural values. In places where a nation's culture is perceived as attractive, culture represents a soft power resource.

Within U.S. public diplomacy circles, the promotion of U.S. culture has received increasing attention.[31] A 2005 U.S. Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy described cultural diplomacy as "the linchpin of public diplomacy."[32] Some analysts, such as Cynthia Schneider, suggest that cultural diplomacy can be more effective than the information efforts of public diplomacy.[33] Many of the recent works by former U.S. Information Agency (USIA) officials underscore how the open and vigorous promotion of U.S. cultural products during the era of the Cold War proved to be a public diplomacy asset.[34] Helena Finn called cultural diplomacy "vital to U.S. national security," arguing that U.S. cultural diplomacy played a critical role in penetrating the iron curtain and that the United States should use it to meet U.S. objectives in the Islamic world.[35]

Unfortunately, a similarly aggressive strategy may not be as effective today as it was with predominantly Eastern Europeans during the Cold War era. For one, U.S. culture has saturated the international market. Historically, U.S. government policies have tended to favor trade in cultural products and services, and the United States tends to dominate international trade in this area.[36] Rather than welcoming more U.S. cultural products, the international community has expressed concern with "American-style cultural globalization."[37] Another obstacle relates to the post-Cold War phenomenon described earlier as the resurgence of cultural awareness. Given this phenomenon, U.S. public diplomacy's attempts to promote American culture runs counter to people seeking to assert their own culture, and by extension, their cultural identity. Paradoxically, rather than fostering mutual understanding, aggressive cultural promotion can magnify cultural differences.

The view of culture as a tool is another theme, albeit less developed, in U.S. public diplomacy discussion. Culture is seen as a tool when cultural knowledge of the target population is gathered, analyzed, and used to develop public diplomacy programs. The thinking is, the greater the cultural knowledge, the more effective the public diplomacy initiatives will be. Former USIA Director Joseph Duffy incorporated cultural

knowledge into his definition of public diplomacy: "Public diplomacy is the studied attempt to understand foreign cultures and institutions so as to enhance the communication and advocacy of the national goals and interests of the United States."[38]

As the above quotes illustrate, the USIA viewed cultural knowledge as vital. Cultural knowledge appeared equally important to U.S. public diplomacy in the post-9/11 period, especially given the cultural disparity between the U.S. government and the audiences in the Arab and Islamic world. Yet, as analyst, Michael Vlahos observed, "America's vision of the situation and cultural context was just plain wrong," allowing "the enemy to turn our own work against us."[39]

The lack of cultural knowledge of the Arab and Islamic world may stem from several factors. First, when the USIA was dissolved in 1999, rather than retaining the link between gathering information and creating information products, the two were split into separate and disconnected functional areas. Another observation made by analysts was the Bush administration's reluctance to draw on the cultural or regional specialists. "In the game plan for the Arab and Islamic world, most of the government's veteran Middle East experts were largely shut out."[40] Finally, quantitative polling data appears to be the primary means for understanding the target audience rather than qualitative research studies that could explain cultural perceptions. All the major reports on U.S. public diplomacy heavily reference public opinion polls from the Arab and Islamic countries but are glaring in their omission of culturally nuanced insights. What is interesting about several of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives is that research on the Arab publics were analyzed from an American perspective, rather than the audience's perspective. The problem was not a lack of information but the differing cultural perspectives used to interpret the information.

Secretary Charlotte Beers, responsible for the *Shared Values* initiative, was roundly criticized for her lack of cultural understanding of her target audience. However, her successors also appeared culturally clueless. Many observers commented on the lack of cultural awareness during Secretary Karen Hughes' high-profile listening tour to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (Chapter 2). In 2004, before becoming Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice touched on the need for greater cultural awareness and understanding beyond polling data;

> Americans also need to hear the stories of the people of the Muslim world. We need to understand their challenges and their cultures and their hopes; to speak their languages and read their literature; to know their cultures in the deepest sense. Our interaction must be a

> conversation, not a monologue. We must reach out and explain, but we must also listen.[41]

U.S. public diplomacy has taken pains to analyze the communication style of the Arab culture and has tried to tailor U.S. communication accordingly. However, understanding the culture of the audience represents only one side of the cross-cultural communication equation. Culture influences all communication participants equally: communicators as well as audiences. To focus exclusively on the other culture is to remain vulnerable to the influences of one's own culture.

Unfortunately, U.S. public diplomacy appears blind to the role culture plays in U.S. communication with others in the international arena. Many U.S. officials argue that they are neutrally communicating information, even objective, accurate, and truthful information. However neutral U.S. public diplomacy may believe its communication to be, it is the very way that the information is gathered, interpreted, packaged, and sent that reflects a distinctly U.S. cultural style of public communication. U.S. public diplomacy is not "culture free," but rather, as Edward T. Hall might say, "culture bound." While U.S. officials appeared oblivious of this, foreign publics have found it glaring. U.S. public diplomacy cannot hope to communicate effectively with culturally diverse publics until it understands the implicit or unspoken side of U.S. culture as a force that shapes dominant patterns and preferences in the way the United States communicates with others.

Cultural underpinnings of U.S. public diplomacy

As a political and communication-based activity, public diplomacy is doubly influenced by culture. As illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, culture permeates the various areas of IR and politics. Culture plays an equally powerful role in shaping communication. As intercultural scholars John Condon and Fathi Yousef noted, "We cannot separate culture from communication, for as soon as we start to talk about one we are almost inevitably talking about the other, too."[42]

Culture guides the three critical variables in communication: verbal and nonverbal communication, and perception. Culture provides the meaning for the various forms of communication behaviors, such as spoken language or nonverbal gestures, as well as the rules and norms that govern when and how to use these behaviors. Culture shapes perception by focusing attention on what merits communication significance and by delineating the parameters for interpreting communication behaviors and events.

While it is critically important for a nation to be able to recognize its own dominant cultural, political, and communication patterns as well as how those patterns differ from other cultures, doing so may pose particular difficulty for U.S. scholars and officials. U.S. scholars are literally immersed in a predominately Western and even U.S.-dominated cultural perspective in both communication and IR studies. Surveys of IR scholarship from 1977 to present reveal that U.S. scholarly output was and still is overwhelming compared with the European production.[43] Communication studies have similarly been dominated by U.S. scholars. As the former president of the International Communication Association, Peter R. Monge observed, "The preponderance of contemporary communication theory has been developed from the singular perspective of the United States."[44] Monge ranked the need to explore the diversity of perspectives on what constitutes communication in various cultures as the field's most pressing issue.

The predominance of U.S. scholarship in both communication and IR studies increases the likelihood of double-blinded cultural analysis. It is possible to expose the cultural underpinnings of U.S. public diplomacy by exploring the dominant overarching cultural views of communication. All cultures and nations view communication as important, yet they view communication in fundamentally different ways. Similarly, how cultures view communication – its purposes and goals – influences what aspects they stress in their own communication and how they perceive or understand the communication of others. Intercultural scholars have highlighted several overarching perspectives of cultural patterns.

Individualism/independent and collectivism/interdependent

The first overarching view of communication is represented by the individualism/collectivism cultural continuum.[45] Harry Triandis called "individualism-collectivism" the single most important dimension of cultural differences in social behavior.[46] He estimated that 70 percent of the world's population holds a collectivist cultural perspective.[47]

Indeed, individualism has been the most frequently cited enduring feature of U.S. culture. Alexis de Tocqueville coined the term while writing about his visit to America in the 1830s.[48] Over a century later, Robert N. Bellah's study of American society, *Habits of the Heart*, asserted that "Individualism lies at the very core of American culture."[49] During the numerous global opinion polls throughout the post-9/11 period,

individualism stood out as the defining characteristic that distinguished Americans from the world.[50]

Individualism places a corresponding emphasis upon individual rights, self-reliance, and independence.[51] Edward Stewart, in one of the most comprehensive analyses of dominant U.S. cultural patterns, described the autonomous individual as a "concrete point of reference" for most Americans.[52] Personal accomplishments are important and individuals will take advantage of opportunities for advancement even if it means sacrificing personal relations. Group cohesion, without expressed consent, is often negatively interpreted as group pressure that impinges on the individual freedom.

Parallel to individualism that stresses the interests of the individual over the group, collectivism stresses the interests of the group over the individual. Societies with a collectivist preference put a premium on group harmony, cohesion, and stability.[53] Individuals pay primary attention to the needs of their group and will sacrifice personal opportunities. Tending to relationships often supersedes individual accomplishments.

The structure of relationships also differs. Whereas individualist societies tend to prefer horizontal (peer) relationships, collectivist societies tend to be more comfortable with vertical (power) relationships. In individualist societies, relationships tend to be utilitarian, short-term or transitory, and often explicitly defined via public statements or written contracts. In collectivist societies, relationships tend to be long term, based on trust or historical context, and are often implicitly acknowledged by both parties. Whereas individualists will readily join a group for personal benefit, in collectivist societies people may make a strong distinction between in-groups (family, tribe, and corporation) and out-groups. Because the in-group protects the individual, the in-group receives the individual's loyalty while out-groups tend to be held with suspicion. While people in collectivist societies strongly encourage cooperation within the in-group, they tend to be poor joiners of new groups.

The broad cultural distinctions between individualism and collectivism impact communication in several ways.[54] Min-Sun Kim is among a new generation of scholars to explore in greater detail non-Western perspectives of human communication.[55] Several of her observations about independent (individualist) perspective of communication provide insight into how U.S. public diplomacy may be misperceived by publics in interdependent (collectivist) societies.

The first observation relates to the notion of truth.[56] As Min-Sun Kim notes, in independent cultures, truth is thought of as an absolute state,

equal and applicable to all. In contrast, interdependent cultures see truth as rooted in the social context, which suggests what is appropriate, valid, and accurate. U.S. public diplomacy, particularly in its information broadcasts, has taken pains to stress truth, accuracy, and objectivity in its communication. The U.S. assumption of truth is not only that it would be self-evident but also valued. Much to the chagrin of U.S. officials, U.S. public diplomacy's vigorous efforts "to get the truth out" have had seemingly little if any impact.[57]

Another observation relates to the value of individual initiative versus maintaining social harmony. People in independent cultures tend to act according to their own attitudes and beliefs, whereas people in interdependent cultures are more accustomed to acting according to social demands.[58] Researchers found that while the term "unique has positive connotations of freedom and independence" for independent cultures, the term "conformity has positive connotations of connectedness and harmony" for interdependent cultures.[59] Given the negative connotation of conformity in independent cultures, the corresponding counter drive is to stand out from the crowd. Bellah referred to the U.S. icon of the "lone cowboy" in his treatise on U.S. individualism. The cowboy "gains value to society only because he is a completely autonomous individual who stands outside it."[60] Whereas standing out alone may be valued in independent cultures, interdependent cultures tend to view it as "sign of immaturity" in that the person is unable to control his individual impulses, or as "selfish and disloyal" in that the person disrupts social harmony.[61] Given these widely discrepant views of standing out versus maintaining harmony, U.S. public diplomacy that stresses its bold individual initiatives can be perceived quite negatively by interdependent publics which value social harmony.

A third observation relates to differences between individual control and social control. For independent cultures, the locus of control resides in the individual. Faced with challenges, the individual through his own effort, determination, and optimism can succeed against the odds. The possibility of success through effort and optimism is a recurring theme in U.S. public diplomacy. For example, two of Hughes' public diplomacy goals, "spreading hope" and initiating "empowerment" programs, are tied to this individualistic theme, while the "success stories" serve as proof of their value. Whereas independent cultures put the locus of control in the individual, interdependent cultures place control in the social context. The autonomous power of an individual is comparatively minor to that of the social power of the group. Change and control is at the level of social institutions. Given this discrepancy, it is

not hard to understand U.S. frustration in promoting and implementing initiatives based on individual "effort and optimism," as well as U.S. reluctance in building social institutions. From an interdependent perspective, capacity building and strengthening civil society may not only be more important than individual empowerment, but a prerequisite. This relates to the problem of sustainability. Individual change and empowerment is difficult to fully sustain without social change.

The combination of multiple factors inherent in the disparate independent and interdependent views of communication could account for U.S. public diplomacy's most pressing problem: the U.S. credibility deficit.[62] U.S. public diplomacy appears to be trying to establish and maintain its credibility based on individualistic, independent assumptions, particularly its notions of truth as self-evident and standing out and apart from the crowd. These are assumptions clearly not shared by interdependent cultures. These notions clash with many in the international community who subscribe to interdependent assumptions about relative truth and the value of group harmony and cooperation.

Transmission and ritual view of communication

A second major overarching view of communication, which stems from cultural differences, is the transmission and ritual view.[63] James W. Carey proposed and described these two views in his seminal essay, "A Cultural Approach to Communication."[64] According to the transmission view, "communication is the transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control ... It is defined by terms such as 'imparting,' 'sending,' 'transmitting,' or 'giving information to others.' "[65] The transmission view is rooted in the transportation metaphor, said Carey. The movement of goods or people and the movement of information were, as he noted, both described by the common English noun "communication." Thus, he opined that it was only natural for Americans to think of communication as transmission. At the "deepest roots of our thinking," he said in reference to the American culture, "we picture the act of communication as the transmittal of information across space."[66]

In contrast to the transmission view of "imparting information," the ritual view focuses on "the representation of shared beliefs."[67] The ritual view, as its name implies, is rooted in the metaphor of religious rituals, the "sacred ceremony that draws persons together in fellowship and commonality." Rituals, as communication activities, connect and solidify social relations. Indeed as Carey noted about the ritual view, "nothing new is learned, but a particular view of the world is portrayed."[68]

Communication scholar Mark Giese, in his study of digital music sharing as a form of ritual communication, suggested most of today's mass media entertainment products, including popular movies, videos, television programs, and recorded music, are "ritual-dominant."[69] Rather than transmitting new information, these communication activities are about representing shared beliefs and building fellowship or commonality.

While the ritual view may be the dominant perspective in many parts of the globe and especially collectivist cultures, the transmission view is the dominant view in the U.S. culture. The transmission view is so fundamental to U.S. communication study that it is often hard to envision or even speak of communication that is not about sending or receiving messages. All major definitions of communication describe a process of sending or transmitting something (ideas, information, feelings, etc.), hence the communication shorthand: sender-message-receiver.[70]

The centrality of transmitting information and conveying messages in U.S. communication scholarship is echoed in U.S. public diplomacy's communication with foreign publics. In fact, transmission is central to the definition of U.S. public diplomacy as well as the goal of telling our story.[71] Understanding, as discussed earlier, serves as a tool for designing more effective messaging strategies, while influencing speaks to public diplomacy as an instrumental or goal-driven activity.

Perhaps, as Carey argues, Americans are more familiar with the transmission view that they may tend to overlook or undervalue the ritual view of communication activities. However, as communication scholar Denis McQuail pointed out, ritual plays an important role in unifying and mobilizing sentiment and action. Ritual communication activities can be equally as persuasive as transmission communication. U.S. politicians engage in ritual communication when they exploit the use of potent symbols and latent appeals to cultural values, togetherness, myths, or tradition.[72] Jay Rosen of New York University on his weblog *PressThink* urged (U.S.) journalists, who tend to see the transmission of new information as real and important, to pay more attention to the ritual communication in their coverage of the 2004 Democratic National Convention. As he cautioned, "If you try to understand a political ritual with a transmission view in your head, you will miss much of what's going on."[73] In other words, he was advising U.S. journalists to look behind the messages and pay attention to the symbolism of the political rituals at the convention as communication.

Rosen's cautionary note against trying to understand a ritual communication from a transmission viewpoint – or vice versa – applies to U.S. public diplomacy as well. U.S. public diplomacy sometimes misses

much of what is going on in its communication with publics who have a ritual communication perspective. An illustrative example is Al-Hurra television station. U.S. officials saw the station as a vehicle for transmitting information and overlooked the rituals of television viewing that can shape how information is perceived by the audiences.

The distinction between ritual and transmission view of communication relates closely to the early cultural distinctions that Edward T. Hall found. Hall differentiated between high- and low-context cultures to explain how much meaning people place on the message itself versus the context of the message. He said low-context cultures such as the United States place very little meaning in the context or setting and tend to focus on the message. In other words, the communication weight falls on the message content. The communicator is responsible for the full meaning of their messages and any misunderstandings that may result. U.S. communication analyses, in turn, tend to focus primarily on message content, to assuage the significance or persuasiveness of the communication.

In contrast to the U.S. low-context culture, much of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Arab world are populated by high-context cultures. Communication in high-context cultures is rooted more in the context than the message. As Hall cautioned, "Most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message."[74] In other words, one cannot rely on message content alone to understand what actually was communicated. A message is hollow without examining the contextual cues such as the communicator's status, credibility, timing, delivery style, selected format, or multiple audiences. As Hall observed, high-context speakers often will talk around the point, in effect "putting all the pieces in place except the crucial one."[75] Audiences in high-context cultures draw upon well-honed skills of using such contextual cues to decipher the true meaning of the message as well as the speaker's intent. U.S. analysts tend to focus predominantly on the explicit meaning.

This discrepancy between low- and high-context communication styles has been particularly problematic for U.S. understanding about what carries significance or meaning in communication in the Arab world. Operating from a low-context cultural perspective, U.S. analysts often focus on message content of Arab leaders (i.e., official speeches, documents, or statements). Yet, Arab speakers, operating from a high-context perspective, tend to bury their intended meaning in the communication context leading to misinterpretation by U.S. analysts. Such misinterpretations can be particularly costly during times of

heightened tensions when the tendency of embedding meaning and face saving may be particularly acute for an Arab leader, while drive for clarity may be the goal of U.S. analysts.

Similarly, U.S. public diplomacy initiatives that focus on content such as "core messages" may fail to register with publics who have a ritual view of communication. However strategically a message may be designed, its ultimate meaning is determined by context. Because message context can override content, no matter how positive the content is, if the message context is negative, then the message content is likely to be discounted or its opposite meaning assumed. Similar to ritual communication, focusing on message content misses where the actual communication meaning lies.

Challenges of identity and culture in public diplomacy

All of the differences in cultural patterns have the potential to cause misunderstanding and misperceptions of U.S. public diplomacy. The more that is known about the underlying cultural assumptions that shape U.S. public diplomacy, the more culturally alert U.S. officials will be to potential unshared communication assumptions that can cause a public diplomacy initiative to fail, or worse, backfire. Whereas ineffective initiatives involve cultural misunderstanding about communication patterns and styles, initiatives that backfire often involve issues tied to cultural identity.

A public diplomacy initiative might be considered ineffective if it simply fails to resonate with a foreign public in the same way the planners hoped it would. Ineffective initiatives are usually the result of a mismatch of cultural communication styles or preferences. An example was the high-gloss Arabic-language youth magazine called *Hi* magazine, which debuted in July 2003. While U.S. officials intended the magazine to be a vehicle for stimulating a dialogue, it is more likely that the audience perceived it as a foreign government-issued document. The initiative represented an information-centered approach using an impersonal print medium, while its intended audience has a more relations-centered approach and preference for aural/oral medium. The 2006 Government Accountability Office report featured picture of undistributed *Hi* magazines stockpiled in a Cairo storehouse which visually underscored the failure of the initiative. Ineffective public diplomacy initiatives often culminate in lost time, effort, and money.

There are several ways to guard against the costly mistakes of ineffective cross-cultural public diplomacy initiatives. The first is to conduct a cultural feasibility assessment. In much the same way that U.S. campaigners conduct a market feasibility assessment to determine the potential appeal of a product, U.S. public diplomacy planners would need to assess whether the approach, medium, and appeal have the potential to resonate positively with the culture of the public. The choice of a print medium for an oral culture appears to be an obvious cultural mismatch. In general, the use of the mass media or arm's length public diplomacy may not be the best approach if the public values personal contact. Knowing how cultural communication preferences and styles differ can alert planners to potential cultural mismatches, which can cause an initiative to be ineffective.

A second way to catch potentially ineffective initiatives is to field test the project – with the actual intended audience – before the initiative is officially launched. All the post-9/11 major U.S. public diplomacy initiatives intended for the Arab and Islamic regions were launched with great fanfare in the United States. Yet, they were received with much skepticism and criticism by the media and public in the regions. The two different reactions speak to U.S. public diplomacy's two culturally disparate audiences.

A third critical step for avoiding cultural missteps is maintaining an in-awareness perspective of the power of one's own culture in shaping and designing public diplomacy initiatives. Again, given the link between culture and communication, public diplomacy as a communication-based activity will contain buried bits of culture in each initiative. The *Shared Values* initiative, for example, was based on sound research, but suffered in its culturally mediated design and execution. The cross-cultural equation dictates being equally cognizant of one's own culture as well as the other culture.

Finally, given that even a targeted public diplomacy initiative eventually reaches a global audience with the help of today's technology, adopting a multicultural approach that incorporates multiple communication styles and preferences may offer the best, if not most challenging approach for creating effective initiatives that span across cultural zones. U.S. public diplomacy has tended to reflect a monocultural perspective. Developing a multicultural approach is the most challenging because it requires that communication planners step outside of an either/or communication perspective and skillfully blend multiple perspectives. One must not only be cognizant of one's own culture and other cultures, but also be able to blend them in such a way as to positively resonate across cultures.

More serious than ineffective public diplomacy initiatives that fail to resonate with publics are those that backfire, or produce negative unintended consequences. Often when an audience reacts in a highly negative or even hostile manner to a communication initiative, more than simply differences in cultural communication styles are implicated. Identity issues are involved. Much of the negative reaction to the *Shared Values* initiative was not about a direct versus indirect style or even the use of advertising medium. Instead, people were reacting to what they described as an erroneous "happy Muslim" identity portrayed in the advertisements.

All communication is inherently about identity.[76] The selection, organization, and presentation of verbal, nonverbal, visual, or audio elements as well as the communication medium all says something about how one party sees itself (own identity), the other (other's identity), and the relationship between the parties. The identity function of communication is evident at the individual or personal level. A person's word choice, phrasing, or tone of voice help provide a window into how the person views himself and wishes others to perceive him. These communication choices also can reveal the person's relative power and affinity with those he interacts.

The identity function is also readily apparent at the international level in traditional and public diplomacy, as both are communication-based activities. In his discussion of diplomacy as representation, Paul Sharp raises the centrality of identity in his discussion of "diplomacy as representation."[77] Sharp argues that "diplomats are engaged in the construction, maintenance, and representation of different identities to one another."[78] He points out that "representation is common to all actors in international relations,"[79] this includes powerful, rich state actors as well as comparatively weaker nonstate actors. All face the problem of producing and reproducing, or representing their identities to others.

Diplomatic communication used in traditional diplomacy has a variety of well-established tools that governments use to communicate or represent their identities. Diplomatic signaling, for example, highlights word choice, phrasing, and tone of an official statement, which can communicate volumes about how one nation views itself and other nations.[80] Diplomatic protocol and other conventions help diplomats navigate unintended slights to a nation's dignity (identity status). Via a shared diplomatic system, diplomats are able to negotiate with their counterparts and navigate cross-cultural misunderstandings in a way that they might not otherwise be able to if they were exposed to the glare of the media and public opinion. The secrecy and shared language

among professional diplomats that traditional diplomacy has long enjoyed is not a luxury accorded to public diplomacy.

By definition, the diplomatic counterpart or audience of public diplomacy is the general public of a foreign territory, not diplomats trained in the nuances of diplomatic signaling, protocol, or negotiations. In cross-cultural and multicultural *public* settings, the cues people and nations use to communicate and even negotiate identities are not shared. The different cultural communication patterns and styles represent different cultural cues for communicating identity. Cues can be misinterpreted, distorted, or missed entirely. Unfortunately, because of the out-of-awareness process with which all this occurs, cultural distortions in communication can result in perceived distortions of identity. Often when misunderstandings occur, the offender pleads that the communication was distorted (e.g., that is not what was meant). However, for the offended public, it is not a simple matter of distorted communication. When a public demands a correction or apology, they are reacting to what they perceive as a serious distortion of their identity. Such perceived distortions of identity strike at the core and threaten the very integrity of an individual or collective psyche. People will often respond to such perceived identity threats with an unexpected velocity and veracity that leave observers stunned.

In public diplomacy, the construction, maintenance, and representation of identities can be vastly more complex with far more serious repercussions than representations within the relatively confined sphere of the traditional diplomatic system. Because public diplomacy's representations of identities have the potential to ignite hostile public reactions, communication with culturally diverse publics demands a heightened sense of cultural awareness and precaution. In addition to the steps recommended for avoiding ineffective initiatives, public diplomacy practitioners can take additional precautions to safeguard against initiatives that can spark identity challenges.

First, in general, the greater the cultural disparity that exists between those who create the public diplomacy initiative and the intended audience, the greater the potential for cultural misunderstanding to occur. It is important to check cross-cultural differences on both sides of the communication equation. Public diplomacy practitioners need to guard against several dangerous pitfalls in particular. One is having buried assumptions or preconceived notions about the intended audience. Most people are able to pick up on biases or prejudices however much one tried to hide or disguise it. Publics are similarly tuned to foreign biases and prejudices.

If cultural disparities are compounded by perceived relationship tensions, cultural misperceptions will likely be interpreted negatively rather than positively. When relations are strained, publics tend to be less generous in giving the other the benefit of the doubt than if relations are strong. Also, publics tend to align current and future expectations with past perceptions. If public's previous communication experiences were overwhelmingly negative, the public is more likely to be predisposed to interpret a current communication initiative negatively. This phenomenon, known as selective perception, can prompt a public to view even goodwill gestures with skepticism.[81] The nature of the public's perceived relationship with an entity, including a foreign nation, thus can greatly influence the perceptions of another's image and action.

Second, public diplomacy practitioners need to carefully assess whether and how to use mass media channels. The misrepresentation or erroneous reproduction of identity can be magnified when mass media channels are used in public communication.[82] Public diplomacy, as a form of public communication, shares with public relations, advertising even journalism, the occupational hazard of unintentionally offending others through its production and projection of identity via the mass media. The 2005 uproar over the Danish media cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed is a ready example of how a perceived erroneous reproduction of identity can ignite a hostile public reaction.

Given the cultural gap and the U.S. preference for disseminating messages using mass media channels, the Washington-driven nature of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives are particularly susceptible to sparking perceived identity distortions. The United States has repeatedly missed important cultural cues. U.S. officials failed to grasp the impact of the *Newsweek* story about the desecration of the Holy Quran being flushed down a toilet. Muslims view the Holy book as a miracle from God. Some U.S. observers still do not grasp the implications of Abu Ghraib for people who value self-modesty in much the same way Americans value self-confidence.

Culture is integral to communication between nations and foreign publics. Public diplomacy practice and scholarship have suffered by considering culture primarily as a product or tool, rather than as a force that shapes and defines public diplomacy. Similar to individuals, nations appear to have their own distinct style of communicating. U.S. public diplomacy can enhance its effectiveness by being equally aware of culture's influence on U.S. communication and potential audiences. Because public diplomacy shares with traditional diplomacy the power of constructing, maintaining, and representing identities among the

actors in the international political arena, developing a multicultural approach to public diplomacy may help guard against unintended identity challenges with culturally diverse publics.

This and the previous two chapters have explored the underlying communication dynamics of the global communication era – connectivity, interactivity, and cultural diversity. These features explain how the communication dynamics have changed. The next two chapters lay a theoretical foundation at the various strategic levels to show how U.S. public diplomacy can become more sophisticated in its approach and how it needs to change in order to be strategically aligned to these underlying dynamics.

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Part III

Expanding the Vision of Strategic U.S. Public Diplomacy

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7
Strategy and Tactics: Conceptual Frameworks

As evident from the preceding chapters, the global communication era poses significant challenges for U.S. public diplomacy. Meeting those challenges requires not simply more public diplomacy, but a different vision of strategic public diplomacy. This chapter presents two frameworks for designing and analyzing an array of public diplomacy initiatives at the strategic and tactical levels. The frameworks are intended to provide greater clarity to the burgeoning field of public diplomacy where debates over what is and is not public diplomacy have surfaced. The frameworks presented here are not mutually exclusive nor is one better than the other. Instead, the frameworks represent complementary and equally critical approaches for developing an expanded vision of strategic public diplomacy.

From either/or to both

At times, the debate on U.S. post-9/11 public diplomacy has flowed in two crosscurrents. One current advocates that U.S. public diplomacy needs to be more forceful and strategic in getting its message out. Proponents of this side argue that U.S. public diplomacy can more effectively present its case by borrowing communication strategies and tactics from the private sector, specifically marketing and public relations. Given the critical security concerns and financial repercussions of anti-Americanism, strategies offered by the private commercial sector offer a convincing, if not immediate, solution to America's communication woes. The other current calls for "less talking" and "more listening." Proponents of this side argue that more attention should be given to promoting "dialogue" and "relationships."[1] The Aspen Institute's 2005 report called for a shift from "monologue" to "dialogue" and from "managing images" to "building relationships."[2] Cowan and Arsenault

advocated moving beyond monologue and even dialogue to a third layer of public diplomacy, namely collaboration.[3]

The debate between these two currents has perhaps created greater confusion than clarity, raising the fundamental question of what is public diplomacy. Is it about messaging or relationship-building? Is messaging better or more effective than relationship-building for healing U.S. public diplomacy's woes? For some, the gap is too large to bridge. For others, the preference for one approach over the other reinforces their argument for keeping the two approaches and views separate.

The assumption that public diplomacy needs to be either/or to be effective may be a faulty and limiting premise. Public diplomacy, like communication, is enriched by multiple perspectives. Holding dual if not multiple perspectives – simultaneously – may be a first step in expanding the vision of strategic public diplomacy. As a preliminary step in public diplomacy theory building, it is possible to synthesize major lines of research highlighting the dominant cultural views of communication and constructing two complementary communication frameworks for defining communication problems as well as types of public diplomacy initiatives that seek to solve those problems. One framework, the information framework, focuses on the design and dissemination of messages to solve communication problems and advance political objectives. The other framework, the relational framework, focuses on relationships to solve communication problems to advance political objectives.

Information framework

The information framework considers communication primarily a process of creating and transferring information from one entity to another to achieve a specific result. Information is the fuel that propels the engine of the public diplomacy initiative. Major activities revolve around gathering, analyzing, producing, and disseminating information.

The information framework reflects Carey's notion of transmission, the low-context focus on message, and the individualism ideal. Message content is the center or pivotal focus of the communication experience. Communication is seen primarily as information transfer from one individual entity (communicator) to another individual entity (audience). Both individual entities are separate and distinct, each with their own particular communication attributes. The communication challenge is how to design and deliver information that can connect the

two separate individual entities. Communicators conduct research on the other's attributes and design information and communication strategies accordingly.

From the information perspective, communication problems are seen primarily as information problems. Communication problems between people are due to insufficient, incomplete, or inaccurate information. This is why President Bush's statement is so particularly revealing in exposing the U.S. information-centered view of communication problems. "I am surprised that there is such misunderstanding. We have to do a better job of making our case." Either the other lacks information or has the wrong information. The perception of inaccurate information prompts the communicator to increase the volume of information, counterperceived inaccuracies, or try different message design and delivery strategies. The assumption is, if one can find the right information and fix the information shortcoming, then the communication problem can be solved.

With emphasis on information transfer, message design and delivery are critical. Messages are information capsules containing the ideas, knowledge, or emotions of one entity that needs to be transferred to the other entity. Given the need to avoid distortions in the transfer of information, message design stresses directness, clarity, and explicit linear organizational structures. In cases where the audience may be resistant to the messages, information is strategically manipulated to make them more persuasive and increase the likelihood of the audience accepting the message. However, the underlying message design is still linear and direct. Propaganda and advertising are based on a host of strategies and tactics for strategically designing persuasive messages.

In terms of message delivery, mass media channels are the ideal vehicles for transferring information to a large and geographically dispersed public. Mass media channels are also efficient: one can convey the most information to the most people in the least time.

Research in the information framework focuses on the individual components of the information transfer chain (sender-message-receiver) and the effects of the information transfer. Public opinion research and audience analysis are examples of information-centered research strategies for identifying and profiling potential receivers. These research data are used to formulate strategies for designing and delivering the messages to the "target audience" of the information initiative.

It is possible to use U.S. public diplomacy initiatives to highlight the dominant features of the information framework and public diplomacy initiatives. First, the most dominant feature is the central role

that designing and disseminating information plays in the initiative. Information is gathered and used in an effort to promote policies, advance political interests, enhance images, or engage publics to achieve the goals of an individual political sponsor. The U.S. definition of public diplomacy captures the information framework: "Public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through *understanding, informing, and influencing* foreign audiences."[4]

Tied to the central role of information are messaging strategies. The first critical questions of information initiatives are: What is our message? And, how do we get our message out? Because messages (information content) carry the communication weight, great emphasis is placed on selecting, structuring, and presenting the information to achieve a desired effect. Many of the prominent reports on U.S. public diplomacy stressed the importance of effective messaging strategies. The 9/11 Commission, for example, called on the U.S. government to "define the message" and offered its suggestion for themes in its 2004 report.[5] The 2007 U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication contained a series of "core messages."[6]

A second dominant feature of information initiatives is control. The political sponsor can unilaterally decide on the goal, message, time frame, channels, and target audience. The sponsor can also control the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative. Once the message is carefully crafted, the sponsor seeks to control the integrity and consistency of the message over various communication platforms. In an effort to control its message, the White House Office of Global Communication issues daily talking points. The State Department circulates similar talking points to its officials in the field.

A third dominant feature of information initiatives is the restricted or limited interaction between the political sponsor and the public. In information initiatives, the public is construed as the target audience. The audience is separate from the initiative sponsor and plays a passive or limited role. A passive audience plays no role in the planning or implementation of the initiative or the content of the information in a one-way flow of information. Alternatively, the audience may provide feedback, but the sponsor decides whether to incorporate that feedback.

Fourth, most information initiatives use a variety of communication channels to disseminate the information. For example, the State Department uses interpersonal communication (designated speakers), print (brochures, fact sheets, magazines), audio/visual (films, videos), print and broadcast mass media (newspapers, television, radio), and

electronic media (websites, e-mails, RSS feeds, podcasts). Broadcast and electronic media channels are particularly prized because they are information-efficient. A mass media controlled by the sponsor allows for control over message design and dissemination.

Finally, information initiatives are designed to achieve specific objectives, such as policy advocacy or image enhancement. Attempts are made to measure an initiative's success based upon these objectives. Common measurements of information initiatives include quantifying information output (number of brochures produced or programs aired) and audience reach (how many readers, listeners, or viewers). To measure the impact of the information output, public opinion polls assess changes in the audience's knowledge (details of a specific policy), attitude (more favorable national image), or behavior (more likely to support policies). Not surprisingly, public opinion surveys are the primary tool for evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. public diplomacy.

Credibility has become a particularly contentious issue for information initiatives. In today's highly competitive information environment, where political entities must vie for audience attention and message acceptance, credibility determines persuasive value. In the past, one could convince simply by manipulating the information. However, with the proliferation of diversified information sources, the audience readily detects and exposes attempts to manipulate information. Today, persuasion appears tied to establishing one's credibility, providing valuable information, and gaining audience trust and confidence. Failure to establish or retain credibility can undermine the effectiveness of information initiatives. Joseph Nye predicted that future communication battles will be "a contest of credibility."[7]

Types of information initiatives

There are different types of information initiatives. While all share a focus on information design and dissemination, the initiatives vary in terms of their level of control, persuasive emphasis, operational context, and communication channels. For example, while most information initiatives strive for control over message content, the degree of control can vary from relatively little (e.g., press conference in which the message is passed via the media to the public) to stringent (e.g., propaganda in which competing information sources are jammed, blocked, or distorted). Similarly, persuasive emphasis can range from expressed attempts to disseminate unbiased information (i.e., news broadcasts), to vigorous advocacy (e.g., information campaigns), to coercion (i.e., propaganda).

Below is a preliminary sketch of the major types of initiatives within the information framework. Some scholars might argue against placing the initiatives together under public diplomacy, particularly propaganda and nation branding.[8] The reason for doing so here is to highlight the dominant features of an information-based approach to communicating with foreign publics.

Propaganda

Propaganda is perhaps the oldest and most prominent type of information initiative that political entities use with publics.[9] Propaganda scholarship is extensive, with the first works emerging shortly after World War I (WWI).[10] Between 1945 and 1960, research on propaganda, persuasion, and opinion management laid the foundation of mass communication theory and the emergence of communication as a field of study in the United States.[11] The 1900s, in fact, was labeled the "century of propaganda."[12]

Prominent theorist, Leonard Doob of Yale University, who analyzed the 6,800-page document of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, argued against the idea of trying to define propaganda and instead advocated identifying its salient features.[13] Political propaganda represents the most extreme form of control over information design and dissemination in an attempt to cross over from public advocacy to coercion.[14] Typically, some aspects of the communication are hidden, be it the information source or alternative options. Several of the persuasive techniques add an emotional pressure to reduce the appeal of viable options and heighten compliance.[15] Deception, information control, and manipulation are strategic attributes of effective propaganda. When access to alternative or diverse information sources is limited, the audience is less able to detect discrepancies or determine the validity of the information. Once exposed, propaganda tends to lose its persuasive value. Among the few contexts in which propaganda remains operational are closed communication environments (e.g., dictatorship) or chaotic and conflict-ridden environments (e.g., government coup, civil unrest, or armed conflict). In today's open communication arena, with its plethora of diverse information sources, propaganda using traditional media may be increasingly difficult to employ. However, research on cyber warfare suggests cyberspace may well be propaganda's new frontier.[16] According to a recently declassified U.S. military report, Information Operations (which include public affairs, public diplomacy, and PSYOP[17]) "is now critical to military success and will only become more so in the foreseeable future."[18]

International broadcasting

International broadcasting represents another prominent information-based initiative. The content, typically news, commentary and information programming are developed by the sponsoring government and disseminated over government-controlled channels or partner stations. International broadcasts allow a nation to ensure that its message is delivered to the public unaltered. International broadcasts tend to reflect the views of the sponsoring nation, either explicitly such as the U.S. Radio Free Europe, or implicitly via the selection, tone, and phrasing of information content. While government-sponsored broadcasts often labeled propaganda, they are missing two important features of propaganda. First in propaganda, the information source is often hidden or unclear. With international broadcasts, the information source or sponsoring nation is often readily identifiable, for example, Voice of America, Voice of Malaysia, or Radio Moscow. A second important element of propaganda missing in government-run broadcast is coercion. Unless the foreign broadcast is the only source of information, publics are free to accept the message or switch the channel.

U.S. international broadcasting began with the Voice of America shortly after the United States entered WW II. Robert Sherwood, who headed the U.S. Foreign Information Service and launched the VOA, was a staunch proponent of overt information. In the first VOA broadcast to Germany, the announcer stated, "The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth."[19] This legacy of objective reporting was epitomized by Edward R. Murrow, a lifelong international journalist and head of USIA under President Kennedy.

Today, U.S. funded nonmilitary international broadcasts are managed by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) and include the VOA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and radio and TV Marti and the Middle East Broadcast Network. BBG's mission is "To promote and sustain freedom and democracy by broadcasting accurate and objective news and information about America and the world to audiences overseas."[20] The emphasis placed on international broadcasting is reflected in its budget allocation. In 2006, out of the $1.5 billion budget for U.S. public diplomacy, BBG received $645 million, compared to the State Department's $795 million.[21]

The BBG relies extensively on audience research and media environment analysis. In 2001, the BBG introduced a market-based approach to international broadcasting to generate large listening audiences in priority markets. Control over message and direct access to audience continue to underlie the development of new broadcast initia-

tives. In 2006, for example, test flights began of an aircraft to provide dedicated airborne transmission into Cuba.[22] In addition to Al-hurra, and Al-hurra-Iraq, Al-hurra Europe was launched to "give the U.S. a news presence for Arabic-speakers in Europe" and put "America and American policy in a proper context."[23] The confidence of information content is reflected in a quote by the BBG member Norman Pattiz, who was a driving force behind the new broadcast formats launched after 9/11,

> We let the facts speak for themselves. We are confident that our overseas audiences, once fully informed, will make decisions that over the long run will coincide with U.S. values and interests.[24]

Information campaigns

Information campaigns closely parallel the stages and elements of Western public relations models. Campaigns often begin with a research stage to assess the environment for strengths, weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and opportunities with potential audiences and messages. The planning stage entails formulating key objectives, identifying target audiences, and outlining strategies and tactics. The implementation stage involves designing and delivering the information to the target audience. Campaigns often use a variety of communication channels to disseminate the information, but again, mass media channels tend to be the preferred vehicle given their information efficiency. The final stage, evaluation (or monitoring if it is an ongoing campaign) measures the campaign's effectiveness in reaching its stated objectives with the target audience.

While the Shared Values campaign spearheaded by Charlotte Beers did not fair so well, the former Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy also envisioned telling the U.S. story through the work of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As part of this effort, USAID began marking all of its programs, projects, and activities with the standard graphic identity "funded by the American people" and initiated a new campaign, "Telling Our Stories." The double-entendre of the USAID campaign title reflects the sophistication of the initiative. The campaign solicits stories from beneficiaries of the USAID-sponsored projects. These "stories" are, in fact, personal testimonials, one of the most powerful tools used in persuasion. USAID lays out strict guidelines in a story format, length, and language for submission of personal testimonials. An analysis of the story formats

and guidelines by Zehra Rizavi revealed underlying frames; this process of framing, including moral frames, is more about shaping audience perception than simply telling their story or America's story – or both.[25]

Nation branding

Nation branding represents yet another type of information initiative. However, instead of policy advocacy, nation branding uses strategic marketing to promote a country's image and appeal. Simon Anholt, a leading advocate of nation branding, considers public diplomacy (government communication) only one component of at least six factors.[26] However, whether one views public diplomacy as a component of a nation brand, or nation branding as a form of public diplomacy, the practice relies primarily on strategically designing and disseminating information to specified audiences.

The goal of branding is to differentiate and position an entity in the minds of the audience. The stages of developing a brand strategy for a country begin with a SWOT analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a country's image. Next is crafting a core concept that collects all the elements of a country's attributes and assets that position the country for internal and external publics. Anholt says that the way a brand is sold can be as important as the brand itself. He advocates a team approach led by a responsible government agency with multistakeholder participation from the local population. Multiple communication channels and modes (advertising, public relations, and direct marketing) are used to deliver a simple, coherent, and compelling message. Increasingly, Anholt has emphasized the policy as a critical component in the evolution from nation branding of a country to its competitive identity.

Early in U.S. public diplomacy campaign after 9/11, Secretary Charlotte Beers, herself a 40-year veteran of Madison Avenue's advertising elite, was criticized for trying to "brand America" in much the same way that she branded commercial products.[27] Critics such as Naomi Klein argued that the United States was too diversified and dynamic to be conceived of as a static brand. Other critics questioned the idea of trying to "sell America."[28] Such criticism at the time (2002) appeared to carry weight and help shift attention in U.S. public diplomacy away from nation branding as an accepted goal or approach. This shift in U.S. public diplomacy, however, dramatically contrasts with what has been an explosion of interest in the practice and scholarship of nation branding among other countries.[29]

Media relations

Media relations are a critical aspect of information-based initiatives because the government or political entity must rely on what is essentially an intermediary – the press and media – to deliver the information to the public. Activities that help facilitate media access to information and distribution of information include conducting press briefings and press conferences, providing interviews, fielding media inquiries and requests, and disseminating press releases and other documents.

In the area of traditional media relations, according to a 2006 performance summary, it appears that the State Department was exceeding its target goals in this area.[30] The Department's creativity and aggressiveness clearly stands out. In recent years, the State Department has substantially incorporated new technologies to better manage its media relations. The Department's daily briefings have gone from a single link to a text-generated transcript to multiple icons representing broadband, dialup, and audio versions. Press releases, which number from three to nine per day, are available through a mobile edition (PDA download), RSS news feeds, and subscription (e-mail and listserv). USAInfo, supervised by the State Department's International Information Program (IIP), has increased the quantity and quality of its "products." In addition to a variety of e-journals, it maintains the "Washington File," distributed daily in six languages. In 2006, IIP began "IIP-chat," a tool many news media outlets use to generate audience interest and interactivity on featured stories. In addition, in 2006, a "media hub" was created in Dubai to provide direct media access to the Arab press. U.S. public diplomacy media relations expand dramatically to new platforms with the proliferation of new, social media.

Relational framework

Concurrent with information framework of public diplomacy is the relational framework. Public diplomacy initiatives within the relational framework focus on relationship-building and positive maintenance of social structures to solve communication problems to advance political objectives. This view of public diplomacy is reflected in a definition proffered by Jan Melissen, "Public diplomacy ... is first of all about promoting and maintaining smooth international relationships."[31] In this respect, relationship activities are viewed as the primary goal and an end in itself that "contributes to a better international environment."[32] As a by-product of a stronger relational foundation, a political entity

can often advance its political objectives with greater ease and enjoy a more positive image. However, in relational initiatives defining, maintaining, and enhancing the relationship is primary; pursuing relationship by-products are secondary.

The relational framework stems from the view of communication that favors Carey's notion of "fellowship" in ritual communication, the high-context focus on communication factors surrounding the message, and the collectivist concern for social bonds. From the relational perspective, communication is a social process that regulates the relationships within a larger social context. While communication parties may have their own individuality or distinct identity, the parties are presupposed to be connected or linked within an immediate or larger social context. Because some form of relationship is presumed to exist, communication activities focus on defining, maintaining, and enhancing relationships, rather than actually creating or building relationships.

The relational perspective views communication problems as relationship problems: one's relations are strained or in danger of being broken. Resolving the communication problem entails finding the source of the tension and trying to heal, protect, and preserve the relationship, thereby restoring social harmony. Just as the information perspective might advocate advanced technologies to enhance the flow of information, so might the relational perspective warrant using the expertise of a seasoned mediator to help establish, cultivate, or mend a relationship. Because all relationships entail balancing levels of risk and trust, initial activities to restore or redefine a relationship may first be conducted confidentially and discretely, before moving to more expansive and visible displays of relationship building.

Because communication equates with relationships, interpersonal communication is the ideal medium. It may not be the most efficient medium, but it is the most effective and preferred one for building and sustaining relationships. It is highly credible and resonates positively with the participatory nature of the relational perspective.[33] Although publics may get news and information from mass media channels such as television, interpersonal communication determines how the information is interpreted.

Finally within the relational framework, information tends to be circulated rather than merely transmitted. Information draws its value not by how effectively it is designed or delivered (a one-time occurrence), but by how fast and extensively it is circulated within the social context. Information that resonates with the social context tends to circulate faster than that which is discordant with the social context.

Public diplomacy initiatives within the relational framework share several dominant features. First, because relationships are the central concern, relational initiatives focus on identifying, defining, and building relationships. The critical questions for relational initiatives are: What relations are important? How are those relations defined or perceived – by the political leaders and their publics? Because communication is about social cohesion, other questions concern the direction and strength of the relations. For example, are the relations positive or strained? Are they strong or weak? If relations appear strong, how can they be solidified or expanded? If relations are weak, nebulous or strained, or the perception of the relationship differs between the political leaders and the publics, what are the causes? Is it possible to alleviate or minimize those causes? In some cases, traditional diplomacy is used as a precursor for defining and enhancing strained relationships before public diplomacy initiatives can be successfully initiated.

Second, relational initiatives seek to find commonalities or mutual interests between the sponsor and other party and its publics. Mark Leonard of London's Foreign Policy Centre captured the essence of the relational framework in his definition of public diplomacy as "building relationships, starting from understanding other countries' needs, cultures and peoples and then looking for areas to make common cause."[34]

Third, relational initiatives tend to rely on relationship-building strategies and downplay or even omit messaging strategies.[35] Rather than having key messages, relational public diplomacy initiatives are often built around specific actions, even symbolic gestures, which demonstrate reciprocity and mutuality. Some countries have literally built bridges and tunnels to concretely and visually reinforce the relationship.[36] Scholars who study relationships have also highlighted the importance of actions that help in demonstrating commitment, building trust, and establishing credibility.[37]

Fourth, most relational initiatives tend toward coordination rather than control. To varying degrees, sponsors work with their counterparts in defining, designing, implementing, and monitoring an initiative. A large part of establishing strong relationships with publics is based on mutuality and reciprocity. Parties share in deciding and controlling aspects of the program. Grunig and Hon called this "control mutuality."[38] This requisite is echoed in the public diplomacy literature in descriptions of "mutuality"[39] and "trust-building."[40] Hady Amr suggested the "paradigm of jointness," which he described as "joint planning for joint benefit."[41]

A fifth dominant feature is the interactive nature of relational public diplomacy initiatives. Relational initiatives stress participation over presentation. In this respect, public diplomacy is more of a process (i.e., cultivating connections and coordinating actions) than a product (producing materials for distribution). This interactive, participatory approach spans across several levels from the leaders, to specialized publics, to the general public. Each level constitutes an important dimension in the larger overall contextual sphere. At the leadership and specialized public level, relationships may be described as "partners," while the general public may be viewed as active participants, stakeholders, or even constituencies The goal of an intensive relationship-building approach is to ultimately involve all levels of public, from the leadership to the general public, in various relational initiatives to define and strengthen the overall relations between two political entities as well as their people.

Relational initiatives are also distinguished by their focus on establishing interactive and often, interpersonal communication channels, and then facilitating, enhancing, or expanding those channels. Communication channels that allow direct interaction, accord a sense of immediacy and facilitate involvement among the participants are favored over mass media channels. The importance of interpersonal contact, even with "the masses," is seen in the preference for public speeches. The atmosphere and energy of the crowd convey cues about the stature and credibility of a leader. In many instances, the leader is not speaking to convey any new information, but rather to reconnect and reinforce his relationship with the people. Again because of the balance between risks and trust, face-to-face contact between parties is important for sustaining relations or moving them to a higher level. Larger initiatives that do use mass communication would rely on the partner's indigenous media rather than creating a new, controlled media outlet. Establishing strong media relations and relying on the local media is part of the relationship-building strategy.

A final dominant feature of relational initiative is that their focus on continuity and sustainability. Because relationships are by nature ongoing, they often require ongoing assessments rather than a one-time evaluation. Instead of using opinion polls of image or message appeal, the effectiveness of relational initiatives may be more aptly determined by the duration and strength of the relationship as well as perceived satisfaction among the parties.[42] Successful relational initiatives would exhibit extensive and intensive interaction across the levels of public and promise relationship continuity and expansion. For example, an

initiative may bring together 45 scientists, 12 of whom begin long-term collaborative research projects.

Types of relational initiatives

Whereas the examples of information initiatives are plentiful, examples of relational initiatives are less easy to find. Within the context of U.S. public diplomacy, relationship-building tends to refer to cultural affairs programs, and specifically to cultural and educational exchange programs. This view is echoed in the public diplomacy literature. The State Department has had a long history of educational and cultural exchange programs. For example, since 1946, the Fulbright program has been sending American students and scholars to foreign countries and bringing their counterparts to the United States. The International Visitors program and the Humphrey program sponsor professionals to tour, study, or train in the United States. Since 9/11, there have been a host of new youth-focused and Internet-based programs, particularly targeted at the Islamic world. For example, the State Department has been working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the field of Internet-based education to incorporate Muslim youth into a global network of world citizens. Some of these programs sponsor virtual exchanges on the Internet, which are complemented by actual exchanges. Education exchanges now reach to the high school level and can involve institutions as well as individuals. The State Department has also partnered with private groups, such as Businesses for Diplomatic Action, to facilitate professional exchanges, mentoring, and networking.

The important role that cultural and educational exchange programs play in U.S. public diplomacy is undeniable. In a worldwide program evaluation of public diplomacy tools, U.S. ambassadors ranked exchange programs the highest among all of the State Department's products and programs. "There is no substitute for direct contact."[43] Karen Hughes echoed the sentiments of many when she remarked, "There's no doubt in my mind that our exchange programs have been our single most important and most successful public diplomacy tool over the last 50 years."[44] In 2006, educational and cultural exchange programs accounted for more than half of the State Department's public diplomacy budget resources, $451 million out of a total of $796 million.

U.S. public diplomacy does have other initiatives that might be considered within the relational framework. A 2004 U.S. Public Diplomacy Advisory Commission report distinguished between "short-term communication" and "long-term communication," what it called

"relationship-building activities."[45] These relationship-building activities included five types of what the report called "information centers:"

> American Corners, information centers staffed and maintained by host country citizens; Virtual Presence Posts, interactive websites that could perform some functions of a physical consulate; Information Resources Centers, open only by appointment; American Presence Posts, where a single American Foreign Service Officer in an important region further commercial public diplomacy goals; and a few remaining American Libraries.[46]

Security has been an ongoing concern for U.S. diplomatic personnel and facilities, hampering direct interpersonal contact so important to relationship-building activities. U.S. embassies have been described as "fortress-like" and are sometimes located in areas difficult for publics to access. The State Department had to also adopt a "low-profile approach" in generating publicity for some of its events and programs because of security concerns.

While U.S. public diplomacy has placed great emphasis on its cultural and exchange programs, in terms of relational strategies, such programs may actually be only the tip of the relational initiatives' iceberg. One can see this more clearly by looking at the various aspects or components that distinguish basic relational initiatives from more sophisticated initiatives.

One aspect distinguishing the variety of relational initiatives is the level of participation, which can range from select individuals to institutions, to communities, to the general public. Basic initiatives may involve just one level of participation, whereas more sophisticated relational initiatives would engage multiple participation levels. A second aspect is the degrees of coordination, which may range from limited coordination to joint or shared coordination to negotiated coordination. Relational initiatives that expand to include multiple publics often require constantly renegotiating coordination. A third aspect is scope; relational initiatives vary in scope from having a single issue to multidimensional focus. A multidimensional or multifaceted initiative may have one overarching theme and then pursue relationship-building across a variety of formats, publics, or time frames.

Time frame is another distinguishing aspect among the various levels of relational initiatives. Time frame can vary in terms of duration from days for an activity or event, months for a project, or years for a

program. However, it is important to point out that not all relational initiatives are long term. Even a one-day visit by a head of state or government during a crisis situation can have an immediate impact. Time frame may also be viewed as circumscribed, sustained, or open-ended. Initiatives with pre-defined or circumscribed time frames are often easier to manage, simply because one can measure the effort, energy, and resources in advance. Initiatives with a sustained time frame require constant monitoring and management. Open-ended initiatives demand an inherent capacity for growth and rejuvenation before they are even launched. Shared control over the time frame by the sponsor and partners or participants is another aspect. Basic relational initiatives tend to have a time frame dictated solely by the sponsor, while more sophisticated initiatives exhibit greater flexibility and shared negotiation over the time frame.

Policy objective, whether a relational initiative is political or nonpolitical, is another important variation that distinguishes sophisticated initiatives. Most, if not all, educational and cultural exchange programs specifically state that they are nonpolitical. However, relational initiatives can also be political. For example, policy formation networks, which involve a government working in concert with nonstate advocacy groups, are explicitly political. Such initiatives, because of their policy component, tend to require a high level of credibility and commitment as well as constant renegotiated coordination, integration, and control.

Levels of relational initiatives

These distinctions among relational initiatives can be used as a basis for identifying graduated levels of relational initiatives.[47] The first level of relational initiatives includes familiar fixtures in traditional public diplomacy and is characterized by restricted levels of participation, coordination, and time frames. Level I relational initiatives are often confined to the individual participation and as such, an initiative's success is often tied to the knowledge, skill, and personality (charisma) of the individual participants. Because the potential outcome is tied to the individual, oftentimes such initiatives are buffered by extensive preparation, monitoring, and control mechanisms.

Examples of Level I relational initiatives include cultural and educational exchange programs, visits by heads of state or government, and designated celebrity or special envoys.

A second level of relational initiatives is characterized by a graduated level of public participation, time frame, partnership coordination, and

public diplomacy skill sets. The participation level expands from individual-specific initiatives to programs that encompass public groupings, such as institutions, communities, or societies. The time frame is open-ended to accommodate relationship growth and continuity. Coordination may include joint decision making in program planning, design, and implementation. Public diplomacy skills include creating communication channels, facilitating direct, sustained, and positive contact across publics, and monitoring the growth of relationships within the initiative. Examples of Level II relational initiatives include culture and language institutes such as the American Corners, development projects such as those sponsored by USAID, volunteer programs such as the U.S. Peace Corps, citizen diplomacy, relationship-building campaigns,[48] and nonpolicy networking schemas.[49]

The third level of relational initiatives in public diplomacy involves policy networking strategies that incorporate coalition building with other countries and nonstate actors to achieve policy objectives. Comparatively speaking, the third level requires the most intensive diplomatic communication skills because the political entity might enjoy the least amount of control over the direction and outcome of the relationship process, yet the political stakes may be the highest. Hocking describes these diplomatic roles as "manager, co-coordinator, and integrator" in his catalytic model.[50] However, given the policy dimension involved as well as the competing political interests of the parties that can challenge a government's position, this tier also requires adept diplomatic advocacy, negotiation, and mediation skills to advance the government's position while sustaining a fruitful relationship process. Examples of policy networks include the "Ottawa Process" that help secure ratification of the treaty to ban landmines discussed earlier, the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court,[51] and the Kimberly Process that helps restrict the trade in conflict or blood diamonds.[52]

Expanding the conceptual vision of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives

The two complementary communication frameworks – information and relational – are intended as conceptual tools for analyzing and designing public diplomacy initiatives. The salient features of the information framework include a focus on messaging strategies, control, limited direct interaction with publics, reliance on mass media channels, and goal orientation. The relational framework focuses on relationship

strategies, coordination, interaction with publics, use of interactive and interpersonal communication channels, and sustainability.

These communication frameworks are not programmatic differences but rather represent fundamental understandings of how one "communicates" with others in the international arena. Some view information as important, while others focus on relationships. Because these assumptions about communication are largely held out of awareness, they are rarely expressed. Frustrations can arise when a sponsor and intended public have unshared assumptions. For example, the sponsor, on one hand, may assume the communication problem is a lack of information – and hence tries to solve the problem by supplying more or better information. The public, on the other hand, may attribute the communication problem to strained relations. Repeating a message over and over again, or designing a more culturally sensitive message, may work for those who assume that the quantity or quality of information is the problem. However, for those that focus on relationship as the pivotal feature, no amount of information can solve the problem until relations are improved.

Problems in public diplomacy are even more likely to occur when a political entity relies primarily on initiatives within one framework. Although U.S. public diplomacy has made an effort to enhance the quantity and quality of its relational initiatives, its forte and focus is decidedly on information initiatives. This strength, however, is still not enough to compensate for relational initiatives, which are confined primarily to the first level of relationship-building. More importantly, for public diplomacy strategists, too dominant a focus on one framework can limit the larger strategic vision.

U.S. public diplomacy cannot operate on the assumption that culturally diverse publics will view communication problems in the same way that U.S. officials will. For U.S. public diplomacy to expand its vision, it needs to view communication as encompassing *both* information and relational perspectives. An even greater level of fluency or mastery would be designing public diplomacy initiatives that integrate the two perspectives. This type of integration of information with relationship-building happens all the time in interpersonal communication between people and is one of the reasons why it is such an effective medium of communication. Achieving such integration in public communication or public diplomacy is more difficult because the process becomes more complex as the number of participants increases.

The broad spectrum of initiatives presented in this chapter is in no way complete and is intended as a foundation for further research on

the strategic communication differences among a range of initiatives. A greater understanding of these differences will enable the analysts to assess an initiative's appropriateness and strengths and allow practitioners to choose more confidently or even creatively develop initiatives that are more suitable to various publics, settings, or issues. With a broader vision of strategic public diplomacy, the United States can more readily explore, develop, and balance its communication expertise across both frameworks and increase its effectiveness with culturally diverse publics in today's global environment.

Expanding the strategic vision of U.S. public diplomacy begins by embracing the need for both the information and relational frameworks. However, that step alone will not ensure U.S. public diplomacy's effectiveness. In terms of communication planning and implementation, the information and relational frameworks only address what are essentially the level of strategy and tactics of individual public diplomacy initiatives. Even if U.S. public diplomacy were to master relational initiatives to the degree of its informational initiatives and skillfully field them, U.S. public diplomacy overall might still be ineffective and even counterproductive. It is the grand strategy that ultimately determines the effectiveness of public diplomacy's communication efforts. The next chapter looks at the critical linchpin of strategic U.S. public diplomacy: the grand strategy.

8
Grand Strategy: From Battles to Bridges

This chapter focuses on the distinctions between an overarching grand strategy of public diplomacy and the strategy and tactics of individual public diplomacy initiatives. Failure to distinguish between these different levels may have been the first critical shortcoming of post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy. Despite the chorus of calls for "a strategy," U.S. public diplomacy already had a grand strategy in place. Not only was there an overarching grand strategy, but that strategy appeared to run counter to the underlying communication dynamics in the international arena. The failure to recognize and analyze the viability of this grand strategy may be the second and single most important factor that undermined all of U.S. public diplomacy's efforts in the post-9/11 period. This chapter identifies and analyzes U.S. public diplomacy's information battle grand strategy and proposes a new grand strategy of building communication bridges. The chapter concludes by redefining the grand strategic goals of U.S. public diplomacy in a global communication era.

Grand strategy, strategy, and tactics

As mentioned in the previous chapter, debates within U.S. public diplomacy have concentrated most heavily over whether U.S. public diplomacy should focus on telling its story or building relationships. Many observers have suggested that U.S. public diplomacy's limited relational initiatives is the core problem of U.S. public diplomacy and that incorporating more relationship-building initiatives is the solution. Hence the appeal of "listening tours," the increased budget for cultural and educational exchanges, and the surging focus in other relational initiatives, such as cultural relations, NGO and civil society partnerships, citizen diplomacy, and medical diplomacy.

However, even if U.S. public diplomacy were to greatly expand the number and sophistication of its relational initiatives that alone would not be enough to ensure that U.S. public diplomacy is any more effective or strategic tomorrow than it is today. The individual initiatives may garner some success, but overall U.S. public diplomacy would still be strategically ineffective. The reason is because initiatives only address the level of strategy and tactics. Infinitely more important is the overarching strategy or grand strategy that conditions both strategy and tactics.

Carl Botan at George Mason University has been one of the few communication scholars to peel apart the interwoven connection between the three levels of grand strategy, strategy, and tactics in communication.[1] According to Botan, grand strategy involves questions of policy and planning at the highest levels. Strategy is the property of individual campaigns designed to meet the goals of the grand strategy. Tactics are the specific activities or the "how to" methods of implementing a strategy. Up until recently, most communication professionals have dealt primarily on the level of strategy and tactics, hence the plethora of books and manuals on strategic planning and tactical implementation. Additionally, because communication professionals have been excluded from the policy decision making, their vision of a 'grand strategy' focuses internally on coordinating lower level strategy and tactics. Often an organization's grand strategy is overlooked, assumed or even subsumed within various campaign strategies. However despite the tendency to blur the various levels, as Botan argues, an organization's grand strategy is the most critical level because it serves as an overarching umbrella that defines and limits campaign strategies and tactics.

What is particularly noteworthy about Botan's discussion of grand strategies is that he focuses not on the stated policy or mission statements as indications of an organization's grand strategy, but rather on an organization's worldview and modus operandi. This is significant because most organizations tend to have very positive, expansive policy mission statements. These mission statements suggest equally positive goals and approach to communication with publics. In reality, however, their view of publics may be very narrow and their modus operandi quite rigid and restricted. Botan presents four types of grand strategies based on how an organization views itself and its goals as well as its attitudes toward change, the environment, publics, issues, communication, and communication practitioners.

First is the intransigent grand strategy. An intransigent grand strategy, according to Botan, assumes that the organization "can be autonomous and should seek to impose its decisions on the environment, even

to conquer part of what it assumes to be a fundamentally hostile environment."[2] The goal is to defeat all competitors and challengers. The intransigent grand strategy views change as bad, publics as dangerous, and issues as impediments. Publics exist to meet the needs of the organization, primarily as consumers, but not as stakeholders in the environment. Because intransigent organizations believe they are already right, communication is primarily one-way with the intention of educating publics and aligning them to the organization's goals. Communication practitioners are viewed as technicians who must use their expertise to explain management decisions and win public support. "Loyalty to the existing leadership and policies is the most important attribute," says Botan.[3]

The resistant grand strategy is similar to the intransigent one. The pivotal difference, according to Botan, is the organization views itself as interdependent with the environment, not as autonomous. The organization's goal is still competitive, but the organization acknowledges external influences even as it tries to resist them. Change is viewed as expensive and disruptive, thus avoided. Publics are considered powerful and dangerous, yet a necessary evil-like change. Issues are still viewed as impediments, but they are hurdles that can be overcome. Two-way communication is recognized as necessary along with feedback from the public, but communication professionals are still viewed as technicians charged with executing strategies and tactics and are excluded from policy decision making.

The cooperative grand strategy, Botan explains, considers the organization as interdependent with the environment with the added responsibility of playing a constructive role. Change is seen as natural but still essentially negative. Managed change is preferred. Publics are viewed as a constructive force with legitimate interests, which serve to inform organizations about necessary changes. Communication is "the lifeblood of the organization," and two-way communication is paramount. Communication professionals are trusted to not only facilitate relationships with publics, but also serve as strategic advisors in policy decision making.

The final grand strategy Botan discusses is the integrative grand strategy. Organizations with an integrative grand strategy see themselves as fully part of their environment and seek to further integrate themselves into the environment through an "ever-evolving web of relationships." The integrative grand strategy is the only grand strategy that views change as a positive opportunity to grow, rather than a threat to avoid. Publics are viewed as "interpretive communities" with legitimate

interests and the organization works with publics to define issues and bring about change. Issues are a natural result of the ongoing communication with publics. Communication professionals are viewed as strategists responsible for helping to integrate change within the organization and with the public.

Botan does not proffer a preference for any one grand strategy over another. From a communication perspective, theoretically, there is nothing inherently wrong with any of the four grand strategies Botan outlines. All have an equally valid, internally consistent logic that makes them stable, viable, and potentially very effective.[4] However, the effectiveness or strategic value of a grand strategy lies not in its internal logic but in how well that internal logic parallels the communication dynamics of the external environment. When an organization's internally held worldview does not match the dynamics of the external context within which the organization must operate, the grand strategy is likely to be ineffective at best and even counterproductive. Deciding which grand strategy to employ rests on an accurate assessment of the communication context to gauge whether the grand strategy is potentially viable.[5]

U.S. public diplomacy grand strategy

Throughout the post-9/11 period of U.S. public diplomacy, the blurring of grand strategy, strategy, and tactics is evident. Although many of the prominent reports appeared to be calling for a grand strategy, they focused their assessment of U.S. public diplomacy on individual initiatives or the level of strategy, and tactics, or internal coordination. The confusion between tactics, such as core messages, strategies such as individual initiatives, and overarching grand strategy is evident in the first U.S. National "Strategy" for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication. The document extensively details the efforts at internal coordination as well as technicalities of individual-level strategy and tactics. However, the document has only a three-paragraph discussion of what might be the outlines of a grand strategy based on political policies and does not discuss the communication rationale behind it. Not surprisingly, even after the National Strategy was issued in June 2007, U.S. public diplomacy problems continued and even intensified throughout the remainder of the year. In late 2008, when the financial meltdown on Wall Street spread to markets around the globe, U.S. public diplomacy appeared ill-equipped to address the crisis.

Additionally, perhaps more troubling is the fact that despite calls for a "strategy," U.S. public diplomacy appeared to already have an overarching

worldview and modus operandi in place – and failed to recognize it. If one looks at the pattern of results of the individual initiatives, instead of lacking a strategy, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be vigorously following an inappropriate strategy. When there is no overarching shared vision or modus operandi, communication results tend to be mixed. Win some, lose some. U.S. public diplomacy, however, achieved results that were consistently ineffective at best or counterproductive. The 9/11 Commission's characterization of U.S. public diplomacy as "*perennially troubled*" was particularly telling.[6] It is difficult to produce a perennial pattern of mistakes without an overarching grand strategy. Perhaps the strongest indication of a grand strategy was that five different professionals were charged with U.S. public diplomacy during this period, yet U.S. public diplomacy maintained a fairly consistent level of ineffectiveness.

Failure to distinguish among the different levels and recognize the presence of an existing grand strategy may have been the first serious failing of U.S. public diplomacy during the post-9/11 period. Without recognizing the existence of a grand strategy, it is difficult to assess how well the organization's internally held worldview matches the dynamics of the external world.

What was the grand strategy of U.S. post-9/11 public diplomacy? If one looked only at the expressed policy of U.S. public diplomacy, particularly the focus on engagement and the desire for dialogue with international publics, U.S. public diplomacy would appear to have either the cooperative or integrative grand strategy that Botan talked about.[7] However, in looking at the underlying dynamics, U.S. public diplomacy appears to more closely resemble the intransigent and resistant grand strategy.

Both intransigent and resistance share competitive orientation. U.S. public diplomacy represented the side of good ("vision of hope"), while the terrorists represented destruction and evil. The policy goals of promoting U.S. values and defeating the terrorists reflect the competitive goal orientation against a challenger. What distinguishes intransigent from resistant grand strategy is the organization's view of its relationship with others in the environment. In this regard, U.S. public diplomacy was closer to the intransigent grand strategy given its autonomous self-view. The U.S. preference for unilateral actions suggests a view of itself as an autonomous entity capable and willing to act independently of its environment. The title of a book by two leading opinion researchers during the post-9/11 time period is telling, *America against the World*.

The intransigent strategy is also evident in the view of change. On the surface, in terms of policy, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to be a strong advocate for change. Empowerment, for example, embodies

the notion of change. However, change was advocated with regard to foreign publics and other governments, not the U.S. government or its policies. In this regard, the U.S. political view of change echoes the perception of a hostile environment that comes against the organization.

The intransigent strategy is similarly echoed in views of the public and issues. U.S. public diplomacy maintained a singular focus on the issue of security and terrorism even as global publics tried to interject other issues, they viewed as equally if not more pressing, such as economic development, climate change, and health. Publics in the Arab and Islamic worlds and elsewhere repeatedly raised concerns about U.S. policies, which would have been legitimate issues under the cooperative or integrative grand strategies. However, rather than publics informing issues, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to negate the constructive role of the public. Whereas the cooperative or integrative grand strategies negotiate issues with publics, the intransigent and resistant grand strategies see such negotiations as "signs of weakness."[8] Dividing publics into hostile, moderate, or favorable publics is similarly indicative of the intransigent grand strategy.

Perhaps most indicative of U.S. public diplomacy as an intransigent grand strategy is revealed in its view of communication and communication professionals. U.S. public diplomacy repeated stressed engagement as a core component of its policy grand strategy. On the surface, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to have moved from a decidedly one-way communication pattern to a more two-way and even collaborative communication. Many of the newer initiatives using the interactive social media features were keen to stress the goal of dialogue. However, if one looks closely at the nature of the dialogues as well as the dialogue topics, the dialogues are carefully controlled and even scripted and the subject matter tends to be apolitical. This pattern first emerged with *Hi* magazine in its attempt to promote a dialogue with Arab youth. It is similarly evident in later initiatives such as the USAID "Telling Our Stories" or more recent Democracy Video Competition. Part of the unexpected disappointment over Hughes' "Listening Tour" was the unspoken assumption that a genuine dialogue often produces not just an *exchange* of views, but a *change* of view. However, U.S. public diplomacy's dialogue with foreign publics is not about changing U.S. policy, even policies that directly or even adversely affect those publics. Foreign publics are not viewed as legitimate stakeholders of U.S. foreign policy. In this regard, U.S. public diplomacy is still inherently one-way communication limited to informing and influencing foreign publics about U.S. policies.

Also revealing are the relatively short tenures and long vacancies of the position of under secretary of public diplomacy or the person charged with heading U.S. communication efforts. Communication professionals operating under the intransigent grand strategy are limited to the technical task of educating publics and gaining their support. Although all of the under secretaries had extensive communication expertise, they were similarly tasked with informing, influencing, and engaging foreign publics, but not necessarily U.S. foreign policy decision makers. In fact, there appeared to be an underlying assumption that because the under secretaries had such expertise that they would be able to leverage those skills to gain public support for unpopular U.S. policies. When each successive under secretary proved unable to move U.S. favorability ratings up, it was not a problem of political policy but rather of communication technique. Given the strong opposition to U.S. policies, the communication professionals charged with U.S. public diplomacy had the impossible task of trying to operate between a public demanding change and an organization fighting back change.

Without recognizing the existence of a grand strategy, it is hard to assess its viability or appropriateness for the communication terrain. From a communication perspective, the continued changeover in the top communication position was an early and strong indication that U.S. grand strategy was not aligned to the prevailing communication and political dynamics of the international arena. However, even without the help of Botan's theoretical discussions of the various grand strategies, the outlines of U.S. public diplomacy's grand strategy were evident even in political and media analyses. In fact, the communication intransigent grand strategy correlates with the grand strategy used by U.S. public diplomacy during the Cold War era. Here it is possible to look at U.S. public diplomacy grand strategy from a more political angle and assess its viability.

Viability of the U.S. grand strategy

Early in the battle for hearts and minds, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke wrote an opinion piece entitled "Get the Message Out."[9] In the article, he posed a question that resonated with many in Washington: "How can a man in a cave *out communicate* the world's leading communications society?" "Getting the message out," similar to President Bush's call for "making our case," suggests a lack of information or abundance of misinformation. A corollary assumption is that the misinformation comes from one opponent and that opponent can be defeated by "out

communicating" it. These assumptions, such as supplying information and countering misinformation, combating a single identifiable opponent, using sophisticated technology to reach a specific target audience are the hallmark of an information battle.

Ironically, the information battle as an overarching grand strategy in the post-9/11 period was perhaps so ubiquitous that it was hiding in plain sight. "We will also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism ... This is a struggle of ideas and ... America must excel," said the *National Security Strategy* issued by the White House in September 2002.[10] "Just as we did in the Cold War, we need to defend our ideas abroad vigorously," asserted the 9/11 Commission in 2004.[11]

The two-prong goals of the information battle strategy was consistent and repeatedly stressed throughout the post-9/11 period. The first goal was to promote the U.S. ideas and values. As stated in 2002, the priority of U.S. public diplomacy was "to inform the international world swiftly and accurately about the policies of the U.S. government," and then, "re-present the values and beliefs of the people of America, which inform our policies and practices."[12] The second goal, pursued simultaneously, consisted of discrediting the enemy's ideas and values. "Marginalize the extremists ... galvanize the moderates," asserted a 2003 State Department report.[13] Again, in 2007, when the State Department outlined the first national strategy for U.S. public diplomacy, it placed "spreading a message of hope and marginalizing the extremist" at the top of U.S. public diplomacy mission.[14]

Throughout the post-9/11 period, reports and studies made reference to U.S. public diplomacy's success during the Cold War, suggesting that if U.S. public diplomacy followed that model, success would be forthcoming again. However, the major reason why the grand strategy of fighting an information battle, which is essentially an intransigent grand strategy, was so successful was because the internal worldview corresponded to the world dynamics. In fact, U.S. public diplomacy grand strategy employed against the Soviet Union during the Cold War ideally matched the political and communication dynamics of the time.

Forty years ago, the geo-political landscape and communication technologies provided the ideal communication terrain for fighting an information battle. The international political arena was defined by two identifiable, rival government powers with comparable capabilities and constraints: the United States and the Soviet Union. Both had a geographical base with delineated national borders, geographically contained populations, access and control over mass communication channels, and conventional military and economic power. An information

battle readily complemented the political, military and economic competition between the two superpowers.

The relatively limited capability of communication technology at the time matched the strategic goal of fighting an information battle. Mass media channels served as the primary means for disseminating information to the target audience. Because these channels were limited in number and audience reach, it was possible to monitor and even try to control the information flow. Governments could readily censor and restrict news coverage. Print material could be confiscated. Radio and television broadcast could be jammed.

Another distinct feature of the communication dynamics that made an information battle strategy possible during the Cold War was that foreign and domestic audiences were relatively isolated entities, separated by geography as well as by information source. Messages could be specially created and disseminated to the foreign audience without fear of alienating the domestic audience by confusing or offensive references. Also noteworthy, publics at this time were viewed as relatively passive "mass audiences," who consumed information rather than question or produce it. Given the limited or restricted access to information, the free flow of information and U.S. information programs were a cherished commodity.

The most compelling communication feature of the Cold War for fighting an information battle was the bipolar ideological context. Democracy and communism represented two distinct political and philosophical ideologies. There was no inherent overlap. The ideological distinction was perfectly tailored for formulating contrasting messages that emphasized America's good and the Soviets' bad. Promoting American values was as central to America's fight on the information battlefield. "Us versus Them" had persuasive power.

Within this contained context, information dissemination was vital; the one with the most information could dominate and frame the political debate and effectively isolate or discredit the opponent.[15] A communicator's persuasive power rested on *quantity* rather than *quality* of information, volume was more important than credibility.[16] Additionally, with limited access to alternative sources of information, accuracy or credibility of the information was difficult to verify.

U.S. public diplomacy during the Cold War was about winning the information battle against the Soviets. U.S. public diplomacy rightly defined its strategic goals as promoting U.S. interests by increasing the volume of information, distinguishing between foreign and domestic audiences, and controlling the content and delivery of information.

Success rested on information production and dissemination: designing the most persuasive messages and delivering them as efficiently as possible. In short, "out communicate" the opponent.

It appears that U.S. public diplomacy, in its rush to respond to the events of 9/11, resurrected and vigorously pursued an information battle strategy borrowed from the Cold War – without first assessing whether that grand strategy was still viable. Given dramatic changes in the international arena since the end of the Cold War, there should have been plenty of red flags. As Chapter 4 discussed, these developments have reconfigured the communication dynamics of the international arena.[17] Several changes, in particular, are relevant to assessing the viability of the information battle strategy.

The loss of the bipolar context of the American-Soviet rivalry has been among the single most important factor that has effectively undermined the United States' ability to wage – and win – the information battle. The bipolar context that once neatly defined all information has given way to a multidimensional context. The first dimension of this new context is the diffusion of the bipolar interests of the United States and Soviets into a multiplicity of global interests such as disease, poverty, and the environment. During the Cold War, these issues took a back seat to the threat of nuclear war, the main concern of the two superpowers.

The heightened public concern of issues that transcend national boundaries has focused public perceptions on which nations work together and which act unilaterally. While foreign publics may readily appreciate the tendency of a country to lobby hardest for its own interests, what they expect is reciprocity and a shared commitment to global concerns. Not surprisingly, U.S. policy and public diplomacy with respect to international treaties, initiatives, and forums have taken on increased visibility and significance. Foreign publics tend to be especially critical when America appears to ignore or dismiss their concerns. More than any other country, America is viewed worldwide as having the capability and resources to address these global concerns. When America is seen as having the means to affect change but does not, U.S. public diplomacy adds salt to the wounds of those who desire change but do not have the means to do so.

A second dimension is the increased visibility and intensity of regional ethnic and political tensions. Decades-old conflicts, once overshadowed by the superpower rivalry, have resurfaced with a vengeance. "As bipolarism crumbles," observed John Stempel of the Patterson School of Diplomacy in Kentucky, "religious, ethnic, and national antagonisms have flared."[18] What U.S. policymakers may view as "foreign"

policy is "local" policy for foreign publics. As James Rosenau points out, "Domestic and foreign affairs still seem like separate domains, but the line between them is transgressed with increasing frequency."[19] America, by virtue of its superpower status, is a player in the regional politics that absorb foreign publics. "Foreign" policy for America is very much viewed as "local" by foreign publics.

U.S. actions relative to regional conflicts and politics now carry greater weight than they did so in the past and in some cases has become a litmus test for U.S. credibility regarding its own values. To appear "neutral" or "biased" toward one side in the conflict greatly affects America's image and audience receptiveness of America's messages. For example, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as Shibley Telhami observed, has become a prism for viewing U.S. policy.[20] Similarly, America's support for allies with a well-established propensity toward authoritarian control serves as yardstick to measuring American values of democracy and freedom.

A third dimension is culture. As discussed extensively in Chapter 6, culture has become a powerful filter capable of distorting messages as well as cherished images and identity. Paradoxically, cultural awareness increased the diversity among publics, but the span of the international news media and proliferation of social media has unified the publics into one listening audience. The new technologies and network organizational structures have given publics new forms of civic engagement as well as a voice (Chapter 5). Unlike the view of the publics during the Cold War era, publics today are no longer viewed as simply passive or mass audiences.

Each of these dimensions and changes in the nature of the issues as well as publics has undermined the viability of the information battle grand strategy. America is not winning because the very idea of fighting an information battle is a relic of the Cold War period. If achieving information dominance – or "out communicating" others – were the key to winning hearts and minds, America, as an information and technological giant, would have won long ago. The grand strategy of fighting information battles is not working because it is out of sync with the prevailing political and communication dynamics of the international arena.

Redefining U.S. strategic goals

To "win" hearts and minds in today's charged political landscape and global communication era, U.S. public diplomacy needs to be able to navigate the new terrain without being exploited by it. Instead of trying to control or dominate the terrain, which tends to spawn resentment

and magnify America's isolation and anti-American sentiment, U.S. public diplomacy needs to "bridge" the gap that separates America from foreign publics. Fighting information battles cannot do that; building communication bridges can. U.S. public diplomacy needs a new grand strategy of building bridges.

Adopting a grand strategy of building bridges requires redefining U.S. public diplomacy's strategic goals. Each communication environment has its own dynamics defined by the players and the way they interact. The dynamics determine what goals are strategic or offer the strongest communication advantage. In the war on terrorism, however, the strategic goals associated with fighting an information battle conflict with the dynamics of the global communication era. Some of the goals are not only ineffective; they are counterproductive. Other goals are simply no longer feasible. The new strategic goals of building bridges are designed to maximize the dynamics of the global communication era.

From competition to cooperation

The first strategic goal is to work to obtain the cooperative advantage – not the competitive advantage. Under the information battle strategy, gaining the competitive edge or advantage was the goal. Gaining the competitive advantage rests on the assumption that there is one clearly defined opponent to compete against and one overriding issue to battle over. Post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy has worked under the assumption that terrorism was the singular issue dominating world concern and terrorists were the clear opponents. The international community does not appear to share – nor do the dynamics of the global communication era reflect – this clear-cut equation or narrow vision.

Seeking the cooperative advantage is critical step that can move U.S. public diplomacy to a higher level of smart power. In *Smart Power, A Smarter, More Secure America*, Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye observed that "America has made the war on terror the central component of its global engagement."[21] The United States has vigorously and even unilaterally pursued its fight against terrorism in an effort to increase its security. However, the first component of a smart power that will make America more secure is not gaining the competitive edge against the terrorist enemies, but gaining the cooperative advantage by building alliances, partnerships, and institutions among potential friends.

> The key is not how many enemies the United States kills, but how many allies it grows. States and non-state actors who improve their

> ability to draw allies will gain *cooperative advantages* in today's environment. Those who alienate potential friends will stand at greater risk.[22]

Gaining the cooperative advantage means seeking out opportunities to work with others on issues that matter to them. Public diplomacy must reflect and articulate this vision. Post-9/11 public diplomacy's emphasis on U.S. goals detracted from its cooperative advantage. In retrospect, the words of a State Department official may seem exceedingly U.S. centric; however in 2002, his words echoed the prevailing sentiment in Washington: "It's all about promoting American policies, American values, focusing on our security, our prosperity and, indeed, our values and beliefs and making sure that those are understood around the world."[23]

Gaining the cooperative advantage suggests a new premise for articulating U.S. public diplomacy goals. As public diplomacy strategist Ali Fisher writes, "Public diplomacy is not necessarily merely about persuading people to adopt *your* goals. It is about achieving your goals through helping others achieve theirs. Effectively, it is about realizing that an organization is part of a wider community."[24]

From quantity to quality

Another strategic goal is to increase the quality rather than simply the quantity of U.S. public diplomacy's communication. In a communication environment with a limited number of information sources, *quantity* of information is important. Dissemination that magnifies audience reach and information dominance can determine success. In a communication environment where there is a diversity of sources, *quality* of information is more important than quantity of information. Credibility and resonance that increase the likelihood of audience acceptance determines success. A diversity of sources creates a competition not over volume, but credibility.

The diversity of sources is the principal reason why the "push-down" model of sending out messages does not work and why the Council on Foreign Relations 2002 report correctly called on American officials to abandon the approach.[25] As the name "push down" implies, it is a vertical communication approach. A communication environment characterized by multiple sources of information communicating simultaneously requires a horizontal approach. Rather than pushing down the message, the objective is to have the audience "pull" one's message or be attracted to it. Another critical objective, given

the network structure, is to have audiences or the publics circulate the information. Again, information that is both highly credible and that resonates with publics is precisely the information that is likely to circulate faster and further than information that does not possess such qualities.

From control to coordination

The third strategic goal is to coordinate rather than control information. During the Cold War, "total information control" was a central feature of U.S. public diplomacy.[26] At that time, information control was technologically possible. Today, it is not. Attempts to control information or the flow of information are perceived as manipulation, and manipulation erodes credibility. Without credibility, information lacks persuasive power.

Letting go of control includes message control. The ability to craft powerfully persuasive messages and to stay on messages have been two highly prized communication attributes. Not surprisingly, questions of effective messaging strategies have been recurring concerns in U.S. public diplomacy discussions. As paramount as message control may be to U.S. public diplomacy, the days of being able to singularly and secretly craft messages apart from the public may be limited, if they have not already passed. In his discussion of an "open source" approach to public diplomacy, Fisher speaks of a "core code," similar to the Linux Open Source project and its core code.

> The essence of open source is control, or the lack of it. While many may argue that you cannot give away control over public diplomacy messages or strategy, they fail to understand one fundamental truth: they cannot control an idea.[27]

Rather than crafting messages apart from publics, one would work with partners and publics to co-create messages. Botan and his colleague Maureen Taylor, in their extensive review of trends in public communication, identified the shift from "instrumental" messages to "co-creational" messaging strategies as the single most dominant trend in public communication over the past 20 years. While attempts to control information can damage credibility, efforts to co-create messages and circulate information can enhance credibility. Being able to effectively coordinate information – without manipulating the information or information context – again brings up the importance of mastering networking and relational strategies.

From segmented audiences to global constituency

A fourth strategic goal is to adopt a comprehensive approach for communicating simultaneously with all of one's publics – domestic, regional, and international. When it comes to gaining support for policy, the domestic and international publics may have different values, perspectives, and interests, but in terms of the listening audience, they are all one global audience.

The idea of communicating simultaneously with multiple and diverse audiences goes against the grain of audience segmentation or tailoring messages to one identifiable targeted audience. Until recently, it was possible to segment audiences and design messages for a specific audience. Many multinational corporations still base their marketing approach on country-specific audience segmentation. U.S. public diplomacy, throughout its history, has subscribed to the targeted audience approach.

Today, the notion of geographic segmented audiences has become problematic for several reasons. First, and perhaps quite obviously, it has become nearly impossible to develop a communication message for one targeted audience that will not be heard by the entire international community. Advanced communication technology and international media has made the separation of a nation's domestic, regional, and international publics artificial. Second, the idea of speaking to the people of one region – while virtually ignoring the rest of the international community – has its own adverse effects on public opinion (Chapter 3). The strategy of building bridges operates on the notion that all publics are publics with whom U.S. public diplomacy seeks to build bridges.

From product to process

A final strategic goal of building bridges entails transforming public diplomacy from a product into a process. On one level, this relates to how U.S. public diplomacy manages the interplay of publics, issues, and policies. On another level, it requires a fundamental change in thinking about how U.S. public diplomacy integrates policy and communication into a unified process of decision making.

Public diplomacy as a product is about prepackaging information on select issues and trying to sell them to publics. These products are created in the home country and reflect the home country's vision and purpose. Post-9/11 U.S. public diplomacy actually used the term "products" to refer to the new information materials and programs.[28] For example, the websites created for the *Shared Values* initiatives were called "web

products." The U.S. State Department and some U.S. embassies specifically list their "products" under the public diplomacy section of their websites.[29] Foreign publics are perceived as little more than consumers of these public diplomacy products. However sophisticated the packaging was, the audience was not interested in *a product*. Repeatedly, as all the studies documented, audience demand was for "more dialogue." What they were saying was that public diplomacy was *a process*.

The diagrams below visually represent U.S. public diplomacy as products that discount the relationship between publics, issues, and policies (Figure 8.1) and U.S. public diplomacy as a process that manages the interplay of publics, issues, and policies (Figure 8.2). Viewing public diplomacy as a process, rather than as a product, represents a radical departure in the conception of public diplomacy. Before it was possible to think of public diplomacy solely as a product. As Shaun Riordan noted, "the idea that public diplomacy is about selling policy and values and national image, remains central."[30] However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the global communication era has prompted a shift in the communication dynamics from message content to message exchange. This shift produced a parallel shift from public diplomacy as a product to public diplomacy as a process. Public diplomacy as a product focuses on message content and asks: "What's our message?" Public diplomacy as a process focuses on message exchange, the first critical question is: "How and with whom do we need to exchange messages?"

The shift from product to process also applies to the role of communication in U.S. public diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy decision making. Communicating more effectively with foreign publics will do little to enhance U.S. public diplomacy's effectiveness if both its communication and political expertise are not integrated into the process of decision making. U.S. public diplomacy appeared to use a political perspective, ,that is, political policies to define the grand strategy. This rather limited view fits with the prevailing label of public diplomacy as a "tool or instrument" of foreign policy (that had already been made), not as an integral component of foreign policy decision making.

The irony of this rather subservient view of communication in public diplomacy is that it runs counter to the increasingly prominent role of communication highlighted by analysts of foreign policy and international relations. As noted in Chapter 4, the dramatic changes in diplomacy and international relations were all associated with the rising importance of information and communication in the international arena, including the shift from traditional diplomacy to public diplomacy as well as the concept of soft power. Raising the value and

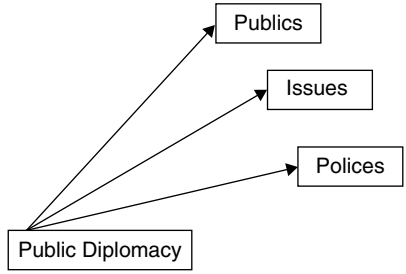

Figure 8.1 Intransigent public diplomacy – Public diplomacy as products

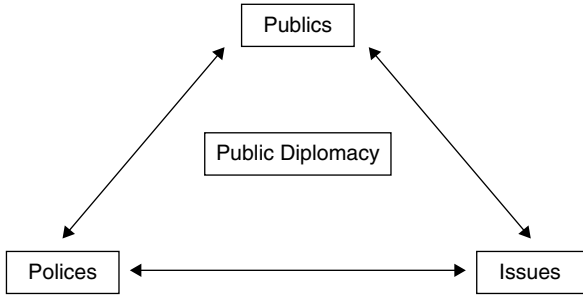

Figure 8.2 Integrative public diplomacy – Public diplomacy as a process

sophistication of communication analyses so that it is on par with that of political analyses is an important component for strengthening U.S. public diplomacy. Hopefully it gives credence to Murrow's oft-quoted statement about public diplomacy being present at the take-offs and landings.

Similar to the strategic goals of the information battle during the Cold War, the strategic goals of building bridges are interrelated and mutually reinforcing; striving to achieve one, makes achieving the others more likely. Each strategic goal enjoys a multiplier effect. Most important, because the grand strategy of building bridges and the strategic goals match the dynamics of the new global communication era, the grand strategy offers the promise of success and greater communication returns for the strategy and tactics of the individual public diplomacy initiatives. U.S. public diplomacy's problem was not a matter of coordinating strategy and tactics within an organization, but accurately assessing and coordinating the organization's grand strategy with the prevailing dynamics in the communication terrain.

For U.S. public diplomacy, building bridges as a grand strategy capitalizes on the underlying communication and political dynamics that now define the global communication era. Building bridges rests on the network communication approach and connective, relational strategies. As a grand strategy, it can incorporate both informational and relational frameworks that come by working with culturally diverse publics. During the Cold War, U.S. public diplomacy waged a battle for information dominance. The one with the most information won. America had the competitive edge. Tomorrow, U.S. public diplomacy needs to gain the cooperative advantage. Those with the most extensive and strongest communication bridges will command power in the global communication era.

Epilogue

At the time of this writing, President Barack Obama just passed the 100th day in office. Already the international reaction to President Obama speaks volumes to the powerful role of the office of the president plays in representing the overall image of the United States to the world. In a global communication era, the mantel of "Communicator in Chief" applies to the international as well as domestic context. Although the Obama administration is only just out of the political starting gate, observers are already noting a pronounced change in U.S. public diplomacy. Some suggest President Obama by his very person represents a game changer for U.S. public diplomacy. As the son of a Muslim father from Kenya, who went on to study at Harvard, Obama's road to the White House captures the spirit of the American dream.

The perceived shift in U.S. public diplomacy suggests a new overarching grand strategy. In much the same way that the former Bush administration exemplified a grand strategy tied to fighting information battles, the new Obama administration appears to be trying to forge a grand strategy of building bridges. The administration has repeatedly emphasized its intent to mend and strengthen relations and use relational vehicles such as diplomacy and dialogue to do so. This strategic vision, articulated at the highest level in the Office of the President, is already evident across different levels of government as well as the strategy and tactics of individual initiatives.

On his second day in office, Obama signed an executive order to shut down Guantanamo Bay within a year, halt the use of harsh interrogation methods, and close secret detention centers. Allegations that the United States had engaged in torture had trespassed across international conventions and diminished America's moral standing. By signing the order, the new administration signals U.S. commitment to rejoin the shared values of the community of nations. In addition that day, Obama paid a visit to the State Department (as opposed to the Pentagon). There he joined the new U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to announce the appointment of George Mitchell as special envoy to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Richard Holbrooke as envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The appointments of these seasoned diplomats signaled a renewed emphasis on diplomacy to address critical concerns.

The Obama administration has been building bridges through a highly visible and personal style of "visit diplomacy." Soon after assuming her new position, Secretary Clinton embarked on an overseas trip to Japan, China, and Indonesia. After returning from Asia, she turned around and headed to the Middle East and the politics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Thus far, according to the State Department's 100-day assessment, Clinton is already the most traveled Secretary of State in a new administration. President Obama's first international trip, a six-hour excursion to neighboring Canada in mid-February, was highly symbolic from a relational perspective. For his first visit to Europe, he landed in London (among America's closest cultural and political allies) to attend the G-20 summit of world leaders, then onto Prague in Eastern Europe to attend the North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit. He ended his trip with a visit to Turkey. Later in April, he went to neighboring Mexico for a one-day visit, before joining the other thirty-four heads of state and governments of the southern hemisphere for the summit of the Americas.

Obama as well as the former first lady Hillary Clinton garner much media and public attention when they travel abroad. They also appear adept at using that attention. During a European security conference in February, Vice President Joseph Biden had used the phrase "press the reset button" in speaking about relations with Russia.[1] A month later, on her visit to Russia, Secretary Clinton presented a red "re-set button" to signal the U.S. desire to renew relations with Russia. Although the Russian Foreign Minister quickly pointed out the word "re-set" had been incorrectly translated, the linguistic gaff garnered more attention for the U.S. intentions to renew relations with Russia than had it not occurred.

In addition to a relational focus on geographic and political spheres closest to the United States, the new administration appears focused on easing those relations that are most strained. Obama used the international spotlight of his inaugural address to signal his intent to improve relations with the Islamic world based on "mutual respect and mutual understanding." During his first week in office, he granted his first official interview to Al-Arabiya and announced plans to deliver a major speech on U.S.-Islamic relations from an Islamic country. On his visit to Turkey, he stressed that the United States was not at war with Islam. His efforts address the 30-year tension with Iran, which include the high visibility Norwaz greeting for "the promise of a new beginning" as well as highly symbolic invitation to Iran to join the security conference on Afghanistan hosted by the Netherlands. In a step toward addressing

50-year-old political tensions with Cuba, Obama lifted travel restrictions and remittance limits for Cuban Americans.

To complement these new initiatives is a new style. The focus on listening and engagement is pronounced as a deliberate effort to communicate respect and understanding. In his interview with Al-Arabiya, he repeatedly used the words listening and respect. Secretary Clinton's overseas visit was also billed as a "listening tour." Listening was also the theme during Obama's European visit. This focus marks a historic change in U.S. public diplomacy that has traditionally been "telling our story."

In many ways, Obama's approach to communicating with foreign publics contain similar distinctive features that characterized his presidential campaign. First is the ability to fuse a positive image based on American ideals (and even myths) and then brand that image, so that it is easily recognizable and resonates positively across multiple publics. For the U.S. public, Obama cultivated a future-oriented brand image that resonated with hope, change, and optimism. For foreign publics, the Obama image resonates with the spirit of the America dream, that success, regardless of one's origins is possible in a land of opportunity.

Another communication hallmark of the Obama campaign evident across the administration is a connective strategy that recognizes that information gains values through social currency. Openness, public participation, and social media tools are key elements of that connective strategy. These elements played a prominent role during his campaign (especially in fundraising) and are now evident throughout his administration. The very first memo, issued by noon of his first day in office, was on transparency and open government, which stated that government should be transparent, participatory, and collaborative. To achieve this, he said all executive departments and agencies "should harness new technologies" and "use innovative tools, methods, and systems to cooperate among themselves, across all levels of government and with non profit organizations, businesses, and individuals in the private sector."[2]

On the campaign trail, Obama exhibited a preference for using a variety of communication vehicles as well as adeptness for exploiting social media. Similarly, the White House website now features a "Stay Connected" box, with its presence on Facebook and MySpace, (free-access social networking website), YouTube and Vimeo (video sharing social network platform), Twitter (140 character micro-blogging, mobile social network service), Flickr (photo/video sharing), and iTunes (podcasts). The move to incorporate social networking has been a

government-wide move. The Library of Congress has already posted thousands of free historical photos on Flickr. About 30 agencies have joined Facebook, and 25 agencies have YouTube channels.[3] The State Department, specifically in the public diplomacy cone, had a head start on using social networking tools. James Glassman, the last public diplomacy head under the Bush administration, had taken the lead in developing what he termed Public Diplomacy 2.0.

While Obama as president plays a powerful role in articulating the grand strategic vision of U.S. public diplomacy, his own personal communication style has an indirect effect as well. As Communicator in Chief, how the president communicates sets the tone for how the U.S. as a whole communicates. Even though America's communication efforts are carried out by a variety of federal agencies and thousands of individuals, if the president appears to communicate in an open, inclusive, approachable, informed manner, foreign publics will tend to expect to see these same features in other "faces" and facades of U.S. public diplomacy. This includes U.S. diplomats and envoys as well as organizations and programs.

The Obama administration has articulated a new strategic vision for U.S. public diplomacy that is much more aligned to a grand strategy of building bridges rather than fighting information battles. What publics will be watching for is the implementation of that strategic vision. Already, the administration is confronting several lingering challenges in terms of publics, issues, and policies.

Old challenges

One of the major lessons of the Bush administration is that the most daunting hurdle for U.S. public diplomacy is not developing innovative ways to communicate with foreign publics, but rather, reconciling inconsistencies between U.S. foreign policy and U.S. public diplomacy. Inconsistencies between positive sentiments expressed in U.S. public diplomacy and negative repercussions of U.S. foreign policy can undermine U.S. credibility.

Already there are signs that the Obama administration is grappling with the policy hurdle on several fronts. Global resentment over U.S. military venture in Iraq is dissipating, thanks to Obama's stated intent to pull U.S. troops out of that country. However, anger over the recklessness of U.S. financial institutions is growing as the economic crisis spreads across the globe. Although Obama as the U.S. president may be wildly popular, U.S. policies still are not, even the administration's

new policies. The enthusiastic welcome Obama received in Europe during the G-20 summit was not enough to melt the policy differences over how best to address the economic crisis and security situation in Afghanistan. At the NATO summit that followed, leaders stood firm against U.S. pressures to increase military commitments in Afghanistan. In regions of the world where human rights and social injustices are high priorities, observers there note the irony of the first African-American president opted to forgo the UN World Conference on Racism in April.

Much like the Bush administration did immediately after 9/11, the Obama administration announced the importance of communication with the Arab and Islamic world. Although much was made of Obama's interview with Al-Arabiya in Washington, for many in the region, the 17-minute interview was little conciliation for his silence during the 22-day Israeli military operation in Gaza. During Secretary Clinton's visit to the region, the policy similarities between the Bush and the Obama administrations were so striking that a prominent newspaper referred to the new U.S. Secretary of State as "Condoleezza Clinton."[4] Similar policy positions between the Bush and Obama administration echo across the Islamic world. For example, Afghanistan: the use of drones and high civilian losses; Pakistan: border region disputes; or Egypt: human rights. Observers are watching Iran and Syria closely for this very reason.

Unless the United States does address the critical concerns expressed by publics about U.S. policies and issues that affect them, the seemingly more open cooperative grand strategy of the Obama administration will grow to resemble the intransigent battle strategy of the former administration. Rather than public diplomacy being the skillful interplay of publics-issues-policies, those components remain disparate and even oppositional. Like the previous administration, the Obama administration may become caught up in the difficult game of trying to devise ever more innovative ways of presenting unfavorable policy to foreign publics who, in turn, grow ever more skeptical of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives. Ultimately, the new Obama administration risks facing the same credibility crisis encountered by the previous administration.

A second major challenge that has crossed over from the Bush administration to the Obama administration is how to bridge inconsistencies between U.S. public diplomacy goals and U.S. domestic sentiment toward foreign publics. Given U.S. public diplomacy's tight focus on how to win over foreign publics, the role that the U.S. public plays in the communication equation has been largely overlooked.

However, as political scholars have long noted, the U.S. domestic public, including organized interests groups, play a key role in shaping

the perimeters U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. government must exercise care that it does not trespass across the sentiments of the American people. The credibility gap between U.S. foreign policy and U.S. public diplomacy discussed above may more accurately stem from political constraints the administration faces at home, not abroad.[5] Indirectly, U.S. domestic public opinion also provides a barometer for gauging the favorability of the U.S. image by foreign publics.

In an interconnected world, the U.S. domestic public is an important element in U.S. public diplomacy. One might call the phenomenon "public diplomacy through the looking glass." In communication, "us" and "them" is a false separation as there is always an inherent link or relationship between the communicator and the audience. U.S. public diplomacy – as a communication equation – is two-sided. If one focuses only on one side, then half of the picture is missing. Currently, Obama's highly positive image casts a wide, glowing halo over America. However, there is a notable irony that should be the cause for concern in the longer term. Similar to the Bush administration's seven-year battle, the new administration is trying to promote a favorable image of the United States in the Islamic world when perceptions of Islam among the U.S. public remain highly negative or unfavorable. This discrepancy between the image that the U.S. president is projecting – and the actual sentiments of the U.S. public – has the potential to undermine U.S. public diplomacy's effectiveness with the foreign publics. As discussed in Chapter 1, communication parties tend to mirror their perceptions of each other.

The communication bottom line is fairly clear: if U.S. public diplomacy hopes to significantly change its image in the Arab and Islamic world, there will need to be a corresponding change in the image of Arabs and Islam in the United States. President Obama appears cognizant of the larger equation when he speaks of mutual respect and understanding. He will need to bridge the perceptual gaps between the domestic and foreign publics and make them more mutually compatible before the halo dims.

Implications for public diplomacy practitioners

Over the long term, the move from battles to bridges has several implications for the practice of U.S. public diplomacy. First for practitioners, one might expect to see greater emphasis on initiatives that favor outreach programs aimed at building relations over the establishment of media enterprises aimed at disseminating information. This includes

exchange programs, visitors programs, and cultural and arts programs. Citizen diplomacy is likely to accelerate faster than other government-sponsored relational programs.[6] As the proliferation and fluency of social media network tools and platforms spread, citizen diplomacy will likely move from the city and state-level to even community and individual-level engagement. Additionally, rather than combining on a geographic basis such as city-to-city twinning arrangements, citizen diplomacy may largely find people gathering over issues such as health, education, or the environment.

Public-private partnerships constitute another trend likely to accelerate as part of a move toward more participatory U.S. public diplomacy. Again, social media is one reason but so too is the generalized approach of openness and inclusiveness that underlies building bridges. Partnerships that emerge as a natural outgrowth of the dialogue and collaborative process are likely to enjoy more credibility than the ones created by officials.

Looking at these two potential trends, as well as the overall approach of building bridges, officials engaged in public diplomacy need to be as versed in relational and networking skills as they are in information dissemination. The communication training skill sets are different. Information dissemination – crafting and getting a message out – requires strong oral and written communication skills. Training needs include public speaking, debate, media relations, public opinion analysis, media analysis, and framing or messaging strategies. Relational initiatives – connecting with people to build relations or making connections between peoples to weave networks – require strong observation, listening, and facilitating skills. Training needs include intercultural communication, mediation, and conflict management because cultivating and sustaining relations between people's diverse backgrounds rarely flow smoothly. Public diplomats will also be more effective if they are conversant with the basics of social networking analysis and network-centric strategies.

As U.S. public diplomacy seeks to build its relational and networking capabilities, officials are likely to start asking different types of questions. The familiar, information-driven approach of U.S. public diplomacy asks questions such as: What is our message? How do we communicate that message? Relational approaches require different questions such as: What sorts of relations are important for advancing U.S. policy in a particular region or political venue? How strong are those relations? And, how can they be strengthened? In terms of individual initiatives, officials might ask questions such as: Are the initiatives confined to basic

relational strategies? What features might expand or strengthen the connectivity within an initiative? Sharing the answers to these types of questions and entering them into a shared database may help individual practitioners enhance the creativity and sophistication of U.S. public diplomacy's relational initiatives. For practitioner-scholars, collecting and analyzing case studies across actors, publics, and issues is an important step for scholars to identify best practices of relational and networking initiatives unique to public diplomacy political mission.

Future of public diplomacy scholarship

For U.S. public diplomacy scholarship, the shift from battles to bridges is perhaps even more significant. Designing and delivering persuasive messages have been a dominant strand in the DNA of U.S. public diplomacy. Since WWI, U.S. public diplomacy has been largely viewed as an information-driven activity. Some scholars may see the task of how to frame persuasive messages and exploit social media in an open environment as the ultimate challenge in the global communication era.

For other scholars seeking to expand U.S. public diplomacy beyond information-driven activities, an immediate area of study is exploring the different types of public diplomacy. One of the reasons finding an agreed upon definition of public diplomacy may be so elusive is because the phenomenon is multidimensional. This study has suggested informational and relational frameworks. Fisher and Bröckerhoff plotted options for influence,[7] Kelley outlined situational dimensions,[8] Cull cut across modes of communication to present a taxonomy of public diplomacy's components,[9] while Cowan and Arsenault peeled back the different layers of public diplomacy to speak of monologue, dialogue, and collaboration.[10] Through such works, commonalities may emerge that can shed light on the expansive nature of public diplomacy and help cultivate public diplomacy theory.

As relation-driven activity, U.S. public diplomacy represents a wide-open research terrain that is rich with cross-fertilization potential from other fields. As discussed in Chapter 7, research on ways to enhance and measure organization–public relationships has been growing steadily over the past decade in public relations scholarship. Many of the features associated with participatory communication such as process orientation, horizontal communication, and empowerment may also provide insights into developing a more participatory approach to public diplomacy initiatives. From the field of marketing, "relationship marketing" may offer more reliable measurement tools. As a major budget item,

public diplomacy cannot dismiss the need for accountability. Other fields with similar accountability requirements have developed methodologies for assessing relational and networking programs.

The role of culture as a force in shaping public diplomacy represents a pressing research need, which at present is curiously unexplored. Interestingly, while the literature on U.S. public diplomacy seems to suggest that culture is powerful enough to influence other people and even help break down stereotypes, culture is presumed to have no corresponding effect on U.S. public diplomacy practitioners or scholars. To presume that public diplomacy as a political or communication phenomenon is "culture free" is to continue to equate "public diplomacy" with "*U.S.* public diplomacy."

Further research into the origins of public diplomacy may help expose the culture bound nature of scholarship today. Many of the current treatises on public diplomacy are confined to the historic and geographic realm of 20th century U.S. public diplomacy. As a practice of trying to persuade the sovereign of a foreign ruler or territory, public diplomacy may well be as old *if not older* than traditional diplomacy. Although scholars have documented traditional diplomacy back to ancient times,[11] Western scholarship appears to assume that "diplomacy" is private communication.[12] In looking at the descriptions of diplomacy in non-Western settings and those that pre-date the rise of traditional diplomatic scholarship, the writers assume "diplomacy" was public communication. In ancient China, India, and pre-Islamic Arabia, diplomacy was conducted in a public venue or the presence of influential court elite and stressed oral speaking skills (rather than written documentation and private negotiations). Poets and orators were prized as diplomat envoys in ancient China, India, the Middle East, and Greece.[13] As diplomatic scholars Hamilton and Langhorne observed, diplomacy in ancient Greece "was surprisingly" open and public.[14] Exploring public diplomacy's origins is a rich, fascinating research quest.

Similarly needed is more research on contemporary public diplomacy from an international perspective. This study has focused exclusively on U.S. public diplomacy. However, the public diplomacy assumptions and practices differ greatly across the globe. For example, U.S. public diplomacy has developed a tradition of trying to keep communication for foreign publics and domestic public separate. The use of public affairs and public diplomacy speak to the separation of publics. Some countries view the domestic public as integral to the implementation and success of their public diplomacy initiatives.[15] Similarly, while U.S.

public diplomacy's forte is in information initiatives, some countries have exceptionally sophisticated relational initiatives.[16]

This study, also by its focus on U.S. public diplomacy, has neglected another research area: nonstate actors. Nonstate actors such as citizen diplomacy, celebrity diplomacy, or advocacy nongovernment organizations (NGOs) can work to help or undermine a country's public diplomacy. It is important for U.S. public diplomacy to study both sides of the coin. As mentioned in the discussion of the soft power differential, highly networked transnational NGOs represent one of the most potentially formidable opponents to U.S. public diplomacy. Another potentially more dangerous group of nonstate actors, which are growing rapidly and more aggressive, are radical activist groups. What makes the urgent study of these groups particularly warranted is the unique nature of their communication strategies and tactics combined with their choice of target audience. These groups can employ high visibility strategies that not only try the patience of governments, but more importantly, push the tactical boundaries for less radical, but politically more powerful NGOs.[17]

A final area of research, critical to establishing public diplomacy as a scholarly field of study and profession, is ethics. Ethics may not be a concern for radical activists, but it should be a critical one for nation-states. "Hearts and minds" is not an abstraction, but rather the civilian population of another country. Similarly, communication technologies are not neutral, but are part of the arsenal of weaponry used to penetrate national borders and wage a battle of ideas. Such battles can threaten political stability. This can raise ethical concerns over the nature and goals of public diplomacy initiatives, selection of specific audiences as well as power imbalances. Public diplomacy may be politically motivated, but public diplomacy as a communication activity will invariably contain an ethical boundary whenever it operates in a social context. To cross an invisible ethnical boundary is to deplete source credibility and diminish the overall effectiveness of a nation's public diplomacy. Ethical research can help identify the contours of those invisible boundaries in the international communication arena.

The United States has long been a world leader in communication. The ability to respond to technological changes, audience styles and demands, is part of the creative imagination of U.S. communication practice and scholarship. The global communication era requires no less than a paradigm shift in how the U.S. views, studies, and approaches communication in general, and public diplomacy in particular. This is U.S. public diplomacy's challenge, but innovation and adaptation are

part of America's communication tradition. In looking over this historical record, what WWI and WWII were to propaganda and persuasion, the war on terrorism may well be to the emergence of the field of public diplomacy and the pursuit of more advanced relational and network communication strategies. As the list of global political threats and opportunities grows, so too does the need for the United States to continually expand its vision of strategic communication and public diplomacy. Rather than viewing publics as passive pawns in a *battle for* hearts and minds, the challenge for U.S. public diplomacy is imaginatively working with the agency of publics to create and sustain *bridges among* hearts and minds.

Notes

Introduction

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7 Strategy and Tactics: Conceptual Frameworks

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24. Norman Pattiz, "Radio Sawa and Alhurra TV: Opening Channels of Mass Communication in the Middle East," in William Rugh (ed.), *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds through Public Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: Public Diplomacy Council, 2004), p. 71.
25. Zehra Rizavi, "Telling Our Stories," Unpublished Masters Capstone Project, American University, May 2007.
26. Simon Anholt, *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
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28. Victoria de Grazia, "The Selling of America, Bush Style," *New York Times,* August 25, 2002.
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30. U.S. Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, *Performance Summary Fiscal Year 2006*, Washington, D.C., February 2006.
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37. James E. Grunig, "Image and Substance: From Symbolic to Behavior Relationships," *Public Relations Review,* 19 (1993), pp. 121–39; John A.

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39. Martin Rose and Nick Wadham-Smith, *Mutuality, Trust and Cultural Relations* (London: The British Council, 2004), p. 8.
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44. Karen Hughes, Remarks at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York City, May 10, 2006.
45. *US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2004 Report,* U.S. Department of State, September 28, 2004, pp. 16–17.
46. Ibid.
47. For more extensive discussion, see R.S. Zaharna, "Mapping out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy Initiatives," in Nancy Snow and Phil Taylor (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 86–100.
48. Relationship-building campaigns are similar to information campaigns in that they can have a predefined campaign goal, set time frame, and specific public, and entail research, planning, implementation, and evaluation, or follow-up stages. However, the primary goal is to build relationships with publics, rather than disseminate information to publics or enhance a country's image. Similar to development projects, a campaign that stresses other motives over relationship-building may undermine the initiative's relational value. A high degree of coordination in designing and implementing the campaign distinguish campaigns that are driven by relational goals. The campaign would begin by developing partnerships with sponsors in the host country, and then actively collaborating with these counterparts to develop the campaign goal and strategies. Such campaigns often feature public participation across several tiers, ranging from political leaders, to institutions, specific publics, and the general public. Finally, campaign effectiveness is more aptly gauged by relationship strength and expansion, rather than opinion surveys.
49. Nonpolitical networking schema are public diplomacy initiatives that seek to link citizens or institutions together in a network so that they can work together on nonpolitical issues such as science, medicine, education, or environmental issues. Although networks have gained increasing prominence as efficient information-sharing organizational structures,

networks are fundamentally relationship structures. In nonpolitical networking schemes, public diplomacy officers act as network weavers who build relationships between like-minded individuals or institutions.

50. Brian Hocking, "Catalytic Diplomacy: Beyond 'Newness' and 'Decline'," in Jan Melissen (ed.), *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 31.
51. David Davenport, "The New Diplomacy," *Policy Review*, 116 (December 2002/January 2003), pp. 17–31.
52. Brian Hocking, "Diplomacy: New Agendas and Changing Strategies," *iMP Magazine* (July 2001), at http://www.usip.org/virtualdiplomacy/publications/

8 Grand Strategy: From Battles to Bridges

1. Carl Botan, "Grand Strategy, Strategy and Tactics in Public Relations," in C. Botan and V. Hazelton (eds.), *Public Relations Theory II* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), pp. 223–47.
2. Botan, "Grand Strategy,"2006, p. 227.
3. Botan, "Grand Strategy," 2006, p. 228.
4. The internal logic of the intransigent strategy presumes a context in which there is a clear line between right and wrong, that the organization believes it is right, that an aggressive competition can defeat the other (wrong) side and that publics are weak or passive bystanders of that larger competition. In such contexts, communication professionals can employ a host of strategies and tactics to secure and retain the organization's power over a competitor.
5. Such an assessment would, for example, consider measures of a clear right-or-wrong fault line, desire for change within the environment or among the public, public willingness to engage on issues, type and strength of issues, as well existing communication tools and expertise.
6. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, July 2004, p. 203.
7. "Engage" has gained increasing currency in public diplomacy since the 2003 the Djerejian Commission included engage in its definition, "Public Diplomacy is the promotion of the national interest by informing, engaging, and influencing people around the world." Report of the U.S. Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for US Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World*," October 1, 2003, p. 13.
8. Botan, "Grand Strategy," 2006.
9. Richard Holbrooke, "Get the Message Out," *Washington Post*, October 28, 2001.
10. U.S. White House, *National Security Strategy*, September 2002, p. 6.
11. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 2004, p. 377.
12. Charlotte Beers, "U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim Worlds," Remarks at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., May 7, 2002.
13. U.S. Advisory Commission of Public Diplomacy, *Changing Minds,* 2003.
14. U.S. Department of State, *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., June 2007.

15. There is a body of literature on media effects and prominent theories developed during the time period that coincides with the Cold War period, for review and critique, see Dietram A. Scheufele, "Agenda-setting, Priming and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication," *Mass Communication and Society*, 3, 2/3, (2000), pp. 297–316.
16. See Leonard W. Doob, "Goebbels' Principles of Propaganda," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 14 (1950), pp. 419–42.
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18. John D. Stempel, "Recasting Diplomacy," Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, University of Kentucky, November 1995.
19. James N. Rosenau, "Diplomacy, Proof, and Authority in the Information Age," in Bernard I. Finel and Kristin M. Lord (eds.), *Power and Conflict in the Age of Transparency* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 317.
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21. Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *Smart Power, A Smarter, More Secure America*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 2007, p. 10.
22. Ibid.
23. U.S. State Department spokesperson Philip Reeker, Noon Briefing, July 29, 2002.
24. Ali Fisher, "Music for the Jilted Generation: Open-Source Public Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy,* 3 (2008), p. 5.
25. Council on Foreign Relations (Peter Peterson, chair), *Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform,* New York, July 2002.
26. Giles Scott-Smith has described the Cold War paradigm of U.S. public diplomacy as oriented around total information control. Giles Scott-Smith, "US Public Diplomacy and the New American Studies: No Logo," *49th Parallel* (online), Summer 2006.
27. Fisher, "Music for the Jilted Generation," 2008.
28. See Charlotte Beers, Address at The Citadel, The Military Academy of South Carolina Charleston, South Carolina, October 17, 2002.
29. See, for example, U.S. embassy website in Germany or Malta (2008).
30. Shaun Riordan, "Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: A New Foreign Policy Paradigm?" Discussion Papers in Diplomacy No. 95, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, November 2004, p. 9.

Epilogue

1. Craig Whitlock, "'Reset' Sought on Relations with Russia, Biden Says," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2009.
2. U.S. White House, Transparency and Open Government, Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, January 21, 2009, 12:00AM EST.
3. Michael Scherer, "Obama and Twitter: White House Social-Networking," *Time m*agazine, May 6, 2009.

4. A reference to Condoleezza Rice who had been Bush's Secretary of State.
5. Whereas before the Smith-Mundt Act sought to shield the American people from lobbying by the U.S. government intended for foreign publics, now because of the open communication environment, the American public can actively lobby and protest U.S. government communication with foreign publics.
6. Sherry Mueller, "The Nexus of U.S. Public Diplomacy and Citizen Diplomacy," in N. Snow and P. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 101–7.
7. Ali Fisher and Aurélie Bröckerhoff, *Options for Influence*, (London: CounterPoint, 2008).
8. John Robert Kelley, "Between 'Take-offs' and 'Crash Landings,'" in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 72–85.
9. Nicholas Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, 1 (2008), pp. 31–54.
10. Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, "Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, 1 (2008), pp. 10–30.
11. Cohen's discussion of the Amarna Letters are diplomatic documents. Raymond Cohen, "On Diplomacy in the Ancient Near East: The Amarna Letters," Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, University of Leicester, 1995.
12. The origins of the study and practice of traditional diplomacy in rooted in the Western European experience.
13. See, for example, Tran Van Dihn, *Communication and Diplomacy in a Changing World* (Norword, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1987); Rohee Dasgupta, School of Politics, Internationals and the Environment, Keele University, U.K., 2005; and Afzal Iqbal, *The Prophet's Diplomacy* (Delhi: C. Stark, 1984).
14. Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 9.
15. The successful nation branding initiatives by Colombia and South Africa both rested on first securing a strong domestic buy-in. Interesting whereas the United States. has moved away from nation branding, the practice appears to be growing internationally.
16. For example, China's extensive networking strategies embedded in the Confucius Institute initiative, Canada's policy formation networking in the Ottawa Process and Kimberly Process, or Cuba's long and extensive medical diplomacy.
17. What was once taboo for a reputable NGO, becomes acceptable by comparison. Additionally, one of the reasons radical activists are able to employ tactics with little regard for public or official sentiment is because their audience is not external, but rather internal. The radical communication tactics are primarily to recruit and retain like-minded activists. Nation states that try to counter their messages in the public sphere are at a distinct disadvantage. See Tiffany Derville, "Radical activist tactics: Overturning Public Relations Conceptualizations," *Public Relations Review,* 31 (2005), pp. 527–33.

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