

Position paper: The role of the presidency in South African public diplomacy

by

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A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Diplomatic Studies

in the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria

Faculty of Humanities

Supervisor: Dr Lesley Masters

January 2017

Abstract

Public diplomacy is an underutilised and underrated instrument in the conduct of South African foreign policy. Its direct and indirect support of diplomatic interventions lies in its value of being able to change the hearts and minds of foreign publics in support of national and international policies in the short, medium and long term. As the principal diplomat of a country the president, and his or her office, drive the foreign policy agenda, utilise the requisite instruments, capacities and structures at their disposal to achieve foreign policy objectives. The researcher's key question is, therefore, what is the role of the presidency in post-apartheid South African public diplomacy? The following related questions emerge. First, what is public diplomacy? Second, how does the presidency drive public diplomacy? Third, how has public diplomacy evolved over the different presidential periods in South Africa? Lastly, derived from this study, this position paper makes recommendations towards the development of a policy framework for public diplomacy and the presidency in South Africa. In doing so, the position paper looks at the theoretical concept of public diplomacy, developments in technology, the media and the overall engagement of the presidency and the efficacy of public diplomacy in South Africa.

Acknowledgements

I wish to appreciate Dr Lesley Masters my supervisor, for her unstinting support and guidance throughout the development and finalisation of the research report.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation for the sponsorship for the Master of Diplomatic Studies programme.

The support from the colleagues at the Political Sciences Department of the University of Pretoria, Dr Yolanda Spies, Prof Anton Du Plessis and Prof Maxi Schoeman.

My dear friend and classmate, Ms Lorraine Ngwenya.

My dad and mom, Gerald and Joey Lepad and my brothers and sisters for their support and encouragement.

I thank you.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| APRM | African Peer Review Mechanism |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa |
| DFA | Department of Foreign Affairs |
| DIA | Department of International Affairs (ANC) |
| DIRCO | Department of International Relations and Cooperation |
| IBSA | India, Brazil and South Africa Dialogue Forum |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NP | National Party |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| PAC | Pan-Africanist Congress |
| SACOIR | South African Council of International Relations |
| SADPA | South African Development Partnership Agency |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States of America |

1 Introduction and the problem statement

Public diplomacy is the deliberate use of diplomacy in targeting national and international publics in order to communicate the foreign policy objectives of a state. These diplomatic activities may be carried out over the short, medium- and long-term. While this has typically been the remit of communication departments, ministries of foreign affairs, and their embassies, the head of state or government plays a notable role. However, when it comes to the analysis of public diplomacy it is predominately assessed at the level of foreign ministries and the analysis is primarily in western discourse and neglected in non-western literature (Wang & Chang 2004:12).

This position paper gives attention to the role of the South African presidency in public diplomacy from Nelson Mandela (1994 – 1999), to Thabo Mbeki (1999 – 2008), and Jacob Zuma (2009 – 2014). For purposes of the study, the presidency comprises the offices of the president, the deputy president and relevant ministries within the presidency. Although Mr Kgalema Motlanthe's term as President came as a result of the 're-call' of Mbeki in September 2008, his approach to South Africa's foreign policy and its engagement in the international arena was primarily to maintain the status quo until the new president, Jacob Zuma was appointed. Given his limited tenure, investigation into Motlanthe's role in public diplomacy is not part of this study.

Presidential public diplomacy activities during the three presidential terms pivot around the persona of the president, demonstrating their strengths and weaknesses in terms of national and international communication. The promotion of foreign policy objectives by the president takes place in bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings, participation in global conferences, head of state visits, and representing South Africa in various forums to name a few. The iconic stature of Mandela followed by the ascetic Mbeki, and subsequent populist president Zuma, makes for an unpredictable approach to a presidential public diplomacy in the absence of clearly defined policy.

Policy requires the clear articulation of a vision. The guiding vision for South African policy is in the South African Constitution of 1996, distilled from the Freedom Charter of 1956. This commits the leadership and people of South Africa to the following: they shall

“respect the rights and sovereignty of nation states”; “strive to maintain world peace”, “the settlement of all international disputes through negotiation and not war”, “upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all”, and “the rights of all people of Africa to self-government and independence” (South Africa 1956).

The National Development Plan (NDP) and the various government’s vision statements provide further articulation of the vision; however, policy also requires the articulation of principles and strategies, which form the framework and pillars that allow for the continued referencing, standard bearing and means to measure progress and success.

While there has been an effort to understand national and international public perceptions in diplomacy, there is limited study on South Africa’s public diplomacy and even less on the role of the presidency in South Africa’s evolving public diplomacy. The research question examined in this position paper is then: What is the role of the presidency in South African Public Diplomacy? The following related questions emerge. First, what is public diplomacy? Second, to what extent does the presidency drive public diplomacy, and finally what are the possible recommendations towards the development of a policy framework for presidential public diplomacy in South Africa?

The research methodology used is a literature study, investigating primary sources such as speeches, addresses, government reports and newspaper articles that are in the public domain and secondary sources such as journal articles. The study also adopts a longitudinal approach by following changes across the different administrations over a period of time. The researcher made use of primary sources that cover each of the three presidents to show their role in South African public diplomacy. These primary sources include speeches and policy documents written by the presidents, amongst others to show the nature of public diplomacy in that specific era.

For purposes of this analysis the paper considers key themes that arose and challenged the practice and implementation of public diplomacy for the presidency. This includes for the Mandela period the means to deliver on foreign policy objectives. For Mbeki the question around HIV and AIDS continued to present a challenge to the presidency and its approach to public diplomacy. The section also assesses the use of the African Renaissance and NEPAD. For the Zuma administration the focus is on the National Development Plan and challenges arising from how he personally handled public diplomacy.

South Africa is a constitutional democracy with three distinct branches of government namely the judicial, legislative and executive branches. First, as the president is the head of the executive branch is responsible for the delivery of services of government, and therefore is also responsible for the means to support and deliver on foreign policy objectives within, and through the government. His constitutional responsibilities include the ‘receiving and recognising of foreign diplomatic and consular representatives’; appointing ambassadors, plenipotentiaries, and diplomatic and consular representatives’ (South Africa 1996, 84 (2) (h) (i)). Second, the research focuses on HIV and AIDS as an area of both national and international importance. Chapter two of the Constitution addresses the Bill of Rights, where the right to life is paramount. Actions and statements made by all three presidents directly and indirectly affect the achievement of foreign policy objectives in this focus area. Third, international events hosted by the government such as the 2010 World Cup, bilateral and multilateral events as elements that shape the achievement of the foreign policy objectives. The presidential support for the hosting of large-scale events such as the World Cup, which attracts international attention through visitors, provides large-scale advertising and the possibility of international investment. Therefore, international citizens are affected by the successful hosting of the event. Fourth, an area that transitions across all the presidencies namely the Government Communications and Information System. This focus area looks at the policy issues in the communication space as it pertains to public diplomacy and links to the policy decisions taken by the presidency. Because the study is both time and space –bound, the areas of research focus in on a specific time indicated by the presidential time line highlighting the policy changes in the different administration periods, and space due to changes politically and socially that prevail impacting on the successes of the public diplomacy role of the presidency.

The analysis is informed by the diplomacy theoretical framework, specifically public diplomacy, as well as by foreign policy analysis. Here a discussion is provided on the various theoretical approaches used in defining public diplomacy. In linking public diplomacy as a tool in foreign policy the paper also draws on foreign policy analysis, particularly the idea of the soft power set out by Nye (2008). This is useful as soft power is defined as the means to effect change “through attraction rather than coercion” (Nye 2008: 102). Diplomacy, public diplomacy and foreign policy interconnectedness is further discussed Chapter 2. Whilst limited by the constraints of the position paper, the researcher also engages with the respective tools that promote or constrain public diplomacy and the

achievement of its outcomes. Yun (2005:18) indicates that there are five areas categorising variables in the study of public diplomacy. These five variables, distilled from the work of Rosenau (1966) are idiosyncratic (personal characteristics of the political leaders), role, governmental, societal and system. The position paper looks at the idiosyncratic and government variables to show that after the pronouncements of the president, implementation lies in the work of government departments and officials. Given the nature of the study namely the role of the presidency in South African public diplomacy, the idiosyncratic and governmental variables are highlighted as discussed further in the paper.

This position paper further argues that presidential public diplomacy may be both active and passive, direct and indirect. For instance presidential activities fall in the realm of the daily business of the president such as delivery speeches, addresses, speaking notes to conferences, hosting bilateral commissions and other diplomatic events. In other words the president's actions affect the external perceptions of South Africa. Where the president addresses the parliaments or cabinet officers abroad, he is engaging with public representatives and often directly with the public through media coverage, which is in effect, public diplomacy.

The theoretical underpinnings of public diplomacy are drawn primarily from the pioneering work of theorists from the US, UK and the Netherlands. As a position paper, the study shows the mutual utility of public diplomacy for the presidency and its underrated and untapped value in mobilising international audiences in support of South Africa's foreign policy objectives. The role of the president as an actor within the realm of public diplomacy and in the development of public diplomacy in the presidency is juxtaposed. In the final analysis, the researcher seeks to present recommendations that will allow for the development of a policy framework for presidential public diplomacy in South Africa. This may further assist in the development of public diplomacy policies within the South African context.

2 Conceptualising Public Diplomacy

2.1 Foreign policy, diplomacy and public diplomacy

Traditional diplomacy is seen as engagement, conducted through peaceful means, by official representatives of states in the execution of their foreign policy mandate (Berridge 2010:1; Cull 2009:12; Du Plessis 2008:89). Although there is still no single definition of diplomacy, it is broadly understood as the peaceful engagement between professionals with the aim of influencing the international system in the interests of a particular party or state without the use of force (Berridge 2010:1). In some instances, the terms diplomacy and foreign policy are used interchangeably given that diplomatic activities are in the execution of foreign policy. However, in a number of definitions, there is a clear distinction between the two, where foreign policy is the government's approach towards the external environment, and diplomacy is means by which this is achieved.

Although diplomatic relations have been around for a long time, formal diplomatic relations were conducted between states as far back as the Westphalia Treaty (1648), which established the institution of states. Codes of diplomatic conduct are enshrined in the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815, and have been codified in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 (Kelley 2010:287). When it came to diplomatic communication, however, diplomacy was often subject to slow, laborious, unpredictable and insecure communications, often subject to the vicissitudes of the political climate of the day (Berridge 2010:2).

The diplomatic system is predominantly state-centric with specialised personnel, rules, codes of conduct, protocols and procedures that keeps the façade of exclusivity (Gilboa 2008: 58; Kelley 2010: 288; Langhorne 2005: 332). In understanding diplomacy, Morgenthau (1973: 521) is of the view that it has three means at its disposal namely: “persuasion, compromise and threat of force”, specifically to gain leverage in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Wiseman (2005:410) posits that diplomacy embodies specified norms and values, dedicated institutions, standardised processes, and professional people specifically responsible for driving it within and between states. Diplomatic activities may take different forms such as bi-national commissions, multilateral forums and summitry, led

by the president or deputy president, and which provides opportunities to conduct public diplomacy (Bayne 1992:27; Berridge 2010:161; Dunn 1996; Satow 2009:1.22).

Modern diplomacy has seen changes in its practice following from developments in communications, an increased number of actors, and an increased measure of transparency. It has also seen a greater role for personal diplomacy between heads of government (Kelley 2010:294; Langhorne 2005:332). Morgenthau also recognised the developing tensions between the traditional diplomacy of the Europeans and the foreign policy approaches of the Americans (Hacke 2005:171). His key concerns were around the formality of the traditional approach, and the almost irreverent approaches of the Americans. He bristled against the Americans approach to foreign policy and their lack of appreciation of the strategic nature of diplomacy. These tensions echo in the relationship between diplomacy and public diplomacy in part due to the unprecedented level of transparency arising from technological advancements (Gilboa 2008:63). Typically diplomacy focuses on the conduct of relations between officials of government between states, this analysis however considers the role of the presidency in shaping public diplomacy activities directed at foreign and domestic publics with a view to gaining favour for foreign policy.

2.2 Defining public diplomacy

In 1965, Edward Guillion coined the term public diplomacy to ameliorate the pejorative connotations of the word propaganda. Public diplomacy broadly refers to the articulation of a state's policies to both the national and international community, and allows for its mutual engagement and interaction (Berridge 2010:182; Cowan and Cull 2008:6; Hocking 1999:42; Huijgh 2013:63; Melissen 2005:13; 2011:2; Pigman 2010:32). The policies are owned by the state. However, most of the information, such as the policies, strategies, processes and procedures, and information, which are non-security related, are available to citizens, media houses and other channels such as social media platforms. The gap that is growing steadily, through the development of technology, is that the owner of information is becoming more and more indeterminate as channels of communication expand and moves further away from the source.

While some scholars refer to both the international and domestic audiences in their respective definitions, other authors such as Melissen (2005:13; 2011:2) and Henrikson (2005:68) distinguish between public diplomacy focusing on international publics, and

public affairs focusing on domestic publics. In this position paper, the author uses public diplomacy to refer to publics in both the international and domestic context but gives specific attention to the role of the presidency and public diplomacy as it relates to international publics. Signitzer & Coombs (1992:139) quoting Deibel and Roberts (1976) indicate that the term public diplomacy does not refer to traditional diplomacy conducted in the “glare of publicity”. The audience to whom the messages are communicated are either the ordinary citizen of a country, or citizens in another country. When public diplomacy is fully accomplished, the international citizens, or their public representatives are able to exert pressure on another country and its policies. Clarity on who the audiences are, and who the communicators, whether state, parastatal, private citizen, organisation or national department among others such as those conducting para-diplomacy or polyilateral diplomacy, are highlighted as gaps in the definitions of public diplomacy.

In the literature, Malone (1985:199) describes public diplomacy as “direct communication with foreign peoples with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately that of their governments”. In his analysis, Tuch (1990:3) identifies the primacy of actors and content of public diplomacy as "a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies". A key challenge facing traditional institutions of diplomacy is that information is so widely available through the internet, social media platforms, media houses and as intimate as communicating via telephone or emails. As a result, the mediation of information via the formal diplomatic channels is no longer performed. Communication is thus possible directly with international publics from any citizen or source. Furthermore, communication channels from citizens to government is often less pointed, and more often than not intercepted, thus forcing citizens to find other mechanisms of communicating with the executive. These means may include holding protest action, marches or signing of petitions. Directionality of communication is thus indicated as a gap.

In their understanding of public diplomacy, Signitzer & Coombs (1992:139) point to the similarities in the objectives, tools and techniques between public diplomacy and public relations. Their definition introduces non-state actors and removes the delineation between public diplomacy and public relations, highlighting the interdependence of actors in the public diplomacy space (Gilboa 2008:57). Wilcox, Ault, & Agee (1992:409-410) define

public diplomacy as the planned activities of an organisation, company, or government in pursuit of mutually beneficial relations with the policies of other nations.

Frederick's (1993:229) definition adds specific information about content pertaining to public diplomacy, such as education, information and culture, by influencing governments through influencing their citizens. In their approach to public diplomacy, Gonesh & Melissen (2005:4) focus on the national image abroad as part of the national political agenda raising questions around "nation branding". The content in the messages to international publics promotes positive perceptions of a country. Positive perceptions would therefore lead to positive support, and favourable consideration of the governments' policies and initiatives. In the environment where technology has changed the landscape of communication, the content is not only available from the government, thus making it vulnerable to less supportive and unfavourable influences.

Gregory (2011:353) goes beyond a state centric approach by defining public diplomacy as "an instrument used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes and behaviour; build and manage relationships; and influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values". Henrikson (2005:68) meanwhile emphasises the importance of both the international and domestic audiences, rather than their governments, in understanding public diplomacy.

According to Wang (2006: 93), there are three areas prevalent in the literature regarding public diplomacy. The key value of public diplomacy is that it seeks to build relations between the nation's policy and international publics. First, commencing from a relationship position, public diplomacy strengthens the development of a favourable climate for policy implementation. Second, the national government is inseparable from the structure and process of public diplomacy; however, as seen in the number of different forms of diplomacy, it does not have a sole mandate in modern public diplomacy. Third, in public diplomacy communication remains "biased, undifferentiated, one-way transmission" (Wang 2006: 94) in the employment of public, mass and social media such as print, radio, television, film, despite creating awareness of the world.

The scholars above highlight a common characteristic of public diplomacy, namely the drive to place the national agenda and the national image in the minds of foreign publics in the

international arena to gain their favour. Their work also shows that public diplomacy engages international publics in the pursuit of national interests.

There are three dimensions identified in the conduct of public diplomacy, building on the concept as an aspect of soft power (Nye 2008:102). First, in the short-term, public diplomacy is daily and strategic communication. Second, it is a set of simple themes, campaign plans, symbolic events, and communications to advance a particular government policy. The third dimension is the lasting relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences and access to media channels (Kotze 2012:75; Nye 2008:102). Although there are elements of public diplomacy in cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, international broadcasting and psychological warfare, the exploration of these links falls outside the scope of this study (Cull 2006:7, 2009; Ross 2002). Similarly, public diplomacy includes a number of related areas such as nation branding, information sharing, marketing, necessary symbolism used in short, medium and long-term initiatives.

The various definitions highlights the following gaps. The (1) shortfall in considering who the owner of the information is or who is in control of the communication; (2) directionality of communication; (3) discussion on who the actors and the audience are; (4) the measure of content; and (5) the purpose and intention of public diplomacy. However, the evolving definition of public diplomacy indicates that neither the concept nor its scope is yet fixed. Therefore, for purposes of this research, the author focuses on understanding public diplomacy as the articulation of South Africa's foreign policy to the domestic and international public and the mutual engagement thereof between the state and the different publics on the policy.

2.3 The significance of public diplomacy

The nature of diplomacy is changing from the traditional, largely invisible activities of diplomats to the more open, visible “jazzy dance of colourful coalitions” led by public diplomacy (Melissen 2011:2). It is argued that the changing world order, the significance of international relations, the proliferation of new states in the post-World War II era, the contest of ideas in promoting democracy, and the perceived necessary correcting of international public perceptions requires an active and vibrant public diplomacy approach (Tuch 1990:3). With democracy flourishing and more countries becoming interdependent,

communication with national and international publics and the management of the national imperatives are critical.

Public diplomacy serves many purposes, including improvement of economic performance (Gonesh & Melissen 2005:4). It may also serve to democratise foreign policy (Melissen 2011: 7) as it gives national and international publics a foothold into a space that is constitutionally not a shared space (Klotz 2000: 832; Melissen 2011:2). Foreign policy is the mandate of the president; however, as seen in the Vietnam War, public intervention swayed the government to change its policies demonstrating that there is an alternate way to influence the achievement of foreign policy objectives. This value translates into support for, or against, interventions that uphold national interest, or impacts directly on the human rights of citizens of the world. This enables citizens to contribute to the building of peace, security and a better understanding of a country's foreign policy ambitions. Citizens have an opportunity to become active and informed observers and participants in international relations, which individually or as the collective of non-state actors are able to give a voice to the concerns related to international interventions (Klotz 2000:832; Riordan 2004:8; South Africa 2011c: 8).

Pratkanis (2009:113) proffers that public diplomacy, apart from being the tool to achieve foreign policy objectives, reinforces and complements traditional diplomatic efforts. Effective public diplomacy can therefore ameliorate the relationship between the international audience and an unpopular regime relative to its citizens (Cowan & Arsenault 2008:13). For example, the Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat went to speak to the Israeli people in Jerusalem, in defiance of the Israeli government in 1977, to mobilise for peace negotiations. Monologues, speeches, poetry, press releases, among others, have the means to inspire, arouse, and enthuse audiences (Cowan & Arsenault 2008:13). Presidents are required to make speeches and announcements, use slogans or captivating phrases to engage with the public in pursuit of the national objectives in the domestic and international arena.

Unforgettable speeches and its oratory capture the audience at different levels, ultimately with the aim of securing attention and support for its key ideas. This one-way communication can promote awareness of the country's position on policy, national values, international identity and is constructed for both national and international audiences (Cowan & Arsenault 2008:14). Mandela's speeches to the UN following his release from

prison, in gathering support for the anti-apartheid movement, is an example of direct intervention in mobilising support for South African policies.

When it comes to indirect intervention, Pratkanis (2009:113) explains that storytelling, the use of metaphors and building a common understanding are long-term interventions to frame and shape the agenda. This falls in the ambit of Nye's (2008:102) expression of soft power, namely the use of persuasion, invitation and a lack of coercion, thereby shaping the environment for policy, although it takes a long time to produce desired results. Gonesh & Melissen (2005:4) submit that public diplomacy is more valuable when linked to national values and interest than only serving foreign policy objectives. This is more crisply captured in the "I am an African" speech by Mbeki, which is explored later in the paper.

Lastly, public diplomacy can support other foreign policy tools, such as economic or military interventions (Gonesh & Melissen 2005:4; Pratkanis 2009:113). The success of these strategies is subject to the political situation, the disposition of the leaders, and the legitimacy of the measures put in place (Pratkanis 2009:113). Mandela's attendance at the bid for the 2010 World Cup, Mbeki supporting the World Summit of Sustainable Development hosted in Johannesburg in 2002, and Zuma supporting the appointment of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the Chairperson of the African Union in October 2012 are examples of how the president's public diplomacy supports other diplomatic interventions. Since diplomatic theory indicates that achievement of foreign policy objectives without the use of violence or threat is the premise of diplomacy, persuasion of stakeholders responsible for the election of the chairperson is seen as diplomacy. Furthermore, since the president is driving the intervention, the implication is at the country is also behind the support of the appointment, thereby directly influencing foreign policy.

Despite advancements in the thinking and practice of public diplomacy internationally, its evaluation has not been addressed when it comes to the diplomatic terrain in South Africa. There are limited studies in public perceptions on the South African foreign policy (Wang 2006:94; Smith and van der Westhuizen 2015: 22); limited studies on the impact of public diplomacy following diplomatic events (Wang 2006: 94; Smith and van der Westhuizen 2015: 31), and only routine reporting on the strategic plans of the Presidency. DIRCO and the respective international relations offices located in line departments are not evaluated to determine the efficacy of public diplomacy. This shortfall in evaluation constrains the development and strengthening of the value of public diplomacy at the point of policy design

and development. Banks (2011:14) has compiled a resource guide highlighting the benefits of public diplomacy evaluation. An exercise in evaluating public diplomacy has the benefits of (1) better allocation of resources; (2) identifying best practices; (3) driving personnel performance; (4) developing domestic champions for public diplomacy; (5) driving policy design, development and implementation; and (6) forcing the practitioner to answer the “so what” question (Banks 2011:14-17).

2.4 The changing environment influencing public diplomacy: communication and the media

Public diplomacy is conducted within the context of an information and communication revolution. As a multidisciplinary area of analysis, public diplomacy is shaped by changes in mass communications such as the internet, social media and major news networks. There has also been growing citizen participation in political processes and a focus by countries on building a favourable image and reputation in international relations through the exercise of soft power (Gilboa 2008:56; Nye 2008:99). The communication of a country’s foreign policy objectives is therefore directed towards its own citizens and the international community in an attempt to win over support for its policies, and is impacted by what happens in the political, technological and international relations field. Kurbalija (1999:171) argues that communication and information as “the main pillars of diplomacy, have been fundamentally changed by digitization”, even though diplomacy itself may not have changed much. With the advent of the Internet, the ownership and control of information is slipping from the hands of diplomats to individuals who now have the means to communicate directly with national and international publics without passing through diplomatic channels (Gilboa 2005; Kurbalija 1999:173). Melissen (2011:7) similarly contends that the terrain of diplomacy is no longer the sole remit of diplomats and the changing landscape has brought state and non-state actors in direct orbit around advocacy and implementation of the foreign policy. Furthermore, Melissen (2011:17) highlights the prioritisation of public diplomacy in foreign policy, the greater influence of non-state actors, communication flowing to the domestic and international publics as well as the two-communication pattern of exchanging information between states.

Public diplomacy requires communication infrastructure such as digital outreach teams, radio, television, print and audio media, media hubs, social media and the necessary

communication policies to withstand the vicissitudes of the public diplomacy environment. This includes an appreciation of the reach and impact of one-way communication achieved through speeches, brochures, flyers, and media broadcasts to name a few. There is also the need to establish, develop and sustain mechanisms that allow for engagement through two-way communication and the feedback loop that allows for policy interventions. The two-way communication is the key component that underpins the *raison d'être* of public diplomacy. Without feedback, the foreign public sentiments, ideas, considerations and support of policies and policy propositions remain unknown and therefore cannot be factored into policy formulation nor implementation. Huijgh (2013:67) indicates that diplomacy, through this digital revolution, is itself becoming a “product of societization” and allows the blurring of lines between international publics and domestic publics.

The evolution of public diplomacy is further characterised by a change in message design from static and mono-directional, to dynamic and interactive (Huijgh 2013:65). Cull (2010:1) draws attention to the importance of listening, which he defines as the “collection and analysis of data or information or opinion from the target foreign public by an international actor” to achieve the objectives of the foreign policy. The analysis also points to the increasing presence of multiple actors, from unreceptive international opinion leaders to vibrant domestic and international publics, high levels of inter-connectedness as well as increased inclusive cultural diversity and the move from information sharing to relationship building (Cull 2010:1; Huijgh 2013:65). With the shift to dialogue, the partners in conversation become as important as the content of their conversation, and the impact of their message should be measurable.

Gilboa (2008:58) offers more characteristics such as a collaborative engagement between state and non-state actors, using soft power and communication in two directions, media framing, information management, public relations, nation branding, self-presentation, and e-image, domestication and socialisation of foreign policy and addressing both short- and long-term issues. According to Gilboa (2008:58), the terms new diplomacy, public diplomacy and media diplomacy “became too vague and imprecise”. He proposes the following, public diplomacy is

[W]here state and non-state actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies. Media diplomacy, where officials use the media to investigate and promote mutual interests,

negotiations, and conflict resolution; and media broker diplomacy, where journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations (Gilboa 2008:58).

Gilboa (2008:58) goes further to analyse the works of Potter (2002:43), and Melissen (2005:13) regarding the rapid changes in international relations and communications on public diplomacy. The areas highlighted by the three scholars show the increased impact of globalisation brought on through rapid development in media technologies and its resultant ubiquity, exposure and threat to cultural diversity.

Public diplomacy is about relationship building and doing so at an international level commences between individuals before relationships can be established between countries (Riordan 2004; Cowan and Arsenault 2008:11). The transformative nature of dialogue often finds expression in conflict resolution, international mediation, and relationship brokering. One of the characteristics of public diplomacy is that it has a bi-directional requirement for communication (Huijgh 2013 p.67; Putnam 1988). With dialogue, the partners in conversation become as important as the content of their conversation (Cowan and Arsenault 2008:12). This highlights the duality of communication in the context of public diplomacy (Kurbalija 1999:177; Huijgh 2013:65).

2.5 Public diplomacy and its use in foreign governments

In international relations, domestic and international public opinion has become more prevalent (Gonesh & Melissen 2005:8; Tuch 1990:3). This puts pressure on a Head of State or Government to navigate not only the content of international relations but also perceptions of the engagements in the domestic and international arena. The examples below demonstrate the implementation of public diplomacy, nationally and internationally, in terms of the advantages gained from a centralised location within the executive, where there is strategic direction, resourcing and political will.

China, which is centrally governed by the party, aims to project its role as a responsible, trustworthy, cooperative country that can take care of its large population (d’Hooghe 2005:88). The head of state has the additional responsibilities as the party and state diplomat.. Public diplomacy for China hinges on the fact that it is a one-party state in control of the public diplomacy instruments such as the media, broadcasting, and other delivery

modes (d’Hooghe 2005:89). Hocking (2005:35) calls it a “state-centred, hierarchical model of diplomacy”. The government has sought to replace the perception of a “China threat”, a debate that arises in Africa and further afield, by messages that highlight China’s peaceful rise or its peaceful development (d’Hooghe 2005:90). These messages now form the cornerstone of China’s public diplomacy (Claasen 2014:136). There are three major goals for China’s public diplomacy. First, with such a vast population its needs to provide for its citizens. Second, China wishes to portray itself as a stable, trustworthy economic partner, thus communicating to the global community that it is not to be feared; and lastly, as a member of the international community it is willing to contribute to world peace such as shown in its interventions with North Korea (d’Hooghe 2005:93).

Public diplomacy may also gain traction in countries by virtue of specific events or crises that force governments to engage at a higher, more centralised level. Such an example includes the terrorist bombings in Bali, Indonesia in 2002, which forced the cabinet of the day to engage directly with public perceptions. Since tourism is a key economic driver in Indonesia, failure to act would negatively affect the tourism sector thus damaging their economy. Under the guidance of cabinet, the ministry of foreign affairs therefore prioritised public diplomacy to deal with the crisis in the tourism sector (Melissen 2005:10).

Public diplomacy in Pakistan received particular attention because of the geo-political importance of security regarding the Taliban of Afghanistan of 2004, remembering that simmering tensions started when Afghanistan opposed the inclusion of Pakistan into the United Nations General Assembly in 1947. Due to the lack of diplomatic networks and constraints in the international arena, Pakistan has had to rely on communication with foreign publics to advance their cause through centrally coordinated public diplomacy and strategic public diplomacy at the level of the head of government and their cabinet (Melissen 2005:10).

In the US, the presidential commitment to public diplomacy receives greater support particularly given the negative view of US policies by international publics (Lord and Dale 2007:2). The 2003 invasion of Iraq precipitated an all-time low in US public diplomacy (Lord and Dale 2007:2). The US have advanced public diplomacy in a number of key areas such as policy formulation and implementation, infrastructure to support its delivery and pitched at the level of the president, which is pertinent to this study. The example of the US

president in public diplomacy provides broad lessons for the importance of strategic thinking in linking public diplomacy and the role of the Head of State or Government.

The election of Barack Obama as president of the US in 2008 was characterised by a flood of national and international support for the person or the “Obama effect” (Hayden 2011:792), and what his election would come to represent as the first African-American president. It also revealed a number of weaknesses especially for public diplomacy. First, Obama’s term commenced when the US policies of the previous administration were markedly unpopular in the international arena including the remnants of the Iraq war. Second, the requisite support to capitalise on the Obama persona in terms of public diplomacy was not evident. Thirdly, Obama’s heritage closely linked to Africa, specifically Kenya, did not evince immediate diplomatic opportunities in this regard (Hayden 2011: 792). His Africa visits to Egypt in June 2009 (Wassef 2009) and his first visit to Ghana in July 2009 (Slack 2012) was telling for South African diplomacy. Lastly, there was a lack of a strategy to engage foreign publics as well as the absence of robust and integrated capacity to capitalise on these gains. Despite his popularity and upwelling of support, this did not transform into significant policy gains (Hayden 2011:785). Hayden (2011:785) juxtaposes the symbolic significance of Obama with the potential soft power but notes that the president carried the weight of public diplomacy on his own. His election, the efforts in foreign policy and the lack of a policy and machinery to support public diplomacy culminate in missed opportunities, which could be read as failed foreign policy objectives and strategies, and/or failed mechanisms of public diplomacy (Hayden 2011:785).

Nicholson (in Berridge 2010:164), highlights challenges when it comes to engagement by Heads of State or Government, particularly at the level of the summit. Nicholson (in Berridge 2010:164) suggests that these visits should be formalised through official communication to obviate any loss of meaning or misinterpretation. The advice given by Nicholson shows the weakness in an absence of a public diplomacy strategy, which is an area of focus in proposing recommendations in the study.

3 Background and Context: From propaganda to public diplomacy in South Africa

There is a fine line in distinguishing between the concepts of public diplomacy and propaganda. According to Berridge (2010:179), propaganda is the utilisation of mass media to manipulate foreign publics and comes in two forms, namely white and black. Black propaganda refers to the lack of admission of sources while white propaganda acknowledges the sources that are known. This is also related to the concepts of open and secret diplomacy (Barston 1997:11).

In the South African context, the concept of propaganda is primarily associated with the outward engagement of the apartheid government with foreign publics. South African international relations history before 1994 was characterised over a period of four decades by the policies of the apartheid government. The management of the country's international affairs was given to the use of aggressive propaganda methods in support of apartheid policies and an anti-communist rhetoric (Geldenhuis 1984:97). For South Africa, propaganda was the maleficent use of information and government structures to advance the objectives of apartheid and to undermine the anti-apartheid movement (Berridge 2010:179). The information, activities, and action taken by proponents of the apartheid regime was to undermine one racial group to the detriment and even the death of another. Mandela (1992) regularly drew the international publics' attention to the "Pretoria propaganda machinery", which was aimed at maintaining the status quo and discrediting the work of the ANC in the liberation struggle.

From as early as 1948, when the nationalist government came to power, the importance of South Africa's perceived image abroad was evident in the increased budgetary allocation to effect propaganda. The government established the Department of Information immediately after coming to power, led by a cabinet minister, and allocated financial and human resources that increased from \$146 000 to \$4 459 000 in 16 years (1949 to 1965), which is a 3 054% increase (Hull 1979:81). Although the Department of Information was actively disseminating information abroad, it did not play an active role in foreign policy formulation between 1948 and 1966 (Geldenhuis 1984:29). After the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the propaganda machinery used multi-pronged strategies, which included television broadcasts, radio interviews and lecture tours to counter the negative backlash from international publics

(Geldenhuys 1984:29). Recognising the impact of these actions on international public opinion of South Africa, the government appointed US firm Hamilton Wright, following the Sharpeville massacre, to assist with improving the South African image abroad (Hull 1979:81).

In the main, this propaganda was disseminated through the distribution of flyers, pamphlets, brochures and information publications. Propaganda tools included direct marketing through advertisements, with themes covering anti-communism, economic prosperity, and South Africa's self-determination. It also included offers of excursions, often paid for by the South African government, for business representatives, journalists, and academics among others (Hull 1979:82). The propaganda apparatus, which was designed, resourced and directed to uphold the apartheid government and its policies, was further strengthened by the appointment of Dr Eschel Rhoodie as Secretary of Information (known today as a Director-General or an Accounting Officer) by Minister Connie Mulder in 1972, and supported by the Prime Minister, Mr BJ Voster (Hull 1979:87). Dr Rhoodie championed two different modes of propaganda. The first was direct propaganda, including information sharing as indicated above, and the second, was indirect propaganda through resourcing non-governmental institutions and like-minded sympathisers to defend the apartheid system (Hull 1979:84). The linkages between the South African government and organisations such as the Club of Ten in the UK was responsible for improving the South African image abroad through dedicated funding and information dissemination (Hull 1979:84; Geldenhuys 1984:29).

The Department of Information stood apart from the Department of Foreign Affairs at the time. As international pressure grew, so the Department of Information began to unravel under the intense scrutiny of journalists and investigations into alleged corruption regarding the financing of propaganda projects (Hull 1979:84). Propaganda projects, including the establishment of the newspaper called *The Citizen*, started to counter the attacks by the Rand Daily Mail, came under scrutiny leading to the "Muldergate" and "Infogate" scandals, the early retirement of Rhoodie, and the eventual dismantling of the Department of Information on 15 June 1978 (Hull 1979:86; Muller 1981:547). Mulder was relieved of his portfolio and replaced by Mr Pik Botha (Hull 1979:86).

Under former President FW de Klerk, one of the key objective of the South African foreign policy was to restore its voting rights at the United Nations General Assembly following the

suspension of this right in 1974 (Pfister 2003:66). De Klerk himself as president travelled to 31 states, including three trips to the UK and two to France, focused on his goal of getting sanctions lifted and “reforming apartheid” sufficiently to allow for the acceptance of the country into the international community (Pfister 2003:67). The National Party was therefore using the negotiations with the ANC as a basis for the “reformed apartheid model” hoping that it would have sufficient legitimacy in support of the lifting of economic sanctions. In the face of this presidential engagement, several states concluded diplomatic relations with South Africa in the lead up to 1994.

Mandela was released from prison on 11 February 1990, following intense negotiations about a post-apartheid dispensation, and became the de facto president-in-waiting. After the tragic Boipatong Massacre of June 1992, Mandela, icon of the anti-apartheid movement, and human rights champion, requested a special UN Security Council meeting, and the cessation of negotiations with the Pretoria government. His six-man team including Thabo Mbeki, Joe Modise, Stanley Mabizela (Deputy Head of the DIA) and Tebogo Mafole (DIA) went to Dakar, Senegal to address the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) members about relations with Pretoria. Despite the poor support from Nigeria and mindful of the significance of African States at the UN, the passing of Resolution 765 proved “a defeat for De Klerk” (Pfister 2003:68).

This background highlights the role of propaganda in apartheid South Africa’s approach to international relations and raises some key points for consideration in this position paper. First, in the pursuit of their objectives, the Nationalist Party government was resolute in its stance despite severe opposition and sanction from international publics. Second, the government had to ensure that it had the necessary resources such as committed people and dedicated funding. These people were required to lobby governments and publics internationally, sending approved texts for publication, buying specialised capacity from agencies and legal firms, as well as using tools and strategies to achieve the objectives, and maintaining a good image internationally. Third, when the scandal erupted following the scrutiny of journalists into the work of the Department of Information, government readjusted its objectives by closing the department, removed officials and put the full weight of cabinet behind the decisions taken (Hull 1979:98).

While propaganda played a central role in the apartheid government’s strategy to gain international support for its domestic policies, the international relations division of the ANC

was playing its own role in maintaining pressure on the apartheid regime within South Africa through engagement with foreign and domestic publics (Schraeder 2001:230). Through interventions, internally and externally, and the concerted will and direction of international civil society, South Africa was forced to rescind its stand on apartheid, moving from position of “pariah” to “phoenix” to “paragon” (Van Wyk 2004:104). In a world where the cost of war had become too high and the quality of life deplorable for the masses in South Africa, for the ANC as a liberation movement international engagement became a “preferred revolutionary instrument” for regime change (Henrikson 2006:11).

During the apartheid era, political activists in the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and many individuals, organisations, and religious institutions actively campaigned against apartheid through sanctions, hunger strikes, media campaigns, awareness campaigns, and boycotts, mobilising international publics to push for change of the policies in South Africa. Engagement with foreign publics in this regard was designed to malign the NP government and its policies. This included collaboration with international bodies such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the UK and its publishing agency, the Anti-Apartheid News, information sharing, securing financial resources and actively mobilising government support (Klein 2012:2). The ANC gained traction and support from publics in countries outside of South Africa, such as the UK, US, and other countries in Europe due to the stance that a “free South Africa” would be a place for all based on the ANC’s more inclusive liberation movement principles. One of the challenges, however, was the support of the ANC by countries with a communist philosophy, which saw more caution from western countries that were sympathetic to its human rights agenda. While the PAC was welcomed mostly in the African countries, it presented itself as the face of the oppressed black African citizen (Mandela 1995:342; Klein 2012:2), thus setting itself as diametrically opposed to the inclusive principles of a unified country.

The ANC counter-propaganda machine was essentially located outside of South Africa due to restrictive communication policies of the NP government. At the banning of the ANC in 1960, the struggle against apartheid shifted to the international arena where the key focus was to gather support for the struggle from the African states (Pfister 2003:68). Mandela succeeded Oliver Tambo, as President of the ANC (1967 to 1991) as head of the ANC (1991 to 1997), and established the ANC Department of International Affairs and Publicity (later DIA) to improve the efficiency of the international struggle against apartheid. Under

successive leaders such as Jele, Makhatini, and Mbeki (between 1989 and 1993), the DIA was critical to the success of the ANC's international diplomacy and demonstrates the role of the party's leadership in the process of seeking to influence international public opinions (Pfister 2003:56, 59). The support of African states and the "Pan-African commitment to racial equality" moved the ANC and Mandela into a new era of engagement with international publics (Pfister 2003:69).

With propaganda methods since consigned to South Africa's apartheid past, there has been a shift to public diplomacy, which has seen changes in the discourse surrounding communication with foreign and domestic publics, as well as in the approach. This includes an emphasis on transparency and acknowledgement of its sources. With this greater transparency, and a positive slant, with the overwhelming tone of the communication around building relationships across national and international publics (Wang 2006: 94).

4 The Presidency and public diplomacy in practice: From Mandela to Zuma

This section looks at the implementation of public diplomacy in South Africa through presidential public diplomacy. In the discourse on South Africa's foreign policy there has been limited attention paid to public diplomacy, and even less on the role of the presidency in public diplomacy. When it comes to understanding South Africa's international engagement and the role of the presidency, studies have focused predominantly on understanding the evolution of South African foreign policy under Presidents Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma (Nathan 2005: 364). This position paper concentrates on the public diplomacy of the presidency through analysis of presidential speeches and messages conveyed to international publics and the resultant actions or lack thereof. For example, Mbeki made a number of speeches that upholds the value of human rights, however, within South Africa his approach to HIV and AIDS seriously mitigates against this value, and resulted in a very serious public diplomacy failure.

At the international level, investors, international partners, and international publics are apprised of the developments within the South African society through different platforms, such as speeches of the president, media briefings, bi-national and joint commissions, and multilateral forums. The support for government initiatives can result in improved standing of South Africa in the international arena, improved foreign direct investment and greater exchanges of citizens through education, training, development, tourism and other socio-economic activities. Public diplomacy is therefore integral to the success of amongst others cultural and economic diplomacy.

Each administrative period has had successes and challenges regarding public diplomacy. Some of it imbedded in the personality of the President, as in the case of Mandela, others in the institutional arrangements, as in Mbeki, and the evolution as seen in the current administration of Zuma (Wolf and Rosen 2004; Landsberg 2010; Borer and Mills 2011; Mckaiser 2012:145). In order to analyse the three case studies coherently, the following organising framework is used (1) how the presidents came into power, (2) brief exposition of public diplomacy activities during their tenure (3) successes and failures/strengths and weakness of their approaches.

4.1 Mandela

President Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of the Republic of South Africa took the helm of government in 1994 after spending twenty-seven years in prison. As indicated in the background, the NP were compelled by international publics to address the ravages of apartheid, which eventually led to the unbanning of all political parties and the release of Mandela in 1990. The first democratic elections of 1994 were the turning point in the history of the Republic of South Africa. Welcomed by both national and international publics, it also saw raised expectations for the potential role the ‘new’ South Africa could play internationally. The symbolic significance of the newly appointed president, Nelson Mandela, evidenced a latent potential for South Africa’s soft power as it transitioned from apartheid to a constitutional democracy (Hayden 2011:785).

Mandela became a symbol of success over an oppressive regime and his popularity saw expectations, both domestically and internationally, for his active international role (Pfister 2003:67; Schraeder 2001:230). Despite being one of the world’s greatest icons, Mandela had to contend with a state apparatus that by its very design still functioned to the detriment of the majority of South African citizens and that still had to undergo dramatic change, while simultaneously repositioning the new democratic state in the changing international milieu. The challenge of changing gear from being an activist in the anti-apartheid movement, to president-in-waiting, to driving the machinery of government as head of the first democratically elected government of South Africa was further complicated by the expectations of foreign publics (Mandela 1993; South Africa 1996; van Wyk 2004). In particular, African countries who had participated in mobilising for his release and had invested in the anti-apartheid movement.

Mandela’s first visit on his release in 1990 was to Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, causing some unhappiness with the government of Angola (SA History Online). The slight felt by Angola and subsequently other sub-regional countries such as Kenya caused them to cool the support they had previously provided to the ANC (Pfister 2003). The key focus of public diplomacy in the Mandela era was relationship building, to restore South Africa’s relations with the continent and the rest of the world – one which Mandela intuitively recognised as fundamental to the addressing the consequences of apartheid (Wang 2006). There was a need for a public diplomacy policy to ensure the building of relationships, restore international relations was evident but no visible progress in

developing one was present. Greater emphasis was placed on the development of foreign policy. South Africa's preoccupation with human rights, democracy, peace and security became the bedrock of its foreign policy, but the articulation and management thereof in the absence of a public diplomacy strategy was conspicuous as is evident in the implementation of foreign policy discussed below.

Mandela (1993) was clear that a new foreign policy would be a requirement for achieving the vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Africa; yet, how this would be linked to public diplomacy imperatives were not addressed at that time. Mandela's vision of a new South Africa foreign policy as articulated in his 1993 paper "*South Africa's future foreign policy*" did not mention public diplomacy as a means to achieve foreign policy objectives, although he does refer to the professional diplomatic capacity required to service all (Mandela 1993: 87).

As the embodiment of the new South Africa, Mandela's emphasis on human rights, the promotion of democracy, and anti-apartheid messaging formed the foundation of his vision for a repositioned South Africa in the international arena. He strongly supported the notion of cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level, upheld the rule of law and belief in international law. His idealistic vision however, was soon tested by the limitation of resources, diplomatic skills, and internal national challenges as South Africa settled into its new role (Le Pere 2013).

While foreign policy imperatives were paramount, public diplomacy did not occupy a central role in the thinking in the presidency as the office sought to address its own internal transformation following the transition in 1994. The idea itself is absent from strategic planning documents. While it is evident from the historical context that initially South Africa's post-1994 presidents sought to play a role in shaping international public opinion, there remains an absence of a clear presidential mandate, leadership, well-established strategies, and centralised coordination and integration when it comes to public diplomacy, and the president and public diplomacy in particular. Initially, in order to deal with the changes of managing a democratic government the focus was on restructuring and transforming the role of the presidency through the *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995, para 6.2.1) which established a Presidential Review Commission for the purpose of conducting:

- (1) “a comprehensive review of the structure and functions of the public service and its statutory bodies including the Public Service Commission, focusing in particular on the division of roles and tasks between central and provincial authorities.
- (2) an internal audit and review of each ministry, department, office and agency concerning its objectives, structure, function, staffing, and financing.
- (3) a review and revision of the system, routines and procedures of planning, budgeting and financial execution (to be undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Finance), view to increasing public sector accountability.”

Because of the work of the Presidential Review Commission, the following areas drew attention. The (1) transformation of South African society, (2) the challenge of capacity constraints at the apex of government, (3) the preoccupation with national security by the white minority against the black majority, and (4) the issue of control by blacks to service delivery to citizens under the vision of “Excellence in governance for a better life for all” (Chikane 2011:40). This inward focused approach saw initial attention given to the role of public diplomacy for domestic audiences. This includes: sharing the foreign policy objectives and constitutional values that will lead to the improved quality of life; institutionalisation of democracy, and the protection of democracy; the safety and security of citizens and addressing the issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Public diplomacy initiatives here included citizen awareness programmes, public service transformation, training and development through various media, civil society bodies, labour, employers, unions and various institutions such as universities, schools, and service delivery points (South Africa 2011(c): 7).

With the audit of the institutional apparatus of the presidency done, the gap in public diplomacy was not addressed (Chikane 2011). This gap widened as messaging from the presidency did not follow with concomitant action and vice versa. One such example is the case study of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) of 1994, which was originally located in the Office of the President under the newly established office of the Minister without Portfolio, Mr Jay Naidoo. Although a national initiative, the RDP was a key driver for economic development and a strategy to secure foreign direct investment, signalling to international partners that South Africa is stable and secure, and is able to provide for its citizens. This was carefully outlined at the State of Nation Address on 24 May 1994, when Mandela indicated:

“This [RDP] will start with an appropriation of R2,5 billion in the 1994/95 budget that will be presented next month. This should rise to more than R10 billion by the fifth year of the life of this government. Government will also use its own allocation of funds to the Reconstruction and Development Plan to exert maximum leverage in marshalling funds from within South Africa and abroad”. (South Africa 1994).

Despite drawing international attention to the strategic importance of the RDP, the nascent administration, still dealing with the remnants of an apartheid public service, effectively saw its marginalisation in practice. By closing the RDP office and forcing it into the programmes of action within all departments, perceptions were that the RDP was being abandoned. The confusion was evident not only in government departments and in the general public, but also internationally. This strategy did not have the impetus that it used to enjoy, located in the presidency (South Africa 1994). A strong, well-thought out public diplomacy strategy developed at the genesis of the RDP would have enabled the following: (1) the development of a strong communication strategy to inform national, provincial and local departments and the international public constituency about the RDP and its expectations. (2) The creation of a communication loop – a key feature of public diplomacy – that allows national and international publics to provide feedback on the RDP. (3) A change in behaviour – another key objective of public diplomacy – of the national and international public regarding the implementation of the RDP. (4) Ensured transparency when managing the changes during the shift from a dedicated silo approach to implementation, to mainstream integration of the programme; and (5) a monitoring mechanism within national departments and international publics once the RDP was situated and running in the various departments, which is the internal communication between and among the machinery of government.

During Mandela’s incumbency there was a burgeoning of summit engagements, allowing the president significant opportunity to promote South Africa’s position on the international stage. The initial approach to South Africa’s foreign policy was a focus on universalism (Mandela 1993). This approach saw Mandela continuing to engage with the so-called “rogue” states, like Cuba and Libya. As a result South Africa’s position was increasingly called into question by leading states in the west, with the presidency called upon to explain to the international and national audiences the rationale for these decisions and the foreign policy direction that was being taken (Schraeder 2001:232). This created public diplomacy challenges as the perceived partnerships and collaboration in question conflicted with the

overall messaging of supporting human rights based leadership. Le Pere (2013) highlights this tension as principles meeting the challenges of the *realpolitik*. This frustration was expressed by Nigeria during the Ogoni struggle with Shell Oil and the hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa when it was said that Mandela is a “black head of a white state” (Corby 2011; Barber 2005:1084).

Mandela said, “It is important that we first define our commitment to Human Rights, within the social and political context of our continent. There is an urgent need to subscribe to, and strengthen the Human Rights framework in Africa. Strengthening this framework must be done by Africans, rather than through the expedient foreign policy priorities and selective morality of some industrialised nations” (Mandela 1994b). In this quote, Mandela urges the continent to adopt a Human Rights Framework in Africa, calling for the shift in the foreign policy focus of other countries to adopt human rights as a priority area. In the same vein, he also calls for an African approach to human rights, rather than assuming western interpretations. Nevertheless, he remained at odds in efforts to explain South Africa’s position in decisions taken at the UN Security Council (SC) regarding Zimbabwe with its existing foreign policy position in support of human rights and good governance (Serrão 2011: 1; Borer and Mills 2011:77). This tension becomes the *bête noire* of deepening the value of public diplomacy.

The position of the presidency on human rights was further under pressure from South Africa’s standing on the sale of arms. In Mandela’s speech to the UN in 1994, he called for the sanction of arms, “The broad guidelines regarding the sale of arms in line with our moral and foreign policy objectives and covenants of the UN go a long way in dealing with this matter.” (Mandela 1994a). While the message internationally was that South Africa was championing greater discussion on, and limits to the arms trade regime, in practice South Africa contradicted its own human rights policy (Van Wyk 2002: 203).

HIV and AIDS

Building on the human rights theme, one key aspect that affected South African public diplomacy was how government in general and the president in particular dealt with the issue of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In 1994, Mandela appointed Dr Nkosasana Dlamini Zuma as Minister of Health, in the face of a burgeoning crisis of HIV and AIDS. The inclusion of HIV and AIDS into the strategic projects under the RDP led to the drafting of a policy, establishment of an advisory group, funding and research committees (SA History online). The National HIV and AIDS plan was approved by President Mandela, and launched by the Network for HIV and AIDS Community of South Africa, a non-profit body. The 7th International conference for People living with HIV and AIDS and was attended by 476 international delegates from 84 countries in Cape Town on 6-10 March 1995 (SA History online 2012). The conference was perceived as a good initiative in line with the political and international support to the pandemic. However, the support was not consistent and the scandal related to the utilisation of the EU funding for *Sarafina II*, a musical designed to educate the public became a public diplomacy disaster implicating foreign donors, and the international community involved in HIV and AIDS activism. The fragility of the national and international debates on HIV and AIDS hinged on the focus of Mandela to maintain the tenuous stability within the post-apartheid South Africa as the pandemic debate had begun to cleave along political and racial lines. Mandela, in 2005 announced that his son Mokgatho had passed away from AIDS. An announcement made in an attempt to destigmatise HIV and AIDS (SA History online 2011). An inter-ministerial committee on AIDS was established and Mbeki, as deputy president was appointed the chair (SA History online 2012). Mbeki's role in the public diplomacy related to HIV and AIDS is further discussed later in the text.

When it came to the establishment of institutions to uphold democracy and good governance Mandela set out that,

Our own Government is in the process of establishing various institutions, including a Constitutional Court, a Commission on Human Rights, a Commission on Gender Equality, and a Public Protector's Office, all of which will provide more effective and accessible means of enforcing Human Rights. To say loudly "NEVER AGAIN". I hope you will develop strategies and ideas that will be of benefit to us in South Africa and to the rest of the continent. Then, through our own efforts as Africans, we

can accomplish our African dream - a continent of peace, prosperity and democracy (Mandela 1994b).

The focus on democracy, safety and security, and good governance, peace and justice formed one of the key pillars of the messaging communicated by the presidency to international publics.

The presidency, however, came under pressure to reconcile its focus on negotiated solutions with the intervention in Lesotho in 1998. Mandela set out that, “Current developments in Lesotho are of major concern to us” (Mandela 1994a), where the South African National Defence Force sent troops into Lesotho on 22 September 1998 to prevent a military coup led by the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (de Coning 2000: 39). It was the first military operation for post-apartheid South Africa’s, and the first SADC intervention to uphold democracy in the region. However, the intervention dented the SADC and South African image as peacemakers and negatively impacted on the spirit of the African Renaissance (de Coning 2000: 40)

What the examples above demonstrate is that it is not possible to achieve change in public perceptions through the periodic and transitory nature of speeches of presidents alone, but these speeches need matching with appropriate interventions and engagements that support presidential pronouncements to catalyse campaigns in achieving intended foreign policy objectives. The role of president in South African public diplomacy is to champion the achievement of foreign policy objectives. His constitutional responsibilities include the ‘receiving and recognising of foreign diplomatic and consular representatives’; appointing ambassadors, plenipotentiaries, and diplomatic and consular representatives’ (South Africa 1996, 84 (2) (h) (i)). Furthermore providing strategic political direction, information sharing, and direction to South African public servants – such as DIRCO, diplomatic corps and departmental officials where relevant; unlocking support through the approval of bilateral and/or multilateral agreements.

The example of the election and first year of President Barak Obama as US president offers a useful lens to reflect on the role of the South African presidency insofar as public diplomacy and “tangible policy gains”, as well as the development of the necessary state apparatus to support him (Hayden 2011:786). The election of Mandela displayed comparable parallels with Obama regarding the high levels of international public attention,

but the subsequent inability to transform this attention into public diplomacy gains. Mandela's election as president of the ANC, and President of South Africa in 1994, took place when the apartheid policies of the NP were eroding and when the international support for a new South Africa was at its zenith. The persona of Mandela had come to incarnate tolerance and forgiveness. Yet there were no mechanisms to harness and support public diplomacy to capitalise on these gains. This was because of the absence of a public diplomacy strategy and requisite mechanisms. Ironically, despite his conviction towards Africa, Mandela also underestimated Africa to his detriment and in the post-apartheid era took the support of his African counterparts for granted.

Mandela did not make himself available to stand as president for a second term, which is a triumph of another form of public diplomacy. The announcement, made mid-term reverberated around the world as he was breaking the mould of African autocratic "ruler-for-life". By doing this, Mandela showed that South Africa could uphold good governance, play a meaningful role in the continent, and not tie itself to perpetual rule.

4.2 Mbeki

The appointment of the academically astute Mr Thabo Mbeki in 1999, as South Africa's second democratically elected president, raised the country's profile in the international arena through robust engagement and greater profiling of South Africa's foreign policy. His work as Deputy President during the Mandela administration, serving as the de facto prime minister, and as former head of the Department of International Affairs (DIA) in the African National Congress (ANC), created a strong platform for his international exposure and his zest with which he centralised foreign policy when he became president.

Under Mbeki the work of the presidential review commission progressed and focused on capacitating and strengthening the government apparatus to give effect to the vision, values and principles of the Constitution. The era saw the development of strategies for the management and advancement of South Africa's international relations. Analysts argue that international relations migrated to the presidency (Vale & Maseko 1998:277), yet the foundation for the development of a presidential public diplomacy, set by Mandela, still did not materialise. Recognising his strengths in the field of foreign policy, of all the presidents, Mbeki could have developed a public diplomacy strategy, infrastructure and capacities at the level of the presidency.

Under Mbeki, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) (later the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) under the Zuma administration) established a small unit responsible for driving public diplomacy. While it was called public diplomacy, the work focused primarily on the dissemination of information rather than the more integrated approach to public diplomacy. Structural changes included the merger of the offices of the president and deputy president in 2000, the formation of coordinating structures such as the Forum of South African Directors-General (FOSAD) and the Policy Coordination and Advisory Services (PCAS), and the various coordinating committees in a cluster system (Chikane 2011). The cluster system comprised the grouping of interrelated national departments into the governance and administration; social cluster; economic sector; investment and employment; justice, crime prevention and security; and international relations, peace and security clusters. Chikane's (2011:41) perspective of this process of change in the presidency includes a reflection on "strengthening the centre" of government and "centralisation of power" – ideologically two very different positions regarding the transformation of the presidency, which created challenges within the ANC and between political parties. Strengthening the centre via improved workflow, capacity and strategies, was a requirement to give effect to the new constitutional demands and to pull the necessary national and international support closer to the achievement of the goals set out in the Freedom Charter, as captured in the Constitution. Centralising power, however, put the locus of decision making squarely within the presidency.

Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy suffered from not having sound public diplomacy mechanisms in place to communicate internationally and nationally with key stakeholders. Lessons could have learnt from such homegrown challenges in engaging domestic and international publics on problems such as HIV and AIDS, poverty, and unemployment in considering how to implement an Africa-wide plan that also entailed reform of global economic institutions and processes. The impact of Mbeki's personal announcements on foreign policy created a trust deficit given that Mbeki took to sharing his views on public platforms (see later in the paper on HIV and AIDS). His lobbying schedule of world leaders during 2000-1 suggests he had all the access he required for the pursuit of public diplomacy (Bond 2005:8). Bond (2005:11-12) makes the example of Mbeki speech to the Group of 77's April 2000 South Summit in Havana, as head of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to address global apartheid.

Thabo Mbeki's address on 08 May 1996 to the Constitutional Assembly began with "I am an African", and through it the spirit of reconciliation, reunification and outreach to the continent were harnessed (Vale & Maseko 1998: 271). In the "I am an African" speech, Mbeki used this technique again to ensure psychological congruence between parties – an key aspect of public diplomacy, namely relationship building; thus facilitating the ease of engagement with the aim of achieving the strategic goals of liberating South Africa. Previously, in the Dakar Conference of 1987, Mbeki declared, "I am an Afrikaner", a technique used to establish links with white South Africans (Lieberfeld 2002, p. 363). The same technique was used decades earlier in a speech delivered by Pixley Ka Seme in 1906 called *The Regeneration of Africa* (Khumalo 2015: 191). Two notable ideas were brought forth, namely a nod to the political past as Mbeki does not reference Seme in the speech, and secondly, the value of the regeneration movement started by Seme, which gave birth to what is known as the African Renaissance. Mbeki, intellectually astute seemed to recognise the value of connecting with the audience he was speaking to as a means to influence their opinion, thus effecting change in perceptions. The change in perception of ideology, ideally from the poor to the good is the hallmark of good public diplomacy.

Throughout his tenure, Mbeki became the voice and champion of the African Renaissance giving South Africans and Africans abroad the hope that this was a worthy aspiration (Meyiwa et al 2014:478). The president therefore embodied the African Renaissance and his own centrality to South African foreign policy (Vale & Maseko 1998: 272). On the face of it, it seemed successful, sharing the ideas and vantage points of a moral regeneration, the spirit of African nationalism and the spirit of unity. Mbeki took forward the theme of human rights, adding to it the dimension of pan-Africanism and strengthening South Africa's position on the continent and globally (Vale & Maseko 1998: 277). Through Mbeki, the message of the African Renaissance was at the forefront of South African public diplomacy message, but according to Vale & Maseko (1998: 271) its articulation was fraught with ambiguities and inconsistencies and lacking in substance. Vale & Maseko were concerned that the pronouncement of the African Renaissance agenda did not have a clear strategy linked to it, and again, the opportunity of a sound public diplomacy strategy was lacking.

Mbeki enjoyed prominence in communicating with the international public through media publications, opinion papers and reflections. The ease with which Mbeki dealt with the various communication modalities, such as the internet, social media, written and visual

platforms, became tools in his cache of South African presidential public diplomacy (Vale & Maseko 1998:278). Mbeki used radio, television, wrote letters to the press, and participated on social media to engage with citizens regarding his views and opinions on policy matters. He is at pains to explain his views, and at the time of the research paper, had started issuing open letters to the press to explain his approach to policy matters during his time as president.

It is important to mention the work of the president in relation to the genesis and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) given the pivotal role that Mbeki had in it and its continental importance. In 2009, Mbeki designed the foundation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and in the establishment of the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Forum. However, as a public diplomacy initiative related to NEPAD, that is, the mobilisation of international publics in support of national foreign policy objectives are limited at best. The value of NEPAD however, is in the promotion of regional and continental stability, creating and environment for improved governance and elevating the African profile to give effect to the "African solutions for Africa's problems". The challenge with the presidency's international promotion of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as reviewed through the lens of Francis Fanon, is that it encompasses the role of the bourgeoisie, the approach to capitalism, and globalisation with a specific emphasis on global apartheid (Bond 2005:2). Indeed, despite Mbeki's advocacy of NEPAD as Africa's development programme, designed by Africans, the core elements of NEPAD included the privatisation of infrastructure, insertion of Africa into the world economy, multi-party elections, visions of information and communications technologies, and continental peace-keeping (Bond 2005:11). Mbeki, with the support of his ministers Trevor Manuel and Alec Irwin led the charge. Bond's (2005:3) scathing comments on the capacity of Mbeki to lead to the continental integration project. "... [F]ailure is emanating from the very project of global-reformism itself, namely Mbeki's underlying philosophy and incorrect analysis, ineffectual practical strategies, uncreative and inappropriate demands and counterproductive alliances" (Bond 2005:3).

HIV and AIDS

Mbeki served as the chair to the Inter-Ministerial Committee on AIDS as deputy president to Mandela. A number of issues presented itself in the autumn of 1997 related to the

provision of anti-retroviral medication (SA History online 2012). Accordingly to Jodi McNeil (SA History online 2012), the Mbeki administration's response to the HIV & AIDS pandemic teetered from "disorganisation and mismanagement to outright denialism". South Africa did not fare well under the Mbeki administration when it came to dealing with the pandemic. Mbeki communicated with world leaders in 2000 to consider socio-economic factors as the true course of AIDS (SA History online 2012). African countries moved quickly to pharmacological interventions where possible and the perception towards South Africa declined in this arena. Despite heading the Inter-Ministerial Committee on HIV and AIDS established by Mandela, the subsequent appointment of Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang responsible for the Department of Health, public diplomacy on HIV and AIDS was catastrophic. The ideology of the policy that HIV caused AIDS was contested by Mbeki, which led to poor decision making in the care and treatment of South African citizens living with HIV and AIDS. With the centralisation of communication as indicated earlier in the paper, the flow of information to the Party, government and citizens came from the office of the President (SA History online 2012). Due to the limits of the length research paper, there is not enough place to fully expound on how important the discussion of HIV and AIDS is to presidential public diplomacy as it significantly affected the lives of citizens of South Africa negatively. Pressure from internal stakeholders, the international community did not crumble the vice-grip Mbeki had on this matter. It has been the albatross around the neck of a remarkable presidency geared to improving perceptions of a South Africa at work.

4.3 Zuma

The election of Jacob Zuma as president came with a chequered history. In brief, as president Mbeki had earlier dismissed Jacob Zuma from his post as deputy president of the country in June 2005 following allegations of corruption. At the 52nd ANC elective conference, which took place in Polokwane, Limpopo from 16 – 20 December 2007, Zuma was elected as head of the political party to a cataclysmic defeat of Mbeki who was both the incumbent and president of the country and which saw his 'recall' by the ANC (SA History Online 2011). The unprecedented result culminated from growing hostilities between the Mbeki and Zuma. The elective conference was the precursor to the 2009 national general election where Zuma was elected president of the country following Mbeki's resignation in September 2008. The top six National Executive Committee positions went to Zuma supporters and a number of Mbeki supporters opted to leave their ministerial positions.

These changes did not go unnoticed by the international publics and there was concern about the effect on policy positions.

South Africa's entry into the multilateral forums such as the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) association, benefited from the appointment of the populist leader, Mr Jacob Zuma in 2009. Although initially focused on building a support base nationally, and strengthening the footprint of the ruling party in the various provinces, Zuma has increasingly had an impact on South Africa public diplomacy at the international level. Not feted internationally as Mandela, nor as academic as Mbeki, Zuma struck the right notes domestically, yet seemed challenged to win the international support for South Africa's foreign policy. The media, nationally and internationally have not always been kind to Zuma and the absence of a public diplomacy policy, particularly around engagement with the media, has become apparent as South Africa grapples with waning international interest. An example of how important an understanding of public diplomacy is, is shown at the BRICS summit of 26-27 March 2013 in Durban. The Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh was scheduled to meet Zuma for a bilateral meeting on the side-lines of the summit. Scheduling however, proved challenging and the Indian delegation were affronted by the lack of protocol and respect for the failure of the meeting to take place (SAPA 2013). The slighting of the Indian Prime Minister was carried out in full view of the media allowing the Indian publics to form their own perception of how the South African government receives its chief representative.

Previously, Zuma had a measure of adeptness at communicating with his domestic constituency, which of late has become more problematic with more service delivery protests and civil uprisings. Even in the light of some challenges at the personal and political level, Zuma has not been assertive in engaging with international publics. He has failed to find traction and support on substantive matters. It was the Minister for International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, affable and informed, that started on a charm offensive in the diplomatic core in support of the ruling party's direction in the international arena (Gruzd 2009:3).

Under the Zuma administration, public diplomacy has largely been the mandate of DIRCO, which has a specific programme for public diplomacy, which has as its goal "to market South Africa's Foreign Policy Objectives, project a positive image of South Africa and Africa, and provide State Protocol services" (South Africa 2002:274). The current focus on

public diplomacy within DIRCO rests on the use of direct and indirect communication, social media, building diplomatic capacity, media liaison, and public participation (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2015). Despite the focus on communication, whether the concept of public diplomacy is adequately understood within DIRCO continues to raise questions, including the working groups of the ANC political party, parliament, the international relations cluster and academics.

The branch for public diplomacy reports directly to the office of the Director-General along with the branches of corporate management, financial and assets management, and the diplomatic academy. The purpose of the public diplomacy branch is to "Communicate South Africa's role and position in international relations in the domestic and international arenas. Provide protocol, ceremonial and consular services" (South Africa 2015:33). There are two programmes in the branch namely (1) public diplomacy, and (2) State Protocol. Public diplomacy promotes a positive projection of South Africa's image, communicates foreign policy positions to both domestic and foreign audiences and markets and brands South Africa by utilising public diplomacy platforms, strategies, products and services. (South Africa 2015:33).

While there is attention given to the idea of public diplomacy in DIRCO, there is still no such attention within the presidency. The gaffe committed by Zuma at the occasion of the address to the Gauteng ANC Manifesto Forum at Wits University in Johannesburg on Monday 21 October 2013 was quickly dubbed the "I am not an African" speech. But a recording of the event, published by Eyewitness News, tells a very different story, which seems to support the idea of not being of and in Africa. Key portions of that recording have been transcribed and this is what Zuma had to say:

“We thank all citizens who have registered for the e-tolls so that we can continue to improve roads and boost economic growth in Gauteng. Gauteng must develop. It can't stand in one place. It can't be. It can't be like Rustenburg [laughter]... "The roads are to be tolled to pay back the money we borrowed to build the freeways, to make the economy flow in Johannesburg, not so? The principle of user pay has to apply to complement the costs incurred by government. This is what all the economies in the world do. "We can't think like Africans in Africa generally. [Laughter] We are in Johannesburg. This is Johannesburg. It is not some national road in Malawi. [Laughter] No." (Rademeyer 2013).

The public diplomacy gaffe was far-reaching as it called into question the assumptions the head of state had about other African states. It reinforced perceptions of the heavy-handedness of South Africa and intimated a disdain of neighbouring African countries. This is in stark contrast to the Pan-African messaging and African brotherhood that South Africa has stood for. The spokesperson for the Malawi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Quent Kalichero, was quoted on Wednesday by AFP that government summoned the South Africa's High Commissioner" to discuss the issue". The Malawi government has accepted an apology from the South African government of President Jacob Zuma's disparaging remarks about the country (Nyasa Times 2013).

National Development Plan

That public diplomacy is important in South Africa's international relations is evident in its discussion in the National Development Plan, which identifies the need for a proactive public diplomacy strategy for South Africa going forward to 2030 (South Africa 2011a:235). Chapter 7 of the NDP notes that,

Public diplomacy is fundamental to South Africa's projection of soft power. It is important to develop a more sophisticated public diplomacy strategy that encompasses more than a communications function. Public diplomacy should use new media and social networking, as well as people-to-people initiatives. The NPC proposes that the Department of International Relations and Cooperation adjusts the country's foreign policy objectives to match South Africa's position as a middle-income country. In this respect, the department may wish to evaluate the suitability of its current structure in terms of its mandate and delivery needs. Such an evaluation should look at the country's diplomatic footprint across the world, and develop a more professional diplomatic service (South Africa 2011a:255).

Despite highlighting the potential value and impact of public diplomacy for South Africa, the NDP in its full articulation does not include consideration of the role of the presidency in driving public diplomacy. As the South African Constitution places the setting and attainment of foreign policy within the remit of the president, the president is then required to set the vision of the country's international relations. He or she should then also be responsible for its communication to the international and domestic publics in a way that

ensures that the messaging is coherent and in line with political thinking; thus the need for a public diplomacy strategy (South Africa 1996; Schraeder 2001, p. 236).

While communicating the foreign policy to international publics, the presidency has to be mindful of the substance of the messaging that is being communicated as this may be wrongly interpreted and misconstrued. Direct contact by the president or deputy president with foreign publics, through their speeches, presentations and international presence can affect the performance of public diplomacy and have in some instances reduced the role of the foreign minister (Barston 1997:7; Wang and Chang 2004:14; Graham 2006). Given the focus on communication, which has embedded the elements of listening, advocacy and is aimed at relationship building, public diplomacy is set apart from propaganda (Cowan and Arsenault 2008:11; Cull 2010:1)

In South Africa, public diplomacy has not enjoyed the same benefits of position, resourcing and political will as it has in countries where it is considered a strategic lever such as the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and other developed countries (Melissen 2005:3-10). The presidents in the US are able to derive benefit for their country through the apparatus supporting public diplomacy, including the position of the Assistant Secretary of State, the US Information Services, and the Voice of America among others (Cull 2006:6).

External bodies such as Lead SA, Brand South Africa and Radio Ubuntu are a few agencies that assist in promoting South Africa's foreign policy abroad. In the absence of policy, strategies, structures and adequate resourcing, as well as the limited scholarship in South Africa on public diplomacy at the level of the presidency, there is limited recognition of how this foreign policy tool can be optimally utilised to achieve foreign policy objectives. "Lead SA is a Primedia Broadcasting initiative established in August 2010 after the World Cup, supported by Independent Newspapers, that aims to highlight the achievements of the nation and celebrate the efforts of ordinary South Africans who continually seek to do the right thing for themselves, for their families and for their country" (BrandSouthfrica 1996-2016). This initiative focuses on the domestic public, encouraging citizens to participate in highlighting successes and achievements in their communities. In terms of public diplomacy three levels, it provides information and builds communities. Brand South Africa is committed to marketing and communicating a positive brand image of South Africa. Established in August 2002, it aligns its communication and marketing strategy with the

Department of Trade and Industry as well as DIRCO. It is outwardly focused to international publics and attempts to engage international publics by sharing information, sharing exchanges of peoples and influencing perceptions of international citizens. Some elements of public diplomacy can be found in their work as it relates to information sharing, but by-and-large Brand SA is focused on marketing and brand management. None of these agencies publically link or consider the role of the country's leadership in their outward engagement. In terms of engagement with the domestic public DIRCO has operationalised the South African Council of International Relations (SACOIR), which was approved by Cabinet in November 2011, with a view to enhancing domestic public engagements during the Zuma administration, something that was not in place in the other administrations.

4.4 GCIS, South African Broadcasting Corporation and Media Houses

The section that deals with the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS), the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and Media Houses spans the different administrations and gives a specific focus to the media. Hence, a different approach of looking at the theme in an integrated way in the paper to cover these areas.

The South African Constitution places the setting and attainment of foreign policy as within the remit of the president. As such, the president is required to not only set the vision of the country's international relations, but also its communication to the international and domestic publics about its foreign policy in a way that ensures that the messaging is coherent and in line with political thinking, thus the need for public diplomacy (South Africa 1996; Schraeder 2001:236). Critical is the approach of the government to its media houses and broadcasting institutions and the necessary legislation to support the promotion of public diplomacy nationally and internationally. In October 1997, Cabinet accepted the recommendations of a communications Task Group that had to review the existing government structure, communication policy, functions at all levels, government communication training and capacity building with special emphasis on affirmative action and ownership and control (GCIS 1998:425). The outcome of the process led to the formation of the Government Communication and Information Service (GCIS) launched in May 1998 where the political responsibility was located in the office of the Deputy President. For public diplomacy, GCIS is pivotal for the sharing of information in general,

and making policy available to domestic and international public in particular. Heads of communications are located in Ministries, which link with the secretariat in the Office of the Deputy President (GCIS 1998:426). The establishment of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1993 (Act 153 of 1993) came into force in January 1994 and was established to ensure that South Africans that is focused on domestic public diplomacy receive the best possible broadcast service, free of bias and protection from government interference (GCIS 1998: 427). Private television commenced in March 1998 and the first local community radio reached beyond the borders to Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia (GCIS 1998: 427). Channel Africa, modelled along the lines of BBC World and Voice of America was started by the SABC and dealt specifically with African content and focused on international public diplomacy (GCIS 1998:429).

For public diplomacy to be successful, it requires access to information that can be shared, clarity on who owns and who is sharing and to whom the information is being shared with. In 2011, The National Assembly passed the Protection of State Information Bill with 209 votes, two abstentions and 107 votes against (Parker 2011). The Bill made provision for any organ of state to classify information with harsh penalties attached to it. Civil society organisations such as the Right to Know (R2K), media houses, independent organisations and some members of parliament were strongly opposed to the bill. This bill would therefore be an obstacle to the value of public diplomacy, as it would prevent the transparency and sharing of information The bill intends to achieve the following objectives:

“to provide for the protection of sensitive state information; and to provide for a system of classification, reclassification and declassification of state information; to provide for the protection of certain valuable state information against alteration, destruction or loss or unlawful disclosure; to regulate the manner in which state information may be protected; to repeal the Protection of Information Act, 1982 (Act No. 84 of 1982); and to provide for matters connected therewith.” (South Africa 2010).

Known as Black Tuesday, echoing the sentiments of the 1929 stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression, media houses and agencies branded this Bill for creating and supporting a culture of secrecy, which was contrary to the principles of democracy. Public diplomacy hinges on the transparency and free flow of communication and information. Controlling the broadcaster, media houses are unconstitutional and impacts

negatively on public diplomacy. The counter-point must also be noted, that sharing sensitive state information in an indiscriminate way will open a state up to safety and security issues.

Problems of an organisational nature beset the South African Broadcasting Agency (SABC) with political interference and allegations of mismanagement, and according to Skinner and Kupe (2009), “editorial and programming credibility, financial viability and institutional sustainability are now seriously in question”. As a key contributor to the information-sharing component of public diplomacy, challenges with the national broadcaster seriously affects the quality and authenticity of content thereby negating any advances as an independent broadcaster.

Public diplomacy requires communication infrastructure such as digital outreach teams, radio, television, print and audio media, media hubs, social media, and the necessary communication policies to withstand the vicissitudes of the public diplomacy environment. This includes an appreciation of the reach and impact of one-way communication achieved through speeches, brochures, flyers, and media broadcasts to name a view. The need to establish, develop and sustain mechanisms that allow for engagement through two-way communication and the feedback loop that allows for policy interventions.

The fervour of a president to undertake public diplomacy activities is influenced firstly by his or her commitment to the foreign policy goals and objectives; and secondly by his or her exposure to the work, policies and positions in the national and international arena. Since presidents are the visible champion of foreign policy in the international arena they require the support of relevant structures, processes and procedures that allow their engagements to embed and deliver on the foreign policy objectives (Wang & Chang 2004:14). A core aspect of public diplomacy is the ability to change the dominant narrative and entrenched attitudes towards a country through engagement with foreign publics thereby changing international perceptions, which then has a beneficial outcome for the country’s citizens. It is therefore not possible to achieve this change through the periodic and transitory nature of speeches by presidents alone, but these speeches, interventions and engagements provide the platform and triggers, the thematic areas and intentions towards an enabling environment from which to articulate goals, achieve cogent ends and catalyse campaigns to achieve intended foreign policy objectives.

5 Analysis and Recommendations

5.1 Summary Analysis

This study highlights the value of public diplomacy, the challenges it faces in implementation and the limited understanding of the role of the presidency in public diplomacy. It goes on to demonstrate the dynamic and fluid nature of the environment in which public diplomacy is conducted and the role played by different presidential approaches to engagement in international relations. The successful implementation of public diplomacy requires not only an innate understanding of multi-faceted aspects of public diplomacy but also the necessary policies, tools, techniques and strategies that are flexible, adaptable and are fully utilised to achieve foreign policy objectives. In addition to the external context, public diplomacy is further shaped by developments in communication technologies, new ways of securing brand image, positioning and other adaptations such as increased access to mobile technologies and social media. Without strong policy, presidential leadership, the necessary infrastructure, systems and capacities to support and drive public diplomacy South Africa is potentially vulnerable in this domain.

This study highlights important areas that require development for a South African public diplomacy strategy. These areas are set out by Lord and Dale as (2007:7): (1) Provide leadership. The President should provide an explicit mandate on how public diplomacy will promote South Africa's interests and security. Key are the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. (2) Establish doctrinal principles. State and non-state actors should have a unified vision, sense of purpose, body of principles, and set of doctrines. Specifically, these should make clear that the fundamental purpose of international information programs is to affect foreign audiences in ways that are favourable to South Africa's national interests. (3) Specify lines of authority and interagency cooperation on public diplomacy. Individuals, departments, and diplomatic organisations should find ways to complement one another to advance the national interest. (4) Target desired audiences. The NDP provides a useful foundation for identifying priority audiences that vary by country and region. A national strategy should identify classes of opinion leaders and populations and mobilize the diplomatic mechanisms to find and target audiences that find accord.

The debates on the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and the impact of presidential public diplomacy is an area that could be investigated further. South Africa's history shows us how national policies regarding thematic areas such as HIV and AIDS, the National Development Plan, Government Communications, are influenced by, or can influence foreign publics. More than just the sharing of information via brochures, media announcements or relevant speeches, the value of public diplomacy lies in its ability to influence governments to make strategic changes in their policies to affect the lives of their citizens for the better. Sometimes, however, the unintended consequences are negative in the short term as in the case of sanctions imposed on a government. The sanctions become the means by which changes to policy are leveraged, but in the short term, sanctions negatively affect the very citizens that the intended beneficiaries. This was seen particularly around the HIV and AIDS discussion and the uncoordinated, and ad hoc input from president Mbeki.

Mandela's iconic stature as South Africa's first black, democratically elected president heralded a new beginning for the Republic. His charisma, humility, and personal commitment to the values of the Constitution were, amongst others, the foundation of a foreign policy that embraced human rights, democracy, safety and security, pan-Africanism and a united Africa, free from oppression and tyranny. Public diplomacy was therefore imbued in the persona of Mandela. His term as president, although short relative to the succeeding presidents, instilled in international publics a global pride, a sense of camaraderie and support for the fledgling democracy. Opening South Africa to the world, and the world to South Africa was an important process in public diplomacy as sharing of information, policies, paving the way for other important forms of diplomacy to achieve foreign policy objectives. Mandela however, under-estimated the value of Africa and its support, not fully building on the decades of activism that underscored the anti-apartheid movement. Even Mandela's departure at the end of his term was a form of public diplomacy, challenging the age-old ruler for life mentality seen in other African countries.

Mbeki's contribution to foreign policy formulation and implementation as an academic and practitioner, as well as his willingness to strengthen the centre of government, was noteworthy. Pragmatism prevailed in foreign policy implementation and institutional management and coordination during the Mbeki administration from 1999 to 2008 (Le Pere 2013). Mbeki, leading from a strategic and operational standpoint introduced the African Renaissance, championed NEPAD and recognising the strategic importance of the north-

south relations. He was able to accelerate the international engagements that commenced under Mandela and provide the strategic leadership to bilateral and multilateral forums. Although a somewhat aloof president who possessed political nous, Mbeki underestimated the domestic public and soon lost their support when challenged by Zuma. While Mbeki's influence internationally extended considerably, critics were underwhelmed in certain policy areas. One example was the issue of HIV & Aids and the treatment of the civil society organisations that opposed his related policies.

The current incumbent, Zuma was initially more focused on the domestic arena, choosing to send representatives to attend significant meetings in order to maintain his dominance in the domestic arena. Increasingly, Zuma has become more engaged and drawn into international relations, especially in the case of BRICS and into issues of South-South cooperation. Zuma's support for the BRICS forum, the hosting of the BRICS regional bank in South Africa, contrasts with the occasions where he has undermined the international position through diplomatic oversights, such as the failure to meet the Indian Prime Minister at the BRICS summit hosted by South Africa, or to leave the Brazilian delegating waiting for a meeting with him. South Africa experienced a huge backlash following the president's decision to appointment a new Minister of Finance, and his subsequent replacement within two days, in 2015. Zuma reacted sharply to comments, indicating that the appointment of the Minister is a president's prerogative when media raised concerns that the markets are reacting negatively to the changes. The comments reflected both his frustration with the media, and effect of a domestic decision within the international financial terrain. The effects of Zuma's limited engagement with the importance of public diplomacy reached its peak at this time.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendation regarding building a general working understanding of public diplomacy - it is evident from the one directional focus of current public diplomacy activities that there needs to be further discussion on what public diplomacy means in the South African context. The definition of public diplomacy must be clearly described within a future policy so that it accommodates the national and international dimension. Furthermore, it is recommended that flowing from the general understanding of public diplomacy, a specific framework for presidential public diplomacy must be developed.

5.2.2 *Recommendation regarding communication* – the following gaps were identified including: (1) the shortfall in considering who the owner of the information is and who is in control of the communication; (2) the directionality of communication; (3) discussion on who the actors and the audience are; (4) the measure of content; and (5) the purpose and intention of public diplomacy. It is recommended that stakeholders convene a plenary to address specifically the role of communication as it relates to public diplomacy. More emphasis must be given to what and how presidents communicate with foreign publics, their representatives and domestic audiences.

5.2.3 *Recommendation regarding public diplomacy impact* – in order to measure the impact of public diplomacy, domestically and internationally there needs to be further studies on public perceptions of South African foreign policy. Presidential public diplomacy, specifically referring to the decisions and utterances of the president have shown to have economic and social consequences for the country. Currently there are only limited studies on public diplomacy and routine reporting on strategic plans of the Presidency, DIRCO and international relations offices in line departments have not been evaluated with a view to determine the efficacy of public diplomacy. It is recommended that there be a funded, formal, study into public perceptions to determine the efficacy of public diplomacy both domestically and abroad.

5.2.4 *Recommendation regarding public diplomacy in foreign policy.* The foreign policy is the fundamental document in successful public diplomacy. The South African foreign policy document is however in need of review, not only in terms of its overall tenets, but in terms of its current exclusion of public diplomacy. Similarly, the role of the president in South African public diplomacy needs to be defined. The key themes of the messages of public diplomacy derive from the foreign policy therefore the focus on the NDP, the changed political milieu needs to be factored into the foreign policy.

5.2.5 *Recommendation regarding the development of public diplomacy policy for South Africa* – the need for a policy document on public diplomacy derives from the different approaches to public diplomacy. It would articulate the principles, processes, procedures, which will guide the presidency, state and non-state actors in the domestic and international arena. It will articulate the leadership, doctrinal, institutional, communication and networks required to give effect to the value of public diplomacy. The approach to a centralised,

presidential public diplomacy model for South Africa is strongly mooted in the paper, and can be further tested based on the earlier recommendations.

6 Conclusion

Public diplomacy in South Africa is an underrated, undervalued tool in the execution of South African foreign policy. The three South African presidential approaches assessed above have demonstrated varying modalities in the use of public diplomacy for the advancement of foreign policy objectives. Mandela, iconic in stature, mobilised international publics in support of the post-apartheid government. Mbeki used his formidable understanding of international relations to advance diplomacy yet, making colossal missteps in areas such as HIV and AIDS. Zuma's tenure as president is pockmarked with diplomatic crises due to his handling of South African foreign policy. All three presidents would have benefited from a clear policy on South African public diplomacy, and as the apex of government, would have given the necessary momentum to government for its successful execution. A policy regarding presidential public diplomacy would have assisted the presidents to avoid the mistakes that costs the country valuable international support.

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