

**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY:
WAR BY OTHER MEANS**

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ABSTRACT

What's In a Name?

In late July of 2005, the global war on terrorism (GWOT) was unofficially and temporarily renamed the “the global struggle against violent extremism.”¹ The war became a struggle; the source of the threat was no longer terrorism, a tactic, but an ideology. Although the complex phrasing never caught with the media and general public, its repeated use in Washington underscored the necessity of a political strategy complimenting a military campaign. Endorsed by both the civil and military establishments, this more nuanced understanding of the conflict implied that economic, political, and diplomatic efforts were integral parts of the solution to both an armed and ideological problem. However, the change in language did not result in a fundamental shift in policy. Ultimately, most non-military elements were only partially elevated in importance. The results have been disastrous, as a policy based predominantly on hard power has led to unprecedented levels of anti-Americanism, increasing the risk of attacks on U.S. interests. The current, bi-partisan consensus among leading foreign policy theoreticians and practitioners appears to be that the United States, in failing to integrate non-traditional instruments of statecraft, is losing the war on terror.²

This paper's objective is to redefine the threat and its source in the context of the war on terror, and offer an alternative approach for success. It rests on the belief that the most direct threat to the United States is not terrorism *per se*, but the radical, globalized ideology which promotes its use. The first section argues that the war on terrorism is as much a battle of ideas as it is a military struggle, and that public diplomacy is the most effective instrument in this context. It underscores that public diplomacy's significance is also in its departure from traditional diplomacy, which is becoming increasingly anachronistic and in some regions irrelevant. In the second section, the paper offers a survey of post-9/11 public diplomacy efforts, as they are: coordinated on the interagency level, led by the State Department, and conducted in local posts overseas. Significant structural problems, institutional dilemmas, and crucial missing elements are identified. Finally, in the third section, relevant policy prescriptions and recommendations are provided. Five years after the 9/11-terrorist attacks, it is critical to reestablish the fundamental root of the problem and offer a more comprehensive strategy, in the hope that the “Long War” does not become an eternal struggle.

¹ The terminology was used constantly throughout July 2005 by the Bush administration, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and senior military officials.

² A recent survey by the *Center for American Progress and Foreign Policy* of over a hundred top foreign policy experts (liberals, conservatives, and moderates) revealed that 84 percent of the respondents believe the U.S. is losing the war on terror due to a failure “in a number of key areas of national security, including public diplomacy, intelligence, and homeland security.” See “The Terrorism Index.” *Foreign Policy*, July-August, 2006.

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INTRODUCTION

The target of traditional diplomacy is the governments of states. Public diplomacy, by contrast, seeks to engage foreign publics. The end goals of public diplomacy are to inform and influence audiences abroad, build mutual dialogue and long-term relationships, and present an unbiased representation of the country's policies and society. Public diplomacy can foster more favorable attitudes overseas, and even promote values or contain opposing ideologies. By taking foreign opinion into account, public diplomacy does not abandon a country's objectives or values. Rather, the strategic logic is to facilitate a country's policies by cultivating more welcoming environments abroad. As with other instruments of statecraft, the ends of public diplomacy are centered around a country's interests. The means, however, often serve both the state's goals and the needs of publics overseas. Components of public diplomacy can be found in programs as diverse as educational and cultural exchanges and scholarships, post-disaster relief efforts, language training programs, and radio and television broadcasts.

Although casually dismissed as propaganda by skeptics, public diplomacy rests on honesty and integrity, elements that are absent in propaganda campaigns. Propaganda is "counterproductive as public diplomacy. Nor is public diplomacy merely public relations. Conveying information and selling a positive image is part of it, but public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies."³ While theoretically originating from the interests of a state, public diplomacy is much more altruistic in practice than other tools of policy. At the very least, it is a superior alternative to war. Arguably the ultimate ambitions of public diplomacy are the prevention of war and the reduction of hostilities in overseas environments where a country is involved militarily. In the latter case, public diplomacy can be seen as a continuation of war by other, more peaceful, means.⁴

The means by which public diplomacy operates and the end goals towards which it strives are long-term. By its very nature, it is not a band-aid approach. Attitudes cannot be changed overnight and success is often hard to measure because relationships take years to cultivate (and a few words by an official to destroy.) Thus, while the strategic logic behind public diplomacy might make sense to theorists, it is not appealing to practitioners. Decision-makers are in office for a limited time; policy-makers frequently look for short-term solutions; and domestic constituencies do not lobby on behalf of 'overt ideological and information activities' which they have little stake in. Consequently, the legacy of public diplomacy is characterized by a lack of funding, resources, and sustained efforts.

Nevertheless, in light of the GWOT and recent developments in the international political system, public diplomacy has become important in historically unprecedented ways that merit a systematic, unrelenting campaign. The next section redefines the

³ Nye, Joseph. "Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics." (New York: Public Affairs, 2004.) p 117.

⁴ This is a paraphrase of Karl von Clausewitz's quote, "War is a continuation of politics by other means."

global struggle on terrorism and comments on the evolving nature of diplomacy. It argues that the current struggle is as much a battle of ideas as an armed conflict. It also contends that traditional diplomacy is becoming increasingly anachronistic and in some regions completely irrelevant. The purpose of the following section is two-fold. First, within the context of the war on terror, to raise public diplomacy to a strategic level equal to parallel instruments of statecraft, including those of the military and intelligence communities, and on the par of policy formulation. And second, in the context of the international political system, to illustrate the increasing significance of public diplomacy as distinct from traditional diplomacy.

REDEFINING THE STRUGGLE

The Limits of a Strategy Aimed at Defeating a Tactic

The source of the threat in the context of the current war is not terrorism *per se*, but the ideology which promotes its use. This struggle is not any more “a war on terrorism than the Second World War was a war on submarines,” to quote Lieutenant General Wallace Gregson.⁵ Terrorism is a tactic used throughout history by individuals from diverse backgrounds who seized upon different ideas for which they were willing to take the lives of others, give their own, or both. It has been a means to an end for anarchists, Bolsheviks, Fascists, Maoists, as well as Hindu, Zionist, and Palestinian nationalists, among others. Whether they were inspired by a vision or simply looking for an excuse, it was an extremist ideology that has bound them together. Ultimately, the ideologies that endorsed terrorism were reduced to levels that no longer posed a significant threat, but terrorism always continued to exist as a tactic.

To a certain degree, it might seem reassuring to think that all previous extremist ideologies which employed terror as a tactic ultimately faded. As *The Economist* suggests, “[T]his wave of terror will pass, just as the anarchist wave passed... the jihadists will go.”⁶ While possibly true, a passive response is not merited. It would be a mistake to assume that the ideology which fuels the contemporary fire of terror will be naturally extinguished on its own, at least not until it has taken the lives of countless individuals. The new terrorism is typified by a number of historically unique traits, as described in the subsections below, that make the current phenomenon extremely potent.

The New Terrorism

As the *9/11 Commission Report* states, “The enemy is not just ‘terrorism,’ some generic evil. This vagueness blurs the strategy. The catastrophic threat at this moment in history is more specific. It is the threat posed by Islamist terrorism.”⁷ Much like the terrorists of the past, the agents of the new terrorism are bound together by an ideology. Thus, the secret to combating this wave of terrorism is partially to see it as the “old terrorisms... as

⁵ As quoted in Packer, George. “Name Calling.” *The New Yorker*, August 8, 2006.

⁶ “Lessons from anarchy; Terrorism.” *The Economist*. August 20, 2005. p. 12.

⁷ “The 9/11 Commission Report; Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States.” *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003.) p. 362.

an ideology pure and simple.”⁸ The enemy is not simply al-Qaeda, itself considered less an organization than an ideology,⁹ but a radical ideology and the movement it spawned.¹⁰ Contemporary jihadism, which is explained in greater detail in the next subsection, is similar to ideologies of the past, such as anarchism and communism.

But the international environment in which terrorists operate today make jihadism much more dangerous. The new terrorism is not merely reacting to, but as importantly, it is facilitated by a globalized international structure.¹¹ Jihadism has become more virulent due to the revolution in information technologies. With greater ease than ever before, its adherents can plot terror attacks on cyberspace¹² and inspire those who are not economically deprived or directly affected by American foreign policy, and those who are integrated into Western society.¹³ It is also different because of its reliance on the most destructive and formidable brand, suicide terrorism, a phenomenon which has grown in the past three decades on religious and strategic grounds.¹⁴ Terrorists today are better equipped, trained, and have greater access to weapons that can cause mass damage.¹⁵ These causal factors form a crucial part of the threat within the context of the international structure.

The Ideological Roots of the Threat and What it Means to U.S. Interests

The other part of the threat is distinctly ideological. The existence of the jihadi ideology is an enduring characteristic of the past, but its dynamics are novel. Perhaps the greatest distinguishing feature of the new “-ism” is the religious ingredient, which makes it all the more virulent. In the context of the Muslim world’s recent history, religious fundamentalism began to enjoy popular political success in the last few decades. Throughout much of the twentieth century, anti-colonial sentiments were articulated by regional nationalisms. Although successful in gaining independence, these movements failed to establish honest governments, stable institutions, or improve socioeconomic conditions.

Religious fanatics, who until the mid- to late-twentieth century played a relatively minor role in the political scene, gradually took over the role of expressing the grievances of the populace and the frustrations of the youth throughout the Muslim world. In some places, they were able to exert influence politically by taking over the government (most notably, Iran); in most places, however, the radical forces never officially took power, but they began to enjoy popular support and were granted refuge in the shadows of

⁸ Lord Desai, Meghnad. “The way to tackle Islamist terrorism is to see it as pure ideology similar to old terrorist movements.” *Financial Times*. (August 10, 2005.) p. 16

⁹ Al-Qaeda itself is considered “less an organization than an ideology.” See Burke, Jason. “Think Again: Al Qaeda.” *Foreign Policy*. (May/June, 2004.)

¹⁰ Islamism must be distinguished from Islam, a religious faith. The enemy is an “-ism,” a radical ideology that uses terrorist tactics and is more politically motivated than religiously inspired.

¹¹ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. “Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism.” *International Security*. (Winter 2002/2003.) pp. 30-58.

¹² As was the case with the 2004 terrorist attacks in Spain. See Lawrence Wright’s “The Terror Web; Were the Madrid bombings part of a new, far-reaching jihad being plotted on the Internet?” *The New Yorker*. August 2, 2004. pp. 40-53.

¹³ As was the case with the 2005 London bombings.

¹⁴ Pape, Robert. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism” in “Homeland Security and Terrorism; Readings and Interpretations,” by Russell Howard, James Forest, Joanne Moore. pp 71-104.

¹⁵ Howard, Russell. “Homeland Security and the New Terrorism” in *Ibid*, pp 4 -18.

governments focused on staying in power. They became non-state or transnational actors, instigated by different causes¹⁶ but united by a political, Islamist ideology.

The militant form of the Islamist ideology is jihadism.¹⁷ Jihadism as a movement has gained incredible momentum in the last few decades and today poses the greatest threat to American interests. As a phenomenon, on ideological and tactical terms, it is both a combination of the violent ideologies of the past and unique in its own way. It is similar to the anarchism of the late 1800s and early 1900s in its readiness to terrorize for the sake of disturbing the international structure, but the jihadi worldview is much more Manichean. Jihadists often uses the practice of takfir¹⁸ to declare any individual who does not share their narrow views a non-believer, permitting them “to rationalize even unprovoked mass murder.”¹⁹ Jihadism contains elements of thought typical of fascism, seeking to control every aspect of an individual’s life according to extremist religious interpretations;²⁰ but whereas fascism was often nationalistic, the jihadi plan is more global.²¹ Like Marxist and communist movements, jihadism is sustained by utopian, anti-nationalistic feelings, blaming anything from the “Imperialist West” to “capitalism” for all the region’s problems. But unlike ultra-leftist ideologies, it contains a strong (and politicized) religious element, perhaps its most virulent characteristic. Jihadism is similar to previous “-isms,” but these differences make it much more potent.

Jihadism is of particular concern to American interests. Although jihadism espouses different theologies in its various forms, it has similar agendas, on top of which is attacking the United States and the West for their encroachment on the Muslim world. What characterizes transnational jihadists (in particular, Salafists²²) is their extreme anti-Americanism. The United States is seen as an evil intruder, an imperialist, blood-thirsty nation. The Jihadists attempt to put the blame for the problems of the disaffected youth and other segments on the United States -- it is their rallying cry and their scapegoat. This politicized ideology, its terrorist tactics, and the globalized international order in which it operates (and, paradoxically, is attempting to disturb), all make jihadism “the catastrophic threat at this moment in history,”²³ especially to American interests.

A Battle of Ideas

The ideological nature of the threat necessitates active U.S. involvement in the “battle of ideas.” Of course, the radicals who use terrorist tactics to attain political goals will not be dissuaded; their capacities to mount attacks and encourage others must be dismantled by military means if necessary. But the effectiveness of hard power and military force in this war should not be exaggerated. Despite the destruction of terrorist bases in

¹⁶ Causes varied from internal conditions (eg Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt) to developments on the global scene (eg al Qaeda in Afghanistan.)

¹⁷ For the most part, this paper will reference jihadism, not Islamism. The goals of the Islamist ideology can be obtained by political means; jihadists are distinguished by their use of terrorist tactics. Jihadism is synonymous with Islamist terrorism.

¹⁸ Takfirism is considered to have inspired extremist Islamist, especially Salafist, groups such as al Qaeda.

¹⁹ “9/11 Commission Report,” p. 51

²⁰ However, calling it *Islamofascism* is an incorrect exaggeration, as much as it makes for useful rhetoric.

²¹ For extremist Sunni factions, a primary goal is the restoration of caliphate. Thus, their vision extends across North Africa and parts of Europe and Asia.

²² Often known as Wahhabism, Salafism is a fundamentalist movement within Sunni Islam. The most powerful and known Salafi terrorist groups is al Qaeda. Other groups, such as Hamas, also identify themselves as Salafi.

²³ “9/11 Commission Report,” p. 362

Afghanistan, the capture of terrorist plotters such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and the killing of top leaders such as Abu al Musab al Zarqawi, the United States is widely seen as losing in the global war on terrorism. The reason is that more and more individuals are joining jihadi causes. The United States is focused on fighting “a military battle against a phenomenon that is largely nonmilitary. In a battle of ideas, no one bullet will win.”²⁴ Meanwhile, jihadi efforts increasingly “attempt to influence propaganda, and they are winning that campaign.”²⁵ In the absence of U.S. ideological and information campaigns, terror groups are successful in defining America’s image and acquiring new recruits.

The propaganda campaign the extremists are waging calls for an effective, sustained U.S. response which appeals to the hearts and minds of the Muslim world’s moderate majority. As the *Council on Foreign Relations* (CFR) argues, “In the Muslim world today, America’s most pressing battle is for the political and social middle. And we are losing.”²⁶ The most practical instrument in waging ideological and information campaigns is public diplomacy, which entails building mutual understanding and fostering more-favorable attitudes towards the United States “so that other peoples near and far are more likely to shake our hands than to squeeze them.”²⁷ Public diplomacy attempts to stop the rising tide of jihadism and anti-Americansim on the ideological front. It is a continuation of the war on terror by other, more preventative and peaceful, means.

... Not a Clash of Civilizations

Several important caveats must be stressed. This paper argues that this struggle should be viewed as a battle of ideas, not a clash of civilizations. The ideology that poses the greatest threat to American interests is more political than religious. Islam, a religious faith, must not be confused with Islamism or jihadism. The latter two are politicized ideologies; their religious origins are extremist, perverted, and contradictory.²⁸ The jihadi movement takes place outside the established religious circles, spreads “traditionalist” values across the Internet, and blurs the customary distinction between the learned teachers (*ulema*) and students (*tulab*). The ideology and its tactics are largely a product of modern times and are not a symbol of unchanging traditions.

The violent factions in the Muslim world that espouse extremist ideologies are a minority. Mosques might be used as recruiting grounds by fanatics as factories were used by communists, but regular “workers were not interested in the millennium promised any more than ordinary Muslims are in the caliphate.”²⁹ While there are those outside the jihadi circles who sympathize with some of jihadists’ sentiments, the overwhelming majority of Muslims do not seek their ultimate goals or approve of their tactics. The purpose of America’s battle of ideas should not be viewed as attempting to

²⁴ Zakaria, Fareed. “How to Stop the Contagion.” *Newsweek*. (August 1, 2005.)

²⁵ Azzam Tamimi, director of the London-based Institute of Islamic Political Thought, as quoted in “Propaganda ‘now as vital as action to al-Qaeda.’” *Financial Times*. (September 2, 2005.)

²⁶ “Finding America’s Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating U.S. Public Diplomacy.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. (New York, NY : Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2003.) p. 21.

²⁷ “2005 Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.” *Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy*. (Washington, D.C.: 2005.)

²⁸ It is important to note that the target is political, not religious. On 9/11, the Twin Towers and Pentagon were struck, not St. Peter’s Basilica.

²⁹ Desai, Meghnad. “The way to tackle Islamist terrorism is to see it as pure ideology similar to old terrorist movements.” *Financial Times*. (August 10, 2005.), p. 16

“drain the swamp” of radicalism;³⁰ nor should it be “boldly asserting American values.”³¹ The struggle for the hearts and minds is a two-way street that involves dialogue and exchange. The United States must do everything to prevent jihadism from becoming a widespread epidemic, but it must not see itself engaged in a crusade lest it will bring about a clash of civilizations.

DIPLOMACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Evolving Nature of Diplomacy

In addition to engaging in the battle of ideas, public diplomacy is important in the context of the evolving international order, which necessitates a more nuanced understanding of diplomacy. Diplomacy is a means by which state negotiate treaties, prevent wars, and resolve conflicts. Traditional diplomacy, largely based on balance-of-power considerations, became the hallmark of European countries’ foreign policies after the 17th-century Westphalian creation of the nation-state system. Since its inception nearly four hundred years ago, the nation-state system has not collapsed, but the international order has changed remarkably. Today, transnational, non-state actors armed with a virulent ideology and powerful weapons, are targeting the world’s lone superpower. They “cannot be contained by the rules of traditional statecraft.”³² Innovations in communication technologies, remarkable improvements in travel, transportation, and the permeability of borders, and other factors influencing and influenced by globalization, have empowered non-state actors to influence governments and act on their own as never before. The information revolution has shifted the paradigm of diplomacy.

Traditional diplomacy, however, has largely remained the same, almost exclusively dealing with governments and hard power rather than peoples or movements. In an international system filled with powerful transnational movements, traditional diplomacy is anachronistic. “[I]t is remarkable the extent to which the diplomatic structures and systems designed to operate [the Westphalian system] remain,”³³ especially in the context of relations with countries characterized by prominent non-state actors filling the void of centralized power. Although adept with maintaining the balance-of-power status quo during relatively stable periods, traditional diplomacy has proved to largely ineffective during volatile times³⁴ and even less capable in dealing with non-state actors.³⁵ The gradual crumbling of the building blocks on which traditional

³⁰ Satloff, Robert. “A Practical Guide to Tapping America’s Underappreciated, Underutilized Anti-Islamist Allies across the Muslim World.” From “A Practical Guide to Winning the War on Terrorism,” by Adam Garfinkle. (Hoover Institution Press, 2004) pp. 181-194

³¹ “Security, Reform, and Peace. The Three Pillars of U.S. Strategy in the Middle East.” *Report of the Presidential Study Group*. (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2005.) p. 49

³² CFR, p. 21

³³ Riordan, Shaun. “The New Diplomacy.” (Polity Press, Cambridge, UK: 2003) p. 13

³⁴ This was arguably the case during World War II, where the Allies committed the grave mistake of carving Czechoslovakia on the assumption that Nazi Germany is a normal state that abides exclusively by narrow, traditional rules and balance-of-power considerations.

³⁵ In fact, most schools of realism, on which traditional diplomacy rests heavily, do not even account for the role of non-state or transnational actors.

diplomacy relies (as evidenced by the number of failed or failing states)³⁶ and the growing number of non-state, transnational actors calls for a diplomacy that takes into account ideological convictions, religious beliefs, socioeconomic conditions, cultural sensitivities, and other considerations outside the narrow realms of ‘balance-of-power.’

Diplomacy at a Crossroads: America’s Transformational Diplomacy

After 9/11, the United States realized that weak or failing states and non-state actors posed as much, if not more, of a threat to its domestic and foreign interests as ‘competitive states.’ On the diplomatic front, the State Department’s response gradually evolved into what today is known as “transformational diplomacy,” the strategic purpose of which is to lay the foundations of democracy across the world.³⁷ Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s ambition is not just to be a gardener that maintains healthy alliances, but a “landscape architect” trying to change the world.³⁸ The Bush Administration’s recognition that traditional diplomacy must be fused with a new type of diplomacy to suit the international landscape of the twenty-first century is commendable. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether the solution chosen by the Administration, democracy promotion, was correct. If the main threats to the United States are terrorism and the ideology which espouses the tactic, then the fundamental question regarding transformational diplomacy is: can democracy stop terrorism and the ideology which promotes its use? It is unclear whether democracy promotion, through either hard or soft power, will benefit or hurt American interests, and whether it is prudent or even possible in the Muslim world. The issue goes beyond Iraq.

Not only does there exist no evidence to support the notion that democracy reduces terrorism,³⁹ but it is becoming evident that democratic reform might actually advance the ideologies that support terrorism. After witnessing the electoral success of Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, respectively, it would be absurd for the United States to harshly condemn Mubarak in Egypt or Musharaf in Pakistan for potentially undemocratic practices. Democracy promotion in the Muslim world from the top-down (ie pressure on governments) might prove counterproductive, but a bottom-up approach (ie overt support for independent democrats and liberals) could be highly impractical, as well. The surest way for supporters of democracy or liberal values to lose public support in the Muslim world is to receive American backing or assistance. U.S. policies in Iraq, the Palestinian territories, and Lebanon have considerably eroded America’s image in the region.

The Bush administration was correct in recognizing the fundamental need for a new focus for diplomacy. But the solution was never found in transformational

³⁶ In 2006, there were over a hundred states on “warning” status for failing; roughly thirty countries were considered “failed states.” For a complete list, see: “Failed States Index 2006.” *The Fund for Peace*. www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindex2006.php

³⁷ Although the term was coined by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in January 2006, the thinking behind ‘transformational diplomacy’ started much earlier in President Bush’s tenure. The war in Iraq is arguably a continuation of transformational diplomacy by other means. In its softer version, transformational diplomacy is State Department programs like the Middle East Partnership Initiative, launched in 2002 to promote political, economic, and educational reform, in the Arab world.

³⁸ Chollet, Derek “Altered State. Rice Aims to Put Foggy Bottom Back on the Map.” *Washington Post*. (April 17, 2005.) p. B01

³⁹ See: Gause III, F. Gregory. “Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?” *Foreign Affairs*. (September/October 2005.)

diplomacy, the aim of which (democracy promotion) is largely unfeasible and unwise in theory and in practice. U.S. diplomacy lost its moment to transform the region according to its vision. The best it can strive for now is to salvage whatever is left of its image and attempt to foster more positive attitudes. That requires a transformation of public diplomacy. The answer to the search for a new orientation for diplomacy in the Muslim world lies in public diplomacy, which aims to tackle America's biggest problem in the region: extreme anti-Americanism, which is "increasingly compromising America's safety and constricting its movements."⁴⁰ As Judith Milestone, former Vice President of CNN and member of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, states, "The war in Iraq has compromised our image. We have to come back to a narrower position that shows the bedrock values of American society. That should be the primary goal of our diplomacy."⁴¹ Today, public diplomacy is a small part of transformational diplomacy; the exact opposite should be the case. Only after restoring credibility can American policies hope to promote pro-American values.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGE

Watching Their Attitude

Attitudes and perceptions matter. Globalization has changed the dynamics of supermarkets to the role of the world's lone superpower, and it also has created what Thomas Friedman calls "the super-empowered individual." The super-empowered individual can pressure his government or exert influence on his own in historically unprecedented ways. 'Attitudes' have come to matter as much as 'longitudes.' As a report by the *Council on Foreign Relations* states, "The amount of discontent in the world bears a direct relation to the amount of danger America faces. As hatred of the United States grows, so does the pool of potential terrorists."⁴²

The problem of anti-American attitudes is especially acute in the Muslim world. The sympathy for the United States expressed by the world population after the 9/11 terrorist attacks gradually transformed into severe anti-Americanism. By 2003, foreign public support for U.S. policies reached bottom, especially in the Muslim world.⁴³ In 2004, according to polls conducted by *Zogby International*, unfavorable attitudes towards the United States ranged anywhere from 98% in Egypt, to 94% in Saudi Arabia, to 88% in Morocco.⁴⁴ When asked 'What is the First Thought When You Hear America?', the responses were overwhelmingly negative throughout the Middle East: "Unfair foreign policy," "imperialistic," and "oil interest" were the terms used most often.⁴⁵

A noteworthy conclusion from these polls is that anti-Americanism is rooted in perceptions of U.S. policies, not American values. The ratio of policy concerns to value

⁴⁰ CFR, p. 28.

⁴¹ Interview, Judith Milestone. July 6, 2006.

⁴² CFR, p. 21.

⁴³ Pew Global Attitudes Project Report. "Views of a Changing World." *The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press*. (Washington, D.C.: 2003)

⁴⁴ Zogby, James. "What Arabs Think: The Pew Research Center For The People & The Press." (Zogby International, 2004.) p. 3

⁴⁵ Zogby, p. 5

concerns ranged from 6 to 1 in Saudi Arabia to 10 to 1 in Lebanon.⁴⁶ That policies are more significant than values in determining attitudes does not imply that the only solution is a radical change of policies. It is not simply the policy, but perceptions of the United States, which are often pre-determined and which put the policy in context. As the Zogby reports indicated, in many countries throughout the Muslim world, most individuals who visited the United States had a more favorable overall view of the United States, as did (to a lesser degree) respondents who met Americans at some point in their life.⁴⁷ Perceptions of the United States were better despite the same policies. Both policies *and* perceptions matter. This is where public diplomacy comes in: it aims to put American policies in an objective context, to show that the United States is not an evil empire aimed at fighting Islam, as it is portrayed to be by jihadists. Unfortunately, in the absence of effective public diplomacy, America's image has been defined for it. The United States must take seriously the battle of ideas and reaffirm its commitment to struggle for the hearts and minds.

The ability to influence foreign public opinion through communication channels has been integrated into the workings of agencies as diverse as the State Department, the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). While numerous departments have increasingly taken interest in information as a form of national power, there are important differences on the means of waging ideological and informational campaigns. *Strategic communication* is the term under which both covert and overt international programs are placed.⁴⁸ *Public diplomacy* is a subset of strategic communications that specifically deals with overt, open information activities overseas. Today's public diplomacy responsibilities are mainly lodged in the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), while the CIA and Department of Defense (DoD) are involved in both overt and covert activities, which include psychological operations, misinformation and disinformation campaigns.⁴⁹

Changing attitudes by covert means is not a wise option because "secrecy works only so long as the secret can be kept, and that is difficult in the information age, particularly in a democracy like the United States with a powerful press, Congress, and no official secrets act."⁵⁰ Covert operations are both risky domestically and in the foreign context as well. As the *Defense-Science Board* writes, "[T]he critical problem in American public diplomacy directed toward the Muslim World is not one of 'dissemination of information'... Rather, it is a fundamental problem of credibility."⁵¹ In regions where the United States already lacks credibility, most covert activities will prove to be counterproductive, especially in the long-run.

This paper deals specifically with public diplomacy, the most powerful instrument that is exclusively engaged in open, overt information activities abroad and arguably the

⁴⁶ Zogby, p. 7

⁴⁷ Zogby, p. 14-15.

⁴⁸ Influencing public opinion is also pertinent domestically in the context of the war on terror (law enforcement, homeland security) and is known as *public affairs* or *public relations*.

⁴⁹ The military and intelligence communities designated these activities by various names, including *perception management*, *strategic influence*, and *information operations*. The definitions and use of these terms are still evolving, and disagreements over authority persist.

⁵⁰ Nye, p. 115

⁵¹ "Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication." *Defense Science Board*. (Washington, D.C.: 2004) p. 41.

most powerful form of strategic communications. The primary focus of the next section will be on American public diplomacy as it is led by the State and the BBG and coordinated on the interagency level; its use by other agencies will also be discussed. Furthermore, it will concentrate on the Muslim world, especially the Middle East, where anti-American sentiments are especially high and where a plethora of sizable jihadi non-state and transnational actors exist.⁵² While jihadism and anti-Americanism are global phenomenon, the imperative for public diplomacy is most evident in the aforementioned region. It will identify the crucial missing elements and institutional problems that are prevalent and that severely hamper public diplomacy five years after it was supposedly rediscovered.⁵³ Finally, it will offer general policy prescriptions and specific recommendations.

U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY POST 9/11

Historically, public diplomacy efforts were coordinated by the United States Information Agency (USIA.) Established in 1953, the USIA was tasked with leading America's battle of ideas with the Soviet Union and the ideological struggle with international communism. Its programs ranged from radio broadcasting, where the legendary *Voice of America* provided millions of listeners behind the Iron Curtain with objective international news, to educational and cultural exchanges, principally the Fulbright Scholarship Program.⁵⁴ After the dissolution of its adversary, the Soviet Union, and rival ideology, communism, the United States celebrated the "end of history," or at least the end of mankind's ideological evolution. Whether liberalism won permanently is questionable, but public diplomacy certainly lost, as funding in the post-Cold War years was slashed and overseas operations were closed. In 1999, Congress abolished the USIA. The agency's broadcasting efforts were transferred to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), while information operations and exchange programs were integrated into the State Department's Bureau of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Public diplomacy was largely forgotten until 9/11. Unintentionally, the atrocious acts that occurred on that day reminded the world that ideas, perceptions, and attitudes still matter. Nevertheless, the true extent of these elements' importance was never realized. The lack of appreciation for and recognition of public diplomacy's strategic importance resulted in structural and institutional problems in the State Department and on the interagency level; budget and personnel constraints, especially in field offices overseas; and programmatic mistakes in operations overseas. The following subsections identify these problems and offer appropriate policy prescriptions and recommendations

⁵² For an excellent history of public diplomacy efforts in the Arab world, see Rugh, William. "American encounters with Arabs: the 'soft power' of U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East." (Praeger Security International: 2006)

⁵³ The aim of this paper is not to provide excessive details and numbers on all federal positions, local posts, budgets, etc., but rather to offer recommendations on how to better conduct public diplomacy.

⁵⁴ At the pinnacle of public diplomacy's importance, the director of the USIA (most notably, Edward Murrow) served on the National Security Council. For a history of the USIA, see Dizard Jr., Wilson P. "Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the U.S. Information Agency." (Lymme Rienner Publishers: 2004)

on how to reform the public diplomacy campaign across the agencies, within the diplomatic establishment, and in posts abroad.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES ON THE INTERAGENCY LEVEL

The Root of the Problem

When a conflict arises, public diplomacy is partially rediscovered, only to be forgotten when the threat goes away. On 9/11, the United States lost its island of security to non-state actors with a transnational ideology. Some public diplomacy experts, such as Bruce Gregory, the director of the Public Diplomacy Institute at The George Washington University, hoped that the “globalization of threat and opportunities would create an environment where public diplomacy will be viewed as strategically important on a more sustained basis.”⁵⁵ Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Today, within the State Department, across federal agencies, and in local posts overseas, public diplomacy is still seen an afterthought because the strategic importance of communications is not recognized or appreciated. This is public diplomacy’s fundamental problem and it leads to other setbacks, such as its lack of resources and separation from policy.

The President Should Reemphasize the Strategic Importance of Public Diplomacy and Reaffirm His Commitment to Strategic Communications.

White House efforts to enhance public diplomacy’s strategic importance have been neither sincere nor sustainable. In 2003, the President established the Office of Global Communications (OGC) with the purpose of advising the Executive Office, and the heads of executive department on the most effective means of communication for the U.S. to promote its interests abroad. Unfortunately, the OGC, which replaced the Strategic Communications Policy Coordinating Committee created the year before, itself quickly “evolved into a second tier organization”⁵⁶ and “has not assumed its intended role in facilitating the strategic direction and coordination of U.S. public diplomacy efforts.”⁵⁷

The key to reinvigorating the public diplomacy campaign lies in executive leadership. The President is the only one can make sure that the United States communicates effectively, positively, and consistently with the world. The President’s word is most closely watched in the international arena, and it carries the most weight across the agencies. He is “the ultimate director of public diplomacy,”⁵⁸ and it is absolutely “essential that the President himself make[s] clear America’s commitment to reform its public diplomacy and make it a central element of U.S. foreign policy.”⁵⁹ A way to convey the importance of an instrument of statecraft is by issuing a Presidential

⁵⁵ Interview, Bruce Gregory. July 25, 2006.

⁵⁶ DSB, 2004, p. 25

⁵⁷ “Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by the Lack of a National Communication Strategy.” (Washington, D.C.: 2005.) *General Accountability Office*. p 11. The last update on the OGC website was made over a year ago, on March 15, 2005 under “Global Message of the Day.” According to some sources, OGC’s director and associate director both left last year. Kamen, Al. “Dear GAO: OGC Is DOA.” *Washington Post*, April 6, 2005. pg A17.

⁵⁸ Djerejian, p. 59

⁵⁹ CFR, p. 10.

Decision Directive, as was recommended by the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Defense Science Board (DSB).⁶⁰ The first step to resurrecting public diplomacy begins at the White House, where the President should once again issue a directive reestablishing the strategic importance of public diplomacy and reaffirm his commitment to strategic communications.

Absence of Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination is crucial to the success of public diplomacy and executive leadership is also essential in this respect. Intentionally or not, America's message is carried out by all government agencies. More specifically, public diplomacy activities are now operated in a wide range of government agencies (eg the State Department, DoD, USAID, and BBG) which communicate through media and person-to-person contacts. Conveying America's message in a consistent voice is essential, and requires interagency coordination, which has been absent from U.S. public diplomacy. The first two attempts at interagency coordination were quickly terminated.⁶¹ This has complicated the task of conveying messages, "achieving mutually reinforcing benefits," and diminished the "overall efficiency and effectiveness of government-wide public diplomacy efforts."⁶²

Today, the Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy is the leader of U.S. public diplomacy efforts. The current Undersecretary, Karen Hughes, has exerted great efforts at interagency coordination.⁶³ Daniel Smith, Undersecretary Hughes' executive assistant, states that his office does not look at public diplomacy as a turf battle with other departments, and that "the Undersecretary has succeeded in bringing the different agencies closer together and encouraged a lot of cooperation."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, as Alberto Fernandez, the director of public diplomacy at State's Near East Bureau, states, "While interagency coordination is better than ever before under Hughes, it is not institutionalized and will most likely be divorced at the end of her tenure."⁶⁵ Because of her close relationship with the President, Hughes' voice has been taken seriously across the agencies. But the position of undersecretary itself does not convey authority on the interagency level, and it is therefore "critical that there is a structural environment which gives public diplomacy power."⁶⁶

Establish a Robust Coordinating Structure at the NSC.

⁶⁰ The CFR recommends issuing a Presidential Decision Directive (PDD), a form of executive order carrying the weight of the President and the National Security Council. The DSB recommends that the President issue a National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), which is how PDDs are referred to in the Bush administration.

⁶¹ The first attempt was in 2002 with the Strategic Communications Policy Coordinating Committee and was terminated within several months. In 2004, the Muslim World Outreach Policy Coordinating Committee was created, but the committee's widely praised plan "was never implemented. Now that committee is being replaced by [Karen] Hughes's new group." Kaplan, David E. "Of Jihad networks and the war of ideas." *U.S. News and World Report*. May 22, 2006

⁶² GAO, 2005, p. 11

⁶³ A successful effort has been the creation of a "rapid response unit," which monitors news stories across the world and each morning distributes reports to administration officials, policymakers, ambassadors, and the military leadership so that they can respond effectively, with consistent answers, to the day's most pressing questions from international reporters.

⁶⁴ Interview, Daniel Smith. July 31, 2006.

⁶⁵ Interview, Alberto Fernandez. July 28, 2006.

⁶⁶ Interview, William Kiehl. July 27, 2006.

The only entity which carries considerable weight on the interagency level is the National Security Council (NSC). Thus, a Presidential Directive must also cover the creation of a robust interagency coordinating structure at the NSC. As the Defense Science Board recommends, the President should establish a permanent strategic communication structure at the NSC: a Strategic Communication Committee chaired by an appointed Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communication.⁶⁷ The members of the Committee should have rank equivalent to that of undersecretary and be chosen by various high ranking officials across the agencies. The Defense Board goes further, “Unlike previous coordinating mechanisms with nominal authority, this Strategic Communication Committee should have authority to assign responsibilities and plan the work of departments and agencies in the areas of public diplomacy, public affairs, and military information operations; concur in strategic communication personnel choices; [and] shape strategic communication budget priorities.”⁶⁸ Such proposals for public diplomacy and strategic communications are necessary and are not so ambitious or radical compared to recent revolutionary changes that have occurred on the institutional levels across U.S. government agencies.⁶⁹

Develop a National Communications Strategy.

Encumbering the coordination amongst agencies has been the lack of a strategic direction from the White House, which has not developed and implemented a sustained national communications strategy. In the absence of executive strategic direction in the context of communications, “agencies have developed their own roles and missions and coordinated their activities on an ad hoc basis.”⁷⁰ This has seriously hurt public diplomacy efforts. Some agencies are still struggling to define or redefine their role. This is especially true of the Defense Department, which is currently developing a public diplomacy unit in the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. The office and its specific tasks have not been formally established “largely because terms such as strategic communications and information operations have not been precisely defined yet by the White House or National Security Council.”⁷¹ The White House should develop a national communications strategy and provide strategic direction for the different agencies.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Public Diplomacy is Divorced from Policy

The logic, at least in rhetoric, of folding the USIA into State was to bring policy and public diplomacy closer together, so that, in Edward Murrow’s words, public diplomacy is present at the “take-offs,” not just the “crash-landings.” Unfortunately, that has not happened. At the State Department, public diplomacy is not seen on the same par

⁶⁷ The position of Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach was supposedly created in March of 2005. However, in interviews with experts and officials, most could not identify the person behind the position and referred to the position as “meaningless.” A senior State public diplomacy official referred to it as “the invisible man, it has no relation to reality.”

⁶⁸ DSB, 2004, p. 63

⁶⁹ Examples in the last few years include the creation of the Department of Homeland Security; Pentagon’s “transformation” of the military; and ongoing reforms of intelligence agencies.

⁷⁰ GAO, 2005, p. 23

⁷¹ Interview, Col (Ret.) Daniel Devlin, July 25, 2006.

as policy (and is merely a small part of transformational diplomacy.) Very little progress has been made in this respect as State's policymaking process does not truly take into account public diplomacy considerations.⁷²

Integrate Public Diplomacy with Policy.

Actions speak louder than words and to truly be effective in improving America's image abroad, public diplomacy must be brought closer to policy. Policymaking should not be held hostage to foreign public opinion, but it would help immensely in communicating a positive message if sentiments and values were taken into consideration when policies are being formulated. Rather than being an instrument for simply responding to criticism, public diplomacy should be an integral part of foreign policy. As such, it would "help define optimum foreign policies as well as explain how U.S. policies fit the values and interests of other nations."⁷³ To achieve policy-public diplomacy integration, it is necessary to empower the role of the Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy within the State Department. The Defense Science Board recommends that the responsibility of this position be not simply to manage public diplomacy effort, but serve as policy advisor to the Secretary of State; more broadly, the Undersecretary should also be tasked with approving public diplomacy components within all major foreign policy directives to ensure that all foreign policy initiatives have a public diplomacy component.⁷⁴

Lack of Institutional Sustainability

The problem with U.S. public diplomacy has been not only of attention, but attention span. A crucial missing element from U.S. public diplomacy has been the lack of enduring institutions, structures, and strategies. All too often, offices and positions are created and disbanded or replaced. "We are attempting to build sustainable foundations," contends Smith, Hughes' executive assistant, "but it is hard not to be distracted by day-to-day policymaking, bureaucratic tug of war, and other urgent matters."⁷⁵ Two positive developments have happened in this area: the creation of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources, which assists the Undersecretary in developing a long-term, wide-ranging strategic vision for public diplomacy; and the appointment of dual-headed deputy assistant secretaries, which are supposed to bring more direct authority between public affairs officers overseas and the Undersecretary.⁷⁶

Develop a Long-Term Strategy and Establish Enduring Structures.

Nevertheless, with the exception of these two, public diplomacy institutions that have endured at State have been largely non-existent over the last half decade. "While there are some positive developments," says Fernandez, "nearly all changes are ad-hoc and will most likely not outlast Undersecretary Hughes' tenure."⁷⁷ Reorganizing a department "is the least attractive thing to do it when you are in office for a short time, but in public diplomacy's current state, it is absolutely essential," says William Kiehl,

⁷² The exception being the "rapid response unit." (supra note 63).

⁷³ CFR, p. 31.

⁷⁴ DSB, 2004, p. 74

⁷⁵ Interview, Daniel Smith. July 31, 2006.

⁷⁶ Public Affairs officers (PAOs) are in charge of public diplomacy operations at overseas posts. Prior to this change, PAO's reported only to the Ambassador, not the Undersecretary.

⁷⁷ Interview, Alberto Fernandez. July 28, 2006.

Public Diplomacy Council's executive director.⁷⁸ Perhaps the most important change in the short-run, argues Dr. Joshua Fouts, director of USC's *Center on Public Diplomacy*, is to "create a long-term vision and strategy for public diplomacy and construct enduring strategies."⁷⁹ The Undersecretary should strive to develop a long-term strategy, which will only be sustained if enduring institutions are built within the State Department.

Resources and Personnel are Constrained by Lack of Funding

Not seen as important enough by different agencies, policymakers, and Congressmen, public diplomacy has lacked the funding, resources, and personnel to carry out successful operations. The combined State and BBG public diplomacy budget is a approximately \$1.2 billion, which is less than a thirtieth of the international affairs budget and less than what the Defense Department spends in one day (Fiscal Year 2006.)⁸⁰ The *Djerejian Report* put it bluntly: "In this time of peril, public diplomacy is absurdly and dangerously under-funded."⁸¹ The financial marginalization of public diplomacy has severely hampered efforts and contributed to further frustration. "At our Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, we have been asked to do more and have taken additional tasks," says Fernandez, "but without any more resources or personnel. It is all done on purely personal will and energy."⁸² A lack of funding causes shortages of personnel. In 2003, there were 619 public diplomacy Foreign Service Officers (FSO),⁸³ compared to 1200 FSO personnel at the USIA in the 1960s.⁸⁴ Over the last few years, public diplomacy's budget has increased marginally, which has significantly constrained public diplomacy operations.

Significantly Raise Public Diplomacy's Budget.

As the CFR states, "The bottom line: U.S. public diplomacy must be funded at significantly higher levels."⁸⁵ The only way to raise appropriate funding is by building congressional support for public diplomacy, which can be done by forming a congressional committee structure devoted to public diplomacy, giving Congress "a sense of ownership over public diplomacy and an appreciation of public diplomacy's linkages to foreign policy."⁸⁶ Furthermore, the President's voice is important in conveying to Congress that public diplomacy is a national security priority and in getting Congressional support for increased funding.

Appropriate More Resources to Overseas Posts.

⁷⁸ Interview, William Kiehl. July 27, 2006.

⁷⁹ Interview, Joshua Fouts. July 11, 2006.

⁸⁰ Numbers taken from Defense Department's "National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2006." pg. 10.

⁸¹ "Changing Minds, Winning Peace." *Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World*. (Washington, D.C.: 2003) p. 13. The group was led by Ambassador Edward Djerejian. It will be referred to as the "Djerejian Report" and referenced as "Djerejian."

⁸² Interview, Alberto Fernandez. July 28, 2006. One example is Fernandez himself, who is a PD office director; fulfills the responsibilities of a deputy assistant secretary within NEA, although he does not hold that title; has recently taken on a range of Iran-related responsibilities; and is also involved in Arab media outreach.

⁸³ "U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenges." *General Accountability Office*. (Washington, D.C.: 2003.) p. 10.

⁸⁴ "Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy," p. 17

⁸⁵ CFR, p. 47

⁸⁶ CFR, p. 48

Person-to-person activities are essential to public diplomacy. Public diplomacy efforts overseas are led by a variety of public diplomacy personnel: public affairs, cultural affairs, information, information resources, and regional English language officers.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, in the last few years, there has not been a significant increase in staff or funding in overseas operations. “Several hundred individuals overseas communicating with an audience of several hundred million is a joke,” claims Kiehl. “Public diplomacy is often directed from Washington, but this does not work. Countries and societies are different. Personnel on the ground are more knowledgeable in this respect.”⁸⁸ Not only should greater resources be allocated to public diplomacy, but a significant portion of funding and personnel must go to regional field offices, rather than Washington-directed operations.

Allocate More Funding and Personnel to the Muslim World.

The issue is not simply of budget constraints, but how money is divided amongst posts overseas. Funding and personnel overseas have been lacking where they are most needed. In 2003, the budget and number of public diplomacy officers working in Europe and Eurasia were more than double that of the Near East and South Asia.⁸⁹ The Global Repositioning process, part of transformational diplomacy’s effort to move resources to high-priority regions, has been “slow, painful, and insignificant. The Near East Bureau will be receiving in the future a dozen personnel, when the numbers should actually be an upward of a hundred, if not more.”⁹⁰ From 2003 to 2006, staff numbers in South Asia and the Near East increased by three percent.⁹¹ According to Ambassador William Rugh, who served in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries in the region, “In the context of the Middle East, personal contact should be at the top of the list.”⁹² The funding that is allocated towards public diplomacy overseas should be divided wisely. It should go towards regions where they are needed most, particularly the Arab and Muslim world.

OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR PROGRAMS OVERSEAS

Programs Are Short-Lived and Lack Strategic Approach

After 9/11, the State Department launched three major campaigns designed to reach Muslim audiences, all of which were completely or partially terminated. The first was the Shared Values Initiative, led by Charlotte Beers, an advertising mogul who was the Undersecretary of Public Diplomacy from October 2001 to March 2003. Centered on a paid television campaign, it aimed to illustrate the daily lives of Muslim Americans and highlight common values and beliefs shared by Muslims and Americans. The television

⁸⁷ For a detailed description of these positions and programs in overseas posts, see: “U.S. Public Diplomacy. State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges.” *General Accountability Office*. May, 2006. pp 49-53. For an account of public diplomacy resources and instruments in the context of the Arab world, see “American Encounters with Arabs.” Pp. 9-23.

⁸⁸ Interview, William Kiehl. July 27, 2006.

⁸⁹ GAO, 2003, p. 10

⁹⁰ Interview, Alberto Fernandez. July 28, 2006.

⁹¹ GAO, 2006, p. 10

⁹² Interview, William Rugh. July 17, 2006.

campaign aired during the winter of 2002-2003 and was subsequently suspended.⁹³ In 2003, State started the publication of Arabic-language, teen-targeted *Hi* magazine, which attempted to highlight American culture and lifestyles. The publication of the magazine ceased in 2005 and its electronic format is no longer available on-line in English or Arabic. The third campaign was an educational exchange initiative for Muslim youth, entitled Partnerships for Learning, which lasted from 2002 to 2005 as an organizing theme. It continues today in modified formats, such as the Youth Exchange Study (YES) and the Partnerships for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) programs, which over the past few years brought close to a thousand students from the Muslim world to study in the United States.

Adopt Private-Sector's Strategic Approach and Long-Term Vision.

According to GAO officials, the most important change in the conduct of public diplomacy programs and campaigns is “to adopt an analytical, strategic approach: from defining the target audience and message, to developing techniques, to monitoring and evaluating progress.”⁹⁴ Public diplomacy campaigns should utilize the key elements of typical public relations/advertising strategies conducted in the private sector: define program objectives, core messages, and target audience; develop detailed strategies and tactics to reach target audience; create and implement a detailed communication plan incorporating objectives, themes, target audience, and strategies; and monitor progress and adjust tactics.⁹⁵

The use of private sector advertising techniques in public diplomacy campaigns has been urged by most reports on public diplomacy. The Shared Values Initiative, the closest program to resemble an advertising campaign, was highly successful in the only country where a post-campaign survey was conducted, Indonesia. The survey determined that in the country with the largest Muslim population, 63 million Indonesians learned that “Islam is not discriminated against” and given equal treatment in the United States.⁹⁶ In addition to utilizing private sector techniques, it is important to have a long-term vision. That programs do not endure is partially due to the expectation of quick, practical results. Because public diplomacy cannot change minds overnight, a short-term view leads to frustration and makes officials more inclined to close operations. A long-term vision should be kept in the creation and implementation of public diplomacy operations.

Create Country-Level Communication Plans.

GAO officials who visited local posts in the Muslim world indicated that they lacked detailed, country-level communication plans. There is never a “one-size fits all” solution. Cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic conditions, and other circumstances are different across countries. Recently, the State Department began a pilot program aimed at developing country-level plans for 15 states in the Muslim world that were designated by the government as crucial in the battle of ideas. “The plan is to look at a specific country,” says Fernandez, “and figure out what are the tools that are needed to accomplish the mission of supporting moderates and promoting tolerance. Overseas

⁹³ The programs were refused to be shown in Lebanon, Egypt, and were withdrawn in Jordan.

⁹⁴ Interview, GAO officials. July 27, 2006.

⁹⁵ GAO, 2006, p. 19

⁹⁶ Djerejian, p. 72. A recent book with original research that concludes that the Initiative was successful in reducing anti-Americanism is “Advertising's War on Terrorism: The Story of the U.S. State Department's Shared Values Initiative” by Jami A. Fullerton and Alice G. Kendrick. (Marquette Books, 2006)

experts and professionals come up with suggestions and plans. Finally, Washington, on the interagency level, marshals the resources needed to support what these countries need.”⁹⁷ It remains to be seen whether these reports are detailed and effective, as they are still being written. But the fundamental idea behind this country-level pilot program is correct and should be pursued vigorously.

Undersecretary Should Provide Field Posts with Strategic Guidance.

In 2005, the Undersecretary established a strategic framework for U.S. public diplomacy efforts, which had goals ranging from delivering a positive image of hope to isolating extremists to promoting understanding on shared values and interests. Nevertheless, a written guidance detailing how this strategic framework be implemented in the field has not been developed. Country-level public diplomacy operations should not be managed by State, but the Undersecretary ought to provide local posts with some strategic guidance on public diplomacy missions.

Broadcasting Operations Are Failing.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is in charge of U.S. international broadcasting operations and has a total budget of approximately \$600 million. In the Arab and Muslim world, it has established Radio Sawa (for Arabic speakers), Radio Farda (for Iranian audiences), and the Afghanistan Radio Network.⁹⁸ In February of 2004, the BBG established al-Hurra, an Arabic language television network. According to Ambassador Rugh, “these efforts have been a disaster, in terms of reaching appropriate audience sizes, and more importantly, in influencing attitudes.”⁹⁹ Most experts agree and many officials at State admit that this has been the case. Media communication remains essential to public diplomacy, but concrete alternative approaches to successful communications have not been implemented.

Consider the Creation of a Corporation for Public Diplomacy.

The CFR report recommended the creation of a ‘Corporation for Public Diplomacy’ (CPD): an independent, not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization supported by the U.S. government and private funds organization and modeled after the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). It would be tasked with making grants to individual producers and independent channels with the aim of creating and disseminating programming in the Arab and Muslim world.¹⁰⁰ However, while this idea should be seriously considered, there are reasons to believe that it might fail. During the Cold War, Soviet-bloc regimes were considered the enemy, while many Eastern Europeans were sympathetic to the United States; American broadcasting’s main challenge was to penetrate the Iron Curtain. The Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Free Liberty were viewed by audiences as credible alternatives to the news services of their dictatorial governments.

Today America finds itself in a competitive communication market in the Muslim and Arab world, whose people are not sympathetic to, and whose regimes are often allies

⁹⁷ Interview, Alberto Fernandez. July 28, 2006.

⁹⁸ Estimated costs for these three initiatives through fiscal year 2003 were about \$116 million, according to the GAO 2004 report, p. 7

⁹⁹ Interview, Amb. William Rugh. July 17, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ More details are contained in the CFR report, pp. 37-39. This recommendation was endorsed by the Djerejian Report, p. 32

of, the United States. American broadcasting efforts in the Muslim world, especially in Arab countries, will never have the reach of existing outlets such as al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya. Nor will they be viewed as credible in the short-run. CPD programs “are likely to gain even fewer viewers in the saturated Middle East satellite market than PBS does in the U.S. market.”¹⁰¹ Perhaps the funding devoted towards such efforts would be better spent on utilizing existing American and Arab media.

Utilize Existing Media in the United States and Arab and Muslim World.

An alternative approach is to encourage as many FSOs, government representatives, ambassadors, and others to engage local and regional media, especially pan-Arab television. The State Department is currently working on establishing a regional public diplomacy hub in Dubai, which will be staffed with several “spokespersons whose full-time job will be to appear on regional media outlets, with a focus on television.”¹⁰² This is an important development, but more needs to be done. Today, not enough American officials are able or willing to appear on pan-Arab media. Ambassadors receive scant media skills training. FSOs, including public diplomacy-related officers, lack the language skills to engage local media. Those who have sufficient skills shy away from the task.

It is necessary that the State Department “recruit language-qualified personnel and train new and existing personnel in the relevant languages” and require “those with the necessary fluency to participate actively in public diplomacy activities regardless of job title.”¹⁰³ Furthermore, utilizing American television networks should be given consideration. In terms of having more credibility and enough sensationalism to keep an audience interested, the U.S. government should “offer tax incentives to U.S. broadcasters to perform the public service of dubbing and then duplicating their news in Arabic.”¹⁰⁴

TAPPING INTO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private Sector’s Role in Public Diplomacy

While most reports argue for empowering the private sector in U.S. public diplomacy, its role has not been yet clearly defined. Some argue for the privatization of public diplomacy, or at least some of its components. Dr. Nicholas Cull, director of the Master’s in Public Diplomacy program at the University of Southern California, believes that cultural diplomacy¹⁰⁵ should be led by a public-private partnership, as is the case with the United Kingdom’s British Council. “If initiatives are directed by the government, such efforts run the risk of being dismissed as simply propaganda,” says Dr. Cull.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, while public diplomacy entails systematic organization that will be

¹⁰¹ Satloff, Robert. “The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror; Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East.” (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004.) p. 31.

¹⁰² GAO, 2006, p. 17

¹⁰³ Djerejian, p. 28

¹⁰⁴ Satloff, p. 31

¹⁰⁵ A subset of public diplomacy, it involves a wide-range of cultural programs, from exchange of performers and writers to overseas museum exhibitions. It aims to build a ‘foundation of trust’ between different cultures. For an excellent report, see “Cultural Diplomacy: The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy.” *Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State.* September 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Interview, Dr. Nicholas Cull. July 12, 2006.

absent if led by the private sector, the private sector has knowledge, expertise, and skills relating to public relations campaigns that will be extremely useful for this instrument.

Establish a Center for Strategic Communication.

To tap into the wealth of resources available in the private sector, the Defense Science Board recommended that the President work with Congress to create legislation and funding for a Center for Strategic Communication, an independent, non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt private 501 (c)(3) corporation modeled on federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs.)¹⁰⁷ The Center should be guided by several purposes: providing information and analysis on issues ranging from global public opinion and the role of culture to media trends and information technologies; developing mandated plans and programs for the implementation of U.S. communications strategies that integrate the diplomacy and national security; and supporting government communications through services provided on a “cost-recovery basis,” with capacities that include knowledge management systems and language and skills inventories.

The Center’s activities should range from audience polling and analysis of media influences on audiences to fostering cross-cultural exchanges. Aimed at advising civilian and military decision-makers, the Center should be made up of academics, experts, advertising specialists, and other private-sector professionals, as well. The Center should be able to sub-contract to the commercial and academic sectors for products and programs, ranging from children’s TV series and interactive games online to blogs and chat-rooms.¹⁰⁸ Public diplomacy would greatly benefit from the creation of a Center for Strategic Communication.

CONCLUSION

U.S. public diplomacy since 9/11 encountered structural and operational problems in the State Department, on the interagency level, and in local posts overseas. Interagency coordination has been largely absent; most institutions that were created have not endured; as an instrument of statecraft, it has remained divorced from policy; programs have been constrained by a lack of funding and long-term vision; and private-sector public relations methods have not been utilized.

The President should reemphasize the strategic importance of public diplomacy and reaffirm his commitment to strategic communications. A robust interagency coordinating structure at the NSC should be created. Country-level communication plans and a long-term strategic approach should be developed. More resources should be allocated towards public diplomacy and appropriated to overseas posts, especially in the Muslim world. Private-sector public relations methods should be adopted. Foreign-service officers should be better trained and required to engage media in the Arab world. Finally, a Center for Strategic Communication would benefit the public diplomacy programs by providing information, analysis, mandated plans, and programs for the implementation of U.S. communications strategies.

¹⁰⁷ In interviews, this recommendation was endorsed by officials in State, Defense, and GAO, as well as public diplomacy specialists at various institutes.

¹⁰⁸ For a detailed description of the Strategic Communications Center, see the 2004 DSB report, pp. 66-70.

Five years have passed since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. America's disproportionate focus on hard power has played into the hands of terrorist and contributed to the growing tide of jihadism and anti-Americanism. The problem of transnational terrorism is multi-dimensional and requires a multifaceted solution. An element that has remained missing is the U.S. response has been on the ideological field. To win the war on terror, the United States must seriously commit itself to engaging in the battle of ideas.