



**The Present And Future Of Public  
Diplomacy: A European Perspective.  
The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public  
Diplomacy**

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## **The Present And Future Of Public Diplomacy: A European Perspective. The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy**

*Javier Noya \**

**Summary:** The first Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy was held on 10 October 2006 at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation's Diplomatic School. Organised by the Elcano Royal Institute, it aimed to open a debate on the current state of –and prospects for– public diplomacy. Both experts and politicians from the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Germany, the EU and Spain made their contribution through documents compiled in this working paper.

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## **Introduction**

The first Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy was held on 10 October 2006 at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation's Diplomatic School. It was organised by the Elcano Royal Institute for International and Strategic Studies –the leading Spanish think-tank for foreign policy issues– and was opened by the Spanish Minister of Culture, Carmen Calvo.

Elcano's aim was to open a debate on the current state of –and prospects for– public diplomacy. Both experts and politicians from the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Germany, the EU and Spain contributed to the success of the meeting and open dialogue, with subsequent editions expected to be held every year in Madrid.

The Elcano Royal Institute would like to thank the Embassies of Germany, the UK and the US in Madrid, the European Commission and the Diplomatic School for their kind support.

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## 1. Opening Remarks

*Carmen Calvo*  
*Spanish Minister of Culture*

Some years ago, the issue of 'country image' began to take centre-stage in diplomatic and many other circles, among other reasons because we are in an increasingly interconnected world and also, in a way, one that is increasingly homogeneous and globalised, where every country needs to identify itself and offer its own unique and differentiating aspects. A country's international image is now managed in a very different way than before.

In this regard, when considering Spain's 'country image' the discourse tends to range between two quite opposite poles. One is based on the recognition of our inferiority in relation to the leading nations of our time which, inevitably, are ahead of us in this issue as well as in some others. The other position focuses on praising the work carried out since the introduction of democracy in Spain to afford the country a modern and creative image in the rest of the world, but also one replete with tradition and cultural diversity.

Your aim here at this conference is to ascertain whether we are better- or worse-placed now, and to propose new remedies, strategies and tactics. But as Minister of Culture, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the pivotal role of culture in this issue of our image abroad and on the global political stage, where the dual process of cultural homogenisation and diversification is at the centre of all the major conflicts.

Culture is at the core of all identities, but at the same time planetary culture, the aggregate of all the cultures brought together on Earth, is the indispensable cultural heritage for a global culture of peace and respect among peoples. It therefore seems evident that culture is a vital instrument on the international stage.

The approval last year in Paris by the UNESCO Assembly of the 'Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions', with only the United States and Israel voting against, is a landmark achievement which must make us think.

As set forth in the Alliance of Civilisations initiative, unveiled by the Secretary General of the United Nations at the proposal of the Prime Minister of Spain, one risk inherent to today's global world is the lack of understanding between different cultures. The way to offset this is to promote dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect between cultures, as an efficient means towards progress and peace among peoples.

But to understand the increasingly important role of culture one must also consider that culture has become an increasingly important factor for the economy and for future development. Fifty years ago, culture was linked to diplomacy as a purely decorative element. Today, culture is a major part of developed economies and the higher their level of development the more important culture is.

In countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain, cultural tourism, which does not count as culture for economic purposes, is a growing force and 'country image' is largely generated via culture.

Modern-day Spain may be considered to be more or less radical in terms of its advanced legislation concerning social issues, but the international public gets to know it, to appreciate it and to become truly familiar with it via, to give you a significant example, cultural creations such as Almodóvar's films.

Spain is well-known in Germany, in certain spheres, as a country with a capacity for reflection and analysis of contemporary life. The success of philosopher and thinker Javier Marías abroad is probably largely responsible for this recognition.

And we could list many more examples of cultural ground-breakers, or phenomena such as our publishing industry, which is the world's fourth-largest.

All of this leads us to the question of language, the Spanish language, and the capacity of penetration of the *Instituto Cervantes* and its excellent work for Spain's image. The *Instituto Cervantes* is a priority issue for this government and, in particular, for Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero, who opened a new institute in Madrid's calle Alcalá, with a 2007 budget that is set to grow by 26%, and which any ambassador for Spain would want for the city where he or she is stationed.

This is because these 'cultural embassies' have shown since 1992 a formidable ability to impregnate the cultural scene of the cities and countries where they work with the language which four hundred million people speak, effectively constituting a cultural block that is comparable to few others in the world.

But in Spain we know just how important culture is in a country's image and in strengthening its identity, because of the huge efforts in the last thirty years to promote Spain's three co-official languages; restoring these languages and bringing their value to the fore has not generated impoverishment and confusion, as many predicted, and indeed some continue to predict.

Galicia, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands are stronger today, and Spain is stronger too with all its languages well cared-for and suitably studied by young people, and valued as a priceless heritage.

Spain's image still has plenty of scope for improvement and part of this work will be up to Spanish culture, which must make further headway in its process of internationalisation and in its own quality controls, so as to offer the world well-founded reason and emotions. But we must remain resolute in this endeavour.

Spain has rebuilt itself and its relationship with Latin America and Europe in the last twenty years. And it now faces challenges in the southern Mediterranean, particularly in Morocco and Algeria, which we must rise to.

In the last few years we have implemented the Asia Plan and this year we have launched the Africa Plan.

In Asia, we have plans to travel to China next year, and it is also worth recalling that this year we have an exhibition from the Prado Museum in Japan for six months, paid for entirely by the Japanese, and that next year South Korea will be the guest country at the art exhibition Arco, where President Roh is scheduled to attend the opening ceremony, linking up with his State visit. Our relationship with Asia is making steady progress.

Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, is the new frontier and culture will be present there too. Spain is a cultural power in the world and the construction of its cultural image must play a decisive role.

## **PART I: THE ANALYST'S VISION**

### **2. The Future of Public Diplomacy**

*Philip Fiske de Gouveia*  
*Foreign Policy Centre*

It may seem eccentric to speculate about the future of Public Diplomacy at a time when analysts and policymakers are still progressing towards an understanding of its present, but like all policy fields, Public Diplomacy is evolving fast. Developing political climates and technological environments, for example, mean that the real and virtual landscapes in which public diplomacy practitioners operate, and the tools available to them, are changing. This short paper aims to identify some of the different changes policymakers can expect in the next decade or so –and by way of doing so makes eight explicit predictions about the nature of those changes–.

Although much communications and public diplomacy work being done today relates to the so-called 'Global War on Terrorism' or 'Long War', it is worth reminding ourselves that there is at least as much if not more public diplomacy work being done globally which is unrelated to the 'War'. Indeed in some ways this is the more important work because it seeks to head-off problems before they flare up. Had the US spent the 1990s trying to engage honestly and constructively with the Islamic World would there still have been a 9/11? Almost certainly - but the environment in which the US would now be seeking to prosecute the 'War on Terrorism' would probably have been more sympathetic. Good public diplomacy is done before its needed not afterwards. At the same time, it is important to remember that public diplomacy is not simply about managing conflict. Public diplomacy, in the broadest sense, has a key role to play meeting some of the grand geo-political challenges of our day: the rise of China, a resurgent Latin America, climate change, the threat of global disease pandemics, international migration, among many others.

The term 'Public Diplomacy', refers, in its simplest form, to the many and varied activities conducted by governments to engage and communicate with foreign publics. The purpose of this, ideally two-way, engagement is generally to influence attitudes towards that government's country so as to encourage tourism and inward investment, and to facilitate, for example, closer political ties or alliances. In the case of the UK government, which applies the term broadly, public diplomacy is understood to include crisis and news management, ministerial visits abroad, Foreign Office information services, travelling cultural and arts exhibitions, British Council language teaching, BBC World Service broadcasts and so on. The UK's public diplomacy is conducted by an enormous range of agencies and individuals from UK Embassy press and public affairs officers to British Council English language teachers, from BBC World Service news presenters to the Foreign Office's I-UK web designers. Public diplomacy is also conducted indirectly by NGOs and development agencies including the UK's Department for International Development, by British businesses operating abroad, and increasingly by UK-diasporic networks. UK public diplomacy strategy is still evolving. The UK Foreign Office has a public diplomacy staff of 70, a streamlined Public Diplomacy Strategy Board, and a new Partners advisory group. UK public diplomacy strategy is now explicitly linked to achieving the government's international strategic priorities including tackling climate change and defeating global terrorism. The BBC World Service, a senior stakeholder in UK public diplomacy, has announced the creation of a new Arabic-language television channel and the UK government is already planning ahead for the London Olympics in 2012, itself an important public diplomacy opportunity. The UK takes these issues seriously although, as everywhere, resource limitations mean the government cannot do everything it, or its staff, would like to do.

Policymakers are, of course, acutely aware of the significance of international communications in the current global geo-political climate and aware, for example, of the fact that as part of the so-called 'War on Terrorism' both sides have sought to employ and manipulate the 'global information environment'. In many ways 9/11 itself was an attack whose chief strategic impact was as a shock to the American collective psyche - a shock, in fact, delivered by and through the American media. The architects of the attack were sensitive to the value of such 'propaganda of the deed'. Since 2001, the US government, for its part, has sought to use strategic communications, and public diplomacy, to influence global 'hearts and minds' –witness the creation of Radio Sawa and Radio Farda among many, many other initiatives–.

In this context Public Diplomacy has enjoyed something of a renaissance. The assumption that public diplomacy was a relic of the Cold War era –an assumption best demonstrated by the late-1990s folding of the United States Information Agency into the State Department– now looks naïve. The US State Department is still the senior stakeholder in US public diplomacy policy but in Karen Hughes it now has a specific Under-Secretary for Public Diplomacy –and all US State Department regional departments have a dedicated Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy–. Other governments are thinking along similar lines. Despite the fact that available literature and journalism sometimes give the impression that the US, and several of the major EU states including the UK, are the only countries engaged in public diplomacy initiatives, almost everyone is. For example, countries like Botswana, Bahrain and Uganda have so-called 'nation-branding' initiatives, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a Public Diplomacy department, Turkey has been looking to raise US\$25 million from Turkish businesses to support a charm offensive in Europe in advance of EU Accession, and China is establishing dozens of Cultural relations Institutes in major cities all over the world. In a way, those of us working in this field are witnessing what we might call the globalisation of Public Diplomacy. Today, it seems everyone wants to develop and exercise their 'soft power'. This is a trend that can only intensify. In a globalised world, international communications, and their impact on attitudes and behaviour, have profound economic and political implications. States realise this and are acting accordingly. Policymakers are going to see countries, including those in the Developing World, as well as supra-national organisations like the European Union, taking strategic communications and public diplomacy more and more seriously. That is this paper's first prediction about the future of public diplomacy.

The problem is this: if states ramp up their public diplomacy efforts in order to try and capture a share of foreign publics' goodwill, they will increasingly compete for what is essentially a finite resource. People cannot go on holiday everywhere, they cannot invest everywhere and they are not inclined to see all other countries as equally benign and friendly. Practitioners in the Information Operations world are well-acquainted with the notion of aggressively targeting the morale or attitudes of a foreign country or soldiers but public diplomacy practitioners still tend to design their strategies in isolation from those of others; public diplomacy is still generally about showing the world what you have to offer, and ignoring everyone else. This is partly because of the perceived benign and altruistic nature of cultural relations, which is still a key component of most nations' public diplomacy but it may well change. If countries are increasingly competing for tourism, trade and goodwill it seems likely they begin to engage in what we might call negative or aggressive public diplomacy. We see this in the political arena, for example, in rather conventional US efforts to discredit the Ahmadinejad regime in Tehran –and aggressive rhetoric or spin has long been a feature of traditional diplomacy and the preamble to war–. But how long before we see countries seeking to discredit each others' attempts to win trade and investment? Aggressive, more competitive public diplomacy is certainly not something to celebrate but it may well be something those working in this field have to learn to live with. That is this paper's second prediction.

At the same time as states increasingly compete in the public diplomacy and strategic communications arena, they will also increasingly co-operate. In an organisation like NATO the notion of countries working together for mutual benefit is, of course, widely accepted but the concept of national co-operation in conventional public diplomacy is still a novel one. The European Union, for example, has the makings of a co-operative public diplomacy superpower; the combined 'soft power' might of the 25 member states and the Commission is formidable. The EU also has the important advantage of being perceived as a largely benign, if indistinct, force in the world. No degree of public diplomacy skill or effort can compensate for actions which antagonise third-country publics as the US government is learning to its cost. When it comes to the perceptions of people around the world, actions speak louder than words. To date the EU's actions –the pursuit of multilateralism, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the championing of the rule of law and human rights in its neighbourhood– have been of great benefit to its reputation globally. At the same time the EU is already, in some cases inadvertently, conducting public diplomacy through initiatives like the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Intercultural Dialogue programme, and, of course, the work done by the representations and delegations. This kind of 'co-operative public diplomacy' –co-ordinated and conducted by the likes of the European Union, the African Union, or ASEAN– will grow because it will work and it will save money. It is true that rather like having their own armies states will always want to maintain a public diplomacy capability, but in those parts of the world where national interests overlap there is no reason why state public diplomacy organisations should not work more closely together. Historically, there have been practical obstacles to closer co-operation between national public diplomacy agencies –but those obstacles are beginning to disappear–. It does not make sense for the BBC, Deutsche-Welle, Radio France International and Radio Netherlands all to broadcast to Burma or North Korea, when often their motives for doing so are the same. That is this paper's third prediction.

Another key issue is that of the evolving global media landscape. Much has been made of the political impact of al-Jazeera, and much has been unfairly said, for example, about the Arabic satellite Channel's role as a mouthpiece for terrorism. The fact is that al-Jazeera is emblematic of a hugely important phenomenon: the rise of developing world media. Communications and media are no longer dominated by the West in the way they were 10 or 15 years ago –and that is not just the case in the Arab world–. Last year the Foreign Policy Centre published a report arguing in favour of the establishment of a pan-African TV channel, 'an African al-Jazeera', as a further step towards democratisation and economic development on the continent. There is also talk of embryonic initiatives to establish regional African TV channels in English and French, an independent Swahili-language service, a Somali service, and a North African service. In the late 1970s and early 1980s sociologists talked about the coming of a New World Information Order in which the Rich North would no longer dominate the poor South in media and communications terms: the end of so-called Cultural and Media Imperialism. It is happening today. We are seeing, for example, entrepreneurs all round the world launching functioning, good-quality, local television channels on shoestring budgets. Cities in the developing world can afford to have their own dedicated TV news channel. This trend is going to continue to influence and reshape the landscape in which Public Diplomacy is conducted. That is this paper's fourth prediction.

This paper has already acknowledged that diasporic networks have an important role to play in conducting public diplomacy. In the case of the UK this is best demonstrated by the regular delegations of UK-Muslims touring the Islamic world –lecturing, debating, engaging with the media– with the purpose of educating people about the diversity of UK society, and particularly, for example, the freedom to worship. Just as governments are starting to leverage their diasporic communities in the service of national public diplomacy strategies, so they are increasingly having to conduct public diplomacy at home. Foreign



policy is no longer something which needs only to be conducted abroad, often the abroad itself is at home. This is something that both the UK and Dutch governments have adjusted to in the last few years as a consequence of the July 2005 bombings in London, and the murder of Pym Fortuyn and Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam. Following the London bombings, specialised working groups on Preventing Extremism were assembled to respond to the new internal threat. Their work certainly hasn't been perfect or free of controversy but it is emblematic of an inevitable trend in public diplomacy. The UK Foreign Office is now looking, for example, at specific means of engaging better with marginalised UK-based African communities –and it makes absolute sense to do so–. The Foreign Policy Centre recently prepared a series of reports in which we argued that the Foreign Office should organise community liaison committees, establish Somali and Amharic language information websites, create community higher-education scholarships, make BBC language services available on FM broadcasts in the UK, and so on. In a globalised world where more and more of us are migrating to live in each other's countries, it makes sense for foreign ministries to seek to engage not just with foreign publics abroad but foreign publics at home. It is a complicated task –hindered in the UK's case by migrants' often unpleasant experiences at the hands of the immigration process– but still a task governments must tackle. There are political and legal complications here – specifically the Smith-Mundt Act in the USA which prevents the US government engaging in propaganda activities on domestic soil– but effective and appropriate public diplomacy at home, particularly in the context of very real internal threats, is something policymakers must take seriously. That is this paper's fifth prediction.

It has already been noted that countries quite new to public diplomacy are vigorously grasping the nettle –and developing strategies and initiatives of their own–. China particularly is throwing a lot of resources at public diplomacy not just through its still rather poor international broadcasting services or its new network of Confucius Institutes but through its willingness to do business in places like Sub-Saharan Africa where others are not. In this context, one wonders whether China may one day achieve the global cultural appeal previously enjoyed by the United States; the 2008 Beijing Olympics look to be an opportunity for China to forge a new image for itself in the world's eyes. Other smaller, developing countries are also creating their own public diplomacy capabilities. The interesting thing is that while for established public diplomacy actors like the US, the UK and France, mainstream public diplomacy remains a largely public-sector activity run by government-funded agencies like the British Council, many smaller countries have begun employing international public relations companies and branding consultants to design and do their public diplomacy for them. Public affairs companies have understandably identified states' new taste for public diplomacy as a significant commercial opportunity and have moved in hard and fast. The consequence, in part, has been the stealthy privatisation of some elements of public diplomacy. This trend looks set to continue, to the extent that even established players like the UK and US are increasingly turning to the private sector for help. Witness the US Government's continuing enthusiasm for consultants like the Rendon Group and Lincoln Group. For better or worse, public diplomacy is becoming big business –and it is going to continue–. That is this paper's sixth prediction.

Another key issue is that of public diplomacy measurement and evaluation. To date even sophisticated public diplomacy actors like the UK have relied on rather crude methods to keep track of what they are doing and how they are doing it. Strategies have tended to involve occasional surveys and focus groups which by their very nature are inadequate. Debates persist over the value of monitoring attitudinal change versus behavioural change. The fact is that effective public diplomacy monitoring and measurement indeed remains something of a 'holy grail'. The Foreign Policy Centre's view is that new technologies offer exciting opportunities in this field –particularly the mining of open-source Internet material for opinion–. If one accepts that the Internet represents a

constantly updated reservoir of the Zeitgeist –the changing opinions of hundreds of millions of people expressed on weblogs, message boards and chatrooms– then if only analysts could access that opinion efficiently they ought to be able to keep track of national reputation, among other things, on a daily not yearly basis. As it happens, with the right software application and research support it is possible to do exactly that. New technology gives strategic communications and public diplomacy practitioners the ability to monitor attitudes in a particular country in a particular language towards a specific public diplomacy or communications initiative. This is an inevitable trend. Technology has shaped this entire field –and the development of technology will inevitably continue to shape its evolution–. That is this paper's seventh prediction.

This paper earlier warned against Western public diplomacy and communications practitioners getting 'tunnel vision' about the conflict with Islamic extremism. China is obviously a key target for constructive Western public diplomacy and the West a key target for increasing Chinese public diplomacy efforts. But there is also huge potential to expand the use of communications to better manage some of the great non-political challenges that governments are now facing together. One fascinating example is migration. The increasing movement of people for political or economic motives is one of the great phenomena of our time. The UNHCR recently commissioned a survey of the North-African media environment in preparation for a possible trans-national communications campaign which will educate potential migrants about what they can expect in any European destination country. This paper does not advocate the use of communications to deter or scare migrants –but it is in everyone's interests for Moroccans risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea in flimsy boats to know why they're doing it–. How might the same thinking be applied to climate change and global warming? To the threat of bird flu? Public diplomacy and strategic communications have an important and, as yet, unexplored future as tools for facing some of the non-political challenges we all face. That is this paper's eighth and final prediction.

And so to recap: we can expect a near-future in which more and more countries are doing public diplomacy, where public diplomacy is increasingly aggressive and competitive, and where, at the same time, it is often more co-operative. We shall see an increasingly complex and frantic global media landscape no longer dominated by the West, where public diplomacy is conducted at home as well as abroad, where public diplomacy is often managed on behalf of governments by private corporations and consultants, where technology is increasingly influential in the conduct and, particularly measurement and evaluation, of public diplomacy, and where strategic communications are used co-operatively to manage the global challenges of our time. Adapting to this evolving public diplomacy landscape is not going to be easy for policymakers but it is a landscape they must learn to appreciate and understand, particularly if governments are to successfully manage the shifting geo-political challenges of our time.

### 3. Public Diplomacy Between Theory and Practice

Jan Melissen

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Public diplomacy is beyond any doubt one of the hottest topics under discussion in the world's diplomatic services. Ministries of foreign affairs (MFA's) in all corners of the world pay more and more attention to their countries' reputation overseas, from Chile to Japan and from Canada to Indonesia. The discourse about 'PD' extends much beyond the world of diplomacy: not only diplomats but also academics, university students in international relations and even those who are targeted by the public diplomacy of states take an interest in this subject matter. That is excellent news. Most people do not care very much about diplomatic practice in general, but many seem to be intrigued by this 'new' phenomenon: public diplomacy.

Speaking in Spain about public diplomacy is a little daunting. As one leading expert on nation branding put it: 'Spain is among the best examples of modern, successful nation branding, because it keeps building on what truly exists'. This observation is indeed the first lesson of both nation branding and public diplomacy. The positive effects of a country's external reputation management will only last if they are based on reality, and overseas perceptions are not easily managed. Not only are foreign publics pretty elusive target groups for public diplomats, they are also the first to benefit from the democratisation of information. Ordinary people have access to multiple sources of information, they can see for themselves and influencing their views has become much more difficult after the latest revolution in communications technology.

Compared to many other countries Spain can also convene an international conference like this one with a great deal of confidence. Spain has a lot less to worry about foreign perceptions than a whole lot of other countries in Europe and beyond. Many countries in Central and Eastern Europe are for instance facing more adverse reports in the international press than they can handle, the United States appears to be hitting an all-time low in foreign polls, and my home country is nowadays not just associated with openness and innovation, but also with Euro-scepticism and intolerance towards Dutch nationals of foreign descent. In comparison, Spain's public diplomacy has really minor headaches to deal with. This perhaps helps explaining why Spain's public diplomacy has mainly focused on the country's main cultural and other assets, rather than focusing on societal debates and issues that may be misunderstood or misinterpreted abroad. In any case, the present state of affairs is for Spain an excellent starting point for a public diplomacy strategy. Spain has a strong brand, delivered by the people of Spain. Nevertheless, there are of course challenges. Why, after all, would we be here at this conference to discuss recent developments in public diplomacy as well as 'PD' in the specific context of Spain's external relations?

One challenge for Spain, in fact for all countries in the current global conversation about public diplomacy, is to go beyond paying lip-service to *diplomacia pública* and develop a coherent public diplomacy strategy with other stakeholders in government and society. It involves truly integrating public diplomacy into the practice of diplomacy. It means making Spanish embassies realise that the dialogue with non-official groups and individuals, in the countries where they are based, is an important task and in some cases perhaps even their principal task.

Of special significance for countries that have a federal structure, like Spain, is the point that a nation's public diplomacy is two-faced: facing inwards and outwards at the same time. In other words, public diplomacy serves as a window into a society and as a window out. The sense of national identity of citizens, and also how they feel about their country,

helps projecting a country's identity abroad. Canadian scholar Evan Potter observes that public diplomacy is not just a foreign policy challenge, but also a national challenge. This observation not only applies to Canada, but also to Spain. Co-existing national and regional identities may complicate Spain's public diplomacy efforts, but they are not necessarily a handicap in the communication with non-official audiences overseas. Spain and some of the autonomous regions on the peninsula draw very different connotations at home, but interestingly, overseas they are often perceived as different parts of the same package. Take for example the fact that Catalan literature has been chosen as next year's theme at the Frankfurter Buchmesse. At home this is likely to be pumped up as an achievement of cultural autonomy and identity, with possibly even an implicit political message, but abroad Catalonia at the Buchmesse will no doubt be seen as evidence of the cultural variety and richness of the whole of Spain.

So what is public diplomacy? The shorthand definition that immediately conveys the essence of public diplomacy is that it involves 'getting other people on your side' –public diplomacy is ultimately about influencing other people's opinions and attitudes–. The 'people on the other side' are characteristically multipliers of opinion and future opinion leaders or high potentials, but also ordinary people who have direct access to all sorts of information. Rather more formally, as a recent British report does, one could define public diplomacy as work which aims at influencing in a positive way the perceptions of individuals and organisations abroad about one's own country and their engagement with one's country. Public diplomacy can then be seen as the instrumentalisation of soft power, ie, the power of one's attraction and reputation overseas. The importance of this dimension of power can hardly be overstated today, but was recognised by statesmen for many centuries. Cardinal Richelieu already observed that the reputation of a country is one of the most important sources of its power.

The current debate about public diplomacy has become a global conversation, although rather dominated by the American experience and post-2001 US preoccupations with the war on terror. It may therefore serve as a useful reminder for those who are new to the field of public diplomacy that it was practised in many different ways and by many different countries before 2001. Europe's post-1945 experience shows that public diplomacy was no stranger to the Old World and that European countries have accumulated considerable experience in this field. The 'European school of public diplomacy' does in fact draw on a much longer and more varied experience with public diplomacy than any other region in the world. For some of the nations of Europe, public diplomacy was a top priority from the first days of their existence. This was true for some of the new nations on the Balkans in the 1990s, but it was also the case for Germany's *Politische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit* from the very start of the Federal Republic in 1949. For the French post-war republics, their *politique d'influence* aiming at foreign publics rather than governments was an essential tool in restoring their *grandeur* after national humiliation in two world wars. Other European countries have had public diplomacy in their toolkit for decades. With the slogan 'Spain is different' Franco's dictatorship was of course targeting citizens rather than elites abroad, even though the term public diplomacy was non-existent. The Netherlands developed *publieksdiplomatie* avant-la-lettre around the so-called moral issues long before the Cold War was over. Liberal Dutch policies on for instance euthanasia and drugs were highly controversial outside the Netherlands, a situation that called for reaching out to multipliers of opinion in a number of other European countries.

A wealth of European 'PD' experience therefore antedated the present era and had nothing to do with issues such as terrorism or the dialogue between civilisations. Nevertheless, it was a remarkable experience for me, back in 2004, when at a two-day conference for small and middle powers at the Clingendael Institute, it appeared perfectly possible to discuss public diplomacy without the shadow of the war on terror hanging over the conference. The message was clear: one can learn a lot about public diplomacy from countries that are usually not associated with PD, and a lot of good public diplomacy is about issues that cannot be found in the headlines of international newspapers.

Public diplomacy is tailor-made to the needs of different countries that have given it greater priority in their diplomacy for a variety of reasons. Their efforts may for instance support long term foreign policy objectives, as was the case for a number of Central European countries aspiring to EU accession (for example Poland). Alternatively public diplomacy may aim at boosting a country's exports and foreign inward investment, which is usually a prime driver for public diplomacy in developing countries. It may also assist small powers punch above their weight on the world stage (Norway), even help them in articulating their own identity (Canada), or PD may be instrumental in conveying their commitment to a stable international society and peaceful multilateral order (both Canada and Norway). Yet others believe public diplomacy may help correct disturbing stereotypical images among foreign audiences (a sad reality for Balkan countries) or counter negative perceptions abroad as a result of incidents and/or crises in domestic society. The Netherlands is a case in point: the murder of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2001, the public outrage after the killing of Theo van Gogh by an Islamic radical (2004), the no-vote on the EU Constitutional Treaty (2005), and the debate surrounding the threatening denial of Dutch citizenship to MP and former asylum seeker Ayaan Hirsi Ali (2006), were exceptional public diplomacy headaches that contributed to a steep learning curve in the Dutch foreign ministry.

Public diplomacy is no one-size-fits-all concept, but what are a few of the most salient features of the new public diplomacy that diplomats new to this field of activity should be aware of? First of all, public diplomacy delivered by embassies is tailor-made –always adapted to local circumstances and preoccupations–. For practitioners engaging with foreign societies it is of course elementary that in some countries certain controversial issues can be effectively addressed whereas they are a 'no-go' in others. Dutch 'ethical issues' like drugs and euthanasia are not public diplomacy material in for instance Turkey and the United States, whereas neighbouring Germany or Spain are much more open to the Netherlands as kind of a social laboratory. Another point rarely mentioned in discussions on public diplomacy is that it may be a very useful tool in bridging gaps between radically different cultures, but that most of it is actually practised between countries and regions where there is a great deal of economic interdependence (the European Union, the United States and Canada) or between societies that are interconnected at many different levels (once again, the EU).

Next, all recent literature on public diplomacy makes the seemingly self-evident point that dealings with foreign target groups should be a two-way street, that PD is essentially dialogical instead of a one-way messaging process. In other words: public diplomacy is as much about listening and receiving as it is about speaking and sending. In this respect public diplomacy shares similarities with marketing techniques. As many students of public diplomacy have observed: it starts with the perceptions and beliefs of 'consumers', a term that is no longer entirely alien to those in diplomatic establishment that deal directly with citizens. But as always understanding theory is so much easier than changing practice. The information departments of foreign ministries generally have a lot of experience in disseminating all sorts of information about their country, including brochures, glossy magazines, films, CD ROMs and DVDs. They have however accumulated much less experience in the art of actually dialoguing with non-official

organisations and individuals abroad. Feedback of any significance is often simply missing. Also in Europe it may be tempting for countries to see public diplomacy basically in terms of sending messages, without too much consideration for communication with foreign publics as a genuine two-way street. What is required is a pretty radical change in working habits and indeed in diplomatic culture. It would be a formidable understatement to say that the old dog merely has to learn a new trick.

The public diplomacy frenzy that has now reached all corners of the globe should indeed not delude us into thinking that all diplomats are 'into PD'. An observation that is probably closer to reality is that public diplomacy is still a rather peripheral concern for most practitioners. Interestingly, senior management in the MFA's of a growing number of countries appears to be convinced of its importance and some information departments have by now been renamed as public diplomacy departments –but changing the name is not the same as changing the game–. Many junior and mid-career practitioners probably have good reasons to believe that their careers are still best served by jobs in other sectors of the ministry. Incorporating it in the day-to-day work of the foreign ministry and rewarding PD work in terms of career progression is therefore a significant challenge. Most MFA's have not even started mainstreaming public diplomacy and vanguard countries that are in the process of doing so, including Britain, Canada and the United States, know that integrating public diplomacy in the foreign policy making machinery requires patience and a sustained support from the highest levels.

For foreign ministries that consider a far-reaching shake up of their practices premature, but that are confronted with the urgent need to tackle their overseas reputation, it may be tempting to outsource their image management to private consultants. Hiring outside communication expertise may indeed help public diplomacy work considerably, but there is of course no way that private consultants can be a substitute for the work of ordinary practitioners. The bottom line is that public diplomacy is DIY –a do-it-yourself business–. This work is particularly testing where short term PD is meant to support foreign policy objectives. Rules of thumb is here that there should be no tension between a country's public diplomacy and its actual foreign policy, just as a nation brand should be based on reality and not contradict it in any way. As the case of the United States shows clearly, there is no public diplomacy that can mask policy failure. Where pictures and deeds speak louder than words, public diplomacy is simply the hardest thing to do. This observation does however not only apply to the United States, it is one that has to be learnt over and over again by many countries, even though on a much smaller scale and with much less dramatic issues at stake. Others are equally exposed when the stories they tell and the images they project do not match with overseas perceptions. The reputation one aspires to is ultimately based on what is real and recognisable. As Socrates put it, the way to achieve a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear.

It is easy to criticise public diplomacy by pointing to contemporary practices that do little else than discrediting notions such as 'dialogue' and 'mutuality' in the field of official communication with foreign audiences. Still, it appears to make sense to take a normative approach and indeed to distinguish public diplomacy from practices such as international propaganda, which have an entirely different pattern of communication.<sup>1</sup> Neither is it very helpful to lump together or obscure fundamental differences between concepts like public diplomacy and nation branding, or even to quietly submerge one concept into the other. The discourses on nation branding and 'PD' generally pass one another like ships in the night, but it may be helpful for diplomats to articulate a few basic differences. Here I want to make the case that public diplomacy is first of all *diplomacia pública*, with the emphasis on *diplomacia*. Like diplomacy in general it is about relationship building rather than the

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<sup>1</sup> I elaborate this point in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

projection of identity, which seems to be at the heart of branding. As far as I am aware there is no comparative literature on this, but a few arguments suggest that diplomatic practitioners better not limit themselves to a marketing approach of dealing with foreign publics.

First, it should be pointed out that branding was a largely spontaneous process in the case of countries that are generally mentioned as success stories of branding in modern international relations, such as Spain and Ireland. One cannot blame consultants for talking about branding in a can-do manner, as something one can achieve (and ultimately purchase), but the truth is that there are many more disillusioned foreign ministries and governments than success stories of branding. Not only have a number of countries in the Balkans and Central Europe lost their initial enthusiasm when the branding promise failed to deliver. A number of MFA's in Western Europe have come to the conclusion that branding is at best incapable of delivering the (often political) public diplomacy needs of foreign ministries, and at worst incapable of moving beyond a fairly rigid and sometimes even superficial approach of country promotion. There may be a permanent tension between the discipline imposed by the branding approach and the diversity and pluralism of modern societies. Transplanting the success of branding from the corporate sector to countries' international relations could well be one bridge too far. To be sure, various historical and modern champions of nation branding were not much troubled by their societies' complexity: branding Cuba, well-orchestrated from the top, was always easier for Castro than branding Spain has been or will ever be for González or Zapatero.

For Spain's reputation abroad, the time is ripe to explore public diplomacy initiatives aimed at truly engaging foreign societies, rather than the broad, ambitious and to date successful, but arguably also more static approach of *marca España*. Typically, public diplomacy is about dialogue and debate. That includes dealing with sensitive and controversial themes, with a variety of issues that are not only subject to public debate on the Iberian Peninsula, but also north of the Pyrenees and south of Gibraltar. Spain's public diplomacy has something to contribute to transnational conversations on a range of topics. It has the potential of correcting foreign perceptions and, equally importantly, giving a distinctive Spanish perspective on issues that are debated across Europe. What springs to mind is the Spanish way of dealing with Islamic terrorism and the unique albeit controversial Spanish approach of illegal immigration. These are just a few examples of typical issues for public diplomacy initiatives of Spanish embassies in countries like France, Britain or Germany. But a few others could also be listed here. The Spaniards have experience with combating terrorism and views on dealing with terror in their society that draw the admiration of many outsiders. And let us not forget that Spain brings to the dialogue with the Islamic world the historical experience of living with Islam for 800 years. Spain also has experiences with devolution it could compare with other countries going down the federalist road. This is not the place to identify a long list of themes for Spanish public diplomacy, but rather to suggest that public diplomacy initiatives along these lines, building on the existing strength of Spain's reputation and strong cultural relations, might be usefully considered for Madrid's future public diplomacy strategy. Such an approach appears to be more appropriate to transnational dialogue in an interconnected world than an ongoing elaboration of Spain's key assets and selling points in the framework of 'Brand Spain'.

Public diplomacy may be the name of the game, but what is in a name? Some people have suggested that it would be better to speak of political communication or strategic communication, instead of public diplomacy. I do however believe that there is great merit in continuing to refer to public diplomacy. It reinforces the view that public diplomacy is part of the wider process by which states and others represent themselves and their interests to one another. PD is in other words not a stand alone phenomenon, and by no means the mere application of new techniques of marketing, advertising, media

management or spin doctoring to the conduct of international relations, but an expression of broader patterns of change in diplomacy. The crux is in the recognition that the practice of diplomacy is moving into another phase, away from the exclusive CD world and closer to the main street. Daryl Copeland of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in Canada speaks of 'guerrilla diplomacy', and suggests that the new diplomat should make it his or her permanent business to establish and maintain contacts, seek tactical advantage and strategic intelligence. And in his book *The New Diplomacy* (in Spanish with the more intriguing title *Adiós Diplomacia*) Shaun Riordan refers to the emergence of a collaborative model of diplomacy. It is true that the kind of new diplomacy that increasingly moves outside its original habitat, works more and more with other agencies and organisations, and operates in a variety of networks, helps creating an environment in which public diplomacy is also thriving.

The connections between diplomacy and society are becoming closer. It is no coincidence that public diplomacy shares some characteristics with consular affairs, another field of diplomatic activity that is becoming more prominent under the conditions of interdependence and globalisation. What these two fields of diplomatic activity have in common is that they deal with 'ordinary people', whom they regard as consumers of the services and products delivered by the foreign ministry. This shows us that the classic distinction between high-priority sovereign representation and the relatively low-priority service tasks of foreign ministries is out of date. Interestingly, public diplomacy and consular affairs both also deal with issues of image and reputation: it is after all the job of public diplomats to manage the external reputation of the country, whereas consular officers are always conscious of the impact of their work on the domestic image of the MFA. Broadly speaking these developments show the growing 'societisation' of diplomacy. This is not a paradigm shift, not even a revolution in diplomatic affairs, but nevertheless highly significant change in the conduct of diplomacy of which the rise of public diplomacy is a part.

I have argued that understanding public diplomacy is much easier than putting it in practice. This is not the place to elaborate on this point in great depth, but it is important to bear in mind that governments do not control what their own societies project to the outside world. Even less are governments in control of how their countries are perceived by foreign individuals and organisations. A major challenge for all foreign ministries is what Joseph Nye calls the 'paradox of plenty': diplomats must gain attention in a world where there is an abundance of information. But the paradox of plenty hits different countries in dissimilar ways. Some of them are desperate to be noticed in the first place, or not to be confused with states that look all too similar to outsiders (the Slovak Republic, or Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania respectively), others do not want to be noticed for the wrong reasons (Balkan countries that have emerged from the war) and there are even those that see the absence of news as 'good news' for their international reputation (countries as diverse as Israel and Sudan). Finally, I would like to suggest a brief sobering thought about two types of structural limits that government officials come across when they are acting as public diplomats. First, they have to come to terms with the fact that their own role in international affairs is not always what it used to be. In a global landscape of multilayered links between countries, diplomats sometimes have to accept that they are no longer at the centre of international relationships. On top of that, when it comes to their contacts with foreign publics, the accredited representatives of other states are unlikely to benefit from the same degree of credibility as vis-à-vis their foreign peers. Ironically, the practitioners who realise this and use it to their tactical advantage are well placed to be successful in public diplomacy.

It should be clear that public diplomacy is a major challenge for all countries. Spain has the distinct advantage of being able to develop a public diplomacy strategy on the strength of a very strong brand. Moving on from that success to a public diplomacy that is



aimed at truly engaging foreign audiences appears to be the obvious next stage in Spain's reputation management project. Spain's 'PD' could deal with themes that matter to Spanish society and where Spain has something distinctive to contribute to debates that do not stop at its borders. This would amount to the development of a public diplomacy that may have a more political character and that would deal with the concerns of modern Spanish society. It would be an exciting challenge for all partners and stakeholders in Spain's public diplomacy.

#### **4. The United States and Europe: Convergence or Divergence in Public Diplomacy?**

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Public diplomacy is the package of research, positioning and overseas communication activities addressing both elites and opinion leaders, but mainly public opinion as a whole, aimed at impacting positively on a country's image and perception abroad. The term 'public diplomacy' was coined in the United States in 1965, at the height of the Cold War, by Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. In the 1970s, the term was formally adopted by the USA government to refer to its programmes aimed at influencing public opinion abroad. The executor of US public diplomacy until the 1980s was the United States Information Agency.

The set of activities encompassed by public diplomacy is gaining significance in view of the role of public opinion in international politics. It is worth recalling that in the preliminaries leading up to the Iraq war some analysts were talking about the birth of a new world power.

The spread of democracy and the mass media play a pivotal role. The spread of education world-wide and, in particular, increasing access to tertiary levels, broaden the average citizen's understanding of foreign policy issues.

Furthermore, international instability, the lack of clear references following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the questioning of institutions pave the way for leaders to pay more attention to intellectuals and public opinion. This pincer movement formed by citizens' enhanced grasp of international issues and the increasing turmoil in international relations makes leaders and institutions more receptive to foreign public opinion. And it also leads governments to begin managing their country's image abroad more actively.

While conventional or official diplomacy is aimed from one government to another, public diplomacy is government-to-people. There is also talk of civilian people-to-people diplomacy, between NGOs, and Diaspora diplomacy, involving emigrants and immigrants.

Contrary to what people might think, public diplomacy is not opposed to conventional diplomacy, but complementary to it. It lays the groundwork, like a sapper. It complements traditional diplomacy, since it paves the way for it. When one government proposes certain actions and strategies to another government, public opinion and elites in the other country will already hold information in this connection, and some may already be inclined to accept the proposals.

Furthermore, public diplomacy can act as a safety net, a cushion that eases the blow. Public diplomacy ensures continuity of the links and communication channels between countries even when formal diplomatic relations are deteriorated or non-existent. It is precisely during times of crisis in bilateral relations when informal networks tend to be most active.

It is worth emphasising that public diplomacy is not unique to the United States. Many countries practice it: for example, China, which in recent years has launched an intensive campaign of public diplomacy to offset the suspicion regarding its increasing economic power and its political regime, especially in the wake of Tiananmen. The official discourse of Asian values and the peaceful rise of China should be taken in this context. The Chinese government has also developed a world-wide tour schedule for Chinese leaders and analysts to counter the image that China fails to uphold human rights. Also, the Chinese authorities have launched the Confucius Institute project, modelled on the major European cultural institutes, such as the British Council, Goethe-Institut and Instituto Cervantes, to disseminate the Chinese languages and culture world-wide. And a final example is a more segmented action, addressing elites: in July 2005 the Chinese embassy in the United States signed a million-dollar contract with a lobbying firm to gain access to members of the US House of Representatives and Senate.

But at the same time China is also a sought-after target of other countries' public diplomacy. In 2006 Spain is holding Spanish Year in China. In 2003 the United Kingdom launched one of the most ambitious drives, the *Think UK* Campaign, with around thirty actions aimed at boosting the UK's image to the average Chinese person, and also among segments such as entrepreneurs, students, etc.

The United Kingdom has always been at the forefront of such initiatives, ever since the BBC was created. It has recently set up the Public Diplomacy Board to coordinate the Foreign Office, British Council and BBC communication actions. The UK also orchestrated the *Live 8* campaign parallel to the G8 summit at Gleneagles, where singers Bono and Bob Geldof gave constant reminders of the UK's commitment to Africa, despite the damage wrought on its image by actions such as its involvement in the Iraq war.

This latter example also reminds us that culture is always one of the key aspects in public diplomacy. In the fifties and sixties, the Department of State (DOS) promoted exhibitions of American abstract expressionism and sponsored tours by jazz musicians such as Dave Brubeck or Dizzy Gillespie world-wide, from the communist block to Arab countries such as Iran. Jazz was genuinely American music, born in the United States, and it also represented freedom, improvisation in both strictly musical spheres and at social level, since it was an Afro-American minority product. And while the DOS was promoting jazz as American culture, jazz musicians like Max Roach, who did not participate in the DOS initiative, were releasing works such as the *Freedom Suite* in which they staked their claims to the civil rights which at the time black people were denied in the United States.

It would be as much of an exaggeration to say that public diplomacy won the Cold War, which by the way has been suggested, as to attribute the United States' current problems in terms of image to the failure of its public diplomacy. The fact is that after the Cold War the US all but dismantled its public diplomacy infrastructure. The dissolution of the USIA is symptomatic of this. Accordingly, US public diplomacy hit all-time lows. At all events, it would be fairer to say that the image problems were due to the lack of public diplomacy policies.

Furthermore, the security issues triggered by Islamic terrorism led to a strategy of weapons of mass communication, remotely, rather than on the ground, which led US embassies in Muslim countries to be seen as a new version of the Crusaders' fortifications. This distance compounded the negative stereotype of the United States. Thus began a negative spiral in which security measures cancelled out all the efforts (which were not very well-advised, it has to be said) of public diplomacy.

There were a number of initiatives –such as Shared Values, the TV channels and Hi magazine– aimed at young people in Muslim countries, many of which have failed. A picture paints a thousand words. A recent report by the Government Accountability Office shows photos of huge amounts of unsold HI magazines at the US Embassy in El Cairo.

What evidences the failure of US public diplomacy is the limits of continuing to use propaganda in a new context in which citizens have greater understanding of and access to information. Young Muslims have direct access to the Internet. In general, Muslims of all ages watch al-Jazeera, and Latin Americans watch private channels and Telesur.

In this context, Ed Murrow, the journalist of 'Good night and good luck' fame, who was persecuted by Senator Joseph McCarthy, highlighted two significant principles which guided public diplomacy under the Kennedy administration. First, public diplomacy must be an integral part of diplomacy as a whole, and it must be incorporated from the outset, from take-off, and not just on emergency landings in times of crisis.

Secondly, policies and communication must be coherent with each other: the right hand must know what the left hand is doing, and the 'you do the killing and we'll clean up the mess' scenario is no longer tenable. Because public diplomacy is not mere propaganda, it is not a kind of cosmetic make-up for hard power, especially military power, and it must not be subordinate thereto.

- (1) But neither is it soft power: The culture of ideas is one of the resources or media for public diplomacy, but it is not the only one. The armed forces may also be a resource for public diplomacy. The US learned this lesson well in Indonesia. Sending soldiers and resources to help rebuild the country in the wake of the Tsunami was more efficient than any media drive, and it did in fact boost the United States' image.
- (2) It is neither idealistic nor altruistic, and it is not cultural cooperation: dialogue is fundamental in public diplomacy, but it is always designed to improve the image of our country abroad. It is Realpolitik through symbolic means, or if you like, "magical realism".
- (3) In this connection, it is a communication strategy such as country brand projects, but with other objectives. Countries which create their own brands are trying to lure investment, tourism, buyers, and so on. They are trying to *position themselves on the map* of significant nations in these areas. Public diplomacy seeks to convince, to transform the world by transforming ideas, it seeks to *change the map* of international relations. Country brands and public diplomacy may coincide in the media, because they may both segment and communicate, although their objectives are entirely different.
- (4) Finally, it is worth underlining the fact that these are not matters reserved solely for major powers: Medium-sized countries such as Norway have used PD strategies which have over time made them into champions of peace, sought-after mediators in a range of national and international conflicts.
- (5) And this last example also reminds us that public diplomacy does not work only in the short term, in managing news, but that it should also factor in the long-term impact, especially via cultural action abroad.
- (6) It must be emphasised that public diplomacy does not operate only at the most visible media level, via campaigns in major mass media, but that it acts at all levels. Public diplomacy is attention to the public on a day-to-day basis, at a film

screening, at an embassy, but also in academic exchange programmes or language classes at cultural institutes, which create networks of people who share an interest in another country. Public diplomacy acts in all level of foreign policy, so that it is *macro*, but not less than *micro* and *meso*.

The cliché is that Europe is a post-modern Venus and the US a modern Mars. According to this idea, such is the case with both foreign policy *and* public diplomacy. The US continues to deploy its traditional strategy of hard weapons of mass communication, whereas in Europe a new public diplomacy has emerged based on soft capabilities such as social networks, NGOs, and so on... In this extended vision, divergence prevails in the present, and there is nothing to suggest that it will decrease in the future.

For sure, the new public diplomacy was born –and is still being nurtured– in Europe. But we should bear in mind that its cradle was the UK, with theoreticians from the Foreign Policy Centre and practitioners in the British Council. If Europe is Venus and the US Mars, what is the UK, which invaded Irak and at the same time promotes soft public diplomacy? An ambivalent Janus? The UK has managed to avoid an image crisis such as that suffered by the US just by using a new strategy: a network-centred and dialogue-oriented public diplomacy.

Moreover, it is a mistake to equate old and new public diplomacy with the US and Europe, because on both sides of the Atlantic there are signs that they are moving in the same direction. First, because both sides face the same kind of threats and weaknesses, such as international terrorism and global interdependence. Both Europe and the US have to make public diplomacy for more sophisticated and critical citizens around the world. And in both Europe and the US new technologies and migration flows will have a more central role in shaping public diplomacy strategies and tools. As a result, public diplomacy is becoming more 'segmented' on both sides of the Atlantic.

This is the common environment for both sides, but in each of them specific factors are calling for change. In the US, after the flaws and errors of public diplomacy during the Iraq crisis, several reports –by both the government and independent think-tanks– have advocated a new diplomacy approach, which means returning to some of the best practices of American Cold War public diplomacy and sending troops to humanitarian missions in the Tsunami area.

At the same time, Europe is increasingly supporting its civilisational soft power with arms and military intervention, as in Afghanistan and more recently the Lebanon.

Another factor of possible convergence concerns the mass media. Hollywood is still the universal dream factory, but in the long –or not that long– term new laboratories are emerging in China and India. Al-Jazeera in the Muslim world and Telesur in Latin America are also a threat. The US quasi-monopoly of the mass media might be weakened. And in public diplomacy terms what that means is that American governments will have to become 'Europeanised', assuming roles which used to be played by American media multinationals. American Public Diplomacy will become more 'public', ie, more dependent on the state's efforts.

De-monopolisation also means that American 'public public diplomacy' will have to be more cultural. In the US the division of labour is as follows: mass culture is promoted by multinationals while the government acts in response to the political, international agenda. This is both the strength and weakness of American soft power. If de-monopolisation forces continue to pull, the US government will have to be more cultural, more 'European'.

At the same time, European 'public public diplomacy' has to be 'McDonalised' in order to gain strength and scope. Looking at the European Union, for instance, its communications are as 'grey' as its functioning, so it is no wonder that Europe's citizens feel unmotivated. The problem does not lie in uninformed citizens or lazy journalists, but in a deficient communications strategy by the EU, which should learn from US strategies and means of public diplomacy. The EU will probably also have to develop a 'Brand Europe', relying and benchmarking on successful American and European private firms and brands such as Calvin Klein and Nokia.

But also in the future, if Europe and the EU are to play a more important role in the world to compete or cooperate not only with the US, but also with China and other countries, European public diplomacy will have to be more 'political'. Both in the EU and its member countries, public diplomacy –or its equivalent– is culture-focused. The promotion of languages and cultures are common tasks, but only because Europe's political role in the world was to be a shadow of American power. In the future European and EU public diplomacy will have to be more political in order to support the EU's foreign policy.

	United States	Europe
<b>Common forces of convergence</b>	New technologies Global interdependence Migration flows and control International terrorism	
<b>Specific forces of convergence</b>	Greater role of the state, more 'public'	More private, firm- and brand-centred
	'Culturisation', greater role of culture	Politicisation, greater role of politics

The future will present a complex picture in which, counter to the Manichaeon-mythological metaphor of Mars and Venus, there will be a more ambiguous world in which the forces of divergence and convergence in public diplomacy will coexist and uncertainty will prevail as to what lies ahead. For the moment all we can do as analysts and practitioners of public diplomacy is to help it progress more smoothly by avoiding too much simplification.

## PART II: THE PRACTITIONER'S VISION

### 5. Public Diplomacy in the United Kingdom

*Ali Fisher<sup>2</sup>*

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The future of Public Diplomacy (PD) is likely to demonstrate a continuing divergence in approach. Much of this divergence can be conceptualised within two models; the hierarchical and network based approaches. As Brian Hocking has argued:

'The reality is that there are in a sense "two worlds" of public diplomacy that intersect, overlap, collide and cooperate in a variety of contexts. On the one hand we have a traditional, "hierarchical" image of diplomatic systems, and, on the other, what has come to be termed a "network" model.'<sup>3</sup>

This article discusses the tension between hierarchical and network based models of diplomacy and the potential benefit that could be gained from network or even facilitative

<sup>2</sup> Ali Fisher is Director of Counterpoint, the British Council's cultural relations think-tank.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Hocking, 'Rethinking the 'New' Public Diplomacy', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 35.

approaches to PD. Through the example of the work of the British Council, the potential development of PD towards a network-based model can be analysed, along with the potential for this approach to exist within the hierarchically conceived UK PD structure.

'Work aiming to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas, in order to improve understanding of and influence for the United Kingdom in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long term goals.'<sup>4</sup>  
The Carter Report's definition of Public Diplomacy, December 2005.

Lord Carter used this definition of Public Diplomacy in his review of the PD system in the UK. In doing so he added to the plethora of definitions already available from academic and diplomatic perspectives.<sup>5</sup> Within this definition, '(t)he word "organisations"', as Alan Henrikson has noted, 'could include, of course, foreign official-governmental organisations too, but the emphasis would clearly seem to be on forming *societal* connections and gaining direct influence, for Britain, on target audiences *as wholes*'.<sup>6</sup> Alan Henrikson argues that this neither privileges nor recognises 'in explicit terms the intergovernmental or "diplomatic" relationship that in most cases are considered to be the authoritative and controlling ones of the international legal order, or the interstate system'.<sup>7</sup> This resonates with the observation by Jan Melissen that 'the interlocutors of today's foreign service officers are not necessarily their counterparts, but a wide variety of people that are either involved in diplomatic activity or are at the receiving end of international politics'.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, 'one can observe converging interests among states and NGOs – actors that previously looked at one another with suspicion and as competitors'.<sup>9</sup> This provides the potential for UK PD to focus attention on a wider variety of groups than the traditional, elite focused diplomacy.

While the scope for UK PD is conceived in broad terms, the production of these operations is conducted, according to the Carter Report, 'in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long term goals'.<sup>10</sup> This creates a hierarchical conception of the UK PD system. Brian Hocking has described the hierarchical approach as one in which 'the foreign ministry and the national diplomatic system over which it presides act as gatekeepers, monitoring interactions between domestic and international policy

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<sup>4</sup> Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, December 2005, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-about-us-governance-funding.htm>. Hereafter referred to as the Carter Report. Also quoted in *Public Diplomacy Board: Terms of Reference*, at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1035898725758>.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Karen Hughes, Nominee for Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, testimony at confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC: The mission of public diplomacy is to engage, inform, and help others understand our policies, actions and values – but I am mindful that before we seek to be understood, we must first work to understand', <http://www.state.gov/r/us/2005/49967.htm>, accessed 23 October 2006.

'(T)he process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented' is the definition provided by Paul Sharp, 'Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005 p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Henrikson, 'What Can Public Diplomacy Achieve?', *Clingendael Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, Issue 104, 2006 p. 10 (emphasis in original text).

<sup>7</sup> Alan Henrikson, 'What Can Public Diplomacy Achieve?', *Clingendael Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, Issue 104, 2006, p. 10.

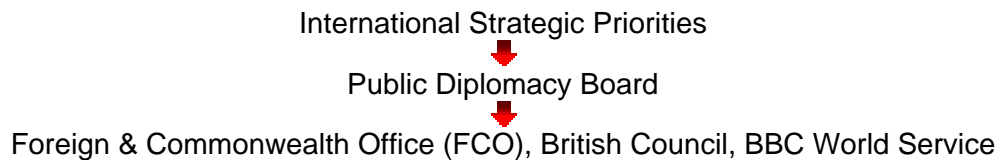
<sup>8</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', In Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Carter Report.

environments and funnelling information between them.<sup>11</sup> In the UK, priorities and objectives for public diplomacy are conceived by the UK Government and are intended to be disseminated through the structure and organisations within the PD system.

The physical form of this hierarchical conception can be seen through the PD structure that was created following the Carter Report.



International Strategic Priorities (ISP) are set by the UK Government. The current White papers *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities* was published in March 2006.<sup>12</sup> Once the ISP have been set, Public Diplomacy Board has the role of considering these priorities to 'ensure stronger leadership, strategic direction and ministerial accountability' within the UK PD structure. The hierarchical nature of this structure is emphasised by the Public Diplomacy Board's terms of reference which state that the aim of the Public Diplomacy Board is to improve public diplomacy effectiveness by:

- Setting the strategic direction of UK public diplomacy.
- Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.
- Making recommendations on resource allocation.<sup>13</sup>

The Board is chaired by the Foreign Office Minister of State responsible for Public Diplomacy. As set out in the terms of reference, the board members:

'include senior representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British Council and BBC World Service (with observer status in view of the BBCWS' editorial independence) with operational understanding of, and responsibility for, the delivery of public diplomacy'.<sup>14</sup>

The specific objectives of the board include agreeing 'geographical priorities, target audiences, priority themes' and ensuring 'that each partner allocates resources to those priority areas'.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the organisational structure adheres closely to the hierarchical model of diplomacy.

While Public Diplomacy strategy stems from a hierarchical structure, through the ISP and Public Diplomacy Board, this does not preclude current and future approaches that utilise the benefits that can be gained from network based PD in the UK. In contrast to the hierarchical model, Brian Hocking has argued that 'the network model provides a

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Hocking, 'Rethinking the "New" Public Diplomacy', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 35-36.

<sup>12</sup> See *Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities*, White Paper, 28 March 2006, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394997>.

<sup>13</sup> *Public Diplomacy Board: Terms of Reference*, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1035898725758>.

<sup>14</sup> *Public Diplomacy Board Terms of Reference*.

<sup>15</sup> *Public Diplomacy Board Terms of Reference*.

fundamentally different picture of how diplomacy works in the twenty-first century'.<sup>16</sup> Arguments for greater use of the network model focus on the recognition that '(m)odern public diplomacy is a "two-way street", even though the diplomat practising it will of course always have his own country's interests and foreign policy goals in mind'.<sup>17</sup> In the conception of the interaction between post-modern states, produced by Shaun Riordan, diplomacy 'must deal with the complex, multi-layered network of relations'.<sup>18</sup> This requires a conceptual shift from the emphasis on a 'top-down processes' that has been reflected 'in post-11 September 2001 writings' about public diplomacy, 'especially those coming out of the United States'.<sup>19</sup> However, the network model does remove the need for setting priorities. While Laurie Wilson makes a valid point that:

'it is important for practitioners to devote some time to identifying and building relationships, or they will forever be caught in the reactive mode of addressing immediate problems with no long-term vision or coordination of strategic efforts. It is like being trapped in a leaky boat: If you spend all your time bailing and none of it rowing, you will never get to shore.'<sup>20</sup>

Within the network model, defining objectives are still important, in parallel with identifying relationships, as it is vital to be sure toward which shore you are rowing.

Part of the conceptual shift towards a network based model requires interaction and engagement in a non-hierarchical manner which develops initiatives that are potentially beneficial to all participants. While it is possible to have a network in which there exist dominant participants, symmetrical relationships in which all participants are valued beyond their ability to transmit a pre-determined message, have the potential to multiply the impact of an initiative. This interdependence clearly carries certain risks, but also engages participant groups with an initiative to a greater extent than traditional or hierarchically conceived influence multipliers.

This conception of the network model incorporates concepts such as Robert Cooper's emphasis on the importance of 'openness and transnational cooperation' within PD.<sup>21</sup> The creation of genuine cross-border cooperation between civil societies and governmental organisations provides the means for greater influence and greater engagement toward the pursuit of common objectives. As Jan Melissen notes,

'Public diplomacy above all thrives in highly interdependent regions and between countries that are linked by multiple transnational relationships and therefore a substantial degree of "interconnectedness" between their civil societies'.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Shaun Riordan, *The New Diplomacy*, Policy Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> Brian Hocking, 'Rethinking the "New" Public Diplomacy', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> Laurie J Wilson, 'Strategic Cooperative Communities: A Synthesis of Strategic, Issue-Management, and Relationship-Building Approaches in Public Relations', in Hugh M Culbertson and Ni Chen (Eds.), *International Public Relations: A Comparative Analysis*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, 1996, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, Atlantic Books, London, 2003, p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005 p. 10.



As such, a network model that is more than a bilateral mechanism for the dissemination of a particular agenda can benefit from engagement with participants from various civil societies, each contributing to common, beneficial outcomes.

The attempt to produce symmetry and the 'degree of interconnectedness' are vital markers of the genuine network-based model. Such methodology should not be confused with the use of networks of contacts for the dissemination of a particular agenda. In this case, while arguable still a network, contacts are acting as gatekeepers to a particular audience or transmitters of a pre-determined message. This can be seen in the use of networks of contacts in covert operations. Whether these were the CIA funded operations of the Cold War era or the contemporary discussions about the use of 'black' propaganda by the Pentagon both seek to exploit the appearance of independence to gain an audience for the dissemination of a government defined message.<sup>23</sup> The plans for the Office of Strategic Influence, with the help of the Rendon Group, demonstrate this hierarchical approach to using a network.<sup>24</sup> A similar approach, according to the *New York Times*, has been pursued by the Lincoln Group who 'paid newspapers from \$40 to \$2,000 to run the articles as news articles' without the publications disclosing 'that the articles were generated by the military'.<sup>25</sup> This approach was taken because, according to Col. James Treadwell, 'We don't want somebody to look at the product and see the US government and tune out'. This is a direct hierarchical approach to disseminate a message through a network. As Col. Jack N. Summe, then the commander of the Fourth Psychological Operations Group said: 'We call our stuff information and the enemy's propaganda'.<sup>26</sup>

These programmes may be successful in the short term, but the credibility of the network tends to be lost when the source of the covert support becomes known. Furthermore, the message or values which were being promoted may also lose credibility within the target audience. For example, as the *New York Times* reported, *Azzaman*, an Iraqi daily newspaper, ran an editorial in which it complained that 'that the paid propaganda campaign was an American government effort "to humiliate the independent national press"'.<sup>27</sup> The extent to which opinion will engage with stories planted by the US Military, rather than the resistance from sections of the Iraqi press, is hard to judge. However, it is clear that this type of approach to a network is not only hierarchical in conception, but contains significant long-term risks in the pursuit of often short-term and occasionally fairly limited gains.

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<sup>23</sup> W.S. Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union*, New York University Press, New York, 1999; H. Laville, *Cold War Women: The International Activities of American Women's Organisations*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002; F. Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, Granta Books, London, 1999; G. Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA, and Post-War American Hegemony*, Routledge, London, 2002; H. Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left, and the Cold War: Calling the Tune?*, Frank Cass, London, 2003; see also W.S. Lucas, 'Campaigns of Truth: The Psychological Strategy Board and American Ideology, 1951-1953', *International History Review*, May 1996, p. 279-298.

<sup>24</sup> James Dao and Eric Schmitt, 'A Nation Challenged: Hearts and Minds; Pentagon Readies Efforts to Sway Sentiment Abroad', *New York Times*, 19 February 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Jeff Gerth, 'Military's Information War is Vast and Often Secretive', *New York Times*, 11 December, 2005.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

Networks that are hierarchical in conception are not limited to the covert sphere. Overt public diplomacy can also use a network for a hierarchical purpose. This point is illustrated by Alvin Snyder's description of Fox News as 'Public Diplomacy's 10,000 pound Gorilla' and is further exemplified by plans outlined by Karen Hughes for, as the *Washington Post* described, 'improving world opinion of the United States'.<sup>28</sup> This concept of public diplomacy included an attempt to 'forward-deploy regional SWAT teams' and 'create a rapid response unit... at the State Department'. Karen Hughes intended the rapid response unit 'to monitor media and help us more aggressively respond to rumours, inaccuracies, and hate speech whenever – wherever they are engaged in around the world'.<sup>29</sup> These operations may rely on a network, but such a network is for dissemination, rather than engagement and the pursuit of genuinely shared goals.

In overt hierarchically conceived networks, engagement with other potential perspectives happens prior to transmission. This is a form of internal negotiation which is intended to make the message more palatable for the recipient rather than making representatives of the target audience part of the developmental process. This approach is similar to the expression of brand values within different cultures described by Simon Anholt.<sup>30</sup> Simon Anholt and Karen Hughes have both emphasised the need to know the audience and the importance of responding differently in different cultures. However, this is still a system that provides policy and image makers with feedback from the field. As important as this type of input is to policy making, it still remains a discussion about targeting an audience rather than the creation of a network and symmetrical relationship that engages target groups in a genuine dialogue. This process of dialogue is evident in the approach taken by the British Council to the development of relationships as part of UK Public Diplomacy.

Working within the hierarchical conception of the UK PD structure, the British Council has sought to develop a genuinely network based approach. This approach is highlighted in the statement of purpose; 'to build mutually beneficial relationships between the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements'.<sup>31</sup> While the increase in perception of the UK retains elements of a hierarchical approach, the focus on mutual benefit from relationships enables the British Council to work toward common goals. Mutual benefit stems from the identification of potential projects in which other groups can engage for their own benefit, rather than from benefit which is gained through merely being a conduit for the prescribed message of a dominant collaborator.

Projects based on mutual benefit are in line with the need to develop greater 'openness and transnational cooperation' in Robert Cooper's phrase.<sup>32</sup> This is also organised within the context of 'highly interdependent regions... multiple transnational relationships... and a substantial degree of 'interconnectedness' between their civil societies', as described by

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<sup>28</sup> Alvin Snyder, 'Public Diplomacy's 10,000 pound Gorilla', *Public Diplomacy Blog*, 4 August 2006, USC Center on Public Diplomacy, [http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/newsroom/pdblog\\_detail/060804\\_public\\_diplomacys\\_10000\\_pound\\_gorilla\\_its\\_everywhere/](http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/newsroom/pdblog_detail/060804_public_diplomacys_10000_pound_gorilla_its_everywhere/), accessed 27 October 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Comments by Karen Hughes at Loy Henderson Auditorium, Washington, DC, 8 September 2005; see *Remarks With Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes at Town Hall for Public Diplomacy*, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/52748.htm>, accessed 27 October 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Simon Anholt, *Another One Bites the Grass*, Wiley & Sons, New York, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> British Council Corporate Plan 2006-2008, p. 4, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-about-us-strategy-2010.htm>, accessed 31 October 2006. See also the British Council's 'Purpose and Values' at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-about-us-purpose-and-values.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*, Atlantic Books, London, 2003, p. 76.

Jan Melissen.<sup>33</sup> In the vein of interconnectedness and transnational cooperation, the British Council has organised its 'overseas networks into 13 regions, each headed by a regional director based on the "hub" office for the region'.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the 'business unit of the British Council is now the overseas region rather than the individual country'.<sup>35</sup> This organisation provides the British Council with the ability to work and coordinate programmes at a transnational level.

The work on a transnational level is important to promote interaction between civil societies in various countries. However, it is still vital that the various communities and countries within the transnational region consider the project to be of particular significance to their specific needs. The network based approach in which participants seek mutual benefit through dialogue ensures that a programme maintains relevance to the various local groups engaged within a transnational project. This can be achieved through the creation of 'global networks for the free exchange of ideas' identified as one of the challenges within the British Council Strategy 2010 and is particularly evident in 'The Network Effect' organised in Northern and Central Europe.<sup>36</sup> 'The Network Effect is a venture set up by the British Council to create and nurture networks between the next generation of European leaders' through providing a forum for engagement between governmental and civil society representatives of various nationalities.<sup>37</sup> In addition, 'Connecting Futures' is intended 'to build mutual understanding, learning and respect between young people from different cultural backgrounds in the UK and other countries' and is focused on 15 to 25 year olds.<sup>38</sup> In both examples the project promotes a network rather than the dissemination of a specific prescribed message.

The importance of a symmetrical approach to the creation of a network is evident in the production of *British Muslims: Media Guide*. This involved the creation of relationships with representatives of numerous groups. The preface to the book carries the message that 'the Muslim organisations that are involved in the project, and the British Council, all felt to be central':

'that we need to understand each other better, to dispel as much as we possibly can the fog of false assumptions, both innocent and malicious, which hang over relationships between 'mainstream Britain' and its Muslim minorities'.<sup>39</sup>

The preface also notes; 'Mutual knowledge and friendship has paid dividends in a book that neither of us could have published, in this form, without the other'.<sup>40</sup> This statement not only provides evidence of the existence of the symmetrical nature of the relationship but demonstrates the potency of this approach. These projects fit into British Council strategy and may be seen to match certain International Strategic Priorities, but they are

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<sup>33</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> British Council Corporate Plan 2006-2008, p. 22, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-about-us-strategy-2010.htm>, accessed 31 October 2006. See also British Council Corporate Plan 2006-2008, Appendix C.

<sup>35</sup> British Council Corporate Plan 2006-2008, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> British Council, *Strategy 2010: Making a World of Difference*, p. 4, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-about-us-strategy-2010.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> British Council Slovakia, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/slovakia-society-bratislava-network-effect.htm>, accessed 30 October 2006.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, British Council Indonesia, <http://www.britishcouncil.org/indonesia-connecting-futures-page.htm>.

<sup>39</sup> Martin Rose and Anas Al-Shaikh Ali, 'Preface', in Ehsan Masood, *British Muslims: Media Guide*, British Council, 2006, <http://www.counterpoint-online.org/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=615>.

<sup>40</sup> Martin Rose and Anas Al-Shaikh Ali, 'Preface', in Ehsan Masood, *British Muslims: Media Guide*, British Council, 2006, <http://www.counterpoint-online.org/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=615>.

not based on the dissemination of a particular message to an audience, but an engagement with participants. This distinction is important to the participants, the success of the project, and the analysis of a network based future of public diplomacy.

The analysis of a network based system through certain means of measurement or valorisation of projects presents an opportunity to assess the success of network based PD but also creates a potential barrier to their application. The question, which is central to the application of Public Diplomacy as well as its assessment is: what is PD for? If the answer is to promote the country; to draw a direct link between the programme and a change in perception of the country, it is easier to make an argument for a hierarchical approach as this conceives the primary objective of PD as the dissemination of a particular perspective, image or brand. However, if the answer is to change behaviour within the target audience, a more effective argument can be made for an engagement with groups through a network, on the basis of mutual benefit. The future of diplomacy therefore, is not merely a question of which approach to take but also how the impact of that approach will be assessed.

Despite the potential power of a network based approach, Alan Henrikson has argued:

‘it should be recognised that, nowadays, the burden of proof is on those who would maintain more loosely associated, more pluralistic, and more segmented approaches to governmental communication with other societies, for that would mean a public diplomacy that is less overtly ‘purposeful’, in a goal-oriented sense. The dominant trend clearly is in favour of integration, or tighter coordination.’<sup>41</sup>

However, despite the burden of proof being on the network based public diplomacy it still offers an alternative future to a prescriptive and strictly hierarchical approach. Current metaphor imagines a conversation, with speaking and listening roles. However, the future development of public diplomacy may be conducted outside a bilateral conception of the direct conversation metaphor.

If PD develops in the direction of a network model the future may be one of facilitative operations, rather than bilateral engagement. This would require a further conceptual shift beyond engaging in projects for mutual benefit, to facilitating for the benefit of other participants. The benefit for the other participants would become the primary goal, with the facilitating State furthering its PD goals through enabling others to achieve their objectives. Developments toward a facilitative approach have already been evident through ‘niche diplomacy’ in which countries, usually with limited physical and cultural capital, have concentrated ‘resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field’.<sup>42</sup> Countries using a niche diplomacy strategy,

‘even if not considered “middle powers” in terms of military or other basic strength or in terms of international rank, they can sometimes play significant roles as intermediaries, as key providers of assistance, or in other precise ways’.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Alan Henrikson, ‘What Can Public Diplomacy Achieve?’, *Clingendael Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, Issue 104, 2006 p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1991, p. 323, quoted by Alan Henrikson, ‘Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena: Canada and Norway’, in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> Alan Henrikson, ‘Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena: Canada and Norway’, in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 67.

In these cases, the ability to facilitate provides influence greater than that gained from the projection of a hierarchically conceived message. Mark Leonard has noted a twofold benefit in which Norway gains from its facilitative role in peace and conflict prevention.

'Firstly, it does allow Norway to gain a general profile it might not already have which is beneficial to the country in broad terms. More specifically though, Norway's reputation in conflict resolution ensures that it is regarded as relevant in multilateral forums, and by other important international players, and this affords it influence on the issue.'<sup>44</sup>

While this approach has largely been adopted by the countries that could not exert influence directly, this strategy could potentially be used by almost any country. As Alan Henrikson has noted, currently 'the difference is that great powers, unlike small or middle-sized countries, lack either the necessity or the incentive to do so'.<sup>45</sup>

If the future development of PD follows the conceptual shift required for a genuinely network-based model, States currently using a hierarchical approach may find benefit in pursuing facilitative diplomacy. As the nature of the new PD shifts; as the actions of participants are reconceptualised, perhaps into what Shaun Riordan refers to as the 'diplomacy of post-modern states'; as pressure grows to develop new and innovative methods of engaging in PD; even powers which previously considered niche diplomacy the preserve of the smaller state, may come to view facilitation as a useful form of public diplomacy.<sup>46</sup> This method, as an extension of a network conception, would have the potential to achieve pre-identified government goals, just as a network model can. However, it would do so outside the bilateral, a conceptual shift which is required for any genuine application of the network model, but which, in the case of facilitative diplomacy, is beyond symmetry to the realisation that the fulfilment of the goals of another group can also have a positive effect for the facilitating country.

In conclusion, while there will be many factors that influence the development of PD with each actor influence toward subtly different conclusions, five points are likely to impact on most discussions of the future of Public Diplomacy. First, the current dichotomy between hierarchical and network approaches to PD will continue, despite the areas of overlap between the two models. Second, whether PD is better conducted through a bilateral or multilateral approach. Third, whether the purpose of PD is to directly changing the impression of a country within the target audience or change the behaviour of that audience. Fourth, how the impact of PD will be measured as this has the potential to alter which programmes will be deemed appropriate and how the dispersal of resources will be prioritised. Finally, the extent to which countries adopting a network model will focus on mutual benefit or a facilitative approach to PD will depend on the immediacy with which a country wants measurable results from their Public Diplomacy. While the approach which each country takes to these five points of tension will differ, Jan Melissen's observation about the future of PD will remain valid; 'The new public diplomacy moves away from –to put it crudely– peddling information to foreigners and keeping the foreign press at bay, towards engaging with foreign audiences'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy*, Foreign Policy Centre, 2002, p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Alan Henrikson, 'Niche Diplomacy in the Public Arena: Canada and Norway', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 67.

<sup>46</sup> Shaun Riordan, *The New Diplomacy*, Policy Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 130.

<sup>47</sup> Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practise', in Jan Melissen (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 14.

## 6. German Public Diplomacy

*Rainer Schlageter*

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Over the past decade the *framework* for Public Diplomacy has dramatically changed. In a global media and information society, in which billions of people world-wide witness events in real time via the electronic media, states are competing more than ever for markets, investment, tourists, value systems, and political influence. So is Germany. Whether it is in the dialogue with Islamic societies, in competition for global markets, in the discussion on the further development of the European Union and the United Nations, Germany has to mark out its position. We want to explain to foreign audiences our values, our democratic system, our social market economy, our human rights concept. And we want to anchor Germany in the minds of people as a partner for solutions to problems, now and in the future.

For many states Public Diplomacy has become an increasingly important tool in the 'toolbox' of foreign policy in pursuance of their interests. As the name proposes, it is primarily addressed to the publics of other states. It is very much about winning minds *and* hearts of people. And it is very much about convincing foreign audiences and increasing the attractiveness of a country. Modern Public Diplomacy –in our understanding of the term– also includes the *reputation management* of a state. We are convinced that a modern, strategic and coordinated Public Diplomacy can -in the long term- enrich and strengthen Germany's reputation abroad. And in this context one has to be aware that a positive reputation and true credibility are closely linked.

In the past, public diplomacy was almost exclusively geared at multipliers, or influential personalities. Today, a wider public has to –and also can– be addressed: The electronic media, be it television, radio or above all the Internet, not only strongly influence the image of countries, they also make it possible to reach larger target groups in an individual and even tailor-made way while keeping the costs at a reasonable level. Consequently target groups today include the traditional elite and decision-makers in politics, in the economy/business and in the cultural sphere, *but also the broader public*, above all the *younger generations*.

We follow a double effect strategy: Germany's Public Diplomacy covers and communicates domestic and foreign policy matters, explains decisions and intentions in German politics and thus creates or enhances the understanding of the political realities of today's Germany. This is the intended short-term effect. Our Public Diplomacy also aims at a presentation of Germany beyond the political matters. To this end we explain and promote Germany as a business location, as a rewarding place for study and research, a land of traditional and modern culture, a place with a high quality of life, a country of innovation) with the aim of making the country more attractive to partners, investors, consumers and tourists. This is the intended long-term effect.

We define and communicate the identity of Germany in three dimensions: The state-political-social dimension, the technological and economic dimension and the emotional and artistic dimension. Thematically these three dimensions range from the democratic traditions of the federal Germany to its international commitment on environmental protection, its contributions to crisis prevention/crisis management including respective missions to the outstanding infrastructure of Germany as a productive and stable location for business and research right at the heart of the industrialised world's largest internal market, to the various landscapes in the 16 'Bundesländer', to the cosmopolitan and attractive cities and to the internationally renowned German art scene.

Such a Public Diplomacy approach cannot be implemented by the Foreign Office alone. It does require sustainable communication strategies that are *closely coordinated* between the Foreign Office and other ministries and orchestrated with the intermediary organisations, cultural institutes (Goethe Institut), foundations, business and other associations (Chambers of Commerce) as well as German multinational companies. To a large extent we are talking about *Public private partnerships* which are already today a decisive tool in public diplomacy. Networks and joint action clearly have a deeper impact than individual measures. In this process the Foreign Office has taken the lead as initiator and coordinator at home and the embassies and consulates-general have done so in their respective countries. Embassies and consulates-general (and more and more the honorary consuls) are very important in achieving the short term and the long term effects. It is obvious that they must be best equipped with information from home and have the means to implement adequate measures.

Back to the network: a basic understanding between the partners about the major communication themes is indispensable. There is consensus on the following core topics for German Public Diplomacy in the years to come:

- Germany's role for the further development of the European Union.
- Germany's contributions for preventing respectively solving political, economic and ecological crises globally.
- Germany's commitment to combating racism and anti-Semitism.
- Germany as an economic power and business location.
- Germany and its research landscape as well as its innovation in social, technological and economic spheres.
- Germany as a home of modern and popular art and music, design and fashion.

In order to be successful, today's public diplomacy has to go beyond traditional 'one-way-street' information work: It should be a *dialogue* and a steady discussion with the goal to establish a *long-term relationship* with foreign audiences and in particular with the leadership from all fields of society. This gives new relevance to partners for public diplomacy. Especially in the field of dialogue and discussion, semi-state and non-governmental actors play an increasingly pivotal role in public diplomacy. They are valuable and credible partners in achieving many of our goals. To mention just one example: frequently used tools in German public diplomacy are conferences and meetings of foreign journalists with German colleagues on topical issues. While the Foreign Office finances or co-finances these events, they are regularly organised by institutions like think tanks or private foundations. The same is true for our visitors programme, by which about 1,200 foreign guests are given the opportunity to visit Germany.

Public Diplomacy can make a substantial difference if it is devised in a *long-term* manner and if it *enjoys credibility*. This demands persistence. Targets will only be reached if communication is coherent and consistent via many channels over long periods of time - conducted by many players using all media. Public Diplomacy must be tailored to regional needs and the information requirements of the local addressees. If it is not carefully customised, it cannot work. Prior to every project, clear answers have to be given to questions such as target group, communication objectives and instruments. Public Diplomacy also must have a clear vision and structure. This means planning all steps from the outset as a package solution including accompanying measures, the use of third-party projects and follow-up measures such as alumni directories and newsletters.

When we talk about widening the perception of a country, about introducing new elements in the image of a country we have a good and successful example with 2006 Soccer World Cup in Germany. As all of you know the slogan was 'A time to make friends'. This was chosen due to the observation that Germany and the Germans enjoy quite a good reputation on so-called hard facts like being reliable, trustworthy and industrious. Yet, according to many opinion polls most people in the world don't believe that Germans can also be friendly, open-minded towards foreigners and able to celebrate. The joy at the matches during the World Cup, the public viewings and the atmosphere all over Germany proved the opposite. However, to be fair: it was the German people that created this atmosphere, the foreign media transported these images around the world –and the weather was nice–. To be serious, while we did a lot to professionally lay the ground for the positive atmosphere the success of the concept depended to a large degree on aspects beyond our control.

## 7. EU Public Diplomacy

*Emma Basker*  
*European Commission*

The European Commission as a whole is fully aware of the huge impact foreign publics' perceptions can have on our ability to achieve our foreign policy and domestic objectives. And Public Diplomacy is a subject very close to the hearts and minds of EU leaders such as Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner.

Think of the economic power of foreign investment or tourism and of the interconnectedness of energy or migration policy. Thanks to globalisation, information and images flash around the world in a matter of minutes, making world opinion as much of a foreign policy actor as any national government.

Of course, that does not just affect the EU. But given that the EU's power is primarily soft rather than hard, we perhaps have even more at stake in ensuring world public opinion is on our side. To prosper we must make sure we project a positive image of ourselves.

So let me make two points, first how we are doing at the moment, and second, how we could do better?

How are we doing? The EU is fortunate in starting with a positive rating in world opinion. In a recent BBC World Service survey of nearly 40,000 people in 33 nations across the globe, every country had a predominantly positive view of Europe. We are perceived as a force for good, thanks to our support for effective multilateral institutions, a rule-based international order and our status as the world's largest aid donor and largest contributor to the UN budget.

The EU has a great deal of attractive power, our achievement in creating and sustaining peace within our boundaries is recognised and admired around the world. In fact, the Chinese Ambassador in Brussels described the creation and success of the European project as 'one of those events which happen in the world only every four or five hundred years'!

Some of that positive feeling about Europe could be described as accidental, a result of our historic, cultural and social links with nations around the world.

But our public diplomacy activities –explaining to our international partners what the EU stands for and the values we promote– are also contributing.



We put great emphasis on communicating –through websites, publications, scholarship programmes like Erasmus mundus, journalists' visits and training, information days, radio and TV talk shows and outreach work in communities around the world–. We sponsor marathons, hold cultural and education fairs and food festivals. Only last month in New York Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner opened a European Culture Festival, which was a collaboration between several member states designed to boost Europe's profile as a dynamic and modern cultural player.

On a more prosaic level we require all our partners to acknowledge EU taxpayers' support and ensure the EU's logo is fully visible. In fact Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner has just signed an agreement with the UN and World Bank to clarify the visibility requirements, ensuring that our support gets the recognition it deserves.

We are continually searching for more innovative ways of getting the message across about what we stand for and what we are doing. For example, you may or may not be aware that Kotooshu, Japan's second highest-ranking sumo wrestler, is a Bulgarian. His rapid rise up the sumo rankings combined with, and I quote here, 'His slim body by sumo standards, his good-looking face and his shy and agreeable character', has made him one of the most famous faces of Europe in Japan. So the Commission delegation in Tokyo organised a competition to design a sumo ceremonial apron for him to symbolise the close relations between Japan and Europe. And the winning design was presented to Kotooshu by President Durão Barroso when he visited Japan earlier this year –to great media acclaim!–.

The Euromed region has also been at the forefront of our public diplomacy activities: there've been a wide range of TV talk shows tackling difficult issues, at least one of which has resulted in a marriage between two participants! And a new development which is airing in Israel shortly is a 'reality TV' style series called 'See You in My Place' which involves a job swap between Israelis and Europeans, including cooks, border policemen and teachers. It may not be 'Big Brother' but we are proud of our ability to experiment and reach out to as wide an audience as possible.

Other public diplomacy activities run by our delegations around the world, often in cooperation with EU member states' cultural agencies, include debating championships, quiz shows, jazz festivals and European film weeks.

But whilst the EU may have a generally positive image in the world, we have to admit that knowledge of our concrete policies and activities is often limited.

And we have not yet fully mastered the art of transforming that general level of good-will towards Europe, our 'soft power', into equivalent political influence on the world stage.

How can we do better? The foreign policy provisions of the EU's constitutional treaty would have helped by resolving some of the structural obstacles. It would certainly have made it easier for people around the world to identify Europe as a cohesive force.

But the treaty is not a prerequisite for improving our performance. All that's really essential is political will.

So the Commission has looked at what it can do, in the absence of institutional changes, to improve the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of the EU's external action. Back in June we adopted a 'concept paper' which marked a formal recognition that for the EU to play a more powerful role in the world, there needs to be greater public awareness of the EU and our activities. We need to project Europe appropriately and positively in the world.

Public diplomacy is crucially important to the EU's future. So an important part of my commissioner's work in the coming years will be ensuring we put this political commitment into practice.

The concept paper outlined a number of ideas to increase the visibility of the EU's external action, development assistance and disaster relief, and key to this will be making better use of our delegations, probably our most valuable resource.

We currently have over 130 delegations across the world and they are already doing a great job. The innovation of appointing a former prime minister as Head of Delegation in Washington DC has certainly paid off in our relations with the US. All our delegations do an enormous amount of unsung work speaking at countless meetings and public engagements and reaching out to communities in different regions of their host country.

But through a series of reforms in the coming years we intend to give them a greater role in our public diplomacy activities and increase their capacity for outreach.

To reduce public confusion we will focus on developing a few concise, understandable messages about what defines the EU as an actor on the world stage, and what concretely it does around the world. These 'key messages' can be tailored to local circumstances and delegations will be closely involved in developing them.

Another proposal listed in the concept paper –improving the internet presentation of the EU's external action– has already been implemented. Later this week the EU's new web portal 'The EU in the World' will go live. It is a simple multilingual portal aimed to give the basics of what the EU's doing in the world. It is organised by theme, so that information is displayed for the benefit of the reader, not according to the Commission's sometimes obtuse organisational structure. And it is more attractive, with more pictures and shorter texts.

We have also started work on another of the concept paper's recommendations, which is to work as closely as possible with the other EU institutions. We recognise that in Brussels the institutional division may seem of utmost importance, but outside people are primarily interested in results. So we have had joint Commission-Council media trips to EU missions in Congo and Georgia; a joint publication highlighting external activities across the board; more frequent development of joint policy papers; and joint press statements, like during the Lebanon conflict.

We have made a good start but more needs to be done. We are limited in our resources, so we need to cooperate with member states as much as possible, building on current collaboration with member states' agencies and models like the EU public diplomacy working group in DC which brings the Commission and all member state embassies together.

To keep the political momentum behind this initiative we are thinking of issuing a communication specifically on public diplomacy which would come out early next year. The European Commission is particularly keen to see how we can make more of the EU visitors programme and our scholarship programmes like Erasmus mundus.