



## **Is Public Diplomacy Inherently a Manifestation of ‘Soft Power’?**

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of this research paper is to present and critically evaluate the discourse of public diplomacy within the theoretical concepts of power, mainly—soft power. More precisely, it will attempt to answer the question: Is public diplomacy an inherent manifestation of ‘soft power’? To do this, the paper will use the context of the United States of America post-9/11 in a “War on Terror” era. The paper will provide a brief synopsis of the literature on public diplomacy, with an emphasis on its theoretical conceptualization and historical evolution. Following which, its major themes will be examined. The thematic issues will include critical debates among scholars over the conceptual convergence of public diplomacy, propaganda and public relations; the incorporation of soft power within the foreign policy strategy of a national government, and the efficacy of public diplomacy. The paper will provide a recent case study of the American soft power in order to illustrate the importance of good public diplomacy, and further understanding into the concept and role of soft power. The research follows a qualitative design with analyses based on secondary sources, such as reference books, research papers, dissertations and scholarly journals from various research institutes, publishers, and universities.

### **Résumé :**

Le but de ce travail de recherche est de présenter et d’évaluer de façon critique le discours de la diplomatie ouverte au sein des notions théoriques de puissance, en particulier la “puissance douce”. Plus précisément, on tentera de répondre à la question : la diplomatie ouverte est-elle une manifestation inhérente de la puissance douce? Cet essai utilise le contexte des États-Unis après les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 durant l’ère de la guerre contre le terrorisme afin de trouver une réponse. En premier lieu, on y trouve un bref résumé de la littérature de la diplomatie ouverte en soulignant sa conception théorique et son évolution historique. Ensuite ses thèmes majeurs sont examinés plus minutieusement. Les questions thématiques comprennent les débats critiques parmi les spécialistes sur la convergence conceptuelle de la diplomatie ouverte, de la propagande et des relations publiques ; l’inclusion de la puissance douce dans les stratégies de politique étrangère des gouvernements nationaux et l’efficacité de la diplomatie ouverte. Cet essai utilise une étude de cas récents de la puissance douce américaine afin d’illustrer l’importance de bonnes relations diplomatiques ouvertes et d’explorer davantage le concept et le rôle de la puissance douce. La recherche suit un modèle qualitatif avec une analyse basée sur des

sources secondaires comme des ouvrages de référence, des travaux de recherche, des dissertations et des revues savantes provenant de plusieurs instituts de recherche, d'éditeurs et d'universités.

## Introduction

“Officials see immediate need for ‘Public Diplomacy.’”<sup>1</sup> Initially ignored after the Cold War era, public diplomacy garnered increased attention and secured front-page headlines in the United States soon after the tragic events of September 11th.<sup>2</sup> The design and conduct of American foreign policy was immediately re-examined, and an attempt was made to repair its inadequacies. The importance of investing in public diplomacy as an instrument of soft power was rediscovered. The truth is that today, as E.H. Carr theorizes, “power over [world] opinion” matters to practitioners of foreign policy in a way that was inconceivable as little as 25 years ago.<sup>3</sup>

The principal goal of this research paper is to present and critically evaluate the discourse of public diplomacy within the theoretical concepts of power, mainly, soft power. More precisely, it will attempt to answer the question: Is public diplomacy an inherent manifestation of ‘soft power’? To do this, the paper will use the context of the United States post-9/11 in a war on terror era. First, the paper will provide a brief synopsis of the literature on public diplomacy, with an emphasis on its theoretical conceptualization and historical evolution. Following which, an examination of its major themes, which have appeared throughout its literature will be presented. The thematic issues will include critical debates among scholars over the conceptual convergence of public diplomacy, propaganda and public relations; the incorporation of soft power within the foreign policy strategy of a national government, and the efficacy of public diplomacy. The paper will provide a recent case study of American soft power in order to

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<sup>1</sup> Walter R. Roberts, “What is Public Diplomacy? Past Practices, Present Conduct, Possible Future,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 18.4 (2007): 36, [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mediterranean\\_quarterly/v018/18.4roberts.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mediterranean_quarterly/v018/18.4roberts.html).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 4, [http://kimo-mp3.at.ua/\\_ld/0/87\\_en-09.pdf](http://kimo-mp3.at.ua/_ld/0/87_en-09.pdf).

illustrate the importance of good public diplomacy, and further the understanding into the concept of soft power. The research follows a qualitative design with analyses based on secondary sources, such as reference books, research papers, dissertations and scholarly journals from various research institutes, publishers, and universities.

## **Theoretical Conceptualization of Public Diplomacy**

### *What is Public Diplomacy?*

The term “public diplomacy” is relatively new; it was coined in the mid-1960s by a distinguished Foreign Service Officer, Edmund Gullion.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that a theory of public diplomacy does not exist; neither does an exact or clear definition since definitions are subjected to continuous change over time. Hence, it may be easily described than defined by foreign policy experts. Elton Gilboa, a professor and director of Communication Studies at Bar-Ilan University, stipulates that in 1980, public diplomacy was described as a “direct communication with foreign people, with the aim of affecting their thinking, and ultimately that of their government.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Paul Sharp, a distinguished diplomacy studies scholar at the University of Minnesota, defines public diplomacy as “the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented.”<sup>6</sup> However, later studies have discerned problems with such descriptions. Scholars and policy practitioners failed to holistically describe public diplomacy by not identifying the type of actors involved in its discourse. This was due to the widely held belief that only nation-states engaged in conducting such communication. Nevertheless, later scholars, such as Hans Tuch, a U.S.

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<sup>4</sup> Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 6, [http://kimo-mp3.at.ua/\\_ld/0/87\\_en-09.pdf](http://kimo-mp3.at.ua/_ld/0/87_en-09.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Eytan Gilboa, “Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 57, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097994>.

<sup>6</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 11.

diplomat in 1940, provided a succinct and workable definition of public diplomacy by identifying its key actors and content.<sup>7</sup> Tuch described public diplomacy as a government's way of communicating with foreign publics to achieve an understanding for its country's ideas, culture, institutions and national policies.<sup>8</sup>

## **Historical Evolution of Public Diplomacy**

### *From Antiquity to the Global Information Age*

Tracing the historical evolution of public diplomacy is essential for providing a better and more accurate understanding of its concept. Many view it as an old wine in new bottles—with a new and interesting spin.<sup>9</sup> Even though the phrase “public diplomacy” is relatively new, it is an old phenomenon in international relations, which has prevailed for nearly as long as the concept of diplomacy itself.<sup>10</sup> Jan Melissen, a Senior Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute, provides a historical account of the use of public diplomacy. He posits that ancient Rome, Greece, Byzantium and the Italian Renaissance were very well acquainted with diplomatic practices aimed at foreign publics.<sup>11</sup> In ancient times, princes and their representatives engaged in activities of gathering public opinions in foreign lands.<sup>12</sup> Activities, such as image and identity cultivation (nation branding in today's parlance) were considered matters of grave importance.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, a regular distribution of newsletters was introduced as part of the diplomatic practice.<sup>13</sup> Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century in Europe aided pioneers in international relations, such as Cardinal Richelieu, to easily

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

communicate with foreign publics.<sup>14</sup> The French were deeply committed towards their image formation abroad, terming it “as one of the principal sources of a nation’s power.”<sup>15</sup> Particularly, under the ruling of Louis XIV, King of France in 1643, activities such as identity projection expanded.<sup>16</sup> Later on, other countries, such as Turkey, followed suit.

To illustrate the historical vitality of public diplomacy, Joseph Nye, an American political scientist, provides an example of the French diplomatic practices. Following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the French government sent its cultural personalities abroad, where they operated mostly through Alliance Française to promote French language and literature, striving to improve its shattered image abroad.<sup>17</sup> With the onset of World War I, a professional form of image cultivation developed across national boundaries.<sup>18</sup> Post-WWI, Nye argues that the academic field of international politics realized the increased significance of attracting and influencing the foreign audiences. Measures to attractively promote causes of national governments to foreign audiences became a norm and indeed, essential in foreign policy application.<sup>19</sup>

### *From Traditional Diplomacy to Public Diplomacy?*

Starting from antiquity to modern day, the contours of public diplomacy take on an intriguing complexity. Public diplomacy is distinct from traditional diplomacy since it goes beyond the narrow and restricted government-to-government interpretation of diplomacy. However, as previously mentioned, public diplomacy is neither a new diplomatic paradigm, nor has it by any

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 96, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097996>.

<sup>18</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 96.

means replaced the discreet and confidential dialogue between state representatives.<sup>20</sup> However, what is unique is the emergence of a new dynamic within the international system, which has transformed the environment in which public diplomacy is at work.

In today's global information age, national governments increasingly realize the importance of targeting not only other national governments but also various international actors, non-official groups and organizations to achieve greater transparency and cooperation. Such expansion in the field of public diplomacy, from being inherently government-to-government oriented to encompassing many diverse non-governmental elements is a consequence of continuous change taking place within the international system. Technological advancements, the rise of transnational terrorism are few drivers of this change. Public diplomacy has, thus, become an essential element of the diplomatic corps and, today, traditional diplomacy is carried out differently. As stipulated by a former Canadian diplomat, public diplomacy requires distinctive "skills, techniques and attitudes than those found in traditional diplomacy."<sup>21</sup>

### **The Essence and Role of Public Diplomacy**

#### *Public Diplomacy: A Mere Propagandist Strategy?*

For many scholars and practitioners, public diplomacy is nothing more than a mere propagandist strategy.<sup>22</sup> They often use the term "public diplomacy" interchangeably with propaganda. The strong association between public diplomacy and propaganda exists since many see public

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<sup>20</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 16-17.

diplomacy as influencing foreign audiences by communicating ideas and values that serve the interests of the propagandists.<sup>23</sup>

In recent years, scholars have conducted research on public diplomacy by using propagandist theories, models, and methodologies.<sup>24</sup> Students of propaganda view public diplomacy as an “outgrowth of propaganda,” categorizing it as a concept of propaganda.<sup>25</sup> Academic historian, David Welch, provides a working definition of propaganda, which contends that, “propaganda is the deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interest of the propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly.”<sup>26</sup> However, scholars who consider public diplomacy synonymous with propaganda seem to miss the point. Nye argues that public diplomacy is distinctive from propaganda since the latter often lacks credibility.<sup>27</sup> Simple propaganda is historically associated with manipulation and deceit of foreign publics, reinforced when the Nazi’s came to power in Germany and by the Cold War tactics.<sup>28</sup>

In variance, public diplomacy manifests credibility, impartiality and is “based on a liberal notion of communication.”<sup>29</sup> Public diplomacy is a ‘two-way street’ since public diplomats not only talk to but also listen to what people have to say.<sup>30</sup> Further, good public diplomacy involves

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> Gilboa, “Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy,” 65.

<sup>25</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 16-17.

<sup>27</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 101.

<sup>28</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 101.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

developing long-term relationships with the host society and creating an enabling environment for government policies.<sup>31</sup>

*The Conceptual Convergence Between Public Diplomacy and Public Relations*

If not propaganda, other scholars view public diplomacy as a Public Relations (PR) campaign since it is concerned with the enhancement and management of national reputation.<sup>32</sup> Dr. Benno H. Signitzer, Head of Public Relations Area at Salzburg University, and Dr. Timothy Coombs, Assistant Professor at Illinois State University, argue that public diplomacy and PR are very similar in their orientation since the two fields seek similar ends and employ very similar tools in meeting those ends.<sup>33</sup> They define international public relations as the “planned and organized effort of a company, institution, or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the publics of other nations.”<sup>34</sup>

However, in variance, Rosaleen Smyth in her article, “Mapping US Public Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” by quoting Joseph Duffy, marks a clear distinction between the two concepts.<sup>35</sup>

It [public diplomacy] is not public relations. It is not flakking for a Government agency or even flakking for America. It is trying to relate beyond government-to-government relationships, the private institutions, the individuals, the long-term contacts, the accurate understanding, the full range of perceptions of America to the rest of the world, both to those who are friendly or inclined to be our partners or allies from one issue to another to those who are hostile, with some credibility or impartiality. (422-23)

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<sup>31</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 101, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097996>.

<sup>32</sup> Gilboa 65

<sup>33</sup> Stacy Michelle Glassgold, “Public Diplomacy: The Evolution of Literature,” 11.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, “Mapping US Public Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 55, no. 3 (2001): 422.

Nye contends that even though selling a positive image, communicating information abroad and developing mutually stable relations is a central component of public diplomacy, public diplomacy goes beyond that by building a two-way messaging street, and gradually a long-term relationship.<sup>36</sup> The mainstream literature on public diplomacy demonstrates a clear cut distinction between public diplomacy, propaganda, and public relations. The essence and uniqueness of public diplomacy is identified in its purpose, multi-stakeholders, and patterns of communication.

### **Aims of Public Diplomacy**

The primary purpose of public diplomacy, as argued by Malone, is to “influence the behaviour of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens.”<sup>37</sup> In order to meet such goals, governments pursue two other smaller objectives. First, is to raise awareness of their foreign policies, cultural values and political action amongst foreign audiences through their public diplomacy activities.<sup>38</sup> Second, is to develop long-lasting, trustworthy, and mutually stable relationships and consensus between different stakeholders of public diplomacy.<sup>39</sup>

However, in a global information age, scholars also consider public diplomacy as, more than ever, comprising a soft dimension. They view it as a means of promoting soft power for nation-states.<sup>40</sup> Research by Joseph Nye is well known in this respect.

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<sup>36</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 101.

<sup>37</sup> Anh Dung Bui, “Public Diplomacy in ASEAN and the Cases of Vietnam and Singapore” (master’s thesis, University of Leeds, 2011, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 107.

## **Public Diplomacy: An Instrument of Soft Power**

### *Soft Power: The Power of Attraction*

The most pivotal aspect this research attempts to incorporate is the interplay of soft power within a nation's foreign policy strategy. The theory of "soft power" was first introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990. It is a powerful theoretical construction which refers to the "ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion ["sticks"] or payment ["carrots"]."<sup>41</sup> It has become an important analytical tool in foreign policy discussions.

In academia, liberal institutionalist scholars emphasize on soft power as an important source of statecraft.<sup>42</sup> Contrary to hard power, "the ability to coerce" that is emphasized by the neo-realists, soft power is a powerful tool used by national governments to persuade and entice others to produce desired outcomes.<sup>43</sup> Nye posits that a nation's soft power rests on those assets which possess the capacity of engendering attraction, or in other words 'seduction.'<sup>44</sup> Several factors can give rise to a nation's soft power—its culture, political values, and foreign policies.<sup>45</sup> All these factors are within the dimensions of public diplomacy and, thus, represent good ways of promoting a nation's soft power.

Several scholars view public diplomacy as an instrument of soft power; it is an instrument that national governments use to mobilize intangible resources to attract the masses of another country, and not solely their state representatives.<sup>46</sup> They draw such attraction and

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest J. Wilson III, "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 114, DOI: 10.1177/0002716207312618.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 119, no. 2 (2008): 256, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20202345>.

<sup>44</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 95.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

enticement through broadcasting, educational and cultural exchange programs, public information, and political action.<sup>47</sup>

*Skeptics: Soft Power as Ephemeral*

As posited by Nye, “soft power is an important reality.”<sup>48</sup> He rejects the realist’s rhetoric of soft power as being a fallacy. For Nye, realist thinkers succumb to a “concrete fallacy.” For them, something is not a power resource unless it can be physically tested—either by dropping it on a city or on one’s own foot.<sup>49</sup>

Skeptics also view soft power as ephemeral. They posit that since popularity is transitory, soft power should not be taken as a guide for foreign policy application.<sup>50</sup> By using the U.S.’s public diplomacy as a reference point, they state that the U.S. is so strong and powerful that it can produce desired outcomes without its reliance on other nation’s approval.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Fouad Ajami argues that the U.S. possesses such enormous power that it need not worry about public opinion in foreign lands. Moreover, columnist Cal Thomas notes that despite being ridiculed and unpopular in the past, the U.S. managed to recuperate its dwindling image, and form a coalition of willing when it required.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast, Nye postulates that the U.S. was able to recover its image both during and after the Cold War since the Soviet Union was considered a greater evil between the two.<sup>53</sup> Wise policies were implemented by the US after World War II, which enabled it to co-opt people into a set of alliances and institutions by relying heavily on soft power resources. Further, profound

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<sup>47</sup> Rosaleen Smyth, “Mapping US Public Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 55, no. 3 (2001): 424, <http://journals2.scholarsportal.info/tmp/4298593292624208136.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 96.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 256.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

changes in the international environment, such as rising new threats of transnational terrorism and advances in information technology, have severely impaired the U.S. in addressing threats in isolation. Cooperation and collaboration amongst nations is required more than ever before.

The vitality of norms and values in international relations is disregarded by the realist school of thought.<sup>54</sup> For them, foreign policy is the pursuit of national interests. It is decided by foreign ministers and then subsequently imposed on other countries.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the engagement of foreign publics in foreign policy implementation remains minimal. To a certain extent, this holds true since nations continue to cooperate based on their self-interest, but as Nye argues, their degree of cooperation is also influenced by the attractiveness of another country, in this case the U.S..<sup>56</sup> Thus, it is essential to pay heed to soft power in order to achieve desired outcomes.

### **The Efficacy of Public Diplomacy**

#### *Soft Power: Stifles with Stifling Culture, Values and Policies*

Nearly all researchers and scholars of public diplomacy unanimously believe that the aim of public diplomacy to produce soft power is unachievable if it is inconsistent with a nation's foreign policies. Nye argues, "[...] if the content of a country's culture, values, and policies are not attractive, public diplomacy that 'broadcasts' them cannot produce soft power. It may produce just the opposite."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Shaun Riordan, *The New Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2003), 120.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power and American Foreign Policy," 257.

<sup>57</sup> Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," 95.

Nye notes that cultural soft power of a country can be undermined by selling images and information to foreign audiences that are seen as illegitimate or offensive.<sup>58</sup> An example illustrating such finding is the export of Hollywood films depicting scenes full of nudity and violence to Muslim countries.<sup>59</sup> Films of this kind are likely to engender repugnance rather than the soft power of attraction amongst the Muslim population. In a similar vein, Melissen argues that foreign policies, which appear to be unsound and narrowly self-serving, are likely to prohibit rather than produce soft power.<sup>60</sup> According to him, the United States policies towards the Middle Eastern countries, and the presence of its military forces in Iraq weakens the effectiveness and credibility of America's public diplomacy.<sup>61</sup>

Melissen also notes that while sound policies may be of tremendous support in attracting foreign publics, the amount of money and resources spent on broadcasting foreign policies will not guarantee success in countries that already hold a skeptical opinion of the nation.<sup>62</sup> Thus, selling images and hawking messages to foreigners have very little chance of being effective. Moreover, Nye posits that incorporating soft power in a government strategy may not always produce the desired results in certain environments. In the case of North Korea, it is very unlikely for the U.S. or other Western countries to persuade Kim Jong-un in disbanding his efforts of developing nuclear arsenals considering his staunch anti-American beliefs. However, America may be more effective in promoting awareness on democracy, human rights issues, and free trade strategies amongst the people of North Korea.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>61</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

Further, it is tempting to view public diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy.<sup>63</sup> However, caution must be maintained while drawing too close a nexus between the two since public diplomacy may run the risk of getting exposed to contradictions and discontinuities if it is closely coupled with the foreign policy objectives of a country that are deemed ineffective.<sup>64</sup>

### **Case Study: American Soft Power and its Foreign Policies**

Sentiments of anti-Americanism have significantly augmented the post-Iraq war in 2003. The ‘War on Terror’ dealt a costly blow to American credibility. A widespread and popular belief is that the U.S. is predominately an imperialist power, who is self-complacent and desensitized to the needs of anyone but their own.<sup>65</sup>

A series of recent polls and surveys conducted depict a strong correlation between American soft power and its foreign policies. According to the polls, American soft power losses are largely a consequence of its unattractive and uninformed foreign policies. The Gallup International poll (a post-Iraqi war poll) revealed that fifteen out of twenty-four countries view American foreign policies as having a negative effect on their attitudes towards the U.S.<sup>66</sup>

A Eurobarometer poll found that in a majority of European countries, a widespread belief prevails that the U.S. plays a negative role in issues concerning the well-being of the international community, such as preventing global poverty, protecting the environment, and ensuring world peace and security.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, when asked in a Pew Global Attitude poll about

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<sup>63</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 255

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

the level of interest the U.S. takes in incorporating the interests and opinions of others, a majority in twenty out of forty-two countries answered as “not too much” or “not at all.”<sup>68</sup>

Similar unfavourable ratings for the U.S.’s foreign policies exist in several countries especially among the younger generation, who question American hegemony, and its popular culture.<sup>69</sup>

To support such analysis, Nye highlights the results of the Roper study 2003, which revealed:

for the first time since 1998, consumers in 30 countries signaled their disenchantment with America, by being less likely to buy Nike products or eat at McDonalds...At the same time, nine of the top 12 Asian and European firms, including Sony, BMW and Panasonic, saw their scores rise.

Unpopular foreign policies spill over and undercut a nation’s soft power—proving self-defeating in terms of the outcomes they desire.<sup>70</sup> In an information age, the attractiveness of the United States will be crucial in meeting its end goals. Wise and carefully planned foreign policies negate negative public opinion.

However, when foreign policies of a country are viewed as illegitimate and inconsistent by foreign audiences, they engender attitudes of distrust and reduce the leverage of the country. This is evident from the case of the German public opinion of the U.S. post-9/11 and the Iraq war. Post-September 11th, the public in Germany became sympathetic to the U.S., and joined a military campaign against the Al-Qaeda group.<sup>71</sup> However, as the Bush administration prepared for the unpopular Iraq war, a widespread disbelief emerged in Germany over the reasons presented by America for entering the war, such as the alleged connection of Iraq with the Al-

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 256

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>71</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 257.

Qaeda network, and a prevalence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.<sup>72</sup> German suspicions were reinforced by the failure to find such weapons or prove Iraq's connection with any terrorist organizations.<sup>73</sup> In such a climate of disbelief, conspiracy theories flourished and by July 2003, "one-third of Germans under the age of thirty said that they thought the American government might even have staged the original September 11 attacks."<sup>74</sup>

From the case study of the United States, it remains increasingly clear that a strong correlation exists between the soft power of a nation and its foreign policies. When the latter appears unattractive, one finds remnants of failure in its soft power. Further, when the importance of soft power is discounted from foreign policy considerations, one is likely to pay a price. Paranoia may generate among foreign publics, which can be very contagious, preventing countries to cooperate with a country with unattractive foreign policies, and cultural and political ideals.

In this global information, it is crucial for countries to liaise with one another over emerging security issues. The inherent attractiveness of foreign policies possess the capacity to influence cooperation and collaboration. Given the surmounting prevalence of anti-Americanism as revealed through these polls, it is vital that the U.S. administration correctly reorients its foreign policy strategy that appeals to a vast majority of public - both nationally and internationally, as well as use public diplomacy more effectively to explain their common interests.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

## **Conclusion: Results, Discussion and Limitations**

With an information revolution occurring, power, more than ever, has acquired a soft dimension of attraction.<sup>75</sup> To be sure, public diplomacy is neither an altruistic affair nor a ‘soft’ instrument. It may not always produce the desired outcome of attraction. In cases where foreign policies are unsound and narrowly self-serving, it may not necessarily produce soft power, rather, it may prohibit it.

Nye’s analysis stipulates that public diplomacy is not necessarily an inherent manifestation of soft power. It depends on the kind of resources and assets (culture, political values and foreign policies) it broadcasts. As Nye puts it, “even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular product.”<sup>76</sup>

Further, it is important to note that public diplomacy can produce a wide variety of objectives, ranging from soft power objectives, such as in the field of trade and investment and political negotiation, to hard power objectives, such as alliance management, conflict prevention, and military intervention.<sup>77</sup> Irrespective of this, public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of power, and it requires sound and credible ‘soft’ resources and assets in order to be successful in producing the desired outcome.

Furthermore, it is vital to be aware of the changes in the dynamics of the international system. As a direct consequence of such changes, public diplomacy has witnessed a substantial evolution and advancement in its discourse. Foreign policy practitioners pay acute attention to public diplomacy in order to develop a coherent and effective government strategy. Scholars of several disciplines in social sciences, such as international relations, communication studies, public relations, history, political science, sociology, cultural studies etc. have contributed

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<sup>75</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 107

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>77</sup> Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, 14.

significantly in advancing theoretical and empirical knowledge of public diplomacy.<sup>78</sup> It is, thus one, of the most multidisciplinary areas of study in modern scholarship.<sup>79</sup>

However, the existing research, knowledge and methodologies of public diplomacy suffer from several major setbacks. Despite the success of several disciplines in contributing useful theories and models to the field of public diplomacy, they have not yet developed a fully-integrated, and comprehensive framework for the functioning and understanding of its deeper role.<sup>80</sup> Experts and practitioners of public diplomacy have often sidelined relevant knowledge and contributions in disciplines, such as communication and PR, while communication and PR scholars have often ignored the pertinent literature in international relations and cultural, diplomatic, and strategic studies.<sup>81</sup> To this end, an extensive collaboration and a substantial multidisciplinary effort is required between scholars and practitioners to close the wide gaps.<sup>82</sup>

While reviewing the literature of public diplomacy programs and activities, it appeared that the field is heavily marred by the experiences of the United States during the cold war.<sup>83</sup> A further examination on public diplomacy is required to pay heed to the greater role of new international actors, such as non-official organizations, individuals and civil society groups. Most scholars have written extensively on public diplomacy of states, while paying little attention to the greater role of these new international actors.<sup>84</sup>

Another major setback with the existing research on public diplomacy is that many scholars and practitioners use the term public diplomacy interchangeably with propaganda,

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<sup>78</sup> Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 56, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097994>.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 616 (2008): 56, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097994>.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

public relations or psychological warfare.<sup>85</sup> However, scholars who consider the term as a euphemism for propaganda discredit the essence and uniqueness of public diplomacy as it encompasses more substance than these terms individually suggest.<sup>86</sup> Public diplomacy is a ‘two-way street’ as public diplomats not only talk to but also listen to what the foreign public has to say.<sup>87</sup> Good public diplomacy involves developing long-term relationships with the host society, and creating an enabling environment for government policies.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to the above listed rigidities to the existing knowledge of public diplomacy, several steps can be taken by policy practitioners and national governments to improve public diplomacy in all its dimensions. Broadcasting capabilities and narrowcasting on the internet should be greatly improved; however they both must be firmly grounded in the interest of foreign audiences.<sup>89</sup> Investment in soft power resources must be greatly augmented by governments, and increased emphasis must be laid on promoting cultural exchanges across societies that enable rich and diverse non-governmental institutions to interact with other nations.<sup>90</sup> Efforts must be made to increase in-person, face-to-face communication instead of mere broadcasting and online campaigns.<sup>91</sup> More educational exchanges must be promoted and advertised.<sup>92</sup> However, most important is for national governments to realize that dire consequences generate when their soft power resources do not live up to its standards.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Gilboa, “Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 56.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 101.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” 266.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

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