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Chapter 14: The New Public Diplomacy **By Marilyn Rosenthal Diamond**

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“Hard power and soft power are inextricably linked. In a global information age, with multiple transnational connections, the loss of soft power can be costly for hard power.” - Joseph Nye

Soft power refers to the strategy that nations adopt to advance their interests without the use of force. This often takes the form of economic, social, and cultural initiatives. Public diplomacy is one vehicle for implementing complementary strategy.

Public diplomacy is as essential a tool for political purposes, as is military and economic power, but it is nothing new. Nations have long sought to manage their images abroad through the controlled dissemination of information. Early efforts at persuasion are reflected in monuments, tombs, pyramids, statues, temples, and paintings. Image management, initially targeted to domestic populations, shifted to foreign publics as the ability to travel and exchange information increased. Additionally, throughout most of its history, public diplomacy remained a hierarchical model controlled exclusively by elite state actors.

Dramatic changes to this model occurred with the invention of the printing press and accelerated after World War II, as access to newspapers, radio, TV, and films increased. The battle to win hearts and minds shifted from the exclusive domain of elites to the mass market. However, it was the advent of the internet that forever redefined public diplomacy in ways that were unimaginable a generation ago. Cyberspace ushered in an era of instant communication that democratized information, replaced the peer-based model, and empowered ordinary citizens to actively and directly participate in transnational relations.

If the old public diplomacy was a one way street, clogged with diplomatic traffic, the new public diplomacy is a superhighway, with civilian drivers careening at breakneck speeds. Governments

are no longer in complete control of how they are viewed transnationally; they now compete with private information sources in shaping these perceptions. Civil society routinely demonstrates its agility and ability to mobilize ordinary citizens. For example, photos transmitted from Abu Ghraib, catalyzed a re-examination of interrogation methods. In another case, the recent “Twitter Revolution” in Iran helped galvanize protestors as the world looked on.

Ordinary citizens also affect positive and equally dramatic influences on public opinion. The first poll in Pakistan, following the earthquake of October 8, 2005, showed that U.S. favorability among Pakistanis doubled from 23% in May to more than 46%, while the percentage of Pakistanis with very unfavorable views of America declined from 48% to 28%. (“Terror Free Tomorrow” survey) American humanitarian assistance is credited with this immediate and significant difference.

Similarly, a Pew Global Attitudes Survey in Morocco, published in July 2005, showed that favorable attitudes by Moroccans towards the U.S. had doubled since 2003, especially among 18-35 year olds, making those ratings the highest in the Muslim world and higher than among some of America's traditional allies, such as the Netherlands, France, and Germany. The U.S. embassy in Rabat, Morocco, determined that the increased favorability was “in no small part due to the work (citizen to citizen exchanges across a wide range of mutually determined issue areas) of the Chicago Casablanca Sister Cities International Program.”

Recently, Thomas Friedman reported from Pushgar, Afghanistan, on the transformative work of Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*. Mortenson has devoted his life to building 131 secular schools for girls in Pakistan and 48 in Afghanistan through his NGO, the Central Asia Institute. His partners are the U.S. State Department and village elders. His mission is to thwart the efforts of the Taliban who recruit among the illiterate and impoverished populations which have poor outside sources of information and few options for meaningful employment. Mortenson says, “educated women are much less likely to let their sons become militants and insurgents.” Moreover, educating girls, builds up the role of women in society and aids in bringing the country out of poverty. Initially critical of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mortenson now says, “the U.S. military has gone through a huge learning curve. They really get it. It’s all about building relationships from the ground up, listening more, and serving the people of Afghanistan.”

The new public diplomacy network of corporations, NGO's, private foundations, and other non-state actors, has created significant challenges and opportunities for professional practitioners of public diplomacy and the institutions that train them. Today's process requires, at a minimum, that diplomats:

1. Persuade by dialogue and recognize that communication is a two way process. Effective initiatives depend on understanding what motivates stakeholders to listen and engage.

2. Build networks in other countries with civilians and their institutions. Near total control of our initiatives is no longer possible, nor desirable. For example, interests between states and NGO's have converged, creating policies independent of governments. The 1997 Ottawa Convention banning land mines and the establishment of the International Criminal Court are two prominent examples of collaborations between states, NGO's and the UN. By improving civilian capacity and institutional strength, a self-sufficient system is created whereby diplomatic endeavors can reap rewards with minimal additional input.
3. Perform ongoing evaluation of programs and initiatives to determine if we are achieving our goals. Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the image of America plummeted in the Arab world. In an effort to reverse this trend, the Bush administration launched a U.S. government news channel in Arabic. On February 14, 2004, Al Hurra, (the free one) began broadcasting at the cost of 100 million dollars a year to American tax payers. 60 Minutes, in collaboration with "Propublica," a non-profit investigative journalism organization found that some of the broadcasts supported terrorism and denied the Holocaust.
4. Reinvigorate existing public diplomacy structures, such as the Peace Corps, American Corners, and Sister Cities International, with an eye to maximizing their effectiveness. People-to-people programs build stable and enduring relationships that cut through bureaucratic clutter and foster engagement with civil society, academics, journalists, students, and opinion leaders in their respective societies. Policy driven campaigns do not.

These are but a few suggestions for our diplomats to bear in mind as they operate in this new reality. Alternatively, they can ignore these suggestions and simply follow the admonition of Martin Rose, a senior British diplomat who, in 2005, stated everything they need to know: "the world is fed up with hearing us talk; what it actually wants is for us to listen."

All the rest is commentary.

[This is a revision to the original article correcting editorial errors]