

American Public Diplomacy: Enduring Characteristics, Elusive Transformation

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Received: 20 September 2010; revised: 23 February 2011; accepted: 6 March 2011

Summary

Understanding, planning, engagement and advocacy are core concepts of public diplomacy. They are not unique to the American experience. There is, however, an American public diplomacy *modus operandi* with enduring characteristics that are rooted in the nation's history and political culture. These include episodic resolve correlated with war and surges of zeal, systemic trade-offs in American politics, competitive practitioner communities and powerful civil society actors, and late adoption of communication technologies. This article examines these concepts and characteristics in the context of US President Barack Obama's strategy of global public engagement. It argues that as US public diplomacy becomes a multi-stakeholder instrument and central to diplomatic practice, its institutions, methods and priorities require transformation rather than adaptation. The article explores three illustrative issues: a culture of understanding; social media; and multiple diplomatic actors. It concludes that the characteristics shaping the US public diplomacy continue to place significant constraints on its capacity for transformational change.

Keywords

public diplomacy, engagement, strategic communication, opinion research and evaluation, social media, multi-stakeholder diplomacy, Obama administration

Introduction

'We now have a public diplomacy effort that is worthy of the name'. It was no surprise when US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed 'a lot of progress' for American public diplomacy early in her second year in office.¹ An Obama administration that pledged a new beginning between the United States and the world could indeed point to numerous achievements. Presidential speeches in Cairo and elsewhere had been well received. Clinton's speeches and her enthusiasm for person-to-person contact in combative town-hall meetings were drawing

¹ Quoted in Michael Hirsh, "Get In There and Mix It Up": Hillary Clinton on Obama, Iran, and a World of Troubles', *Newsweek*, 23 April 2010, available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/04/22/get-in-there-and-mix-it-up.html>.

considerable attention. Senior US officials and diplomats were heeding her call to 'mix it up' with global audiences on many issues of shared concern. Polls showed that negative ratings of the United States had dropped and that positive ratings were up.²

What was surprising was the Secretary's use of the term 'public diplomacy'. President Obama rarely, if ever, speaks of public diplomacy. Secretary Clinton usually does so when referring to activities within the domain of the Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs and occasionally when describing her own frequent television appearances and meetings with civil society leaders. In seeking a redefinition of US diplomacy late in 2010, Secretary Clinton focused on US leadership, new approaches and skill sets for all American diplomats, leveraging civilian power and engaging beyond the state. 'Engagement must go far beyond government-to-government interactions', she wrote, as she called for a 'public diplomacy strategy that makes public engagement every diplomat's duty'.³

Engagement — the administration's foreign policy leitmotif — has multiple meanings. *Comprehensive engagement* frames an overall strategy and a new commitment to collective action based on 'mutual interests and mutual respect'. *Global public engagement* conveys an emphasis on dialogue and activities aimed at building relations with nations, institutions and people. *Strategic communication* describes a national capacity that 'synchronizes words and deeds' and uses tools of 'deliberate communication' and 'engagement', including those implemented by 'public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals'. *Public diplomacy* designates activities carried out by the US Department of State. The new lexicon describes a 'whole of government approach' in which engagement and strategic communication are seen to be essential to the integrated use of all of the tools of power. The Obama administration professes no desire to create 'new terms, concepts, organizations or capabilities'. Its goals are to clarify what it means by these terms and to encourage a new 'culture of communication' throughout government.⁴

² BBC World Service Poll, 'Global Views of the United States Improve while Other Countries Decline', 18 April 2010, available online at http://www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbc2010_countries/. See also Pew Research Center, 'Obama More Popular Abroad than at Home, Global Image of US Continues to Benefit', 22-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 17 June 2010, available online at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1630/obama-more-popular-abroad-global-american-image-benefit-22-nation-global-survey>.

³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, 'Leading through Civilian Power: Redefining American Diplomacy and Development', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2010, p. 16. Her essay framed key themes in *Leading through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (QDDR), a report issued by the US Department of State in December 2010, available online at <http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/>.

⁴ For an explanation of these terms, see the Obama administration's 'National Security Strategy', May 2010, available online at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf, (hereafter 'National Security Strategy'); and 'National Framework for Strategic Communi-

Public diplomacy in the twentieth century was viewed as a state-based instrument used by foreign ministries and other government agencies to engage and persuade foreign publics for the purpose of influencing their governments. Today, public diplomacy has come to mean an instrument used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes and behaviour; to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values.

Yet this article uses the term 'public diplomacy' reluctantly. This is not because of a preference for a better term or a new master concept.⁵ It is because public diplomacy is now so central to diplomacy that it is no longer helpful to treat it as a sub-set of diplomatic practice. The term marginalizes what has become 'woven into the fabric of mainstream diplomatic activity'.⁶ Public diplomacy is what many more diplomatic actors do much or most of the time.

There is evidence that the Obama administration is comfortable with this interpretation. Even as it confines public diplomacy organizationally to activities within the Department of State, it frames its 'diplomacy' as public diplomacy. Diplomats are 'the first line of engagement'. Diplomats need new skills: "[...] to foster interaction to convene, connect, and mobilize not only other governments and international organizations, but also non-state actors such as corporations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, universities, think tanks, and faith-based organizations".⁷ In the administration's 'smart power' rhetoric, diplomacy, development and defence signify a range of tools to be used in the right combination for each situation. Conceptual distinctions between diplomacy and public diplomacy are becoming rare, even as organizational distinctions persist.

US public diplomacy, which is described by Obama administration officials as global public engagement and strategic communication, is a multi-stakeholder instrument in which many domestic and foreign affairs departments and agencies play significant roles. They do so increasingly in collaboration with civil society actors, which are growing in strength and numbers.⁸ This article discusses these

cation', President Barack Obama's report to Congress, 16 March 2010, available online at <http://www.fas.org/man/eprint/pubdip.pdf>.

⁵ For an attempt to create a new 'master concept of 'strategic public engagement' that goes beyond public diplomacy and strategic communication, see Kristin M. Lord and Marc Lynch, *America's Extended Hand: Assessing the Obama Administration's Global Engagement Strategy* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2010), p. 11.

⁶ Jan Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice', in Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 11.

⁷ 'National Security Strategy', p. 14; US Department of State, 'American "Smart Power": Diplomacy and Development are the Vanguard', Bureau of Public Affairs Fact Sheet, 4 May 2009, available online at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/fs/2009/122579.htm>.

⁸ The term 'multi-stakeholder public diplomacy' can be used in a variety of ways. It can describe multiple actors who *implement* public diplomacy within governments. It can describe multiple actors, understood as governments, regional and international government organizations, sub-state actors and non-state

developments in the context of core public diplomacy concepts that are not unique to the US experience and then from the perspective of the US approach to public diplomacy.

Global trends and changes in the role of the state as new actors gain power are shaping diplomatic practice. Demographics, communication, urbanization, technological innovation, climate change, transfers of wealth, the power of networked connections, energy transition, pressures on food and water resources, and other drivers of change are creating a future that will be 'almost unrecognizable' to the makers of twentieth-century diplomacy.⁹ Change of this magnitude requires much more of diplomacy than better performance in the context of traditional expectations. It requires a fundamental reappraisal of missions, skills and structures — transformation, rather than adaptation, in institutions, methods and priorities.¹⁰

In framing a 'whole of government' approach to this global environment, US leaders elevate diplomacy and development 'alongside defence' in a strategy of civilian power that emphasizes engagement with people and institutions outside government. This article argues that the enduring historical and cultural characteristics that shape the United States' public diplomacy *modus operandi* place significant constraints on its capacity for transformational change. The analysis focuses on the US experience, but it does so in recognition of the need for discussion and research that does not privilege US public diplomacy.¹¹

actors that act independently or in association. Multi-stakeholder can also describe multiple publics, local and global, that are *affected* by public diplomacy. In this article, the term refers primarily to multiple public diplomacy actors within the US government. For a discussion of stakeholder issues and the profusion of diplomatic actors, see R. S. Zaharna, 'The Public Diplomacy Challenges of Strategic Stakeholder Engagement', in Ali Fisher and Scott Lucas (eds), *Trials of Engagement: The Future of US Public Diplomacy* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2011), pp. 201-229; and Geoffrey Allen Pigman, *Contemporary Diplomacy: Representation and Communication in a Globalized World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), pp. 17-105.

⁹ Sources on global trends and power shifts, with particular relevance to public diplomacy, include Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011); Alex Evans, Bruce Jones and David Steven, *Confronting the Long Crisis of Globalization: Risk, Resilience and International Order* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 26 January 2010); Andrew F. Cooper, Brian Hocking and William Maley (eds), *Global Governance and Diplomacy: Worlds Apart?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); and US National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, November 2008, available online at http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf.

¹⁰ This distinction borrows from Monroe Price, Susan Haas and Drew Margolin, 'New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations', in Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull (eds), *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 160-162. In adaptation, institutions update and perform traditional tasks more efficiently. Transformation comes to grips with fundamental change, and it can be turbulent.

¹¹ On concerns about the need to go beyond discourse in US public diplomacy, see Kenneth A. Osgood and Brian C. Etheridge (eds), *The United States and Public Diplomacy: New Directions in Cultural and International History* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2010), pp. 1-14; and Melissen, 'The New Public Diplomacy', pp. 6-10.

Unpacking Public Diplomacy

One problem in writing about public diplomacy is a lack of consensus among scholars and practitioners on analytical boundaries. Many appear to know it when they see it. Nevertheless, there are spirited debates about what 'it' really is and how 'it' should be used. Today's debates for the most part bear little resemblance to a 'traditionalist critique' of public diplomacy that questions its significance and value. Such questions, which were prevalent among diplomats during the twentieth century, are largely settled.¹² Contested issues in the study and practice of public diplomacy now relate to priorities, methods, tools, resources, strategic direction, organizational structures, the identity and roles of its practitioners, and whether publics are capable of conducting diplomacy.

Public diplomacy has four core concepts: understanding; planning; engagement; and advocacy. Scholars and practitioners differ on the meaning and use of each, but few dispute their relevance. Each can be found in the public diplomacy of small, medium and large states and sub-state and non-state actors.

Understanding

Knowing one's audience is far from a new concept in communication theory and public diplomacy practice. Whether it is called listening, opinion research, intelligence, or something else, understanding the cultures, attitudes, and behaviour of others is a necessary precondition to successful public diplomacy. Ali Fisher goes further and identifies listening as a public diplomacy act, not just a communication enabler, if it is perceived to be a genuine effort to take into account the views of others. Scholars are also turning understanding inwards in ways that practitioners need to appreciate more fully. For Stephen R. Corman, participants in communication systems are connected in relationships in which they interpret each other's motives, expectations and actions. They create meaning in a 'double contingency' process of mutual interdependence. A's success depends on what B thinks and does. B's thoughts and actions are 'influenced by A's behaviour as well as B's expectations, interpretations and attributions with respect to A'. R.S. Zaharna observes that public diplomacy actors, including the United States in particular, cannot communicate effectively unless they understand 'their own dominant cultural, political and communication patterns as well as how those patterns differ from other cultures'.¹³

¹² For a discussion of the 'traditionalist critique' and problems associated with it, see Paul Sharp, *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 270-275. On public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy, see Walter R. Roberts, 'The Evolution of Diplomacy', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, summer 2006, pp. 55-64.

¹³ On 'listening' as a constituent element of public diplomacy, see Nicholas J. Cull, 'Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and History', in Geoffrey Cowan and Nicholas J. Cull (eds), *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 32, 37-38 and 43-44; and Ali Fisher, 'Four Seasons in One Day: The Crowded House of Public Diplomacy

A second category of understanding involves assessments of operational efficiencies, the relevance of programmes to goals and impact on the audience. This understanding is about accountability and improvement. Public diplomacy actors use quantitative and qualitative methods: performance indicators and tools for data collection, measurement and analysis, as well as focus groups and field reports. Evaluation done well is expensive. Lawmakers and practitioners traditionally have willed the ends of impact evaluation far more than the means. Recent evidence suggests that their priorities may be changing.¹⁴

The Obama administration discusses understanding in the following ways. Research is used to enable engagement with publics abroad — with greater focus on knowledge about non-elite networks, the 44 per cent of the world's population under the age of 25 and online communication. Counter-insurgency doctrine and lessons from what the United States did not know about Iraq in 2003 are among drivers of the need for better research. Understanding also refers to 'what takes place within our borders' and to 'synchronizing words and deeds'. Here the administration's emphasis is on the communicative value of actions and on how 'actions and policies will be interpreted by public audiences'.¹⁵ It is a conscious separation from earlier approaches, which gave priority to how best to develop and send messages.

Planning

A second category includes a range of planning functions: advising leaders on policy formulation and implementation; developing strategies on issues; providing strategic direction and coordinating public diplomacy actors; and adjusting to change. These functions apply also to communication and engagement strategies in business, education and many other sectors of society. A key difference turns on fundamental goals: in business, it is to earn income and satisfy shareholders;

in the UK', in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 252. On public diplomacy understanding as 'intelligence', see Daryl Copeland, *Guerrilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009), pp. 9-10. The 'double contingency' model is discussed in Steven R. Corman, Angela Trethewey and Bud Goodall, *A New Communication Model for the Twenty-First Century: From Simplistic Influence to Pragmatic Complexity*, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University, Report no. 0701, 3 April 2007, p. 10. For R.S. Zaharna's views on understanding in public diplomacy, see *Battles to Bridges: US Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 115-122.

¹⁴ Conversation with Dawn McCall, Coordinator, Bureau of International Programs, US Department of State, 28 January 2011; 'IIP Announces Changes to Strengthen its International Programs and Products', US Department of State, 28 January 2011, available online at <http://www.state.gov/r/iip/index.htm>; and Tijana Milosevic, 'Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy Examines Evaluation Tools', Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, 21 July 2010, available online at <http://www.alliance-exchange.org/policy-monitor/07/21/2010/advisory-commission-public-diplomacy-examines-evaluation-tools>.

¹⁵ 'National Framework for Strategic Communication', pp. 2-5.

in education, it is to discover, produce and share knowledge; and in public diplomacy, it is to further public interests in the context of governance and diplomatic relationships between groups. Public diplomacy actors often partner with civil society actors and use civil society's methods and norms. These partners' goals may coincide, but their roles are not the same.

The Obama administration's approach to planning reflects awareness of an iterative process that begins with strategic policy choices, values public diplomacy advice in policy-making and policy implementation, and appreciates the necessity of evaluation and adjustment. Its speeches and strategy papers are reasoned and articulate. But it will be difficult to turn the rhetoric of networked, multi-stakeholder diplomacy into durable reality through hard decisions on institutions, methods and priorities. Debates continue about how to address global problems with diplomatic institutions that favour bilateral relationships, firewalls between policy-makers and government broadcasters, separation between cultural diplomacy and policy advocacy, whether military services should support public diplomacy or actually 'do' public diplomacy, trade-offs among hard and soft power assets, comparative advantages of presidential staff and foreign ministries in providing strategic direction and inter-agency coordination, and many other issues.

Engagement

Understanding and planning are cognitive categories with operational implications. Policy-makers and other public diplomacy actors rarely discount their value, but they typically give them low priority. Engagement and advocacy are operational categories with priorities and resource levels that are orders of magnitude higher. In its broadest sense, engagement describes a strategic approach to governments, partners and adversaries, and global publics in pursuit of group interests. It is grounded in networks and participation in cross-boundary relationships. Engagement places a premium on dialogue, reasoned argument, openness to the opinions of others, learning through questions, not talking at cross purposes and working out common meanings.

Sustained 'engagement among peoples — not just governments' is a meta-narrative for the Obama administration's foreign policy and central to its vision of diplomacy.¹⁶ Most reports on US public diplomacy make increased exchanges a signature recommendation. Scholars have generated an extensive literature on the history of US cultural diplomacy and wide-ranging assessments that draw on constructivism, Gramscian ideas, communicative action theory, soft power theory, open source models, network theory and relational frameworks — a literature that defies easy summary.¹⁷

¹⁶ 'National Security Strategy', pp. 11-12.

¹⁷ Historical studies include Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore MD:

Two issues deserve attention. First, practitioners focus enthusiastically on the possibilities of engagement, but far less on its limitations. In current US strategy, 'modes of engagement have a powerful and enduring impact'. They are 'cost effective', and they build 'goodwill and relationships that are invaluable to sustaining American leadership'.¹⁸ Civil society voices contend similarly that engagement leads to mutual understanding, breaks down stereotypes and contributes to long-term cooperation. Engagement can indeed achieve these and other objectives, but engagement is most effective when participants have roughly equal status and common goals, or when one partner has soft power in ample supply.¹⁹ Engagement has limited value when it reinforces negative stereotypes and when contact is not sustained. It can 'illuminate and encourage the spread of hostility towards other groups'.²⁰ And barriers to engagement are high when coercion trumps bargaining and peaceful competition as a way to advance group interests.

Political intent raises related considerations. Engagement is framed as a means to break down barriers between people. As Frank Ninkovich observes, however, 'The desire to break down cultural barriers is hardly innocuous or innocent. It is hard to imagine a foreign policy activity that is more serious, even subversive in intent'.²¹ The Obama administration makes no secret of its serious political intent. Engagement is a preferred way to 'address common challenges', because the alternative 'denies us the ability to shape outcomes'. Engagement is good for mobilizing action through 'American leadership' and for 'US success at home and abroad'.²² The US leaders and diplomats build foundations of trust to help them achieve political, economic and military objectives.

Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); and Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For conceptual studies, see Giles Scott-Smith, 'Mapping the Indefinable: Some Thoughts on the Relevance of Exchange Programs within International Relations Theory', in *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 173-195; and R.S. Zaharna, 'Mapping out a Spectrum of Public Diplomacy Initiatives: Information and Relational Communication Frameworks', in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 86-100.

¹⁸ 'National Security Strategy', p. 12. In speeches as Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs late in George W. Bush's administration, James Glassman observed similarly and with little elaboration that educational and cultural exchanges are 'the crown jewels of our public diplomacy'. Following this 'to be sure' remark, however, he focused most of his attention on 'winning the battle of ideas' in a war against terrorism. See, for example, 'Public Diplomacy in the Twenty-first Century', a speech delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations, 30 June 2008.

¹⁹ Joseph S. Nye Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), pp. 33-71. On the strengths and limitations of dialogue in public diplomacy, see Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, 'Moving from Monologue, to Dialogue, to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy', in *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World: The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616, March 2008, pp. 16-20; and Cull, 'Public Diplomacy', pp. 33-51.

²⁰ Kristin M. Lord, *The Perils and Promise of Global Transparency* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 47 and pp. 45-56, *passim*.

²¹ Quoted in Scott-Smith, 'Mapping the Indefinable', p. 182.

²² 'National Security Strategy', pp. 11-12. For an analysis of the Obama administration's engagement

Similarly, many civil society practitioners are rooted cosmopolitans. They are particularly pragmatic about linking engagement to political goals when seeking government funds. This has the virtue of credibility. It suggests accurately, and perhaps for some unintentionally, the degree to which public diplomacy is integrated into domestic and global politics.²³ It also adds to operational challenges. Those who privilege long-term relationships will de-emphasize control, accentuate reciprocity and view political by-products as secondary.²⁴ Actors who focus on political objectives will emphasize control and use engagement to encourage mind-sets and mobilize action to short-term advantage. Planning and resource decisions turn on which approach has priority.

How the Obama administration views these priorities is not entirely clear. The State Department's 'Strategic Framework for Public Diplomacy' seeks to 'expand and strengthen people-to-people relationships' in order to build 'trust and respect'. The primary tactics in achieving this, however, include: (1) emphasis on 'programs which advance US national interests'; (2) developing 'desired skills that provide opportunity and alternatives to extremism'; and (3) strengthening 'connections to policy and the field [...] to ensure and articulate a strong link between educational and cultural programming and policy objectives'.²⁵

A second issue is the blurred line between engagement as public diplomacy and as cultural internationalism.²⁶ It is public diplomacy when a student reads Mark Twain's novel *Huckleberry Finn* in a US-funded Lincoln Center in Pakistan. When that student downloads *Huckleberry Finn* from Google Books, it can be thought of as cultural internationalism. A great deal of what happens in cross-border relationships is not public diplomacy. Plays by South Africa's Athol Fugard performed in New York, and Silicon Valley executives seeking investments in Beijing, may reflect a society's soft power and benefit shareholders. They are not public diplomacy. Nor is most of the global engagement in corporate, religious, media, cultural and epistemic communities. Governments often seek global engagement through public-private partnerships and informal associations with civil society organizations. But the Obama administration blurs the line between diplomacy and cultural internationalism in saying 'the best ambassadors for American values and interests are the American people' — described to include 'our businesses,

strategy, see Thomas Wright, 'Strategic Engagement's Track Record', *The Washington Quarterly*, July 2010, pp. 35-60.

²³ Historical case studies that illuminate a close relationship between public diplomacy and politics can be found in Osgood and Etheridge, *The United States and Public Diplomacy*. See especially Michael L. Krenn, 'Domestic Politics and Public Diplomacy: Appalachian Cultural Exhibits and the Changing Nature of US Public Diplomacy, 1964-1972', pp. 315-343.

²⁴ Zaharna, *Battles to Bridges*, pp. 146-155.

²⁵ Office of the Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, *Public Diplomacy: Strengthening US Engagement with the World*, February 2010, PowerPoint slides nos. 13 and 28, available online at http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/PD_US_World_Engagement.pdf.

²⁶ Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, pp. 3-12.

non-governmental organizations, scientists, athletes, artists, military service members and students'.²⁷

Civil society actors blur the line as well. 'Citizen diplomacy', which is defined by its enthusiasts as the 'concept that the individual has the right — indeed the responsibility — to help shape US foreign relations', holds that citizen diplomats 'can be students, teachers, athletes, artists, business people, humanitarians, adventurers, or tourists'.²⁸ Citizen diplomats are agile and entrepreneurial. Often they harness technologies and network strategies to effect. They like the diplomacy brand, and they are growing in power relative to the state. Most view what they do in their private capacity as a supplement to what government does well and as compensation for what government does poorly or not at all. Yet they also project their own interests, passions and identity issues. Bringing more people into diplomacy at home and abroad does not necessarily mean good things will happen, although they may. It is not self-evident that citizen diplomats always serve public interests or that what they do improves diplomacy. Questions relate to their accountability and legitimacy — and to the analytical boundaries between citizen diplomacy, public diplomacy and cross-cultural internationalism.²⁹

Advocacy

A fourth conceptual category is communication in which political actors in one group seek to influence thought and behaviour in other groups. Advocacy differs from engagement, not in its instrumentality, but in its emphasis on monologue and transfer of information. It is intended to advance an actor's self-interests in the first instance and, where possible, mutual interests and collaboration on common problems. Advocacy seeks to gain attention, produce trust and persuade to one's advantage. Its methods are actions, speech and images that entail reason and emotion. In contrast to engagement's discourse logic, advocacy's focus is on strategic action and non-deliberative elements in politics and diplomacy — agenda-setting, decision-making, persuasion and mobilizing actors.³⁰

Advocacy and engagement are not either/or options. Public diplomacy actors use them separately and in overlapping ways. The British Council, which has traditionally been concerned with building mutual understanding through cultural relations (engagement), is working to 'mobilize public pressure for progress'

²⁷ 'National Security Strategy', p. 12.

²⁸ US Center for Citizen Diplomacy website, online at <http://www.uscenterforcitizen diplomacy.org/>.

²⁹ For a discussion of the rise of non-state actors in diplomacy and issues of accountability and legitimacy, see John Robert Kelley, 'The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2010, pp. 286-305. See also Sharp, *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*, pp. 288-292.

³⁰ On distinctions between communication as consensus-based deliberative dialogue and interest-based strategic action, see Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 53-68; and Michael Walzer, 'Deliberation and What Else?' in David Miller (ed.), *Thinking Politically: Essays in Political Theory* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 134-146.

on international climate change agreements (advocacy).³¹ What works well for each depends on situational differences and technological change. Fulbright scholarships and visitor programmes were successful during the Cold War and remain successful. Using short-wave radio to broadcast to China in the internet age is problematic.

For all of its rhetorical emphasis on engagement, the Obama administration values advocacy and messaging. Presidential speeches to global audiences, public appearances by a wide range of officials and diplomats, and media outreach are hallmarks of its diplomacy. The Obama administration differs from previous administrations, not in its commitment to advocacy, but in its approach. Dialogue, aligning words and deeds, and greater attention to understanding others are important in the way that the Obama administration frames its diplomacy. The administration's challenges lie for the most part not in the vulnerabilities of 'war-of-ideas' messaging or gaps between what it says and does. Rather, its challenges lie in the gaps between raised expectations and what it is unable to deliver — between what it wants to do and what it has so far not done on issues ranging from the Middle East, to climate change, to Guantanamo.³²

Understanding, planning, engagement and advocacy are clearly described in the Obama administration's strategy statements aimed at 'understanding peoples' as an enabler for 'strategic planning' and efforts to be more 'effective in deliberate communication and engagement'. The strategy was described just as clearly in many US Information Agency (USIA) mission statements that viewed public diplomacy as 'understanding, informing, and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad'.³³ These conceptual categories are widely shared by states and many non-state actors, although these are significant differences in their methods and priorities.

The United States' *Modus Operandi*

The United States does have a public diplomacy *modus operandi*, however, with enduring characteristics that are rooted in the nation's history and political culture. Episodic resolve correlates with war, public anxiety and surges of zeal. Because of systemic trade-offs in US politics, leaders find it easier to engage on the world stage than to institutionalize change. The strengths and enthusiasms of practitioner communities and civil society activists influence operational

³¹ British Council, Climate Change website, online at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/climatechange/>.

³² I have benefited here from the analysis in Lord and Lynch, *America's Extended Hand*, pp. 12-14.

³³ 'National Framework for Strategic Communication', p. 16; United States Information Agency Strategic Plan, 1997-2002, available online at <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/abtusia/stratplan/pland.htm>.

priorities. Technologies quickly fascinate, but government is a second adopter. These characteristics influence the current practice, as well as efforts to define and solve problems.

US identity is rooted in values and ideals — freedom, equality, democracy and human rights. These ideals shaped the nation's political culture in a context that featured distance from 'old world' conflicts, deep scepticism about the role of government (except in times of crisis), relative immunity from direct attack and significant economic advantages. In foreign policy, these ideals created a self-image of exceptionalism and abstractions intended for export. This identity is comparable to US economic and military power.³⁴ The United States is a 'nation bound together not by territory or religion or ethnicity', the State Department's former Policy Planning Director Anne-Marie Slaughter observed, 'but by a self-conscious commitment to shared values, for ourselves, and for all peoples'. In language resonant of the Obama administration's commitment to aligning words and deeds, Slaughter's values' agenda calls for recommitment to 'achieving our ideals at home'.³⁵ For Americans, projecting ideals globally is a national interest.

Episodic Resolve

Societies differ in their organizational approaches to public diplomacy. For example, Europeans tend to favour durable government information and cultural ministries; the United States traditionally has not. US public diplomacy institutions were not established until the hot and cold wars of the twentieth century. After each conflict, budgets were cut and organizations abolished.³⁶ The attacks of 9/11 and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan brought renewed attention, increased funding and new tools (such as the Al Hurra Arabic-language television network), but not a new organization. Public diplomacy became more networked and the number of stakeholders grew.

The US lack of interest in 'government propaganda' led to legal restrictions on the domestic dissemination of public diplomacy early in the Cold War. These restrictions continue in the age of the internet with little effect and make the US distinction between public diplomacy (foreign) and public affairs (domestic) no longer tenable. Reports by think tanks and advisory panels have marginal impact. When report recommendations are adopted, the driving forces tend to be less

³⁴ Henry R. Nau, *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas that Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy and Free Markets in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002).

³⁵ Anne-Marie Slaughter, *The Idea that is America: Keeping Faith with our Values in a Dangerous World* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), pp. 1-16.

³⁶ Bruce Gregory, 'Public Diplomacy and National Security: Lessons from the US Experience', *Small Wars Journal*, 15 August 2008, available online at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/82-gregory.pdf>; and Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, *The Future of US Public Diplomacy: An Uncertain Fate* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2010), pp. 15-78.

their reasoned logic than public zeal that is energized by foreign threats and domestic political pressures. These can be shaped by what publics are against (fascism, communism or terrorism) and what they are for (democratization, human rights, or the agendas of ethnic diasporas). Domestic pressures include the lobbying efforts of issue-oriented interest groups and exchange organizations that are seeking increased funding. It is far from clear whether accelerated globalization will end cycles of episodic resolve.

Systemic Trade-offs in US Politics

US presidents stand apart from this pattern in one respect. To gain support for policies in peacetime, presidents frequently view influencing foreign publics to be a necessary corollary to building political will at home. Examples include seeking support for the League of Nations, establishing the United Nations and global financial institutions, implementing the Marshall Plan, leveraging 'Basket Three' of the Helsinki accords, placing intermediate-range missiles in Europe, bringing down the Berlin Wall, achieving post-conflict stability in the Balkans, and restoring the US image in the Muslim world. In their pursuit of foreign policy agendas, US presidents value a strong diplomacy in principle, but they give low priority to transforming institutions, methods and resources.

Americans give much higher priority to military instruments of power, as comparative resource levels clearly indicate.³⁷ After 9/11, they changed their doctrines for fighting wars and built 'a hidden world, growing beyond control' of government organizations for intelligence and homeland security.³⁸ For public diplomacy, they wrote lots of reports. This preference for military power derives in part from what Walter Russell Mead calls the United States' 'Jacksonian tradition', with its resistance to cultural elites, soft power and large government institutions (other than defence). To be sure, as Mead also argues, the Wilsonian tradition has its own cyclical influence that is manifest in surges of democratization and 'wars of ideas'.³⁹

³⁷ According to the non-partisan Henry L. Stimson Center, the US defence budget since 2001 grew 'from \$335 billion to more than \$700 billion proposed for FY 2009. While foreign affairs' spending has grown from \$20 billion to just under \$40 billion, it is still one-seventeenth the size of the defense budget'; see online at http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/publications/FAB_report_2008.pdf.

³⁸ Dana Priest and William M. Arkin, 'Top Secret America: A Hidden World, Growing Beyond Control', *The Washington Post*, 19 July 2010. 'The top-secret world the government created in response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001', Priest and Arkin concluded, 'has become so large, so unwieldy and so secretive that no one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs, how many programs exist within it or exactly how many agencies do the same work'.

³⁹ The two traditions often collide, especially on issues such as nation-building and long-term troop commitment. 'It is a perennial problem in American foreign policy that Wilsonians often write checks that Jacksonians do not want to cash'. See Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), p. 154 and *passim*.

The US political system — its election cycles, steep post-election learning curves and separation of powers — makes institutional reform rare and difficult. With limited time, finite political capital and few electoral votes to be gained, presidents seldom take on the hard work of structural change. Political staff, especially in first presidential terms, are often inexperienced, and there are delays in confirming appointees. Serious change seldom comes from within organizations where bureaucratic cultures are comfortable with settled practices. Moreover, the reforms that may occur in one organization typically do not transfer to other public diplomacy stakeholders. These tendencies and systemic trade-offs in US politics did not vanish with the US elections of 2008 and 2010.

Competitive Practitioner Communities

Not long ago the number of practitioner communities in US public diplomacy was relatively small. A list would include USIA's public diplomacy professionals (the foreign service, civil service and foreign nationals), international broadcasters, and cultural diplomats in partnership with academic institutions and non-governmental organizations. It would also include military officers engaged in public affairs and open information operations, plus government democratizers who are collaborating with civil society's democracy-building organizations.

Each of these communities remains a distinct tribal culture whose self-identity and operational preferences are associated with specific rules, skills and tools. Each competes for resources and freedom of action. Each has roots in more than half a century of practice in which the dominant tendency has been to exclude rather than to include. There are exceptions, however, and agencies do sometimes collaborate. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) funds Fulbright scholarships in Pakistan and Voice of America programmes in Africa. US broadcasters partner with US embassies, USAID and non-governmental organizations on journalism training and media coverage of health issues. Concentrated experience and expertise are strengths of specialization, but heterogeneity has its price in missed opportunities, weak inter-agency networks, research that is often not shared and insufficient strategic direction.

This relatively circumscribed practitioner environment is changing. First, there are more public diplomacy actors within traditional stakeholder communities. In the Department of State, public diplomacy is no longer confined to ambassadors and public diplomacy officers. It is increasingly the work of political officers and special envoys on issues ranging from climate change to fostering global public-private partnerships. In this new environment, the merging of political officer and public diplomacy career tracks has merit, but resistance to it is strong. 'Emergent thinking' in the US Department of Defense 'is coalescing around the notion that strategic communication should be viewed as a process rather than as a set of capabilities, organizations, or discrete activities'. This process involves more

players at all levels, requiring horizontal coordination across the Department of Defense (and with other government agencies and international partners), and vertical coordination up and down the chain of command.⁴⁰

Second, there are many more government stakeholders. Public diplomacy is done by senior leaders in Treasury, Energy, Commerce, Interior and other cabinet departments and in agencies ranging from the Center for Disease Control to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. They frame public arguments on global issues within their domains and sponsor exchanges. In 2009, 63 US Cabinet departments and agencies sponsored international exchange and training programmes.⁴¹

Third, contractors carry out much of today's diplomacy. Government has long partnered with civil society entities in exchanges, democratization, opinion research and other activities. Today, however, contractors also do work that was traditionally undertaken by career employees, as part of an overall trend in outsourcing foreign policy.⁴² Multi-stakeholder public diplomacy is not new. What is new is the greatly increased number of stakeholders and the challenges that this presents for diplomatic practice.

Fascinating Technologies, Second Adopters

Although Americans invented many of the communication technologies that have changed diplomacy⁴³ — among them the telegraph, the geostationary communication satellite and the internet — they have been slow to use them in public diplomacy. The typical pattern has been early fascination and late adoption. In the 1930s, the Soviet Union, European colonial powers and the Vatican used short-wave radio to broadcast directly to citizens in other countries, thus bypassing borders and foreign ministries. Because of opposition by US commercial broadcasters, the Voice of America did not air until 1942, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, despite earlier support in the US State Department and US Navy for a government short-wave station.⁴⁴ The pattern was similar with satellite

⁴⁰ US Department of Defense, *Report on Strategic Communication*, December 2009, pp. 2-3, available online at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/dime/documents/DoD%20report%20on%20Strategic%20Communication%20Dec%2009.pdf>.

⁴¹ Inter-agency Working Group on US Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training, FY 2010 Annual Report, p. 28, at http://www.iawg.gov/rawmedia_repository/44c4ac01_4486_4a6c_8f03_f6bcb696eda5.

⁴² Allison Stanger, *One Nation under Contract: The Outsourcing of American Power and the Future of Foreign Policy* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 56-83; and Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, 'Privatized Public Diplomacy', in Philip Seib (ed.), *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Reinventing US Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 155-172.

⁴³ David Paull Nickles, *Under the Wire: How the Telegraph Changed Diplomacy* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ Once engaged, however, the United States became the only nation to sponsor two forms of government broadcasting. The Voice of America broadcast news and information about the United States to countries around the world in one network of language services. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio

television. CNN was launched in 1980 and Al Jazeera in 1996. USIA developed its Worldnet satellite television network in the mid-1980s, primarily for video conferencing, yet the United States' direct broadcast satellite service — the controversial Al Hurra Arabic-language television network — began in 2004, more than two decades after CNN.⁴⁵

For the most part, US public diplomacy's use of the internet reflects a similar pattern. Although USIA moved quickly to create an attractive public diplomacy website in the 1990s soon after the invention of the World Wide Web, innovation in using internet technologies was led by commercial and non-governmental organizations. The gap widened as the internet evolved from platforms in which email and websites were defining characteristics to the world of viral communication, social media and consumer-driven content. In 2008, US diplomacy turned to the potential of social media, and the Obama administration's planning documents gave it high priority.⁴⁶ Scholars and practitioners struggle with what this means conceptually and operationally for diplomacy.⁴⁷

Elusive Transformation

There are numerous issues to consider in transforming institutions, methods and priorities in US public diplomacy — to name just a few, rethinking fortress embassies, the role of foreign ministries, risk assessments for diplomats among the people, recruitment, training and professional education, resource limitations, Congressional oversight, legal and regulatory authorities, international broadcasting and inter-agency direction. This section examines briefly and illustratively what transformation might mean in three areas: understanding; social media; and multi-stakeholder diplomacy.

A Culture of Understanding

A capacity gap exists between consensus on the need for more knowledge in policy formulation and diplomacy, and the tools and resources available. Foreign opinion polling has been part of US diplomacy since the Second World War. Recognition that the opinions of others count in policy 'take-offs' as well as 'crash

Free Asia and Radio Marti separately transmitted news and information about events within many of the same countries as 'surrogate broadcasters'.

⁴⁵ Shawn Powers and Ahmed El Gody, 'The Lessons of Al Hurra Television', in Philip Seib (ed.), *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Reinventing US Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 49-66.

⁴⁶ Jesse Lichtenstein, 'Digital Diplomacy', *The New York Times Magazine*, 12 July 2010, pp. 24-29; and *Statement for the Record*, by Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale, US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 10 March 2010.

⁴⁷ Amelia Arsenault, 'Public Diplomacy 2.0', in Philip Seib (ed.), *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Reinventing US Foreign Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

landings' is settled doctrine. Yet research budgets remain tiny in relation to operations, and the systematic generation of knowledge in forms that are useful to practitioners — just enough, just right, just in time — is a low priority. This gap is well documented. The presidential US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy recommended annually for half a century, with little effect, large increases in opinion and media research. Many voices are currently calling on government actors to do more with social influence analysis, network-mapping, sentiment analysis and other tools as supplements to polling, and to share their research more willingly within government and with stakeholders outside government.⁴⁸

The Obama administration's initiatives at departmental and inter-agency levels show promise. Consider steps that have recently been taken by the US Department of State. They include the appointment of Deputy Assistant Secretaries for Public Diplomacy in all of the Department's regional bureaus; the expectation that they will use enhanced research products in policy formulation; modest increased funding for foreign opinion and media analysis; exploration of the value of new research tools; re-establishing embassy public diplomacy plans that are informed by analysis of information; aggregation of research done by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the Open Source Center, and others; and more programme measurement and evaluation.⁴⁹ Transformation, however, continues to be elusive.

What would it mean to achieve a culture of understanding throughout government in which policy-makers and practitioners value the deep comprehension of others as vital to their success, not just as nice to have? As the Defense Science Board and other advisory panels have urged, it would mean going beyond polling and preoccupation with the US image to embrace a variety of tools and assessment techniques. These would be used to sharpen judgements, inform choices and monitor effectiveness in the field. A culture of understanding would mean mandatory training on the value of research, the comparative merits of research tools and ways to use research well. Senior diplomats who appreciate opinion research and programme evaluation would be appointed to the State Department's functional bureaus, which focus on transnational and multilateral issues, as well as its regional bureaus.

⁴⁸ US Government Accountability Office, *US Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, GAO-09-679SP, May 2009, p. 21, available online at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09679sp.pdf>; *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Washington, DC, January 2008, pp. 52-62, 82-84 and 89-93, available online at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/ADA476331.pdf>; and Kristin M. Lord, *Voices of America: US Public Diplomacy for the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, November 2008), pp. 21-22, available at online http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/Files/rc/reports/2008/11_public_diplomacy_lord/11_public_diplomacy_lord.pdf.

⁴⁹ Conversation on the record with Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale, 23 July 2010; and comments on the background by senior US State Department officers.

At the inter-agency level, transformation would mean assigning senior diplomats to government agencies other than those currently contemplated in the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense and USAID. It would mean bringing more subject-matter experts to the Department of State from a range of government and civil society organizations. Transformation would mean substantially increased and sustained funding for measuring and evaluating performance relative to funding for programme operations. It would mean higher priority for evaluation in the other 63 US agencies that fund exchange and training programmes, not just in the State Department's exchanges' bureau. Importantly, but rarely acknowledged in a country where the belief in US exceptionalism persists, transformation also includes a more mature self-awareness and deeper understanding of the enduring patterns in American culture that shape its approach to global issues.

US diplomacy is adapting. In varying degrees, departments and agencies are using new tools and sharing more research. The National Security Council has established a sub-group in its Global Engagement Directorate 'to better coordinate and aggregate relevant information and analysis, and develop mechanisms for improving access' *within* government. It will be a challenge, however, to transform protocols and mind-sets that have long been resistant to inter-agency collaboration. Moreover, much of the knowledge and expertise that is needed for effective diplomacy lies elsewhere. Voices outside government, and some quietly within, are exploring ways to leverage civil society's knowledge, skills and creativity through a new independent, non-profit institution — a networked capacity that is intended to enable government instruments, not to duplicate or compete with them.⁵⁰ Such an approach to understanding could be transformative if done well and if funding was a significantly higher fraction of US spending on defence, intelligence and homeland security. Episodic resolve, a preference for military power, the infrequent willingness of presidents to lead institutional change, and other attributes of the United States' *modus operandi* that were discussed earlier, however, remain formidable barriers to creating a culture of understanding.

Social Media

No issue frames diplomacy's transformation challenge more clearly than what to do about tools that allow groups to assemble and communicate without govern-

⁵⁰ 'National Framework for Strategic Communication', pp. 5 and 14. In saying the 'National Security Staff currently sees no need to establish a new, independent, not-for profit organization', the Framework seems clearly resistant to this approach. However, in saying that a number of reviews, including the State Department's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, are examining the issue of public-private partnerships, the drafters of the Framework appear to leave the door open to change. For a summary of proposals to create an independent organization, see Kristin M. Lord, *America's Voices*, pp. 51-54. See also *Strengthening America's Public Diplomacy Engagement*, a project sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2010-2011, available online at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=641608&fuseaction=topics.home.

ments, as witnessed in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East in early 2011. And perhaps no one has done more to illuminate this challenge than Clay Shirky, whose central argument is that the internet, mobile phones and other platforms make it possible for people to come together and get things done without the structures and management imperatives that previously 'bounded their effectiveness'. For Shirky, these changes are a difference in kind (not in degree) so large that they 'will transform the world everywhere [that] groups of people come together to accomplish something, which is to say everywhere'.⁵¹

This article can touch only lightly on social media with questions that are intended to promote further enquiry. It assumes that social media will have a profound impact on diplomatic and civil society actors, but with significant differences relating to their roles in diplomatic practice. The most important issues are not in the application of technologies to legacy practices, but in a fundamental re-imagining of missions and methods.

Two issues should be considered. First, to what extent will diplomatic actors shift to what Ali Fisher calls 'genuinely non-centralized' communication? Organizational cultures, technological restrictions and insufficient understanding of networks, Fisher argues, restrict diplomatic actors to conversations that they know about and in which they are permitted to engage. They miss out on potentially relevant 'invisible conversations', of which they are unaware or in which they are discouraged from participation. US diplomats have typically operated in centralized participatory platforms, 'inviting others "in" rather than getting out and engaging as a peer'. This creates opportunity costs, since those prepared to come to your 'safe space' may not be those you most need to engage. Fisher offers useful insights on network tools and makes a compelling case for deep network-mapping and greater access to communication spaces and platforms. He challenges risk-averse diplomatic services and foreign ministry cultures.⁵² His analysis is less helpful, however, with decisions about which 'invisible conversations' deserve priority and in what circumstances 'non-centralized communication' should be preferred. There is also work to be done on the operational consequences that are driven by considerations of authority and legitimacy in the public responsibilities of diplomats.

US State and Defense Department policies recognize that social media are becoming mainstream, and they are leaning towards more liberal interpretations of professional practice. Senior officials are leading by example. Individual practitioners, embassies and headquarters' organizations use a variety of social media tools for advocacy and engagement. Policies on their use, however, remain well

⁵¹ Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (New York: Penguin, 2008), pp. 24 and 149.

⁵² Ali Fisher, *Mapping the Great Beyond: Identifying Meaningful Networks in Public Diplomacy*, USC Center on Public Diplomacy, CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy, paper no. 2, 2010, pp. 12-30, available online at <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/publications/perspectives/CPDPerspectivesMappingNetworks.pdf>. See also Copeland, *Guerrilla Diplomacy*, pp. 205-236.

connected to control and hierarchical communication models. For example, US State Department guidelines require that ‘personnel should obtain supervisory approval prior to creating or contributing significant content to external social media sites or to engaging in recurring exchanges with the public’.⁵³ Social media for the most part are still viewed as new ways to perform traditional functions. Transformation raises tough questions. Should diplomats, with their policy discipline derived from public accountability, play by the same rules as civil society actors? Why not permit any diplomat who is trained and trusted to engage publics on policy issues by personal contact to engage similarly in social media without supervisory approval? In contrast to information-sharing and collaboration, to what extent should diplomats undertake the more difficult tasks of using social media to mobilize action on contested policies (such as climate change) and to support particular groups (such as regimes in power or those who seek regime change)?⁵⁴

The second issue is the extent to which diplomacy should privilege content aggregation over centralized content production. The key arguments are these. User-content-driven social media are not ideal tools for governments to micro-broadcast policies in order to advance national interests. Social media are, however, very useful in responding to demands for attractive content, such as English teaching, online conference proceedings, video games, courses and other educational resources — especially if the content is apolitical and in translation. This soft power argument calls for growing the demand side of diplomacy rather than the supply side.⁵⁵ Social media are also used by diplomatic actors to connect non-state actors in domains ranging from earthquake relief, to mobile phone banking, to election monitoring, to telemedicine.⁵⁶

As often in the past, the United States has been slow to embrace the full meaning of a powerful new technology in its diplomatic institutions and methods. Although leaders increasingly offer a transformational vision, legacy agendas and structural impediments persist. To be fully successful in adopting new media technologies, public diplomacy actors will need to focus more on changes in core missions. Risk-averse practitioners will need to manage loss of control and demonstrate greater flexibility in the face of accelerating change. They will need new strategies and priorities and new metrics for success. In short, they will need to transform rather than adapt.

⁵³ US Department of State, ‘Using Social Media’, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, 5 FAM 792.3(a), 10 June 2010, available online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/144186.pdf>.

⁵⁴ For numerous other questions, see US Government Accountability Office, *US Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, GAO-09-679SP, May 2009, pp. 33-34; and questions in a survey sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 2010, online at <http://mountainrunner.us/2010/07/survey.html>.

⁵⁵ Evgeny Morozov, ‘The Future of “Public Diplomacy 2.0”’, *ForeignPolicy.com*, 9 June 2009, available online at http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/06/09/the_future_of_public_diplomacy_20.

⁵⁶ Lichtenstein, ‘Digital Diplomacy’, pp. 26-29.

Multi-stakeholder Diplomacy

The Obama administration's 'joined-up government' global engagement strategy reflects an understanding of the power of network connections and a world in which multiple actors within and outside of government shape diplomacy.⁵⁷ The administration benefits from the personal engagement skills of President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton. Senior US officials — many in departments with a domestic focus — engage governments *and publics* in other countries on a broad range of issues such as energy, global finance, climate change, science and technology, and bluefin tuna. The National Security Council's Global Engagement Directorate is better suited to leading inter-agency coordination than the Department of State. During its first two years, the Obama administration supported modest budget increases for diplomacy and made adjustments to planning mechanisms in the Departments of State and Defense.⁵⁸ But thus far it has not leaned into the kinds of changes that require significant presidential leadership and legislation. And continuation of the US pattern of episodic resolve is revealed in forecasts of retrenchment in diplomatic capacity by lawmakers and the State Department's announcement of a multi-year delay in its previously stated plans for a 25 per cent increase in diplomatic hiring.⁵⁹

Multi-stakeholder diplomacy presents three critical challenges: (1) providing inter-agency strategic direction that is strong and durable; (2) developing strategies for multiple issues rather than single threats; and (3) changing military and civilian investment ratios. Given its limited authority and resources, the Global Engagement Directorate lacks sufficient capacity to set priorities, assign operational responsibilities in agencies to the extent needed, and influence key personnel and funding decisions. The problem is compounded by the challenge of ensuring that engagement 'remains a priority for all departments and developing the skill sets and standards for officials more used to domestic policy than foreign policy'.⁶⁰ There are engagement and strategic communication elements in the US Afghanistan/Pakistan strategy, and planning is under way for strategies on climate change and food security, but strategies do not exist for the 'strategic buffet' of major foreign policy challenges in today's world. In funding diplomacy, the United States is nowhere near achieving serious trade-offs in civilian and military spending. On these, as in other issues, the United States' political culture and *modus operandi* make it difficult to move from adaptation to transformation.

⁵⁷ See Joseph S. Nye Jr and Anne-Marie Slaughter, *Report of the Working Group on Foreign Policy Infrastructure and Global Institutions*, The Princeton Project on National Security, 27 September 2006, pp. 1-28, available online at <http://www.princeton.edu/~ppns/conferences/reports/fall/FPIGI.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Lord and Lynch, *America's Extended Hand*, pp. 36-50.

⁵⁹ Josh Rogin, 'State Department Budget Request may be Dead on Arrival on Capitol Hill', The Cable Blog, Foreign Policy, 14 February 2011, available online at http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/14/state_department_budget_request_may_be_dead_on_arrival_on_hill.

⁶⁰ Wright, 'Strategic Engagement's Track Record', p. 41.

Beyond Public Diplomacy

The global conversation on public diplomacy continues, but public diplomacy is unlikely to persist as a sub-set of diplomatic practice. Diplomacy is entering new terrain. It will be a composite of traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy in which multiple diplomatic actors with new skills and techniques will be required to act easily in both worlds. Organizationally, the new diplomacy will involve networks of government departments in which foreign ministries, if they transform, can play leading roles. The role of the state will continue to diminish as networks of new actors gain power. Much more diplomacy will take place among publics. Diplomacy will look more like domestic politics on a global scale, and the risk calculus for diplomats — personally and professionally — will increase. The challenge for diplomats will be to loosen their control habits, adopt different mind-sets and embrace new practices in a world of networks and transnational challenges.

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