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Canada and the new public diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

We are witnessing a fundamental shift in how nations manage their international relations. National interests are advanced abroad through events and actions that go well beyond the classic diplomacy of communiqués, démarches, and aide mémoires. Foreign ministries must now devise programmes and muster complex coalitions involving the wider public aimed directly at specific problems rather than simply urge governments or international organizations to act. It is a cliché to say that the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the subsequent public relations campaign by the United States and its allies to win understanding in the Arab and Islamic worlds have changed 'everything.' Nonetheless, this tragedy has enabled public diplomacy, 'once the stepchild of diplomats,' in the words of David Hoffman, to assume its rightful place at the centre of diplomatic relations.[1]

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1 The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 prompted deep introspection about failing to understanding how the rest of the world perceived the United States, which, in turn, led to a broad public discussion on the need to reform United States public diplomacy strategy. Knowledgeable observers urged the government to make a commitment to public diplomacy as a central element of United States foreign policy. See David Hoffman, 'Beyond public diplomacy,' *Foreign Affairs* 81(March/April 2002), 84. A detailed blueprint for reform of American public diplomacy, published in July 2002, can be found in the Report of an Independent Task Force on Public Diplomacy, Council on Foreign Relations, available at

In this new world, knowledge, culture, and communications are the key, not only to technological progress and economic prosperity, but also to social cohesion and sustainable development. There is concern that the powerful engine of the global economy will roll over cultural diversity, fragile social and political systems, and state sovereignty itself. In this world of instant and ubiquitous communication, hyper text (a document on the World Wide Web that has links to other text, sound, images), and easy travel, the ideas, images, and values that motivate citizens take on an importance and power never known before. As Akihiko Tanaka says, 'word politics' is becoming more important in world politics.[2]

In other words, image counts for a lot in contemporary world politics. Whether a country needs to build international coalitions against terrorism, co-operate to protect the environment, attract foreign investment, or bring in foreign students, influencing foreign public opinion is critical to national success because, in the absence of substantial military or economic weight, most countries are the image or 'words' they project abroad. Their room to manœuvre is affected by their image, or soft power, so that all points of contact - whether promoting policies or exporting - will feed off this general image in both positive and negative ways.[3] The diplomatic advantage goes to countries that are able to present distinct voices or 'information edges,'[4] attract broad non-governmental support, and project three-dimensional national images. Forging relationships with citizens in other countries is now as important as talking to their governments. More than a decade ago, Allan Gotlieb, a former Canadian ambassador to the United States, summed up his experience: 'The new diplomacy, as I call it, is, to a large extent, public diplomacy and requires different skills, techniques, and attitudes than those found in traditional diplomacy.'[5]

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http://www.cfr.org/PublicDiplomacy_TF.html. The taskforce chair subsequently published an article on the report. See Peter G. Peterson, 'Using public diplomacy as a strategic instrument of foreign policy in the war on terrorism,' *Foreign Affairs* 81(September/October 2002).

2 Quoted in Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Power and Interdependence* (New York: Longman 2001), 221.

3 This point is made by Mark Leonard in *Public Diplomacy* (London: Foreign Policy Centre 2002); and in 'Diplomacy by other means,' *Foreign Policy*, September/October 2002, 48-56.

4 The term was coined by Joseph S. Nye and William A. Owens, 'America's information edge,' *Foreign Affairs* 75(March/April 1996), 20-36.

5 Allan Gotlieb, *'I' ll be with you in a minute, Mr. Ambassador' : The Education of a Canadian Diplomat in Washington* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991), vii.

This article examines the extent to which Canada as a middle power has embraced this new diplomacy and describes how Canada is positioned to develop the 'information edge' in its diplomacy. My thesis is that a middle power such as Canada, with a limited ability to influence the global public discussion, must give its image serious attention because Canada's global influence today depends increasingly on factors that transcend raw economic or military power and that appeal to public perceptions abroad.

Despite the severe budget cuts of the 1990s, Canada still brings formidable assets to the table: a bricks and mortar network of 160 embassies and trade offices abroad linked by the most advanced information technology infrastructure of any foreign ministry in the world; extensive experience with civil society groups on sensitive international trade and security issues; the enshrining of culture and values as a 'third pillar' of Canada's foreign policy following a parliamentary foreign policy review in 1995; and global leadership in providing all government services on-line. More generally, with an educated population, Canada has abundant knowledge capital; it defines itself as an inclusive multicultural society that is a beacon for immigrants; it has an enviable record of using new communications technology, such as the internet, to connect its citizens; and it is one of the world's premiere producers of television programmes, a fact that would presumably allow Canada to project its values further than other countries of similar size.

Paradoxically, despite these favourable conditions and characteristics, an examination of Canada's public diplomacy between 1998 and 2002 demonstrates the challenges inherent in attempting to project an accurate and complete national image that serves the national interest. Surveys show a large gap between the way Canadians view themselves (as an advanced and modern economy) and the way others outside the country perceive them (not as a high-tech economy). And, leaving aside the success of exercising soft power in support of human security goals such as the global ban on landmines, there is a growing gap between Canada's public diplomacy rhetoric (for example, its important role as a peacekeeper and mediator) and its ability to project influence in light of the cumulative decline in funding over the past decade for its international envelope (aid, the military, and the Canadian foreign service). Other public diplomacy challenges include Canada's federal structure, which means that the provinces also have a role in pro-

jecting Canada's image abroad, and the use of international broadcasting as an instrument of Canadian foreign policy. These challenges, some structural and some fiscal, mean that despite considerable public diplomacy advantages, Canada nevertheless risks being drowned out amid a cacophony of competing voices in the international arena. If this trend is not reversed, Canada can expect serious economic repercussions in the years ahead along with the further dissipation of its international influence. The prognosis is not all bleak. The short case study at the end of this article points to an attempt by Canada to develop a coherent public diplomacy strategy for its relations with Japan, one of its major diplomatic and economic partners.

WHAT IS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?

Simply put, public diplomacy is 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 advantage. In the words of Hans Tuch, it is 'a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.'[6] National goals and interests are communicated to foreign publics in a variety of ways, including international broadcasting, cultivation of foreign journalists and academics, cultural activities, educational exchanges and scholarships, programmed visits and conferences, and publications. It is not a one-way street, however. Gifford Malone expands the definition to include an understanding of others: 'If we strive to be successful in our efforts to create understanding for our society and for our policies, we must first understand the motives, culture, history, and psychology of the people with whom we wish to communicate, and certainly their language.'[7]

Whatever the definition, the essential point is that public diplomacy, both in its short-term (for example, media relations) and long-term (cultural programmes) varieties, is undertaken by official bodies of one

6 Hans Tuch, *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas* (Washington DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, 1990), 3. Tuch offers an excellent survey of slightly different definitions of public diplomacy, although all agree that for public diplomacy to exist it must be projected outside a country's borders by an official body.

7 Gifford D. Malone, *Political Advocacy and Cultural Communications: Organizing the Nation's Public Diplomacy* (Lanham MD: University of America Press 1988), 12.

state to persuade the publics of another state to regard the national policies, ideals, and ideas of the targeting state favourably.[8] What distinguishes public diplomacy from classic diplomacy is that the former's programmes are not exclusively state-to-state interactions, although they may include government officials as direct targets.

Public diplomacy activities may be formulated in direct support of a particular foreign policy objective. For example, most countries have 'foreign visitors' programmes, whether in their foreign or information ministries, that are designed to bring in foreign journalists and other elites for official tours in advance of important conferences or policy announcements. The purpose is to bring about greater understanding of, and a more favourable disposition towards, the host country's specific policies or initiatives. Other types of public diplomacy, particularly cultural and international education programmes, are not necessarily linked to specific near-term policy objectives; they help develop a three-dimensional image of a country that will lead to a more complete and balanced perception of the country's economic, political, and social development. As with any good public relations strategy, good will is built over time in targeted governments and publics alike so that there may be less friction on those occasions when interests diverge. In the words of a former senior official responsible for public diplomacy at Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT): 'A relationship with a solid foundation ... will be more reliable when the chips are down. And one of the best ways to foster a relationship in a non-threatening way is to engage in public diplomacy.'[9]

Public diplomacy is also distinct from (but related to) a foreign ministry's public affairs role, which often uses similar activities and techniques but directs them at its own citizens to help them interpret the outside world from a national perspective and to raise awareness of their country's international role. In Canada, a considerable number of the activities identified as 'public diplomacy' in official DFAIT documents are, in fact, communications and consultation programmes directed at domestic audiences. These range from dedicated consultation divisions, such as DFAIT's Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy

8 For a post-11 September recapitulation of the definition of public diplomacy, see Christopher Ross, 'Public diplomacy comes of age,' *Washington Quarterly* 25(spring 2002), 75-83.

9 Hugh Stephens, 'Public diplomacy in the 21st century,' *bout de papier* 16(spring 1999), 7.

Development, to efforts through DFAIT's Federal-Provincial-Territorial division to strengthen partnerships with other federal government departments and other levels of government on international issues of mutual interest. Indeed, the level of energies expended domestically to communicate Canada's international role reflects two key imperatives: to use Canada's international activities to highlight and promote Canada's success as a unified nation to Canadians and to show that DFAIT is linking its activities to broader national priorities.

In an increasingly 'connected' world it is difficult and, indeed, counter-productive for foreign ministries to run completely separate public diplomacy and public affairs tracks in their external communications activities, especially in Canada, which, given its 'liberal internationalist' foreign policy heritage, uses its roles in the world, whether in peacekeeping or aid-giving, to forge a national identity domestically. Because of Canada's close proximity to the United States and the spasms of national self-doubt this engenders, the reflection back to Canadians of foreigners' perceptions of them is an important element of Canadian nation-building.[10] Indeed, it could be argued that for a country such as Canada, re-affirming Canadians' sense of identity through the public-diplomatic advocacy of international humanitarian initiatives or Team Canada trade missions is just as important as projecting the nation's self-image to outsiders.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

A number of over-arching trends have increased the importance of both public affairs and public diplomacy in contemporary diplomacy and will affect any re-thinking of Canadian approaches. These include the increased importance of public opinion, the rise of a more intrusive and global media, increased global transparency brought about by advances in communications and the related phenomenon of a more activist civil society, and the rise of a global culture leading to a reflexive desire to protect cultural diversity.

In a globalized world, public opinion matters more than ever. With publics more distrustful of government and demanding greater transparency and input into policy-making, governments can no longer

10 I am indebted to Roman Waschuk of DFAIT's Policy Planning Division for this point.

count on 'spin' to overcome communications challenges.[11] With so many players and a news cycle of 24 hours a day, seven days a week, foreign ministries, like domestic departments, are under pressure to provide substance on demand, to be aware of and responsive to the public mood, and, in some cases, to refute aggressively misinformation and untruths in the public domain.

The change in the relationship between the state and its citizens is not just qualitative; it is also spreading across the globe. However imperfect in design, the sweep of democracy through eastern Europe, Russia, and Latin America since the late 1980s has led to a greater need to understand and manage the opinions of at least another half billion people. From a time in which contact with local civil societies was strictly circumscribed, we have moved to a point at which the rise of pluralism in previously closed societies has led to an abundance of interest groups that have to be taken into account when engaging in public diplomacy. In fact, more public diplomacy and greater advocacy skills are now required because there are more points of access in the policy-making process.

Of globalization's many effects, one of the most profound for diplomatic practice is the ability of citizens to access, use, and disseminate information. The explosion of information technology and communications infrastructures provides the public with the ability to research, engage, and advocate positions on a wide range of issues. It creates new competencies for citizen activism on a global scale. Increasingly, domestic issues such as crime, health, and the environment have become essential elements of global security. It is noteworthy that these domestic policy areas already have advocacy networks in place.

As the concept of security has broadened, the gap between what used to be domestic policy and foreign policy has rapidly closed, so that citizens' everyday concerns have become the concerns of foreign policy makers. And diplomats must take note if they are to resolve the non-traditional security issues that are high on the public's agenda because resolution requires much closer links with non-governmental organizations and the mobilization of public opinion at home and abroad.

11 I am indebted to Colin Robertson, consul general of Canada (Los Angeles) for this observation.

With an expanding and, at times, intrusive global media, what governments do and say abroad is playing back rapidly into public debates at home. As a result, diplomats are increasingly called upon to become good public communicators at home and not just when they are assigned to foreign postings. The closing of the gap between foreign and domestic policy in tandem with a more activist civil society is making public affairs with domestic audiences and public diplomacy with foreign audiences a central element of contemporary diplomacy.

Trade liberalization, the emergence of global media giants such as Time Warner/AOL, Disney, and Bertelsmann, increased mobility of people, and changing demographic patterns (exploding youth populations in the South) are creating global societies along with global markets. This has raised concerns that cultural homogenization, often interpreted as Americanization, will limit the ability of countries to maintain their cultural distinctiveness. On the other hand, as noted, the rise of new communications technologies such as the internet is creating virtual communities of interest in which people from different backgrounds can learn from each other and understand each others' experiences. Ease of transportation and digitalized communication is allowing closer and greater interaction. Through these encounters, people can build understanding to prevent conflicts based on ethnic, religious, or linguistic differences. It is also recognized that, rather than being a barrier, cultural diversity is a strategic resource that, in a global knowledge-based society, drives innovation, creativity, and reconciliation. It could even be conjectured that in the same way that the environment was held up in the 1970s and 1980s as essential to quality of life, by the 1990s cultural diversity was increasingly recognized as a focus of global strategies towards economic development.[12]

To reiterate, in this 'infosphere' of ubiquitous communication, with the twin forces of global culture and cultural diversity vying for ascendancy, the diplomatic advantage goes to countries that are able to present distinct voices and attract support based on their credibility. Globalization and the communications and media revolution have, according to Peter van Ham, 'made each state more aware of itself, its image, its reputation, and its attitude - in short, its brand.'[13] For

12 The above paragraph draws from internal DFAIT documentation. I am indebted to colleagues from the International Cultural Relations Bureau for making this available to me.

13 Peter van Ham, 'The rise of the brand state,' *Foreign Affairs* 80(September/October 2001), 3.

Canada, attention to its global brand or image is an essential part of its 'strategic equity.'[14] Reputation, goodwill, and credibility are keys to enhancing Canadian competitiveness - to attracting a greater share of global investment stock, recruiting the best immigrants, and wielding political influence. John Ralston Saul, in a seminal position paper on culture and foreign policy written for the 1995 parliamentary review of Canada's foreign policy, states that Canada's profile abroad is largely its culture: 'That is our image. That is what Canada becomes in people's imaginations around the world when the time comes for non-Canadians to buy, to negotiate, to travel. Canada's chance or the attitude toward Canada will already have been determined to a surprising extent by the projection of our culture abroad.'[15]

CANADA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY INSTRUMENTS

Since representation, advocacy, image-building, delivering messages, and interpreting and explaining are part and parcel of daily routines of diplomacy, it can be said that public diplomacy has always existed. What has changed is the emphasis placed on this facet of diplomacy. In the Canadian context, public diplomacy was recognized as a 'third pillar' of Canada's foreign policy in the 1995 foreign policy review, in theory equal to the first two 'pillars' of promoting economic growth and international peace and security. However, just when it seemed that public diplomacy would receive the emphasis that it deserved, the government was forced to engage in a major budget-cutting exercise to reduce the federal deficit. Rather than expanding public diplomacy programmes, the issue became one of survival. Despite the pressure to cut government programmes in 1995-8, DFAIT managed to refurbish Canada House in London (which had been slated to be closed for budgetary reasons) and the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris and to protect the Department's cultural grants programme.[16]

In addition to both reactive and proactive communications work with foreign media, perhaps the best known public diplomacy tool is that of culture and international education. By 1999, DFAIT's $4.7 million Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion Program was assisting both established and emerging artists and cultural groups to perform

14 *Ibid.*

15 John Ralston Saul, 'Culture and foreign policy,' typescript version, 30 August 1994, 2-3.

16 Stephens, 'Public diplomacy,' 7.

and display abroad, supported visits to Canada by film and book distributors and agents, and undertook specific cultural projects to promote key foreign policy themes such as 'Children and War.' Having its own cultural grants money allowed DFAIT a seat at the table with the federal cultural department, Canadian Heritage, and agencies such as the National Film Board and Telefilm Canada. The purpose of the grants is not to subsidize Canadian culture per se; rather, it is to select specific cultural activities that will reinforce foreign policy objectives.[17] This point is frequently misunderstood. At the same time, helping Canadian artists to market themselves is a legitimate exercise for a department that houses the Canadian government's trade commissioner service. Culture is not only an essential means of projecting Canadian values and messages, it is also a multi-billion dollar business that supports some 50,000 Canadian jobs from exports alone.[18] In addition to symphony orchestras and ballets, acts such as *Cirque du Soleil* and jazz singer Diana Krall were once the beneficiaries of DFAIT cultural grants.

A major plank of DFAIT's public diplomacy approach has been its post-graduate scholarship and academic relations programmes. By the late 1990s, it was administering $7 million in grants, covering primarily the Commonwealth Program and the Canada Awards programme. The purpose was to support promising students who, it was hoped, would become leaders, contacts, business partners, and scholars of Canada when they returned to their countries of origin. The jewel in the crown for many long-time observers, however, has been the Canadian Studies abroad programme ($5.2 million in grants), which supports Canadian studies associations and centres, research and study awards, travel grants, and assistance to university libraries. By 1999, there were more than 7,000 'Canadianists' in over 30 countries teaching at least 150,000 students per year. The Canadian Studies network, for a relatively small investment, ensures that knowledge and understanding about Canada reaches present and future decision-makers. The approximately $12 million annual expenditure on academic grants and scholarships accounts for less than one per cent of DFAIT's annual budget.[19]

17 I am indebted to Curtis Barlow of DFAIT's International Cultural Relations Bureau for this point.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

Although Canadian universities have a long tradition of sizable numbers of foreign students, it was only in the 1990s that the post-secondary education sector became a core trade sector. The high-quality education offered by Canadian colleges and universities was both a hidden 'national branding' and a commercial resource. One reason education marketing had not been fully exploited as part of public diplomacy strategies was the decentralized education system in Canada. Because education is under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government had only a limited role to play. That said, the absence of a federal education department meant that DFAIT could take a far more prominent role working with provincial ministers of education to coordinate foreign policy in the area of education and to ensure Canada's active participation in a range of international educational activities abroad, including the Organization of American States, the G-8, and UNESCO.[20]

After media relations and international cultural and education relations, the third major component of most countries' public diplomacy strategies is international broadcasting. As this is discussed in more detail in the next section of this article and elsewhere by the author, suffice it to note here that this has not been an adequately funded or developed public diplomacy instrument.[21] The most experienced player in Canada's international broadcasting is Radio Canada International (RCI). It also has had the most problematic internal history, lacking adequate domestic governmental support at crucial periods of its evolution, even during the cold war. In the words of Keith Spicer, the former chair of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, 'The history of RCI has been a series of intermittent terrors with reprieves at the last minute for a few years and then it starts all over again with a new breed of politicians who again do not know about it.'[22]

By the end of 1998, with a new management team in place, the weekly audience for the RCI was approximately six million (excluding

20 Interview with DFAIT official in International Academic Relations division, 22 March 2002.

21 This section on Canada's international broadcasting is adapted from a more detailed description and analysis in Evan H. Potter, 'Information technology and Canada's public diplomacy,' in Evan H. Potter, ed, *Cyber-Diplomacy: Managing Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* (Kingston, Montreal, and London: McGill-Queen's University Press 2002).

22 Quoted in Arthur Siegel, *Radio Canada International: History and Development* (Oakville ON: Mosaic 1996), 175.

China, India, and Southeast Asia for which reliable figures are not available). Its broadcasts were in seven languages, generating approximately 153 hours of programming a week: a third CBC English-language, a third Radio-Canada (CBC French-language), and a third RCI programming - 14 hours in Russian and Ukrainian, 14 hours in Spanish, 10.5 hours in Mandarin, and 8 hours in Arabic. There was a concerted attempt by RCI to reposition itself as a programmer (it placed its programmes through FM and CD distribution to 62 countries, and it had real audio availability on the internet) and to distance itself from its antiquated image as a short-wave broadcaster. A $5 million investment in capital spending meant a 100 per cent change in RCI's infrastructure, and by 2000 the broadcaster began distributing digital radio programming. The only area of operations that, for reasons of cost, could not be dealt with immediately was that of tailoring programmes to local conditions. It was recognized, of course, that in an information universe exploding with new media sites every day, quality - measured in availability, attractiveness, ease of use, feedback, and reliability - would be a key factor in allowing Canada's voice to be heard abroad. Canada does not have a dedicated government-funded international television presence such as the BBC World Service or the WORLDNET Television and Film Services in the United States. It can channel a limited number of Canadian-produced French-language programmes through TV-5, the international French-language broadcaster, which reaches 66 million households on five continents and which was launched into the United States in January 1998.

TV-5 is financed by leading members of la francophonie (Canadian federal government, Quebec, France, Communauté francaise de Belgique et Suisse). Although the bulk of its budget and programming is furnished by France, the Canadian federal government (through Canadian Heritage) and the government of Quebec together make the second highest contribution. TV-5 has 15 per cent Canadian content in Europe, 13 per cent in Asia, 12 per cent in Africa, and 28 per cent in the United States and Latin America (where it is positioned as a specialty channel for French speakers). Although it is an important international projection of Canada's francophone character and a valuable showcase for Canadian French-language programming, the fact remains that it broadcasts only in French. Its identity for viewers is influenced by the predominance of programming from France. And, as if to underscore the somewhat precarious nature of a Canadian

influence in international television, as of 1 August 2001, TV-5 Monde (based in Paris) took over the management of programming for the United States and Latin America, a function that had been based in Montreal.

What is evident in reviewing these public diplomacy instruments is that for many years federal spending in these areas has been very low in both absolute terms and certainly relative to what is being spent by its major competitors. Whereas the Canadian investment on its public diplomacy instruments can be counted in the tens of millions of dollars annually, the United States, France, Germany, and Japan each spends over one billion dollars. In addition to low funding levels, it is reported that Canadian Studies is a 'greying' area with no guarantee that there is a next generation of Canadianists in the pipeline or that the distribution of programmes across the world reflects the growing influence of emerging regional powers such as India, Brazil, and Mexico.[23] If Canada's soft power, that is, its influence and credibility internationally, is a direct function of public awareness and respect for its society's values, accomplishments, and creativity, how successful has Canada been in using its limited public diplomacy resources and how it is perceived abroad?

CANADA'S IMAGE (BRANDING) PROBLEM[24]

How did global trends and the state of Canada's public diplomacy tools affect its ability to be heard in the world between 1998-2002? As stated, Canada's ability to influence other states depends increasingly on its ability to influence foreign perceptions through ideas. This is what scholarly observers in the early 1990s referred to as Canada's ability to demonstrate intellectual leadership and be a 'good dancer' on the international policy stage.[25] A manifestation of this intellectual leadership

23 Interview with DFAIT official in International Academic Relations division, 22 March 2002.

24 I am indebted to Colin Robertson and Daryl Copeland, who have both contributed substantially to this section on branding. After so many discussions, e-mails, conversations, briefing notes, PowerPoint presentations, my claim to ownership is tenuous.

25 Andrew F. Cooper, Richard Higgott, and Kim Richard Nossal, *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1993).

was the promotion of Canada's soft power by Lloyd Axworthy when he was Canadian foreign minister.[26]

On a day-to-day basis and leaving out the need to project hard power during such crises as in Kosovo (or in a global war on terrorism) the contemporary foreign policy agenda of a middle power runs in large part on soft power, which, in turn, is exercised through the strategic use of the media and public diplomacy to develop constituencies, forge coalitions with like-minded countries, and build alliances with civil society. The Canadian victory over Spain during the 1995 dispute about allegations (subsequently proven) that a Spanish trawler, the *Estai*, was overfishing in Canadian waters was driven by public diplomacy, as were the negotiations, known as the Ottawa Process, leading to the landmine treaty (Ottawa Convention). The Ottawa Process provides a compelling case study of how governments have had to ally themselves with a diverse group of non-governmental actors to achieve a landmark treaty. Country-specific initiatives such as the Canadian consulate general's innovative campaign in New York City ('Upper North Side Campaign') to create the convergence of persuasive advocacy activities with investment and trade objectives in one of the world's toughest markets in which to get attention, and the Canadian embassy's 'Think Canada' campaign in Japan, both illustrate the point about the growing reliance on public diplomacy.

Canada's success in promoting a human security agenda during these years, that is, a focus on the safety of people that included protection of human rights, good governance, economic rights and environmental sustainability, was almost completely an exercise in soft power and thus in public diplomacy since it depended on how convincingly Ottawa advocated its positions to the citizens and leaders of other countries. On the trade side, because over 40 per cent of its gross domestic product is dependent on exports, Canada's international reputation and image were fundamental to Canadians' well-being.

The strategic use of both traditional and new public diplomacy tools - international broadcasting, cultural and international education programmes, and new media - together were a 'force multiplier' for Canadian foreign policy. The examples of these high profile Canadian

26 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Statements and Speeches* 99/4, 'Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the National Forum,' 22 January 1999; and Joseph S. Nye, Jr, 'The challenge of soft power,' *Time*, 22 February 1999, 30.

foreign policy initiatives of the mid- to late-1990s showed that public diplomacy was destined to become more and more central to the success of Canadian diplomacy. Canada's strategic use of its public diplomacy assets did enable it to act as a knowledge broker, to influence others, and to ensure that its political and economic objectives would be taken more seriously.

But not everyone has viewed this period as a public diplomacy success story. Although the landmines issue is frequently held up as an example of effective public diplomacy, there are also numerous examples highlighting the difficulties encountered by the Canadian government when Canadian and foreign non-governmental organizations sought to mobilize public opinion (foreign and domestic) against government policies (for example, seal hunts, hydro development, and clear-cut logging practices). It also must be admitted that Axworthy's soft power agenda did cause a backlash and alienated a number of Canada's allies, notably the United States, who complained that good ideas could not be a substitute for hard power. The foreign policy legacies of this era have made it more difficult for Canada to be seen as the most reliable ally of the United States in the war on terrorism today. It is a truism that most large countries have a number of different images among different publics and that cultivating one might compromise another.

More fundamentally, however, is the fact that by the turn of the century it was apparent that there was a large gap between how Canadians viewed themselves and how broad swathes of foreign audiences (not just those in the Beltway) perceived them. In the eyes of the world, Canada remained largely what it was a century ago, namely, a resource economy, and, according to a review of Canada's international brand undertaken in 2000, contemporary elements - dynamism, innovation, technology, tolerance, competitiveness and multiculturalism - were conspicuously absent.[27] As a result, there was a sense that Canada was being routinely passed over when foreign governments and businesses were contemplating direct investments or partnerships. The evidence was clear: Canada's share of global investment stock dropped precipitously

27 In response to the outdated foreign images of Canada, Daryl Copeland, then in DFAIT's Communications Bureau, developed a proposal for an international communications framework to begin the process of repositioning Canada's 'brand' abroad. The proposal advocated an overarching message or mantra - 'Canada. Cool. Connected' - that could be adapted for all regions.

from 6 per cent in 1990 to 3.1 per cent in 2000. An international poll conducted by the Angus Reid research organization in 1997 found that less than one per cent of Germans and Japanese associate Canada with telecommunications or other technologically based products. More than 50 per cent associated Canada with lumber, pulp and paper, and food.[28] More generally, according to Daryl Copeland, who in 2000 was almost single-handedly spearheading an internal drive in DFAIT to rethink the projection of Canada's image abroad, 'there was a sense that Canada was coasting on an international reputation - liberal internationalism, honest brokerage, environmental activism, generous aid giving - that was increasingly difficult to sustain and that the growing gaps between reputation, rhetoric and reality would become an unbridgeable chasm.'[29] In short, Canada had an image problem, with 'image' being defined as one part presence and one part promotion.[30] A world characterized by 'connectivity' thus presented multiple avenues through which gradually to provide foreign audiences with a more balanced and accurate view of Canada through both increased presence and promotion.

There were a number of reasons for Canada's image problem. First, although Canada has one of the most advanced communications systems of any foreign ministry, much of the investment had been in software and hardware to serve the needs of government employees and the web-based content on the main DFAIT internet site was designed primarily for a domestic Canadian audience. It is instructive, for example, that by 2000 DFAIT had spent in excess of $100 million on informatics, double what it had been five years earlier. This was 7.4 per cent of the total budget in fiscal year 1999-2000, more than total personnel costs (6.9 per cent), and more than the annual combined costs of all of the department's foreign policy, trade, economic policy, international business development, and public diplomacy operations. Although it is true that in the mid-1990s DFAIT was a leader among foreign ministries in the introduction of web sites, that was largely a reflection of a group of individuals within the department who 'saw the light' and

28 Angus Reid Group, Canada and the World, 1997. The Angus-Reid group is now known as Ipsos-Reid, a global public opinion research firm. The survey sample consisted of 5,700 adults in 20 countries.

29 Daryl Copeland, personal communication.

30 I am indebted to Gaston Barban, a DFAIT official, for this observation.

took it upon themselves to develop innovative sites. There was much creative energy, little co-ordination, and, not surprisingly, very little consistency in the 'looks' of individual embassy sites. Canada's lead did not last. The lack of an authoritative presence on the internet created a vacuum that other countries and even a Canadian province had no trouble filling. The consequences were rather startling: with the exception of Canadian embassy web sites in Latin America and Spain and Radio Canada International's Spanish-language broadcasts, in the late 1990s the major source of information produced by Canadian governments in Spanish was provided by the Quebec government. It was only with the push, starting in 1999, to provide all federal government services on-line (with a target date of 2004) that serious attention began to be paid to a 'common look and feel' among the many embassy sites and how Canada could project itself to foreign (non-Canadian) audiences through a single government of Canada site.

Second, despite the fact that Canada is the world's second largest producer of children's television programming, a leading producer of computer software, and has among the highest per capita producers and users of information on the internet (especially in the French language), such activity remains largely invisible to the rest of the world. Canadian television programming is often absorbed into local broadcasts, or, increasingly, into the programme schedule of specialty channels based in the United States. With the partial exception of TV-5, which broadcasts only in French, most Canadian programmes are, in fact, deliberately not branded as Canadian.

Indeed, it could be said that Canada is invisible for all intents and purposes in government-financed international broadcasting. The outlay on Canada's international broadcasting is modest to say the least. The $15.52 million (1999-2000) annual federal appropriation for RCI and the contributions by the federal and Quebec governments of $9.1 million and $5.2 million respectively to TV-5 are but small fractions of what is spent by the first tier of international broadcasters (mostly Canada's G-7 counterparts). For example, the United States, with the impetus of a war on terrorism, now spends in excess of $600 million on its extensive network of international radio and television broadcasting organizations. Britain's BBC World Service, which is converting rapidly into a multi-media broadcaster, has a budget of $500 million. It has been reported that Radio France International spends about $200 million on radio only, and *Deutsche Welle* has had a budget

in excess of $500 million. The federal government's investment is also small compared to medium-sized players such as Radio Netherlands or even Vatican Radio.[31]

The third factor may be less a problem than a reality. Globalization has driven other levels of government (provincial, municipal, and regional) and other federal departments and agencies previously considered domestic to launch or to develop further their international relationships. On the federal front, with instant electronic access to counterparts abroad and combined funding for foreign operations that equals 60 per cent of DFAIT's operational budget, other federal government departments must now be managed as major components of Canada's overall capacity for international influence. For instance, the Canadian Tourism Commission (an agency of the federal Industry Canada department) promotes Canada as a pristine and clean vacation destination, a promotion that is no doubt at times at odds with federal trade commissioners in the field who are trying to project an image of Canada as a sophisticated, high-technology market.

Generally, relations between the federal and provincial governments abroad are co-operative. Given the growing levels of interdependence, both levels of government must increasingly work together in trade negotiations and on trade promotion. DFAIT has negotiated co-location agreements with a number of provinces (Ontario, Alberta, Quebec) to place provincial officials within specific Canadian embassies. The Team Canada trade missions around the world are a manifestation of this attempt to mine the synergies of federal and provincial activities abroad and to promote a single, unified image of Canada. By all accounts, such an approach is working.

Of course, provincial governments - mostly British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec - have their own specific international activities, including trade offices abroad (Quebec's is the most active), immigration (only Quebec), and their own trade missions. When the provinces engage in high-visibility events abroad that project only a partial image of Canada's identity, some confusion can occur among foreign audiences.

In light of what can only be considered a chronic under-funding of its public diplomacy instruments, a closer look at a particular case study of Canadian public diplomacy in action is warranted. Such a

31 See Potter, 'Information technology.'

study brings into stark relief both the untapped opportunities to reposition Canada in global-mind spaces and also highlights some of the constraints.

'THINK CANADA' IN JAPAN

Japan is Canada's principal ally in Asia, second-largest trade partner after the United States, and an important G-8 partner. As it positions itself to play a larger role in regional and international affairs commensurate with its economic status, it is in Canada's interests to look for further ways to engage Japan in Canada's foreign policy priorities. At the same time, it has been acknowledged in both Canada and Japan that, for a number of reasons, including the domestic stagnation of the Japanese economy through the 1990s, the bilateral trade and investment relationship has not been reaching its potential, and the export mix from Canada does not reflect the sophistication of the Canadian market.

In 1998 the Canadian embassy in Japan began an extensive programme of research and consultation to explore the reasons for the state of bilateral economic relations. A number of striking findings emerged from an embassy-commissioned survey of several hundred Japanese opinion leaders.[32] According to the survey, the single most important determinant for Japanese interest in another country was its culture. Canadian officials were also surprised at the high-level of knowledge of some aspects of Canadian history and society, including Japanese awareness of Canada's aboriginal peoples. When asked to identify a country that would fulfil the image of a country that was progressive, innovative, modern, and attractive, the Japanese respondents invariably picked the United States and not Canada. They generally viewed Canada in terms of natural resources and a lack of sophistication, which was at odds with the Japanese cultural norm of doing business with countries that they thought were culturally diverse in business and industry.

A 'branding committee' at the embassy proceeded to apply the findings from the survey to the development of a more focussed strategy for an incoming Team Canada trade mission in 1999. The programmes

32 The details of the 'Think Canada' campaign were outlined to me in an interview with a mid-level Canadian official who worked at the Canadian embassy in Tokyo during the initial phases of what would eventually become a formal campaign. The interview was conducted at DFAIT on 22 March 2002.

prepared by the embassy for this mission, whether cultural activities or banquets, all emphasized Canada as a high-technology exporter. The Japanese media picked up the message. With few extra resources to devote to a more comprehensive branding exercise, sponsorship from major Canadian and Japanese corporations became a key source of support and exceeded all expectations.

On the heels of the Team Canada mission, the embassy launched the 'Think Canada 2001' festival from March to July 2001. It was the largest ever Canadian festival to be held in Japan, and included a programme of approximately 200 events throughout the country. The activities were diverse: arts and culture; business; science and technology; politics and society; education; and food and living. The thrust was to brand Canada as a diverse, sophisticated, technologically advanced society.

The response to Canada's multifaceted approach did raise awareness of Canada in Japan with a significant increase in print and broadcast media coverage. An 'open house' at the embassy alone attracted an unprecedented crowd of thousands of people over the course of a weekend. Canadian officials noted that by pursuing a more integrated public diplomacy strategy rather than the traditionally more ad hoc approach, Japanese audiences received a more three-dimensional image of Canada. For all its success, the 'Think Canada' approach was not inexpensive. It drew significantly on the Canadian embassy's resources and is a reminder that public diplomacy requires investment and commitment.

CONCLUSION

There is an old Cornish proverb that says 'the tongueless man gets his land took.'[33] The absence of a vibrant, sustained, and co-ordinated presence abroad through culture and education stating 'This is Canada' could prompt a disturbing question: 'What is Canada?'

A small, open economy such as Canada's is vulnerable by definition because it lives or dies by its reputation. Despite its acknowledged problems in updating its image to the rest of the world, there is a tremendous amount of goodwill for Canada in the hearts and minds of citizens around the world. For this reason, there is an urgent need to

33 Cited in Franklyn Griffiths, 'Canada as a sovereign state,' *Canadian Foreign Policy* 2(spring 1994).

create a vibrant public diplomacy, using all the communications and technological tools at Ottawa's disposal, both to defend Canada's sovereignty and to promote its values and economic development. A co-ordinated public diplomacy strategy, one that emphasizes the importance of international broadcasting, can play a pivotal role in projecting an informed, sophisticated image of Canadian views and concerns in a knowledge-based environment.

A number of observations arise from this initial examination of Canada's approach to public diplomacy. First, it is often said that public diplomacy is the soft side of diplomacy, a servant to the 'real' diplomacy of state-to-state negotiations. Not true. Prosperity in an increasingly competitive global knowledge-based world requires the outlook and the skills that can be gained only from exposure to and understanding of other values, cultures, experience, languages, and ways of life.

Canada needs to adopt a more strategic and coherent approach to its public diplomacy. It must anticipate controversial issues, develop clear policies that are in line with its interests, and promote them to the relevant segments of its foreign audiences. It needs strategies that are proactive, that use a combination of traditional and new public affairs tools/techniques, that are implemented by staff with the appropriate training, and that are consistent with a federal government-wide strategy to promoting Canada's image abroad.

Second, what is so new about it? Most fundamentally, it is that issues of global concern require broad-based public consent. The processes pursued to achieve this consent are often as important as the final outcomes. If governments do not first prepare the publics of the states they wish to target, it will be that much more difficult to sway the governments of those states. And, if there is initial resistance from the targeted government, it will be through public diplomacy that new alliances will be shaped with local groups to attempt to change policy. Put simply, in an age of instantaneous information, power is being distributed more evenly.

Third, the electronic media are a primary means of conveying a national presence. There should be a re-examination of Canada's underdeveloped and underfunded international broadcasting capacity. In addition, there should be greater co-ordination between the capacity that exists at RCI, for example, and the particular policy objectives of country-specific public diplomacy strategies. The convergence of radio, television, and the internet may make this easier to achieve.

Fourth, content-driven 'connectivity,' whether in traditional forms of public diplomacy or on new dedicated web sites, is key for credibility. This will enable governments to build electronic communities around their national foreign policy interests. Finally, it is worth remembering that the key is to see public diplomacy in its whole: 'A well informed, engaged civil society strengthens the will and ability to achieve foreign policy objectives; an active and vibrant projection of cultural expression can underpin and support an active foreign policy; and a network of academic and scholarly linkages can help build a network of comprehension and knowledge to build alliances of the like-minded in Canada and abroad. This is the essence of soft power.'[34]

34 Stephens, 'Public diplomacy,' 8.