

## THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** Public diplomacy plays an important role in the foreign policy of states. Moreover, its evolution helps understand how independent states have used it in their foreign policy and international relations. This article reveals the evolution of public diplomacy, and how it has been used by countries.

**KEYWORDS.** Public diplomacy, Voice of America, Cold War, Fulbright-Hayes Act, United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly,

**INTRODUCTION.** Although the term of public diplomacy is considered as a new concept in the sphere of international relations, the origin of the public diplomacy goes back when countries began establishing initial relations as an independent nation. It is true that in the past the majority of countries strongly convinced in army, military tactics and general's military abilities. At that time, political concepts like public opinion, public relations and public diplomacy were less common. As time went by, states put much more emphasis on building economic and diplomatic relations as well as they started to ally with other nations to win various wars and fight against a wide range of pirates. As a result, countries began using diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy. However, military power remained the primary method of solving international conflicts rather than diplomacy.

**METHODS.** In this article systematic, logical-comparative analysis and historical methods have been adequately used.

**RESULTS.** Public diplomacy gradually developed during XIV century in conjunction with appearance of new states. The term of "public diplomacy" was

initially used in “Times” magazine in January 1856. It is used merely as a synonym for civility in a piece criticizing the posturing of President Franklin Pierce. “The statesmen of America must recollect,” the Times opined, “that, if they have to make, as they conceive, a certain impression upon us, they have also to set an example for their own people, and there are few examples so catching as those of public diplomacy.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this piece of early information, public diplomacy was seen as a component of people. In addition, the first use in official context quoted by the New York Times was in January 1871, in reporting a Congressional debate. Representative Samuel S. Cox (a Democrat from New York, and a former journalist) spoke in high dudgeon against secret intrigue to annex the Republic of Dominica, noting he believed in “open, public diplomacy.”<sup>2</sup> These magazines provided information on the first use of “public diplomacy” in journalism. But they didn’t offer exact meaning of public diplomacy due to lack of scientific research. However, in the subsequent century, public diplomacy was used in broad context. For instance, US President Woodrow Wilson in 1917 formulated a Committee on public information with the aim to inform foreign audience about the foreign policy goals of USA. Later on USA Public Diplomacy initiative include: cultural exchange programme in Latin America, International visitors programme, Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, Fulbright exchange program, US information Agency, US International communications Agency.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, During the Great War the phrase “public diplomacy” was widely used to describe a cluster of new diplomatic practices. These practices ranged from successive German statements on submarine warfare policy, through public declarations of terms for peace, to Woodrow Wilson’s idealistic vision—as expressed in the opening point of his “fourteen points” speech of January 8, 1918—of an entire international system

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<sup>1</sup> Nancy Snow Syracuse University Philip M. Taylor University of Leeds “Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy”. 2009. P-19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. P-19

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Saima Ashraf Kayani and Dr. Muhammad Saif ur Rehman. “PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY PARADIGM” Margalla Papers 2015. P-55-56.

founded on “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at.” Many writers at the time preferred the phrase “open diplomacy” for this, but “public diplomacy” had its adherents and seems to have been given further currency by reporting French use of the phrase “*diplomatie publique*”<sup>4</sup>. The New York Times used the phrase on May 9, 1916 in its coverage of the so-called Sussex Pledge, a declaration issued on May 4 by the German government to restrict its submarine warfare. Reviewing U.S. reactions to the pledge the New York Times quoted an editorial from that day’s Boston Herald, which declared: “One of the evils of public diplomacy is the necessity of continued letter-writing, in which the responsible head of each nation must save his face with his own people as well as communicate his purposes to the other side.”<sup>5</sup> Besides that institutionalization of public diplomacy began under Woodrow Wilson who established a Committee on Public Information (CPI) led by George Creel. The CPI was the US government’s first formal government agency for providing information to foreign publics. It initially began as a program to inform domestic opinion but, starting in 1917, it was given a mandate to address foreign audiences as well. Creel called it “the fight for the mind of mankind.” The CPI had a foreign section which produced news and picture services, and arranged for foreign journalists to visit the United States. It also disseminated Hollywood films abroad. Those were clearly public diplomacy projects, antecedents of today’s programs. But the CPI ended in 1919 when the war ended; Congress withdrew funding, saying it had been too partisan.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that during the World War I the US initiated to practically utilize Public Diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the US became much more active to use public diplomacy. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Nelson Rockefeller as Coordinator for Commercial and of Cultural Relations, renamed in 1941 as the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. His staff opened libraries and bi-national centers and established exchange programs, sponsored traveling musical

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<sup>4</sup> Nancy Snow Syracuse University Philip M. Taylor University of Leeds “Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy”. 2009. P-20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P-20.

<sup>6</sup> William A. Rugh. Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics. 2014. P-8.

presentations and art exhibitions, and published a magazine. Roosevelt's prewar public diplomacy was therefore focused on Latin America. But in 1941, while the United States was at war with Germany, President Roosevelt broadened the concept. He established the Office of the Coordinator of Information (later the Office of Strategic Services, OSS), that had a "Foreign Information Service" (FIS). Roosevelt appointed Robert Sherwood, his speechwriter and a playwright, to head FIS. The new FIS opened ten information offices around the world, each called the US Information Service (USIS), a name that was used throughout the rest of the century.<sup>7</sup> Those affords played a crucial role to expand the concept of public diplomacy. Because they were carried out in a practical way. As a result, that circumstance created an opportunity for other countries to accept public diplomacy.

The post-war years saw both a reassessment of Wilson and a reemergence of the term public diplomacy. In 1946, the Belgian foreign minister Paul-Henri Spaak spoke enthusiastically of "this age of public diplomacy" during the inaugural session of the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly in October. In Britain the London Times denounced public diplomacy as one of the "catch-phrases and slogans masquerading as principles of foreign policy," and endorsed a call from diplomat and politician Harold Nicolson for a return to private diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the practical use of public diplomacy is usually seen in the foreign policy of the US. After the World War II, the US put enough emphasis on undertaking public diplomacy. In June 1942, Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI), which operated Voice of America (VOA) and an expanding chain of information centers around the world. It also published and distributed magazines and books abroad and worked with Hollywood to produce and distribute films abroad. President Truman abolished OWI in 1945 at the end of the war, but transferred its overseas information activities including information, broadcasting and exchanges to the Department of State. Psychological operations continued separately under the

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<sup>7</sup> William A. Rugh. *Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics*. 2014. P-8.

<sup>8</sup> Nancy Snow Syracuse University, Philip M. Taylor University of Leeds "Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy". 2009. P-20.

Department of Defense. That year, Congress authorized spending for educational exchanges, when Senator J. William Fulbright, a Rhodes Scholar, proposed that proceeds from the sale of surplus property be used to fund educational exchange programs. In August 1946, Congress passed an act to amend the Surplus Property Act of 1944, authorizing expanded educational exchanges. The first agreement was signed in November 1947 to bring Chinese students to the United States, and the first American “Fulbrighters” left for Burma in the fall of 1948.<sup>9</sup> In general, it became clear that developed countries modified their foreign policy from “hard power” which is using a wide range of weapons to impact on other countries to “soft power”. The main characteristics of this sort of policy was that any independent states either developed or underdeveloped could afford to take part in international political situations.

It would be mistake If we said the only USA used public diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy. Like USA, former Soviet Union also comprehended the importance of public opinion. In 1955, Moscow formulated the Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), with the aim to revive Soviet American cultural exchanges. Thus cultural agreement in 1958 was signed between the two rivals. While the visit of VOKS delegation to USA was highly publicized. Both the nations realized the "usefulness of exhibits as an effective means of developing mutual understanding." It was all about presenting Soviet technology, industry, and culture to the USA citizens. The US held The American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959. This exhibition tried to present the American achievements in the field of technology, fashion, art, culture, to soviet citizens.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that former Soviet Union comprehended the benefits of public diplomacy to maximize its partners around the world.

Additionally, during the cold war the importance of public diplomacy significantly increased. Because, after undergoing a couple of economically and

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<sup>9</sup> William A. Rugh. *Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics*. 2014. P-9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Saima Ashraf Kayani and Dr. Muhammad Saif ur Rehman. “PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY PARADIGM” *Margalla Papers* 2015. P-56.

mentally tough wars not only individuals but also officials became so vulnerable to fight against ideas. Instead, most of them preferred putting a great emphasis on public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. At that era the US also continued and evolved the way utilizing public diplomacy. As the Cold War intensified, Congress saw this as reason to pass new legislation supporting public diplomacy. In January 1948, Truman signed Public Law 402, informally called the Smith-Mundt Act. It has been amended since 1948, but it remains today the most important legislative foundation for the US government's entire public diplomacy program. Its purpose was "to enable the Government of the United States to promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries, and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Among the means to be used in achieving these objectives are...an information service to disseminate abroad information about the United States, its people, and policies promulgated by the Congress, the President, the Secretary of State and other responsible officials of Government having to do with matters affecting foreign affairs." The Act said that information dissemination should be accomplished "through press, publications, radio, motion pictures, and other information media, and through information centers abroad."<sup>11</sup>

In addition, during the Cold War, the development of policy and instruments of public diplomacy intensified. The decade following World War II saw the establishment of the Fulbright program, re-education programs for Germany and Japan, and the journal *Problems of Communism*. The Central Intelligence Agency launched Radio Free Europe for the satellite countries of East Central Europe and Radio Liberty for the various nationalities of the Soviet Union. Then, in 1953, the various information and cultural diplomacy activities of the government were consolidated into a single new agency, the U.S. Information Agency. Over time, public diplomacy programs expanded under USIA to include production of new

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<sup>11</sup> William A. Rugh. *Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics*. 2014. P-9-10.

periodicals targeted to foreign audiences, exhibitions abroad, book and library programs, and the distribution of film and television programming.<sup>12</sup>

In 1961, Congress passed the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, informally called the Fulbright-Hayes Act. This act consolidated existing programs, added initiatives in book translations, exhibitions and American studies, and provided for new cultural centers abroad. It said its purpose was “to strengthen the ties that unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational, cultural interests, developments and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations, and the contributions being made toward a more peaceful and fruitful life for the people throughout the world; to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.” It authorized funding for educational exchanges for study, research, instruction, and other educational activities, and it authorized cultural exchanges in music, arts, sports, or any other form of cultural expression.<sup>13</sup> The main peculiarity of this period is that some countries paid special attention to both education and culture as well as art. These are usually considered as a primary component of public and cultural diplomacy. Because they have a considerable opportunity to gather a wide range of people and cultures around the world. Besides that during this period student exchange programs became more and more popular. However, there are positive and negative aspects of this circumstance. On the one hand, by means of student exchange programs, students are likely to acquire contemporary knowledge. On the other hand, students might be negatively influenced when they study abroad. The reason why they might experience cultural shock, language barrier and accept negative political and religious thoughts as well. For this reason, governments and officials have to be careful to establish partnership with much more powerful countries than themselves.

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<sup>12</sup> John Lenczowski. “Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy. 2011. P-28.

<sup>13</sup> William A. Rugh. Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics. 2014. P-9-12.

The Cold War also witnessed the development of other programs and agencies involved in public diplomacy. These included foreign aid programs, the launching of the Peace Corps, disaster relief efforts, other humanitarian aid initiatives, and U.S. involvement in international organizations with such initiatives as the Ten-Year Health Plan for the Americas through the Pan-American Health Organization.<sup>14</sup>

At that time Soviet Union was also active to implement public diplomacy. Soviet Union fully utilized Radio Moscow which by 1970, broadcast in 70 languages. Soviet used movies, television, books and all kinds of media.<sup>15</sup> It shows that Soviet Union attempted to spread its ideology by expanding cultural aspects of socialism.

In these early years, various terms were applied to the US government's communication efforts abroad, including international communication, educational and cultural exchange, or both. Then in 1966, Edmund Gullion, a retired foreign service officer who was the dean of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, proposed the term "public diplomacy" and it stuck. Although Gullion's original formulation did not confine the term to activities by the government, US officials have consistently used it to mean only the US government's efforts to communicate with foreign audiences.<sup>16</sup> Gullion's term "public diplomacy" covered every aspect of the United States Information Agency (USIA) activity and a number of the cultural and exchange functions jealously guarded by the Department of State.<sup>17</sup>

During the Cold War, the U.S. government also embarked on numerous projects that some have characterized as "political action" or "political warfare" but which were so targeted toward influencing foreign opinion that they could also be properly considered public diplomacy. Some of these were run by the Central Intelligence Agency and some were coordinated under the auspices of the newly

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<sup>14</sup> John Lenczowski. "Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy. 2011. P-28-29.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Saima Ashraf Kayani and Dr. Muhammad Saif ur Rehman. "PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY PARADIGM" Margalla Papers 2015. P-56.

<sup>16</sup> William A. Rugh. Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics. 2014. P-9-12.

<sup>17</sup> Nancy Snow Syracuse University, Philip M. Taylor University of Leeds "Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy". 2009. P-21.



formed Psychological Strategy Board and its successor, the Operations Control Board. These projects involved the creation and support of political, intellectual, and cultural organizations which promoted the values and principles of the United States.<sup>18</sup> These facts demonstrates how the US and other countries enforced in real life. However positive they seem, their original essence outweigh all of the actions, namely supporting underdeveloped nations or providing a wide range of grants for students. It is considered that prior to establishing cultural relations or accepting various grants, special political scholars have to analyze the primary aim of forthcoming partners. Because, even making minor mistake during negotiation process, the decision of current government might impact on subsequent generations in a negative way.

Moreover, public diplomacy continued developing in the subsequent years. During the course of the 1990s the term public diplomacy finally entered common use in foreign policy circles overseas. In Britain, for example, the Blair government established a Public Diplomacy Strategy Board.<sup>19</sup> A major change in the organizational structure of American public diplomacy took place in 1999 when Congress passed legislation abolishing USIA and merging most of its functions into the State Department. Part of the reasoning behind this decision was the perception in Congress that with end of the Cold War, public diplomacy was no longer necessary.<sup>20</sup> Besides that the main aim of the US Public Diplomacy in post-cold war period was to “Support the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives, advance national interests, and enhance national security by informing and influencing foreign public and by expanding and strengthening the relationship between the people and Government of the United States and citizens of the rest of the world”.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> John Lenczowski. “Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy. 2011. P-28-29

<sup>19</sup> Nancy Snow Syracuse University, Philip M. Taylor University of Leeds “Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy”. 2009. P-21-22.

<sup>20</sup> William A. Rugh. Front Line Public Diplomacy How US Embassies Communicate with Foreign Publics. 2014. P-19.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Saima Ashraf Kayani and Dr. Muhammad Saif ur Rehman. “PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A NEW FOREIGN POLICY PARADIGM” Margalla Papers 2015. P-57.

Public diplomacy is simply not being integrated with other instruments of statecraft. There has been a widespread failure to utilize cultural diplomats and other public diplomats as sources of information and political analysis of foreign political conditions, not to mention the systematic failure to utilize “opportunities intelligence” and “cultural intelligence” to maximize the enhanced effectiveness of attempts to exploit political opportunities through public diplomacy, political action, psychological strategy, and political warfare.<sup>22</sup>

**DISCUSSION.** In conclusion, the basis of contemporary statehood evolved in conjunction with public diplomacy. The principle aim of public diplomacy did not modify completely, although the world witnessed a couple of World Wars, information revolution and a wide range of ideological conflicts. In the past, it can be seen that states utilized public diplomacy as means of foreign policy. By way of public diplomacy, they attempted to broaden the cycle of their policy. To some extent, independent states implemented public diplomacy in an appropriate way. Even though countries enlarged the scope of various grants and scholarships to influence on minor countries, these kinds of interested grants created new opportunities for the developing countries to improve their economy. As time went by the ways of implementing public diplomacy gradually evolved. Besides that the amount of governments financial assistance for the executive organs of public diplomacy also slowly increased. In general, public diplomacy serves to establish initial contacts with different nationalities.

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<sup>22</sup> John Lenczowski. “Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy Reforming the Structure and Culture of U.S. Foreign Policy. 2011. P-41.