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A New Foreign Policy Paradigm?***

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DIALOGUE-BASED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY PARADIGM?

Shaun Riordan

Introduction

Public diplomacy is a central element of broader diplomatic activity in the 21st century. But it remains controversial. Debate remains about whether it is really new, whether it is merely a fancy name for traditional propaganda activities. This paper will not directly address these issues, but rather focus on more practical aspects of public diplomacy. It will argue that the new security agenda requires a more collaborative approach to foreign policy, which in return requires a new dialogue-based paradigm for public diplomacy. To get a handle on the practical aspects, the paper will begin by looking at the struggle against international terrorism and nation building.

Building Bridges to Moderate Islam

Leaving aside issues such as the wisdom of declaring a ‘war against international terrorism’, for the purposes of this chapter the key objectives¹ of the confrontation with international islamic terrorism might be defined as the disruption of attacks, detention or killing of terrorists and the dismantling of networks; the reduction of the capacity to recruit; the reduction of the capacity to secure financing; marginalization within Islamic society. Examination of these four objectives will clarify the centrality of public diplomacy to broader policy, something of its nature and the tools it must draw on.

At fist sight, the first of these objectives appears to relate primarily to security, military and policing policies. Yet it has an important element of public diplomacy. The successful disruption of terrorist operations and networks and detention or killing of terrorists requires the collaboration of a

1 For a similar list of objectives, see Niall Burgess and David Spence, ‘The EU: New Threats and the problem of coherence’, in Alyson Bailes and Isabel Frommelt (ed) *Business and Security: Public-Private Sector Relationships in a New Security Environment* (Sipri and Oxford, 2004).

broad range of foreign governments, and particularly governments in Islamic countries. These governments must be convinced, and not only coerced, to collaborate. But the effort to convince must extend beyond governments, and even political elites, if the collaboration is to be effective, stable and long lasting. The extent of collaboration will inevitably be constrained by what even non-democratic or semi-democratic governments perceive as acceptable to their broader societies. For example, the government of Pakistan has clearly had to balance its collaboration with the US in the 'war against terrorism' with what is acceptable to its broader society, including its own military and security elite. Furthermore, full collaboration by an Islamic government serves western interests little if the price is a rise in Islamic fundamentalism among the broader society and a consequent weakening of the government, or even its ultimate substitution by an extremist alternative. Thus, effective long-term collaboration against Islamic terrorism requires a public diplomacy to win the support, or at least the acquiescence, of broader Islamic societies.

The other objectives, recruitment, finance and marginalization, are more obviously centred on public diplomacy, and closely related. While there have been surprisingly few studies of why young men and women are willing to become terrorists, and in particularly suicide bombers, simplistic answers like poverty, poor education or the Israel/Palestine dispute are clearly inadequate. Studies have shown, for example, that Hamas suicide bombers tend to come from above average income families with above average education². Similarly, while Al Qaeda has sought to make capital out of the plight of the Palestinians, it has never been a core objective, nor does Al Qaeda recruit Palestinians. Rather there is a complex of reasons and motives relating both to the perception of the west and of existing Middle Eastern regimes. Similar complexes of factors explain the ability of groups affiliated to Al Qaeda to secure financing and the necessary level of tolerance, if not active support, in Islamic societies. While we need far more effective and rigorous studies of what these factors are, it should be clear that a key element is the perception of the west, both western governments and society, in Islamic societies.

Thus the shared public diplomacy aim of the four objectives outlined above is to engage with broader Islamic societies in a way that changes their perception of the West. In blunt terms, a public diplomacy strategy that can convince them that the West is not the enemy, Osama is; that democracy and

2 Alan B. Krueger and Malecková, 'Education, Poverty and Terrorism', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*; Vol 17, No 4, 2003.

market economies are neither incompatible with Islam, nor tools of neo-imperialism; and that constructive co-existence with the West is possible, and in the interest of all. This engagement with the Islamic street will not be easy, and raises important issues of the form and content of the message and the tools and actors of the strategy.

Simply asserting the primacy of western values, whether human rights, democracy or free-markets, or of good intentions is unlikely to work. On the contrary, it runs the risk of provoking a reaction in which western values are rejected because they are western, and in which Islamic values are defined against those of the west. This does not imply that western values must be abandoned in some form of moral relativism, or that all western values are inherently incompatible with Islam. A series of polls for example have demonstrated that a majority of Arabs do favour democracy³. But the same polls also demonstrate deep attachment to 'Islamic values'. This implies that a successful engagement must be built upon a genuine dialogue that accepts that Islam is different, and has its own values and historical and cultural traditions; that the West does not have all the answers, and that, while maintaining its own values, accepts that not all of them are universally valid for everyone everywhere; and that there are many paths to democracy and civil society.

However, if the dialogue is to be successful in engaging with broader Islamic society and promoting a moderate approach to Islam, the agents of the dialogue must enjoy credibility and access. At first sight this may be the hardest part. Neither western governments nor their agents (i.e. diplomats) have either the necessary credibility or access. Their need to maintain good relations with existing Islamic governments and political elites further constrain their freedom of action. More credible agents will need to be found among non-governmental agents in broader western civil society. The credibility of such non-governmental agents will be enhanced by the extent to which they are perceived to be independent of, and even critical of, western governments. Equally important will be the extent to which they are able to build on existing relationships, or shared interests or problems between western and Islamic societies. Thus they will include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and universities, who already have exchange programmes or relationships with local universities and NGOs. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) associations and chambers of commerce can

3 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, Perseus, 2004); Civility Programme – www.civility.org

develop relationships through promoting and fostering good commercial practice, including advising on lobbying for legislation to protect the SME sector in Arab countries against corrupt state-owned corporations. Sports clubs and associations can also be important, particularly given the shared passion for football.

Of particular potential in building bridges to moderate Islam are the Islamic communities in Western societies. But they also point to another aspect of successful public diplomacy. Many potential agents are reluctant to be associated with government. In as far as they are perceived to operate under government direction, or with government funding, their credibility and effectiveness can be undermined. Their involvement in a public diplomacy strategy can therefore be highly problematic. In the particular case of western Islamic communities, these communities may have significant differences with their governments not only on foreign but also on aspects of domestic policy, and their own standing in the broader communities. Governments may therefore need to engage in a prior dialogue with their own Muslims about shared values and the basis of co-existence. Aside from the need to do this in any case in the interests of domestic racial and ethnic harmony, and its value in bringing domestic Islamic communities within a broad public diplomacy strategy, it could provide a powerful preparation for the dialogue with overseas Islamic communities, and a demonstration of the genuineness of the intent behind that dialogue. The more general point is that an effective overseas public diplomacy strategy may often have to be preceded by an equally effective domestic public domestic strategy.

Thought must also be given to the tools of public diplomacy. Government sponsored conferences and seminars can be effective with existing political elites, but are unlikely to reach broader Islamic societies (although they can be effective tools for non-governmental agents). New technology, and in particular the internet and its offshoots such as e-mail and chat-rooms, offer cheaper and easy techniques for networking and building relationships to all public diplomacy agents, governmental and non-governmental. But so far extremist Islamic groups may be making more effective use of them. For example, there is evidence⁴ that extremist groups are using cookie and other e-commerce techniques to build profiles of visitors to their web sites, with a view to identifying and recruiting potential agents of influence, or even terrorists. While there may be privacy concerns about

4 Michele Zanini and Sean Edwards, 'The Networking of Terror in the Information Age', in John Arquillo and David Rondfeldt (ed), *Networks and Netwars: the Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2001).

western governments using similar techniques to recruit agents of influence in Arab countries (although this should not be excluded in particularly difficult or hostile environments) such techniques, combined with more traditional polling techniques where these are available, can be of value in assessing the effectiveness of on-line public diplomacy. Greater sophistication is also needed in engagement with the media. While television and radio stations, sponsored by western governments, playing western popular music, may attract audiences among younger sections of the population, there is evidence that their audience gives no credibility to, and even switches off for, their news broadcasts. They also run the risk of reinforcing prejudices about western popular culture (corrupt, decadent etc). A more effective approach could be to use the media, and especially the Arab media such as Al Jazeera, to launch dialogue and engagement. Once again this will be more effective if taken on by non-governmental agents rather than government spokesmen.

Promoting Civil Society

Another example, which shows the power of alternative, and more imaginative approaches, to public diplomacy, is nation building. The West's record in this area is mixed. In what might be called 'soft nation-building', primarily in Eastern Europe where the state was in transformation rather than collapse, where the West had not been forced to intervene militarily, and where civil society already, at least to some extent, existed, there has been considerable success. A broad range of good-government, education, training and economic/commercial promotion programmes played a significant role in bringing these countries to the brink (and beyond) of EU membership. In what might be called 'hard nation-building', where the West has been forced to intervene militarily, and subsequently become an occupying power, where the state has effectively disintegrated, and where existing civil society is scarce on the ground, the West has been far less successful. Even in its European protectorates of Bosnia and Kosovo, the West has failed to create politically stable and economically successful states, its pro-consuls, far from passing political power to local institutions, frequently feel compelled to seize it back, and the military presence looks set to continue for years yet. The situation in Afghanistan and Iraq is, of course, even worse.

Without going into a detailed critique of western efforts to nation build in these countries, part of the problem has been the failure to recognize that democracy, respect for human rights and successful market economies emerge from concrete historical, social, economic and cultural conditions.

Thus western diplomats and international civil servants have put excessive emphasis on a top-down imposition of democratic and liberal values and practices, institutional and constitutional arrangements and physical security and policing. An alternative 'public diplomacy' approach would instead focus on the creation of civil society, the promotion of a stable and secure middle or professional class, giving people 'ownership' of both the economy and political institutions and creating the conditions in which indigenous political institutions could emerge.

Some of the building blocks in this approach should be obvious: exchange programmes and networking between universities and schools; promotion of an independent media, especially one critical of the West and thus more credible; to this end exchanges and networking between journalists and journalists associations; cultural events; sporting links; promotion of civil society activities that develop social capital; links and networking between political parties; and the role of religious organizations. An area often neglected, but which gives a flavour of the broader approach, is the promotion and protection of a vibrant SME sector. SMEs are, of course, important economically: some 60 to 70% of new job creation in Britain is in the SME sector (the figures are similar in other countries). But they have a broader political and social importance. SMEs promote a feeling of ownership of the economy and its institutions in the broader society. Even those employed by SMEs, as opposed to their owners, have a greater sense of responsibility and interest in economic decisions than those employed by large corporations. Thus SMEs can also have an important role in promoting civil society and political participation, and an independently minded middle/professional class. They can be particularly important in motivating younger generations. However, in unstable societies, or those emerging from failure, SMEs are highly vulnerable to political elites primarily intent on promoting large corporations, whether multinational corporations promising foreign investment or corrupt local corporations linked to political and personal interests. Diplomats and international civil servants do too little to protect them, often under pressure themselves to focus on the interests of multinationals. The alternative approach would focus not only on greater institutional and regulatory protection of SMEs, but also in more active strategies to promote them, including roles as sources of information and advice, or even as 'guardian/tutors' for western SME associations or even individual SMEs.

Once again, diplomats and international civil servants may not be the ideal agents for these activities. As government representatives, they are no more trusted in nation-building societies than they are in Islamic (or even

their own) societies. Their bureaucratic and hierarchical working structures and cultures are poor preparation for the innovation and creativity needed (what might be described the 'entrepreneurial spirit' of public diplomacy). An example of where this spirit was sadly lacking arose during the NATO bombing of Serbia. Hundreds of thousands of Kosovars were sitting for six weeks in refugee camps in Macedonia, a captive audience with nothing to do, and yet it occurred to nobody to initiate classes in citizenship or democratic political practice as preparation for their return. Diplomats also frequently lack the knowledge of key areas or the practical skills needed (for example, economics, programme management).

What effectively amounts to the promotion of civil society in failed states requires the engagement of agents from the broader civil society in the West (with the incidental advantage of strengthening western civil society), reinforced by the effective use of the new technology. Some will already be active (egg NGOs and to some extent universities) and their activities primarily need co-ordination within a broader strategy. Others who have much to offer will never have thought of doing so and will need encouragement (e.g. SMEs, Chambers of Commerce, sports associations or schools). Others may need technical or even financial support to realize their potential. Key roles for governments will therefore be as coordinators, catalysts and advisors/supporters. Many relevant agents will be suspicious of governments' motives (if not perhaps as suspicious as in the case of Islamic societies) and reluctant to be seen as too close. Diplomats will therefore need to demonstrate tact and subtlety. Once again a public diplomacy strategy abroad will require a prior public diplomacy strategy at home. This does not mean that diplomats and other government officials have no direct role. They should continue to engage with existing elites and training programmes aimed at civil servants, police, the military and the judiciary. But they need to realize that these activities, while necessary, are not sufficient, and that they need to collaborate with, and bring into their thinking and decision-making, a broader coalition of non-governmental agents.

Beyond Selling Policies, Values, and National Image

On the base of these two brief case studies, we can now consider the lessons for the broader approach to public diplomacy in the 21st century. Firstly, these are not the only issues that require a public diplomacy approach. Recent years have seen the emergence of a new international security agenda, including non-traditional issues such as environmental degradation, the

spread of epidemic diseases, financial instability, organized crime, migration and resource and energy issues. These issues are all inter-related. The threat they pose to western societies has been enhanced by the extent of inter-connectedness and inter-dependence and changes in technology and human behaviour in a globalized world⁵. No single country, however powerful, or even regional grouping of countries, is powerful to tackle these issues alone. The threats these issues pose can only be contained through collaboration with a broad range of partners from a broad range of different cultures. As with international terrorism, collaboration with governments and political elites will not be sufficient. Not only will the level of collaboration these can offer be limited by the attitudes of their publics, but in some cases the key issues do not lie within their control or competences, while in others they require changes in societal attitudes. For example, reducing the threat from epidemic diseases both requires the collaboration of medical professionals, who may not be directly linked to government, and changes in social attitudes and behaviour in the wider population. Similarly, tackling environmental degradation requires the collaboration of NGOs and commercial companies, as well as governments. Thus a public diplomacy strategy aimed beyond governments to broader civil societies will be essential.

If this is so, then public diplomacy must move from being an optional 'bolt-on' to a central part of the foreign policy decision-making process. Ed Murrow, Kennedy's head of the US Information Agency (USIA), famously demanded to be in at the 'take-off', not only at the 'crash-landing'⁶. Murrow meant that he wanted public diplomacy, or better described presentational aspects, to be taken into account during the policy development stage. In other words, policy formulation should take account of how the policy could be sold later. The argument here is stronger. If tackling the major security issues requires collaboration at the global level with both governmental and non-governmental agencies, and if stable and effective collaboration can be secured only through engagement with broader foreign societies, public diplomacy becomes an integral and substantive, not just presentational, part of the policy making process. Increasingly in the 21st century, diplomacy will be public diplomacy. There is little evidence so far of this move of public

5 For an analysis of this in relation to epidemic disease, see Jennifer Brower and Peter Chalk, *The Global Threat of New and Reemerging Infectious Diseases* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2003).

6 Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy of the Council of Foreign Affairs: Public Diplomacy: A Strategy for Reform 2002, www.cfr.org/pubs/Task-force_final2-19.pdf

diplomacy to the centre of the decision-making process. The British Foreign Office, for example, has made a great show of taking public diplomacy seriously. It has created a Public Diplomacy Policy Department, which has produced a public diplomacy strategy⁷. All policy recommendations must include a section on public diplomacy implications. But the changes are bureaucratic rather than the profound change of attitude needed. In as far as these changes do bring public diplomacy into the 'take-off' in Murrow's sense they are welcome. But it remains essentially a bolt-on, invoked only in the sense of how to sell policy better, rather than a substantive and integral part of the policy making process.

The idea that public diplomacy is about selling policy and values, and national image, remains central to much theoretical and practical work on the issue. Seminars and conferences are organized on promoting western values or 'selling democracy'⁸. President Bush appointed an expert from the marketing industry to head up US public diplomacy following 9/11. Even authors like Joseph Nye treat 'soft power' as an exercise in winning the battle of ideas⁹. Brand consultants are making significant profits from advising governments on how to improve and sell their national image ('national branding' is becoming a research theme in its own right). But the examples we have looked at of engagement with Islam and nation building suggest this may be a seriously mistaken approach. It is, for example, highly questionable whether a 'national brand' can be created, and whether efforts to do so are credible. The attempts to re-brand Britain in the late 90s collapsed in the fiasco of the much-derided 'Cool Britannia'¹⁰. The strength of a country's image emerges from its cultural, political and economic plurality. Attempting to impose an artificial coherence, and to spin it to the rest of the world in the way that policy-makers or their consultants think profitable, risks undermining both richness and credibility. In the case of Britain, the effort to promote its modernity and youthfulness contradicted its traditional image so important to its valuable tourist industry. The FCO's public diplomacy strategy is reduced to meaningless platitudes such as that Britain 'is building

7 Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Public Diplomacy Strategy, www.fco.gov.uk

8 For example, a British Council Conference entitled 'Selling Democracy' in February 2004. In the words of George Kennan: 'Democracy has, in other words, a relatively narrow base both in time and space, and the evidence has yet to be produced that it is the natural form of rule for peoples outside these narrow parameters', cited in Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles*, (London: Penguin, 2002).

9 Nye (2004); Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power* (Oxford, 2002).

10 Mark Leonard, *Britain TM* (London: Demos, 1997).

dynamically on [its] traditions'. The national branding approach constantly wavers between overly simplified and non-credible claims and blandness in which all countries (and regions and cities) seek to present themselves as combining innovation and tradition.

But the issue goes beyond applying inappropriate marketing tools to national promotion. Many commentators now recognize that public diplomacy, and indeed diplomacy as a whole, will increasingly be about ideas and values. We have seen that values and ideas are crucial both to engagement with Islam and nation building. They are equally crucial to the other security issues identified above. But we have also seen that assertion of western values as possessing unique and universal validity could be counter-productive. There has been a progressive break down of the consensus on universally accepted and applicable political, economic and social values, even among elites. To some extent this reflects the decline of political and intellectual domination by Western Europe. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, was a European document, written by Europeans at the end of a European Civil War notable primarily for its non-respect for human rights. Non-Europeans were unable to participate because at the time they remained under the control of European colonies. It is questionable whether the same document would today be accepted as universal. Instead the association of western values with US hegemony, and the perception by many in developing countries that these values are used as a tool to secure western political and economic domination, lead to their rejection. Thus in the wake of the recent war, we have seen the resurgence of Islamic Sharia, rather than western democratic, values in some parts of Iraq. In Africa we have seen African states prioritising sovereignty and African solidarity over human rights in Zimbabwe. In a related phenomenon, the simple assertion of values, when such values are no longer universally accepted without question, risks provoking automatic rejection and the assertion of alternative value systems. Even where core western values are clearly in the interests of the individual, e.g. right to life, freedom of expression, equality of the sexes or ethnic groups, the perceived need of a group or nation to identify itself in opposition to the west can lead to their rejection.

If tackling the new agenda of security threats requires the collaboration of other governments and their broader civil societies, a successful public diplomacy must be based not on the assertions of values, but on engaging in a genuine dialogue. The messages of public diplomacy need to be more sophisticated and subtle. Public diplomacy must engage in dialogues with a broad range of players in foreign civil societies. This requires a more open,

and perhaps humble, approach, which recognizes that no-one has a monopoly of truth or virtue, that other ideas may be valid and that the outcome may be different from the initial message being promoted. If the aim is to convince, rather than just win, and the process is to have credibility, the dialogue must be genuine. This does not amount to abandoning core values. The aim remains to convince other publics of these values. But the effort to convince is set in a context of listening. Just as no individual will long suffer, nor be convinced by, an interlocutor who endlessly asserts his views while never listening to those of others, so other governments and societies will not engage in collaboration if they feel that their ideas and values are not taken seriously.

Collaboration With Non-Governmental Agents

Governments and diplomats have progressively lost their monopoly over international relations. The new ICT, by radically reducing the costs and increasing the speed of communication, has allowed a broad range of new actors to participate in the debate over, and implementation, of foreign policy, including sub-national governments, global NGOs and less formal groupings of citizens. Not only does new technology allow these new actors to communicate and collaborate more efficiently, but it has also opened up a treasury of sources of information through the world wide web which means that they are frequently as well, if not better, informed on key policy issues and geo-political developments than governments and their officials. This is reinforced through the increasing privatization of technology that formally remained under exclusive government control. For example, the launch of commercial monitoring satellites means that these new actors can access the kind of keyhole imagery once the preserve of the western military¹¹. While those who argue that these developments imply the 'end of the state'¹² in international relations may protest too much, states have little option but to engage with these new actors in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. As international relations increasingly operate not at a single interstate level but through complex, multi-level and interdependent networks, governments and their diplomats must learn to operate in these networks.

11 Stephen Livingston, 'Diplomacy and Remote Sensing Technology', *iMP Magazine*, July 2001, www.cisp.org

12 Guehenno, *The Decline of the Nation State*, tr Victoria Elliott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

But as we have seen, involving non-governmental agents in public diplomacy strategies is not just accepting an inevitable development in international relations, but relates to the most effective way of developing and implementing such strategies. While diplomats retain an important role in engaging in debate with other governments and political elites, they are often not the ideal, or even counterproductive, agents for engaging with broader foreign civil societies. As government representatives, they can lack credibility. They often lack detailed expert knowledge of the key issues. Their key role of maintaining relations with existing governments can conflict with engaging with broader civil society, especially if the government concerned is corrupt or repressive and does not like the direction or possible implications of the engagement. Diplomats may not have natural ways of engaging with key elements of civil society: creating artificial channels of approach can increase suspicion of their motives, both with foreign governments and their civil society. In many countries, being seen as too close to foreign diplomats can be dangerous, either in career terms, or even physically.

Engaging with foreign civil societies is often best done by the non-governmental agents of our own civil societies. Unlike diplomats, they do have credibility, often to the extent to which they are seen as critical of their own governments. Many do have specialist knowledge of the key areas. They also have more natural ways of engaging with their opposite numbers, which arouse less suspicion of their motives. They are deniable in a way that diplomats are not, meaning that the engagement with civil society can be pursued in parallel to maintaining normal diplomatic relations with existing governments. We have already identified many of these potential non-governmental agents of public diplomacy: universities and individual academics can be highly effective public diplomacy agents and already have highly effective networks; schools/colleges can engage foreign citizens during the formative years; NGOs, national and international, who provide a vivid example of the plurality and freedom of debate in western society and many of whom are already well plugged in to counterparts in other countries; journalists; political parties, who have already developed effective networks among themselves at a European level (the role of German political parties in promoting democracy in Spain was particularly notable), but have been more limited elsewhere in the world; citizen groups, ranging from baby sitting collectives to local issue lobbies and parent teacher associations; business associations and individual companies, especially at the SME level; Youth movements, such as the scouts, girl guides or boys/girls brigade, who pioneered international networking in the first half of the 20th century, and their modern counterparts; sports clubs; and offshoots of the internet such as

chat-rooms and usernets. The role of government, and diplomats, in relation to these non-governmental agents, will be more as catalysts, coordinating their activities within a broader strategy, encouraging those not already engaged in such activities, and, on occasion, providing discreet technical and financial support. But governments must bear in mind that many potential agents will be reluctant to be seen as too close, or acting at the behest of government. Indeed, being seen to do so could undermine the very credibility that otherwise represents much of their added value. Government will therefore need tact, openness and understanding. As noted above, effective public diplomacy at home may be an essential precursor to successful public diplomacy abroad.

A public diplomacy strategy along the lines outlined above has significant implications for the structure and culture of foreign ministries. Dialogue-based public diplomacy needs time to work: it does not produce instant results. Foreign Ministries therefore need to develop a capacity for long-term policy thinking and geo-political analysis. Western foreign ministries are notably weak in both. Overly hierarchical decision-making processes, and the consequent administrative burdens and premium on conformism rather than innovation or creativity, condemn officials to short-termism, both of policy-making and analysis¹³. Foreign ministries should learn from the experience of the private sector, which makes extensive use of the scenario planning techniques developed by Shell in the 1960s and 1970s¹⁴, as well as newer modelling techniques derived from network and complexity theory¹⁵. Drawing on these techniques, foreign policy machines should be restructured to allow the development of medium to long-term objectives against various future possible scenarios which can provide the framework in which a public diplomacy strategy to secure these objectives can in turn be developed. This will need a change of culture as well as structure. Western foreign ministries remain tied to a 'closed' paradigm of decision-making, in which policy is decided and then 'sold' to other governments. Policies once decided may indeed be changed, but only as a result of 'defeat' by foreign governments. This paradigm largely holds true even between close allies. But it is

13 Shaun Riordan, *The New Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

14 Kees Van der Heiden, *Scenarios: the art of strategic conversation* (Chichester: Wiley, 1996).

15 Paul Ormerod and Shaun Riordan, 'A New Approach to Geo-Political Analysis', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* (forthcoming); Robert Lempert, Steven Popper and Steven Bankes, *Shaping the Next One Hundred Years: New Methods for Quantitative Long Term Policy Analysis* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2003).

inadequate, and even counter-productive, if the aim is to secure the collaboration of a broad range of partners and their civil societies. Dialogue-based public diplomacy requires a more open decision-making process, in which broad policy objectives are set, but in which detailed policies emerge as part of the dialogue process. To return to an earlier point, dialogue means listening as well as talking, and accepting that you don't have all the answers and that others might have alternative valid solutions.

The move to a more open culture will also be required if foreign ministries are to collaborate with non-governmental agents of public diplomacy. Some moves have been made in this direction. The Director of the British Foreign Office's Human Rights Department has been seconded from Amnesty International. The FCO also created a Panel 2000, bringing together experts from a wide range of backgrounds to advise on its public diplomacy strategy¹⁶. A task force in the US has suggested establishing an independent, not-for profit 'Corporation for Public Diplomacy' to co-ordinate the activities of non-governmental agents¹⁷. But these steps will serve little if the hermetic, almost monastic, culture of foreign services is not broken open. Officials should also beware their almost instinctive tendency to respond to a problem by creating yet new co-ordinating committees. Apart from the risk of creating yet more bureaucratic structures, where the aim should surely be to create less, membership of formal government committees may cause significant ethical or political problems for many potential public diplomacy agents, while their bureaucratic nature may turn off others. Less formal network structures may prove more effective, cost efficient and less politically sensitive. But network, as opposed to hierarchical, structures will again pose significant cultural and structural challenges to foreign ministries.

Practitioners as Public Diplomacy Entrepreneurs

A major part of the new public diplomacy will fall to non-governmental agents, but embassies and diplomats abroad will continue to play an important role. They too will need radical changes of culture and structure, neither of which has significantly changed in the last 50 years. Diplomats will continue to have an important role in engaging political elites, in many cases including key journalists and commentators. To do so they will need to be

16 Mark Leonard, *Going Public* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2000)

17 Independent Task Force (2002).

more open and willing to go ‘off-message’ and to engage in genuine dialogue and debate. Their knowledge of the countries in which they are posted, which will remain of enormous importance, will need to be augmented by greater expert knowledge of the key issues to give them credibility. To perform this role successfully, they need to be encouraged to, and rewarded for, taking risks. In the engagement with broader civil society, their key role will be as ‘public diplomacy entrepreneurs’, looking for and identifying opportunities for engagement, communicating them to the relevant non-governmental agents and, where necessary, facilitating the first steps in engagement. They will only be able to do this effectively if they are part of the informal network established with the non-governmental agents at home. They will also need to get out and about, and not only in capital cities. The current departmentalized embassies, and the increasing micro-management from foreign ministries, pose serious obstacles to these public diplomacy roles. Larger western embassies tend to spend too much time in self-administration, managing both personnel and large embassy estates, and talking to other diplomats. The premium is placed on the ability to handle the paperwork sent from headquarters, rather than local networking. Future embassies need to be slimmer and more flexible; less tied to prestigious buildings and more structures around functional networks. In the future five or six well-prepared and well-motivated diplomats with clear objectives, travelling constantly and linked to the foreign ministry network through their mobiles and lap-tops will be far more effective than the current thirty to forty diplomats bound to their desks. As Rand analysts have put it, we need a revolution in diplomatic affairs to match that in military affairs¹⁸.

18 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Emergence of Noopolitik: Towards an American Information Strategy* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1999).