

Murrow 100th Anniversary Conference - "Public Diplomacy and International Citizenship"

Monday and Tuesday, April 14-15, 2008

"Public diplomacy" generally has been viewed as a state-directed activity, referring to purposeful communication through the media and various non-state actors in order to influence the policies and behavior of other states, conceivably even to bring about "regime change." The notion of "international citizenship" was given its contemporary currency by former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans and by a number of like-minded governments, some of these emphasizing "human security" above "state security." The idea perhaps owes something as well to "cosmopolitan democracy" (David Held et al.) according to which the individual, rather than the state, is the center of international society, as distinct from the interstate system dominated by the great powers.

Which is, and should be, the touchstone of Public Diplomacy?—the "national interest," defined by state authorities, or the "human interest," determined by the spontaneous thoughts and acts of millions of individual persons (as well as NGOs, PVOs, corporations, unions, universities, and numerous other non-state entities) in the name of international or even universal (i.e., "human") interests, values, and norms? Who does, can, and should, say what "public diplomacy" even is? Who, properly, can participate in it? Who may conduct it? Can "public diplomacy," logically, ever be completely private in origin, implementation, and purpose? Could it be thought of, however, more broadly as a "social" activity—as a purposeful transnational activity carried out across a globalized world? But where does the initiative lie, with the state or with the people? Can responsibility be shared? Can cooperation be "contracted," or is it better left to "parallel" but independent action, when and where, and if, possible?

This polarity—an opposition of points of view and even of interests—is evident in much of the debate concerning Public Diplomacy, as conducted by the U.S. and many other governments around the world today. The interplay between positions is a dynamic one. It generates many questions: Who really "wields" public diplomacy—or "soft power" (with which "PD" sometimes is today identified, as the end toward which the means of PD are deployed by its practitioners)? *Whose* business, in the last analysis, *is* public diplomacy? That of political leaders and officials (the "state")—or citizens (members of the "public") themselves? Are those engaged in it mostly (national) patriots? Or (global-local) citizens of the world?

Can there be effective *partnerships* between the two (sides, interests, perspectives), without one or the other becoming predominant, perhaps compromising or even completely subsuming, rather than reinforcing and enhancing, the other? Are there useful roles for intermediaries to play in this field, a global public sphere? What—and who—might the facilitators, bridge-builders, or brokers be? UNESCO? Professional and scholarly associations? Or entirely new "PD" entrepreneurs?

This—the State or the Citizen as Diplomat—is the problematical theme underlying much current thinking and debate regarding Public Diplomacy at present.

The <u>primary purpose</u> of the conference is to elicit and facilitate the presentation of research, including faculty and student research (drawing upon seminar papers, M.A. and M.A.L.D. and Ph.D. theses, conference papers, etc.), in the field of Public Diplomacy, broadly conceived to encompass not just informational activity and communications systems and flows (and related techniques and technologies) but also educational exchange programs, cultural projects, foreign correspondence, the role of public opinion, government-business and government-civil society interaction, and inter-civilizational dialogues involving individuals and groups as well as governments and international organizations, at various levels and on different scales.

<u>Particular topics</u> on which panels have been proposed so far include: the various challenges facing officials conducting **government public diplomacy**, U.S. and other; **international exchanges** (educational, professional, cultural); diplomacy and **ICT**/media; PD and international **business**; the role of public diplomacy in **conflict situations**; and the public diplomacy of **international organizations** (UN system, WTO, other multilateral institutions). The "public diplomacy" of national political campaigns and the state branding efforts of "green" countries also have been suggested as possible panel topics for the conference. Other ideas may also be considered.