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A Survey and Analysis of American Public Diplomacy: 1942-2007

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College Scholars Program

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I. Introduction

Public diplomacy is a term frequently used in recent years both in international relations circles and the media. Only during that time has it become an accepted part of the foreign policy machine within government, but as a concept public diplomacy has existed for much longer. Whether called psychological operations (as it is in the U.S. military) or information dissemination (as within organizations such as the U.S. Information Agency) public diplomacy has been exercised for decades. With the establishment of high profile positions for public diplomacy within the U.S. government during the last several years, it has become more prominent as a field of practice. Public diplomacy is an essential and underutilized branch of the foreign policy world. It has the potential to improve relationships with other nations, foster understanding between cultures, and promote global education and engagement for Americans. It also reinforces democratic principles by recognizing public citizens as important players in their own countries and on the global stage. Most importantly, it has the ability to accomplish its primary goal: building widespread support for American foreign policy.

In a world of declining American influence and increasing hostility toward American policies, public diplomacy will be the lynchpin in any successful foreign policy in the coming years. A rapidly globalizing world has given a voice to billions of previously unheard individuals. These individuals must be the targets

of public diplomacy efforts. Continued democratization around the world means more and more that the will of the people will drive government action. The distinction here is important: as a nation, America cannot focus solely on garnering support among foreign governments. We must also win favorability with the citizens.

An important distinction must be made between public diplomacy and propaganda. Very negative connotations surround the idea of propaganda, and while both fields are concerned with informational campaigns, public diplomacy is based on other components. Two primary differences separate these fields. First, public diplomacy is not unidirectional. An important objective is to inform foreign audiences of American values, but equally important are efforts to inform Americans of foreign opinions. Second, cultural and educational exchanges are crucial areas of public diplomacy, as they prove mutually beneficial to both cultures. Propaganda is not centered on the free exchange of ideas and cultures the way public diplomacy is. Also, the government is not the only player in public diplomacy; it is a practice that draws from multinational corporations and private citizens, in addition to government entities.

At the heart of American public diplomacy lie the American people. With their voices positive messages about American life are carried around the world. With a government often struggling with public diplomacy, and working with declining cultural capital, the people provide a sound alternative to educate a new

generation of foreign friends. Public diplomacy offers a rare arena in which the actions of people can make up for the deficiencies of government.

For centuries, the public was largely excluded from the policy realm, but with the advent of liberal democratic societies has come an onslaught of information and public opinion. The story of English diplomat Harold Nicolson is well known in international relations because his writings and observations capture a shift between old and new diplomacy. Early in his life, as a member of the British foreign service, Nicolson was a Wilsonian idealist who viewed the League of Nations as the solution to all international problems.[1] He accepted Satow's definition of diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states."[2] This definition characterizes old diplomacy through its focus on government-to-government encounters, and was based on a model with a sovereign head of state. Let down by the failures of the Wilsonian model, Nicolson began writing as a realist who recognized a sort of new diplomacy in which sovereignty lies with the people.[3] Because of the changing nature of sovereignty, diplomacy itself needed

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[1] Otte, T.G. "Nicolson." *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger,"* 2001, p. 152.

[2] Otte, ibid. p. 156.

[3] Otte, ibid. p. 157.

to adapt: "The conflict between the 'old' and 'new' diplomacy is…in this long process of adjustment," Nicolson wrote.[4]

Public diplomacy accepts "new" diplomacy and focuses on influencing foreign audiences. While traditional diplomacy continues to play a critical role in the international system, public diplomacy responds to public opinion, which is very important in societies where the people can vote out public officials. Viewed this way, effective public diplomacy has a trickle-up effect, starting with shaping the opinions of the public audience, which then manifests itself in electoral outcomes. Through such actions, state leaders are indirectly targeted by public diplomacy.

The purpose of this essay is three-fold. The first section provides history and analysis of public diplomacy from 1942-2007, including its structural organization within the U.S. government. The section includes an analysis of how public diplomacy has been transformed as the result of the War on Terror. The second section describes the most recent programs and initiatives in American public diplomacy. Thirdly, I offer a section of policy recommendations and conclusions, ultimately calling for more indirect approaches to public diplomacy in order to improve American credibility.

Two major problems will be addressed at various points throughout the essay. There is widespread disagreement over what the role of public diplomacy

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[4] Nicolson, Nigel. *The Harold Nicolson Diaries 1907-1963*. Orion Publishing Group, London, 2004.

should be exactly. This disagreement has led to detrimental inconsistencies, most obviously in the rapidly shifting structure of the public diplomacy establishment. There are also important questions about the scope of public diplomacy. Is it anything more than public affairs or publicity? There is a fine line between the information programs of public diplomacy and propaganda. What characteristics of public diplomacy distinguish it as an independent and necessary part of the foreign policy process? These questions will be addressed from various perspectives.

II. Public Diplomacy: Structure and Practice

The concept of public diplomacy is relatively new, at least compared to age-old international interactions, such as bargaining, trade and war. Because of the rise of accessible information in the twentieth century, the opinion of foreign audiences became increasingly more prominent and influential. The actual term, public diplomacy, was coined and defined in 1965 as the "cause and effect of public attitudes and opinions which influence the formulation and execution of foreign policy."[5] Public diplomacy can be broken down into three different functions: information programs, educational exchanges and cultural exchanges. This section offers an examination of some important attempts at public

[5] Edmund Gullion of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University first coined the term during the establishment of the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy. The term was first used in the 1965 Fletcher School catalogue. United States Information Agency, USIA: A Commemoration, 26.

diplomacy by the U.S. government and the structure of the public diplomacy establishment within the government, beginning with an overview of some programs that are widely known, if not widely understood as efforts in public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy: information programs and cultural exchange

America's first experiment with public diplomacy was part of the strategic communications tactics that helped the U.S. and its European allies defeat Axis troops. It came in the form of a radio program that today is known around the globe, *Voice of America*. In January 1942, the U.S. government began purchasing small blocks of time on national broadcast networks to inform listeners about the day-to-day events of the war. Broadcasters made a pledge that the news would be honest, whether the news was good or bad.[6] At its inception, VOA was organized under the Office of War Information, and its programs targeted areas that had already fallen under Nazi occupation. Quickly, the program expanded to various markets around the world, often partnering with local media to gain airtime. During the war, the American Broadcasting Station was founded in Europe, establishing an enduring precedent for the availability of American media in

[6] Rugh, William A. *American Encounters with Arabs: The "Soft Power" of U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East.* 2006, p. 13.

Europe.[7] By the end of the war, VOA provided broadcast services in 40 languages.[8]

For a first trial in modern public diplomacy—modern because the effectiveness of the entire operation depended upon the relatively new technology of radio—Voice of America proved successful. It is difficult to quantify the role it played in winning over audiences worldwide, but America had undoubtedly found new and useful methods for effectively disseminating information. Other countries followed, creating their own external broadcasting programs modeled after VOA; however, some criticized its objectivity because of its government association. VOA continued doing important work after WWII, taking on communist ideology during the Cold War. Although its effectiveness was witnessed in Europe, it still had detractors among those in Congress and the mainstream media. The Associated Press and United Press stopped providing news material to VOA, fearing government interference.[9] They worried their collaboration with a government entity undermined their journalistic credibility.

In the early years of the Cold War, an ideological clash developed between the foreign policy establishment and politicians, with the latter adopting a more traditional view of how diplomacy should be conducted—old diplomacy, to use

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[7] Dizard, Wilson P. *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency.* 2004, p. 24

[8] Dizard, ibid, p. 25

[9] Kugler, David F. *The Voice of America and the Domestic Propaganda Battles, 1945-1953.* p. 2

Nicolson's terminology. To them, this new realm of public diplomacy, because of government oversight, constituted an unnecessary expansion of the federal government. Some Congressional leaders believed that foreign policy mattered far less than the domestic political agenda.[10] This discord led to various and major restructurings of the foreign policy establishment in America, particularly in the area of global communications and exchanges.

The most well-known public diplomacy program is the Fulbright exchange program, which, since its creation in 1946, has sent thousands of Americans to universities abroad to conduct graduate research or teach. The program is funded through Congressional appropriations and had a budget of $262 million in 2007. Although cost is shared by host countries and institutions, the United States provides a vast majority of funding. More than 6,000 grants were awarded in 2007, sending researchers and teachers to 155 countries.[11] The cultural benefit is not one-sided; since the program's inception 46,000 Americans and 150,000 students from other countries have participated in Fulbright exchanges. Although the program has been an unquestionable success, funding remains limited. The FY 2007 State and Foreign Operations budget request was $35,116,000,000, and the total earmarked for educational and cultural exchanges was $474,000,000.[12] In other words, only 1.34% of the requested funds were for educational exchanges,

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[10] Kugler, ibid, p. 4

[11] http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about.html

[12] http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/iab/2007/html/60199.htm

with Fulbright being the flagship program. With a proven program such as this one, better funding would insure even greater results.

The structure of public diplomacy within the U.S. government

The failure to set clear goals for public diplomacy hinders its organization and implementation. Because its scope lacks clear definition, it is difficult to organize effectively; on the other hand, because of poor structuring, the scope of public diplomacy is ill defined.

The strategic communications sector of the national security and foreign policy bureaucracy seeks to use communication tactics to further the interests of America abroad. Yet, it is difficult to communicate externally when internal organization is unstable. During the Second World War, three organizations held responsibilities within the strategic communications sector: the Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services (later rechristened the CIA) and the division within the Army that practiced psychological warfare.[13] The onset of the Korean War sparked renewed interest in public diplomacy, but no overarching organization existed that would enable it to be used as an effective tool. President Eisenhower provided an intended solution to this organizational problem with the creation of the United States Information Agency in 1953. USIA assumed responsibility for broadcasting and information functions; however, the

[13] Laurie, Clayton D. *The Propaganda Warriors: America's Crusade Against Nazi Germany*. 1996.

educational and cultural exchange components of public diplomacy continued to operate through the State Department.[14]

Voice of America was now under the auspices of USIA, but other governmental agencies still had a hand in broadcasting, most notably the CIA, which launched radio programs in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (known as Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, respectively). Of course, CIA involvement in these programs was covert. Because of the various and often competing organizations involved in public diplomacy, interagency coordination was problematic. Efforts were made to coordinate public diplomacy efforts through the creation of a Psychological Strategy Board, established during the Truman years and falling under the control of the National Security Council. Although the Eisenhower administration established a similar policy coordination office through the NSC, those efforts fell by the wayside until the Reagan administration.

The 1970's marked a time of significant organizational change to the public diplomacy machine, beginning with the exposure of CIA involvement with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. With the possibility that these two broadcast networks could be shut down, Congress created a Board for International Broadcasting in 1973 to oversee operations.[15] During this decade several studies

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[14] Lord, Carnes. *Losing Hearts and Minds?* p. 65

[15] Lord, Carnes. Ibid, p. 66

and commissions examined and evaluated American public diplomacy.[16] As a result, major restructuring took place with regard to the educational and cultural components of public diplomacy. Historically, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) within the State Department oversaw cultural and educational exchanges. But in 1977, President Carter removed this bureau from State and made it a part of USIA, and also changed the name of USIA to the U.S. International Communications Agency. The new agency redefined the mission of public diplomacy. The primary goal of public diplomacy was still to influence foreign audiences and expose them to American culture. Now, a new, second purpose was added de facto through the new International Communications Agency: to give Americans "the opportunity to understand the histories, cultures, and problems of others, so that we can come to understand their hopes, perceptions and aspirations."[17] This exemplifies the ever-changing nature and purpose of public diplomacy, especially as it relates to coming and going political administrations. President Carter's intention was clearly to promote mutual understanding, yet his goal of educating *Americans* about foreign cultures reached beyond the generally accepted scope of public diplomacy.

One positive result of the studies and commissions of the 1970's was that it provided some distance between the government and its attempts at public

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[16] Roth, Lois. "Public Diplomacy and the Past: The Search for an American Style of Propaganda," *The Fletcher Forum, Summer 1984*.

[17] President Jimmy Carter, "Memorandum for Director, International Communications Agency," March 13, 1978.

diplomacy. This separation between policy and information dissemination allowed State to focus solely on policy planning and implementation, and the ICA to focus on information dissemination and cultural exchange. The outcome was the legitimization of public diplomacy initiatives, which could now be seen as more independent, rather than so closely tied up with government policy planners.

The Stanton Commission was a notable 1970's study of public diplomacy. It made policy recommendations contrary to what President Carter implemented through strengthening the International Communications Agency and the extraction of educational programs from State.[18] The suggestions were founded upon one general idea: that if the State Department was responsible for information programs, the department would be more accurate and timely in its efforts, promoting both accountability and accuracy. It was not until 1998 that the Stanton approach was ultimately adopted. The U.S. Information Agency (it was given back its original name in the previous decade) was folded into the State Department. Voice of America and Radio Free Broadcasts were removed from USIA in 1994 and placed under the jurisdiction of the Broadcasting Board of Governors by an act of Congress.[19] Thus, effectively, with the abolition of USIA in 1998, State regained the control over ECA, which it had lost twenty years before. Also at this time, Congress created a high-ranking position within State, the undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs. This was a step in the

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[18] Lord, Carnes. ibid, p. 67

[19] Lord, Carnes. ibid, p. 68.

right direction; however, like all cabinet positions the office holder depends on who controls the White House. The organization of public diplomacy was streamlined through this decision, but still it lacked cohesive long-term goals and methods.

The State Department and public diplomacy

The undersecretary for public diplomacy and public affairs oversees a variety of initiatives, including educational and cultural exchanges, and international information programs. On the public affairs side, the State Department spokesman reports directly to the undersecretary, meaning that s/he has a direct impact on the daily message coming from the department. Information provided by the department spokesman is used in domestic and international media. The attention of the undersecretary is divided between these two components, although the position was created to heighten the profile of public diplomacy and to demonstrate the commitment of a high-level government official to its successful operation.

Besides the undersecretary, there are in fact hundreds of State Department officials whose careers are dedicated to public diplomacy. They are members of the U.S. Foreign Service who chose public diplomacy as their career track (the department calls this a career cone—the five cones are made up of officers specializing in political, economic, and consular affairs, as well as management and public diplomacy). According to several Foreign Service officers in the

public diplomacy cone, training in this specialty is weak when compared to other Foreign Service careers.[20] All FSO's spend their first few years working in consular affairs, approving visas for foreign students and travelers. Yet when it comes time for a public diplomacy officer to serve in that capacity, there is little definition of expectations. In many ways, this career cone is the catch-all, doing pieces of the work that political or economic officers might do, but with a focus on public relations. If their focus was truly public diplomacy, they would work solely with educational and information programs, and would consult with local media. Such grassroots forms of public diplomacy are unique because they target to certain audiences. There should be clear expectations and homogenized efforts among public diplomacy officers to provide consistency. Without such clarity, it is challenging to examine the effectiveness of public diplomacy because too much is left to the discretion of individual officers. The result is work that is too fluid, changing from person to person and administration to administration. No guiding principles or long-term goals are established, and this lack of foresight damages the potential of diplomats to consistently impact foreign audiences. Large programs with oversight, such as foreign aid, have had more visible results than individual efforts in public diplomacy.

[20] Based on interviews with several FSO's, and also one public diplomacy officer, who is a University of Tennessee alum and spoke to a class in April 2008.

Foreign aid and public diplomacy

There are strong ties between the goals of public diplomacy and the billions of dollars of U.S. foreign aid spent each year. Foreign aid is not a type of public diplomacy; economic power is classic hard power. Yet, the goals of foreign aid and of public diplomacy are complementary. Both share a commitment to forging strong bonds in an effort to foster goodwill and understanding of American culture and policies.

The Marshall Plan was successful in rebuilding Europe and creating strong ties with our Western allies.[21] It demonstrated America's commitment to providing relief for its friends and to strengthening the global economy. Agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have played a critical role in foreign policy for the last half-century. The Millennium Challenge Account, introduced by President Bush in 2002, called for a five-fold increase in foreign aid and restructured distribution methods.[22] There are four ways in which MCA is different from preexisting aid programs. First, its purpose is aimed at economic growth and development and is not tied to other foreign policy objectives. Second, it rewards countries that practice sound economic policies. Third, bureaucratic costs are reduced, and fourth, recipients have a greater say in implementing the aid programs. The separation between policy and aid serves to

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[21] Kunz, Diane. "The Marshall Plan Reconsidered: A Complex of Motives." *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1997.

[22] Radelet, Steve. "Will the Millennium Challenge Account Be Different?" *The Washington Quarterly,* 26-2, pp. 171-187.

strengthen both. It demonstrates altruism on the part of the U.S. government and invests more power in recipients of the aid. Giving more oversight to the people shares similarities with the goals of public diplomacy because it assumes that in states that are democratic or democratizing, public opinion will influence state policies. By empowering people instead of governments, America fosters trust and goodwill among those whose governments may be an adversary.

Foreign opinion polls reveal that many underdeveloped countries have a negative opinion of America and its policies.[23] Rather than decreasing our engagement with these countries, it is crucial that the U.S. continues to strengthen interactions while seeming less focused on its own agenda. Foreign audiences must believe that accepting U.S. aid does not by association mean accepting all U.S. policies. This dilemma is explained well through James Fearon's concept of audience costs. Fearon examines how domestic political audiences impact a nation's incentive to give in during international disputes[24]. While his scholarship pertains more to acts of war, his findings ring true when examining public diplomacy. His thesis relies heavily on the notion of the democratic peace: "If democracies are better able to communicate their intentions and to make international commitments, then the security dilemma may be somewhat moderated between them." In other words, democracies communicate best with

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[23] Pew Global Attitudes Project. http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252 Foreign opinion of the U.S. bottomed out in 2003, when only 1% of Jordanians had a favorable opinion of the U.S. Since then, polls show increased but still very marginal support.

[24] Fearon, James. 1994. "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes." *American Political Science Review* 88 (3): 577-99.

other democracies. One serious problem with American public diplomacy is that often, the foreign audience is non-democratic. Because audience costs are a social invention, they depend on the type of government. Autocratic leaders of Middle East countries have few audience costs when they engage in anti-American rhetoric. Even if a majority of their population disagreed with such rhetoric, it would have little effect on the country's government. Imagine, on the other hand, that a leader of a democratic society were to engage in anti-American rhetoric. S/he will eventually be judged by their domestic political audience.

How technology has impacted public diplomacy and public opinion

Information technology is crucial because it has the capacity to engage whole audiences, not just the political elite of a given country. Wide availability of a message can lead to widespread opinions about America. In August 1994, the *Washington Times* published an article called "The Death of an Agency," harshly critiquing the U.S. Information Agency and its newest approach to disseminating information—the Internet: "How many computer whizzes are there in China or Burma or Cuba or Tibet, or Russia for that matter?"[25] Public diplomacy has a long tradition of adopting the latest technology, from radio to film to television and most recently the Internet. The *Washington Times* may have had a point in 1994, but over a decade later it is apparent that USIA was ahead of its time.

[25] "The Death of an Agency," *Washington Times,* August 11, 1994.

Zogby International is well known for providing reliable polling data around the world. Polls released in 2002, 2005 and 2006 reveal a trend concerning how America is viewed in the Middle East:

Opinion of the United States (2002)

	Favorable	Unfavorable
Saudi Arabia	12	87
Egypt	15	76
Morocco	38	61
Jordan	34	61
Lebanon	26	70

Opinion of the United States (2005)

	Favorable	Unfavorable
Saudi Arabia	9	89
Egypt	14	85
Morocco	34	64
Jordan	33	62
Lebanon	32	60

Opinion of the United States (2006)

	Favorable	Unfavorable
Saudi Arabia	12	82
Egypt	14	83
Morocco	7	87
Jordan	5	90
Lebanon	28	68

The data conclude that positive views of America in the Middle East have drastically declined. While this certainly reflects feelings generated by the unpopular war in Iraq, these low numbers also indicate that public diplomacy is failing in the region. Although such disapproval is unsettling, those numbers provide insight that was unavailable before the advent of the information age. If so many in the Muslim world are dissatisfied with American policy, it is critical to understand why before significant improvements can be made to the public diplomacy efforts to reshape their opinions.

The Pew Global Attitudes Project is perhaps the best-known poll that gauges public perception of the United States. The questions cover many topics, but touch on opinions of foreign governments and foreign people. Often respondents dislike a country, but like its people. The results for countries such as Jordan and Turkey demonstrate an important gap between the negativity associated with the U.S. government, as opposed to the American people.

Question: What is your opinion of the United States: favorable, unfavorable or undecided?

Country	Favorable	Unfavorable	Undecided
Great Britain	56%	33%	11%
Egypt	30%	69%	1%
Jordan	15%	85%	0%
Turkey	12%	76%	12%

Question: What is your opinion of Americans: favorable, unfavorable or undecided?

Country	Favorable	Unfavorable	Undecided
Great Britain	69%	21%	10%
Egypt	36%	63%	1%
Jordan	38%	61%	1%
Turkey	17%	69%	14%

*From the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006.

Public diplomacy relies heavily on the notion of promoting American culture and showing foreign audiences the "real" America. The above data, therefore, are encouraging because they demonstrate an opening to convey

American values to foreign audiences without directly attaching those values to the government. Walter Russell Mead writes that, "American sweet power, though limited and variable, clearly plays an important role in winning sympathy and support for American foreign policy around the world."[26] Indeed, there is an opportunity for public diplomacy to contribute to improved approval numbers for America. Ideally, convergence in the two above data sets would indicate successful public diplomacy. Once foreign audiences look favorably upon the government and the American people, it will be less important to detach public diplomacy initiatives from the government because of lack of popularity.

The greatest downside to polls conducted by the Pew Center is that the data are so comprehensive it takes several years to compile and release, resulting in sometimes outdated information. More rapid polling information would allow public diplomatists to quantify improvements in opinion polls as they relate to public diplomacy. Yet, having this information is an advantage over what was known about worldwide perception of America a generation ago. Because improvements in technology and communication have allowed better access to a diverse array of media and information resources, the discipline of diplomacy has changed how it envisions its tasks and performs its functions. No longer is diplomacy strictly conceived of in the traditional sense of government-to-government negotiations.

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[26] Mead, Walter Russell. *Power, Terror, Peace and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk.* p. 39-40

What we learn from the structure of public diplomacy

The structure of the public diplomacy shop within the foreign policy establishment is revealing of its place on the diplomatic priority list. Public diplomacy is faced with definitional problems that do not exist in policy planning or diplomatic management. There are strict guidelines for how embassies are run; there is a process in place for creating and implementing policy; the resources the State Department provides to Americans and foreigners is straightforward. Public diplomacy itself, however, is not straightforward.

Those with a more traditional, realist perspective of international relations question the effectiveness of soft power altogether. Realists believe hard power and self-interest are the key determinants to creating policy. Decisions are instinctively made based on the best outcome for the decision-maker. Hans Morgenthau argued that "rational foreign policy [is] good foreign policy; for only rational foreign policy minimizes risks and maximizes benefits and, hence, complies both with the moral precept of prudence and the political requirement of success."[27] The focus of the foreign policy establishment continues to be military and economic power, not cultural power. Until a happy medium can be found between hard and soft power—which is difficult due to constantly changing

[27] Morgenthau, Hans J. 1985. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace,* 6th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

circumstances in the world environment—the role of public diplomacy will remain unclear.

The constant restructuring and reorganization over the past sixty years tells us that public diplomacy is still finding its place. As an academic field, it is not studied nearly as much as traditional diplomacy and international relations, with their focus on military and economic issues. Only three American universities have centers dedicated entirely to the academic study of public diplomacy, George Washington University, the University of Southern California, and Tufts University[28]. If more information were available in academia on this subject, it would create a new academic branch of the foreign policy establishment and help the field of public diplomacy find its place within international affairs. Currently, the field lacks a strong theoretical framework which more widespread academic analysis would provide.

III. Public Diplomacy After September 11

Some of the most fascinating and significant developments in the realm of public diplomacy have happened since the September 11 attacks. The changes result from a world altered by terrorism, but also by a global society vastly improved thanks to technological advancements. Christopher Ross, who is a

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[28] The Public Diplomacy Council and The Public Diplomacy Institute, The George Washington University, http://www.pdi.gwu.edu/; University of Southern California Center for Public Diplomacy, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/; The Edward R. Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/

special coordinator for public diplomacy and public affairs at the State Department, provides a vivid description of how public diplomacy has changed in recent years:

> "A full generation ago, for instance, small teams of U.S. Foreign Service officers drove Jeeps to the hinterlands of Latin American and other remote regions of the world to show reel-to-reel movies to isolated audiences, while U.S. diplomats in capital cities scouted out future leaders and sent them on exchange programs to experience life, society, and democratic values in the United States firsthand. That world now seems impossibly quaint, and the contrast with today's global environment could hardly be more pronounced."[29]

The rise and spread of American multinational corporations, as well as non-governmental organizations, have impacted the interaction foreign audiences have with "America," or at least the representations of America they see from their various perspectives.

In the weeks immediately following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Council on Foreign Relations established an Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy, bringing together prominent leaders of the foreign policy community to make suggestions to the U.S. government on how to improve America's image abroad. The criticisms and recommendations found in a November 6, 2001, release from the Council on Foreign Relations provide critical insight about where public diplomacy stood at the time just before and just after the invasion of Afghanistan. The task force, less than two months into the war, was bold to say that winning the battle for *public*

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[29] Ross, Christopher. "Public Diplomacy Comes of Age." *The Washington Quarterly: 25-2.* pp. 75-83.

support abroad is of equal importance as the military operations in Afghanistan. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who co-chaired the task force, made headlines when he publicly asked, "How can a man in a cave out-communicate the world's leading communications society?" His question exposed a difficult truth for the American public, as well as policymakers: public diplomacy and international communications had failed, and as a result there now existed a large group of individuals with an impression of America so negative it was deadly.

Suggestions made by the task force were numerous, and some of them called for drastic changes to the bureaucracy, which has experienced one change after another since WWII. A few notable suggestions included:[30]

- Employing modern public relations research and polling techniques
- Creating a Public Diplomacy Advisory Board, including academics and business professionals from a variety of backgrounds, to demonstrate that voices from outside the traditional policy establishment are heard
- Aggressively recruit speakers of Arabic, Dari, Pashto and Farsi into the U.S. Government, looking past misplaced security concerns that have prevented such recruitment in the past
- Create a Radio Free Afghanistan broadcast and increase the presence of Voice of America in the region

Because the task force made so many recommendations, and called for such sweeping changes regarding the practice of public diplomacy, one can reasonably conclude that public diplomacy prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11 was only partially effective. It seems that an entire region of the world was neglected, and as a result, not exposed to American ideas and values the way foreigners in

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[30] Council on Foreign Relations, Independent Task Force for Public Diplomacy, November 6, 2001.

friendly parts of the world might have been. This invited frustration and resentment toward American policies, and ultimately created an environment friendly to extremism based on harming American interests. Ironically, the audiences and the regions most in need of enhanced public diplomacy efforts are the ones that share the most ideological differences with America. Therefore, it is difficult to express American messages in a clear and convincing way, without seeming to impose a foreign ideology.

In 2002, the independent task force released another report, this time more critical of American policies: "The United States will need to modify not simply the implementation of its foreign policies but, in certain cases, the foreign policies themselves."[31] The task force's most important observation concerning public diplomacy centered on credibility. Essentially, it argued that America lacks credibility in the Middle East, and that allies with more credibility must be used to send American messages. Within traditional international relations literature, the idea of credible signals was introduced by Thomas Schelling. He suggests that states send signals to one another through their actions, and that in order to be effective, these actions must have credibility: "If the commitment is ill-defined and ambiguous—if we leave ourselves loopholes through which to exit, our opponent will expect us to…exit."[32] The idea itself is intuitive, regardless of

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[31] Peterson, Peter G. "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2002.

[32] Schelling, Thomas C. 1966. "The Art of Commitment." *Arms and Influence.* Yale University Press, p. 35-91.

whether you are talking about bargaining, negotiations or strategic communications. Shouldn't public diplomacy, first and foremost, be believable? If it is not, all public diplomacy efforts will be ineffective. The task force recommended the following changes in order to improve credibility:[33]

- Use foreign governments and diplomats to interact with governments that may be suspicious of U.S. intentions
- Employ Arab-American businessmen, professional and celebrities to carry messages to the Arab world in order to foster a sense of mutual understanding
- Create a Corporation for Public Diplomacy that would be free from government involvement to bridge the gap between public and private sector initiatives

Examining public diplomacy policymakers and academics the opportunity to evaluate what exactly is working and what is not. There is little disagreement over the fact that in the past, public diplomacy has been mismanaged, overshadowed and underestimated, but by viewing public diplomacy in a current context, more accurate conclusions can be drawn and policy recommendations can be made. New diplomacy should be the rubric used to evaluate the success of American efforts. Similarly, there must be commitment to public diplomacy on the part of the U.S. government. Otherwise, credibility is difficult to achieve. Kurt Gaubatz, a scholar who studies the foreign policies of democratic states as they relate to commitment, writes, "A state makes a commitment to a course of action when it creates a subjective belief on the part of others that it will carry through with a

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[33] Peterson, Peter G. "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2002.

certain course of action."[34] He calls for consistency of methods and purpose. Such consistency would render public diplomacy more effective.

Public diplomacy is used to influence foreign audiences, indirectly influencing sovereigns of foreign governments; therefore, the opinion of the people serves as a measurement of success. Here is where the U.S-led efforts against terrorism stand in terms of public opinion:

Question: Which of the following phrases comes closer to describing your view? I favor the U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism, OR I oppose the U.S.-led efforts to fight terrorism.

Country	Favor	Oppose	Undecided
Great Britain	49%	42%	10%
Egypt	10%	82%	8%
Jordan	16%	74%	10%
Turkey	14%	77%	9%

*From the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006.

We must understand how America is viewed and interpreted around the world, but understanding the paradigms of other cultures has proved challenging. Neglecting public opinion undermines efforts, yet when public opinion is

[34] Gaubatz, Kurt Taylor. 1996. "Democratic States and Commitment in International Relations." *International Organization 50 (1):* p.109-130.

incongruent with American preferences, a balance must somehow be reached. With the "stay the course" policies of the Bush administration, a dangerous mindset has taken hold in the policy world that says policies should not change according to public opinion.[35] Because of this, American policies can be construed to be hard-headed, self-interested, irresponsible and even imperialistic because of such strong rhetoric. This is not to suggest that policy should change every time there is a shift in opinion polls, but it would be foolish to think that policies should never change.

From that same perspective, it is important not to misread the data presented above. We cannot assume that respondents do not favor fighting terrorism; this poll suggests that they disagree with U.S. tactics, most likely because of opposition to the unpopular war in Iraq. With important national security matters such as this, is it more important to achieve our goals or to achieve our goals our way? That truly is a matter of a person's own worldview, but the question pertains to public diplomacy in very real ways. There is an opening for the United States to achieve its goals through surrogates—allies, private businesses, individuals—instead of every action being seen as the direct decision of the government.

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[35] Telhami, Shibley. "Reaching the Public in the Middle East" *Engaging the Arab and Islamic Worlds through Public Diplomacy.* Public Diplomacy Council, 2004.

IV. Recent Initiatives in Public Diplomacy

During her tenure as Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen Hughes brought about significant changes to public diplomacy. Her office produced a quarterly newsletter providing the most up-to-date information concerning developments in U.S. public diplomacy.[36] Most of the recommendations made by more than thirty studies on public diplomacy were implemented under her leadership, leading to significant changes in education and cultural exchange, as well as informational initiatives.

Changes in education and cultural exchange

After September 11, the number of student visas issued to foreign university students fell dramatically. Mostly this was derived from misplaced security concerns. Educational exchanges are more important than ever. By educating a class of young, international students, America has the opportunity to make a positive impression and have de facto spokespeople for America return to their home country after their exchange. Undersecretary Hughes made this a top priority, and by 2006 the number of student visas issued not only rose to pre-9/11 levels, but set a new record for the most visas in a year, with 591,000 student visas granted.[37] A similar commitment has strengthened the Fulbright Program, causing

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[36] http://www.state.gov/r/update/

[37] http://www.state.gov/r/update/

it to reach record levels. A new Fulbright exchange attracts the world's best scientific minds to study in America. A program called Citizen Dialogue sends Muslim Americans overseas to talk with various Muslim communities, and vice versa. More than 600 Muslim scholars have visited the U.S. in the last two of years as a result. Other innovative cultural exchanges involve sending sports icons and celebrities to represent America abroad, such as Cal Ripken, Jr., and Michelle Kwan[38].

The State Department refers to education and cultural exchanges as people-to-people programs, and recently renewed its focus on these grassroots efforts. For the first time since 1979, the United States now sponsors people-to-people programs with Iran, including meetings between clergy, students, teachers and journalists. Through advocating programs such as these, the State Department sends an important message to foreign and domestic audiences: for public diplomacy to be effective and make a real difference, it need not be glamorous. It does not have to come in the form of a prestigious educational exchange, like Fulbright, and it should not have to involve a perfectly coordinated plan to target the media. Individuals—teachers, lawyers, students, religious leaders—can make a significant difference in America's image abroad. This concept echoes the calls for a new type of public diplomacy, its focus being not only on foreign audiences, but also on domestic involvement.

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[38] "Michelle Kwan Accepts Job as Diplomat," CBS News, November 9, 2006.

Improvements to information programs

Two important factors in the improvement of the information component of the State Department include private sector involvement and the development of rapid response units. The contributions of the private sector during Hughes' tenure totaled over $800 million, more than half the annual budget of the Office of the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy. State has partnered with the private sector to provide disaster relief, to establish education and health programs, and to make American embassies and airports welcoming to visitors. This indirect approach has greatly expanded the means of public diplomacy and serves to demonstrate goodwill on the part of American businesses.

A newly-formed Rapid Response Unit constantly monitors foreign media on radio, television and the Internet. This unit immediately sees how America is being portrayed around the world, compiles that information in a daily e-mail and sends it to thousands of high-ranking government officials, including ambassadors and military personnel. Ignorance is no longer a valid excuse. Along these same lines, regional media hubs have been established, allowing Arabic speakers to interact with local media on behalf of the American government. This means that an "American perspective" on a number of issues will be delivered in Arabic in Middle Eastern media outlets, allowing American surrogates to speak directly to foreign audiences instead of through loose translations.

A focus on rapid response is evident in this year's report released by the Broadcasting Board of Governors. There are efforts to create programming to

respond to crises and events worldwide: "On September 27, 2007, VOA Burmese doubled its daily broadcast from 1.5 to three original hours daily in response to the massive nationwide demonstrations against the military junta and the ensuing crackdown."[39] Similar adjustments were made in Pakistan when a state of emergency was declared in late 2007, and also in Somalia and Zimbabwe during recent political and humanitarian crises. An important addition to the broadcasting capability of VOA was the creation of a Persian News Network, which is seen and heard by a quarter of Iranians every week.[40] This type of reactionary programming demonstrates flexibility and a commitment to relating to the events in the lives of foreign audiences.

V. Policy Recommendations

Many significant adjustments have been made affecting the implementation of public diplomacy. As a result, the government critically evaluated its past failures in public diplomacy and tried new tactics. Of course, not enough time has passed to know whether or not these changes will have a positive long-term effect on America's relationship with a number of key allies, especially those in the Middle East. The recommendations offered here are drawn from the many factors so far outlined in this essay.

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[39] Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request, p. 25

[40] Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request, p. 28

1. Public diplomacy should have higher prioritization in the foreign policy process. Public diplomacy officials should be included in high-level meetings so they can inform fellow policymakers about public opinion abroad. Being part of the decision-making process can only have positive effects on an official's ability to devise a useful strategy to win foreign support.
2. American officials must engage more regularly with foreign media. Limiting contact with foreign media to high-profile trips abroad makes the interaction seem too much like a publicity stunt. If the American President or Secretary of State were more accessible to foreign media, it would lead to increased quantity and quality of coverage.
3. The State Department must dramatically improve its training of ambassadors and Foreign Service Officers. As it stands now, ambassadors receive just a few weeks of training before deployment, and little attention is given to public diplomacy. As a spokesperson for America, an ambassador should have daily interaction with the press in her/his host country. S/he should be the strongest advocate of grassroots public diplomacy, arranging visits between American and foreign businesspeople, policymakers, academics and students.
4. The government must continue to work closely with American multinational corporations. Embassies and consulates should work to foster

good relationships with American companies abroad, forging partnerships to expose locals to American culture.

5. Money is a crucial factor for public diplomacy, as with any government entity. Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes worked hard to increase Congressional appropriations for public diplomacy. According to the Congressional Research Service, funding nearly doubled during her two-year tenure at State. Yet it remains just over 1% of the total State Department budget, and it pales in comparison with the hundreds of billions of dollars appropriated to the Pentagon and supplemental war funding packages. Money could make the most significant difference in educational exchanges. With proper funding, the State Department could work with American universities to send more students abroad each year. If embassies abroad provided students with improved information and opportunities to interact with the local culture, it would foster a sense of engagement for American students abroad.[41]
6. Improving credibility should be addressed at the highest levels. Dispatching so-called "goodwill ambassadors" gives a human face to foreign policy, and establishes credibility. Indirect approaches should also be adopted, using our allies to carry our messages.
7. The government must stabilize the organization of public diplomacy. Adjustments should be made as needed, but a vast overhaul of the entire

[41] See Appendix pp. 37-8

system, such as those that took place in the 1950's, 1970's and 1990's, interrupt public diplomacy efforts. Just as consistency in messaging is important, consistency within the organization would have a positive effect.

8. Academia must make room for the study of public diplomacy. Quantitatively study is challenging because of the time lag between the collection of data and its release. If public diplomacy is more critically analyzed and studied by researchers and students, it will have a trickle-up effect within the policy establishment. When universities produce a class of scholars on public diplomacy, the government must utilize their unique knowledge through recruiting them as Foreign Service officers and policy planners.
9. The government should use its greatest resource: the American people. There are 300 million potential citizen diplomats living in the United States. Efforts must be made to educate Americans about the impact they can have by taking part in foreign exchange programs. Public diplomacy can take place in average American homes—by hosting an international student, by keeping an international pen-pal, by blogging about daily life. The data show that the opinion of Americans as people remains more popular than America as a government. We must use this circumstance to our advantage.

VI. Conclusion

In various Middle East countries, heavy government control over print and broadcast media continues to obfuscate American messages. The only solution is to use a more indirect approach, relying on allies and proxies and private sector partners to deliver messages on behalf of America.[42] It is far better to continue exposing foreign audiences to American culture, even if it must be done through a moderator, than to allow unfriendly governments to distort American policies. Indirect approaches shore up credibility and invite multiple players to take part in the public diplomacy process.

An important collaboration took place in late 2007 between the Department of State and the Walt Disney Company. A team from Disney created a seven-minute video entitled "Portraits of America," which is now played on a loop at every U.S. consulate and American point of entry. Thousands of people see this video each day as they stand in line waiting to receive visas or to go through customs. The video itself is simple—smiling faces, quaint scenery, sweeping music—but it paints an important picture of America as a welcoming place, open to visitors from anywhere in the world. This collaboration is important for two reasons. First, it positively portrays America and seeks to make visitors feel welcome before they have even left home. Second, this kind of partnership between the public and private sector is the best solution for the funding and organizational problems public diplomacy faces within the government. Disney

[42] Lord, Carnes. ibid, p. 111

generously donated its time, money and talent, and produced a product that is now a part of every visitor's American experience. Engaging the private sector in public diplomacy is not only efficient, but will serve the long-term purpose of fostering further collaboration, thus involving America's best and brightest in the process.

The greatest hindrance to public diplomacy—disregarding a lack of funding and organizational instability—will continue to be the disagreement over whether or not public diplomacy is effective or important. Not until domestic support is built for public diplomacy will its efforts realize their full potential. As with most domestic issues, there is a double-edged sword involved. Politicians do not want to support a practice unless they believe it works; however, poorly funded and badly organized efforts are never given a full-faith opportunity to demonstrate what they can accomplish. Like so many things, effective public diplomacy depends on allocating the appropriate resources, and allocation relies on commitment. In a well-known game theory scenario in international relations, when a nation commits to a task, the outcome is a function of relative effort. Even though the game itself, in an article by Bruce Beuno de Mesquita and others, studies conflict, the same principle holds true: "If the choice is to fight, then leaders decide how many of their available resources they are prepared to commit

to the war effort."[43] Similarly, if America wants to commit to a credible and effective public diplomacy, it must decide what portion of its resources it is willing to allocate. If the policy community and the academic community would collaborate to give clear examples of when public diplomacy has been successful, American politicians would perhaps be more inclined to support such allocation and commitment. Unlike economic or military affairs, there is little hard data associated with public diplomacy, which makes it seem intangible. Accurately measuring its effects would have a tremendous impact, but collecting so much data would require intense collaboration between the government and scholars. Joseph Nye, who is a leading scholar on soft power, writes that soft power is "not just a matter of ephemeral popularity; it is a means of obtaining outcomes the United States wants."[44] The potential of public diplomacy must not be underestimated, and it deserves to be studied. In the meantime, those who believe in the power of public diplomacy must continue in its advocacy. Engaging Americans in public diplomacy will create many positive outcomes: Americans taking interest in their country, foreign audiences having a more favorable view of the American government, and a restored sense of positive American influence worldwide.

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[43] Beuno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. "An Institutional Explanation for the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review* 93 (4): 791-807.

[44] Nye, Joseph S. "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs,* May/June 2004

VII. Appendix

1. Budget breakdown of State and Foreign Operations—the item line of special interest to this essay are in bold and italics.

Department of State and Other International Programs (In millions of dollars)			
	2005 Actual	**Estimate**	
		2006	**2007**
Spending			
Discretionary Budget Authority:			
Diplomatic and Consular Programs	4,202	4,304	4,652
Education and Cultural Exchange Programs	***378***	***426***	***474***
Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance	1,504	1,470	1,540
International Peacekeeping	483	1,022	1,135
International Organizations	1,166	1,151	1,269
Economic Support Fund	2,391	2,621	3,215
Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief	1,374	1,975	2,894
International Narcotics and Law Enforcement	493	472	796
Andean Counterdrug Initiative	725	727	722
Migration and Refugee Assistance	764	783	833
Non-proliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining Programs	384	406	449
Foreign Military Financing	4,746	4,465	4,551
Legislative proposal, Conflict Response Fund	—	—	75
Assistance for Eastern Europe and Baltic States	308	357	274
Assistance for Independent States of the Former Soviet Union	462	509	441
Child Survival and Health	1,573	1,569	1,433
Development Assistance	1,445	1,488	1,261
International Disaster and Famine Assistance	466	361	349
USAID Operating Expenses	610	624	679
Broadcasting Board of Governors	***594***	***644***	***672***

Department of State and Other International Programs
(In millions of dollars)

	2005 Actual	Estimate	
		2006	2007
Millennium Challenge Corporation	***1,488***	***1,752***	***3,000***
Export-Import Bank	106	97	58
Overseas Private Investment Corporation	−180	−160	−160
Peace Corps	317	319	337
Multilateral Development Banks	1,219	1,277	1,329
Other State and International Programs	1,494	1,521	1,583
Food Aid (USDA PL 480 Title II) (non-add)	*1,173*	*1,139*	*1,219*
Total, Discretionary budget authority	28,512	30,182	33,859
Memorandum: Budget authority from enacted supplementals	*4,737*	*162*	—
Total, Discretionary outlays	29,808	30,762	32,384
Total, Mandatory outlays	−2,306	−2,209	−417
Total, Outlays	27,502	28,553	31,967
Credit activity			
Direct Loan Disbursements:			
Export-Import Bank	262	65	26
All other programs	876	706	654
Total, Direct loan disbursements	1,138	771	680
Guaranteed Loan Commitments:			
Export-Import Bank	9,317	12,630	13,829
All other programs	2,477	1,675	1,748
Total, Guaranteed loan commitments	11,794	14,305	15,577

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