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The New Diplomacy: Devising a Relational Model of Public Diplomacy

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Public diplomacy, an open form of international politics, is essential for building state relations and improving the American image in current times, particularly in light of the recent leakage of some 250,000 classified State Department cables. The ways embassy officials conduct diplomacy must be more candid if they are to gain trust from local populations. Contemporary technology and new media have drastically modified the ways states conduct foreign policy, and embassies must cater to this environment by reaching out to mass publics using novel approaches. Additionally, a new kind of public diplomacy is emerging, one involving private sector networks. In a series of two case studies, the first investigating the role of the Public Affairs section of the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France, and the second looking at an international visitor event at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I observed two different kinds of public diplomacy in action and quickly discovered the power of cultural education initiatives and interpersonal relationship-building efforts in developing and sustaining international political relations.

Introduction

Purpose

In the twenty-first century, instant global communications necessitate a new kind of diplomacy if the age-old practice is to survive. In particular, the United States would be wise to improve America's relationships with people around the world in attempts to avert conflict caused by ideological, cultural, or other differences that did not threaten global stability in previous centuries.

The purpose of this project is to recommend a working model of relationship-based public diplomacy for public and private citizens to utilize. My undergraduate studies focused on international communication and relations in Western Europe, predominately looking at the bilateral relationship between the United States and one of its oldest allies,

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France. I wanted to know more about how interpersonal relationships between U.S. diplomats and the people of France shaped the transatlantic alliance, and my initial questions concerned whether these or government interactions had more of an impact on the bilateral relationship. I also wanted to learn exactly how a state's foreign affairs apparatus works in other countries to promote its nation's culture and to build diplomatic relations with the host country. As I discovered through my internships, public diplomacy based on government-to-people and people-to-people interactions is increasingly replacing traditional diplomacy, involving government-to-government interactions.

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate how relational public diplomacy can and should be used as a central foreign policy tool by the United States in order to build intercultural relations among people of various backgrounds. The ultimate purpose, I believe, of international relations is to maintain stability in the system in order to prevent violent conflict. My interest lies not in discovering how to achieve jingoistic foreign policy goals for one country, but rather, how to nurture a peaceful and prosperous global environment. Developing international networks and fostering communication and collaboration among nations can accomplish this goal.

Methodology

As I began to explore public diplomacy in depth, I first reviewed the scholarship on diplomacy in the form of monographs, scholarly articles, news articles, and public remarks by statesmen and other government advisers. Additionally, I conducted an ethnographic collective case study from twenty weeks of participant observations at the U.S. Department of State headquarters in Washington, DC and at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France as well as from first-hand experience as a private citizen conducting public diplomacy at the University of Tennessee.

While in Paris, France during the summer of 2010, I examined the U.S. Department of State's role at the American Embassy in building intercultural relationships with the people of France through diplomatic efforts. There, I interviewed eight American Foreign Service officers, two French Locally Employed Staff members, and the U.S. Ambassador to France. Each interview lasted from ten to forty minutes, and I transcribed every one in order to analyze the conversations for common threads. From participant observations, field notes, interview transcriptions, and a review of the scholarly literature on diplomacy, I established a chain of evidence shedding light on the fact that relationship-based public diplomacy seems to be the most effective means of maintaining constructive international relations that ultimately promote global peace.

Structure

In this paper, I will first give a historical overview of diplomacy, offer reasons for U.S. intervention in world affairs, and define public diplomacy. Next, I will expand that definition, explain the impact of the technological revolution on traditional diplomacy, and devise a new model for public diplomacy. Finally, I will describe two scenarios in which I participated in public diplomacy initiatives. The first case study will demonstrate a successful public diplomacy program at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France in June 2010. The second case study will show a successful public diplomacy program in the private sector at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in April 2011. By embedding these two instances in the existing literature on diplomacy, I will propose a model of relational public diplomacy aiming to serve as a paradigm for government officials and private citizens alike wishing to build and/or strengthen cross-cultural relations.

As this study will reveal, a person does not need a security clearance to build relationships with foreign populations, nor must one be an official diplomat to serve as a representative of his or her country. Anyone can help make the world a more peaceful and secure place by working together with people of various backgrounds toward common goals of freedom, equality, and human rights.

Historical Background

It is often and correctly observed that the beginnings of diplomacy occurred when the first human societies decided that it was better to hear a message than to eat the messenger.
—Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne¹

Early Origins of Diplomacy

Diplomacy, defined simply, is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states. Some of the earliest identified writings and letters reveal that diplomacy began around the mid-third millennium BC in the ancient Near East. Surviving writings, written on clay tablets, give valuable information about the interstate relations existing at the time, recounting stories about trade, military cooperation, alliances, treaties, political fugitives, and even political gifts. Translations of the phrases, “to be friendly” and “to ally with,” appear in many of these epistolary exchanges.²

Modern diplomacy, including the rise of the resident ambassador, did not emerge until the approach of the Renaissance in the states of Northern Italy. It is during this time, around the thirteenth century, when the first embassies were established in Europe.³ Traditional diplomacy involved the sending of representatives, usually holding the title of ambassador, from one country to another in order to communicate with the government of that country. In the old world, having national representation in foreign countries was vital for communicating official messages and keeping the world informed of state affairs. In current times, however, international relations scholars raise the question of “whether or not ambassadors and their staffs should be regarded as anachronistic relics, the eccentric survivors of the advent of electricity and steam.”⁴ Today, heads of state can instantly send electronic communications to one another with the click of a button thanks to the Internet. They can have video teleconferences with each other at any moment in the day. One might justly wonder, then, what is the purpose of embassies in today’s world? Is diplomacy necessary to advance a state’s political agenda? I believe it absolutely is – just not in its traditional form.

From Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy in the United States

In the words of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “Diplomacy has long been the backbone of U.S. foreign policy.”⁵ The U.S. Department of State was established in 1789 with the mission to “create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.”⁶ The original Foreign Service consisted of people trained to manage U.S. relations with foreign states, mainly through consultations with their counterparts in foreign governments.⁷

When one thinks of American diplomacy, the image of people in business suits meeting in lavish foreign ministry buildings typically comes to mind. In today’s world of global communications and threats of terrorism from nonstate actors, diplomatic initiatives require that Foreign Service officers do more than just work with other government officials to transmit messages and negotiate policies. Particularly in light of the unauthorized

release of 250,000 classified State Department cables onto the public Internet by the non-profit organization WikiLeaks in November 2010, “the practice of diplomacy is moving inexorably towards the realm of public diplomacy and away from reporting cables and demarches.”⁸ Many scholars and practitioners alike would agree that “diplomatic practice has not kept pace with change.”⁹ In today’s world of instant global communications, it is necessary to create a new kind of diplomacy if the practice is to survive. In a 2010 *Foreign Affairs* article, Secretary Clinton writes:

Although traditional diplomacy will always be critical to advancing the United States’ agenda, it is not enough. The State Department must expand its engagement to reach and influence wider and more diverse groups using new skills, strategies, and tools. To that end, the department is broadening the way it conceives of diplomacy as well as the roles and responsibilities of its practitioners.¹⁰

The kind of diplomacy that Secretary Clinton describes is what has been labeled, *public diplomacy*. In contrast to traditional diplomacy, involving negotiations between national leaders, public diplomacy focuses on a country’s relations with foreign publics, who have the ability to affect a nation’s policies, security, and other interests.¹¹

The term originated in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, a career Foreign Service diplomat and dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.¹² It proceeded from a government effort to distinguish this kind of government-to-people diplomacy from propaganda, which had been negatively associated with the dissemination of a combination of facts and falsehoods during the Cold War. Public diplomacy is no new idea in U.S. foreign policy, but it has become more central in policy formation since 2001, as a later section of this paper will discuss.

American Public Diplomacy Pre-9/11

Nicholas Cull, a professor of public diplomacy at the University of Southern California, claims, “American public diplomacy is as old as the Republic.”¹³ He argues that the writing of the Declaration of Independence was an exercise in public diplomacy and that the founding fathers carefully considered international opinion, especially that of France, as they sent diplomats abroad to sell the idea of the new nation. In his capacity as a diplomat, Benjamin Franklin made friends with Europeans and distributed pamphlets in order to compensate for the nation’s limited military capability. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln advocated for the Northern cause by bribing journalists and covertly funding newspapers. During the nineteenth century, private individuals like Mark Twain and Buffalo Bill sold American values and ideas abroad, perhaps inadvertently, as their narratives reached people across the globe.¹⁴

World War I saw the beginning of American public diplomacy as the twentieth century would know it. In many cases, these attempts to influence publics outside of traditional diplomatic channels amounted to creating and countering propaganda. When President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) in 1917, he aimed to favorably influence public opinion about the war and to create enthusiasm for his foreign policies. This instance of using propaganda in American foreign policy would be the first of many in the century ahead. In 1938, the U.S. State Department created a Division of Cultural Relations in order to combat Fascist propaganda in the western hemisphere. Weeks after America’s entry into World War II, the United States developed the Voice of America (VOA) radio program to counter anti-American propaganda. In 1942, the White House created the Office of War Information (OWI) to distribute information that would

educate foreigners about American life as the State Department expanded its cultural programs at posts around the world. At the end of World War II, however, public diplomacy found itself fighting for its survival in American foreign policy when the OWI as well as other offices were disbanded.¹⁵

In 1945, newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton emphasized the need for a dynamic change in the way the United States conducted diplomacy. Though the term *public diplomacy* had not yet been coined, Benton's vision of U.S. foreign policy embodied everything it encompasses. Addressing Congress, he warned that general publics were increasingly influencing foreign relations as the nations of the world became more interconnected from mass communications technologies and increased means of mobility. Benton and other colleagues in the 1940s were not only interested in public opinion, but also in public participation in U.S. foreign relations since the public was quickly becoming an "organic component of a broadened conception of what constituted foreign relations."¹⁶

In 1953, the United States Information Agency (USIA) was established, serving to inform foreign audiences about U.S. policies and American society. As the Cold War intensified, the USIA grew in size, strength, and importance. From the 1950s to the 1980s, the United States grew its foreign information programs as well as the USIA to manage America's image abroad in attempts to combat communism.¹⁷

Public diplomacy took the stage in American foreign policy during the Cold War, with the USIA spearheading its initiatives, when it became evident that information and persuasion campaigns would be necessary to win the global ideological struggle in an era of nuclear weapons.¹⁸ "The horrors of modern warfare and a deep desire to prevent future wars contributed to widespread interest in fostering global cultural relations through educational and scientific exchanges."¹⁹ It is during this time when the U.S. government began to realize the importance of informing the world about American culture and selling the U.S. image. All kinds of images of the United States were pushed abroad, including the image of Appalachia:

Banjoes, fiddles, and corn husk dolls would appear to be more at home on the set of the movie *Deliverance* rather than serving as important parts of American cultural diplomacy. Yet, twice – in 1966 and again in 1972-1973 – the U.S. government organized and finance the foreign travel and display of extensive collections of artifacts, speakers, and performers dealing with Appalachian cultural as part of the nation's cultural offensive during the Cold War.²⁰

Selling American culture and ideals abroad would not, however, be at the center of the U.S. foreign policy agenda for long. Rhonda S. Zaharna, associate professor in American University's School of Communication, recounts the stark decline in public diplomacy interest in the United States in her book, *Battles to Bridges: U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11*. At the fall of the Berlin Wall and throughout the 1990s, many of the USIA's programs were cut, and there was an acute decline in funding and interest in public diplomacy initiatives abroad. The U.S. government cut USIA posts in half worldwide, closed many American libraries and cultural centers, and reduced the number of Public Diplomacy Foreign Service officers by 40 percent. During that same decade, the U.S. Department of State's budget for educational and cultural exchanges was cut by more than 33 percent. The final blow to public diplomacy came in 1999, when the USIA ceased to exist as an independent agency and was combined into the State Department.²¹ In the

United States, public diplomacy initiatives tend to increase in times of war, but in times of peace, they diminish. This trend reflects a failure by national leaders to realize the importance of foreign publics in maintaining stable international relations.²²

American Public Diplomacy Post-9/11

From the closing of the USIA in 1999 to 2001, public diplomacy was at the bottom of U.S. policy-makers' agendas. In fact, in September 2001, the highest public diplomacy position in America, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, had been vacant for 18 months.²³ Winning the hearts and minds of foreigners, as many people characterize public diplomacy's job, did not seem to be an important objective of the Bush Administration – not until the September 11 attacks initiated by an extremist, anti-American terrorist organization. In her book *The Future of U.S. Public Diplomacy*, Kathy Fitzpatrick observes, "U.S. leaders' failure to recognize the importance of America's relations with ordinary people abroad *weakened* the nation's ability to stave off the strikes."²⁴

After 9/11, many Americans concluded that people in the world simply do not understand the United States. President George W. Bush reflected these sentiments when he remarked that he was amazed by such misunderstanding about our country, calling for the need to do a better job of explaining ourselves to the Muslim world.²⁵ Since that fateful day, nations realize that "a lack of cultural understanding can inspire global conflict to an extent far less controllable than the superpower conflict during the cold war."²⁶

"When Osama bin Laden orchestrated the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he unwittingly sparked a new public diplomacy revolution."²⁷ Richard Holbrooke was one of many statesmen calling for a global information campaign to fight violent extremism and anti-Americanism when he wrote an editorial in the *Washington Post* a month after the attacks stating that the United States was engaged in a battle of ideas that must be won.²⁸ "After 9/11, the U.S. foreign policy and national security agenda was unavoidably dominated by the need to counter the explosive threat of global terrorism."²⁹ Since the attacks, the United States has attempted to rebuild American public diplomacy yet again.³⁰

University of Pennsylvania post-doctoral research fellow Amelia Arsenault declares that calls for increased dialogue between cultures and nations have abounded since the terrorist attacks on the United States.³¹ She explains that true dialogue between cultures can only occur when both parties are respectful and are willing to listen and when they see their interactions as the ultimate goal of the relationship. In 2010, senior adviser at the Foreign Service Institute Jeremy Curtin declared, "21st century statecraft cannot just be government-to-government; it must be government-to-people and people-to-people."³²

A year after 9/11, Congress passed the "Freedom Promotion Act of 2002," allocating \$497 million for the budget of public diplomacy each year. During this time, public diplomacy funding increased by 9 percent.³³ This increase in funding was promising for public diplomacy initiatives in America because top items on the U.S. agenda generally receive top funding.

The post-9/11 foreign policy debate asks whether U.S. public diplomacy should be more forceful in disseminating its message or more subdued, involving more listening and less talking.³⁴ Since the 1999 reorganization of the USIA, the Department of State has been America's center for public diplomacy work. The Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs manages several bureaus devoted to public diplomacy initiatives, including the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Bureau of Public Affairs, and the Bureau of International Information Programs. Additionally, embassies worldwide have public diplomacy initiatives through their Public Affairs sections headed

by Minister-Counselors for Public Affairs. In 2011, the U.S. Department of State boasted the following mission statement for its public diplomacy initiatives:

The mission of American public diplomacy is to support the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives, advance national interests, and enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign publics and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world. The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs leads America's public diplomacy outreach, which includes communications with international audiences, cultural programming, academic grants, educational exchanges, international visitor programs, and U.S. Government efforts to confront ideological support for terrorism.³⁵

Such a broad statement of what public diplomacy is and does leaves significant room for debate. Until a clearer definition arises of what public diplomacy involves, it cannot be used in a systematic way as an effective foreign policy tool by the U.S. government. In order to arrive at that clearer definition, it is necessary to discover why the United States desires to engage with the publics of foreign countries in the first place.

Reasons for U.S. Intervention in World Affairs

The United States as Global Leader

Since the end of the Cold War, many people have wondered why the United States intervenes in other states' affairs. Naturally, the U.S. government is concerned with national security. Beyond that, the United States all too often tends to act as an international police officer or moral authority. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declares, "Almost as if according to some natural law, in every century there seems to emerge a country with the power, the will, and the intellectual and moral impetus to shape the entire international system in accordance with its own values."³⁶ Kissinger's statement rings especially true for the United States since World War II. He further claims, "In the twentieth century, no country has influenced international relations as decisively and at the same time as ambivalently as the United States. No society has more firmly insisted on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, or more passionately asserted that its own values were universally applicable"³⁷ These universally applicable values manifest in U.S. policies typically reflecting "democracy, tolerance, the rule of law, and pluralism."³⁸

International relations scholar Neal Rosendorf expresses the United States' need "to recommit to a culture of diplomacy, underlining our core commitment as a nation to global stability and the peaceful arbitration of disputes whenever possible."³⁹ Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice placed an emphasis on transformational diplomacy, advocating doing things with people rather than for them. She called for using America's diplomatic power to help people all over the world ameliorate their lives through partnership instead of paternalism.⁴⁰

Renowned international relations scholar and Harvard University professor Joseph Nye avows that "if the most powerful country fails to lead, the consequences for international stability could be disastrous."⁴¹ Traditionally, international relations scholars define power as the ability of one state to get another to do something that it would not have done otherwise. "The problem of American power in the twenty-first century," Nye states, "is

not one of decline but what to do in light of the realization that even the largest country cannot achieve the outcomes it wants without the help of others.”⁴²

Purpose of U.S. Public Diplomacy

What is the ultimate goal of U.S. public diplomacy initiatives? Secretary Clinton stresses that American public diplomacy serves “to improve the lives of human beings around the world.”⁴³ On the contrary, all of the American Foreign Service officers I interviewed in 2010 at the U.S. Embassy in Paris suggested that the underlying goal behind U.S. public diplomacy initiatives at embassies worldwide is national security. The Deputy Press Attaché commented, “In the current world, most countries are democratic, and the countries that aren’t democratic, we would like to see become more democratic.”⁴⁴ The United States seems to uphold the democratic peace theory, which claims that democracies breed peace, as no two democracies have ever fought. This particular Foreign Service officer also noted that by having increased understanding of the United States by foreign publics, people are less likely to join anti-American terrorist organizations, and this particular belief – that understanding produces peace – is another that resonates through the U.S. government post-9/11. According to Abiodun Williams, vice president of the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at the United States Institute of Peace, “Ensuring national security is no longer merely a matter of defending borders and patrolling oceans and skies, but requires reconstruction and stabilization efforts, building partnerships, and improving the U.S. image abroad.”⁴⁵

Many people view public diplomacy as a U.S. foreign policy tool used to further national interests, influence the actions of foreign publics, influence national security, and enhance the American image.⁴⁶ In a 2002 *Foreign Policy* article, Mark Leonard describes the following objectives of public diplomacy: increasing familiarity by making people update their images of a country, increasing appreciation by getting foreign publics to think differently about a country, engaging people by encouraging them to see a country as attractive, and influencing people’s behavior by encouraging public support for a country’s positions.⁴⁷

Although national security is undoubtedly a strategic objective behind public diplomacy initiatives, the Deputy Press Attaché, who is in the public diplomacy cone of the Foreign Service, made the following remarks about U.S. involvement in world affairs:

I think the United States actually to some extent cares about what people around the world think of the United States. We believe we represent important values of equality and democracy and opportunity, and we believe that all people are happiest under systems that also have those values. I think there’s also a belief on the part of the U.S. government that sharing those values with other people has merit in and of itself because those values are to an extent universal.⁴⁸

To try to better understand the real reasons behind public diplomacy, it is helpful to seek answers from former diplomats. In June 2007, a *USIA Alumni Study* took place in which 213 American public diplomats completed a 15-page questionnaire regarding their work in the USIA and American foreign policy in general. The participants were all part of the USIA Alumni Association, and they boasted an average of twenty-five years experience working for the USIA in all parts of the world between the years 1953 and 1999.⁴⁹ The shortest time one participant recorded working for the U.S. government was less than a year, while the longest was 66 years.⁵⁰

From the results of the *USIA Alumni Study*, findings showed that 98 percent of USIA alumni expressed concern over the state of U.S. public diplomacy, while 94 percent worried about the rise of anti-Americanism in the world.⁵¹ Additionally, the USIA alumni noted four reasons why public diplomacy is important for the United States: global interconnectedness, the rising impact of nonstate actors in international affairs, increasing anti-Americanism, and threats of terrorism.⁵²

Table 1 records USIA alumni views on the importance of strategic objectives to the U.S. public diplomacy mission, with a scale from 1-5, 1 indicating “not important” and 5 denoting “very important. The highest-scoring answers for this particular question involved furthering understanding of the United States and its policies in the world (consistent with many policy-makers’ assertions post-9/11), presenting America in a positive light, and fostering relationships with people abroad.

Table 1⁵³

Objective	Mean**	
	Cold War	Today
To create understanding of and support for U.S. and its policies	4.80	4.51
To present clear statements of U.S. government policies to people abroad	4.72	4.41
To advance U.S. foreign policy	4.62	4.45
To create a positive image for the U.S. with people in other countries	4.62	4.34
To create an understanding of American life and institutions among people abroad	4.57	4.23
To establish and maintain good relationships with people abroad	4.56	4.27
To build confidence and trust in U.S. world leadership	4.32	4.05
To defend U.S. ideals abroad	4.27	4.05
To demonstrate respect for other cultures and values	4.20	4.12
To combat anti-Americanism	4.14	4.01
To defeat communism	4.12	N/A
To defeat terrorism	N/A	4.17
To advance peace in the world	4.06	3.83
To counter disinformation campaigns by others	4.04	3.81
To establish and maintain U.S. leadership position in the world	3.98	3.81
To shape a global environment where democracy can flourish	3.86	3.68
To improve life for all people around the world	3.47	3.05
To advance U.S. economic interests	3.46	3.47
To establish and maintain U.S. power in the world	3.30	3.42
To convert people abroad to U.S. beliefs and values	2.88	2.91

*The USIA Alumni Study (n=213)

**Numeric average of all responses, with 1 being “Not Important” and 5 being “Very Important.”

Adding to many of the former USIA officers’ answers, the Embassy Paris Deputy Press Attaché eloquently explained to me why she believes the United States goes to such efforts to share its values with the world through public diplomacy initiatives:

The basic underpinning of American foreign policy is the idea that the pursuit of happiness and the freedoms that are enshrined in our Constitution and our

Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights are not freedoms that should be enjoyed uniquely by Americans but ideally enjoyed by more people. We aren't trying to force them on other people, but we do believe these are positive things, and we'd like to give people the opportunity to know more about them.⁵⁴

Her ideas about America's diplomatic mission seem to be in line with Kissinger's as he advises, "The Wilsonian goals of America's past – peace, stability, progress, and freedom for mankind – will have to be sought in a journey that has no end."⁵⁵

The Public Diplomacy Debate

Defining Public Diplomacy

Perhaps the main reason why the U.S. government tends not to put public diplomacy at the center of its foreign policy strategy is because no one has yet to define exactly what it entails or to devise a universal model for how it ought to work. The purpose of public diplomacy is at the center of the debate to define what it is. Is it to facilitate a dialogue between people at home and abroad? Is it pure propaganda, advertising a utopian America? Or is it a weapon of war?⁵⁶ A lack of a clear definition has restrained public diplomacy's advancement in the United States since the term originated in the 1960s. Bruce Gregory, director of the Public Diplomacy Institute at George Washington University, offers that states use public diplomacy "to *understand* cultures, attitudes, and behavior; *build and manage* relationships; and *influence* opinions and actions to advance interests and values."⁵⁷

Furthermore, Charles Wolf, Jr., a senior economic advisor at RAND, contrasts public diplomacy with what he calls, official diplomacy, in three ways. First, he claims that public diplomacy is transparent whereas official diplomacy is opaque. Second, public diplomacy is government-to-people while official diplomacy is government-to-government. Third, the themes and issues concerning public diplomacy relate to the attitudes and behaviors of the publics whereas those concerning official diplomacy relate to the policies and behaviors of governments.⁵⁸

Some scholars and career diplomats claim that public diplomacy is a "deliberate act designed to communicate with the public in foreign countries."⁵⁹ At the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France, this is exactly the case. In a personal interview in July 2010, the Embassy's Press Attaché, a former USIA Public Diplomacy officer, stated:

We believe that it is in the interest of the United States to have excellent relations with the people of France. We seek to promote that relationship by engaging with them and getting to know them and having them getting to know us. We believe that the more they know us, the more they'll like us. That's the American mentality. We also think it's good for the people of France to know the United States, and it's good for the United States to know France. We believe that bridges of understanding and friendships and working relationships are good for each side. And that's what it's about – building and maintaining personal and professional and institutional linkages which complement, or strengthen, our common values. Everything that I just said about France is essentially valid for any country in terms of the justification for public diplomacy – we believe in these bridges.⁶⁰

An Economic Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Embassy in Paris had similar views, stating that U.S. public diplomacy is not "to shape people's political attitudes so much as it's

to help them understand the United States and to prevent misunderstandings.”⁶¹ A third American officer, the Deputy Cultural Affairs officer, shared these attitudes and even expanded on them in a conversation that same summer:

We’re working in people-to-people diplomacy, putting non-diplomats, non-government officials together, and sometimes we do government officials too. But, our main focus is on making sure that the general public, or specific publics . . . understand the U.S. as well, so that when their government decides, based on our political dealings, yes, we do think we should send more troops to Afghanistan, for example, they have the support of their population too. The population also understands why this is important and why the U.S. thinks it’s in our common interest to do this.⁶²

In the words of scholars Jennifer Marshall and Thomas Farr, “U.S. public diplomacy aims to advance U.S. interests and security by imparting to foreign audiences an understanding and appreciation of American founding principles, ideals, institutions, and policy.”⁶³

It is interesting to note that of the five career tracks of Foreign Service officers in the Department of State – political, economic, public diplomacy, consular, and management – public diplomacy remains the most under-represented, according to a study released by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy in 2008.⁶⁴ Furthermore, many U.S. Foreign Service officers choosing to work in the public diplomacy cone feel there is a clear glass ceiling for their careers. From the time the public diplomacy track was instituted in 1999 to the end of this particular study in 2007, no public diplomacy officer had risen to the Foreign Service’s highest rank of ambassador. This sentiment prevailed among many of the public diplomacy officers I encountered in both my experiences as an intern at the U.S. Department of State in Washington and at the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Additionally, there is no specific test for public diplomacy skills in the Foreign Service Officer Test, and officers have complained that on-the-job training in public diplomacy is inadequate.⁶⁵ The Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs (MC-PA) at the U.S. Embassy in Paris even commented that a public diplomacy conference for high-level U.S. diplomats she attended in DC during the summer of 2010 gave only surface-level information of the practice and was essentially futile.⁶⁶

This lack of emphasis on public diplomacy programs also shows in the differences between budgets. The United States notoriously allocates a huge amount of money each year for the Department of Defense and other military initiatives. For example, in 2008, total U.S. military spending was nearly \$700 billion. The Department of State’s budget that same year was \$35 billion – a significantly lower amount. Even more, of the State Department’s budget, only \$1.5 billion went toward public diplomacy initiatives that year.⁶⁷ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton admits that civilian power must “be brought into better balance with U.S. military power.”⁶⁸ The stark difference in funding between the two departments conveys this disparity.

If the public diplomat is indeed “the steward of his or her nation’s relationships with the people of the world,”⁶⁹ then why is the United States not pushing for more funding for public diplomacy? Or is it something other than increased funding that U.S. public diplomacy needs to be more effective? Perhaps it needs a new direction. Regardless, “U.S. embassies and consulates are the nation’s front line of contact with the peoples around the world.”⁷⁰ The case for soft power must be made, especially considering the current emphasis the United States places on its military infrastructure.

The Case for Soft Power

Despite whatever diplomatic strategy the U.S. government pursues, most all Foreign Service officers in the U.S. Department of State will agree that in today's information age, power politics is more about whose story wins rather than whose military or economy wins.⁷¹ Traditionally, the test of a country's power was its strength in war. In current times, however, military force does not determine a great power as much as technology, education, and the economy. Instead, a nation's power rests on its ability to create and innovate more than its possession of military resources.⁷² Joseph Nye claims, "Proof of power lies not in resources but in the ability to change the behavior of states."⁷³ The way Nye believes states should change the behavior of other states is through attraction rather than coercion or payments, an idea he called *soft power* in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*.⁷⁴ He describes how a country can attract foreigners through its culture and ideology, noting that the "United States has more co-optive power than other countries," particularly in American popular culture and ideology.⁷⁵ The opposite of soft power is *hard power*, which implies using force to generate an outcome. Many scholars will attest, "Favorable image and reputation around the world, achieved through attraction and persuasion, have become more important than territory, access, and raw materials, traditionally acquired through military and economic measures."⁷⁶

Similarly, former U.S. ambassador to Yemen and to the United Arab Emirates, William A. Rugh claims, "The case for soft power rests partly on the fact that hard power is insufficient to support American national interests adequately."⁷⁷ For example, when the United States sought support for the war in Iraq, the decline of American soft power created a disabling environment for its policies in places like Mexico and Turkey, where the U.S. government needed a vote in the United Nations and permission for American troops to cross borders, respectively.⁷⁸ Shaping public opinion favorably is quite important in democratic countries in order to garner support for policies that may affect that country. Moreover, the Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs at U.S. Embassy Paris claims, "War has become so deadly at this point that persuasion has become increasingly part of our national security."⁷⁹

Ambassador Rugh comments, "Soft power can derive from American culture if that culture is admired and respected abroad."⁸⁰ He defines culture, in this sense, as literature, music, visual and performing arts, and education. Even more, Ambassador Rugh boldly claims, "The most important sources of United States soft power are American films, television programs, music, and education . . . as well as American sports."⁸¹

Hans Morgenthau, a University of Chicago political scientist generally credited with founding the "realist" school of international relations, published a book in 1948, *Politics among Nations*, which placed little importance on public opinion, cultural outreach, and propaganda in U.S. foreign policy formulation. In 1956, however, he published a second edition of that book, adding extensive material on the great impact of world public opinion and international morality on policymakers' decisions.⁸² Again, as communications technologies and advances in transportation modes improved over the course of the twentieth century, so did the ability for people around the world to build international networks and the necessity for American leaders to pay closer attention to foreign publics. Philip Seib, professor of journalism and public diplomacy at the University of Southern California, predicts that "public diplomacy will become increasingly important because it is the essence of soft power."⁸³

Expanding the Definition of Public Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy as Cultural Diplomacy

In a 1993 *Foreign Affairs* article, former Harvard University professor Samuel Huntington wrote that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.”⁸⁴ Indeed, cultural differences are what seem to spark wars in current times. For example, some terrorist organizations targeting America oppose Western culture and traditions and believe their culture’s customs should spread across the globe.

Some scholars define cultural diplomacy as a type of propaganda where culture is used to persuade and influence while others assume a more liberal understanding of cultural diplomacy that embraces a broad variety of cultural interactions between different countries and populations.⁸⁵ Rosendorf emphasizes that “*cultural diplomacy is not propaganda*; it is a process of outreach, relationship-building, and a mutual increase in understanding over time.”⁸⁶

France is often credited as being the first nation to use cultural diplomacy as a foreign policy tool. The Alliance Française originated in 1883 with the idea that instructing people in the French language would inspire people and help them to develop an affinity for France as a country.⁸⁷ This nongovernmental institution is a prime example of how private organizations are often some of the most effective instruments of public diplomacy. In this use of cultural diplomacy, a country attempts to manage the international environment by exporting samples of its culture abroad.⁸⁸

To this effect, Nye describes that “the United States is a country with a vibrant social and cultural life that provides an almost infinite number of points of contact with other societies.”⁸⁹ American culture has undeniably spread throughout the entire world. Hollywood films are present in nearly every country, as are American restaurants and stores. In Paris, France, an American tourist walking down the famed Avenue des Champs-Élysées, might expect to see traditional French shops and restaurants. Though they exist, French stores are separated by McDonald’s restaurants, a Disney store, and a Gap clothing store. A tourist might wish to see a traditional French film at one of the movie theaters on the Champs-Élysées, but instead, he or she would be more likely to catch the premiere of the latest Steven Spielberg film in English with French subtitles. Even in Paris, the French culture capital of the world, American culture pervades the city. The United States is everywhere. As one French citizen, a Locally Employed Staff (LES) member in the Cultural Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, put it, “French people are highly exposed to American culture every minute of every day.”⁹⁰

One Political Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Embassy in Paris referred to this phenomenon as the “American pop culture machine [that] we really have going for us as a country.”⁹¹ Cultural diplomacy is something that the U.S. government does not necessarily facilitate; America often benefits from this pop culture machine that seems to be wildly popular. As another French LES member at the U.S. Embassy affirmed, “The best way to promote American values is through culture.”⁹² At the same time, not everyone in the world enjoys Western popular culture or media. In fact, some detest it. Those people are typically ideologically against Western ideas and values, and this kind of difference is what in today’s era causes violent conflict. The U.S. government’s job, then, is not necessarily

to sell people on Western ideals, but rather, to find a way to reach out to publics in order to combat extremism by spreading values of freedom of expression and peace.

Old Versus New Public Diplomacy

More traditional definitions of public diplomacy state that it is an activity implemented by governments; newer definitions assert that it can be, and often is, performed by international actors including nongovernmental organizations, commercial entities, and private individuals.⁹³ Both state and nonstate actors use public diplomacy tools to engage, understand, and influence audiences on a wide range of issues including politics, economic growth, democracy, human rights, the distribution of goods and services, and other international threats and opportunities.⁹⁴ Rosendorf expresses a need for “a fundamental shift in both the substance and tone of American foreign policy, in both the realms of strategic statecraft and cultural and other public diplomacy efforts.”⁹⁵

Administration after administration, American leaders tasked Assistant and Under Secretaries of State with the job of selling the United States – its culture, ideals, and foreign policies – to the people of the world. In 1945, President Harry S Truman appointed William Benton to the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. Benton was the co-founder of Benton & Bowles, one of the top advertising agencies of the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁶ Over a half-century later, President George W. Bush seemed to follow the exact same strategy – hire a renowned advertising specialist to sell America to the world. A month after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he appointed Charlotte Beers, former chair of two of the top-ten worldwide advertising agencies, as the new Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.⁹⁷ At this time, then Secretary of State Colin Powell called for a “re-branding” of U.S. foreign policy, and he believed the United States needed an advertising executive for the task.⁹⁸ In 2009, President Barack Obama appointed Judith McHale to that same post. McHale had experience as a top media and communications executive, formerly working as the CEO of an American communications company.⁹⁹

None of these people lasted long in their positions. In fact, many of them resigned before their terms were completed. Hiring people to sell the United States’ brand was not the best approach for public diplomacy. The U.S. government didn’t need to sell America; it needed to make America more friends in strategic places. U.S. public diplomacy cannot be successful if it is strictly focused on the U.S. image abroad; success depends much more heavily on the image of America in the context of its relationships with the international community and individual nations.¹⁰⁰ That means we must work hard to be present and build relationships abroad.

In a 2010 *Foreign Affairs* article, Nye asserts, “The country’s capacity to maintain alliances and create networks will be an important dimension of its hard and soft power.”¹⁰¹ This reason is exactly why it is so vital for U.S. foreign policy to be relationship focused, rather than message or policy based. The new public diplomacy is not restricted to messages, promotion campaigns, or just government-to-people outreach; “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.”¹⁰² Communication in the old public diplomacy is one-way, while the new public diplomacy involves collaboration and dialogue.¹⁰³ French LES member in charge of the arts and entertainment portfolio at Embassy Paris insisted in July 2010, “The old way of doing diplomacy is completely obsolete.”¹⁰⁴ To some diplomats, in this case a French civil servant working for the U.S. Embassy, the new diplomacy – people-to-people diplomacy – is the only diplomacy that will work in today’s world. Old diplomatic practices exclusively involving governments are no longer effective.

The Diffusion of Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy and the Technological Revolution

It comes as no surprise that today's world of global communications capabilities demand a new kind of public diplomacy. In a *Foreign Affairs* article, Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen assert, "In an era when the power of the individual and the group grows daily, those governments that ride the technological wave will clearly be best positioned to assert their influence and bring others into their orbits."¹⁰⁵

Secretary Clinton asserts that "increasing global interconnectedness now necessitates reaching beyond governments to citizens directly and broadening the U.S. foreign policy portfolio to include issues once confined to the domestic sphere."¹⁰⁶ In July 2010, the MC-PA at Embassy Paris indicated that public diplomacy and diplomacy are merging into one thing because of the changes in communications and technology. She also noted that "education used to be for the elites, the wealthy, the lucky – it's not that way any more. Education itself has become a lot more democratized. Communication has become global."¹⁰⁷

The Internet provides an extraordinary opportunity for the global dissemination of information, ideas, and culture.¹⁰⁸ One scholar comments, "Although it still has something of a Wild West flavor, the Web holds enormous soft power potential for the United States in particular."¹⁰⁹ Another confirms, "Used well, technology extends our reach exponentially."¹¹⁰ However true that statement may be, the challenge for the United States is in gaining foreign publics' attention. As Nye states, "Plenty of information leads to scarcity of attention."¹¹¹ The Deputy Press Attaché at Embassy Paris made the following remarks about the communications revolution:

Electronic communication is becoming more and more an important pillar of our public engagement strategy in that no longer will it just be the Ambassador or his spokesperson or a very small number of people within the U.S. government who are speaking on behalf of the United States. Now, there are so many people-to-people connections that it's much harder to keep control of the communication and the message. That's both positive and negative; it can be a little dangerous because you can lose the ability to control the message and shape what it is you're trying to communicate. At the same time, on a fundamental level, I think it will increase mutual understanding if people have an opportunity to communicate more, and I think that's positive.¹¹²

Losing the ability to control the messages publics receive may make U.S. agendas more difficult to pursue, but if the overall goal is mutual understanding between cultures to reduce global conflict, new communications technologies can be highly accommodating.

Privatizing Public Diplomacy

The technological revolution not only gives diplomats advanced tools for influencing and communicating with foreign publics, but it also equips nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other private sector actors with the means to take on higher public profiles and to expand their roles as global players.¹¹³ In their book, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its evolution, theory, and administration*, Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne note that states have never had a monopoly of diplomacy and that "the two decades which have elapsed since the end of the Cold War have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number

of international actors whose role and influence extend beyond the traditional confines of the state."¹¹⁴ In other words, nonstate actors are becoming increasingly powerful in international relations.

What some call the diffusion of diplomacy can be attributed to advances in communications technologies. Satellite and digital networking encourages and permits instant communication between groups and individuals, unconstrained by distance or national borders.¹¹⁵ New social media technologies in particular help create a web culture based on conversation without frontiers.¹¹⁶ New media is "less about technology and mass audiences and more about being connected on a personal and individual level."¹¹⁷

Nye realizes that "great powers of today are less able to use their traditional power resources to achieve their purposes . . . [as] private actors and small states have become more powerful."¹¹⁸ In fact, what individuals do abroad creates an image, positive or negative, of America as a whole.¹¹⁹ Private citizens, from students studying abroad to tourists traveling to businesspeople working, seem to have just as much influence on foreign views of the United States as the Foreign Service officers spending their careers abroad do.

In this new age of globalization, international relations scholars and practitioners alike agree that "the rising influence of nonstate actors in foreign affairs makes public diplomacy an increasingly important component of international relations."¹²⁰ Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried advocate for governments to work in tandem with civil society and private organizations and individuals. They argue that these kinds of partnerships lead to "greater neutrality, better reception by the foreign audiences, and more effective participation by these audiences in the programs and initiatives created."¹²¹

It is interesting to note that many attempts at privatizing public diplomacy are not made by the U.S. government. Following 9/11, many American businesses recognized the need to ameliorate America's declining image, as anti-Americanism was proving to be bad for business.¹²² Kathy Fitzpatrick, a professor of public relations at Quinnipiac University, notes that although private parties have influenced U.S. international relations throughout America's history, there is a new level of involvement by private actors due to the communications revolution in the twenty-first century.¹²³ Fitzpatrick, as well as other observers, believe that public diplomacy's successful survival lies in the private sector. As public relations executive Michael Holtzman declared in the *New York Times*, "Public diplomacy is much too important to leave to professional diplomats."¹²⁴ I personally believe many diplomats excel in their work, but it would be ideal to have increased collaborations with the private sector.

Privatization of public diplomacy can be beneficial because many people abroad are skeptical of U.S. government programs and messages and tend to trust private parties more. Thus, private organizations or individuals, often possessing more credibility than the U.S. government in the eyes of foreigners, are able to do more goodwill for America than the government itself can. Fitzpatrick advises the United States to partner with nongovernmental entities to cultivate relationships with foreign publics.¹²⁵

Although using private parties to conduct public diplomacy can be advantageous, it also has a number of weaknesses that must be considered. First, government officials have little control over the messages transmitted by private parties to foreign publics. Second, the objectives of private entities may conflict with the missions of the U.S. government. Third, if relationships are only built in the private sector and the government is completely separated from the network, the entire goal of promoting American policies through building relationships is undermined.¹²⁶ Since diplomacy involves relationships between nations while public diplomacy entails a country's attempt to build strong relationships

with foreign people, it is in the best interest of the U.S. government to collaborate with private entities, ensuring they support, rather than damage, the building of transnational relationships.¹²⁷

In 2010, Secretary Clinton expressed the need to “leverage civilian power by connecting businesses, philanthropists, and citizens’ groups with partner governments to perform tasks that governments alone cannot.”¹²⁸ Certainly, in today’s world, general publics are much too interconnected across the globe to be left out of interstate relations. As the MC-PA at Embassy Paris stated, “Diplomacy has become less and less one government talking to another government – it’s becoming one society engaging with another society.”¹²⁹ Indeed, diplomacy is no longer restricted to officials at embassies abroad. Every citizen who communicates with foreigners via the Internet or who travels abroad becomes a personal representative of his or her country. As they have been for decades, the eyes of the world are upon the United States, and people pay attention to what Americans say and do.

Emphasis on Interpersonal Interactions

Although American public diplomacy officials have a wide array of instruments to reach out to foreign publics – radio broadcasts, television, printed media, libraries, cultural centers abroad, Web sites, social media tools, and more – there is a consensus among international relations scholars and career diplomats that there is no substitute for personal experiences. Though not the most efficient, interpersonal interactions are best for building and maintaining relationships.¹³⁰ Ambassador Rugh declares that “the personal experiences of foreign students in America and the personal encounters of Americans with foreigners abroad are the most powerful tools we have.”¹³¹

Scholars and practitioners agree that Americans who travel overseas, particularly in countries with greater levels of anti-American sentiment, consistently find significant differences in attitudes of foreigners who have spent time in the United States and those who only know it from afar.¹³² Keeping in mind that the best way for foreigners to develop an affinity for the United States is for them to be in contact with people from the United States, Secretary Clinton calls for public engagement in the twenty-first century to be

. . . every diplomat’s duty, through town-hall meetings and interviews with the media, organized outreach, events in provincial towns and smaller communities, student exchange programs, and virtual connections . . . Indeed, in the twenty-first century, a diplomat is as likely to meet with a tribal elder in a rural village as a counterpart in a foreign ministry, and is as likely to wear cargo pants as a pin-striped suit.¹³³

An Economic Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Embassy in Paris proclaimed that “American embassies are better than most in terms of establishing contacts and getting out all around the world.”¹³⁴ In fact, all eight U.S. Foreign Service officers I interviewed shared a similar viewpoint that the United States is doing more public diplomacy work than most countries. Congruent with Secretary Clinton’s comments, the Deputy Press Attaché described that the “most effective means of public diplomacy is the face-to-face, people-to-people exchanges, whether it’s someone who meets at a program or event or who actually travels to the United States and experiences that firsthand,” underlining the profound impact these interactions have on one’s perception of the United States.¹³⁵

A Political Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Embassy Paris furthered this idea of the value of interpersonal interactions between cultures when he explained, “It just helps people understand the United States better if there’s an actual, real live American in their

classroom talking to them about our system and sometimes allowing people to have at us – to ask difficult questions that they might not be able to ask if they’re reading a newspaper article about our policies.”¹³⁶ His remarks referred to a program the U.S. Embassy does to send American diplomats out into French schools to speak with students and inform them of the United States and its policies, and most important, to answer their questions candidly.

When I had the opportunity to have a conversation with the U.S. Ambassador to France in July 2010, he noted the following about his interactions with general publics:

People ask me what the role of ambassador is all the time, and I tell them I am the personal representative of the President. Everyone just thinks it’s all elite, black-tie events, but it’s not. I mean, in high season, I’m giving 3-4 speeches out in public a day. I’m so busy. I don’t go to sleep until 1 AM most nights, meeting with people, answering emails.¹³⁷

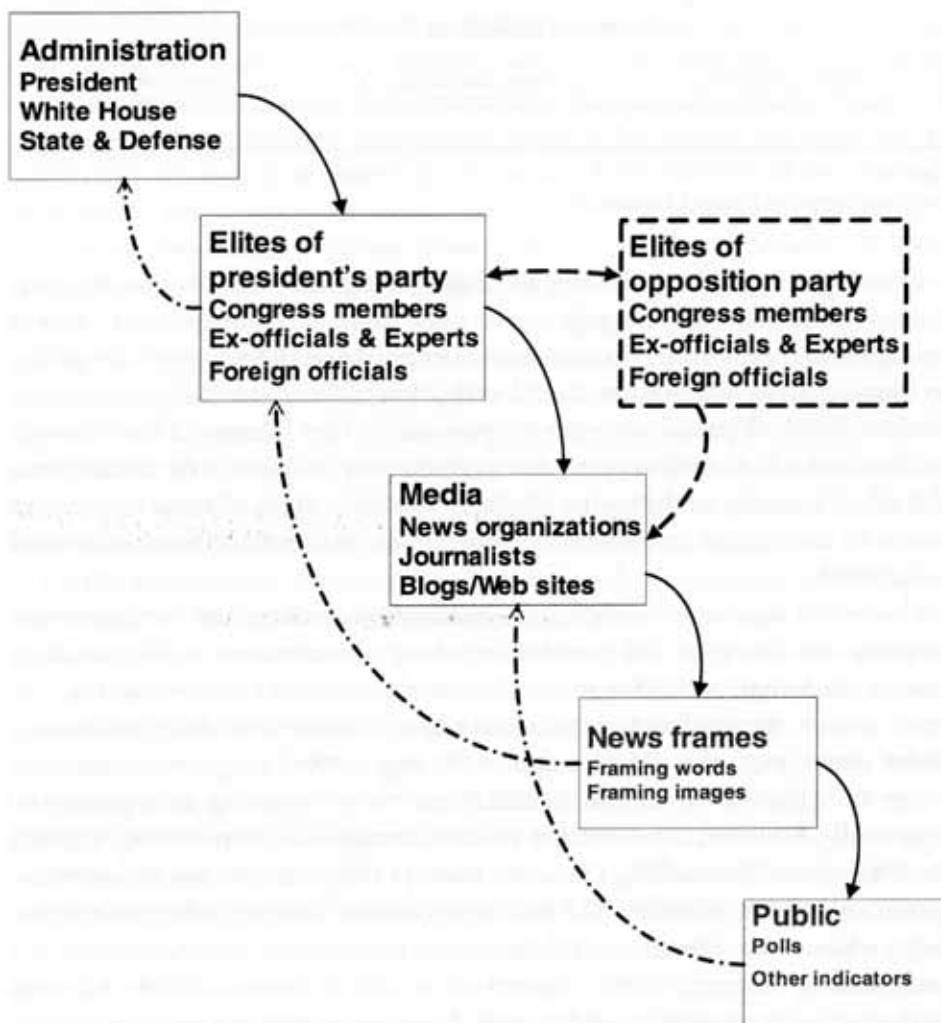
As Secretary Clinton professes, “Today, a U.S. ambassador creates ties not only with the host nation’s government but also with its people.”¹³⁸ It is evident from these remarks and others by Foreign Service officers, statesmen, and scholars that diplomacy is no longer confined to the walls of embassies and foreign ministries. Diplomatic practice happens out in the world on a people-to-people level.

Why Public Diplomacy Works

Diplomacy aimed at influencing foreign public opinion seems to be as important as traditional classified diplomatic communications among top leaders.¹³⁹ Many scholars hold a theory that domestic audiences greatly influence, if not even control, leaders’ decisions in democratic countries. Charles Wolf elucidates that “to the extent that the behavior and policies of foreign governments are affected by the behavior and attitudes of its citizens, public diplomacy may affect governments by influencing their citizens.”¹⁴⁰ This kind of public diplomacy works in democratic countries under the assumption that “political parties value holding office and therefore choose strategies designed to maximize their probability of election.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, Harvard University political scientist Robert Putnam describes that “domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups.”¹⁴²

The Deputy Press Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Paris adds the following: “In democracies, having public support for government decisions is extremely important, so I think on a practical level, if the United States wants to have support from political leaders of foreign countries, it’s expedient for us to have support from their publics, or those leaders won’t get voted in year after year.”¹⁴³ As the Press Attaché confirmed, “The days when the larger population could be ignored are behind us. Certainly in democratic societies, particularly those that have undergone information/technology revolutions in the last century, if you don’t have your nation behind you, then you’re living on borrowed time as a government.”¹⁴⁴

Although public diplomacy aims to influence mass publics, Robert Entman alleges that its ultimate goal is to shape elite opinion and behavior.¹⁴⁵ He defines mediated U.S. public diplomacy as the attempts by the foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible over the framing of U.S. policy in foreign media, where framing means highlighting some aspects of a situation to advance a particular interpretation.¹⁴⁶ Table 2 shows how public opinion influences the media, which then frames the news in a way that affects politicians’ decisions.

Table 2¹⁴⁷

This model attempts to describe how publics have the ability to alter the positions of politicians in a democratic society in which an opposition party exists to challenge the choices of the party in power. If this cycle works, it is only wise for a government to reach out to publics and implement favorable policies, in hopes of being re-elected. For many U.S. officials, public diplomacy can serve to accomplish strategic goals and satisfy national interests. My parochial hope is that public diplomacy's purpose is deeper than self-serving objectives, but this model of mediated U.S. public diplomacy does help advocate for public diplomacy's effectiveness as a foreign policy tool seeking to accomplish U.S. interests abroad.

Insisting that public events are just as important as meetings in foreign ministries, Secretary Clinton declares that "the durability of the United States' partnerships abroad will depend on the attitudes of the people as well as the policies of their governments."¹⁴⁸

In an age of extremist groups and unprecedented threats from terrorist organizations, this statement exudes particular truth. In fact, 76 percent of the USIA alumni in the 2007 study agreed that U.S. public diplomacy serves a critical role in the current war on terror.¹⁴⁹

Devising a New Model for Public Diplomacy

Past Frameworks of Public Diplomacy

Thus far, this paper has discussed a brief history of public diplomacy, offered multiple definitions of what public diplomacy is, identified its purpose in U.S. foreign policy, and put it in the context to today's world of global communications abilities. Gleaning from all this information, I will now examine various existing paradigms of public diplomacy and devise a new model of public diplomacy based on two successful case studies that either public or private entities can employ.

In their attempt to devise a formal model of cultural diplomacy, Jessica C. E. Gielow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried identified two key theses:

First, the more distance there is between the agent of a cultural diplomacy program and a political or economic agenda, the more likely the program is to succeed.

Second, the more interactive (meaning that dialogue and exchange move in both directions between the agent and recipient of the cultural diplomacy program) the structure of the cultural diplomacy program, the more likely it is to be sustainable and therefore successful.¹⁵⁰

These scholars advocate for public diplomacy to be relational, rather than information-based. They believe that programs focused on building relationships will be much more successful than those trying to push a particular policy. Debates about U.S. public diplomacy center around whether or not initiatives should focus on telling the American story, advocating U.S. policies, or building relationships with foreign publics.¹⁵¹ Several scholars have offered various frameworks for public diplomacy, including listening, informing, advocating, and relationship-building.

In the listening framework, the key component of public diplomacy is a diplomat's skill of listening to foreign publics. In listening, a diplomat attempts to manage the international environment by collecting information from foreign publics about their opinions, values, and interests in order to redirect foreign policy.¹⁵² Seib notes that listening must be a cornerstone of public diplomacy and that personal interactions must encourage candid exchanges of viewpoints.¹⁵³

The information framework of public diplomacy "focuses on the design and dissemination of messages to solve communication problems and advance political objectives."¹⁵⁴ Zaharna identifies several types of initiatives within the information framework including propaganda, international broadcasting, information campaigns, nation branding, and media relations.¹⁵⁵ Controlling information in today's world, though, is nearly impossible. Messages of all sorts, true and falsified, constantly seep through media channels. Furthermore, any attempt by the U.S. government to control the flow of information would erode American credibility and inhibit the ability to build trusting relationships with foreign peoples. Messages should be co-created in a candid international environment.¹⁵⁶

Nye notes that propaganda alone often lacks credibility and is counterproductive. He comments, "Conveying information and selling a positive image is part of it, but public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies."¹⁵⁷ There is so much information available in today's world that disseminating messages is not an effective foreign policy strategy.

The advocacy framework of public diplomacy "rests on the assumption that public diplomacy's function is to influence the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of foreign publics."¹⁵⁸ Though this strategy is often the U.S. government's approach to public diplomacy, it does not always resonate well with foreign publics. When foreigners know the U.S. government's goal is to manipulate them, they view all public diplomacy initiatives as a gimmick, according to a French LES member who heads the diversity portfolio in the Cultural Affairs Section at U.S. Embassy Paris.¹⁵⁹

The relational framework emphasizes "relationship-building and positive maintenance of social structures to solve communication problems to advance political objectives."¹⁶⁰ Under this model of public diplomacy, relationship activities are the primary objective as they help foster a more connected international environment. The by-products of the relationships, including policy goals, are only secondary.¹⁶¹ Building intercultural relationships are the sole goal. The relational framework truly builds international networks, and I believe it is what may help connect people of all backgrounds and cultures, decreasing the amount of violent conflict in the world. In fact, "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."¹⁶²

The Relational Model of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy initiatives within the relational framework have six key characteristics, according to Zaharna. First, they emphasize identifying and building relationships. Second, they seek out mutual interests between the sponsor and its publics. Third, relationship-based initiatives depend on relationship-building strategies, which demonstrate reciprocity and mutual respect, and downplay, or even neglect, message strategies. Fourth, they focus on coordination efforts rather than control between parties involved. Fifth, these public diplomacy initiatives emphasize participation over presentation. And sixth, public diplomacy initiatives within the relational framework aim for continuity and sustainability.¹⁶³

Relationships should be built by understanding foreign publics' needs and cultures and then by finding areas for common cause.¹⁶⁴ In this kind of public diplomacy, the primary goal is about building and maintaining positive, lasting relationships between different peoples. There can be no political agenda behind these relationships. In fact, any "unilateralist policies that always put U.S. interests first will undercut sophisticated attempts to build relationships with foreign publics."¹⁶⁵ As Joseph Nye argues, "Effective public diplomacy is a two-way street. We need to understand better what is going on in the minds of others and what values we share."¹⁶⁶

A focus on relationship-building in public diplomacy is what can separate it from propaganda.¹⁶⁷ In the *USIA Alumni Study* of 2007, an emphasis on the importance of relational initiatives appeared in that the top five scoring responses for the most effective public diplomacy activities involved building relationships and fostering dialogue. Exchange programs lead the list. Table 3 shows the complete results.

Table 3¹⁶⁸

Activity	Mean**
Exchange programs	4.85
Educational exchanges, e.g., Fulbright, American Studies	4.85
Face-to-face interactions with local publics	4.84
International visitors programs	4.81
Dialogue with political elites and other opinion leaders	4.67
U.S. government libraries	4.54
Media relations	4.46
Speaker programs	4.35
International broadcasting	4.22
Performing arts	4.18
Interviews with U.S. officials by the foreign media	4.11
Cultural exhibits	3.95
U.S. government publications, i.e., magazines, brochures, etc.	3.88
Wireless file	3.81
Technical and development assistance	3.80
Editorials, op-eds in local media	3.78
Documentaries and films	3.64
Internet sites	3.61
American corners	3.52
Democracy initiatives	3.36
Psychological warfare	2.26
Disinformation campaigns	2.15
Paid advertisements in national/local media	1.19

*The USIA Alumni Study (n=213)

**Numeric average of all responses with 1 being “Not Effective” and 5 being “Very Effective.”

The first sign of any purely information-based public diplomacy initiative lies in the sixth highest scoring response, U.S. government libraries. Although libraries, cultural exhibits, documentaries, Internet sites, and other activities made the list, it is clear that relationship-based initiatives receive the most acclaim from former USIA officers. One Political Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Embassy Paris made the following remarks in support of the relational approach to U.S. public diplomacy:

The human contact that we establish – that we build – creates for the people of another country a palpable sense of what America is and if we don’t build relationships, then we aren’t serving any purpose. If we build relationships on a person-to-person level and as people, to a broader group, by being humanly, physically present, then we can really push forward the larger peoples who are behind us in France and America. Embassies are about building human relationships.¹⁶⁹

The results of the *USIA Alumni Study*, combined with statements from Secretary Clinton, interviews with current Foreign Service officers at posts abroad, and the scholarly literature I reviewed, reveal that relational public diplomacy programs are the most effective in yielding long-lasting international relations between peoples and states.

Exchange Programs

Relational public diplomacy aims to facilitate the dialogue between different social collectives in the hope of sharing understanding, culture, and meaning despite national or language barriers.¹⁷⁰ Exchange programs are an excellent example of a successful relationship-based public diplomacy initiative. Exchanges serve a fundamental role in public diplomacy strategies at every embassy worldwide. They seek to manage the international environment by sending citizens overseas while inviting foreigners for a period of time to learn about American culture and society.

Karen Hughes, former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, commented that exchange programs have been the Department of State's single most important and successful public diplomacy tool over the last 50 years.¹⁷¹ In 1946, the Fulbright program began, sending American students and scholars to other countries and inviting their counterparts to the United States.¹⁷² When the program began, Senator William Fulbright held the idea that if people would get to know each other better, they would develop a sense of empathy for others, a distaste for war, and a desire for peace.¹⁷³ As someone who spent a semester abroad as an American exchange student in France, I wholeheartedly agree with Senator Fulbright's philosophy. Exchanges are the best ways to develop an appreciation for another culture. Many other government-funded exchange programs exist, and especially after 9/11, a multitude of new youth-targeted and Internet-based programs appeared.

The Department of State's most prestigious exchange program is its International Visitor Program (IV Program). In 1997, over 100,000 people had come to the United States on the IV Program since its inception in 1949, and 177 of those people later became heads of state or government. Notable foreign leaders who participated in the IV Program include Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Hamid Karzai.¹⁷⁴ Goals of the IV Program include professional networking, transferring information, exploring bilateral issues between the U.S. and other nations, influencing potential political leaders, and dealing with the common economic and political problems of an independent world.¹⁷⁵

Exchanges work by "cultivating and strengthening existing transnational cultural affinities, and thus positively influencing the broader context in which policy decisions are taken."¹⁷⁶ For example, in the 1980s, the U.S. Embassy in London nominated Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, two rising members of the British Labour Party, for the IV Program in the United States. The objective was simple – to help the influential members of the Labour Party cultivate an affinity for America. The strategic goal was smart – to develop good relations within the Labour Party in order to steer British foreign policy away from anti-American neutralism and anti-nuclear unilateralism.¹⁷⁷ In this case, the use of exchanges helped develop a body of favorable opinion in policy-making circles that built a more positive profile of the United States.

A Political Foreign Service officer at U.S. Embassy Paris observed the following about the strategic purpose of America's IV Program:

We send people to the United States, and they come back and not just talk about, "Hey I had a great time in the United States," but might write an op-ed for their local newspaper about what they experienced and how maybe we should have a more deep understanding about what's going on domestically in the United States.¹⁷⁸

It is important to note that exchanges, however beneficial they can be, do not always produce the desired results. In fact, they can have damaging effects. As international relations

scholar Giles Scott-Smith admits, “There is no guarantee that all grantees will return from their U.S. trips with a favorable disposition towards American politics and society.”¹⁷⁹ In 1948, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo selected Sayyed Qutb, an Egyptian civil servant, to spend two years in the United States to study the American education system. The U.S. interest in this government-funded exchange was to help Qutb in his career, moderate his Islamic views, and develop a channel for U.S. ideas and values into Egyptian society. Instead of gaining an appreciation for America, he returned to Egypt appalled by his perception of American society’s amorality, decadence, and materialism. His experience in the United States strengthened his prejudices against Americans and ignited his desire to purge Western influences from Egyptian society.¹⁸⁰

Despite this one negative citation, exchange programs are generally highly effective at building international networks and helping instill in people an appreciation and respect for other nations and cultures.

Model of Successful Public Diplomacy

There have not been many attempts by either scholars or practitioners to create a universal paradigm of public diplomacy. Eytan Gilboa, a professor at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, came up with three models of public diplomacy: the *Basic Cold War* model, the *Nonstate Transnational* model, and the *Domestic PR* model.¹⁸¹ None of these models, however, sufficiently constitutes a successful model of public diplomacy. Additionally, case studies can be useful in providing insights into various aspects of public diplomacy, but they do not generalize accurately.¹⁸²

Effective public diplomacy requires that state’s public diplomacy strategies move from monologue to dialogue, and even more, to collaboration. Collaboration, according to Cowan and Arsenault, features international participation in a joint project with a clearly defined goal.¹⁸³ They argue that this is the most effective public diplomacy technique, and I agree. Though monologues, in the forms of public speeches for example, can be moving and informative, and dialogue can build mutual understanding, “nothing creates a sense of trust and mutual respect as fully as a meaningful collaboration.”¹⁸⁴ And that’s exactly what we did with Afghan journalist and women’s rights activist Diana Saqeb at the University of Tennessee in April 2011, as a later section of this paper will illustrate.

In collaboration, citizens of different countries come together for a common purpose. This cooperation not only bridges social and political divides, according to Cowan and Arsenault, but it also helps lessen violence and political tension. “Whether working together on small projects or large ones, participants can learn from each other’s skills; they learn to respect each other; and they may find that they have common ground in at least one area of importance to them.”¹⁸⁵ Gaining the cooperative advantage is essential, and that can be done by creating alliances, building networks, and partnering with foreign publics and institutions.¹⁸⁶ As a later section will describe, the U.S. Embassy in Paris’ young political leaders training program in June 2010 embodied this kind of collaboration.

Research studies have shown that international collaborative projects involving ordinary citizens and government officials alike help “contradict group biases and create external loyalties that reduce the importance of in-group membership and moderate pressures for conformity and radicalism.”¹⁸⁷ This strategic, national security goal is exactly what is behind public diplomacy efforts – to combat extremism posing threats to international stability and thus, American security. Not only does collaboration appear to be the best way to build relationships, but it also seems to combat extremism better than any other public diplomacy tools such as propaganda, speeches, pamphlets, or cultural centers. Instead of

trying to control another country's foreign publics, America might consider bridging the gap that separates the United States from them.¹⁸⁸

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs in 2005, Karen Hughes devised a strategic framework for diplomacy built on exchanges, education, empowerment, and engagement. She viewed exchanges as the most valuable public diplomacy tool, claiming that they make a lasting impression on people's attitudes of the United States. Second most important, in her opinion, was education, and she emphasized educating both Americans about other cultures and foreigners about American ideals.¹⁸⁹

Public diplomacy strategies that are relationship focused have greater promise than those that try to promote foreign policies. These kinds of strategies – with the sole objective of building relationships – improve credibility and trust between a nation and foreign publics, and they can serve foreign policy goals in the long-term by keeping people connected, even despite unpopular policies.¹⁹⁰

Nearly all scholars and diplomats alike will agree that “face-to-face interactions through cultural and educational initiatives and other activities are widely recognized as among the most effective strategies.”¹⁹¹ Edward Murrow called these programs the “last three feet.”¹⁹² In old public diplomacy, information frameworks tended to rule. Now, relational frameworks seem to be most important in fostering social harmony and pursuing U.S. interests abroad. If this is the case, training for diplomats should include gaining intercultural communication, mediation, listening, and observation skills rather than learning how to craft and deliver a message.

The 2007 *USIA Alumni Study* compiled a list of several key credentials successful public diplomacy professionals should have. At the top of this list are cross-cultural understanding, interpersonal skills, and oral communication skills, which come as no surprise considering the importance of relational public diplomacy. These are skills that foster relationship-building. Table 4 charts the various qualities former USIA officers mentioned as important. At the top of the list are cross-cultural understanding, interpersonal skills, and other communication skills.¹⁹³ It is clear that former USIA officers understood the importance of being able to relate to people of other cultures.

Embassies help cultivate American relationships with people of the world. Instead of solely inviting politicians and government officials to foreign countries, it is just as important to invite other Americans – artists, athletes, musicians, students, businesspeople, and more – to meet, network, and collaborate with artists, athletes, musicians, students, businesspeople, and more to meet, their counterparts in another country. Rosendorf advises the U.S. government to increase spending on cultural and other public diplomacy initiatives, offering the idea that the funding could be drawn from the Department of Defense budget in order to make the expense revenue-neutral.¹⁹⁵

Despite much of the academic writing on public diplomacy assuming that if foreign publics and elites had better information on America, they would be more supportive of the United States and its policies, this is not always the case.¹⁹⁶ In fact, anti-American sentiments in the twenty-first century appear to be most high in many of the more developed or literate countries with the ability to acquire such information, like Spain. “Americans will have to become more aware of cultural differences; an effective approach requires less parochialism and more sensitivity to perceptions abroad.”¹⁹⁷

Keeping in mind the suggestion to be more sensitive to perceptions abroad, Rosendorf makes three important points that policy formulators should take into account when devising new public diplomacy strategies. First, everyone will not be pleased with American culture. Second, there is no easy way to measure cultural diplomacy success.

Table 4¹⁹⁴

Credentials	Mean**
Cross-cultural understanding	4.90
Interpersonal skills	4.86
Oral communication skills	4.84
Foreign languages	4.70
Writing skills	4.65
U.S. Foreign Service experience abroad	4.62
Problem-solving skills	4.53
Public diplomacy experience	4.48
Managerial skills	4.34
Knowledge of U.S. history	4.30
Research skills	3.55
Training/experience in journalism	3.51
Travel or study abroad	3.42
Training/experience in public relations	3.07
Training/experience in advertising	1.79
Other: Ability to listen and observe Knowledge about/respect for foreign cultures Collaborative, networking and creative skills Patience, flexibility and adaptability Tolerance and empathy Sense of humor	

*The USIA Alumni Study (n=213)

**Numeric average of all responses with 1 being "Not Important" and 5 being "Very Important"

And third, no quick return on effort should be expected. Over the long-term, however, Rosendorf claims that cultural outreach will have a highly beneficial effect on America's reputation.¹⁹⁸

Because the Department of State is a bureaucracy, clearance processes and hierarchical levels often debilitate programs from ever surfacing. In 2010, Jeremy Curtin remarked, "Traditional bureaucratic processes based on a hierarchical, clearance-based system in which nearly every public utterance has been vetted through many offices is ill suited to the dynamic interaction of engagement."¹⁹⁹

Perhaps most important to remember as a part of this model, the U.S. government should not use public diplomacy for direct political gain. According to Nye, it will "not be effective unless the style and substance of U.S. policies are consistent with a broader democratic message."²⁰⁰ That democratic message involves promoting freedom, equality, and peace in the world, ideals upon which the United States was founded.

Indeed, the best kinds of public diplomacy programs are those that seek to foster intercultural relationships in hopes of increasing mutual understanding, tolerance, and empathy for others in the world. The ultimate goal of this public diplomacy strategy is to help decrease global conflict by connecting people of various nationalities. It is not a goal restricted to one nation, but it is universal. The following sections of this paper describe public diplomacy programs in the public and private sectors. Both seem to be consistent, as Nye puts it, with broader democratic messages.

Case Study I: U.S. Embassy Paris Government-Sponsored Public Diplomacy

Introduction

In this section, I explore government-sponsored public diplomacy at the United States Embassy in Paris, France. This kind of diplomacy might be referred to as, *government-to-people*, or *old* public diplomacy. During the summer of 2010, I had the opportunity to work as an intern in the Cultural Affairs and Political sections of the Embassy for ten weeks under the supervision of the Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs. During my tenure, I not only observed government-sponsored public diplomacy initiatives, but I participated in them. I had discussions with U.S. Foreign Service officers, French Locally Employed Staff (LES) members, and participants in programs to better understand public diplomacy's purpose, function, and effectiveness in building cross-cultural relations.

Public diplomacy is an essential foreign policy tool at U.S. Embassy Paris. The Public Affairs section (PA) heads public diplomacy initiatives and has a small budget for programs and grants. The Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs is the Senior Foreign Service officer in charge of the section, and she reports directly to the Ambassador. At Embassy Paris, PA comprises two divisions: the Cultural Affairs section and the Press Office. The Cultural Affairs section consists of approximately 20 LES members who provide "the cultural knowledge, political insight, and human intelligence necessary for a successful foreign policy."²⁰¹ There are five American Foreign Service officers who lead the sections: the Minister-Counselor, Cultural Affairs officer, Deputy Cultural Affairs officer, Press Attaché (often referred to as the Embassy spokesperson), and Deputy Press Attaché. I interviewed all five of these officers as well as two French staff members in order to gain further knowledge of U.S. public diplomacy.

PA boasts relationship-building as its number one goal. Though interested in national security and other foreign policy objectives, the section focuses on creating and sustaining relationships with French citizens in order to strengthen the transatlantic alliance. The Press Attaché described the two sections in PA in the following way: "The Cultural Section is focused on long-term relationship-building, or institutional bridge-building. The effects of their work are not felt on a day-to-day basis. They are really about long-term relationships. The Press Office is a day-by-day operation reacting to breaking news and looking to the next news cycle. We're short-term, mostly."²⁰²

One way to build long-term relationships is through musical collaborations from jazz to hip-hop, which are generally successful in bringing people closer together, as are sports, especially events featuring cross-national teams.²⁰³ What is promising is that these ideas are playing out in U.S. embassies around the world. At the U.S. Embassy in Paris, I helped facilitate programs involving building relationships through music and sports among others. Some of the key programs of the Cultural Affairs section include the IV Program, Fulbright exchanges, youth ambassador programs, sports and tolerance events, music exchanges, seminars, mural arts programs, film festivals, Embassy/American speakers programs, and interfaith initiatives. The PA section also gives grants to partner organizations engaging in projects bringing American and French cultures together.²⁰⁴ There are so many programs happening each week that it is nearly impossible to record them all. Additionally, the Cultural Affairs officer at Embassy Paris described several of PA's main contacts:

We work in partnership with the Ministries of Education and Culture . . . and we also enjoy nice relationships with the mayors offices around France . . . At the same time we have contact with non-governmental associations and other citizens'

groups who are doing interesting, creative things . . . so we have a very broad range of contact, and we have a lot of contact with students. I think that because we have a prestigious name as the U.S. Embassy, we are welcomed as partners.²⁰⁵

Victor Ashe, former Knoxville mayor and former U.S. Ambassador to Poland, confirmed America's cachet abroad when he mentioned in a panel discussion at the University of Tennessee in March 2011 that "an invitation to the American Ambassador's residence is a sought-after thing. The American Embassy, in most countries, is a fourth branch of government."²⁰⁶ Embassy Paris knows this fact and uses it to its advantage.

Implications for Broader U.S. Foreign Policy Goals

During my tenure at U.S. Embassy Paris, I also had the opportunity to work in the Political Affairs section (POL) for two weeks, learning about the national interests behind American public diplomacy initiatives. I interviewed two Political Foreign Service officers, and one of them described several intentions of the U.S. government for building relations with the French. The U.S. government wants France to be a stronger and more stable ally, and Embassy Paris believes that to do that, it needs to encourage the people and government of France to embrace the nation's new diversity. The U.S. government attempts to highlight the benefits of inclusion, expose French religious and ethnic minority groups to American culture, strengthen France economically by encouraging the full use of its labor potential, and reach out to youth audiences to share our values and to create new networks.²⁰⁷ These are some of U.S. Embassy Paris' key goals under the Obama Administration.

An Economic Foreign Service officer I interviewed made the following remarks offering insight into why the U.S. Embassy seeks to reach out to diverse populations in France in current times:

France is changing. The U.S./France relationship was heavily influenced by WW2. For many years, even though our governments didn't always see eye-to-eye, there was a very strong bond. That generation is dying out, and the younger generation is made up of a large percentage of immigrants who came here after that time, and they don't necessarily have that same sentiment. So, we have to reach out to them and talk about the United States so that they're getting that information through American channels. And just expose them – we believe that the better they understand the United States the more favorably disposed they'll be towards us. The way we do that is not to tell them what they should be doing, but to point out what the American experience has been and try to serve as a role model in that sense – and also to discuss the challenges that we've faced in the process and the lessons that we've learned.²⁰⁸

Concepts like diversity, affirmative action, and multiculturalism are relatively new to the French dialogue and can be extremely controversial. The U.S. notion of compound identities (for example, African-American or Asian-American) does not exist in the French context.²⁰⁹ Witnessing France's changing demographic, the U.S. Embassy attempts to reach out to French partners and prepare the nation for a new era. Indeed, sharing best practices, as the U.S. Embassy calls it, is "the best thing we can offer," according to the Minister-Counselor for PA.²¹⁰ For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. is well known and praised in many French towns, and learning about the African-American experience is of interest to a number of minority populations. The American Civil Rights movement resonates with diverse populations in France and helps them think about their own integration issues.

Political officers at the Embassy claim that the purpose for all this outreach is to help France's social stability. Both the Political and Economic sections of the Embassy work with the PA section to devise public diplomacy programs relevant to their objectives. PA's main focus, however, remains to create intercultural networks in order to strengthen the American/French alliance. The current emphasis on reaching out to diverse populations originated in 2005 after riots in Paris. From 2007-2010, the Embassy increased grants for initiatives promoting diversity and created a program in 2010 to train young elected officials of different backgrounds. This program, called "How to Mobilize your Base" ("Comment constituer sa base" in French), was highly successful and put the U.S. Embassy in newspaper headlines.

Indicators of Public Diplomacy Success

"How to Mobilize Your Base" took place June 4-5, 2010 in Paris, and I observed this public diplomacy program first-hand. The purpose of the program was to bring young, diverse French political leaders to a two-day seminar in which they learned election strategies from four U.S. political pundits. Notable speakers were Karen Finney, former White House Deputy Press Secretary during the Clinton Administration, and Cornell Belcher, a pollster for the Obama presidential campaign. The French participants had the opportunity to network with other local leaders of diverse origins, take tips from the American experts, and also gain valuable contacts with U.S. Embassy officials. The program serves as a good example of an intercultural collaboration initiative.

For the Cultural Affairs section, the ultimate goal of this program was to help foster intercultural relations and develop an affinity for the United States among these young, up-and-coming leaders. One LES member noted, "These people are looking at the U.S. as a model for freedom, diversity, and democracy."²¹¹ The program consisted of lectures, interactive sessions, and discussions. The 70 or so French participants gained valuable information and developed their own personal networks, but even more important for American/French relations was the extensive, positive media coverage the U.S. Embassy received for hosting this program.

In an article from June 8, 2010, SaphirNews.com quoted a program participant discussing what knowledge he gained: "Here, I have the confirmation of what I felt on the ground. For example, it is better to have face-to-face discussions with constituents rather than sending e-mails or telephone calls: one has approximately thirty times more chances of being elected this way."²¹² By recording this positive experience lived by a French citizen, the article helped ameliorate America's image in France. That same article noted the following: "'In spite of our history, we succeeded in electing a black president. You can do it too,'" Cornell Belcher concludes. In any case, if this scenario is carried out one day, it is not very probable that the lucky elected one will be anti-American."²¹³ This statement speaks volumes about how this program worked. It aimed to build an affinity for the United States and its values in these young leaders in the hopes that they might share their sentiment for America and one day, as leaders of France, pursue policies favorable to U.S. interests. Additionally, one French citizen posted the following about the program on the website's public comment section: "I find that this is admirable!"²¹⁴ The Internet, as discussed earlier in this paper, has limitless abilities for foreigners to share their candid views of the United States, in this case very good ones, with the rest of the world.

In the June 5-6, 2010 weekend edition of *Le Monde*, France's most prestigious daily newspaper, Luc Bronner wrote an article titled, "Washington Conquers the 9-3," praising the U.S. Embassy for its activities in Seine-Saint-Denis and with diverse leaders from

the Paris banlieues, or outskirts. Bronner lauded the U.S. government in his article for its activities in these socially and economically diverse neighborhoods, its knowledge of the inhabitants, and its commitment to working with them: “The American Embassy has built an exceptional network – the most complete, the most relevant, the most up-to-date, in the French suburbs.”²¹⁵ The article elicited a wave of interest in U.S. public diplomacy programs initiated by Embassy Paris, causing other newspapers, TV channels like France 24, radio stations including Radio France International, and French government officials ranging from local mayors to the Prime Minister’s office to seek further information from the United States about these kinds of programs.

In an article in the *Guardian Unlimited* out of the United Kingdom in August 2010, Lizzy Davies cited Embassy Paris’ Press Attaché saying, ““We wish to build relations with French people wherever they may be . . . We are engaged with the France of today and the France of tomorrow.””²¹⁶ Another article in *The Canberra Times* mentioned the following about the U.S. Embassy’s outreach efforts: “The US embassy has, since 2001, built an extraordinary network of contacts among the young, non-violent political and cultural leaders in the Paris suburbs, many of whom contrast the US interest in them with the relative inaction despite many promises of successive French governments since the 2005 riots.”²¹⁷

All the positive French media coverage served as feedback for the program. The U.S. Embassy’s attempt to help young, diverse political leaders resonated well domestically, and the French government instantly began paying more attention to the U.S. Embassy’s initiatives in the banlieues. As Table 2 shows, public opinion shapes what is in the media, which eventually affects choices of policy-makers. This particular example perfectly follows Entman’s model of mediated public diplomacy. Whether or not the U.S. Embassy’s goal was to affect French domestic policies is at the center of the debate between the PA and POL sections. The former would claim the efforts are purely to build relationships while the latter would note the strategic interest in pressuring the French government to embrace its diversity in order to stabilize French society. Either way, this particular young political leaders training program was highly successful, as proven through comments by participants and widespread media coverage. It serves as a paradigm for the relational model of public diplomacy. This example proves that old public diplomacy – government-to-people – can be quite successful if done in the right way.

Case Study II: Diana Saqeb at UT-Knoxville Privatized Public Diplomacy

Introduction

During my tenure as an intern at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, I also participated in a public diplomacy program that brought a group of Afghan journalists to Paris to network with Western media organizations for a week. Rosendorf recommends, “Beyond encouraging the entry of tourists and students regardless of place of origin and scholars and other intellectuals regardless of intellectual stripe, America should welcome and, in some cases, even provide financial incentives for visits and work in the United States by foreign media producers.”²¹⁸ The Embassy Paris did exactly that through bringing the Afghan journalists to Paris.

One of the journalists selected by the U.S. Embassy in Kabul to participate in the program was a woman named Diana Saqeb, a leading women’s rights activist in Kabul. Holding degrees in art and film, Diana is a documentary filmmaker who at age 28 led the first public women’s rights protest in Afghanistan since the 1970s. She has personally met

with Afghan President Hamid Karzai to advocate for women's rights, and she celebrated in 2009 when he promised to amend the Shia Family Law, which had legalized Taliban-era abuses of women. Her first documentary film is called *25 Percent* (*25 Darsad* in Dari), and it shows the daily lives of six female members of the Afghan Parliament, one of whom is her sister Sabrina. Diana screened her film all over Paris in June of 2010, and she quickly became the star among the Afghan journalists. The U.S. Ambassador to France was highly impressed by her poise, intelligence, and fearlessness. She clearly demonstrated her passions for freedom, equality, and justice during her time in Paris, and she is the exact kind of person the United States seeks to support.

At the end of Diana's week-long program in Paris, I asked her if she would be interested in coming to the University of Tennessee (UT) to show her illuminating film and share her message with the Knoxville community. My eyes were opened to the real situation for women in Afghanistan today through her film, and I was so moved by it that I wanted to help her spread the word about the fight for women's rights in her country. I also felt that the Knoxville community could benefit from learning a new worldview. She enthusiastically agreed to come, so when I returned to UT in the fall, I asked the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy (Baker Center) if we could possibly host an Afghan citizen for a week to meet Americans, spread Diana's message about women's rights, and give a first-hand perspective of the current situation in Afghanistan. Thanks to tireless efforts by the Baker Center's student engagement coordinator, the event did indeed happen, in April 2011.

This type of diplomacy might be referred to as, *people-to-people*, or *new public diplomacy*, in which private citizens develop relationships with others across the globe. Since I initiated this project in the private sector, the U.S. government did not encourage me to bring Diana to my university, nor did it fund the program. Instead, I sought financial resources from various nongovernmental organizations interested in women's rights and international affairs in Knoxville as well as from academic groups on campus. Financial support came from the Alliance of Women's Philanthropists, Ready for the World at UT, the UT Issues Committee, the International House, and the Chancellor's Honors Program. The reason for these groups' involvement was purely to promote mutual understanding between cultures and to raise awareness about women's rights in Afghanistan. There was no strategic agenda behind their support.

The program we created, called "Women in Politics: An Examination of Oppression in Afghanistan," took place Monday, April 11-Friday April, 15. Events of the week included a reception with international students, visits to English, religious studies, film, law, and journalism classes in which Diana spoke, lunches and dinners with students and faculty, film showings, diversity discussions, and even a softball game. The following student groups participated in hosting Diana and publicizing the events: Baker Scholars, UT Amnesty International, the UT Religious Studies Association, Honors Ambassador Program, Tyson House Episcopal-Lutheran Campus Ministry, and the Muslim Student Association among others. So many student groups wanted to participate in the events of the week in order to support Diana and get to know her. The main event of the week was a film showing of *25 Percent* the evening of Tuesday, April 12 at the Baker Center. The event was free and open to the public, and the room was completely full with over 125 people in attendance. Additionally, the Baker Center webcasted the film showing and discussion with Diana, so the amount of viewers could have been substantially greater than those physically present.²¹⁹

Over the course of Diana's week in Knoxville, she attended another documentary showing dealing with human rights in Africa, and she connected with the filmmaker. She is actually in the process of coordinating Kabul's first ever Human Rights Film Festival for the fall of 2011, so she made valuable connections in Knoxville. Also, she met with professors in UT's College of Communication and Information to discuss potentially pursuing a Ph.D. in the future in the United States. Additionally, we took her to a Lady Volunteers college softball game, where she threw the honorary first pitch. The UT Women's Athletic Director personally escorted Diana onto the field, bought her a hot dog, and shared a sky-box with her. All the fathers who attended the game to support their daughters impressed Diana. She noted that no organized sports for girls exist in Afghanistan.

In total, Diana reached over 350 students and faculty during her visit to Knoxville. UT students gained new perspectives about life in Afghanistan, and many also made a new friend, vowing to continue communication with her online through e-mail and social media sites like Facebook. Indeed, "The Internet and other new communication technologies also offer unprecedented opportunities for promoting cross-national collaborations as well as dialogue and monologic communications."²²⁰ In an online student-run news site, *Tennessee Journalist*,

Kristen Thornton described Saqeb's film and discussion:

She interviews each woman about their arranged marriages, and how their marriages were not a mutual agreement. They also speak about their family member's disagreement in their running for Parliament. Their own fathers and brothers told other citizens not to vote for them. They don't get to spend enough time with their children because of their job in parliament, and many of them are now widows. Their efforts are a symbol for democracy. They want to change Afghanistan for the better. As of now, there are 60,000 orphaned children in Kabul alone . . . Saqeb says in her film, "A child has the right to live a free life, the right to shape their own life, and shouldn't be intimidated . . . Women are harassed by Taliban and family members, and many women have been killed during elections. There is no special protection for women," she said. *25 Percent* allows outsiders to see Afghanistan from a first-hand perspective. The tireless, courageous work that these women are doing is extremely difficult. They are risking their lives in order to see change in their country that has already seen so much death, hate, sexism and racism. Students, faculty and community members were able to speak with Saqeb after the screening. She said she hopes her work will continue to inspire action in those who can help her cause.²²¹

Thornton's description of the film screening was exact, and her article even seems to advocate for the courageous women in Afghanistan. By including Diana's wish that she hopes her work will inspire action in others, readers instantly can feel as if they have the ability to collaborate with Saqeb. This kind of project – working for a common goal of human rights – is precisely what helps people of various cultures and nationalities build deep, long-lasting relationships.

In addition, we did our best to expose Diana to many aspects of American culture, and part of that included taking her to a Wal-Mart store as well as a shopping mall in Knoxville. She had truly never before seen anything like Wal-Mart, and she thoroughly enjoyed observing Americans in their daily lives. When the week came to an end, Diana mentioned that her favorite thing about the trip was by far the people. She continually stated how impressed she was with the friendliness of everyone who hosted her. She noted that

her first trip to the United States was a “very special one.”²²² Saqeb’s experience in America was a positive one, and this visit accomplished every public diplomacy goal it could have – increasing mutual understanding, building intercultural networks, working together toward a common goal, and developing an affinity for another culture among others.

Implications for Broader Private Goals

Afghanistan was the hot topic in current affairs in April 2011. From Western media sources, Americans only heard about troops on the ground in Afghanistan, the Taliban, terrorist groups, and corruption in the government. People knew about the opium trade and Afghanistan’s unstable economy, but very few people had the insight into the country that I had through my week-long encounter with Diana and other Afghan citizens. Most Americans did not understand the extent of oppression women faced in the war-torn country, and I wanted to give UT students the opportunity to learn the truth. Diana offered a unique, real view of the current state of life for the normal people in her country. Her film showed an Afghanistan unrefracted through the lens of Western culture. I wanted students in Knoxville to have the opportunity to uncover the real story of the country where so much of our tax dollars, media attention, and political rhetoric have been spent in recent years. In an interview with the Editor in Chief of UT’s student-run newspaper, *The Daily Beacon*, Saqeb stated, “It is important for me to show my films, because people generally associate war and terrorism with Afghanistan, but I try to show other parts of Afghan life to the people of the world.”²²³ She and I had the exact same goals for her visit – to increase mutual understanding between our vastly different cultures.

Diana made an interesting remark when I picked her up from the Knoxville airport Knoxville on April 11, 2011. I expressed my excitement for her being in the United States, and she replied, “There are so many Americans in Afghanistan right now. I want to learn more about where they come from so I can better understand them at home.”²²⁴ Such a simple statement spoke volumes. She wanted to gain a greater understanding of Americans who were so active in our country. At UT, we hoped to help increase her understanding of Americans and foster relationships with Tennessee residents.

The program we created centered on collaboration for a common cause – promoting women’s and other human rights. By having a central, universal cause, students, faculty, and others in the Knoxville community easily connected with Saqeb and grew in knowledge, understanding, tolerance, and empathy. Rather than winning hearts and minds, the focus in this case was on creating and sustaining bridges among hearts and minds.²²⁵ With the events surrounding Diana Saqeb’s visit, the University of Tennessee community did exactly that.

Indicators of Public Diplomacy Success

As with the first case study at U.S. Embassy Paris, the greatest measure of success for this program was positive media coverage. Four articles ran in *The Daily Beacon* and *Tennessee Journalist* that week praising Diana and the discussions she had with the UT community. Additionally, positive comments about the events flooded the Facebook pages created for her visit. In one article in *The Daily Beacon*, Brittney Dougherty wrote, “Saqeb and her associates definitely have a positive view of America. The Baker Center created a Facebook event for the movie showing, and many people from Afghanistan have put encouraging comments on the page.”²²⁶ It is amazing that people in Afghanistan connected with the University of Tennessee community through an online social networking site. This model of privatized public diplomacy illustrates exactly how people-to-people diplomacy works in light of new communications technologies.

Furthermore, a local television station, Volunteer TV (WVLT Channel 8), conducted a minute-long interview with Saqeb that aired on the evening news. Saqeb's message truly spread throughout the Knoxville community. Blair Kuykendall, Editor in Chief of *The Daily Beacon*, wrote the following in attempts to help UT students better understand Diana:

Saqeb is eager to expose different parts of the world to her work. "When I met Anne in Paris, she suggested that I screen my film here," Saqeb said . . . Given the developments in the last several years between the U.S. and Afghanistan, Saqeb's experiences are highly relevant to discussions of U.S. foreign policy . . . Saqeb said she hopes that her work will introduce a different perspective on Afghanistan and its people. "We can't change everything overnight, but we are working to bring about change through art, films and paintings," Saqeb said.²²⁷

This and other articles further enlightened the UT community about the plight of women in Afghanistan and the current situation in the country. In an article on *Tennessee Journalist*, Sean Franklin stated,

In the United States, Americans live in a society where women are treated equally and are not required to fight for their rights each day. Diana Saqeb comes from a place where those rights for women are not as easily spoken for . . . A different world indeed for Saqeb and her fellow Afghan women – one that requires a fight for rights that Saqeb hopes will gain acknowledgement an support throughout the world through her films.²²⁸

Finally, the most direct feedback received for the success of Diana's visit on her impression of Americans came from an e-mail she sent to the student engagement coordinator and me a week after she returned to Kabul. Here is an excerpt from that message:

It was such a pleasure to meet you at UT, spend time with you, and it was great experience for me. I opened your postcard when I was in the airplane from Atlanta to Dubai and when I read the letters I was crying. I missed everything there specially your kindness to me . . . hope we'll be in touch and let me know if I could do anything for you, I seriously [am] thinking about some Afghan women Handicrafts Exhibition at UT (Knoxville) if you are interested because this will be one of the best ways to support Afghan women. Please send my regards to everyone we met at UT."²²⁹

Her genuine words could not better express the affinity she gained for the people of Tennessee during her week-long visit to Knoxville. These kinds of interpersonal interactions are exactly what help to build international networks among differing cultures, and they are, in my opinion, the best way to prevent violent conflict. It is a basic idea, but the more people like each other, or at least can tolerate one another, the less likely they are to fight with one another. Also, as she mentioned in the e-mail, she hopes to send crafts made by Afghan women to UT for a potential exhibition the UT Religious Studies Association discussed hosting some time in the future. This collaborative work shows public diplomacy at its best.

I am certain that Diana's view of the United States is nothing but positive after her experience in the country, and I also believe that hundreds of young Tennesseans now have a more informed understanding of Afghanistan and a truer idea of Afghan people. The goals I envisioned for Diana's visit were not only attained, but the outcomes exceeded my expectations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In both case studies, all six characteristics of public diplomacy Zaharna illustrates as part of the relational framework are present. Both the young political leaders event at the U.S. Embassy in Paris and the Diana Saqeb visit to the University of Tennessee emphasize relationship-building as the primary goal. Second, they identify mutual interests between the sponsor and its publics. Third, the programs depend on building relationships over any other goal of disseminating a particular policy or message. Fourth, both case studies show examples of coordination between parties rather than control of one over the other. Fifth, participation in the events proved to be much more important than actual presentation. And finally, these programs endeavored to create and sustain networks built.

These six features construct a basic model of relational public diplomacy that both the public and private sector can use to build cross-cultural relationships and ultimately reduce conflict between nations and societies. Public diplomacy programs need not be confined to these elements, however, which is what makes devising a simple, universal model problematic. New, creative ideas for building international relationships can and should be pursued.

Additionally, evaluating public diplomacy can be difficult. There is no good measure of public diplomacy's success. It is easy to record the number of people involved in a program. Approximately 70 French citizens participated in the U.S. Embassy's political training seminar. Over the course of the week of Diana Saqeb's visit, around 350 people appeared at events. Simple numbers, though, do not at all assess the strength of interpersonal relations built. Rather than look for quantitative measurements of success, it is best to observe the general attitudes of publics over time. Nye comments, "The effectiveness of public diplomacy is measured by minds changed."²³⁰ In both case studies described above, the indigenous media clearly expressed positive sentiments about the programs. Qualitative measurements most likely serve as the best feedback for the effectiveness of public diplomacy initiatives. These measurements can be attained through surveys, polls, or interpersonal communications.

A further quantitative study could involve several embassies in various locations over a set period of time, recording the number of public diplomacy programs, populations reached, and funds spent. Instead of trying to measure minds changed through surveys or polls, this study would record the number of violent conflicts of the populations participating in the public diplomacy programs. I hypothesize that as the number of public diplomacy programs increase in a certain area and for a specific population, the number of violent conflicts initiated by that population will decrease over time.

Furthermore, more funding is not necessarily what U.S. public diplomacy needs, though it would not hurt. Instead, it needs new direction. It also needs more staff. Secretary Clinton is hopeful of diplomacy's future: "Congress has already appropriated funds for 1,108 new Foreign Service and Civil Service officers to strengthen the State Department's capacity to pursue American interests and advance American values."²³¹ Perhaps the U.S. government does not need more staff in the traditional sense though, just as public diplomacy is not diplomacy in its traditional sense. Maybe America needs more citizens to do its work for the country. Perhaps private individuals and organizations with passions for peace could become the staff the U.S. government seeks but cannot fund. It is going to take individuals – passionate young political leaders, brave Afghan journalists, curious students at the University of Tennessee – to ensure peace and prosperity in the world today and in the future. This people-to-people approach is the new model of diplomacy. And, I believe it will work to reduce violent conflict in the world and increase mutual respect and tolerance.

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