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**THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA IN THE “WAR ON TERROR”**

by

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH THEME

After the attacks on 11 September in 2001 (hereafter, September 11) on the United States of America (US), the comment that ‘the world will not be the same again’ has become a truism. Although targeted before in February 1993, the scale and horror of September 11 was a watershed event in US history and foreign policy. While prior mention was made by US officials of a ‘war on terrorism’, September 11 ‘institutionalised’ the ‘war on terror’ as the primary US foreign policy objective. Therefore, as an instrument of foreign policy, US diplomacy pursues this objective, which has serious implications for international relations.

Although the most salient feature of current international relations is the dominance of the US, it perceives itself as being under threat. Even before September 11, the US government was aware of a growing anti-American sentiment (House of Representatives 2002). This was confirmed by opinion polls conducted in Muslim countries. This negative perception was not confined to Arab countries and polling in Europe found similar negativity (CFR 2004b). This prompted Senator H.J. Hyde (House of Representatives 2002), Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to ask: “Why ... when we read or listen to descriptions of America in the foreign press, do we so often seem to be entering a fantasyland of hatred?” The anti-American feeling was not only a contributing factor to September 11, but was also hampering the US efforts in its ‘war on terror’.

On the basis of this evidence and September 11, US policy makers identified public diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument with which to remedy the negative perceptions and their consequences. Policy makers and commentators were unanimous in their

assessment that the US government “[was] losing its voice before foreign audiences and need[ed] to get it back” through reinvigorated public diplomacy (Johnson & Dale 2003). The Bush administration thus embarked on an extensive public diplomacy campaign to control the discourse of the ‘war on terror’. However, the ‘war on terror’ has proved to be a defining phenomenon in international relations and by extension the role of the concomitant US public diplomacy campaign has gained political relevance. These developments illustrate the importance of public diplomacy and US public diplomacy in particular, in international relations.

## **2. AIM AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

Against this background, the aim of this study is to analyse public diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument but with reference to US public diplomacy, and US public diplomacy activities in the ‘war on terror’ in particular. In view of the limitations of existing public diplomacy theory, there is also the concern that, what is practised as public diplomacy by the US, significantly differs from the meaning as understood by other practitioners, academics and the public.

This study postulates that this US effort will, by virtue of US dominance of world politics and International Relations as a science, have a far-reaching influence on the theory and practice of public diplomacy. This indicates the theoretical and practical relevance of the study. The theoretical relevance pertains to the fact that, firstly, despite the recent upsurge in academic interest, ample scope remains for conceptual clarification of public diplomacy. Secondly, the general increase of public diplomacy activities, evident from this case, presents new opportunities for academic scrutiny. At the theoretical level this analysis thus presents a current evaluation of public diplomacy. Thirdly, due to the dominance of the US in International Relations, this case will determine future theoretical analysis in the field.

The practical relevance of the analysis of US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’ derives from the influence of the US as a superpower. Firstly, US practices create

precedents in international relations. Secondly, its public diplomacy has a profound political and personal impact on the target audience. At the practical level this analysis thus indicates trends that can affect future public diplomacy, but also indicates the socio-political effects of US public diplomacy.

### **3. FORMULATION AND DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The limitations of the theory on public diplomacy belie the importance currently attached to it by foreign policy makers and its prominence in the US 'war on terror'. Although public diplomacy is also scrutinized in, amongst others, Communications, Cognitive, Linguistic and Marketing Studies, studies in International Relations and Diplomatic Studies lack conceptual clarity and critical analysis.

#### **3.1. FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

As indicated, the aim of this study is to analyse the meaning of public diplomacy in the context of the US' 'war on terror'. With its roots in propoganda and with recent intrusions of corporate communications and advertising, public diplomacy is a vague and confusing concept. Therefore, the main research question is: What are the meaning, nature and scope of public diplomacy? However, in view of the political and academic dominance of the US, three sub-questions inform the main research question: How does the US as the superpower practice public diplomacy? How does US public diplomacy manifest in the 'war on terror'? Does US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' constitute propoganda? The latter question specifically addresses the distinction between public diplomacy and propoganda, which informs the main question on the meaning, nature and scope of public diplomacy.





### 3.2. DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem is demarcated conceptually, geographically and temporally. In respect of the conceptual demarcation, this analysis considers public diplomacy within the theoretical framework of International Relations and Diplomatic Studies, in the process also distinguishing it from and relating it to propaganda. In respect of the geographic demarcation, the case study is confined to the public diplomacy of the US and in particular the information disseminated through public diplomacy institutions and activities. This study thus focuses on the content of public diplomacy. Although US pronouncements of a war on terrorism pre-dated 11 September 2001, the 'war on terror' has become a stated US foreign policy objective from 2001 and is still continuing. The time demarcation therefore is from 2001 to 2006.

## 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This analysis consults these, and other primary and secondary sources:

**(a) Literature on the theoretical context of public diplomacy:** In consideration of the broader theoretical context of public diplomacy, this analysis draws from standard works such as *International politics: A framework for analysis* (1995) by K.J. Holsti; as well as the book *Soft Power: The means of success in world politics* (2004) by J. Nye (Jnr), who considers public diplomacy as an instrument of 'soft power'. A seminal work such as *International communication* (1968) edited by A.S. Hoffman serves to define public diplomacy within the aforesaid context. The books, *Strategic public diplomacy and American foreign policy: The evolution of influence* (1994) edited by J.B. Mannheim, as well as *Public diplomacy and political change: Four case studies: Okinawa, Peru, and Czechoslovakia, Guinea* (1973) edited by G. Henderson, are more recent academic sources on public diplomacy in general, but also US public diplomacy in particular. Although various academic journals on international relations and diplomacy include articles that focus on US public diplomacy in particular, they also serve as sources to define public diplomacy as a diplomatic concept. These include



articles in journals like *Foreign Affairs*, *International Studies Perspectives*, *Politics* and *New Leaders* which are referred to in the Bibliography. One such article by Ross in the *Harvard Review* (Summer 2003), *Pillars of public diplomacy: Grappling with international public opinion*, sets out the basic tenets of public diplomacy. Internet sources of non-governmental organisations like the Council of Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institute and the Heritage Foundation published articles on public diplomacy representing the views of mainstream scholars, current and former practitioners and opinion leaders. These sources mostly represent realist and neo-conservative views within the Bush administration<sup>1</sup>, for example those expressed by Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense<sup>2</sup>, Rumsfeld and Secretary of State, Rice. Since public diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument is inextricably linked to propaganda through its common historical roots, some emphasis is also placed on the latter. Literature on propaganda abounds. The work of Elull, *Propaganda: The formation of men's attitude* (1973), which adopts a *critical* approach to propaganda, is considered a template for the definition and clarification of propaganda.

**(b) Literature on US public diplomacy:** The empirical analysis of the role of US public diplomacy is covered and relies on the availability of governmental publications as primary sources. On the internet the US Government's web pages include that of the White House, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense. These primary sources set out the history of US public diplomacy, current development and contextual foreign policy documentation.

The web pages of non-governmental organisations such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and others quoted above are secondary sources on US public diplomacy, as are those of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise indicated, references to the Bush administration, Bush or President Bush indicate the presidency of George W Bush, 43<sup>rd</sup> president of the USA who was inaugurated in January 2001 and re-inaugurated in January 2005.

<sup>2</sup> American spelling of 'defense' is used when referring specifically to the American defence force or when an American reference is quoted.

Alternative or dissenting views on US public diplomacy, such as the work of N. Snow, *Propaganda Inc.: Selling America's culture to the world* (2002) has also been included in the study. Alternative views marginally influence mainstream academia, but this study considers the work of leading alternative academia as equally valid and deserving of academic consideration.

**(c) Literature on the 'war on terror':** Official US governmental documentation from the White House, the Department of State and the Department of Defense serves as primary sources indicating the foreign policy context and definition of the 'war on terror'.

Primary sources include statements and speeches by the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, National Security Advisor, as well as other high-level US governmental officials, such as ambassadors. Primary sources include the President's weekly radio addresses to the nation.

As secondary sources, academic publications on the subject of the 'war on terror' mostly represent the realistic perspective. To reflect views critical of the US 'war on terror' this study draws from the work of S. Rampton & J. Stauber, *Weapons of mass deception: The uses of propaganda in Bush's war on Iraq* (2003).

This study also uses newspaper articles from influential papers such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* as conveyors of the message of the 'war on terror' of the US government, both inside and outside the US. In consideration of the role of the private media as conduit of governmental messages, this analysis will also consider work such as Herman and Chomsky's, *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media* (1994) and that of Kaufman, *Threat inflation and the failure of the market place of ideas: The selling of the war in Iraq* published in *International Security* (2004).

**(d) Literature on methodology and approach:** This analysis draws from the example of Broadhead's critical approach to empirical research in her book *International*



*environmental politics: The limits of green diplomacy* (2002). Broadhead's work is a practical application of the critical approach in international relations. The two definitive works of Yin, *Case study research: Design and methods* (1994) and *Applications of case study research* (1993) are consulted in respect of the case study method.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this study deviates from the rationalist approach of the dominant international perspective of realism. This study applies a critical and reflective approach to the theoretical analysis of the concept public diplomacy; to the empirical analysis of US public diplomacy; and to the case study on US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror'.

Ultimately, the case study method, which is rooted in the study of diplomacy (Lantis 2004), is an appropriate research design to explore US public diplomacy in respect of the 'war on terror'. It is "a method for learning about a complex instance, based on a comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive description and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context" (Government Accounting Office as quoted by White 1994: 129). This analysis thus requires a focus on the context, theoretical and practical, to explore preliminary propositions with the objective to conclude with a premise for further inquiry. This case study is therefore of an exploratory nature in which the 'what' question is asked in respect of public diplomacy as theoretical concept and in respect of US public diplomacy and its 'war on terror'.

This research theme is complex: it calls for a comprehensive understanding; it requires extensive description and analysis; it needs to be addressed as a whole; and it considers the context of US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror'. These four elements namely complexity, comprehensive understanding, extensive description and understanding, if taken as a whole, and viewed with consideration of the context, correspond with the four elements of the case study method (White 1994: 129).

## 6. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

This study comprises of three main parts, namely a theoretical framework, a main section, and a conclusion.

Chapter One, as introduction, provides the rationale for the study and identifies the research theme by demarcating it in terms of conceptual, geographical and temporal parameters. It indicates the methodology of literature analysis and single case study analysis and briefly discusses the rationale for the choice of methodology.

Chapter Two firstly presents a theoretical perspective of public diplomacy in the context of international relations, foreign policy and diplomatic theory. Secondly, the nature, scope, characteristics, use of public diplomacy are analysed in respect of three dimensions, namely agents, activities and the target audience. From this analysis seven operating principles are identified which are considered defining criteria for public diplomacy. Thirdly, this chapter identifies defining criteria for propaganda. Fourthly, public diplomacy is distinguished from propaganda through the application of the respective criteria to the said three dimensions. This provides a framework for the analysis of the US case study.

Chapter Three, as background to the case study, discusses the origins, development and current practices of US public diplomacy. The analysis of current US public diplomacy addresses the three dimensions as distinguished in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four turns to the case study on US public diplomacy in respect of the 'war on terror'. This chapter considers the US public diplomacy information activities in the 'war on terror' against operating principles identified in Chapter Two.

Chapter Five addresses the sub-question on the public diplomacy-propaganda nexus and analyses the extent to which US public diplomacy in support of the 'war on terror' is an example of 'new' public diplomacy or propaganda, or both.

Chapter Six is an evaluation that concludes the study with findings that address the research problem. Finally, to clarify the conceptualization of public diplomacy, a reassessment of the concept and its application is considered in the light of the findings of this study. This re-definition of the concept is related to US public diplomacy efforts in the 'war on terror'.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The theme of this study is public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is a mode of diplomacy and an instrument of foreign policy. In an era of mass politics, public diplomacy has become a more powerful, as well as a controversial, mode of diplomacy. However, in International Relations and Diplomatic Studies literature, public diplomacy remains descriptive with a focus on the US practice and on problem-solving. These practical developments together with the theoretical shortcomings indicate the importance of public diplomacy as a theme in International Relations.

Furthermore, despite the growing interest in other parts of the world, US interest in public diplomacy waned with the end of the Cold War. However, the realities of international politics, namely anti-Americanism and September 11, forced US policy makers to re-evaluate public diplomacy. This renewed interest by the US; together with the international controversy over the 'war on terror' and the concomitant charge that the US public diplomacy was seen as being propaganda, indicate the need for an empirical analysis of the practices of public diplomacy. This study postulates that by virtue of its superpower status and academic dominance, US practices as manifested in the 'war on terror' hold implications for the theory and practice of public diplomacy.

The main research question on the meaning of public diplomacy therefore has both theoretical and practical relevance. This study thus aims to determine the meaning of public diplomacy, by means of, firstly, a theoretical analysis of the concept public diplomacy and as counterpoint, propaganda; secondly, an empirical analysis of US

public diplomacy; and thirdly, a case study analysis of US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’. This three-step process integrates contemporary theory with current practices.

A critical approach to the research problem and the application of the case study method addresses the complexities of public diplomacy practices as foreign policy instrument. This study draws on existing problem-solving and rationalist insights, while attempting to contribute to conceptual clarity through critical analysis. Ultimately, in view of the real socio-political impact on foreign publics (target audiences), this study aims to stimulate and contribute to a public debate on public diplomacy.



## CHAPTER 2

# PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: THEORY, PRACTICE AND PROPAGANDA

### 1. INTRODUCTION

With many countries, amongst others South Africa, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia announcing public diplomacy initiatives in recent years, and renewed US interest after September 11, this mode of diplomacy appears to be a recent phenomenon. Closer investigation, however, indicates otherwise. Although the term public diplomacy entered International Relations relatively recently, it had in fact been practised for many centuries.

Most literature on public diplomacy are descriptive case studies with vague and interchanging references to marketing, advertising, 'selling', 'branding', strategic political communication and propaganda. The application of the concept public diplomacy to case studies is therefore hampered by this theoretical inconsistency. In addition, studies of public diplomacy remain within the rationalist or problem-solving paradigm, thus detached from the questions put forward by non-mainstream theorists.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse public diplomacy, with the secondary objective to relate the concept to propaganda. Therefore, after the clarification of concepts pertaining to public diplomacy, the chapter locates the concept diplomacy within International Relations. Thereafter, an analysis is provided of the origins, development, aims and objectives, principles, dimensions and modes of public diplomacy. In order to address the nexus between public diplomacy and propaganda, their parameters and relationship are outlined.



## **2. THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

The concept public diplomacy has a diplomatic and a public dimension. The diplomacy dimension derives its meaning from the domain of foreign policy and international relations, whereas the public dimension concerns the domain of political communications.

### **2.1. FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The concepts foreign policy and international relations are often used indiscriminately. Cautioning that a distinction may be more academic than real, Holsti (1995: 18-19) defines foreign policy as “the objectives and actions (decisions and policies) of a state or states and the interactions between two or more states”; and the term international relations as “all forms of interaction between the members of separate societies, whether government sponsored or not”. This definition perceives foreign policy as the exclusive domain of the state, with international relations the domain of state and non-state actors. It also implies a narrow range of assumptions on what foreign policy is, who should practice it, and the kinds of policies that are available and applicable. However, as Rothgeb (1995: 34) points out, foreign policy is a complex phenomenon determined by social, political, psychological, and economic forces that work both within and between international actors. Such a complex phenomenon thus requires analysis that goes beyond the state.

Despite differences in the priorities, the foreign policy objectives of states are security, autonomy, welfare, status and prestige (Holsti 1995: 84). However, the goals of states are increasingly linked to those of non-state actors with foreign policy goals therefore increasingly expressed in terms of the common good, such as human rights. Where realists have been preoccupied with state security, alternative approaches point out that ensuring state security is often detrimental to human security. This emphasis on human security stems from alternative intellectual and ethical traditions. However, although alternative interpretations of security translate into alternative choices of foreign policy

instruments, the underlying state-centric approach of some non-traditional security studies falls back on foreign policy instruments that secure the survival of the state.

A number of foreign policy instruments serve foreign policy objectives, namely diplomacy, subversion, economic strategies, propaganda, and military strategies. These instruments represent various techniques and tools, with public diplomacy a mode of diplomacy and propaganda a technique of subversion. Propaganda serves foreign policy objectives, but where public diplomacy is perceived as a legitimate mode of diplomacy, propaganda is treated with mistrust, particularly during peace time.

Foreign policy instruments derive their utility from the notion of power, with states increasingly basing their objectives and interests on new conceptions of resources and power. The translation of publicity, science, technology and economic prowess into power challenges traditional notions of power based primarily on military might and recently also economic prowess. In recognition of new notions of power, Nye (2004a: XI) coined the term 'soft power', meaning the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments". Nye (2004a: X & 6) argues that soft power "arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and, policies". Soft power is distinct from influence. Where the hard power of threats and payment enhances influence, soft power is the ability to attract and to persuade. He considers three sources of soft power, namely culture, political values, and foreign policy. Although soft power is the result of governmental policy, other actors increasingly contribute to the attractiveness of a state (Nye 2004a: 32). However, the importance of soft power must be seen within the context of the continued importance attributed to military power as is evident from the expenditure, ambitions, and reliance on weapons by states such as the US, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, China, Israel and India as well as non-governmental political entities such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The actions of these actors still correspond with traditional notions of power, with the emergence of a new race to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. Although many scholars such as Barston (1997:1-8) point to the changing nature of the international political system relating to diplomacy, scholars such as Rothgeb (1995: 34) argue that although the nature of

competition and the patterns of conflict within the international system may have shifted with the end of the Cold War and arguably after September 11, its basic structure remains the same. The international system is thus marked by both continuity and change in respect of structure, nature of competition, and patterns of conflict.

Due to the changes in international relations, specifically the growth of mass politics, public diplomacy has emerged as an instrument of foreign policy. In consideration of Holsti's distinction, the public dimension of public diplomacy used to fall exclusively in the international relations domain. However, like diplomacy, public diplomacy operates in a transformed international environment marked by the increased influence, or rather 'soft power', of non-state actors; advanced global information technology; and complex issues in which, as Ross (2003) points out, the "public-diplomacy quotient of virtually every foreign policy issue today has risen dramatically". Ross argues that policies can still be forged in private, confidential talks among professional diplomats, but successful long-term implementation often requires the understanding and support of multiple foreign publics and other non-state actors. Therefore, in this transformed context, public diplomacy now also falls within the foreign policy domain.

The public dimension of public diplomacy has a domestic as well as an international component, but with increased interfacing. The domestic public indicates foreign policy preferences, whereas the international public is the target audience. Holsti (1995: 261-263) points out that a direct relationship between domestic public opinion and foreign policy cannot be assumed, because various factors such as, who is expressing foreign policy opinions; on what issues; and in what situations, influence the formulation of foreign policy. Although foreign policy makers and a small top layer of attentive domestic public generally constitute the 'who', even inattentive citizens express opinions when an issue touches their lives directly. In a crisis situation, with perceptions of threat, a few key policy makers determine foreign policy. Due to their access to classified information, governments are deemed to have superior knowledge and insight and therefore often have adequate space to create foreign policy moods. Amongst foreign policy makers, the head of government has a vantage point from where public opinion

can be influenced due to public perceptions on political expertise and prestige. Information emanating from governments has more impact on public opinions than information dispersed by alternative sources. However, exclusive government access to evidence and communications compromises the quality of information available to the public, which in turn has a negative impact on democracy. As both the domestic and foreign public become more interlinked through mass media and globalization, practitioners propose that domestic mindsets be changed first in order to shape mindsets abroad (Ross 2003).

Formerly, the international dimension of public opinion has mostly received attention in consideration of propaganda. However, with growing negative views on propaganda, public diplomacy emerges as a new mode of political communication to influence foreign publics. Propaganda and public diplomacy thus occupy the same space in the foreign policy domain; are concerned with the same objectives and have the same targets. However, this study considers diplomacy as the point of divergence between public diplomacy and propaganda. Therefore, to demarcate public diplomacy and propaganda requires analysis of the concept and practice of diplomacy.

## **2.2. DIPLOMACY**

Diplomacy has many definitions. However, a chronological review of definitions reveals a shift from a state-centric (single actor) perspective to the recognition of non-state actors. The nineteenth century scholar Satow (quoted by Otte 2001: 125) defines diplomacy as “the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states”. The twentieth century scholar Harold Nicolson (quoted by Otte 2001: 156) considers diplomacy as the “art of negotiations”, with the “aim of sound diplomacy ... the maintenance of amicable relations between sovereign states.” He also warns that “(once) diplomacy is employed to provoke international animosity, it ceases to be diplomacy and becomes the opposite, namely war by another name.” More recently, Berridge (1995: 1) defines diplomacy as “the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or



recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation.” He thus distinguishes diplomacy from propaganda. Barston (1997: 1) defines diplomacy as the “management of relations between states and between states and other actors.” This definition points to the increasing importance of non-state actors, a new non-state centric approach to diplomacy.

Furthermore, although the earlier definitions of Satow and Nicholson espouse an exclusive state-centric view of diplomacy, its philosophical underpinning is clearly non-violent. Contemporary definitions are more mechanistic and espousing of ambivalent philosophies on violence. Although these definitions indicate the essence of diplomacy, diplomacy also derives its meaning from content provided by its institutional framework such as the United Nations (UN) Charter and the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*, 1961. This institutional framework, based on the principles of sovereignty, self-determination and democracy, thus informs the concept and practice of public diplomacy. The following theoretical analysis of public diplomacy therefore also considers its public dimension against the institutional principles of diplomacy.

### **3. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

Crude forms of strategic communications to foreign populations have been practised throughout history in many parts of the world by diverse religious organisations and political empires. Although most literature indicates propaganda during both World War I and II as the roots of public diplomacy, some scholars trace public diplomacy back to 1622 when Pope Gregory XV's established *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* with the objective of promoting Catholicism (Mannheim 1994: 158). Others, such as Delaney (1969: 3) also discern public diplomacy in the way Moses influenced the Pharaoh. Later manifestations of public diplomacy are the image making and image projection practised by Cardinal Richelieu of France and more recently by Kemal Atatürk of Turkey. However, the reported coining of the term by Edmund Gullion (of the Fletcher

School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University) in 1965 distinguishes between public diplomacy and propaganda. As such it is defined as “a government’s process of communication 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” (Tuch as quoted by Mannheim 1994: 5). It indicates a departure from propaganda, and the emergence of a new practice of strategic communications.

Furthermore, the prioritization of public diplomacy by several countries preceded the current interest stimulated by the US effort in the ‘war on terror’. For example, in the aftermath of World War II Germany ‘reinvented’ itself as a respectable member of the community of nations through a policy of *politische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit* (Melissen 2005:9), a concept translated as political public relations. Also, former East European states that pursue European Union (EU) membership increasingly engage in public diplomacy campaigns; EU member states consider public diplomacy as the “number one priority” (Melissen 2005: 9 & 10); and the EU itself “possesses many of the required ingredients to mount a viable public diplomacy strategy” (Michalski 2005: 141). In addition, it is argued that a diverse group of non-state actors that includes oil companies, environmental groups, and terrorist organisations also engages in public diplomacy (CFR 2004b). Public diplomacy has become a main feature of contemporary international relations, reflecting its complexities. The clarification of public diplomacy needs to reflect these complexities and thus the distinctions between diplomacy and public diplomacy and between propaganda and public diplomacy.

### **3.1. DEFINITIONS**

Although public diplomacy is practised by many countries, theory on the subject mostly originates from the US or focuses on US public diplomacy (e.g. Hansen 1984 and Henderson 1973). Other literature does not define the concept (e.g. Godson 1987), supposing a well-established or self-explanatory meaning. However, as a point of departure, most definitions of public diplomacy distinguish between traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy. Mannheim (1994: 3) defines public diplomacy as



“people-to-people and government-to-people contacts” distinct from traditional government-to-government diplomacy. Mannheim’s definition does not indicate the persuasive nature of communications in public diplomacy. In turn, Critchlow (2003) defines public diplomacy as “distinct from the traditional striped-pants variety in that it reaches people directly, without going through the filter of their governments.” This definition presupposes political independence in public diplomacy. Delaney (1968: 3) defines ‘new’ diplomacy or public diplomacy as “the ways in which both governments and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on other governments’ foreign policy decisions.” This definition creates space for individuals like “the idealistic peace Corpsman, the long-suffering missionary, the foreign correspondent, the businessman, the visiting professor, and the propagandist” (Delaney 1968: 4). However, Delaney considers propaganda to be a part of public diplomacy, and thus contributes to the confusion of public diplomacy with propaganda. Sharp (2005: 106) defines public diplomacy as the “process by which direct relations are pursued with a country’s people to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented.” Sharp’s definition reflects recent thinking on public diplomacy of multilevel, multiple actor engagement emphasizing not only interests, but also values. This view on public diplomacy reflects a non-state and more critical approach.

Considering a US perspective on public diplomacy, the US think tank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR 2004a) describes public diplomacy as the “efforts to inform and influence public opinion in other countries”. The CFR makes a similar distinction as that offered by Mannheim (1994) between traditional diplomacy which is a government-to-government process conducted between officials, and public diplomacy which broadly aims at the international elite and public. US Senator Hyde (2002) defines public diplomacy as “the collective name given to efforts by the US government to explain its foreign policy to the world and encourage greater familiarity with the United States by populations of other countries”. Accordingly, he regards these public diplomacy activities as “essentially passive” with the “use of public diplomacy to speak directly to the peoples of the world and enlist them in our long-term efforts to promote freedom,





prosperity, and stability throughout the world”. The now-defunct US Information Agency (USIA) defines public diplomacy as the promotion of national interests and national security through understanding, informing, and influencing of citizens abroad (quoted by Johnson & Dale 2003). When compared with traditional diplomacy which seeks government-to-government cooperation, public diplomacy “encourages mutual understanding and cooperation between a nation and foreign publics by identifying its institutions and activities with those publics’ interests,” indicating multidimensional engagement (Johnson & Dale 2003). These US perspectives emphasise the people-to-people distinction that depends on the communication of images, symbols and values, with the pursuit of national interests as its primary objective.

Alternatively, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the UK (House of Commons Report 2005-2006) comments that public diplomacy is “about overturning negative views of the UK, as well as increasing positive perceptions”. From a Canadian scholarly perspective, Potter [2002] defines public diplomacy as “the effort by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion of another nation for the purpose of turning the policy of the target nation to an advantage.” These definitions indicate such a wide scope for activity that critics charge that public diplomacy serves as a catch-all for activities that don’t fit into traditional, thus contributing to confusion about the essence of public diplomacy.

This ‘catch-all’ trend and concomitant confusion is aggravated by the influence of the business sector. The meaning and definition of public diplomacy are obscured by business management concepts, such as public relations and marketing that enter the discourse on and practice of public diplomacy. For example, Hills and Holbrooke (2001) call for the application of “most sophisticated tools [of] modern marketing” in public diplomacy. Generally, the term public affairs refers to communications directed at the domestic audience, to gain understanding of and support for government policies, activities and institutions but also to account for the government’s management of public resources (Johnson & Dale 2003). Public diplomacy initiatives therefore increasingly involve public affairs campaigns (Melissen 2005: 13) because foreign policy





implementation, especially through military force, requires, if not direct consent then the tacit approval of the domestic public. Public affairs are governmental activities in the public domain, with public relations an activity sponsored by the private sector in the private domain. Public relations seek the “informed consent of a target audience for the activities of a particular organization”, and advertising, the “use of persuasive communication to encourage consumers to buy a product or service” (Johnson and Dale 2003). Private sector involvement in government through strategies such as privatization, outsourcing, and public-private partnerships increasingly draws numbers of private business consultants into public diplomacy projects. This trend introduces the discourse of business and information technology into the public sector and also into diplomacy. The ultimate manifestation of this trend was the appointment of Charlotte Beers, an advertising executive as the Under-secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs by President Bush following September 11. Beers did not have any experience in public policy, diplomacy or public diplomacy (Rampton & Stauber 2003: 12).

Other business practices introduced to public diplomacy include corporate communications such as advertising and branding. However, Klein (2002) considers branding as “essentially about rigorously controlled one-way messages, sent out in their glossiest form, then hermitically sealed off from those who would turn that corporate monologue into social dialogue.” Rosenshine (quoted by Klein 2002), an advertising executive, concurs that successful branding “requires a carefully crafted message delivered with consistency and discipline.” Klein (2002) points out that the requisite consistency of branding appears ‘distinctly authoritarian’ as historically manifested in centralised information, state-controlled media, re-education camps, and the purging of dissidents as manifested in the authoritarian rule of Mao Zedong and Adolf Hitler. Considering branding and advertising as modes of public diplomacy therefore appears not only misplaced, but it undermines the diversity and debate underpinning democracy.

However, in the UK, Prime Minister Blair led the *Cool Britannia* campaign and in the US, former Secretary of State, Powell, charged Beers with re-branding the US. Powell



argued that Beer's appointment "was an attempt to change from just selling the US ... to really branding foreign policy" (quoted by Rampton & Stauber 2004: 25). In the execution of her mandate to promote American values in the Middle East, Beers turned to the principles and theories of consumer marketing. This exchange of practitioners from advertising, public relations, public affairs to public diplomacy creates the interchange of practices and theoretical imprecision.

Therefore, McClellan's (2004) new definition for public diplomacy provides more clarity, namely "the strategic planning and execution of informational, cultural and educational programming by an advocate country to create a public opinion environment in a target country or countries that will enable target country political leaders to make decisions that are supportive of the advocate country's foreign policy objective." He posits that public diplomacy goes well beyond the usual concepts of propaganda, in which a particular message is 'injected' into the target country repeatedly, or public relations in which a message is relayed through branding, image projection and advertising. He also distinguishes between positive and negative propaganda, with the former having the goal of injecting a positive image into a target country and the latter a negative image.

Van Ham (quoted by Center for Public Diplomacy) offers an alternative distinction between public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy. The key element of public diplomacy is the building of personal and institutional relationships and dialogue with foreign audiences by focusing on values. This distinction sets public diplomacy apart from classical diplomacy, which deals primarily with issues. Canada's aim to promote "commonly shared values such as equality and democracy" through membership of international organisations demonstrates its emphasis on values (Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [s.a.]). This Canadian perspective corresponds with that of Ross (2003) who argues that public diplomacy "systematically addresses the slower pulse of public attitudes, to connect to human emotions and perceptions where ... values and worldviews reside most deeply". In the context of the growing importance of public diplomacy in foreign policy, read together with the multilevel, multiple actor

definition of Sharp above, this definition elevates values to the plain of high politics, and therefore relevant to national security.

### **3.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

In the context of traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy has long-term as well as short-term goals, whereas traditional diplomacy focuses mostly on the short-term objectives, with the latter “the bread and butter of government-to-government relations” (McClellan 2004). Per definition, public diplomacy informs, engages, and influences a target audience with the objective to obtain positive foreign policy decisions from their government. Melissen (2005: 18) argues that, whereas propaganda tells people what to think, with the purpose to narrow and close their minds, public diplomacy aims to broaden perspectives and open minds. The latter is therefore not a one-way or even two-way process, but extensive engagement by multiple actors at multiple levels.

However, although distinguished from traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy falls within the institutional framework of diplomacy. Therefore, public diplomacy serves the objective of the UN Charter, namely the peaceful existence and peaceful resolution of conflicts by sovereign states. More specifically, with reference to the functions of diplomacy as codified by the *Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations*, 1961 Article 3.1(e), public diplomacy serves the function of promoting friendly relations between states and developing economic, cultural and scientific relations. Policy advocacy by means of public diplomacy thus requires adherence to the principles of the UN Charter.

### **3.3. OPERATING GUIDELINES**

The long-term focus of public diplomacy, as opposed to the short-term focus of traditional diplomacy, indicates that public diplomacy goals of informing, explaining and engaging are aligned with strategic foreign policy objectives. The long-term focus of public diplomacy therefore requires distinct ‘best practices’. Ross (2003) identifies

“seven pillars” or best practices, which serve the long-term objective of public diplomacy, distinguishing it from traditional diplomacy.

Firstly, the primary operating guideline is policy advocacy to support national interests, to meet international duties, and to ensure that foreign audiences understand policies. Therefore, public diplomacy must be consistent with a country’s foreign policy actions. Secondly, effective public diplomacy requires coordination, or inter-agency coordination, throughout government. Although the types of messages, language, audience, format, and media will vary between governmental departments, all should form a “comprehensive public diplomacy strategy” with strategic foreign policies. In turn, the provision of reasons, rationale, and context rooted in the values or culture, supports policy advocacy. Thirdly, credibility is the *sine qua non* of international communication. Therefore, public diplomacy must be consistent, truthful and ultimately credible. Fourthly, effective public diplomacy also requires tailor-made messages for specific audiences, without sacrificing consistency and tailoring. In the fifth place, the mass media is an indispensable operating tool and vehicle for public diplomacy. In the context of “large and diverse publics” interested in foreign affairs, the mass media extends beyond opinion leaders to reach the target audience.

Furthermore, in the sixth place, public diplomacy relies on alliances and partnerships, international alliances and private-sector partners, such as global corporations, humanitarian organisations, or expatriate communities. In this respect, Melissen (2005: 7) refers to the “good offices provided by the non-governmental sector.” Finally, public diplomacy requires a “genuine commitment to dialogue” and engagement. This latter operating guideline of public diplomacy corresponds with the ‘collaborative model of diplomacy’ which requires openness and multilevel transnational cooperation (Cooper quoted by Melissen 2005: 5) and which also includes “domestic citizen diplomacy” (Melissen 2005: 8). These operating guidelines for effective public diplomacy indicate the parameters and salient features of all modes of public diplomacy.

### **3.4. MODES**

Public diplomacy activities are generally classified into three main categories, namely information, cultural and educational exchange programmes. However, there are alternative initiatives that serve public diplomacy purposes, but cannot be categorized within the three main categories. Amongst others, once-off events like head-of-state visits and mega-events (Olympics) are considered as major public diplomacy opportunities. However, as argued above, this study does not consider corporate communication, such as advertising and 'branding' as modes of public diplomacy.

#### **3.4.1. Information activities**

Information activities include the provision of full texts of official speeches and statements, transcripts of press conferences and briefings by the office of the head of government and by other departments such as the Departments of Foreign Affairs (and Trade), and special feature and interpretive articles sent *via* satellite, cable, microwave or landline to embassies. Other information activities are information resource centres in foreign countries that provide library programmes to foreign citizens, international radio and television programmes; speakers and specialists representing the government, business, academia, media and community organisations who deliver speeches under the auspices of the departments of foreign affairs. Embassies and cultural centers distribute a broad range of booklets, pamphlets and brochures, often in multilingual texts. International broadcasting directly targets its audience and is used by developed countries such as the UK (British Broadcasting Corporation - BBC), the US (Voice of America -VOA) but as indicated by Lukaz (2006), also by developing countries such as Ghana (Radio Ghana).

Advances in communications technology made new tools available for information dissemination such as web sites on the internet, CD ROMs, e-mail and teleconference programmes. Although these information activities form part of the various stages of the

communications pyramid, they contribute to creating awareness. At the base of the pyramid, targeting the broad masses, awareness is created through news stories, foreign aid projects, military actions, public events, radio and television broadcasts by the traditional and private media. Speakers, lectures, interviews, seminars and academic programmes serve to translate interest into knowledge of the advocating country. These informational activities reflect the agenda and discourse of public diplomacy.

The mass media plays an essential role in releasing the information to the global public. It provides the context through 'expert' opinions, and provides the vehicle for policy makers to be heard. The mere fact that heads of state or government make statements or take action is considered news. These statements are therefore carefully crafted and public dissemination carefully choreographed to influence public diplomacy. The release of official documentation is often preceded by media anticipation and speculation and leaks to the media. As Ross (2003) points out, the mass media is an indispensable tool of public diplomacy.

### **3.4.2. Educational and cultural activities**

Educational and cultural exchange programmes involve the establishment of cultural centres, libraries, university partnerships, graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships to study abroad, funded professorships in target countries, book translation programmes, research grants, language study, and 'country study' programmes. The target audience mostly consists of students, professors, intellectuals and journalists, so that the next generation of social and political leaders is obviously targeted (McClellan 2004).

Educational and cultural exchange programmes clearly have a long-term strategy and do not show immediate results. The year-long campaign in North America to promote UK excellence in science and technology, overseen by the UK Public Diplomacy Strategy Board in 2004 is an example of an educational exchange programme

(VisitBritain 2003). Although educational and cultural exchanges target a smaller and more elite part of the population than information activities, they translate interest and information into knowledge and ultimately advocacy of that country.

### **3.4.3. Head(s) of state and government visits and summits**

Diplomacy at the highest level of head of state or government visits and summitry presents ideal opportunities to act as 'diplomat in chief' and public diplomacy agent. Perceived as the epitome of foreign policy, political leaders are extremely attracted to head of state or government visits and summits. The growing realisation by political leaders of a global constituency resulted in the popularity of summits, despite questionable measures of success. As Melissen ([s.a]: 12) points out, the importance of the media and public opinion in international affairs has acted as an incentive for leaders to become more visible before their global constituency. The mass media treat summits and visits by heads of state or government as headline news and prime events, around which public diplomacy is then organized. With the media, elite, and public opinion in mind, each aspect of the visit or summit is carefully choreographed and orchestrated. As Mannheim (1994: 63) points out, issues that may seem 'rather mundane' communicate important messages to foreign leaders and publics.

These visits serve various purposes such as generating feelings of pride and nationalism; projecting the importance of the relations between two nations; facilitating negotiations, and breaking down barriers and establishing personal relations. Even if not the primary purpose, the public diplomacy component of these visits, to appeal to citizens of another country to view the country more positively, constitutes at least a secondary purpose. The mass media provides general coverage and generates a mood. Therefore, in pre-visit preparatory briefings the public diplomacy practitioner attempts to 'frame' public relations perceptions and through them, the policy environment. Zaller (quoted by Mannheim: 1994 92) considers it particularly important to shape the discourse of the members of the policy elite because they will frame issues



for the media and the general public. This process attempts to turn awareness and information into knowledge and ultimately into policy advocacy.

#### **3.4.4. Mega-events**

The intense competition between rival countries to host mega-events such as the Olympic Games indicates its significance as opportunities for public diplomacy. The Olympic Games is the prime opportunity for a government “to parade its virtue before the entire world” (Mannheim 1994: 102). The target audience for a mega-event such as the Olympic Games is as close as possible to a global audience.

Furthermore, major political events like the G8 summits, meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and gatherings of the World Economic Forum (WEF) provide ample opportunities to heads of state or government to make statements targeting the global public. Non-governmental organisations and the business community also realize the public diplomacy or propaganda value of these events as demonstrated by the level and extent of representation at the *UN Conference on Environment and Development* (UNCED), 1992, or the Rio Conference. Therefore, although these political and economic mega-events initially primarily provided states with opportunities for public diplomacy, non-state actors have also seized the opportunity.

#### **3.4.5. Personal public diplomacy**

Although public diplomacy primarily falls within the confines of government-to-people communication, Delaney (1968: 3), amongst others, indicates space for public citizens to engage in people-to-people public diplomacy. The use of prominent personalities to create a positive attitude for a state in a target state or with the global public constitutes public diplomacy. States provide such persons with the forum to publish their opinion with the objective to promote the image of a country or to influence policy making in other countries.





The former South African president, Nelson Mandela, has the personal attributes to influence governments and global audiences on behalf of South Africa (securing the hosting of the Soccer World Cup for 2010) or global issues (his criticism of the war in Iraq). The rock musicians such as Bob Geldoff from the UK, Bono from Ireland and the US billionaire Bill Gates, have the attributes to engage in public diplomacy even if on behalf of contentious issues rather than a country. The Australian Olympic Committee bestowed the honour to carry the torch during the opening ceremony for the Olympic Games in Sidney on an athlete of aboriginal descent to address the negative perception of foreign publics of Australia's racial problems.

The diverse modes of public diplomacy illustrate its versatility, but also contribute to confusion and vagueness. In all these modes of public diplomacy, the mass media is an indispensable conduit to reach the global audience. However, the role of the media is ambivalent at best and problematic at worst, because it can either facilitate constructive public diplomacy or serve as a vehicle for propaganda. An analysis of public diplomacy and propaganda requires at least cursory attention to the media.

## **4. PROPAGANDA**

Most literature on public diplomacy appears to accept propaganda as the origin of public diplomacy and public diplomacy as a benign manifestation of propaganda. Whilst the historical baggage of propaganda necessitated propagandists to turn to new practices, the protean nature of public diplomacy lends itself to propagandistic practices. Analyses of the origins and definitions provide points of reference to delineate public diplomacy from propaganda.

### **4.1. ORIGINS**

As with public diplomacy, the origin of propaganda is generally attributed to Pope Gregory XV (Finch 2000). According to McLean (1996: 408) the Roman Catholic



practice became common practice in twentieth century when totalitarian regimes, “fascists, Nazis, and Bolsheviks”, attempted to achieve comprehensive subordination of knowledge to state policy, which was soon directed at foreign populations and in turn provoked reaction from the industrialized democracies. Paradoxically, Finch (2000) argues that the major practitioners of propaganda in warfare from the middle of the nineteenth century to World War I were the UK and the US. Ellul’s (1964: 363-364) exposition of the origins of propaganda also challenges McLean’s view. Ellul argues that it was private capitalism in capitalist democracies that initiated the conjunction of mechanical techniques (radio, press, and motion pictures) and psychological techniques, which produced propaganda. The propagandistic properties of advertising and public relations in selling merchandise and images emanating from capitalist industrialized nations are well recognized. Therefore capitalist nations engage in more sophisticated manifestations of propaganda.

Furthermore, Ellul (1964: 365) also indicates that although propaganda techniques in the US received less scrutiny than those of totalitarian states, it “does not mean that instances of propaganda on a grand scale are lacking there.” Snow (2002: 40) shares Ellul’s view and refers to the Creel Commission, the first US public diplomacy agency, which persuaded the American population during World War I to join the war against Germany. This evidence suggests that twentieth century manifestations of propaganda cannot automatically be attributed to earlier authoritarian regimes.

In the late 1930s, the UK established its own Ministry of Information, notably not referred to as the Ministry of Propaganda. It employed print, radio, film, and the spoken word “to put the best gloss on state policy and the fortunes of British arms (white propaganda) while also running down and misrepresenting of the Axis powers (black propaganda)” (McLean 1996: 408). The British initiative was followed by the establishment of the Voice of America by the US. However, British and American propaganda had been eclipsed by the infamous Nazi propaganda, a development which may also be attributed to the success of post-War allied propaganda. During the Cold War, the propaganda of communist regimes was often crude and ineffective, because it

lacked the technical skills of advertising and marketing developed within the private sectors of capitalist states. In recent years propaganda developed into “a fine art ... where the presentation of state policy and legislation has often received as much attention as its content and drafting” (McLean 1996: 408).

Referring to totalitarian regimes, McLean (1996: 408) indicates the objective of propaganda as the development of legitimacy and social control. The goal of all propagandists is to maximize power, while reducing the material cost of power (Lasswell quoted by Elull 1973: x). There is however, no reason to distinguish between the propaganda objectives of democracies and totalitarian regimes and it is therefore argued that the objective of all propaganda is to develop legitimacy and social control. Elull (1973: x) argues that, before war, propaganda substitutes physical violence, while during war it is a supplement to physical violence. This observation indicates the implications of propaganda, and therefore the importance of distinguishing public diplomacy from propaganda.

## **4.2. DEFINITIONS**

In his seminal work on the psychology and technique of propaganda, Doob (1944: 3) argues that propaganda refers to “an attempt by somebody to influence somebody else.” This definition represents the most common understanding of propaganda. However, Doob (1944: 88) also offers a comprehensive definition of ‘intentional’ propaganda, namely the “systematic attempt by an interested individual (or individuals) to control the attitudes of groups of individuals through the use of suggestion and consequently, to control their actions” (original in italics). From this definition can also be inferred that the general propagandistic objectives are legitimization and social control.

Snow (2002: 21), a contemporary scholar, defines propaganda as “those systematic and deliberate attempts to sway public opinion in favor of the objectives of the institutions (usually state or corporate) sending the propaganda message.” These definitions indicate three distinctive elements of propaganda, namely a propagandist; a



systematic information campaign; and a target audience. Firstly, the propagandist pursues the objectives of legitimization and social control. Secondly, the propaganda communications campaign is a systematic one-way mass information dissemination campaign that is designed to change the perceptions and attitudes of the target audience. Thirdly, the target audience has to be persuaded to act in the interests of the propagandist. These three elements also exist in the nexus between public diplomacy and propaganda and correspond with the dimensions of public diplomacy, namely institutions/agents, activities and the target audience.

Considering the first element, the propagandist, it is clear that propaganda is not a “monopoly of government information ministries” (Holsti 1995: 153). Non-state actors such as multinational companies and ‘terrorist’ groups increasingly revert to propaganda to influence target audiences. In the context of international relations, the propagandist is the governmental institution, government official, or non-state agency responsible for the design and execution of propaganda. Government officials may fulfil propagandistic roles in the propaganda campaigns. Irrespective of whether the state has a democratic or authoritarian system of government, the propagandist is concerned with maximizing persuasiveness to attain its objective. In principle, there is no reason to distinguish between the propaganda objectives of democracies and totalitarian regimes, and it is therefore argued that, as with totalitarian regimes, the objective of democracies is ‘to develop legitimacy and social control’.

Kaufmann (2004: 32-33) posits that despite the relative superiority of democratic foreign policy making, democracies allow more scope for elite manipulation, because all democracies are vulnerable to manipulation of outcomes through agenda control, strategic voting, or manipulation of issue dimensions. Therefore, democracies are as vulnerable to propaganda, especially from their own governments. However, propaganda is more likely to be challenged within democracies than in closed societies.

The most controversial element of propaganda is the communications campaign and the degree of truth involved, especially considering the distinction between truth and

credibility. Truth is a matter of facts, where credibility reflects on the perception of the messenger and message by the target audience. The truth may even be perceived as not credible due to the public's perception of the messenger. Holsti (1995: 154) points out that propaganda cannot be equated with the scientific method because it essentially involves a process of persuasion and not a logical discourse or dialectical investigation. It relies on the selection of facts, partial explanations, and predetermined answers. Therefore the content of propaganda is "seldom completely 'true', but neither wholly false, as is so often assumed" (Holsti 1995: 154). This ambiguity in respect of truth contributes to the negative baggage of propaganda as a foreign policy instrument, thus creating space for the development of public diplomacy. Therefore, there is an expectancy of truth in respect of public diplomacy.

The third element, the target audience, which refers to the foreign population of an adversarial nation, seldom attracts academic inquiry in the discipline of International Relations. Political questions in respect of the target audience, of people, who, in the common ideal of global democracy, have the right to unbiased information, freedom, justice and peace ultimately sought through self-determination, remain scant. Political questions on the target audience concern the space between propaganda and public diplomacy, with propaganda aiming at the persuasion and 'closing of minds' and public diplomacy aiming at reciprocal engagement.

Studies that take a prior or underlying value stance on propaganda tend to focus on the regime type of the propagandist, the regime type of the adversarial nation, and/or an evaluation of the degree of truth of the communications campaign. Therefore alternative theoretical approaches illuminate some of the underlying values prevalent in propaganda studies, especially pertaining to the primacy of the state, but also such as the role of the media as a barometer of democracy.

## 5. THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY-PROPAGANDA NEXUS

Scholars such as Mannheim (1994: 5) and Snow (2002: 32) argue that the term public diplomacy refers to activities that would previously have been described as propaganda. Whilst both public diplomacy and propaganda are concerned with government-to-people or people-to-people contact to maximize foreign policy objectives, both have three correlating elements, namely agents or institutions; activities and the target audience.

### 5.1. INSTITUTIONS

Elull's (1973: 15-16) distinction between covert or 'black' propaganda and overt or 'white' propaganda provides a point of departure to address the public diplomacy-propaganda nexus. He argues that institutions for 'black' propaganda tend to hide its existence, identity, significance and source. Conversely, 'white' propaganda is open with an agency or ministry that admits that propaganda is being made; its source is known; its aims and intentions are identified and the public knows that an attempt is being made to influence them. Public diplomacy correlates with white propaganda or 'new' propaganda. However, Sproule (quoted by Plaisance 2005: 257) indicates that 'new' propaganda targets mass audiences and not just elite publics.

Elull (1973: 16) also points out that the combination of 'black' and 'white' propaganda becomes a cover for 'black' propaganda. The propagandist openly admits the existence of 'white' propaganda of its organization but only as a facade "to capture the attention of individuals and neutralize their instinct to resist". The rhetoric of public diplomacy or 'new' propaganda can be used to mask 'black' propaganda. However, public diplomacy may also be what it claims to be.

Generally, public diplomacy is executed by a known governmental agency, often within a department of foreign affairs or an independent agency to evade obvious linkage with government. In turn, propaganda activities are mostly accommodated within military institutions. However, in an era of cultivated perceptions and images, the term

'propaganda' is not mentioned in the title of the relevant bureaucracy or agency, and also not in classified internal policy documents. In the US in particular the word 'propaganda' is a pejorative term for negative or offensive manipulation, particularly in the political arena (Snow 2002: 35). References to propaganda are therefore unlikely to appear in US documentation or discourse related to foreign policy. In contrast, due to its Catholic connection, the term 'propaganda' does not evoke the same sinister meaning in the southern Catholic countries of Europe (Seldes quoted in Finch 2000).

Notably, the US *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, 2004 defines public diplomacy as one dimension of strategic communication, together with public affairs, psychological operations (PSYOPS), international broadcasting and military information operations. Differential terms are often used for expedient reasons, rather than real differences. Based on the general premise that propaganda during a war is entirely natural and rational ('neither ominous nor insidious'), the fact that it is located within the military further legitimizes propaganda. To conclude, in general public diplomacy is associated with overt diplomacy agencies, whereas propaganda institutions tend to be covert military agencies.

## **5.2. ACTIVITIES**

The activities of public diplomacy and propaganda entail a complex interplay of agent, activities and content in three modes of public diplomacy. The public diplomacy process involves a multilevel two-way engagement with the target audience with the content designed to foster mutual understanding and enlightenment beneficial to foreign policy objectives. The propaganda process is a systematic one-way process of persuasion (injection) with the content designed to maximize utility through control regardless of the level of truth involved.

In contrast to public diplomacy, the propaganda process depends on negative techniques, originating in knowledge of the human psyche that has been well-





documented. Holsti (1995: 158) provides a list of the most prominent propaganda techniques: *name-calling*, namely the attachment of emotion-laden symbols to a person or a country; *glittering generality*, namely the attachment of emotion-laden symbols to an idea or policy rather than individuals; *transfer*, namely the identification of “one idea, person, country or policy with another to make the target approve or disapprove it”; *‘plain folks’*, namely the attempt to “identify as closely as possible with the values and style of life of the targets by using local slang, accent, and idiom”; *testimonials*, namely the endorsement or criticism of an esteemed person or institution of an idea or political entity “with the variation of an appeal to authority...(where) the target is asked to believe something simply because some ‘authority’ says it is true”; *selection*, namely the selection of facts often vaguely presented; *bandwagon*, namely to “play on the audience’s desire to belong or be in accord with the crowd”; *frustration scapegoat*, namely the creation a scapegoat accounting for what is wrong; and *fear*, namely making the target audience aware of some imminent threat, real or perceived.

These propaganda techniques reinforce those identified by Elull (1964: 366-367), namely the prolonged and hypnotic repetition of the same complex of ideas, images, and rumors; the exploitation of hate and resentment which needs only be suggestive; and the exploitation of the will to self-justification which involves the introduction of scapegoats. In respect of creating a scapegoat, he explains that “the introduction of a scapegoat means that conflict is no longer on a social or political plane but on a moral plane of good and evil” leading people to transfer evil to the adversary (Elull 1964: 367). Importantly, these propaganda techniques depend on access to mass communication, which renders the knowing or inadvertent cooperation of the private mass media imperative. Elull (1973: 12-14) argues that together with the mass media, total propaganda employs censorship, legal texts, proposed legislation, international conferences, personal contacts and educational methods, literature and the writing of history.

It is evident that almost all activities of public diplomacy are open to propagandistic uses. Mannheim (1994: 7) therefore argues that strategic public diplomacy is public



diplomacy practised less as an art than as an applied transnational science of human behaviour and concludes that public diplomacy “is the practice of propaganda in the earliest sense of the term, but enlightened by half a century of empirical research into human motivation and behavior.”

In respect of activities, the margin between public diplomacy and propaganda is so tenuous that, a public diplomacy campaign can only be distinguished from a propaganda campaign through a case study. Critical inquiry requires that such case studies do not accept the existing political and political power structures and relationships but ask how these came about, and what techniques were used to create and are still used to legitimize these structures and relationships. Although both public diplomacy and propaganda are foreign policy instruments, they relate to different activities.

### **5.3. THE TARGET AUDIENCE**

As a result of the development of mass politics, the target audience is increasingly important to foreign policy makers. Perceptions of the target audience do not differ significantly between literature on public diplomacy and literature on propaganda. In both the target audience is perceived to be instrumental in realizing foreign policy objectives and perceived of as a legitimate, recipient of information. However, in both the target audience is expected to act, to become actors and not only be recipients of information.

In the case of propaganda the target audience is not made aware of the propaganda effort. In the case of public diplomacy the target audience may be more aware and can evaluate the process and the information, but may be unaware of the ultimate objective. Being unaware of the ultimate objective, the target audience does not have the opportunity to evaluate information and may fall victim to social and political control and manipulation. Presently, social and political control and manipulation do not conform to the values of a society of states espousing the democratic ideal. It is argued that the



unaware target audience may not be involved in the calm exposition of political theories among which it may choose intelligently, but becomes the victim of propaganda.

In conclusion, propaganda is devoid of any notion of diplomatic objective, process, or outcome. The diplomatic essence of public diplomacy resides in the principles of custom and international law. Accordingly, public diplomacy should ultimately serve the objectives of the UN Charter, namely to preserve the peace and prohibit the scourge of war. The diplomatic essence of public diplomacy also requires adherence to the legal instruments attached to the UN framework such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which includes the right to life and freedom, which should be reflected by public diplomacy.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Despite the history of communicating with foreign publics and recent twentieth century manifestation in international relations, public diplomacy is a subject relegated to the margins of International Relations. With the end of the Cold War, similar neglect was suffered from politicians, especially in the US. However, recent re-evaluations by diverse states were compounded by the US realization of anti-Americanism tragically displayed by September 11. This event triggered renewed academic focus, albeit within a skewed International Relations context.

In consideration of the theoretical context of public diplomacy, this study indicates that contemporary public diplomacy falls within the domains of foreign policy and international relations as distinguished by Holsti. Due to the development of mass politics and the concomitant growing importance of foreign public opinion, public diplomacy gained importance as a foreign policy instrument in foreign policy although it was more restricted to the international relations domain before. Although distinguished from traditional diplomacy, as a mode of diplomacy, public diplomacy is defined by its diplomatic aims and objectives. Distinguished from traditional diplomacy by its long-term



focus and government-to-people or people-to-people engagement, public diplomacy engenders friendly relations and the maintenance of peace.

Public diplomacy comprises of three dimensions, namely institutions/agents, activities, and the target audience. These three dimensions correspond with that of propaganda, namely a propagandist, propaganda activities, and the target audience. Relating these three dimensions in respect of the public diplomacy-propaganda nexus, a number of structural differences and similarities become clear. However, this study considers diplomacy as the major point of distinction with public diplomacy thus bound by diplomatic objectives and conventions. Therefore, the democratic principles underlying diplomacy as expressed through the diplomatic framework, defines the nature and scope of public diplomacy. Although the two practices can be distinguished through the application of the operating principles for public diplomacy and the techniques of propaganda, it is argued that diplomatic aims and objectives indicate the ultimate point of distinction.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Although the US adopted public diplomacy relatively late, the influence of US practices and scholarship appears to overshadow other states which have less extensive public diplomacy institutions, but arguably more sophisticated variants of public diplomacy. The focus of this chapter is US public diplomacy. It outlines the origins, development and current institutions of US public diplomacy. However, the structural dimensions of US public diplomacy only acquire meaning within the context of the US grand strategy that manifests in the foreign policy of 'war on terror'.

#### **2. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF US PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

US public diplomacy came into being when President Woodrow Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) in April 1917 to communicate US war aims in World War I to the world. Wilson realized that the public opinions of other countries could influence the policies of their governments. The CPI, also referred to as the Creel Committee, had two sections: one domestic, addressing the American public (against the Germans); and one foreign, which was divided into a foreign press bureau, a wireless and cable service, and the foreign film services (Snow 2002: 34). When the US entered World War II in 1941 President Roosevelt established the Foreign Information Service (FIS) to conduct foreign intelligence and propaganda (US Congress Research Service 2005). In 1942 he also created the Office of War Information (OWI) to consolidate the scattered agencies of domestic and foreign information [US Department of State n.d(b)]. The OWI established the VOA in February 1942 as a propaganda radio

network transmitting to Europe (US Congress Research Service 2005). After the war the VOA became the official US government channel targeting communist countries.

The first law to legitimize public diplomacy was the *US Information and Educational Exchange Act*, 1948, popularly referred to as the *Smith-Mundt Act*. This act provided the first overarching legislation authorizing the activities carried out since 1941 (US Congress Research Service 2005). Senator Smith, one of the sponsors of this Act, distinguished between information services that “may conceivably have certain propaganda implications and may even become involved politically”, and educational exchange services that “if it is to be truly effective, must be objective, non-political, and above all, have no possible propaganda implications” (US Congress Research Service 2005). Since Smith foresaw that informational public diplomacy could be exploited for propaganda purposes, the *Smith-Mundt Act* therefore prohibits the “US government from propagandizing its own people” (Snow 2002: 12).

During the Cold War, public diplomacy attracted more attention. In the ‘war of ideas’, President Truman launched a public diplomacy campaign in 1950, aimed at exposing communists to Western ideas and values, epitomized by his “Campaign of Truth” speech (Tiedeman 2004). Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) began broadcasting to the ‘enslaved nations’ of Eastern Europe in 1950 under the auspices of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which was created in 1947 (US Congress Research Service 2005). In 1973, RFE/RL was placed under the authority of the Board of International Broadcasting (BIB). The latter was a ‘fire-wall’ between the US government and RFE/RL to increase its credibility. RFE/RL thus became a private, non-profit broadcaster receiving government grants through the BIB. In August 1953 President Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA) in “recognition that traditional state-to-state diplomacy alone could not achieve US interests in a world of fast communication and sophisticated propaganda” (Djerejian 2003). The dual purpose of the USIA was to counter anti-American propaganda from the Soviet Union and to coordinate foreign information dissemination programmes (Johnson & Dale 2003), also referred to as ‘propaganda activities’ (US Congress



Research Service 2005). The first director of the USIA came from the advertising industry, a fact that may have contributed to USIA messages being simple and propagandistic, thus reflecting the advertising trends of the time (Tuch quoted by Tiedeman 2004).

After World War II, US public diplomacy focused on “reorienting defeated totalitarian nations toward democracy” (Tiedeman 2004) through exchanges, libraries, cultural centres, schools, social programmes and universities. These activities established the concept of cultural exchanges, which led to the creation of the Division for Cultural Cooperation within the Department of State. Where the USIA was kept separate from the State Department to have an independent foreign affairs agency within the executive branch of government, the educational exchange programmes, also provided for by the *Smith-Mundt Act*, remained under the auspices of the Department of State. The *Fulbright Act*, 1946, facilitated the exchange opportunities for young people, professionals, trade unionists and artists to “[expose] people in defeated totalitarian countries to freedom and democracy” (Tiedeman 2004). Cultural and educational exchanges thus became a significant element of public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy remained a major US priority throughout the Cold War. Press briefings made ‘official Washington’ more accessible to foreign journalists, whilst cultural and academic exchanges ‘helped educate’ world leaders like Anwar Sadat, Helmut Schmidt, and Margaret Thatcher about the US and its values (Johnson & Dale 2003). All three these world leaders became ‘friends’ of the US, with a particularly close relationship between UK Prime Minister Thatcher and US President Reagan. US commentators, such as Johnson and Dale (2003), credit US public diplomacy and foreign broadcasting with containing and defeating communism; promoting democracy in many parts of the world; and exposing foreign publics to US values.

During the Cold War, the USIA evolved through stages marked by various presidencies. President Kennedy (1961-1963) appointed the renowned journalist Edward R. Murrow as director of the USIA. Murrow believed in the importance of personal relationships and



personal communication. Kennedy also changed the mission of the USIA from informing foreign audiences to explaining objectives. President Carter (1977-1981) introduced the idea of mutuality into US public diplomacy, referring to coupling information dissemination with listening to foreign public and learning about their concerns (Tiedeman 2004). Furthermore, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, the Carter Doctrine, which asserted military force at any outside control of the Persian Gulf region, emerged (The Hutchinson Dictionary of World History 1998: 107). With the advent of the Reagan presidency (1981-1989) US foreign policy changed significantly. In an address to the UK parliament in June 1982, the 'evil empire speech', President Reagan called for a new war on ideas and values with the Soviet Union initiating a foreign policy shift from a policy of containment to a policy advocacy for democracy and free markets. This policy shift initiated a one-way propaganda direction, reviving an aggressive information campaign against the Soviet Union (Snow 2002: 14). Furthermore, the Reagan presidency realized the power of television and through the appointment of a Hollywood producer Charles Wick, the USIA built Reagan's image around the world (Snow 2002: 14 and Tiedeman 2004).

In 1987, USIA information functions were consolidated with those of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State. The agency became known as the International Communication Agency (USICA). However, the name USIA was subsequently restored. The *International Broadcasting Act*, 1994, reorganized and consolidated all non-military US government international broadcasting into the USIA, supervised by the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) (US Congress Research Service 2005).

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, public diplomacy became less of a priority for the White House, for Members of Congress, and for US opinion leaders. In 1998, during the Clinton Administration, Congress passed the *Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act 1* to cut public service costs, which came to include the public diplomacy budget. Senator Helms, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, initiated legislation to reorganize the foreign policy agencies. According to





Snow, (2002:12) American policy makers felt that “CNN could do that work ... and with much more efficiency than a federal bureaucracy.” Budget cuts, for example, included the reduction of resources for the USIA mission in Indonesia, the country with the world’s largest Muslim population, and currently a key partner in the ‘war on terror’ (Johnson & Dale 2003). By 2001, the US spent less than four per cent of its overall international affairs budget on public diplomacy, in contrast with much higher amounts spent by US corporations surveying overseas consumers (CFR 2004).

For 46 years, the USIA remained the centerpiece of US public diplomacy, but on 1 October 1999, it officially lost its status as an independent agency (Snow 2002: 15). Subsequently, USIA information programmes as well as educational and cultural exchange programmes were referred back to the Department of State (US Congress Research Service 2005). Although the USIA was an independent agency, it did not have direct access to the president like the Department of State that had a seat at the executive branch. Prior to the merger, “the State Department seemed satisfied with USIA’s isolated role controlling the ‘soft side’ of diplomacy ... [whilst] the State Department would handle the real business side of diplomatic relations between the United States and heads of state in other countries” (Snow 2002: 18). Apart from these structural adjustments initiated during the Clinton presidency, the USIA carried out the Clinton Doctrine, which placed US competitiveness and integration of the world economy at the heart of US foreign policy (Snow 2002: 56).

With the incorporation of the USIA into the Department of State foreign broadcasting became an independent activity under the auspices of the BBG. Despite opposition to incorporate the USIA into the Department of State, commentators from the Heritage Foundation, Johnson and Dale (2003) recommended the merger as it “more closely follows corporate public relations practice and the institutional model of military Public Affairs.” This argument reaffirms a trend to apply business principles to the public sector based on the assessment that market principles will rectify governmental shortcomings. The application of business practices to the public sector manifests in the application of public relations and marketing as public diplomacy.





In November 1999 a governmental report on public diplomacy entitled, *American overseas presence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: The Report of the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, the Advisory Panel*, reported that the condition of missions abroad was unacceptable and the fear was expressed that the American presence overseas was “perilously close to the point of systems failure” (Department of State 1999). The report warned that the neglected state of public diplomacy institutions abroad could have serious consequences such as “less effective representation and advocacy of US interests abroad; a loss of US exports, investment, and jobs; inadequate political and economic information...; less effective in promoting democracy and the rule of law; and a weakening of the fight against international terrorism and drug trafficking”. With the advent of the George W. Bush administration, the merger of the USIA and the Department of State had been underway for two years with the Department of State and the USIA still struggling to regroup (Johnson & Dale 2003). September 11 was interpreted as “a dramatic reminder” of the importance of ... cultivat(ing) a better public opinion abroad” (GAO 2004). The confused state and low level of effectiveness of US public diplomacy was the result of the years prior to September 11, during which both Congress and the various administrations viewed public diplomacy as being less important than political and military functions. With its prime focus on the Middle East, the foreign policy of the current Bush administration towards the Middle East displays similar tenets as the Carter Doctrine.

On 14 November 2001, in the immediate aftermath of September 11, Senator H.J. Hyde, the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, concluded that public diplomacy in US foreign policy had been neglected, a “long neglect that has consigned public diplomacy to the periphery of (US) foreign policy decision-making”. Hyde (2002) argued that the image of the US had been “distorted” abroad by “misunderstanding” and “disinformation”. Apart from “antiquated methods”, he discerned a “deeper problem” where the US allowed “enemies’ slanders to go unchallenged”. Congress therefore created the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, a subcommittee of The US Advisory

Commission on Public Diplomacy. The subcommittee provides oversight of government activities intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign policies. In 2003, this subcommittee published a report, *Changing minds, winning peace: A new strategic direction for US public diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim world* (US Department of State 2003). The report reflects the American perception of its foreign policy context and the role of public diplomacy therein.

The Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy sponsored by the CFR “urged an overhaul of America’s public diplomacy efforts”. Recommendations included “extensive polling and outreach to better gauge international reactions to US policy; renewed emphasis on respectful, two-way dialogue abroad; the use of credible indigenous messengers; increased training in public diplomacy for US ambassadors and other officials; and the creation of a not-for-profit Corporation for Public Diplomacy that could receive private-sector grants” (CFR 2001).

In 2004, Congress confirmed the revalued status of public diplomacy and included public diplomacy measures in the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, 2004* (US Congress Research Service 2005). This act targets Islam and Arab audiences for public diplomacy programmes. With the ‘war on terror’ continuing, the violence in Iraq worsening, and Iran’s nuclear ambitions real, the focus of US public diplomacy is likely to remain the Middle East.

### **3. DIMENSIONS OF US PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

There are three salient dimensions of US public diplomacy, namely institutions, including agents and messengers; activities also referring to content; and, the target audience. Whereas institutions act as agents, messengers or conduits of public diplomacy, activities and content combine to constitute the message of public diplomacy. In the post-September 11 context, the *Smith-Mundt Act*, the *Fulbright-Hays*

*Act* and the *International Broadcasting Act*, 1994 direct the institutional arrangements, activities and contents of US public diplomacy (US Congress Research Service 2005).

### **3.1. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY INSTITUTIONS**

At the strategic level, the President sets the primary foreign policy objectives directing US public diplomacy. After September 11, President George W. Bush established the White House Office of Global Communications (OGC) through presidential order. The President incorporated the OGC into Strategic Communications at the National Security Council (NSC), ultimately creating the Office for Strategic Communications and Global Outreach (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005).

Since the 1999 restructuring, the Department of State has been the lead agency for public diplomacy initiatives, co-chairing the new interagency Policy Coordinating Committee. Within the Department of State, the Under-secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs administers the Bureau for International Information Programs (IIP) and the Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). An independent agency, the BBG manages and oversees non-military international broadcasting (US Congress Research Service 2005).

Although the Department of State is the lead agency for public diplomacy, a range of other agencies engage in related activities and programmes. The 2005 Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy recognises the Department of Defense and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) as such. The USAID-State Department Joint Strategic Plan coordinates efforts to “create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the American people and the international community” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005).

Since September 11, the President and other policy makers have charged several key governmental organisations with studying public diplomacy; to improve the image of the US; and to combat terrorism. These include the Council on Foreign Relations, the

Government Accounting Office (GAO), the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, the BBG, as well as studies by members of Congress and congressional committees (US Congress Research Service 2005). Diverse non-governmental organisations such as the Defense Science Board Task Force and the Council on Foreign Relations; participate in deliberations and deliver reports and recommendations on public diplomacy. Various influential think tanks such as the Brookings Institution and the Heritage Foundation also undertook and published independent studies and analyses.

Apart from the institutions and agencies charged with public diplomacy, governmental officials and opinion leaders act as vehicles or messengers of public diplomacy. Press conferences, public appearances, press releases, exclusive interviews, private dinners, jogging outings and a myriad of other activities are arranged to disseminate, amongst others, a message to a target audience. The settings of public appearances, such as the President's Oval Office or the Treaty Room, are carefully chosen to convey a message. The primary messenger of US public diplomacy is the President. Thereafter follow administration principals such as the Vice President, the Secretaries of State and Defense. Other agents include the White House Press Secretary, the Commander in Chief of the US Army, the Director of National Security Affairs, the Chief of Staff to the President, the Deputy Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The First Lady and the spouse of the Vice President also act as agents for public diplomacy, as demonstrated by the First Lady's visit to the Middle East in May 2005. At embassy level, Foreign Service officers posted at overseas embassies act as public diplomacy agents. Ambassadors and field officers conduct what may be termed 'grass-roots' public diplomacy in target countries.

Private citizens also act as public diplomacy agents, for example by receiving foreign visitors or journalists espousing the content introduced by the government. Citizens from target countries, or 'credible indigenous messengers' are best placed to act as messengers. Hills and Holbrooke (2001) support this strategy and argues that in the

case of the 'war on terror', the "messenger may be more important than the message". Therefore, they advise the US to find credible proxies who can speak on behalf of the US. They also suggests that the government works with "independent interlocutors". To find credible messengers, Hills and Holbrooke (2001) suggest an aggressive recruiting campaign to bring Arab-Americans, Afghan-Americans and other Muslim-Americans, as well as Dari and Farsi speakers, into the US government.

Finally, the services of private sector public relations firms are increasingly used "to draw on their expertise in strategies and tactics for influencing international public opinion" (US Department of State [s.a.]). In this respect, Hills and Holbrooke (2001) argues that the federal bureaucracy "is not configured to handle the demands of a major public diplomacy campaign" and advises the Bush administration to "reach beyond traditional bureaucracies to tap Agencies not traditionally associated with public diplomacy, as well as the private sector". Apart from surveying and polling, private sector involvement in public diplomacy also includes the services of public relations firms, such as Knowlton and Hill, to act as lobbyists and public relations agents. Private sector involvement includes the private media, which, in democracies, is often perceived as independent of the government.

### **3.2. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES**

In February 2004, GAO reaffirmed the key objectives of US public diplomacy, namely "to engage, inform, and influence overseas audiences ... carried out through a wide range of programmes that employ people-to-people contacts; print, broadcast, and electronic media; and other means". Three primary activities, namely international information programmes; educational and cultural exchange programmes and international non-military broadcasting address these objectives. Where the traditional focus of the USIA was on the foreign elite, in the context of the expansion of global communication and the growth of mass politics, US public diplomacy programmes now focus on broader, non-elite, and younger audiences. However, after September 11 the Department of State focused its broad, non-elite public diplomacy on "Muslim-majority

countries considered of strategic importance in the war in terrorism” (US GAO 2004). Importantly, the US public became part of the broad, non-elite audience as the Department of State considers “engagement of the American public [as] indispensable to the conduct of foreign policy” (US Department of State 2005a).

Furthermore, public diplomacy activities are divided into short-term communications, which refer to international information programmes that compete with “a global, 24-hour news cycle” and “requires proactive message dissemination”; and long-term communication which “seeks to increase mutual understanding across cultures” mainly through educational and cultural exchange programmes (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). Ultimately, the Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs identified three strategic objectives that direct US public diplomacy: “Offer people throughout the world a positive vision of hope and opportunity that is rooted in America’s belief in freedom, justice, opportunity and respect for all; isolate and marginalize the violent extremists...; and, foster a sense of common interests and common values between Americans and people of different countries, cultures and faiths throughout the world” (US Department of State 2005a).

### **3.2.1. International information programmes**

International information programmes concern the “news management function of public diplomacy” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). Since 1999, the Under-secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs within the Department of State oversees the range of information programmes formerly carried out by the USIA. The Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) acts as a strategic communications service for the foreign affairs community. The mission statement of the IIP is to inform, engage and influence international audiences with regard to US policy and society to advance America’s interests. The IIP concentrates exclusively on international audiences, such as the international media, governmental officials, opinion leaders, and the public in more than 140 countries around the world (US Department of State [s.a.] b).



The IIP “delivers America’s message to the world through a number of key products and services” using the electronic and printed media (US Department of State [s.a]). For example, the Washington File provides in-depth information that includes full transcripts of official speeches, congressional testimony, articles by administration officials and other materials that provide context and analysis on issues regarded as important. The IIP delivers US policy information and articles about society in on-line publications that cover topics such as democracy, trade and security in languages that attract the largest numbers of viewers, namely English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. Apart from the general public website, USINFO, another website, INFOCENTRAL, provides US government officials and with “talking points on sensitive issues such as the Guantanamo Bay detainees and Abu Ghraib prisoners” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). The IIP engages audiences through lectures, workshops, and seminars to promote understanding of US policies. Foreign Press centres in Washington, New York and Los Angeles assist resident and visiting foreign journalists.

Recently, the IIP developed new initiatives of support for the war on terrorism, which include a print and electronic pamphlet entitled The Network on Terrorism. The IIP distributed the pamphlet globally in 36 languages by means of hard copy, the Web, and the media (US GAO 2004: 8).

Apart from official public diplomacy agencies, in 1983 President Reagan created the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a private non-profit organisation with the proposed objective to “strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts” (National Endowment for Democracy [s.a.]). However, being defined as a private organization is a question of degree or interpretation, because not only did the US President create the NED, it also received annual congressional funds. Reagan intended the NED as a “partnership of Republicans and Democrats, of labour and business, conservatives and liberals, and of the executive and legislative branches of government”. His objective with the NED dovetails with President Bush’s rhetoric in the ‘war on terror’.



Furthermore, public broadcasters relay international information to a varied and broad audience. In 1994, oversight of USIA broadcasting was placed under the BBG in terms of the *International Broadcasting Act, 1994*. Current broadcasts include the international radio services, the VOA and RFE/RL; the global television network, WORLDNET; Radio Free Asia and Radio and TV Marti that broadcast to Asia and Cuba respectively. Since March 2002, Sawa, which means ‘together’ in Arabic aims at listeners younger than 30 years and broadcasts in Arabic to the Middle East. Other new broadcasts also include an Arabic television station, the Afghanistan Radio Network and Radio Farda in Iran. Furthermore, investigations with a view to improving US public diplomacy indicate the appreciation for the role of the mass media and recommend a more inclusive approach to mass media.

### **3.2.2. Educational and cultural activities**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) in the Department of State manages the educational and cultural exchange programmes that “[seek] to promote cross-cultural understanding, an awareness of shared values and a platform for ongoing dialogue” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). The mission of the ECA office, therefore, is to foster mutual understanding between the US and other countries through international educational exchanges, scholarships, and training programmes (US Congress Research Service 2005). ECA Bureau programmes include the International Visitors programme; the Partnership for Learning (P4L); and Youth Exchange and Study (YES). Since September 11, new ECA programmes are increasingly focusing on the Middle East. For example, the Partnership for Learning programme is an effort to reach youth in Arab and Muslim countries. Furthermore, in November 2002, the ECA in cooperation with US female Chief Executive Officers (CEO’s) brought 49 Arab female political activists from fifteen countries from the Middle East to the US. To indicate the extent of ECA programmes, it is recorded that in 1999 the USIA organised over 2 400 foreign leaders and professionals to visit the US as international visitors. In addition, between 1 800 and 2 000 voluntary visitors visited the



country under private auspices for up to 30 days of professional appointments arranged by the USIA.

Other long-term educational and cultural exchange programmes include American Corners, which are information and media rooms inside host-country facilities and Virtual Presence Posts, which are interactive Web-based portals offering some of the functions of a consulate. Due to budgetary cuts and security concerns during the 1990s, many physical facilities were abandoned with a few Information Resource Centres, American Presence Posts and American Libraries remaining (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005).

The ECA Bureau also administers a variety of educational programmes. It includes the Fulbright Program, which provides grants for graduate students, scholars, professionals, teachers and administrators; the Humphrey Fellowships, which brings mid-level professionals from developing countries to the US for a year of study and professional experience; the International Visitors programme, which brings professionals to the US to confer with professional counterparts; and the Office of Citizen Exchange, which develops professional, cultural, and youth programmes with non-profit American institutions (US Congress Research Service 2005). The Fulbright Program is the best-known educational exchange programme and operates in more than 125 countries. Senator Fulbright opposed the incorporation of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program in the USIA, preferring to house the programme in the Smithsonian Institute, because the “emphasis is education and not propaganda” (Snow 2002: 42). Fulbright clearly intended the Fulbright Program to be non-propagandistic.

Furthermore, the programmes of the ECA Bureau engage in public-private partnerships. Partners include the academic community, private organisations, foreign governments and American volunteers (US Congress Research Service 2005). The 2005 Report of the Advisory Commission of Public Diplomacy acknowledges the ‘critical role’ of private corporations, universities, foundations and private citizens in US public diplomacy. For example, as a public-private partnership, the United Nations Foundation supports

professional internships for US Fulbright alumni at UN Economic and Social Committee (UNESCO) (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). Other public-private partnerships include programmes with the American Research Institute, the Rotary Club, and the Turkish American Association. The latter provides support for the English ACCESS Microscholarship programme that involves English-language study to underprivileged youth in predominantly Muslim countries (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). As educational and cultural exchange programmes, the objective of the English-language training in other countries is to “promote cross-cultural understanding, engender an awareness of common ground, open up educational and research opportunities and empower students to participate in the global economy” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005).

Furthermore, the USAID, as the lead agency in providing assistance to developing countries, is allowed to accept private-sector resources, thus forming public-private partnerships with NGO’s, foundations, private companies, government agencies and civil society organisations. Since 2003, the USAID has embarked on a campaign to communicate the contributions of the American people in ‘telling our stories’ initiatives through a Development Outreach and Communications Office (DOC’s) (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2005). The USAID therefore increasingly fulfils a public diplomacy role.

All programmes of this bureau are administered under the *Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act*, 1961, better known as the *Fulbright-Hays Act* (Snow 2002: 41). This act states as its main objective to “enable the government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries ... and thus to assist the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations, between the United States and other countries of the world” (quoted by Snow 2002: 42). As a foundation document for US public diplomacy, this Act underscores peace as the objective of US public diplomacy.

### 3.2.3. Public diplomacy content

The message or content of public diplomacy, more directly concerns the question whether or not the current US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’ practices a new manifestation of public diplomacy, or its precursor, propaganda. Recognising the primary importance of content, the Report of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 2005 posits: “One of the most vital aspects of public diplomacy is tailoring content to meet a given audience” thus taking notice of “local communications environment-media, language, values, culture, and audience preferences.” Furthermore, foreign policy and actions also convey a message. Some US policy makers concur, that, with surveys showing that much of the resentment toward the US stems from US policies, public diplomacy is only part of the picture (US Department of State 2003). The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) also states that “American foreign policy is part of the message.” US practitioners therefore select and design the content of US public diplomacy activities, whether informational or educational and cultural activities, in accordance with US foreign policy strategic objectives. The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) recommends that the “US government must define what the message is, what it stands for.” However, in defining what the US stands for, often the impact of policy *per se* is a peripheral concern in addressing the content of public diplomacy messages.

The content of the messages of the first public diplomacy agencies, the CPI (World War I) and the FIS (World War II) was anti-German and anti-Nazi war propaganda. It targeted audiences in Europe in an effort to influence the outcome of World War I and II (US Congress Research Service 2005). The propaganda message changed with the onset of the Cold War and also in response to developments during the Cold War. Initially the USIA disseminated anti-communistic messages to audiences in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. When Vietnam War started, the USIA disseminated the message of ‘containment’ of Soviet expansion. In 1984 Reagan shifted the overall foreign policy objective from ‘containment’ to the ‘roll back’ and pronounced the Soviet Union the ‘evil empire’ (Mamdani 2004: 95). With the end of the Cold War in 1991, the



message changed again, from 'roll back of the evil empire' to the 'liberation of the global market place'. During the Clinton presidency the USIA's message demonstrated a "merging of commerce and culture in national security objectives and foreign policy objectives" (Snow 2002: 48). Since September 11, the message has changed yet again. Within the broad message of a 'war on terror', public diplomacy efforts such as the *Shared Values Initiative* had to "demonstrate [that] the United States is an open society, and that Americans and Muslims share certain values and beliefs" (US GAO 2004). Currently, Muslim and Arab audiences are the focus of the public diplomacy effort.

However, all these messages emanate from the moral framework of 'enduring American values' and US exceptionalism. Although Wilson failed to convince Congress that "peace depends on the spread of democracy, that states should be judged by the same ethical criteria as individuals, and that the national interests consist of adhering to a universal system of law" (Kissinger 1994: 30), US exceptionalism and enduring values became the rhetoric of US diplomacy. Hyde (2002) argues that "in addition to genuine altruism, promotion of freedom can have another purpose, namely as an element in the United States' geopolitical strategy." US exceptionalism presumes that the US is "possessed of an exceptional nature expressed in unrivaled virtue and unrivaled power" (Kissinger 1994: 809). Throughout history, Americans "marched ... to the drumbeat of exceptionalism" (Kissinger 1994: 809). Many US presidents, including Nixon and Reagan invoked US exceptionalism as the cornerstone of the US in foreign policy, each adapted to the set of circumstances of his time. Kissinger (1994: 809) also argues that during the twentieth century the US was "so confident of its strength and virtue of its aims that it could envision fighting for its values on a worldwide basis."

In the 'war on terror', US enduring values and exceptionalism re-emerged as rationalizations of the war in Iraq as a just cause. Hills and Holbrooke (2001) write that the goal in the public diplomacy campaign must be to demonstrate that the US "has a just cause for [its] actions". They warn that if the US is "unable to win the battle for hearts and minds, it may prove impossible to carry military operations through to

completion”. These arguments of foreign policy makers illuminate the centrality of the content and message to US public diplomacy.

### **3.3. THE TARGET AUDIENCE**

Foreign policy at the macro level determines the target audience. The target audience changes when foreign policy at the macro level changes. In 1942, in the early history of US public diplomacy and the beginning of the Cold War, the ‘war of ideas’, the OWI targeted the populations of the communist countries. US public diplomacy also focused on the defeated totalitarian nations such as Germany and Japan. In the struggle between the West, led by the US, and Communism, the USIA pursued these populations as target audience throughout the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War, US public diplomacy moved its target audience focus to the global populace to advance free market democracy. September 11 provided the impetus to change the target audience focus to the Middle East, and in particular to Muslim populations. However, the global focus of US foreign policy requires a wider target audience focus. Therefore, the US continues to target the populations of its allies, particularly European populations.

## **4. FOREIGN POLICY CONTEXT**

In international relations, grand strategy informs foreign policy that in turn informs diplomacy and ultimately public diplomacy. In the case of the US, foreign policy documentation indicates that the US translates its estimation of its superior values and superior power into the notion of US exceptionalism. US exceptionalism has long informed grand strategy, foreign policy, diplomacy and public diplomacy. The National Security Strategy of 2002 underscores this premise: “The United States possesses unprecedented – and unequalled – strength and influenced in the world. Sustained by faith in the principles of liberty, and the value of a free society, this position comes with

unparalleled responsibilities, obligations, and opportunity” (The White House 2002b). As the first post-September 11 national security document, the 2002 National Security Strategy directed the ‘war on terror’ from the initial stages. Subsequent national security policies remained within the scope set out therein.

In recent years, the US has increasingly displayed a propensity towards unilateral foreign policy action, especially the first actions of President George W. Bush. Bush pursued a number of controversial foreign policy actions, such as his advocating the elimination of the *ABM Missile Treat* and pulling out of the *Kyoto Protocol* on the environment. The US created the impression that it shied away from international agreements that might require oversight from other countries or the UN (Snow 2002 19). These foreign policy actions caused widespread resentment of US foreign policy and explain the deterioration of the image of the US and its president around the globe. The power of the US led Bush to consider and apply foreign policy options and diplomatic tactics not available to most other states. Weaker states were co-opted, stronger states courted as ‘allies,’ or all were dismissed as in the case of the *Kyoto Protocol*. The US applied similar diplomatic tactics within multilateral institutions such as the UN. These actions and strategies exerted political pressure which influenced the nature of diplomacy within these institutions.

Furthermore, in setting the foreign policy context, the National Security Strategy, 2002 proposes that in pursuit of goals, the US “must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere.” The document elaborates that, “the national security strategy of the United States must start from these core beliefs and look outward for possibilities to expand liberty” (The White House 2002b). The Under-secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs confirms three strategic objectives that currently direct US public diplomacy: “Offer people throughout the world a positive vision of hope and opportunity that is rooted in America’s belief in freedom, justice, opportunity and respect for all; isolate and marginalize the violent extremists ... ; and, foster a sense of common interests and common values” (US Department of State 2005a). The first strategic objective, the notion of vision and hope rooted in US values

presented as “American”, espouses the most recent variant of US exceptionalism, demonstrated in Bush’s State of the Union address on 31 January 2006 when he pronounced that the US “accept[s] the call of history to deliver the oppressed and move this world toward peace”, it was an expression of US exceptionalism (The White House 2006).

Following these strategic objectives, the Bush doctrine asserts that the US “will make no distinction between those who planned these acts and those who harbor them.” The Bush doctrine subsequently provided the impetus for the notion of ‘preemptive strikes’ which means that the US “must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends” (US National Security Strategy, 2002 as quoted by Blix 2004: 70). Ultimately, as an instrument of policy advocacy, US public diplomacy mirrors the macro level strategy vested in the moral perceptions of US exceptionalism.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The overview of the earlier and current US public diplomacy indicates the effect of political developments in international relations on the practice. Its origins in World War 1 indicate propagandistic roots. The Cold War heightened public diplomacy efforts, first to ‘contain’ communism, but during the Reagan presidency, to ‘roll back’ communism. The US interpreted the end of the Cold War as a victory in the war on ideas, and therefore considered public diplomacy as being redundant. Subsequent down-scaled public diplomacy turned to the propagation of the idea of market economy democracies. However, September 11 and concomitant widespread reports of anti-Americanism forced the Bush administration to re-evaluate public diplomacy.

The analysis of contemporary US public diplomacy is based on three distinct dimensions, namely institutions, activities and the target audience. Institutionally, the



President sets the foreign policy objectives and also acts as a primary agent. Administration principals follow the lead of the President. The statements and appearances of the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Vice President reinforce the message of the President. Furthermore, major opinion leaders in the media and academia also act as enforcers of the public diplomacy message. However, public diplomacy is fragmented with the incorporation of the USIA into the Department of State compromising the traditional independence of public diplomacy.

The second dimension, public diplomacy activities, comprises informational activities and educational and cultural activities. Informational activities vary from press centres to international radio and television stations. Furthermore, the power and influence of the mass media renders it a primary conduit for public diplomacy messages. The case study of US public diplomacy in respect of the 'war on terror' not only requires analyses of the appearances and statements of the President and administration principals, but also media reports on these appearances and speeches. Educational and cultural activities have a long-term objective and involve more specific targeting such as the Fulbright scholarship programme and the International Visitors programme.

The third dimension indicates a clear pattern in respect of changing macro level foreign policies and changing target audiences. The target audience is instrumental in reaching foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, the content or message communicates the foreign policy context as perceived by the US. Where grand strategy dictates foreign policy and ultimately public diplomacy, two factors determine US foreign policy at the macro level, namely its hard power and the notion of US exceptionalism.



## CHAPTER 4

### PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE 'WAR ON TERROR'

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Although US public diplomacy also entails educational and cultural activities, September 11 created a crisis atmosphere that called for immediate action. The US thus embarked on a short-term informational public diplomacy campaign aimed at preempting the political and military campaigns. The focus of this case study is therefore on the informational activities as practised by the primary public diplomacy agents. Furthermore, criticism of propaganda against US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' largely concerns the truthfulness of the information put into the public domain. However, such information also permeates educational and cultural activities.

The case study draws from the example of Broadhead's (2002) critical approach to empirical research and has two parts. Firstly, this chapter covers informational activities in terms of public diplomacy criteria. Secondly, the next chapter covers the analysis of the same informational activities in terms of criteria for propaganda. These analyses focus on the three dimensions of public diplomacy, namely institutions (agents), activities and the target audience.

#### 2. AGENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Multiple public diplomacy institutions and agents perform informational activities. After September 11, the pressure for immediate results required the combination of the most prominent messengers with the most effective message. The messenger may be even more important than the message.

## 2.1. PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

In his capacity as US President, Bush plays the dual role of setting the foreign policy objectives at the strategic level, whilst acting as a primary public diplomacy agent promoting the set foreign policy objectives. *The Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication, 2004* (US Defense Science Board 2004) points out that “unifying strategic communications starts with US Presidential direction ... or White House leadership, with support from cabinet secretaries and Congress.” Djerejian (2003) confirms the indispensable role stating that “the commitment has to come from the US President of the United States”.

### 2.1.1. Setting foreign policy objectives

Strategic foreign policy directing the ‘war on terror’ emanates from pre-September 11 policy documents and statements. Although Bush was more attuned to the domestic public in his Inaugural Address on 20 January 2001, in addressing foreign policy, he re-affirmed “America’s belief in freedom and democracy”; committed the administration to building “defenses beyond challenge”; and set out to “confront weapons of mass destruction” (The White House 2001a). In the State of the Union Address on 27 February 2001, he pledged to promote “a distinctly American internationalism” defined by free markets, free trade, and freedom from oppression, ultimately secured by a strong military (The White House 2001b). The thrust of pre-September strategic foreign policy was to strengthen US power globally through the projection of exceptionalism backed by military power. The immediate reaction to the September 11 attacks indicates a pre-eminence of military power in foreign policy strategy.

A few hours after the September 11 attacks, Bush relayed this military orientation to the principals of his administration when he opened the first video teleconference with them with the words, “We’re at war” as reported by the *National Commission on Terrorists Attacks upon the United States* (hereafter the 9/11 Commission) (9/11 Commission

Report 2004: 326). This statement determined a military response, in time defined as the 'war on terror', as the main strategy to defeat terrorism. In his first address to the nation on the night of September 11, he declared that the US "will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these attacks and those who harbor them" (9/11 Commission Report 2004: 326). This statement became known as the Bush doctrine.

In the first post-September 11 foreign policy directive, the *National Security Strategy*, 2002, Bush identified a "single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise" (The White House 2002b). This followed Bush's notion of a "distinctly American internationalism". In the 2001 document the President linked terrorism exclusively to the absence of freedom, democracy and free enterprise. He did not indicate that he considered other possible causes of terrorism. By means of the 'freedom agenda' Bush thus usurped for the US the responsibility to bring freedom, democracy and free enterprise to the world. Hyde (2002) commended the *National Security Strategy*, 2002 because it "link(s) together our fundamental principles, our long-term goals, and challenges we will confront in the new century." These arguments underscore the US self-assessment of exceptionalism.

In respect of Iraq, Bush told the 9/11 Commission that immediately after the attack he "wondered ... whether Saddam Hussein's regime might have had a hand in it" (9/11 Commission Report 2004: 334). This statement confirms that Iraq was a pivotal focus in pre-September foreign policy objectives. However, sensitive to public opinion, the Bush administration refrained from references to Iraq until after the start of the war in Afghanistan.

From 2001 to 2003 the military objective against al Qaeda and countries harbouring them, expressed through the Bush doctrine, evolved into a US obligation to democratise all corners of the world, expressed through the 'freedom agenda'. Although the immediate focus of the 'freedom agenda' is the Middle East starting with Iraq, this agenda provides for a global scope. The 'war on terror' thus evolved into a 'long war', as



pronounced by Rumsfeld at the Munich Conference on Security Policy (US Diplomatic mission to Germany 2006b).

Subsequent strategic foreign policy documents continue the merging of the Bush doctrine with the 'freedom agenda'. In November 2005, the Bush administration released the *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (The White House 2005d), a policy document stating the strategy for withdrawal from Iraq. The release of this report was widely publicized, amongst others by CNN and the BBC, offering an excellent opportunity for the Bush administration to convey a public diplomacy message to the global public. The title, as well as the content of the report, suggests confidence, a message conveyed through the media. Although the initial rationale for the war in Iraq was the threat to US security by Iraqi WMDs and bringing liberty to the Iraqi people, the report indicates a change to "helping the Iraqi people defeat terrorists and build an inclusive democratic state" (The White House 2005d). This optimistic document forwards an integrated strategy and retains the strategic objectives stated by the earlier foreign policy documents. However, the recognition of multiple role players indicates a tacit appreciation for multilateralism as opposed to open pursuit of unilateralism.

Turning to specific policy objectives for public diplomacy, Bush appointed the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy "to provide oversight of US government activities intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics." The commission confirms public diplomacy as "a strategic element of power in the information age" and proposes short-term focus on issues and long-term focus on values (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy 2002). In July 2003, the commission announced the creation of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World which published the report, *Changing minds and winning peace*, 2003 (US Department of State 2003: 1). This report finds the US public diplomacy system "lacking both strategic direction and resources", especially in the Arab and Muslim world. Referring to "forces of extremism", the report calls for a "dramatic transformation" of public diplomacy, particularly "in the way the US communicates its values and policies to enhance [its] national security." Addressing

domestic resources, the report (US Department of State 2003: 5-6) emphasizes the input of think tank studies, specifically the CFR, the Heritage Foundation, and the Brookings Institutions. The report also dismisses 'spin', manipulative public relations and propaganda, advising that the issues of the citizens of the Arab and Muslim world must be taken seriously. The President leads the translation of foreign policy objectives into information directed at domestic and foreign publics.

### **2.1.2. Acting as public diplomacy agent**

This study considers the President as the primary agent of public diplomacy. As the head of government of the only superpower, the message of the President receives preferential coverage from the public as well as the mass media. Although the Inaugural and State of the Union addresses are delivered in the domestic context, the President also addressed the global public in these speeches. Perceived as independent in democracies, the mass media affords the President an ideal vehicle for such communication. However, institutionally, the OGC and the Office for Strategic Communication and Global Outreach ensure that the President's priorities in foreign policy are reflected in public diplomacy. The OGC relays the President's messages to US embassies around the world, via the White House website and in the form of a daily *Global Message*.

A chronological representation of events following the September 11 attacks indicates a swift transformation of pre-September 11 foreign policy objectives to US public diplomacy promoting a 'war on terror.' The availability of, and unparalleled mass media attention facilitated this transformation process.

The night of September 11 presented President Bush with the opportunity of almost undivided attention of the global mass media and public. He undertook "to pursue the terrorists and those who harbor them, we [shall] go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world" (Bush 2001a). The day after the attacks, on 12 September 2001, he declared in more explicit terms that the attacks were "more than



acts of terror” but acts of war on freedom and democracy (Bush 2001b). He concluded that the “enemy attacked not only our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world” and anticipated a “monumental struggle of good versus evil” (Bush 2001b). That same day, in a separate speech at the Pentagon, he declared the reason for the attacks, namely the US and its “embrace [of] freedom” (Bush 2001c). In reporting the President’s speech, CNN News highlighted his reference to the US as the “brightest beacon of freedom and opportunity in the world” and reiterated his undertaking to make “no distinction between the terrorists ... and those who harbor them” (CNN 2001). On 13 September 2001, with the proclamation for a *National Day of Prayer and Remembrance*, Bush again proclaimed the attacks as “acts of war” stating that “civilized people around the world denounce the evildoers” (Bush 2001d). These statements marked the beginning of a trend by the President to frame the ‘war on terror’ by a few simplistic tenets, namely that the attack constituted war; the cause of the war was a hate for freedom; the target of the attack was all freedom-loving people of the world; and the US would fight the war on behalf of all free people of the world. He kept to this message and provided the lead for the principals of his administration and other public diplomacy agents.

On 18 September 2001, Bush posed for a photo opportunity with President Megawati of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population. Published under the heading *US President building worldwide campaign against terrorism* on the White House webpage (US Department of State 2001e). This event served as a public diplomacy opportunity aimed not only at the global public, but in particular at the Muslim public. Continuing within the ‘war on terror’ framework, the President posited that it was “a new type of struggle” with no borders and no capital with “a common ideology ... they hate freedom, and they hate freedom-loving people” (US Department of State 2001e). Bush evaded answering questions from journalists about presenting “irrefutable evidence” to act against the “60-plus countries” where he claimed al Qaeda existed. He also did not answer a question on the possible involvement of Iraq, but instead offered a blanket statement that “anybody who harbors terrorists needs to fear the United States and the rest of the free world”. Both presidents evaded a question on whether the Vice

President of Indonesia had allegedly said that “the tragedy would cleanse the sins of the United States”. Appearing with the head of government of the most populous Muslim country, conveyed a message of friendship with a Muslims, and ignoring sensitive questions, means that dissenting voices from Indonesia were avoided by Bush.

Furthermore, apart from presidential news conferences, the White House Press Secretary provided the first line of interaction with the media, representing and explaining administration policy. In this capacity, Ari Fleischer reiterated the President’s messages to the media. On 18 September 2001 Fleischer reported that the President and the Secretary-General of the UN “agreed that the attacks were against all freedom-loving people and that all nations should join in the fight against terrorism” (The White House 2001c). In respect of the role of the UN in the ‘war on terror’, Fleischer conveyed a dualistic US approach. On the one hand he argued that the UN Charter provided the US with the “right to act in self-defense”, but on the other hand, he foresaw no specific role for the UN. Also, during a press briefing on 19 September 2001, Fleischer did not directly answer the questions on whether the US would provide the world with evidence before acting against any country in the ‘war on terror’ (The White House 2001d).

Subsequently, the President also pursued military action in Iraq as part of the ‘war on terror’ through speeches and press conferences. In his first State of the Union Address after September 11, on 29 January 2002, Bush welcomed Hanid Karzai as the interim leader of a “liberated Afghanistan” and the widow of a marine “who gave [his life] for freedom” in Afghanistan (The White House 2002a). Karzai’s presence communicated the image and message of a ‘new liberated Afghanistan’ as an example of US military success. Underscoring the image of success, Bush declared “terror training camps in Afghanistan out of business”. He also turned the attention of the global public to Iraq in declaring Iraq, Burma and North Korea “an axis of evil”. He focused on Iraq and linked Iraq to terrorism, alleging that Iraq would provide WMDs to ‘axis of evil’ states and terrorists. His dramatic language conveyed to the global public the image of Iraq as an imminent threat: “The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade ... has already used poison gas to murder



thousands of its own citizens ... the price of indifference would be catastrophic". The OGC and the mass media conveyed this dramatic image of an imminent threat to the global public.

Subsequent public statements reiterated the message of the threat from Iraq and the image of the menace of Saddam Hussein. From April 2002 Bush publicly embarked on a message advocating a policy of regime change in Iraq, and in June 2002 he formally declared that he would launch preemptive attacks against countries believed to be a serious threat to the US (Woodward 2002: 330). Bush carried this heightened sense of threat through to address to the UN General Assembly on 12 September 2002, with the date linking the speech with the September 11 attacks. In the speech Bush pertinently invoked the context of September 11 ultimately pointing to "one regime" as an immediate threat and concluded, "Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger" (The White House 2002d). He challenged the UN Security Council deliberations to be "more than talk", and resolutions to be "more than wishes". This speech targeted the representatives of the all nations at the UN as well as the global public. Bush also spoke to the Iraqi people specifically declaring that the US has "no quarrel" with them. In addition to the speech to the UN General Assembly, the OGC also released a background paper, *A Decade of Deception and Defiance, 2002* (The White House 2002e). Apart from these public events, he continually addressed the Iraqi people directly through radio and television as confirmed by the White House Press Secretary, Fleischer. In these addresses he directly spoke to the Iraqi people as the 'target audience' to turn them in favour of the war in Iraq and US foreign policy objectives in the Middle East.

During 2002 the Bush administration increased the pressure on Saddam Hussein through public rhetoric. In August 2002, the Republican Party formed the White House Information Group, also known as the White House Iraq Group (WHIG), managed by White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card to coordinate all executive branch elements in the run-up to the war in Iraq (Gellman & Pincus 2003). Shortly after the formation of the WHIG, White House claims about Hussein's possession of WMDs escalated. Although





little is known of the WHIG, indicated its mission when he declared in 2002, that “(f)rom a marketing point of view, you don’t introduce new products in August” (Gellman & Pincus 2003). Gellman and Pincus (2003) point out that the day after Card’s remark, the President and his top advisors began to talk about the dangers of an Iraqi nuclear bomb.

The 2002 information campaign to promote support for military intervention in Iraq was increased during the first two months of 2003. In the State of the Union Address of 28 January 2003, again in apparent reference North Korea, Iran and Iraq, Bush warned that “the ideology of power and domination has appeared again, and seeks to gain the ultimate weapons of terror” (The White House 2003a). He rallied the US and its friends to “defend the safety of (its) people and the hopes of all mankind.” Again he turned his focus to Iraq and called on the UN “to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm” (The White House 2003a). Bush also declared US support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) “in its mission to track and control nuclear materials around the world”. Despite the tension between the US and the IAEA as pointed out by Blix (2004: 3-5 & 61), this support conveyed the message of US cooperation with the UN’s weapons inspection regime. During the speech Bush again linked Iraq with al Qaeda and then with September 11. He then announced that the US would ask the UN Security Council to convene on 5 February 2003 where Secretary of State Powell was to present information and intelligence about Iraq’s illegal WMDs; its attempts to hide those weapons from inspectors; and its links to terrorist groups. Bush’s speech sent the twin message of the eminence of an Iraqi threat and of US commitment to diplomacy. In this speech he portrayed the US as a benevolent force in international relations by creating the perception of the US following the UN process. The message intended to create legitimacy for US actions. However, in his speeches to the UN in September 2002 and the State of the Union Address in 2003, Bush extended the Bush doctrine to a right to preemptive strikes on states that, in the estimation of the US, supported or harboured terrorists and pursued WMDs.



Also in January 2003, two months before military intervention in Iraq, the OGC produced a document titled *Apparatus of lies: Saddam's disinformation and propaganda 1990-2003* (The White House 2003a). Addressing “the use of propaganda by Saddam Hussein and his regime” the document aimed to “counter misinformation about America, the coalition, and Western intentions in Iraq”. The document attempted to speak to the global populace, urging “governments, the media, and the public ... to consider the regime’s words, deeds, and images in light of this brutal record of deceit”. The central message of this document was that the US was confronting an evil regime heavily engaged in propaganda. The definition of propaganda provided in the *Apparatus of lies* equated the concept with lies and deception, and thus strongly suggests that such practice would be incompatible with US values. The information in this document emanated from the White House OGC reiterated the information of the President’s speeches and press conferences.

In both ‘normal’ and choreographed public diplomacy events, the mass media forms an integral part of the strategy. An example of the latter took place on 1 May 2003 when Bush declared an end to “major combat operations” in Iraq. He did not address the nation and the world from the White House, but from the dramatic setting of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The media widely reported the event. CNN television broadcast the sense of drama of the event and reported that after Bush disembarked from a fighter plane and “[s]tanding on the giant flight deck, with a banner reading ‘Mission Accomplished’ overhead on the bridge, the commander-in-chief saluted the men and women of the US military” (CNN 2003). This setting and the image of the Bush fighter pilot gear underscored the military power of the US and the President as a leader in the action.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, public diplomacy information remained focused on the theme of the US leadership in the ‘freedom agenda’ as a counter to terrorism. The President’s address to the General Assembly on 21 September 2004 illustrated this trend. Again the UN General Assembly provided a podium to speak directly to the representatives of the peoples of the world. Despite the fact that the UN did not sanction



US military action in Iraq, in this speech, Bush portrayed the UN and US as partners, putting the *American Declaration of Independence* on *par* with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of the UN. Structuring his speech as if he was speaking on behalf of the UN, Bush used the idea of ‘human dignity’ as the refrain and the main theme of his speech. He ultimately led this theme to ‘democracy’ and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, where, he argued, “a democratic Iraq has ruthless enemies, because terrorists know the stakes in that country” (The White House 2004). He postulated that the new century requires a “new definition of security ... not found in spheres of influence, or some balance of power ... (but) found in the advancing of rights of mankind”. This speech before the General Assembly again carried the three-part message of the universality of ‘American values’; the obligation to pursue democracy; and a two-part world of ‘wise’ and ‘free’ nations and ‘oppressive’ governments. On the subject of the democratization of Iraq and the region, reference to the US Declaration of Independence presented a powerful image to many states formerly colonized, calling attention to US history as a former colony, ultimately addressing concerns over perceptions of US imperialism.

On 15 March 2005, two years after the start of the war in Iraq and at a time of heightened violence in Iraq, the President received King Abdullah of Jordan in Washington. The *Global Message* of 16 March 2005 stated that the King “understands the need for reform in the Middle East, and has a clear vision that the world needs to fight terror” (The White House 2005b). As a head of state in the Middle East, the support of the King for the ‘need to reform in the Middle East’ strengthens the message of the democratization of the region. The King thus represents a credible proxy or interlocur, and although he may not be as credible in the Middle East, his ‘understanding’ spoke to the global public.

Subsequently, in his second Inaugural Address on 20 January 2005, Bush addressed the fears of his domestic audience, yet intentionally addressed “the peoples of the world”. He stated that American freedom has been secured by “standing watch on distant borders” (The White House 2005a), and thus argued that US security demands



military bases in foreign countries. Referring to September 11 as “a day of fire”, he argued that US vulnerability arises from “whole regions in the world simmer(ing) with resentment and tyranny”, concluding that, defined in terms of liberty, US vital interest “depends on the success of liberty in other lands.” To this end, foreign policy should be “to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.” Bush continued that, although democracy “is not primarily the task of arms ... [the US] will defend [itself] and [its] friends by the force of arms when necessary”. This speech aligns with the strategic foreign policy objectives put forward in his first Inaugural Address, of promoting US exceptionalism through military strength. Bush espouses a realist assessment of US security, typified by neo-conservative foreign policy objectives.

The power and prestige as the head of government of the sole superpower, gave Bush access to international podiums such as the UN, as well as the access to the mass media. Appearances with heads of governments and states from the Middle East and/or Muslim dominated countries were widely publicized through presidential news conferences. These joint high profile public appearances were utilized by Bush to promote the ‘war on terror’ by means of the ‘freedom agenda’ and to create an opportunity for public expression of support from a visiting head of government. The most regular appearances were with the most vocal partner in the ‘coalition of the willing’, Prime Minister Blair and Pakistani President Musharaff, followed by other coalition partners. Even after the fall of Saddam Hussein, presenting a united image and optimistic message to the world on the “transfer of Iraqi sovereignty”, Bush and Blair jointly addressed the media in Istanbul, for example on 28 June 2004 in Turkey.

In disseminating information to the public domain, the presidential discourse was based on the initial premises that, the September 11 attacks constituted war; that war was the only appropriate response; that the attackers had no legitimate rationale but were driven by a hatred for freedom; that this hatred for freedom-loving US extends to all freedom-loving people of the world; that the US has the responsibility to bring freedom, democracy and free trade into all corners of the world; and that Saddam Hussein

possessed WMDs and may attack the US in the future. As primary public diplomacy agent, Bush thus demarcated the parameters of the US public diplomacy information in the ‘war on terror.’

## **2.2. THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

As the head of the Department of State, the lead agency for foreign policy, diplomacy, and currently also for public diplomacy, the Secretary of State is the primary political presidential appointee. Institutionally the Secretary of State is the primary public diplomacy agent and the President’s principal foreign policy advisor. The Secretary of State enjoys prestige and power beyond most heads of governments of other states. Therefore, statements, speeches and visits of the Secretary of State enjoy wide media attention within and outside of the US. In addition, the Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs manages the institutional dimension of public diplomacy in the Department of State.

### **2.2.1. The Secretary of State**

At the time of September 11, Colin Powell was serving as Secretary of State. Powell had a military background, but was considered a diplomat and the moderate amongst neo-conservative ‘hawks’ in the Bush administration. For Bush, Powell was a “diplomatic person who has got war experience” (Woodward 2002: 342). The international community also considered him a diplomat and pragmatist. Although Powell had a low profile during the first nine months of his tenure (Woodward 2002: 13), he was alongside the President during the first press briefings after September 11. Powell followed Bush’s lead and on 15 September 2001 he echoed Bush’s message of earlier in the day, that the attacks were “an assault not just against the United States, but against civilization” (Powell 2001a). One of the most visible examples of public diplomacy was in February 2002, when Powell appeared on MTV, specifically targeting the global youth and not government elites, a “superior messenger” who reached out to young people around the world about what America represents (Beers 2002).



Powell did not join the overtly belligerent talks about Iraq. For example, on 12 September 2001 he argued on national television that, "there are many options available ... military options, diplomatic options, further isolation of any country that might be harboring who is responsible" (Powell 2001b). Such statements enhanced Powell's credibility as a cautious and pragmatic militarist. Bush was therefore increasingly reliant on Powell to assemble an international coalition, the 'coalition of the willing'. Powell gradually became the face of US diplomacy in the 'war on terror' and subsequently of the pursuit of the war in Iraq.

On February 2003, he delivered a 'pivotal presentation' to the UN General Assembly to demonstrate the threat that Iraq was posing (The White House 2003e). Powell's presentation of 'evidence' was broadcast to the world by, amongst others, CNN and the BBC. He argued that Iraq was in possession of WMDs. Despite the fact that the intelligence information provided by Powell was not independently verified and was received sceptically by security analysts, his excellent military background coupled with his pragmatic stance conveyed a message of US credibility. Powell was aware of the public diplomacy opportunity of UN speeches in what he termed as "making the case before the international community" (US Department of State 2002). Presenting this image to the world enhanced US portrayal of its just cause and of the US as the leader of the 'civilized' world. The US followed a parallel strategy of pursuing a UN Security Council resolution to authorize a military campaign in Iraq, whilst at the same time proceeding with a military build-up. By linking Iraq to the 'war on terror' Powell's presentation to the General Assembly was pivotal to state the US case for war. The UN speech was used by various administration officials as if constituting evidence, for example by the White House Press Secretary on 10 April 2003, and Under-secretary Feith during a special Pentagon Briefing on 4 June 2003 (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]).

Although Powell was not often utilized by White House communications strategists, he was the most credible person to convince the UN and global public of the justness of

the US cause. By 17 March 2003, multilateral diplomacy reached a stalemate, with the US and its allies the UK and Spain blocking further inspections for WMDs and the majority of Security Council members not prepared to authorize military action in Iraq. The UK-sponsored resolution before the Security Council to authorize war was withdrawn on 17 March 2003 (Blix 2004: 7).

When Powell resigned in January 2005, the President appointed Rice, who pursues a higher profile of extensive overseas travels with an emphasis on the Middle East. Whereas Powell's term is significant for diplomacy in the run-up to the Iraq war, the deteriorating social, political, economic and security situations in 'liberated' Afghanistan and Iraq mark Rice's term. As Rice stated in her opening remarks during her confirmation hearing, she considered September 11 as "a defining moment" for the US and the world (US Department of State 2005g). In her testimony, Rice indicated a new strain of the Bush doctrine, of applying US diplomacy to "create a balance of power in a world that favors freedom". However, September 11 and the 'war on terror' remains the point of reference for foreign policy as evident from her statement to the media during a visit to Kabul in June 2006, remarking the "joint fight in the war on terror" (US Department of State 2006a).

In public engagements, such as the address at Georgetown University on 18 January 2006, Rice continued to reiterate Bush's 'freedom agenda', namely "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (US Diplomatic mission to Germany: 2006a). In her remarks with Afghan President Karzai after their meeting in Kabul on 28 June 2006, Rice emphasized the democratic accomplishments of Afghanistan, contrasting it with "brutal and ruthless enemies" (US Department of State 2006). Similarly, Rice's visit to Baghdad in May 2005 emphasized the elections held as a process of democratisation. In the wake of reports of the desecration of the Holy Koran in US detainee camps, Rice wanted to "speak very clearly to the Muslims around the world" stating that the US is a "country that was built on the concept of religious freedom" (US Department of State 2005h). At the joint press briefing by Rice and Iraqi



Interim Prime Minister al-Ja'fari on 15 May 2005, both emphasized the process of democratization in Iraq (US Department of State 2005i).

By means of a high profile in the mass media, as Secretary of State and public diplomacy agent, Rice continues to promote the 'war on terror' as foreign policy objective, through the grand strategy to democratize the world, with Afghanistan and Iraq the starting points in the Middle East.

### **2.2.2. The Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs**

Under the political leadership of the Secretary of State, the Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (hereafter Under-secretary) manages the public diplomacy within the framework of the State Department. The position, however, does not have the stature and prestige of the Secretary of State on the global stage. The Under-secretary directs public diplomacy information and educational programmes disseminated through American Corners (foreign information centers), US embassies and the private media.

As mentioned, after September 11, the President appointed Beers as Under-secretary to 're-brand' America and revitalize the story of America to the world (Snow 2002: 20). As a first initiative to 'sell' the 'war on terror' Beers produced a glossy brochure with photographs of the human destruction of September 11. She then created a departmental Website called *Muslim life in America* which showed pictures of mosques and smiling Muslim families. However, the most prominent initiative was the *Shared Values* campaign, a series of videos that featured American Muslims describing their freedom to practice their faith, and ultimately their integration into America society. It was broadcast through paid media programmes on pan-Arab satellite television, in newspapers as well as *via* the national media of Indonesia, Pakistan, and Kuwait during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. This media initiative was 'augmented' by speaker programmes and a booklet on *Muslim life in America* (Beers 2003).



The *Shared Values* campaign did not directly address the most divisive policy issues in the US-Arab relationship such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As Ross (2003) argues that in the context of the pressure of short-term results, the *Shared Values* campaign needed to be “values-based communications”. Beers therefore attempted to ‘sell’ the ‘intangible assets’ of the US. Following the *Shared Values* initiative, Beers initiated a *Shared Future* programme to “bring sustained attention to economic and political and educational reform in the Muslim world” (Beers 2003).

Subsequently, Beers turned to the issue of Iraq and distributed booklets and brochures to promote the war in Iraq as part of the ‘war on terror’. A booklet entitled, *Iraq: From fear to freedom*, “examines in a comprehensive way the horror of Saddam Hussein’s regime but also addresses the US desire to see a future Iraq that is democratic, unified, and at peace with its neighbors” (Beers 2003). Another booklet, *Iraq: A population silenced*, focuses “on human rights violations by Saddam Hussein, and his associates” including first-person and eye-witness accounts, including one saying that, “Iraq under Saddam’s regime has become a land of hopelessness, sadness, and fear, a country where people are ethnically cleansed” (Beers 2003). Another brochure accompanied by filmed interviews entitled *Iraqi voices for freedom* claim to be the voices of “a few of the millions of Iraqis whose hopes for the future have been silenced by tyranny” (Beers 2003). In these documents the words freedom and democracy carry the central theme. The message disseminated was two-fold: that Saddam Hussein was evil; and that US foreign policy in Iraq is based on a desire to free Iraqi’s from him. As point of departure in all her initiatives, she followed the presidential assessment on the causes of September 11, contributing terrorism to a “gravely distorted” image of the US in the Muslim world (Beers 2003).

Karin Hughes, a longtime advisor and Counselor to the President replaced Beers on 27 July 2005. In contrast to Beers, Hughes was involved in major domestic and foreign policy issues and led the communications effort in the first year of the ‘war on terror’ (US Department of State 2005b). At the time of her appointment the focus of public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’ shifted from pursuit of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq,



to convincing the world of these wars as successful democratization. A profile of Hughes' visits to foreign countries from 2005 to 2006 indicates that the focus of public diplomacy remains the Middle East and Muslim countries (US Department of State 2005c). Hughes considers her public diplomacy mission as "America's conversation with the world" (US Department of State 2005d) and engages with 'grassroots' meetings with students (Morocco) and women (Hawaii), and appearances on television (Malaysia and Doha). She emphasizes three strategic imperatives for US public diplomacy in pursuit of the freedom agenda as part of the 'war on terror' (US Department of State 2005f). Firstly, that the US offers a positive vision of hope and opportunity to people throughout the world; secondly, to isolate and marginalize violent extremists; and thirdly, to foster a sense of common interests and common values between Americans and different countries, cultures, and faiths across the world. Since she is not a principal of the administration, the mass media does not pay as much attention to her public statements. However, Hughes' public statements reiterate Bush's lead in promoting the 'freedom agenda'; and a simplistic division of the world into civilized and evil sections.

Although the Beers initiatives were the most controversial public diplomacy initiatives, it formed only a part of the 'war on terror' campaign. The information disseminated by Bush and the administration principals through the mass media and public diplomacy agencies such as the OGC constituted the major part of the campaign. The disseminated information did not indicate to Middle Eastern populations a US awareness of its foreign policy history in the Middle East; of perceived bias in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or of compromising US ties with undemocratic governments in the Middle East. The message was clear, namely the 'war on terror' was a simple choice for a war on behalf of democracy and civilization *versus* tyranny and terrorism.

### **2.3. THE VICE PRESIDENT**

Vice President Cheney had been Secretary of Defense during the former presidency of George H. W. Bush. In addition to Cheney's prestige and power by virtue of his political



position, he is considered one of the most 'hands-on' Vice Presidents, actively directing foreign policy.

In the 'war on terror' Cheney played a prominent role in propagating a war in Iraq, not only behind the scenes persuading the President, but also *via* the mass media. For example, Cheney challenged the agreement on 14 August 2002 by the principals that the issue of an attack on Iraq had to be pursued in part through the UN. He argued that the UN had to be made the issue. According to Woodward (2002: 35) he instructed: "Go tell them it's not about us. It's about you. You are not important." Cheney's disregard for this agreement by the principals on the UN became evident when, only a few days later, on 26 August 2002, he declared in a speech that "there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction" (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]). He elaborated that, "(a)rmed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror, and seated atop ten percent of the world's oil, Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East to take control of a great portion of the world's energy supplies, directly threaten America's friends throughout the region and subject the United States or any other country to nuclear blackmail". The media duly relayed Cheney's views, for example CNN News reported, *Cheney cites 'risks of inaction' with Iraq* (CNN 2002). CNN further reported that he had urged that action on Iraq be taken "sooner rather than later" and that the US "must take the battle to the enemy". Furthermore, in keeping with his earlier instruction in respect of the UN process, Cheney argued that the return of the UN weapons inspectors to Iraq would be futile. His message was clear, namely that there was no doubt that Hussein possessed WMDs, that action should be taken immediately and that the UN process was futile. Relaying the message nationally and internationally, *The New York Times'* headline read, *Cheney says Peril of a Nuclear Iraq Justifies Attack* (Woodward 2002: 344).

From then onwards, Cheney acted as one of the key advocates for a war in Iraq. *The Washington Post* (Gellman & Pincus 2003) considered Cheney "far ahead of Bush's public line" in alerting the public on Iraq's alleged WMDs. His television appearances on *NBC Meet the Press* on 8 September 2002, 16 March 2003, and 14 September 2003

and speech to the Heritage Foundation on 10 October 2003 (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]) served this objective. His position on Iraq and the ‘war on terror’ was clear and as such widely reported by the mass media. His hard-line language could not be misunderstood. As the Vice President, he has the prestige to be considered a credible interpreter of international threats and he is therefore a credible messenger.

#### **2.4. THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, was part of a small group of top advisors whom the President refers to as his ‘war council’ (9/11 Commission Report 2004: 330). He valued the dissemination of information into the public domain that is supportive of the US position. In a briefing at the Pentagon Foreign Press Center, he confirmed that information provided at such press briefings “all ... add to the information available to the American people and the people of the world” (US Department of Defense 2003).

As Secretary of Defense, his public diplomacy role in the ‘war on terror’ and US military intervention in Iraq is significant. According 9/11 Commission Report (2004: 330), on the evening of September 11, Rumsfeld “urged the US President and the principals to think broadly about who might have harbored the attackers, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, and Iran.” Furthermore, the report states that on the afternoon of September 11, the “secretary said that his instinct was to hit Saddam Hussein at the same time – not only bin Ladin“. After September 11, he publicly pursued the extension of the objective for the “war on terror’ to include Iraq.

Controversially, in late 2001, Rumsfeld launched the separate Pentagon Office of Strategic Influence (OSI), “authorised to engage in disinformation, particularly to foreign media” (Mamdani 2004: 196). The OSI was criticized for its plans to “target American allies and foes alike with secret ‘information warfare’, including the dissemination of false information to the foreign press” (Johnson & Dale 2003). The objective was “to provide a harder sell with a combination of public affairs and information warfare”.

Although full details were never revealed, the OSI allegedly planned to dispense “truthful news releases”, to “(plant) stories through outside contractors” and to “[conduct] cyber attacks against enemy computer networks and Websites” (Johnson & Dale 2003).

The OSI was scrapped because of complaints that it would ruin the credibility of legitimate public affairs. Sensitive to the domestic public, media critics argued that “false news planted in foreign news outlets could end up in the American press, violating a ban on government propaganda activities” (Johnson & Dale 2003). However, the *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (2004) defines public diplomacy as one dimension of strategic communication, together with public affairs, psychological operations (PSYOPS), international broadcasting and military information operations. This definition is reflected in media briefings, where public diplomacy agents, such as the White House spokesperson, do not distinguish between military communication and public diplomacy.

Furthermore, before the war in Iraq, the Department of Defense launched Commando Solo, “a military operation that involve[d] the flying of aircraft that beam radio messages to the people of Iraq” (The White House 2002c). With the military invasion of Iraq, television broadcasts *via* former Iraqi state television commenced as part of the Department of Defense programme, with amongst others, messages from Bush and Blair. The Department of Defense determined the programme content. The White House Press Secretary stated that the Department of Defense “is very good in the middle of war not only of fighting and winning a war, but in providing information for people” (The White House 2002c). He refrained from answering media questions on whether Bush had personally authorized these measures but replied that, “the US President is proud they played the role that they played not only in fighting the war, but in providing information to the Iraqi people.” The fact that the defence department awarded three contracts worth up to \$300 million “in an effort to improve foreign public opinion about the United States” (Farmer 2005), indicates the interchange of public diplomacy and military communication.

In addition to these campaigns, Rumsfeld also propagated US military intervention in Iraq through the mass media. On 30 June 2003, *The New Republic* reported that on 12 September 2002 he lamented: “Imagine a September eleventh with weapons of mass destruction. It’s not three thousand – it’s thousands of innocent, men, women, and children” (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]). According to the same article, he also claimed on 26 September 2002 that he had evidence of ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda and that Saddam Hussein had WMDs. In an interview with Stephanopoulos on ABC television on 30 March 2003, he claimed that “[w]e know where they are” and in the interview *Face the Nation with Bob Schneider*, he again claimed that “there’s been so much intelligence” about WMDs in Iraq (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]).

Rumsfeld did not only act as a primary public diplomacy agent in the ‘war on terror’, continually reiterating the message of Saddam Hussein’s alleged possession of WMDs, but oversaw both the strategic military communication directly to the Iraqi people and the strategy of embedded mass media.

## **2.5. THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR**

At the time of September 11, Condoleezza Rice was the National Security Advisor. Representing the views of the Secretaries of State and Defense to the President, she had a close working relationship with Bush. In this position, Rice had the opportunity to influence foreign policy, but also the power and prestige to influence the information put into the public domain in the ‘war on terror’.

In the Opening Statement to the 9/11 Commission (2004) Rice stated that long before September 2001, “radical, freedom-hating terrorists declared war on America and the civilized world.” She posited that the terrorist threat gathered for “more than twenty years”, but as a democracy the US had been slow to react. The statement suggests that, as a democracy, the US was innocent in the causes of terrorism, thus assuring the domestic and international publics of the credibility of the US.



In respect of pre-September 11 foreign policy objectives, she confirmed the “determination to confront the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; ... improving America’s relations with the world’s great powers; and, to change an Iraq policy”. Rice also indicated that these objectives were subject to the primary objective to eliminate al Qaeda. Finally, she placed a war in Iraq in the context of the ‘war on terror’ as a “broad war ... confronting the nexus between terror and weapons of mass destruction.”

Immediately after September 11 Rice identified Iraq as a key target in the ‘war on terror’. On 13 September 2001, she chaired a meeting of principals where they agreed that the overall message should be that anyone supporting al Qaeda “would risk harm” (9/11 Commission Report 2004: 331). Initially Rice did not mention Iraq in public, she became outspoken in promoting the invasion of Iraq as part of the ‘war on terror’, continually reiterating the Bush doctrine. After Iraq delivered its declaration on WMDs to the UN on 8 December 2002, Rice wrote an editorial for *The New York Times* on 23 June 2003 entitled, *Why we know Iraq is lying* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]). During a period of intense anticipation and media hype the title conveyed a clear message. Furthermore, in an interview with CNN’s Blitzer, she stated that there will always be some uncertainty about Iraqi WMDs, but “we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud” (Blitzer 2003 & Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]). The media widely reported this ominous statement. Even when WMDs could not be found for months after the invasion of Iraq, Rice maintained in an interview with Stephanopoulos of *ABC Network* on 8 June 2003 that, “there was plenty of evidence and plenty of assessments that they were there” (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace [s.a.]). She kept to the basic message that Iraqi WMDs threatened the US and the world. Rice’s influence on policy is also evident from the fact that, when Bush decided to declare the so-called Bush doctrine, he consulted with her and not with the other administration principals (Woodward 2002: 30). Her advocacy of the ‘war on terror’ and specifically the objective to invade Iraq rendered her a foremost public diplomacy agent to ‘sell’ the war.



## 2.6. THE MASS MEDIA

By virtue of its investigative objective, the media covers the 'war on terror'. An effective media policy has become an integral part of the politics of conflict and thus essential in the 'war on terror'. Therefore, Shpiro (2002), amongst others, points out that the media has become "a crucial battlefield" and argues that the timing of the first US military strikes against the Taliban on a Sunday, when people were free to follow events on television, "seems to have been planned according to television prime time rating schedules and not only by military necessity." The mass media willingly or unwittingly forms part of public diplomacy. White House officials therefore carefully manage and screen the messengers and the messages on television, deciding who from the administration would appear on the Sunday talk shows, the major television evening news and the morning programmes (Woodward 2002: 13).

In May 2005, Larry King of Cable News Network (CNN) conducted a series of interviews with primary public diplomacy agents. The format of the Larry King Live talk show is intimate and social with a sense of camaraderie rather than penetrating journalism. Yet, this show broadcasts around the globe under the banner of CNN International, which promotes itself as a news network with an objective global perspective. Reaching the domestic and international public makes it an ideal conduit for public diplomacy.

On 30 May 2005 Cheney and his wife appeared on this talk show. Conducted in a tone of admiration and familiarity, King asked for his comments on Amnesty International's condemnation of US actions in Iraq and Guantanamo. Cheney reacted that he "does not take them seriously" and described the incarceration of prisoners at Guantanamo as an operation of "a very sane and sound fashion" (CNN 2005c). Similarly, on 11 May 2005 Rice made the case of a principled US foreign policy based on the idea of the US as a 'beacon' to the rest of the world and argued that it is "America's fate, America's role, America's obligation to help people who were in tyranny to be free" (CNN 2005b). King did not challenge any of Cheney or Rice's premises, statements or opinions. The



appearance of administration principals on this show served to ‘tell America’s story to the world’, the stated objective of public diplomacy.

Furthermore, the Department of Defense, with the support of the White House, embedded journalists with US troops. The White House Press Secretary presented the arrangement as a sign of the Department of Defense “commitment to a free press” (The White House 2002c). Embedded journalists reported live from the military front and US Central Command in Qatar to CNN, the BBC, Sky News and a host of private television stations around the world. This strategy thus contained the content and discourse of the media. Ross (2003) recognizes that the impact of images cannot be overestimated and observes that the Iraq war was really two wars with the Arab media displaying one set of images of the conflict and US media another, each playing to different assumptions and audience biases.

Furthermore, there is a close relationship between the government and the media. For example, a pool of screened reporters also accompanies the President on Air Force One, as was the case on September 11, 2001. This closeness affords the President the opportunity to cultivate relationships and explain messages. Few journalists will compromise the opportunity of such closeness by being overtly critical of the President. This media sensitivity to the government’s position is illustrated by the fact that little footage of coffins of soldiers returning to the US had yet been broadcast on the major US television networks. A black-out in the media of these images underscores the upbeat and positive message on the war in Iraq.

Most policy documents, testimonies and academic articles considered by policy makers in respect of US public diplomacy stress the importance of engaging the private media (Beers 2003; Report of the Defense Science Board 2004). The media had become, if not an initiating or active agent, at least a vehicle for public diplomacy.

### **3. THE CONTENT**

Although a 'war on terrorism' had been contemplated before September 11, the attacks provided the impetus to pursue a 'war on terror' officially and publicly. As indicated earlier, two pivotal rationalisations form the basis of all public diplomacy information and messages, namely 'we're at war' and that the 'war on terror' is a just cause.

#### **3.1. 'WE'RE AT WAR'**

Although most international transactions are carried out by means of diplomatic bargaining, persuasion, offer of rewards, granting rewards, threat of punishment, and economic sanctions, "recourse to violence has been and continues to be an important characteristic of the international system" (Holsti 1995: 212). In the event of September 11, Bush declared: "We're at war". War was the only recourse considered with all other foreign policy instruments employed in pursuit of war. The option of targeted retaliatory attacks did not enter the discourse of public diplomacy. Conversely, public diplomacy information emphasized war and the list of targets considered legitimate in the 'war on terror'. Neither the media, the public, academia nor the Democratic Party as opposition party, questioned war as a point of departure. The global public also did not object to the war on the Taliban as the host of al Qaeda.

However, after the ousting of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the singular focus on war moved from Afghanistan to Iraq. For war to be the only foreign policy option for Iraq, evidence had to be provided that Iraq was linked to September 11. Therefore, after the war in Afghanistan the public diplomacy information focused on evidence of the 'eminent threat' posed by Iraqi WMDs to the US and all civilized people. Apart from the alleged link between September 11, al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration advanced the notion of a 'freedom agenda' for justification for a war in Iraq. As further justification, war seemed to have paid off. Rice proclaimed during her visit to Kabul, Afghanistan in 2004, that "[e]veryone can see Afghanistan's success" (US

Department of State 2006). Portrayal of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as successes paves the way for the 'long war' with the objective to democratize the world.

### **3.2. A JUST CAUSE**

Holsti (1995: 213) also points out that, although the legitimacy of force as foreign policy instrument had "rarely been questioned by those responsible", it had been questioned and often renounced by philosophers and reformers. Reformers such as De Groot developed the doctrine of just war, which seeks to define the difference between murder and just war (Kegley & Wittkopf 1993: 506). Six basic conditions determine a just cause or *jus ad bellum*: namely last resort, meaning that all other means of resolution have been tried; legitimate authority, meaning that the decision to go to war is made by a duly constituted authority; right intention, meaning the purpose of war is defence and not revenge; probability of success, meaning that there is a reasonable chance that the war will succeed at a reasonable cost of life; an appropriate goal, meaning that the objective is to restore peace that would be preferable to the conditions that were likely to materialize if the war had not been fought, and military purpose, meaning that war is permitted to resist aggression but not the change of the aggressor's type of government (Henkin quoted by Kegley & Wittkopf 1993: 507). Foreign policy makers are aware of the importance of the 'soft power' of having a just cause to pursue war.

In the case of the 'war on terror', Hills and Holbrooke (2001) repeatedly argued that the goal of US public diplomacy should be to persuade the public of the justness of its cause. US public diplomacy duly focused on providing information relating to conditions under which the use of military force will be considered justified. Firstly, US public diplomacy asserts the justness of the 'war on terror' on the basis of being the victim of September 11. The justification for the extension of the 'war on terror' to the 'freedom agenda' is based on US exceptionalism (beacon of democracy; leader of the 'free' world; commitment to international law; extraordinary US efforts to avoid pain to innocents).



Secondly, US public diplomacy asserts the justness of the 'war on terror' on the basis of terrorist attacks and threats of attacks. Against the background of September 11 public diplomacy introduced evidence of WMDs. Military weapons are considered 'ethically neutral', therefore the proposed objective for the use of weapons determines the justness of a cause (Holsti 1995: 214-215). However, the existence of international law in the form of the *Non-Proliferation Treaty*, 1970 and the *Geneva Gas Protocol*, 1925 challenges the notion of the ethic neutrality of WMDs. Therefore, Iraq's alleged possession of WMDs became the central issue in persuading the world of the justness of the plan to include Iraq in the 'war on terror'. Notably, the fact of US, India, Pakistan and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons did not enter public diplomacy.

Furthermore, a UN sanction of the proposed war in Iraq would have enhanced the portrayal of a just cause. Even if the US did not expect a UN sanction, engaging in the UN process enhanced public perceptions of the US pursuing a just cause. Therefore, as proposed by Cheney, the US made the UN the issue. US public diplomacy portrayed the UN stance on the war in Iraq as a failure, contrasted by US exceptionalism and leadership. The argument of war and concomitant case for justness provided a powerful framework for public diplomacy activities in pursuit of the 'war on terror'.

Considered against the operating guidelines indicative of public diplomacy, it is concluded that the US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' displays some of the criteria. These include policy advocacy; providing reasons rationale and context based on values and culture; being consistent and considered credible; using tailored messages for specific audiences; making use of the mass media; and seeking alliances and partnerships. However, the communications campaign is ambivalent in respect of the additional qualifying criteria, namely a commitment to dialogue and engagement (as opposed to one-way injection); engagement with a broad representation of the public; the pertinence of common international values and ethics (as opposed to American interpretation thereof); and the expectation of truthfulness and credibility.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The immediate focus of US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' was on short-term information activities, rather than long-term educational and cultural activities. Other modes of public diplomacy, such as head of state and government visits, official statements, staged media events and personal public diplomacy underscored the information put out by informational activities. Despite recent structural consolidations that evidently impaired US public diplomacy, the US still has extensive public diplomacy institutions to manage a high-intensity informational public diplomacy campaign. Furthermore, the Bush administration recognizes and utilizes the mass media as an important public diplomacy asset.

Although the *Shared Values* campaign undertaken by the Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs received most publicity and academic scrutiny, the thrust of the public diplomacy information activities were conducted by the President and the principals of the Bush administration. The President acted as the primary US public diplomacy agent, firstly in determining strategic foreign policy objectives, and secondly, as prime messenger of information promoting the 'war on terror.' The power and prestige as the President of the only superpower provided Bush with unparalleled credibility in the domestic and international arena. In respect of strategic policy, the President framed the 'war on terror' as foreign policy informed by September 11. However, evidence indicates that the tenets of the 'war on terror', namely to fight global terrorism, to advance an agenda for democracy, to change the Iraq policy and to strengthen US military power, emanate from pre-September 11 foreign policy. In respect of public diplomacy, the President introduced information that supports the 'war on terror' as US foreign policy, but specifically war as the appropriate foreign policy instrument. The President therefore focuses on information that could serve as evidence to justify the 'war on terror', but also the extension of the war in Iraq.

From 2001 to 2006, the 'war on terror' that targets terrorists and their host countries in terms of the Bush doctrine, evolved into the 'long war' that isolates terrorists and their



host countries by means of democratization in terms of the 'freedom agenda'. Two considerations in US foreign policy traditions inform the Bush doctrine as well as the 'freedom agenda', namely US exceptionalism and reliance on US military power. The hard power of US military power makes the options of the 'war on terror' and the 'long war' possible as foreign policy options for the Bush administration. However, the Bush administration realises that the soft power of public diplomacy may determine the margin of success of these foreign policies.

Apart from the President, principals in his administration such as the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Vice President, and National Security Advisor the President, also act as public diplomacy agents. Their positions, political power and prestige also lend them the credibility and access to the mass media to act as public diplomacy agents. The Under-secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs does not have similar positional power and prestige, but fulfils the institutional function. The principals follow the President's lead in translating foreign policy into public diplomacy through the systematic introduction of information to influence the domestic and foreign publics to support the 'war on terror'. However, the Vice President preempted the President's leadership in introducing the issue of the threat of Iraq's WMDs, indicating strong neo-conservative policy preferences in the Bush cabinet.

The content of US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' forwards two arguments: firstly, that war is the only appropriate response September 11; and secondly, that the 'war on terror' constitutes a just war. The information of US public diplomacy informs these two basic arguments. However, critics point to the ambiguity of the information introduced as evidence in US public diplomacy, ambiguity that may constitute propaganda. Therefore, the next part of this case study analyses the same informational activities in terms of against criteria that indicates the propagandistic properties of a campaign.



## CHAPTER 5

# THE 'WAR ON TERROR' IN THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY-PROPAGANDA NEXUS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Whether referred to as public diplomacy, strategic political communication or propaganda, the effects of these modes of mass political communications on the global society and international relations are pervasive. The political and societal impact of these phenomena therefore not only calls for a clarification of concepts, but also for continuous assessment of their meaning, power, relationships, role and effect on international relations and on the public and private lives of the global populace.

Propaganda theory provides the analytical context and indicates methods to identify propagandistic tendencies. Since the realist problem-solving perspectives and its underlying value judgment necessitate critical inquiry, this analysis is offered of the overlap between public diplomacy and propaganda.

### 2. THE 'WAR ON TERROR' AND PROPAGANDA

US policy makers were careful to detach public diplomacy from propaganda, as demonstrated earlier by the establishment of the USIA as a separate agency from the Department of State. However, critics often level allegations of propaganda at US public diplomacy. Nancy Snow (2002: 11), a former USIA employee, who turned into a critic of US public diplomacy, regards the USIA as the "US Government's de facto propaganda agency".

As an instrument of foreign policy, propaganda pursues state objectives through the mobilization of domestic and foreign publics. Where propaganda fits into the realist paradigm of international relations, critical analyses indicate the moral problematic of the structural power of propaganda. This analysis uses Elull's (1964) exposition of four propaganda strategies (referred to as 'techniques' by Elull) as the main criteria for analysis with Holsti's as collaborating criteria.

## **2.1. THE REPETITION OF IDEAS, IMAGES AND RUMOURS**

Framing an issue for propagandistic objectives involves a prolonged and hypnotic repetition of the same complex of ideas, images and rumours using a number of techniques such as name-calling, glittering generality, transfer, and 'plain folks'. The repetition strategy includes not only ideas and images but also repeated public appearances with selected individuals in selected settings. This strategy of repetition is reinforced by other strategies such as the exploitation of hate and resentment, self-justification, or using a scapegoat.

The Bush administration indicated September 11 as the rationale for the 'war on terror.' The central theme is war. The image of war is provocative and relies on supporting images such as a credible enemy, fear and victims. In pursuit of the 'war on terror' the Bush administration embarked on a prolonged and intense exchange of words and images, first with the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda organization, then followed by exchanges with the 'Axis of Evil' namely Iraq, Iran and North Korea, in particular with Iraq and Saddam Hussein. The information repeated in the public communications campaign underscored war as an instrument of US foreign policy. The rationale for war in Iraq was expressed in value-laden terms, images and rumours that were stated over a period of time in speeches, statements, video, brochures, policy documents and appearances on radio and television. Although critics of the war in Iraq, such as Perry (2003), consider many parts of the rationale as 'lies', Elull (quoted by Kellen in Elull 1973: viii) notes that modern propaganda "has long disdained the





ridiculous lies of the past and outdated forms of propaganda”, instead modern propaganda operates with “many kinds of truth – half truth, limited truth, truth out of context.” From a different perspective, in accusing Hussein of “corrupting the public record”, the OGC document, *The apparatus of lies*, underscores the notion that to lie or conceal the truth amounts to propaganda. The question thus arises: Did the Bush administration’s selection and presentation of information in its public diplomacy campaign also amount to ‘corrupting the public record’? As a modern communications campaign, ‘war on terror’ presents a complex interplay of variant degrees of truths, rather than outright lies.

The primary US public diplomacy agent, the President, thus led the strategy of repetition in which war was the central theme. In support, the 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 put forward the argument that “(c)alling the struggle a war accurately describes the use of American and allied armed forces to find and destroy terrorist groups and their allies in the field.” Furthermore, the commission condones “(t)he language of war ... (as it) ... evokes the mobilization for a national effort”. This statement indicates the importance to the Bush administration of the mobilization of the domestic public as well as the importance attached to language in communicating with the public.

Starting immediately after the attacks, from 12 September 2001, the President’s public statements constituted a discourse of war, publicly labelled as the ‘war on terror’. He declared the September 11 attacks “more than acts of terror”, but “acts of war” on freedom and democracy; the “enemy attacked not only our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world”; the anticipated ‘war on terror’ was a “monumental struggle of good versus evil”; and, “civilized people around the world denounce the evildoers” (Bush 2001a). Ultimately, a discourse of war entails attempts of legitimization in respect of the victim, the enemy and the threat.

In respect of the victim, continuous reference to the September 11 attacks frames the US as the legitimate victim. The legitimacy of the US as victim did not automatically extend to a ‘war on terror’. Therefore, on 18 September 2001, the White House Press



Secretary reported to the media that, during a phone call, the President and the UN Secretary-General, “agreed that the attacks were against all freedom-loving people and that all nations should join in the fight against terrorism” (The White House 2001c). This statement co-opted the support of the UN Secretary-General on the side of the US, thus serving to legitimize the ‘war on terror’. After the attacks, the President began to portray the world as divided into two parts: one civilized, freedom-loving and ‘for’ the US; and the other side, evildoers who hate freedom-loving people, and ‘against’ the US. The initial support of the US by the UN Secretary-General played into this portrayal of the world of simply two sides. These world views, ideas and images were repeated in subsequent Presidential speeches and reinforced by his appearing with selected heads-of-state or government, individuals and groups.

Appearances with heads of state or government of the ‘coalition of the willing’ and Muslim states indicate to the domestic and global publics support for the ‘war on terror.’ Bush frequently appeared with British Prime Minister Blair (April 2002), the most supportive member of the ‘coalition of the willing’ in public. During such an appearance, on 6 April 2002 Bush praised Blair for his “courageous leadership” and the UK because, “[n]o nation has been stronger in fighting global terrorism than Great Britain” (Bush 2002b). Similarly, appearances and news conferences with leaders of Middle East and Islamic states, for example President Megawati of Indonesia (September 2001, October 2003), King Abdullah of Jordan (September 2003), President Musharraf of Pakistan (February 2002, June 2003), and President Mubarak of Egypt (June 2002) sent a message to the Muslims of the world because all expressed their commitment to the ‘war on terror’. Furthermore, the invitation to the State of the Union Address, 2002 to the widow of a dead soldier “who gave his life for freedom” represents a symbol of the sacrifice the American people was making in the fight for freedom and liberty on behalf of all ‘freedom-loving people’. The presence of President Karzai of Afghanistan represented a liberated Afghanistan, an image testifying to the ‘successes’ of the ‘war on terror’. These appearances invoked and repeated images of support for the ‘war on terror’; of the bravery of the US in paying the price; and of the success of the ‘war on terror’.

As evident from the analysis of US public diplomacy, the principals followed the President's lead with war as the central theme and his portrayal of the 'war on terror' as a simple choice between good and evil. Therefore, they concentrated on the theme of war in the media, such as Cheney and Rice's statements on CNN in May 2005 broadcast to an international audience. The principals respected governmental officials with access to secret information and whose interpretation of events were ascribed high levels of credibility. Their statements on WMDs and in Iraq are considered credible testimonials. Furthermore, their portrayal of the issues at stake in the 'war on terror' was reinforced by the *Shared Values Initiative*, and the booklets and brochures produced by the Under-secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs discussed earlier. Critics, like Fandy, an Egyptian media analyst who served briefly as a consultant to the campaign, "charged that (the Shared Values Initiative) seemed expedient, insincere, and likely to inflame anti-American sentiments" (Johnson & Dale 2005). The use of testimonials by administration principals to substantiate the rationale for the 'war on terror' was therefore combined with the 'plain folks' technique used in the *Shared Values* campaign in which US public diplomacy attempted to speak to the Muslims of the Middle and Far East through ordinary Muslim Americans.

In respect of the enemy, in the State of the Union Address, 2002 the President added a reference of the "Axis of Evil" to the reference of 'evildoers', thus invoking the memory of the Axis powers of World War II, and ultimately the image of a world war. Bush redirected the attention of the world from al Qaeda to North Korea, Iran and Iraq. In the next State of the Union Address, 2003 he called for the US and its friends to "defend the safety of [its] people and the hopes of all mankind" (The White House 2003a). He continued the repetition of the image of a divided world of wise and free nations and oppressive governments that harboured terrorists. These images resonate emotionally with most people all over the world, albeit with distinct interpretations. As was pointed out, Schiller (in Snow 2002: 23) argues that against the background of the US history of anti-colonial revolution, the words freedom and liberty are powerful words, the "national expression since the First World War." By extending this argument internationally, it is



argued that the community of nations also deems these words to be powerful and provocative. Therefore, Bush's expressions of US foreign policy goals as 'bringing democracy and liberty to the world', is likely to gain favourable domestic and international consideration. Conversely, if goals are expressed in terms of self-interest, US public diplomacy is likely to fail.

Subsequently, in pursuit of the war in Iraq, the President and his principals reverted to the 'war on terror' to provide the rationale for the war in Iraq. The main arguments for the war in Iraq were firstly, that Iraq was in possession WMDs that ultimately threatens American citizens on US soil; and secondly, that Saddam Hussein provided aid to the September 11 high-jackers. To identify Hussein as a legitimate target in the 'war on terror', the US government had to convince domestic and foreign audiences of a linkage between the September 11 attacks, al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. Critics of the war in Iraq, such as Kaufmann (2004: 7), discern "critical manipulation" in redefining the Saddam Hussein as a regional threat to a terrorist threat on the US. In the State of the Union Address, 2003 two months before the invasion of Iraq, the President linked Saddam Hussein with WMDs, also alleged in the White House document, *A decade of deception and defeat*, 2002. On 26 August 2002, Vice President Cheney linked Saddam Hussein with WMDs, suggesting that he could subject the US and its Middle East 'friends' to 'nuclear blackmail' and argued that "there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction" (quoted by Hanley 2005). In repeating the image of threat, Cheney (CNN 2002) concluded that therefore, "the risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action."

Pursuant of the war in Iraq, Bush stated on 7 October 2002 that "[f]acing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud" (The White House 2002f). Against the background of these ominous predictions of an imminent threat, the Bush administration continued to present its rationale for the invasion of Iraq. It considers as 'reasonable intelligence assessments' statements that Saddam Hussein tried to buy uranium in Niger; that the aluminum tubes were proof of a nuclear programme; that Iraq's WMDs were hidden in



Syria; and that the IAEA report indicated that Iraq could be as little as six months away from making nuclear weapons. These claims were made by the administration principals on Sunday television talks shows, for example on 8 September 2003 by Rice on CNN's, *Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer* (CNN 2003) stating that, "Saddam Hussein had had and still possesses and used weapons of mass destruction, that he was actively pursuing weapons of mass destruction." Cheney made similar statements on NBC's *Meet the press* (Gellman & Pincus 2003). Rice's use of the imagery of a "mushroom cloud" and Cheney asking listeners to "imagine a September 11<sup>th</sup> with weapons of mass destruction" was broadcast through the mass media to the global public. Subsequent evidence refuted these ideas, but the Bush administration attributed the failure to find WMDs to intelligence errors, rather than adapting intelligence to a war strategy. However, the Wilson/Plame incident confirmed that the Bush administration was informed of the falsity of the Niger lead before the President's 2003 State of the Nation Address. However, during this address, Bush stated that Powell would present evidence of Iraq's illegal weapons programme. It is argued that the President, and in fact all his principals, were aware of the fact that information disseminated in the US mass media would reach the global public.

Despite refuting evidence, on 5 February 2003, in the address to the UN Security Council, Powell gave the Bush administration's "most extensive account of the aluminum tubes" (Gellman & Pincus 2003). The UN thus served as a global platform to repeat the images in support of the 'war on terror' and the war in Iraq. The link between al Qaeda and Hussein was never proven and nuclear weapons were never discovered, thus confirming Kaufmann's charge of 'threat inflation' and 'critical manipulation' on the part of the Bush administration.

Since the start of the war in Iraq, the President and his principals maintain the 'war on terror' as comprehensive foreign policy objective, underscored with powerful images of the victim, the enemy and the threat. For example, in the speech to the National Endowment for Democracy on 6 October 2006, Bush urged the audience to "remember the calling of September 11 ... to confront this mortal danger to all humanity and not tire



or rest until the war on terror is won ... to stand by those who stand up for the liberty, justice and humanity” (The White House 2005c). On 18 December 2005, the President put it to the nation that “the terrorists do not merely object to American actions in Iraq and elsewhere, they object to our deepest values and our way of life” (The White House 2005e). He continued that if the US was not fighting the terrorists in Iraq, “they would be on the offensive, and headed our way”. Bush thus continued the repetition of images, attesting to the victimhood of the US, the irrationality and evil of the terrorists, and of an imminent threat to the US on US soil.

The aforesaid indicates a definable strategy of a prolonged repetition of September 11 as the point of the departure for the ‘war on terror’. To extend the ‘war on terror’ to Iraq depended on the repetition of the idea that Saddam Hussein had WMDs, and on the idea that he was linked to the September 11 attacks. The image of a ‘war on terror’ undeniably provokes fear, and, as Lakoff (2004) points out, the “word terror activates fear”. The discourse of war strengthens fear, which ultimately invokes hate, resentment, and self-justification, and *vice versa*.

## **2.2. THE EXPLOITATION OF HATE AND RESENTMENT**

Elull posits that in the exploitation of resentment the adversary is framed as the single cause of the problem. Furthermore, he argues that this procedure needs only be suggestive, and “depends on the collective fixation on these emotions on a given adversary” (Elull 1964: 367). Ultimately, hate and resentment is exploited through the technique of repetition and also contribute to the creation of fear and the feeling of self-justification.

The September 11 attacks shocked the US and global public, leaving them insecure. The President’s interpretation of events as war placed the discourse of war into the public domain. A war, however, requires a legitimate enemy defined by wrongdoing and evil and a victim defined by innocence and the moral high ground. US public diplomacy information presented a simple image of the US as the victim and terrorists as the



enemy. However, as the 'war on terror' evolved, one enemy morphed into another. As the alleged perpetrators of the attacks, al Qaeda was the immediate enemy but, through its link with al Qaeda, the Taliban also became an enemy. Hate and resentment was leveled at the Taliban because of its political links to al Qaeda. Notably the people or government of Saudi Arabia, the country from where the majority of the perpetrators originated, were not designated as an enemy. The Bush administration did not implicate Pakistan, whose security forces had been the sponsor of the Taliban (Mamdani 2004: 159-161), in the mass media. Furthermore, information on CIA recruitment of Bin Laden for the mujahideen and earlier tacit US approval of the Taliban (Mamdani 2004: 132 & 160) did not form part of the information offered to the public through the mass media. Blame, hate and resentment appear to have been selectively apportioned through the application of various degrees of truths. For example, on 3 October 2003, Ambassador Djerejian, the Chairman of the US Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, addressed journalists at the Washington Press Centre on the report known as *Changing minds, winning peace*. Djerejian referred to enemies "who hate" the US as "political Islamists", "extremists" and "terrorists". The choice of these terms not only indicates hate and resentment but serves as self-justification. The Bush administration and the mass media stereotyped the popular notion of a radical Islam.

In respect of a victim, the image of the victims of the September 11 attacks symbolized the victimhood of the US. The publication of the brochure with photos of the human destruction of September 11 graphically portrayed US victimhood to the world. Furthermore, Hills and Holbrooke (2001) recommended personalizing the victims of the attacks by publicizing the names, national origin, and families of Muslims who died in the attacks. It is argued that these information activities contributed to feelings of resentment and hate that were ultimately transferred to Saddam Hussein.

Furthermore, for the US, the event of September 11 became a 'sphere of sacredness' as defined by Elull. Internationally, due to the widespread sympathy of the global public, a similar 'sphere of sacredness' developed almost instantaneously. This 'sphere of sacredness' inhibits the ability of the domestic and global publics to be critical of the





information emanating from the Bush administration. Arguably, this 'sphere of sacredness' contributed to a widening dichotomy between victim and enemy, which in turn exacerbated feelings of hate and resentment towards the designated enemies.

In respect of the enemy, the President initially focused on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, for example referring to Osama bin Laden as "the ultimate parasite" (Bush 2003). After the war in Afghanistan, the focus of the 'war on terror' shifted to Iraq and Saddam Hussein replaced al Qaeda and the Taliban as the enemy. Blame, hate and resentment previously levelled at al Qaeda and the Taliban were transferred to Saddam Hussein. To identify Saddam Hussein as a legitimate enemy required what Kaufmann (2004: 32) refers to as 'threat inflation' as was evident from the 2002-2003 public debate on the US foreign policy towards Iraq. The Bush administration transformed the debate from the existing consensus that Iraq's regional aggression could be contained, to the new issue of potential attack on the United States. During the President's news conference on 13 March 2002 he portrayed Iraq as a nation that "is not conforming to agreements that it made in the past, a nation which has gassed her own people in the past, a nation which has weapons of mass destruction and apparently are not afraid to use them" (Bush 2002a). These charges that, Iraq "is a nation run by a man who is willing to kill his own people by using chemical weapons, a man who won't let the inspectors into the country, a man who has clearly something to hide", were repeated during the same and subsequent news conference. For example, during the news conference of 6 April 2002, both Bush and Blair repeated these charges almost verbatim as both "recognize the danger of a man who's willing to kill his own people harboring and developing weapons of mass destruction ... Saddam Hussein, is a leader who gasses his own people, goes after the people in his neighborhood with weapons of - chemical weapons [*sic*] " (Bush 2002b). These charges were later transformed to charges of Saddam Hussein being a threat to the US on US soil.

Furthermore, Bush's speech to the UN General Assembly on 12 September 2002 was a direct address to the representatives of the global populace since it contained powerful imagery and cues. He outlined a chronology of Iraq's transgressions set against moral





obligation of “the urgent duty of protecting other lives, without illusion and without fear”, and of UN Security Council resolutions to be “more than wishes”. Alleged transgressions included specific charges that “al Qaeda terrorists escaped from Afghanistan and are known to be in Iraq”; that Iraq “retains physical infrastructure needed to build nuclear weapons”; that Iraq “has made several attempts to buy high-strength aluminum tubes used to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon” (The White House 2002d). Ultimately, he concluded that “Saddam Hussein’s regime is a grave and gathering danger ... [to] suggest otherwise is to hope against evidence”. In the setting of the UN, which was “born in the hope that survived a world war” (The White House 2002d), the President of the sole superpower and the ‘beacon’ of democracy was representative of the ultimate ‘testimonial’ to the nations of the world; a testimonial that demonstrated the transfer of the hate and resentment of the US to Saddam Hussein.

The ‘evidence’ of WMDs and links between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein provided by Iraqi defectors were included in the information presented in speeches and news conferences. However, the fact that the Iraqi National Congress (INC), which provided the information was sponsored by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was not made public. The Rendon Group, a public relations or ‘perception management’ firm, hired by the CIA created the INC to instigate dissent against Saddam Hussein within Iraq (Rendon 2005). For example, the ‘information’ for the 20 December 2001 headline of The New York Times, *An Iraqi defector tells of work on at least 20 hidden weapons sites*, was provided by a defector provided by the INC, but who failed a CIA lie detector test (Rendon 2005). This information was relayed to the global stage through broadcasters such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and newspapers, and became part of the reservoir of information quoted in US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’ (Rendon 2005). Although the OGC also pointed out Saddam Hussein’s misdeeds against his own people ultimately, he was linked to al Qaeda and September 11. However, subsequent investigations by US government agencies such as the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the 9/11 Commission found no evidence of substantial cooperation between Iraq and al Qaeda during Hussein’s rule.

As the 'war on terror' evolved into the war in Iraq, Saddam Hussein thus became the personification of evil and threat. The selective use of evidence to juxtapose the victim against the enemy indicates an exploitation of hate and resentment to rationalize the war in Iraq. Subsequently, even after US admittance that there was no WMDs in Iraq and no link between Saddam Hussein and September 11, Saddam Hussein is still portrayed as a legitimate target of the 'war on terror'. For example, on 18 December 2005 the President admitted that the US "did not find those weapons ... the intelligence turned out to be wrong ... Yet it was right to remove Saddam Hussein from power ... captured and jailed, [he] is still a raging tyrant" (The White House 2005e). US information presented to the mass media framed Saddam Hussein as the evil enemy in contrast to the blameless victims of September 11.

### **2.3. THE EXPLOITATION OF SELF-JUSTIFICATION**

Elull (1964: 367) argues that the will to self-justification, which is the need to feel justified, authenticated and purified, is latent in every individual. The will to self-justification is a manifestation of people's desire to belong to the mass, and for the individual, identification with the mass confirms being 'right'. The exploitation of the will to self-justification therefore also relies on the selection of facts to serve as evidence of being right. The opinion (endorsement or criticism) of esteemed persons or institutions, or the appeal to authority, referred to as testimonials (Holsti 1995: 158), serves as evidence of being 'right' and therefore the will and need for self-justification. Few opinions can compete with that of a head of government of the sole superpower which had been projected as the 'beacon of democracy', and in respect of foreign policy, principal governmental officials such the ministers of foreign affairs and defence. The mass media facilitates such testimonials in news reporting but also in presenting the context through its choice of opinions to air and broadcast.

The will to self-justification is expressed through an appeal to powerful moral values. In the case of war, the rationale suggests tenets of just war theory and existing global governance values as set out in the UN Charter. The realist premise of foreign policy,



that national security is the prime responsibility of a state, is expressed in value-laden terms. The will to self-justification also depends on the creation of a scapegoat with propaganda offering “ready-made scapegoats ... whom it is lawful to kill” (Elull 1964: 367). The provision of evidence therefore serves a dual purpose, namely to attain victimhood and to frame an enemy. This is enhanced by value-laden rhetoric. The US portrayal of itself as the victim and various enemies as evil was indicated, but with the provision of evidence enhanced the will to self-justification. The claims on WMDs eventually gave way to the humanitarian rationale of liberating Iraqis from tyranny.

Set against information presented as intelligence facts, the Bush administration repeatedly and publicly proclaimed that US foreign policy as such was not set on war with Iraq. When the US Congress voted to authorize the President to go to war against Iraq on 16 October 2002, Bush stated, “I have not ordered the use of force. I hope the use of force will not become necessary”. During the same address he repeated that the goal of the US was “to fully and finally remove a treat to world peace and to America ... Hopefully we can do this without military action” (Bush quoted by Danner 2005). Consider these statements against Rice’s opening Statement to the 9/11 Commission, 2004, that pre-September 11 US foreign policy included the objective to change the Iraq policy. As previously pointed out, the 9/11 Commission Report also stated that immediately after the attacks, Bush considered Saddam Hussein’s regime to be a probable perpetrator. This indicates that well before September 11 the Bush administration, if not set on regime change, considered Saddam Hussein to be a prime US foreign policy issue.

Furthermore, the minutes of the secret meeting of the British Prime Minister with senior ministers and advisors on 23 July 2002 (published in *The Sunday Times*, London, 1 May 2005), reveals that eight months before the invasion of Iraq, after a visit to the US, the head of Britain’s ML-6 intelligence service reported, that, “[m]ilitary action was now seen as inevitable” by the Bush administration (quoted by Strobel and Walcot 2005). Strobel and Walcot (2005) point out that this declaration was made at the same time that the Bush administration declared that no decision had been made to go to war.



During this meeting the British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, a close colleague of then Secretary of State Powell, also declared that “Bush had made up his mind” (Strobel & Walcott 2005). The memo of the meeting also points out that the case for war against Iraq “was thin ... Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMDs was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran”. The memo concludes that the “intelligence facts were being fixed around policy” (Danner 2005; Strobel & Walcott 2005). In addition, Woodward (2002: 49) reports that before the September 11 attacks, “the Pentagon had been working for months on developing a military option for Iraq.” This evidence confirms that the public statements of the Bush administration that it did not want to pursue war in Iraq were not accurate but served as self-justification.

The minutes of the 23 July 2002 meeting also emphasized Blair’s insistence in April 2002 during consultations with Bush for “preparation of the domestic opinion” for the war in Iraq, stating that “[an] information campaign will be needed which has to be closely related to an overseas information campaign designed to influence Saddam Hussein, the Islamic World and the wider international community. This will need to give full coverage to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein including his WMDs, and the legal justification for action”. Clearly Blair was mindful of the importance of public opinion and therefore attempted to influence US information to emphasise self-justifications in the run-up to a war in Iraq. Also consider this evidence with that of Woodward (2002: 49), that Rumsfeld raised the possibility to take advantage offered by September 11 to “go after Saddam immediately.” Woodward (2002: 16) reports that Bush has been looking for ways to get rid of Hussein since he took office. Mindful of the public opinion implications, Bush requested that discussions about Iraq remain low-key, “I knew what would happen if people thought we were developing a potential war plan for Iraq”, he explained to Woodward (Cooperative Research [s.a]). This evidence does not correspond with the self-portrayal of US public diplomacy as the beacon of democracy reluctantly forced into war, but appears to indicate a government set on war but aware of the need for self-justification.



Further evidence that the decision of the Bush administration to start the war in Iraq was not dependent on domestic democratic processes or international institutional requirements, is demonstrated by the fact that in September 2002, six months before the invasion of Iraq, a huge air assault “dropped precision-guided munitions on Saddam Hussein’s major western air-defense facility” (Scahill 2005). That was a month before the US Congress authorized war in Iraq, and according to the London *Sunday Times*, the “RAF and US aircraft doubled the rate at which they were dropping bombs on Iraq in 2002 in an attempt to provoke Saddam Hussein into giving the allies an excuse for the war” (Scahill 2005). However, on the eve of the invasion, on 8 March 2003, Bush stated in his national radio address that the US was doing everything it could to avoid war in Iraq (The White House 2003b). This statement was made “after a year of systematic, aggressive bombings of Iraq during which Iraq was already disarmed by force, in preparation for the invasion to come”, a fact demonstrated by Pentagon statistics of 78 offensive air strikes against Iraq in 2002 alone (Scahill 2005). Again, this evidence does not correspond with the US’ self-portrayal of a wronged democracy reluctant to revert to military action. Together with the fact that no WMDs were found by both the UN weapons inspectors and the US military, this evidence refutes the grounds of US self-justification. Furthermore, these statements were repeated, also portraying the US as the ‘beacon’ of democracy fighting for world peace and liberty and Iraq as a threat to the US and the world.

The Bush administration successfully influenced the debate in favour of a preventative strike against Iraq by utilizing the authority advantage the government agencies had in respect of foreign policy and national security policy (Kaufmann 2004: 41). In pursuit of the ‘preventative war’ against Iraq, the authority advantage of the President, the White House, government agencies and administration principals, enabled the Administration to control the agenda which in turn assisted in reframing the issue from containment to deterrence. Observers such as Kaufmann (2004: 42) argue that White House ‘control’ was compounded by the fact that throughout the Iraq debate mainstream press and even opposition politicians often simply accepted administration claims uncritically. This authority advantage allowed claims with especially weak evidentiary bases or even

discredited claims to be persuasive to the public. In pursuit of self-justification, the authority advantage of the White House also allowed it to attack the credibility of independent experts such as the IAEA and its Director-General, Mr ElBaradei. The discrediting of this agency and its Director-General has since been proven misguided as he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2005.

Assessing evidence on Iraq's alleged WMDs, Gellman and Pincus (2003) discern a pattern in which Bush and Cheney, amongst others, "made allegations depicting Iraq's nuclear weapons programme as more active, more certain and more imminent in its threat than the data they had would support." They charge that on occasion the Bush administration withheld evidence that did not conform to their views and that the White House seldom corrected incorrect statements. Such 'evidence' was combined with the statements that Saddam Hussein had been involved in September 11 and possessed WMDs, the main tenets rationalizing US self-justification.

The authority advantage of officials is enhanced by the management and control of the release of intelligence information. In a democracy countervailing institutions such as the press, independent experts and opposition parties mediate against governmental breaches. In the case of the 'war on terror', only the White House has direct access to all national security recourses and was therefore in control of intelligence information. Furthermore, according to Kaufmann (2004: 37), "at least some of the favorable analyses were produced by coercion of intelligence agencies and analysts". The White House used its control of intelligence information in four ways. It constantly published leaked intelligence analyses that favoured its threat claims while suppressing contrary analyses; important intelligence information tending to undermine administration claims was suppressed or distorted; administration officials publicized claims provided by Iraqi exiles supported by the CIA and who could benefit from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein; and administration officials coerced intelligence agencies and analysts to provide politically useful conclusions (Kaufmann 2004: 37-39). The release of intelligence information found its way directly into the mass media and into public

diplomacy information relayed through speeches to the UN, press conferences, television appearances and radio addresses.

The failure of the countervailing forces can be attributed to the 'new sphere of the sacred' which was transferred from the September 11 attacks to the 'war on terror' as US foreign policy objective. Kaufmann (2004: 44-45) argues that the political opposition was largely mute or supportive in the Iraq case, probably due to fears "of seeming weak in the face of an external threat"; and the press and independent experts tending to report administration claims without stating refuting evidence. He also indicates that in Iraq numerous reporters signed agreements that allowed the military to censor their reporting. These reporters may have feared loss of access to official sources if they publicized critical stories. This is an example of flak as proposed by Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model. Independent experts failed to present "comprehensive critiques" and few critics received wide media attention. Kaufmann (2004: 45) argues that, "as with the media, ideologically conservative think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute made it possible to confuse the debate by contradicting any expert criticism with experts of apparent equal authority." Furthermore, the general public lacks the knowledge and information to evaluate experts' qualifications or disinterestedness, which undermines the possibility that any criticisms might be seen as authoritative or have much persuasive effect. Thus, the media model in the US inhibited equal access for dissenting voices to the mass media and mostly reflected the views of the epistemic community. This contributed to the strengthening of existing power and power structures.

Furthermore, critics (Center for Media and Democracy 2001) point to the attacks of pro-war commentators on dissenters from the Bush administration's military campaign, by describing them as a 'cult of national suicide' or as the 'fifth column' allies of Osama bin Laden, and by calling for action to suppress 'anti-American rallies' on college campuses.



In the context of September 11, domestic opponents to the ‘war on terror’, such as politicians, mainstream media, public intellectuals, or high profile citizens such as movie stars were considered soft on national security, even anti-American. For example, after Chomsky’s anti-war standpoints were publicized, he was referred to as the “Prof who hates America” (Bozell & Brent 2002). The vilification of dissent was possible in the context of a sphere of the sacred, namely the creation of an entire category of events, beings and ideas beyond criticism. The vilification of dissent reinforced US self-justification, which was transferred to the global level with Bush’s declaration that “you’re either for us or against us”.

Gordenker (2004: 283), amongst others, argues that the quality of the debate on the ‘war on terror’ and the war in Iraq had been characterized by “(i)gnorance, refractory rhetoric, a paucity of relevant academic research, a lack of mediating intellectual institutions to provide translations to policy relevance, and an ability to the part of Washington to set the agenda for public discourse combine to overshadow the fundamental precepts of multilateralism.” Limited access to and selective release of information together with limited access to the media by opposing voices have had a detrimental effect on the quality of debate, and ultimately on public opinion.

Think tank analysis of the ‘failure’ of US public diplomacy influenced proposed legislation and entered media reports. For example, in a publication of the Heritage Foundations, Johnson and Dale (2003) consider public diplomacy information activities the ‘meat and potatoes’ of public diplomacy that transmit “balanced, independent news to captive people who have no information source independent of a repressive government”. The observation of the presupposition of repressed target audiences is problematic. For example, in the case of the 2003 US war in Iraq, apart from the Muslim public, the opinions of the established democracies such as the British, French, German, South African and Australian public were essential to build a ‘coalition of the willing’. These states do not have repressive governments but the support of their public was important to ‘allow’ their governments to join the coalition.



The will to self-justification is further demonstrated by the Bush administration's view on propaganda, where US strategic communication efforts are declared to be informational and educational, or counterpropaganda, but similar efforts by Iraq were denounced as propaganda. Ultimately, the will to self-justification is based on the identification of the self as a blameless victim in contrast to a legitimate and evil enemy. The will to self-justification contributes to the formation of a good social conscience and to the conviction that own actions are just, good and in the spirit of the truth.

#### **2.4. TRANSFERRING EVIL TO THE ADVERSARY**

The propaganda technique referred to as frustration scapegoat, entails a process in which all that is wrong is leveled at a specific target, whether it is a nation, group of people or an individual. In exploiting the scapegoat device, the adversary "becomes the generalized incarnation of evil" (Elull 1964: 367). From a communications perspective, Shpiro (2002) argues that "conflict media policies ... almost always sought to demonstrate moral, legal or religious superiority of the one side in the conflict, public legitimacy was also often sought by demonizing the enemy." He elaborates that the trend to demonise nations has been replaced by a trend to demonise political leaders, rather than the general population. Ultimately, this trend manifests in the doctrine of 'regime change'. The creation of a scapegoat is taken to its extreme through the creation of fear, and by convincing people of an impending or imminent threat to their lives and way of life. In creating a scapegoat, the propagandist relies on the exploitation of hate and resentment and on the exploitation of self-justification, ultimately reinforced by the repetition of specific ideas and images.

In the first and most controversial example of transferring evil to an adversary in the 'war on terror', Bush called for a 'crusade' against terrorists and named the US response 'Operation Enduring Crusade' - a name interpreted as inflammatory by Muslims (Critchlow 2003). This was followed by repeated references to the two sides of the 'war on terror', good against evil; freedom-loving against freedom-hating; democracy against authoritarian regimes; and fighting for freedom and liberty against nuclear

blackmail. Spiro (2002) also identifies two elements of US counter-terrorism media policies, namely “personal demonizing of Bin Ladin and the emphasis on the plight of women in Afghanistan.” As explained, as the ‘war on terror’ evolved, Saddam Hussein replaced al Qaeda (and temporality even bin Laden) as scapegoat, with the final qualification an alleged link with al Qaeda. This strategy is evident from discussion of the exploitation of hate and resentment and the will to self-justification, but the President’s reference to Saddam Hussein as “a student of Stalin” further illustrates the trend to transfer evil to the enemy, of creating a scapegoat (The White House 2002f).

In pursuit of military action against Iraq as part of the ‘war on terror’, the OGC produced a document titled *Apparatus of lies: Saddam’s disinformation and propaganda 1990-2003* in January 2003. In addressing “the use of propaganda by Saddam Hussein and his regime”, the document urges “governments, the media, and the public ... to consider the regime’s words, deeds, and images in light of this brutal record of deceit.” It alleges Hussein’s “disinformation and propaganda campaigns” by the “use of elaborate ruses and obvious falsehoods, covert actions and false on-the-record statements, and sophisticated preparation and spontaneous exploitation of opportunities” (The White House 2003a).

The allegation of Iraqi propaganda entails four charges, namely crafting tragedy, exploiting suffering, exploiting Islam and corrupting the public record. The OGC set its allegation of Iraq’s ‘crafting tragedy’ against the norms of international law by referring to Article 51 of the *Protocol of the Geneva Conventions*, thus indicating US support and adherence to international law. The OGC claimed that the baby-milk factory in Baghdad bombed by coalition forces was used by the Iraqi regime as a biological weapons site. Furthermore, the OGC charged that Iraq’s blame of the UN and US for the starvation and medical crises in Iraq constituted the ‘exploitation of suffering’, alleging staged mass baby funerals for the global media. The Iraqi allegation that the upsurge of birth defects and cancers was due to the use of the armour-piercing ammunition made from depleted uranium by US forces in the Gulf War, was countered by the document and instead contributed to the “regime’s use of chemical weapons from 1983 to 1988,

including mustard gas and nerve agents” against Iraqi Kurds and Iranians during the eight-year war. Furthermore, the OGC considered that Hussein’s public portrayal of himself as a devout believer amounted to ‘exploiting Islam’. The document used the statement of the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* who stated in a CNN interview that “Saddam is an opportunist ... not really a devout Muslim” as a testimonial.

Finally, the document charged Hussein of ‘corrupting the public record’ with examples of a combination of on-the-record lies, covert placements of false news accounts, self-inflicted damages, forgeries, and fake interviews. The document also alleged that the Iraqi government falsely claimed that its citizens were starving from the imposition of UN sanctions “while generating significant amounts of money from the Oil-for-Food Program”. This document, emanating from the public diplomacy office of the White House, framed Hussein as an evil propagandist. However, it selectively dealt with the truth, such as references to the baby-milk factory and the use of mustard gas and nerve agents against the Kurds. The US version of the baby-milk factory remains a highly disputed version, whereas critics point to the fact that the gassing of the Kurds was probably perpetrated with weapons originating from the US during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s (Mamdani 2004:181). The provision of technology to Iraq to build chemical and biological weapons during the Iraq-Iran war is substantiated by the *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book*, 2003 (quoted by Rampton & Stauber 2003: 19). Amongst others, Shriver (2004/5) also points out that Rumsfeld negotiated US military aid to Iraq in 1988 at the same time as Saddam Hussein was gassing the Kurds. The public in the Middle East was aware of US “sale to Iraq of dual-use equipment for the Iraqi nuclear programme, and US diplomatic support in the UN security Council to protect Iraq from condemnation for its use of poison gas against Iran” (Khalidi 2004: 43). The public diplomacy document, *Apparatus of lies: Saddam’s disinformation and propaganda 1990-2003* demonstrates the selective use of facts to create a scapegoat in the person of Saddam Hussein.

Creating a scapegoat by transferring evil to the enemy in turn creates fear. The shock of September 11 created an atmosphere of fear and crisis. The authority advantage and



control of intelligence information of the executive branch of the Bush administration in transferring evil to al Qaeda and subsequently Saddam Hussein, turned a fear of al Qaeda into a fear of Saddam Hussein. Rice's statement that "there will always be uncertainty about how quickly (Hussein) can acquire nuclear weapons ... [but] we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud" epitomized the attempt to create fear.

Set against the strategies of propaganda proposed by Elull, the 'information' of the US communications campaign in the 'war on terror' indicates a propensity toward propaganda. The 'information' used by the public diplomacy agencies and agents indicates the repetition of ideas, symbols and images; a will to self-justification; the exploitation of hate and resentment; and creation of a scapegoat and fear. It is argued that a communications campaign that meets these criteria constitutes propaganda rather than public diplomacy. As argued by Elull, propaganda creates a verbal universe where people do not react on a material situation but on myth created by propaganda. In the case of the 'war on terror', Iraq did not have WMDs anymore, there was no link between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, and Saddam Hussein did not pose a threat to Americans on US soil, yet the US supported the Bush administration's war in Iraq. Despite the various degrees of truths of the information disseminated by the Bush administration and despite this dichotomy between the reality and the reality as perceived by the public, it is argued that the mass media contributed to the success thereof because the media acted as conduit for the message.

### **3. THE MASS MEDIA**

Herman and Chomsky's (1994) application of a propaganda model to US case studies is useful to assess the role of the media in a democracy. It offers a critical perspective on the complex relationship that exists between the mass media, the government, and the business sector. Like Elull and others, they contend that the mass media serves as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general public.



Controlled and controlling relationships between the media and government in democracies is harder to ascertain in democracies “where the media actively compete, periodically attack and expose corporate and governmental malfeasance, and aggressively portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and general community interest” (Herman & Chomsky 1994: 1). The mass media of some democracies, in particularly of US and UK, have a global reach, which renders it an ideal vehicle for public diplomacy or propaganda. The utility of the mass media does not only derive from its global reach but in a democracy, also from a perceived credibility.

Rationalist academic inquiries do not address probable undemocratic tenets of the proposed government-media-business relationship; the inequality of resources; the unequal access to mass media; and ultimately, the effect on democracy. Conversely, Herman and Chomsky’s (1994: 2) propaganda model focuses on the inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass media interests and choices and the filters it provides. They pointed out that these elements interact with and reinforce one another, and also interact with and reinforce the propaganda techniques outlined above. US policy papers recognize the role of the media and specifically advise the use of the media in the ‘war on terror’. Therefore, the use of the private mass media is of major concern in this study.

The centrality of the mass media in the communications campaign in the ‘war on terror’ is indicated by the *Wall Street Journal* report (quoted in Rampton & Stauber 2003: 11) that “US officials have scrambled to persuade local editors and broadcasters across South Asia and the Middle East to carry stories intended to soothe anti-American passions and win tolerance for military action ... (to) include features on the importance of Muslims in American life and hard news reports on evidence linking Mr bin Laden to the attacks”. Furthermore, Curtis, the producer of the BBC series *The power of nightmares: The rise of the politics of fear*, 2005 cites the “suspiciously circular relationship between the security services and much of the media since September 2001: the way in which official briefings about terrorism, often unverified or unverifiable by journalists, have become dramatic press stories which – in a jittery media-driven

democracy – have prompted further briefings and further stories” (quoted in Beckett 2005). For example, after September 11, the National Security Advisor, Rice, requested broadcasting networks not to air unedited videos of Osama bin Laden, a request complied with (PR Watch 2001). Curtis also points out that few of those ominous announcements are retracted if they turned out to be baseless, and alleges that there was no fact-checking about al Qaeda.

Furthermore, the banning of the independent Arabic broadcaster Al Jazeera from Iraq after reporting on the May 2004 siege of Fallujah indicates more direct and robust forms of government censorship in the ‘war on terror’ (Glantz 2005). In view of the bombing of the clearly marked Al Jazeera offices in Baghdad by US forces Glantz (2005) contends that as more and more Western journalists pull out of Iraq, the US military specifically targets the remaining Iraqi journalists and the Pan-Arab journalists when they broadcast controversial material. However, the ‘targeting’ of journalists by US soldiers are disputed by other journalists like Rainey (2005). Apart from alleged targeting of journalists, the parallel track of US military propaganda through Radio Sawa amongst others also compromises the quality of information relayed to the Arabic public.

A main feature of the mass media coverage of the war in Iraq was the Pentagon policy of ‘embedding’ reporters with military units, mainly UK and US reporters. Embedded reporters were dependent on the US military for safety and access to information and locations, which compromises the independence and objectivity of their reports. Apart from tacit governmental censorship in the form of requests, the issue of self-censorship also comes into play. Embedded journalism therefore epitomises media dependence on the government. The US military became the primary source of information relayed through the mass media to the global public. *Via* the mass media, the US military portrayed the level of technological advancement of its weapons as so smart and applied with such precision that it would only inflict unintended ‘collateral damage’ on civilians, thus implying the just war norm of target discrimination (Shriver 2004/5). However, despite these explanations of the US military, on 10 December 2003, after the declaration of the end of formal hostilities, the American authority in Iraq ordered a stop

into an investigation of the Iraqi Minister of Health to determine the number of Iraqi deaths (Shriver 2004/5). Shriver (2004/5) draws attention to the contrast between mass media reporting of US soldiers killed and Iraqis killed. The mass media reports the names, ages, home towns and ranks of US soldiers killed, whereas the number and personal details of Iraqis killed remain uninvestigated, unreported and unknown to the public. This phenomenon of apparent discrimination between victims by the mass media corresponds with Herman and Chomsky's proposition of worthy and unworthy victims, indicating the moral relativism of the mass media.

Furthermore, it appeared that in the run-up to the war in Iraq, the media, knowing or unwittingly assisted the Bush administration through its silence on issues such as the 2002 attacks and the "full air offensive" (Scahill 2005) in the months before the invasion officially began. In addition, UN Assistant Secretary-General, Hans Von Sponeck, also stated that as far back as 1999, the US and Britain pressured the UN not to call attention to the military attacks on Iraq (quoted by Scahill 2005). The issue of the silences of the private media comes to the fore with the revelation of the minutes of the July 23, 2002 UK cabinet meeting referred to previously. Yet, as a media advisor of *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting* (FAIR), 2005 indicates, few outlets other than the *London Times* (5 January 2005) pursued the statement that the 'facts were being fixed around policy'. Although CNN referred to the fact that the memo received little attention in the media, it did not offer more coverage itself (FAIR 2005), indicating the silence of the media.

The application of Elull's model of propaganda to the informational activities of the US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' as relayed to and by the mass media indicates a propensity towards propaganda. US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' is a manifestation of realism in the domain of diplomacy. The realist approach of US foreign policy is evident from Senator Hyde's (2002), statement that the "peoples of the world represent an enormous reservoir of strategic resources waiting to be utilized ... one can best advance our own interests not by persuading others to adopt our agenda but by helping them achieve their own freedom." People are therefore seen as similar to other



commodities or resources like oil. In the case of the Middle East, which is specifically relevant for this analysis, Nye (2004a: 140) argues that historically the US followed a realist policy “that sought stability through support of autocrats and commerce.” It is argued that the pursuit of this realist foreign policy has been a contributing factor to terrorism or to so-called radical Islam. It is evident that the realist approach of US foreign policy in the Middle East had political and security consequences not only for the US, but more so for the people of the region and the rest of the globe.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Strategic political communication is growing in scope and intensity. Such communications goes by many names with public diplomacy a more recent term than propaganda. Public diplomacy has not amassed the negativity associated with propaganda, in particular in the US. A comparison of the origins and definitions of these concepts indicates a nexus between public diplomacy and propaganda. However, a comparison of the three defining dimensions of the two concepts indicates a confluence between these practices. The dimensions of public diplomacy are just as suitable for propaganda, with a real probability of public diplomacy morphing into propaganda.

In the application of a more critical approach to this case study, US public information in the ‘war on terror’ was subjected to Elull’s four-point criteria. The analysis of evidence indicates that the thrust of the information disseminated in the US public diplomacy campaign to ‘sell’ the ‘war on terror’ constitutes propaganda. The evidence further indicates that the US public diplomacy institutions and agents use the mass media to ‘speak’ to the global populace.

The evident deterioration of communications between political entities and communities and the subsequent increase of violence stimulate questions not addressed by or not answerable through a rationalist approach. The reality of the escalation of violence and threats of violence in the ‘war on terror’, in Iraq, in the Middle East and elsewhere challenges neo-conservative practitioners and rationalist theorists to reconsider their



premises of 'reality'. It is clear that the 'war on terror' did not enhance security in the US, the Middle East or the rest of the world. It is argued that the 'war on terror' undermines democracy and thus contributes to anarchy, legitimizing the realist premise of an anarchical world. In the context of the deteriorating security situation of the peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq and the collapse of political order, a revision is required of the theories and practices that contributed to the situation.



## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION

Two trends, namely the recent improvisations of practices generally referred to as public diplomacy; and the theoretical imprecision on public diplomacy in International Relations, provided the impetus for this study. These two trends pose practical as well as theoretical questions that are particularly pertinent in the case of US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror'. Apart from the fact that 'the war on terror' is a current application of public diplomacy, charges of propaganda also deem it as being controversial.

This study postulates that, due to the political and academic dominance of the US, the 'war on terror' will set a precedent with practical and theoretical implications. Therefore, the 'war on terror' pertains to the main research question: What is public diplomacy? Furthermore, three sub-questions informed the main research question, namely: How does the US as a superpower practice public diplomacy? How does the US public diplomacy manifest in the 'war on terror'? Does US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' constitute propaganda? The main question required a theoretical analysis of the meaning, nature and scope of public diplomacy, distinguishing it from propaganda. The sub-questions require an empirical analysis of US public diplomacy and a case study analysis of its application in the 'war on terror'. As a counter approach to the rationalist approach and realist dominance in International Relations, this study applies a critical approach to the theoretical and empirical analyses and the case study.

The theoretical analysis of public diplomacy indicates that, in spite of a growing body of critical analyses, realist dominance retains the state as the main organizing principle. The primacy of the state in foreign policy, which is the analytical domain of public diplomacy, determines the nature and objectives of diplomacy and by extension the nature and objectives of public diplomacy and propaganda. As is the case with propaganda, realism opens up public diplomacy for strategic political communication



aimed at self-interest and the attainment of hard power. Public diplomacy and propaganda share the same analytical domain, namely foreign policy. However, public diplomacy is defined by diplomacy, which is a distinct foreign policy instrument from propaganda. Definitions of diplomacy indicate peace as the primary objective. Definitions of diplomacy also indicate space for non-state actors that clearly illustrate the shortcomings of a state-centric realist approach.

To clarify the concept and practice of public diplomacy, this study has identified seven operating principles or criteria for public diplomacy, namely policy advocacy; inter-agency coordination that provides a comprehensive public diplomacy strategy; credibility; consistent and tailor-made messages for specific audiences; utilisation of the mass media; alliances and partnerships and genuine commitment to dialogue and engagement. Conversely, a range of negative techniques indicates propaganda, but this study has identified four primary propaganda techniques, namely the prolonged and hypnotic repetition of the same ideas, images and rumours; the exploitation of hate and resentment; the exploitation of self-justification and the introduction of a scapegoat. However, although the application of these criteria to the three dimensions of public diplomacy and propaganda indicated a nexus, there are clear distinctions.

Institutionally, public diplomacy is openly practised by known governmental agencies, often the Department of Foreign Affairs, while propaganda is generally practised covertly by the military. In respect of activities, public diplomacy involves a multilevel two-way engagement with the target audience. The content of public diplomacy is designed to foster mutual understanding and enlightenment for the purpose of building and maintaining peaceful relations that will address foreign policy objectives on both sides. Propaganda activities involve negative one-way techniques based on psychology. The content of propaganda is designed for legitimization and social control to satisfy the foreign policy objectives of the propagandist. In respect of the target audience, in both practices the target audience is instrumental in realising foreign policy objectives. However, they differ in their treatment of the target audience. Public diplomacy engages the target audience in dialogue and interaction in recognition of

alternative values and cultures. With propaganda, the target audience is a means to a material objective.

This study has identified three dimensions for analysis of public diplomacy, namely institutions/agents, activities/content and the target audience. A similar structure was identified for the analysis of propaganda, namely the institution/propagandist, activities and the target audience. Analyses of these dimensions in respect of both practices confirm a confluence, or public diplomacy-propaganda nexus. It has been indicated, however, that the main point of divergence is diplomacy, because the propagandistic roots of public diplomacy have been replaced by a more recent diplomatic legacy. Definitions and the institutional framework of diplomacy indicate that, as a foreign policy instrument, diplomacy resolves conflict by maintaining friendly relations. The objectives of propaganda, namely the realization of material and political gains, undermine peace as an institutional objective of diplomacy.

The empirical analysis of US public diplomacy has found that it largely corresponds with the theoretical model set out above. In respect of institutions, the President determines the macro level foreign policy that directs objectives, and ultimately also directs public diplomacy. The President also acts as a primary public diplomacy agent although the Department of State is the lead agency with the Secretary of State being the most important diplomat directing the Under-secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The power and prestige of the President of the superpower lend him or her credibility, which is a primary operating principle for public diplomacy. Principal administration officials such as the Vice President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, and the National Security Advisor follow the lead of the President. US public diplomacy activities are informational, educational and cultural and are executed by the IIP and the ECA from within the Department of State. Because of the negative perception of propaganda in the US, the independence of public diplomacy has been enhanced by the separation of the USIA from the executive power. However, the independence of public diplomacy was compromised with the incorporation of the USIA into the Department of State. The creation of the OGC further undercuts the independence of US public diplomacy.

The empirical analysis of US public diplomacy also indicates that foreign policy objectives determine the content or message. US history reflects marked phases but with a common, overarching foreign policy tradition, namely the application of US exceptionalism by means of military power. The message changed from anti-German and anti-Nazi war propaganda at the inception of US public diplomacy during the World Wars to anti-Communism during the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War, the message changed from anti-Communism to market-liberalisation, and after September 11, to the 'war on terror'. However, throughout these phases the US has projected the notion of exceptionalism, enhanced by the application of military power.

Furthermore, the empirical analysis of US public diplomacy indicates that, in contrast to the appreciation for public diplomacy elsewhere, US public diplomacy waned in the aftermath of the Cold War. However, at the time of September 11 the level of anti-Americanism has already caused alarm within the US. September 11 graphically illustrated the security risk of anti-Americanism. September 11 prompted the government to re-evaluate public diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy. However, this campaign became controversial with many charges of propaganda. In the crisis atmosphere of September 11, informational activities became the main focus of the public diplomacy campaign.

The two-part case study on the 'war on terror' considers these informational activities against the criteria for public diplomacy and propaganda. A chronological presentation of events indicates the complex interplay of institutions, activities and content. The analysis is restricted to the lead institutions and the principal actors, and includes think tanks and the media.

In reaction to September 11, Bush immediately pronounced a 'war on terror' as the primary foreign policy objective. Although the 'war on terror' was placed in the context of September 11, evidence indicated that a 'war on terrorism' and a policy change in respect of Iraq already was a pre-September 11 foreign policy objective. The National

Security Strategy, 2002 re-defined these foreign policy objectives into the 'war on terror.' The Bush doctrine gave impetus to the 'war on terror' as the broad foreign policy objective. The Bush doctrine evolved into the 'freedom agenda'. Where the Bush doctrine pursued the punishment of terrorists and those who harbour them, the freedom agenda pursues democratization of the Middle East and ultimately the globe.

The primary public diplomacy agent in the 'war on terror' is the President. Bush acted as primary agent through press conferences, speeches, and public diplomacy institutions such as the newly created OGC. Considered a credible messenger, Bush's messages were relayed to the domestic and global publics through the mass media. To project credibility in the 'war on terror' Bush pursued UN sanction for military action in Afghanistan and Iraq. The UN provided a podium to address the representatives of all nations, and through the mass media, the global populace directly. The administration principals reiterated his messages that hinged on two conclusions, namely that September 11 constituted war, and that the cause of the US was just.

Measured against the criteria identified for public diplomacy, the campaign in part constituted public diplomacy. Firstly, public diplomacy clearly advocated the foreign policy objectives of the 'war on terror'. Secondly, activities between agencies were coordinated from the White House that created a comprehensive strategy. Thirdly, the campaign relayed tailor-made messages to specific target audiences. Specific activities focused on the Middle East, Muslims and Iraqis. Fourthly, the mass media was utilized to speak to the global public. Finally, the message that war was the only recourse and that the cause of the US was just, was consistent. The consistency of this message created credibility that is essential to public diplomacy. Despite these indications of public diplomacy campaign, it had major shortcomings that undermined the campaign and ultimately, its long-term objectives.

The second part of the case study, the application of the criteria for propaganda to the same informational campaign, indicates strong evidence of propaganda. Firstly, the US did not commit to a multilevel two-way dialogue with Muslims and the public in the





Middle East. Information dissemination was a one-way process that included broadcasts to the Iraqi people that was controlled by the US military. Secondly, the utilization of the media was compromised by the implementation of the practice of embedded journalists. All major television and radio reporting was thus controlled by the US military. Thirdly, evidence that emerged in the UK indicates that, despite claims to the contrary, the US produced evidence to fit a prior decision to go to war. The carefully cultivated and consistent message of the public diplomacy campaign, that the US was following the UN process and would only resort to war as a last resort, was proven untrue. Fourthly, this evidence was exacerbated by the use of propaganda techniques, specifically in respect of the war in Iraq. Most prominently, the campaign created a scapegoat in the person of Saddam Hussein. The international community agreed that Saddam Hussein was a menace to his people, but, the US linked him with al Qaeda and September 11, both postulations proofed to be false. References by Bush and his principals to Saddam Hussein exploited hate, resentment and fear towards him. Conversely, the US was portrayed as a blameless victim who was fighting for democracy and freedom on behalf of the civilized peoples of the world. In this exploitation of self-justification the facts such as the provision of WMDs to Saddam Hussein and the ISI did not come to light. The mass media followed this silence on ambiguous US foreign policies. Furthermore, the consistency of the messages, for example about the linkage between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein and charges of Iraqi WMDs, constituted the propaganda technique of the repetition of the same ideas and rumours. However, the message was inconsistent in respect of the objectives of the 'war on terror', changing from the pursuit of al Qaeda to pursuing WMDs in Iraq to democratising Iraq. In the application of these propaganda techniques, the campaign was consistent, though, in relaying the premises on US power and exceptionalism to the target audience.

The case study indicates that although the campaign conformed to some criteria of public diplomacy, there were real shortcomings. Together with the high incidence of propaganda techniques a propensity towards propaganda is displayed. This study therefore concludes that it is more accurate to refer to the strategic information

campaign in respect of the 'war on terror' as propaganda. These findings have theoretical as well as practical implications.

In respect of the theoretical relevance, it is argued that rationalist analyses based on the premises on primacy of the state open up public diplomacy to propagandistic intrusions. State-centric premises thus legitimise state violence and political control in foreign policy, which is incompatible with the principles of diplomacy and democracy. Furthermore, the political and academic dominance of the US in International Relations translates this practical precedent of the US into theory. In pursuit of the realist perspective, so-called public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' will be analysed as 'what is' with little consideration of 'what ought to be'. It is therefore proposed that, in International Relations, more prominence be afforded to critical analysis to address the problem of state-centric analysis and US academic dominance. In respect of the nature of public diplomacy, critical analysis will reveal propagandistic trends that will serve to demarcate and define public diplomacy.

The application of propaganda in the 'war on terror' holds practical implications for the US, the Middle East as well as the international community. Firstly, in respect of the US, indications are that anti-Americanism in the Middle East and elsewhere increased. Furthermore, the violence and instability in Afghanistan together with indications of civil war in Iraq undermine US interests in the Middle East. Military commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere verge on overreach that undermines the US position in respect of the nuclear negotiations with Iran and North Korea respectively. Such overreach thus compromises US hard power. Ultimately, the stated objective of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq has not been realised, undermining US credibility, which compromises US soft power. The 'war on terror' as foreign policy objective directing public diplomacy as policy instrument, has ultimately undermined the soft as well the hard power of the US.

A second practical implication of the 'war on terror' is that the target audience in the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq, has been subjected to war. Furthermore,

the prospect of an end to the civil war and violence is not good. Apart from the destruction of life, livelihood and security, US treatment of the target audience negated their right to life, and their democratic right of freedom and self-determination.

The 'war on terror' also has practical implications for the international community. Firstly, the 'war on terror' undermined the geo-political balance in the Middle East, a region that is important to most nations in respect of energy provision and religious connections. Secondly, propagandistic pursuit of the 'war on terror' by the US undermines multilateral efforts to fight terrorism. Thirdly, as the leader of the West, the US has compromised dialogue and engagement of other states and communities with Muslims in general and the states of the Middle East. Ultimately, it undermines the democratic ideal of the international community. When democracy is undermined, the democratic principles of diplomacy are undermined. When diplomacy is undermined, peace is undermined.

In view of the detrimental implications of the application of propaganda in public diplomacy campaigns, this study thus proposes a reappraisal of public diplomacy by scholars and practitioners. A theoretical reappraisal concerns a clear demarcation and distinction of public diplomacy from propaganda. This study proposes that the point of departure be diplomacy. Critical analyses of the power of existing structures and relationships will not only enhance realist analyses, but will also illuminate ambiguous assumptions.

The severity of the practical implications, in particular the loss of life, security, and the detrimental effect on the prospect of democracy for the target audience, urges practitioners to reconsider the application of propaganda techniques in public diplomacy. Such practice undermines a real commitment to dialogue and engagement between foreign publics that fosters the knowledge and understanding for peace and democracy.



US public diplomacy and in particular the current application in the 'war on terror' informs both the theoretical and the practical dimensions of the main research question: What is public diplomacy? Therefore, this study concludes that the theoretical analysis indicated that the concept public diplomacy is defined by diplomacy. Diplomacy determines the scope and nature of public diplomacy and also distinguishes it from propaganda. The sub-question on US practices indicates a history of dialogue and engagement with foreign publics that served foreign policy objectives well in spite of earlier unpopular foreign policies. Whilst the precedent set by the US in the 'war on terror' is frustrating the attainment of its current foreign policy objectives, realists may argue that the US overcame similar situations in respect of its policies in Vietnam and South America. However, as with Vietnam, the US may find that its public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' compromised its credibility with foreign public that will frustrate the attainment of foreign policy objectives.

Finally, this study indicates the importance of analyses of public diplomacy in International Relations. With further technological and communications advances, globalization and the integration of the global constituency, the practice of public diplomacy will become more important in foreign policy and international relations. Policy makers will increasingly seek the consent of the global populace. Ultimately, the outcomes of public diplomacy campaigns will force target audiences to recognize such campaigns and to engage on terms that harness their basic human rights.



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## SUMMARY

### THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE “WAR ON TERROR”

by

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As a theme of study, public diplomacy has been at the margins of International Relations and Diplomatic Studies, despite recent increased academic interest. However, studies largely remain descriptive and within the rationalist/realist approach, creating theoretical shortcomings. Furthermore, in practice, new manifestations referred to as public diplomacy, have entered the field. A recent manifestation, the case of US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’ is viewed as being propaganda. This campaign has thus challenged existing ideas on public diplomacy. This study postulates that due to the political and academic dominance of the US, this case will have far-reaching theoretical and practical implications.

These theoretical shortcomings and new manifestations pose the main research question: What is public diplomacy? Two sub-questions inform this question: How does the US practice public diplomacy? How does US public diplomacy manifest in the ‘war on terror’? A three-step analysis addresses these questions: firstly, a theoretical analysis of the concept public diplomacy with propaganda serving as a counter-reference; secondly, an empirical analysis of US public diplomacy; and, thirdly, a case study of US public diplomacy in the ‘war on terror’. The case study follows two steps, applying a critical approach to reach beyond rationalist premises. The case study has

been restricted to information activities of the principal public diplomacy agents and institutions.

The theoretical analysis of public diplomacy indicates that, despite the fact that both practices are foreign policy instruments, and that they have common roots and common dimensions that create a public diplomacy-propaganda nexus, public diplomacy is clearly distinguished from propaganda by its diplomatic essence. The analysis has identified criteria distinguishing public diplomacy and propaganda respectively. The empirical analysis of US public diplomacy indicates that it conforms to the theoretical model. However, US public diplomacy is distinguished by its macro level foreign policy projection of exceptionalism and reliance on military power. The first step of the case study, applying criteria for public diplomacy, has revealed that US public diplomacy in the 'war on terror' only partially constitutes public diplomacy. The second step, applying criteria for propaganda, has revealed significant evidence of a propaganda campaign. This study therefore concludes that the information activities in the 'war on terror' constitute propaganda more accurately.

In the light of the negative socio- and geo-political effects of the 'war on terror' in the Middle East, this study proposes that academic analysis clearly demarcates public diplomacy from propaganda by means of the principles of diplomacy, and also that policy makers refrain from propagandistic practices in public diplomacy.

**KEY TERMS:** public diplomacy, diplomacy, propaganda, foreign policy, international relations, information activities, educational and cultural activities, public diplomacy agent, target audience.



## SAMEVATTING

### **DIE OPENBARE DIPLOMASIE VAN DIE VERENIGDE STATE VAN AMERIKA IN DIE “OORLOG TEEN TERREUR”.**

deur

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Ondanks die onlangse opbloeï in akademiese belangstelling, is openbare diplomatie nie 'n algemene studietema in Internasionale Verhoudinge of Diplomatieke Studies nie. Studies is ook meesal van 'n beskrywende aard en vanuit 'n rasionalistiese / realistiese benadering, wat dus teoretiese tekortkominge tot gevolg het. In die praktyk het nuwe manifestasies wat as openbare diplomatie voorgestel word, ook na vore getree. As voorbeeld, kritici beskou 'n onlangse manifestasie, die openbare diplomatie van die Verenigde State van Amerika (VSA) in die 'oorlog teen terreur' ('war on terror'), as propaganda. Hierdie manifestasie daag bestaande idees ten op sigte van publieke diplomatie uit. Hierdie studie maak die stelling dat, weens die politieke en akademiese oorheersing van die VSA, hierdie manifestasie verreikende teoretiese en praktiese gevolge het.

Die teoretiese tekortkoming tesame met nuwe manifestasies in die praktyk, stel die navorsingsvraag: Wat is openbare diplomatie? Twee sub-vrae lig die navorsingsvraag toe: Wat is die openbare diplomatie praktyk van die VSA? Wat is die VSA praktyk in die 'oorlog teen terreur'? 'n Analise met drie stappe spreek hierdie vrae aan: eerstens, 'n teoretiese analise ten opsigte van die konsep openbare diplomatie met propaganda as teen-verwysing; tweedens, 'n empiriese analise van die openbare diplomatie van die VSA; en derdens, 'n gevallestudie ten opsigte van die VSA praktyke in die 'oorlog teen terreur'. Die gevallestudie het twee stappe en is 'n kritiese benadering wat meer as die





rasionalistiese veronderstellings wil aanspreek. Die gevallestudie was beperk tot die inligtings aktiwiteite van die belangrikste openbare diplomاسie instellings.

Die teoretiese analise dui aan dat die gemeenskaplike oorsprong en dimensies van publieke diplomاسie en propaganda 'n openbare diplomاسie-propaganda nexus skep. Alhoewel beide praktyke buitelandse beleidsinstrumente is, word dit duidelik onderskei deur diplomاسie wat die grondslag van openbare diplomاسie vorm. Die teoretiese analise dui verdere kriteria aan wat openbare diplomاسie en propaganda onderskei. Die empiriese analise van openbare diplomاسie praktyke van die VSA dui daarop dat dit tot 'n groot mate met die teoretiese model ooreenstem. Dit word egter onderskei deur die buitelandse beleid van 'US exceptionalism' gerugsteun deur militêre mag. Die eerste deel van die gevallestudie, naamlik die toepassing van kriteria om openbare diplomاسie te onderskei, dui daarop dat die VSA veldtog gedeeltelik aan die vereistes voldoen. Die tweede deel, naamlik die toepassing van kriteria wat propaganda aandui, toon beduidende aanwending van propaganda tegnieke. Hierdie studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat die inligtingsveldtog van die VSA in die 'oorlog teen terreur' eerder as propaganda geklassifiseer kan word.

In die lig van die negatiewe sosio- en geo-politieke gevolge van die 'oorlog in terreur' soos dit in die Midde Ooste manifesteer, stel hierdie studie voor dat akademiese analise duidelik onderskei tussen openbare diplomاسie en propaganda. Diplomاسie is die kern van hierdie onderskeid. Hierdie gevolge noodsaak ook beleidsmakers om nie propaganda in die plek van openbare diplomاسie aan te wend nie.

**SLEUTELTERME:** openbare diplomاسie, diplomاسie, propaganda, buitelandse beleid, internasionale betrekkinge, inligtings aktiwiteite, opvoedkundige en kulturele aktiwiteite, openbare diplomاسie agente, teiken publiek.