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# Public Diplomacy

How to Think About and  
Improve It

Charles Wolf, Jr.

Brian Rosen



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## Preface

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In a speech on March 19, 2002, in Chicago, Newton Minow, former chairman of the RAND Corporation Board of Trustees and former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, issued an eloquent call for the development and deployment of a strategy for “public diplomacy,” the process of explaining and advocating American values to the world.

To answer that call, RAND President and Chief Executive Officer James Thomson and RAND Executive Vice President Michael Rich invited proposals from the RAND staff for a short-term effort aimed at outlining the essential elements of an effective public diplomacy strategy. They selected the response submitted by Charles Wolf, and this paper is the result of the brief exploratory effort that followed.

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# Public Diplomacy: How to Think About and Improve It

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## Problem, Background, and Context

### Foreign Perceptions and Domestic Consequences

America has an image problem. The problem is global—even the leaders of some traditional American allies have found it convenient and politically advantageous to disparage America. But the problem is especially acute in the Middle East and among predominantly Muslim populations.

Recent polls highlight the depth and breadth of the animus. In December 2001 and January 2002, Gallup conducted a poll of nearly 10,000 residents in nine Muslim countries. By an average of more than 2:1, respondents reported an unfavorable view of the United States (see Table 1).

The prevalence of an unfavorable view in Iran is unsurprising because that country has had an adversarial relation with the United States for more than 20 years. More troubling are the results from ostensible allies. Only 16 percent of respondents in Saudi Arabia, supposedly one of America's long-standing allies in the region, held a favorable view, while 64

**Table 1**  
**Gallup Poll of Foreign Publics' Opinion of the United States, 2002**  
**(in percentage)**

Nation	Favorable	Unfavorable
Lebanon	41	40
Turkey	40	33
Kuwait	28	41
Indonesia	27	30
Jordan	22	62
Morocco	22	41
Saudi Arabia	16	64
Iran	14	63
Pakistan	9	68
Total	22	53

SOURCE: Andrea Stone, "Kuwaitis Share Distrust Toward USA, Poll Indicates," *USA Today*, February 27, 2002, p. 7A.

NOTES: The Gallup poll has not been repeated since 2002. Rows do not sum to 100 because the remainder expressed no opinion.

percent reported an unfavorable view. Results from Kuwait were even more disconcerting. In a country that the United States waged war to liberate a decade earlier, only slightly more than a quarter of those polled expressed a favorable view of the United States.

A Pew poll conducted in the summer of 2002, which was repeated in some nations in May 2003 and March 2004, reported similar results (see Table 2).

Moreover, according to the Pew polls, foreign publics' opinions of the United States appear to have worsened, although in some instances the March 2004 results reveal slight improvement from May 2003.

Even if we question the reliability of such polls, we can likely infer that opinions of the United States held by most of those in Muslim and Middle Eastern nations remain distinctly unfavorable.

This displeasure cannot be easily dismissed as vague and loosely held views of those in remote lands whose attitudes and behavior are immaterial to the United States. It may not foreshadow adverse outcomes for the United States, but it hardly provides reassurance that such outcomes will not ensue. As one influential congressman observed, "the perceptions of

**Table 2**  
**Pew Poll of Foreign Publics' Opinion of the United States, 2002–2004**  
**(in percentage)**

Nation	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable
Egypt	3	3	10	59	6	69
Indonesia	5	56	27	9	61	36
May 2003	2	13	35	48	15	83
Jordan	6	19	18	57	25	75
May 2003	0	1	16	83	1	99
March 2004	2	3	26	67	5	93
Lebanon	8	27	21	38	35	59
May 2003	8	19	23	48	27	71
Morocco <sup>a</sup>						
May 2003	13	14	13	53	27	66
March 2004	8	19	23	48	27	71
Pakistan	2	8	11	58	10	69
May 2003	3	10	10	71	13	81
March 2004	4	17	11	50	21	61
Turkey	6	24	13	42	30	55
May 2003	2	13	15	68	15	83
March 2004	6	24	18	45	30	63
Uzbekistan	35	50	9	2	85	11

SOURCE: *Pew Global Attitudes Project: Nine Nation Survey (2004). Final Topline*, Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004, p. 24; *Pew Global Attitudes Project: Wave 2 Update Survey (2003)*, Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2003, pp. T-132–T-133; *2002 Global Attitudes Survey, Final Topline*, Washington, D.C.: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2002, p. T-45.

NOTES: Undated rows are for 2002. Rows do not sum to 100 because the remainder expressed no opinion.

<sup>a</sup>Pew did not conduct a survey in Morocco in 2002.

foreign publics have domestic consequences.”<sup>1</sup> This is especially so when those foreign publics and the behavior of the nations in which they reside are having increasing effects on U.S. national security.

Charlotte Beers, the former Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, summarized the potential consequences of Middle Eastern antipathy toward America as follows:

We are talking about millions of ordinary people, a huge number of whom have gravely distorted, but carefully cultivated images of us—images so negative, so weird, so hostile that I can assure you a young generation of terrorists is being created. The gap between who we are and how we wish to be seen, and how we are in fact seen, is frighteningly wide.<sup>2</sup>

That gap must close. President George W. Bush plainly stated the task: “We have to do a better job of telling our story.”<sup>3</sup> That is the job of public diplomacy.

### **What Is Public Diplomacy?**

The Department of State defines “public diplomacy” as “government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries.”<sup>4</sup>

The term was first used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, a career foreign service diplomat and subsequently dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, in connection with establishment at the Fletcher School of the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy. At that time, the Murrow Center’s institutional brochure stated that

public diplomacy . . . deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy . . . [including] the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another . . . (and) the transnational flow of information and ideas.”<sup>5</sup>

Government efforts—sometimes though not always successful—to distinguish public diplomacy from propaganda contend that the former always deals with “the known facts,” whereas “propaganda” is typically based on some combination of falsehoods and untruths mixed in with facts.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. S. Zaharna, “American Public Diplomacy and the Islamic and Arab World: A Communication Update & Assessment,” Panel Two of a Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 27, 2003 (quoting Henry Hyde).

<sup>2</sup> Charlotte L. Beers, Hearing on American Public Diplomacy and Islam, Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, February 27, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Zaharna, 2003 (quoting George W. Bush).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Dictionary of International Relations Terms*, Washington, D.C., 1987, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> United States Information Agency Alumni Association, “What Is Public Diplomacy?” Washington, D.C., updated September 1, 2002. Online at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm> (as of August 6, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> See references to United States Information Agency, Edward Murrow testimony before congressional committees, and other sources cited at <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm>, 2002.

Other formulations frequently define public diplomacy by what it is *not*. For example, the planning group for integration of the U.S. Information Agency into the Department of State in 1997 distinguished “public diplomacy” from “public affairs” in the following terms:

Public affairs is [sic] the provision of information to the public, press, and other institutions concerning the goals, policies and activities of the U.S. government. The thrust of public affairs is to inform the domestic audience . . . [whereas] public diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing, and influencing foreign audiences.<sup>7</sup>

The semantic niceties of these multiple distinctions recall the hair-splitting of 16th century theology. Indeed, the tasks of public diplomacy and of public affairs converge more than their definitions imply. The provision of information intended for domestic audiences is frequently received by foreign audiences as well; and conversely, information intended for foreign audiences is also accessible to domestic ones.

Another formulation of public diplomacy in terms of what it is *not*—intended by this commentator to be critical if not dismissive—asserts that:

United States public diplomacy is neither public nor diplomatic. First, the government—not the broader American public—has been the main messenger to a world that is mightily suspicious of it. Further, the State Department, which oversees most efforts, seems to view public diplomacy not as a dialogue but as a one-sided exercise . . . America speaking at the world.<sup>8</sup>

Public diplomacy can perhaps be better defined by contrasting its principal characteristics with those of “official diplomacy”. First, public diplomacy is *transparent* and widely disseminated, whereas official diplomacy is (apart from occasional leaks) *opaque*, with narrowly confined dissemination. Second, public diplomacy is transmitted by governments to wider, or in some cases selected, “publics” (for example, those in the Middle East or in the Muslim world)<sup>9</sup>, whereas official diplomacy is transmitted by governments to other governments. Third, the themes and issues with which official diplomacy is concerned relate to the behavior and policies of governments, whereas the themes and issues with which public diplomacy is concerned relate to the attitudes and behaviors of publics.

Of course, these publics may be influenced by explaining to them the sometimes-misunderstood policies and behavior of the U.S. government. Additionally, to the extent that the behavior and policies of a foreign government are affected by the behavior and attitudes of its citizens, public diplomacy may affect governments by influencing their citizens.

In this paper, we will consider how to inform and persuade foreign publics that the ideals that Americans cherish—such as pluralism, freedom, and democracy—are fundamental human values that will resonate and should be pursued in their own countries. Associated with this consideration are two questions that are rarely addressed in most discussions of public diplomacy: (1) Should the U.S. government be the only, or even the main, transmit-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> See Michael Holtzman, *The New York Times*, October 4, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Whether this presumed governmental exclusivity in transmission should be altered is another question to be considered below.



ter of public diplomacy's content, rather than sharing this function with such other potential transmitters as nongovernmental (nonprofit) organizations and responsible business, labor, and academic entities? (2) Should public diplomacy transmissions and transactions be viewed and conducted to encourage dialogue or "multilogue" (for example, through call-in shows, debates, and structured "cross fires"), rather than as a monologue through one-way transmission by the United States?

### Purpose and Motivation: Private Goods and Public Goods

Four linked propositions—each of questionable validity—have, implicitly or explicitly, motivated the United States to energize and improve its "public diplomacy." Partly reflecting these propositions, Newton Minow has forcefully advocated the need for the following improvements:<sup>10</sup>

1. Prevalence of anti-Americanism abroad—especially but not exclusively in the Middle East, and among Muslims more generally—is partly due to the inability of "the United States government to get its message of freedom and democracy out to the one billion Muslims in the world . . . (and) to explain itself to the world."
2. Lack of success in conveying the U.S. message has ensued despite the fact that "our film, television and computer software industries dominate their markets worldwide."
3. A potential remedy for the failure of our public diplomacy may be found in the "American marketing talent (for) . . . successfully selling Madonna's music, Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola, Michael Jordan's shoes and McDonald's hamburgers around the world."
4. Linking these propositions, it might be inferred that America's "marketing talent" should enable our public diplomacy—the process of "explaining and advocating [American] values to the world"—to be more effective in combating anti-Americanism and promoting more positive views of the United States.

The foregoing argument is deeply flawed. It is fanciful to believe that redeploying American "marketing talent," even when supplemented by the \$62 million appropriated to launch a new Middle East television network, would significantly diminish the prevalence of anti-Americanism.<sup>11</sup>

The preceding argument suffers from three fundamental flaws. The first arises from the conflation of *private goods* and *public (or collective) goods*, and the inference that what works in marketing the former will be effective in marketing the latter. In fact, marketing efforts and marketing skills attuned to and grandly successful in promoting the former may be ill-adapted to promote the latter.

Madonna's music and McDonald's hamburgers are private goods whose marketing can describe and evoke a personal experience. An individual consumer can readily connect with these products by seeing, listening, feeling, tasting, and smelling to test whether the

<sup>10</sup> See his eloquent lecture. Newton Minow, "The Whisper of America," Loyola University, Chicago, Ill., March 19–20, 2002, pp. 6–7. Online at [www.defenddemocracy.org/usr\\_doc/WhisperofAmerica.pdf](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/usr_doc/WhisperofAmerica.pdf) (as of August 6, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> David Shelby, "Satellite Station Scheduled to Be Launched in Late December," Washington, D.C.: Federal Information and News Dispatch, Inc., September 25, 2003.

consumer's reactions are positive or negative. Where private goods are under scrutiny, each consumer can decide apart from what others decide or prefer. Empirical validation is accessible at low cost.

But these attributes of private goods sharply differentiate them from such public goods as democracy, tolerance, the rule of law, and, more generally, American values and the "American story." Instead, the meaning, quality, and benefits associated with these public goods largely depend on a high degree of understanding, acceptance, adoption, and practice by *others*, rather than by an individual acting alone. For example, one person's valuation of tolerance depends to a considerable extent on its reciprocal acceptance, valuation (and practice) by others. Not only are these public goods "non-rivalrous"<sup>12</sup>, but realization of *individual* benefits from them depends on their *collective* adoption (consumption) by all, or at least by the larger group of which the individual is a part. And the benefits of these collective goods, once the goods are provided, are accessible to others without imposing any additional costs on them. Beneficiaries of private goods pay incrementally for the benefits they receive. Beneficiaries of public goods do not.

Acceptance and support (including funding) for private goods depend on purchases of discrete amounts of these goods by individual consumers at market-based prices. Acceptance and support for public goods depend on other means: namely, on endorsement by a *constituent group* (hereafter referred to as the "*constituency*") whose members collectively share in the benefits of the collective goods and (directly or indirectly, and sooner or later) can accept the burden and responsibility of their attendant costs.

Table 3 summarizes the key differences between public and private goods. We will suggest later the implication of these differences for the conduct of U.S. public diplomacy abroad.

Another key difference between public goods and private goods is relevant and important for the conduct of public diplomacy. Because private goods are discrete and separable ("rivalrous"), one person's taste for and consumption of a private good does not require another to consume the same good. The situation is different for public goods, which must be collectively consumed (hence, non-rivalrous), or at least collectively purchased. Similarly, those who dislike a private good may largely insulate themselves from its distastefulness sim-

**Table 3**  
**Comparing Private Goods and Public Goods**

	<b>Private Goods</b> (e.g., Madonna's music and McDonald's hamburgers)	<b>Public Goods</b> (e.g., U.S. values, interests, and the American "story")
Conditions of supply (production)	Many competing suppliers	Single or few producers (principally governments, sometimes also nongovernmental organizations or others via outsourcing) <sup>a</sup>
Conditions of demand	Consumption of separate units by individual consumers	Collective consumption by members of constituency group
Support and financing	Market-based prices charged to each consumer's individual purchases	Collectively based and accepted by constituency or by sponsoring group (e.g., U.S. taxpayers)

<sup>a</sup> See text below for elaboration on this topic.

<sup>12</sup> "Rivalry" in consumption means that consumption of a private good by one consumer subtracts from consumption of that same good by another.

ply by refusing to consume it. Because public goods are collectively consumed, no one is shielded or insulated from them. Their availability to one beneficiary entails their imposition on all. An individual can consume a Madonna CD without any one else doing so, but that same individual cannot consume democratic values unless democratic values have been collectively adopted and sustained.

This difference creates barriers for the potential consumers of public goods that the potential consumers of private goods do not face. A *constituency group* that regards voting rights, women's rights, civil liberties, and democratic values as collectively appealing public goods may therefore face hostility from an implacable *adversary group* that regards this package as offensive public "bads."<sup>13</sup>

We will discuss below certain Muslim groups that illustrate the respective designations of constituencies and adversaries.

Such are the differences between public goods and private goods that methods and techniques for effectively marketing one cannot be presumed to be successful in marketing the other. Success in each of these arenas may depend on rules and strategies as different from one another as those that account for success in basketball differ from those accounting for success in football.

The second flaw is that among some groups, cultures, and subcultures, American values and institutions are already reasonably well understood yet intensely resisted and disliked. *Misunderstanding* of American values is not the principal source of anti-Americanism. The source lies in explicit rejection of some of the salient characteristics of American values and institutions. Women's rights, open and competitive markets, and equal and secret voting rights—let alone materialism and conspicuous display—are (in some places and for some groups) resented, rejected, and bitterly opposed. When this hostility is mixed with envy, the combination can lead to violent resistance.

The third flaw is that some U.S. *policies* have been, are, and will continue to be major sources of anti-Americanism in some quarters. The most obvious and enduring policies that arouse anti-Americanism are strong U.S. support for Israel. Much of the Middle East views this stance as providing support for an already strong, dominant, and overbearing military occupation, while U.S. concern and support for the plight of the Palestinian victims is viewed as half-hearted and grudging.<sup>14</sup> To explain let alone extenuate U.S. support for Israel as actually a reflection of democratic values, tolerance, and the defense of freedom, rather than a denial of these values to the Palestinians, may be an insuperable task.

Nevertheless, public diplomacy may mitigate this source of anti-Americanism. What we have in mind is not a concession to the cliché about "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Instead, public diplomacy might emphasize the long history of U.S. support for *Muslim* Bosnians, Kosovars, and Albanians in forcefully combating the brutal "ethnic cleansing" in the Balkans in the 1990s. This support often placed the United States in strong opposition both to Russia's backing of the Serbs against the Bosnian Muslims and to European reluctance to commit military forces in accord with Europe's verbal condemnation of ethnic cleansing.

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<sup>13</sup> For elaboration, see text below.

<sup>14</sup> Consider the following characterization by Israel's own minister of Justice of Israel's home demolitions in the Gaza refugee camp: Israelis, he said, "look like monsters in the eyes of the world," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2003. Those who support people viewed as monsters tend to be viewed negatively.

Another part of the story that could be usefully conveyed to the Muslim “constituency” by U.S. public diplomacy is the perennial American support for Muslim Turkey’s admission to the European Union, also perennially and vehemently opposed by the European Union, especially by Germany and France within the union. Reiteration of U.S. support for an independent Palestinian state is a third theme that a suitable public diplomacy effort could appropriately emphasize.

As important as it is to communicate America’s history of support and defense of Muslim populations, it is equally important to communicate the rationale motivating these policies. In these instances, U.S. policies reflected and furthered the values of democracy, tolerance, the rule of law, and pluralism. The overarching message public diplomacy should convey is that the United States tries, although it does not always succeed, to further these values regardless of the religion, ethnicity, or other characteristics of the individuals and groups involved. Highlighting the instances in which the United States has benefited Muslim populations by acting on these values may make this point more salient.

Convincing others that U.S. efforts to further these values are genuine, persistent, and enduring requires that those receiving the message believe that the values themselves are worthwhile, that they are “goods.” Potential opposition to U.S. policies can be divided into three discrete groups: those who accept that the values America seeks are goods; those who may believe that the values America seeks are not goods, but who nonetheless see them as a means to achieve other core goals (such as personal or family betterment; improvements in health, education, and skills; and the assurance of personal dignity) that are associated with the preceding values; and those who believe that the goals America seeks, as well as the associated core goals, are “bads” and would therefore reject the entire package.

The first group is sometimes considered to be the least populous of the three, although one especially knowledgeable observer has recently suggested that the size and influence of this component of Islam may well be larger than has usually been assumed.<sup>15</sup>

Those in the first category will be most receptive to the contention that U.S. policies are beneficial. Because they already believe that the values the policies seek are “goods,” they need be convinced only that the policies really do engender these values. Convincing those in the second category requires the antecedent step of convincing the members that the values themselves are associated with goals that are valued by those in this category (e.g., opportunities for personal or family betterment, improvements in health and education, etc.).

These two categories compose what we have referred to as public diplomacy’s “constituency.” Those in the third category are presumed to be beyond persuasion; they compose public diplomacy’s “adversary.”

Thus, two tasks emerge. One is to convey and contend that U.S. policies are pursued because they seek to further values that are already accepted by the audience, including Muslims in the Middle East and elsewhere. The second is to show that the values themselves have other derivative effects that are accepted as goods.

### **Hypothesis: Constituencies and Adversaries**

Reflecting on the earlier discussion of the differences between marketing public goods and private goods, and relating that discussion to the previously cited examples of potentially promising public diplomacy themes, we propose the following “constituency/adversary” hy-

<sup>15</sup> See Bernard Lewis, “Democracy and the Enemies of Freedom,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 22, 2003.

pothesis to guide thinking and debate about public diplomacy and the formulation and implementation of more-effective public diplomacy efforts by the United States:

Effective marketing of the public goods represented by the values and ideals America cherishes requires two ingredients: (1) an existing or identifiable *constituency* expected to be relatively receptive and more or less congenial to the content of the message to be conveyed by public diplomacy; and (2) an existing or identifiable *adversary* whose actual or expected opposition to the public diplomacy message can be directly or indirectly invoked as a challenge and stimulus to mobilize and activate the constituency.

The effectiveness of public diplomacy efforts and messages—and, more generally, effective marketing of public goods—depends on (a) appealing to the identified *constituency* by focusing on the goods and goals to be achieved, (b) explicitly or implicitly recognizing the *adversary* or adversaries standing in the way of the constituency's interests in the delivery of those goods, and (c) capitalizing on the tension between public diplomacy's appeal to the constituency and the adversary's resistance to it.

In some cases and situations, effectiveness may be maximized by focusing the public diplomacy effort on the constituency while ignoring actual or potential opposition by the adversary. Constructing or reconstructing hospitals, clinics, and schools in Iraq are a case in point; their appeal does not need to be highlighted by acknowledging the expected opposition of the adversarial group. Instead, public diplomacy can be advanced by ignoring the potential adversary or relegating it to only limited recognition.

In other cases, public diplomacy's effectiveness may be maximized by acknowledging—perhaps even anticipating—inhibitory and perhaps violent oppositional efforts to be expected from the adversary. In advance of, or in response to, those efforts, the constituency can be mobilized to stand up for the public goods in question. Training and equipping indigenous Iraqi police and self-defense forces are examples—opposed by adversary groups while sought and welcomed by the constituency.

We will apply and elaborate the constituency-adversary hypothesis in the following section, which highlights the case studies of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.

## Learning from Past Successes

To test the constituency/adversary hypothesis, this paper applies it to past successes in two different contexts of marketing public goods and of doing so in adverse and at times hostile environments. The public goods in these contexts are, or are close cognates of, core American values. Specifically, we examine the speeches and public writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his attempt to achieve basic civil rights for all people, and of Nelson Mandela in his attempt to end apartheid in South Africa.

To be sure, the circumstances in which King and Mandela operated are obviously different from those for the conduct of public diplomacy by the United States. King and Mandela were individual charismatic figures whose public causes and public messages were intimately connected with their personal styles and characters. By contrast, public diplomacy is conducted by, or at the instigation of, a government or a governmental institution, al-

though it may be important and useful to devolve some of this responsibility to nongovernmental entities.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the differences, the efforts of King and Mandela and those of public diplomacy share a linkage that may make the experience of the former instructive for conduct of the latter. For all three, the central concern is effective marketing of public goods: civil rights, racial equality, and the end of apartheid in the King and Mandela contexts; democratic values, open societies, and competitive markets in the public diplomacy context. The messages articulated by those highly effective protagonists related directly and forcefully to the marketing of public goods sufficiently congruent with those encompassed in public diplomacy, so that inferences derived from the former may be useful in improving the latter.

We assembled the following convenience sample of significant, high-profile public writings and speeches:

### **Martin Luther King**

1. Address to the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) First Mass Meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala., December 5, 1955, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/papers/vol3/551205.004-MIA\\_Mass\\_Meeting\\_at\\_Holt\\_Street\\_Baptist\\_Church.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/papers/vol3/551205.004-MIA_Mass_Meeting_at_Holt_Street_Baptist_Church.htm) (online as of August 6, 2004).
2. "The Birth of a New Nation," Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala., April 7, 1957, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/papers/vol4/570407.003-The\\_Birth\\_of\\_a\\_New\\_Nation\\_Sermon\\_at\\_Dexter\\_Avenue\\_Baptist\\_Church.htm](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/papers/vol4/570407.003-The_Birth_of_a_New_Nation_Sermon_at_Dexter_Avenue_Baptist_Church.htm) (online as of August 6, 2004).
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8. "Where Do We Go From Here?" Annual Report Delivered at the 11th Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Ga., August 16, 1967, [http://www.stanford.edu/group/King//publications/speeches/Where\\_do\\_we\\_go\\_from\\_here.html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/King//publications/speeches/Where_do_we_go_from_here.html) (online as of August 6, 2004).

### **Nelson Mandela**

1. "No Easy Walk to Freedom," Presidential address to the ANC [African National Congress] Transvaal Conference, September 21, 1953, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/speeches/1950s/sp530921.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).

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<sup>16</sup> See text below on this subject.

2. "Our Struggle Needs Many Tactics," February 1, 1958, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1950s/nm55-56.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
3. "General Strike," Statement on Behalf of the National Action Council Following the Stay-At-Home in May 1961, June 3, 1961, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1960s/pr610603.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
4. "Black Man in a White Court," First Court Statement, October 1, 1962, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1960s/nm6210.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
5. Address to Rally in Cape Town on his Release from Prison, February 11, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1990/release.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
6. Address to Rally in Soweto, February 13, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1990/sp900213.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
7. Address to the Swedish Parliament, Stockholm, March 13, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1990/sp900313.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
8. Statement to the President and Members of the French National Assembly, Bourbon Palace, Paris, June 7, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1990/sp900607a.htm> (online as of August 6, 2004).
9. Address to the Joint Session of the Houses of Congress of the U.S.A., Washington, D.C., June 26, 1990, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1990/sp900626.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).
10. Works from before and after his lengthy incarceration were also selected.

For each work, data were collected on King and Mandela's explicit references to the following: the good or value to be attained (G), the constituency addressed (C), peaceful activities the constituency conducted or was urged to pursue (ACP), activities the constituency conducted or was urged to pursue that may or may not be peaceful (ACA), violent activities the constituency conducted or was urged to pursue (ACV), the adversary (A), activities of the adversary (AA), and negative remarks about competing leaders (CL). In addition, we summed and characterized as "positive" references to the good or value to be obtained, the constituency, and peaceful activities the constituency conducted or was urged to pursue  $\Sigma(G, C, ACP)$ . We have also summed and characterized as "negative," references to violent activities conducted by the constituency or violent activities encouraged for it to pursue, identification of the adversary, activities of the adversary, and negative references about or activities relating to competing leaders  $\Sigma(ACV, A, AA, CL)$ .

Summary statistics were generated for King and Mandela. Through the course of this study, a marked contrast was noted between Mandela's rhetoric before and after imprisonment. To better display this difference, Mandela's summary statistics were reported as totals and were bifurcated between those before and after imprisonment (see Table 4).

Special caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from a small convenience sample. Moreover, a simple tabulation of numbers of "references," as in Table 4, lacks any indication of emphasis or intensity that might be conveyed by the context.

Still, some of the results reveal stark differences between the approaches of King and Mandela. In every speech or writing, King made substantially more positive than negative

**Table 4**  
References in Collected Works of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela

Work and Date	Words	Good	Constituency	Peaceful	Nonpeaceful	Violent	Adversary	Activities	Competing Leaders	Positive	Negative
King											
1 12/1955	1,585	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	2
2 4/1957	7,027	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	1
3 5/1957	2,537	3	4	8	0	0	1	2	0	15	3
4 4/1963	6,863	1	3	4	0	0	3	3	1	8	7
5 8/1963	1,574	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	6	2
6 12/1964	1,125	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	6	1
7 4/1967	6,738	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
8 8/1967	7,627	4	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	8	2
Subtotals											
Mean	4,385	2.88	1.63	2.38	0.00	0.00	1.13	1.00	0.13	6.88	2.25
St dev	2,902	0.99	1.41	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.99	1.07	0.35	3.72	2.12
Mandela											
Before prison											
1 9/1953	4,534	0	4	2	1	0	4	6	0	6	10
2 2/1958	2,005	1	1	2	0	0	3	1	0	4	4
3 6/1961	5,582	2	3	4	0	0	2	6	4	9	12
4 10/1962	3,199	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	3
After prison											
5 2/1990	1,607	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	1
6 2/1990	1,996	1	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	8	1
7 3/1990	1,158	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
8 6/1990	1,847	3	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	6	2
9 6/1990	2,667	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	5	2



**Table 4—continued**

Work and Date	Words	Good	Constituency	Peaceful	Nonpeaceful	Violent	Adversary	Activities	Competing Leaders	Positive	Negative
Subtotals											
Before prison											
Mean	3,830	1.25	2.00	2.00	0.50	0.00	2.75	3.50	1.00	5.25	7.25
St dev	1,559	0.96	1.83	1.63	0.58	0.00	0.96	2.89	2.00	2.99	4.43
After prison											
Mean	1,855	2.00	2.20	1.20	0.20	0.40	0.20	0.60	0.00	5.40	1.20
St dev	554	1.00	1.10	1.10	0.45	0.55	0.45	0.89	0.00	1.67	0.84
Overall											
Mean	2,733	1.67	2.11	1.56	0.33	0.22	1.33	1.89	0.44	5.33	3.89
St dev	1,466	1.00	1.36	1.33	0.50	0.44	1.50	2.42	1.33	2.18	4.23

NOTES: The numbers in each column indicate the number of “references”—that is, explicit referrals to the subject of each column heading. For further explanation of the column headings, see the text. The numbers in the work and date column refer to those numbered citations listed above in the text.

references. In contrast, before Mandela was in prison, his negative references always equaled or exceeded the positive ones. After imprisonment, his speeches were markedly different. In each of them, positive references substantially exceeded negative ones.

Turning to the individual categories, we find that the data suggest that King consistently and frequently referred to the good to be achieved as his main focus. In six of the eight works cited in the sample, the good to be achieved was referred to more than any other single reference category. With few exceptions, King gave little attention to the adversary, averaging only one adversary reference per speech, or to the adversary's activities. This contrasts markedly with Mandela, who, before prison, made an average of three or four references in each speech to the identified adversaries and their activities. However, after release from prison, Mandela's emphasis was sharply reversed; his attention focused instead on positive references and on the constituency, while rarely making negative references or even mentioning the adversary.

In addition to these general points, a closer look at the individual works suggests lessons that may be applicable to public diplomacy more broadly, and to the constituency-adversary hypothesis in particular.

### **King's Public Message**

King's consistent references to the good to be achieved and, in most of his works, the targeted constituency, were purposeful; the linkage he made between the two was strategic. His ultimate aim was "to bring the Negro into the mainstream of American life as quickly as possible."<sup>17</sup> King recognized that doing so—effecting civil rights for blacks—required the assistance of a sizeable portion of white America, which was clearly not his natural core constituency. Hence, King needed to broaden his constituency to include whites.

Attaining sufficient support from moderate whites may have been possible by focusing on the goal of black civil rights, but it was made more probable by framing the goal as something that more obviously appealed to this sought-after additional constituency. Toward this end, King did not speak merely of black civil rights for its own sake. He linked black civil rights as beneficial, indeed essential, for America as a whole. He portrayed attaining black rights as inextricably linked to fulfilling America's purpose and promise as a nation predicated on freedom and democracy. The following quotes are illustrative:

We are here in a general sense because first and foremost we are American citizens, and we are determined to apply our citizenship to the fullness of its meaning. We are here also because of our love for democracy, because of our deep-seated belief that democracy transformed from thin paper to thick action is the greatest form of government on earth.<sup>18</sup>

We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or

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<sup>17</sup> "Where Do We Go From Here?" 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Address to the Montgomery Improvement Association, 1955.

saved from itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear.<sup>19</sup>

Also illustrative is the motto that was chosen for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference: “To save the soul of America.”

The linkage between the framing of goals and the targeted constituency is strong and clear. King’s goal, and his assessment as to what was necessary to accomplish it, compelled him to select a broad constituency (white America). To court it, he needed to seek broader goals, the goals of the broader constituency (the fulfillment of America’s purpose) and to portray the attainment of those broader goals as dependent on the attainment of the specific, narrower goals (black civil rights) that he sought. Through this tactic, he elicited the support of white America (the broader constituency) for black civil rights (the narrower goal).

Something similar may be relevant and important for public diplomacy in the Middle East, and specifically for affecting positively the behavior and attitudes of those who believe that the values America seeks are “bads” but nonetheless desire core goals such as personal or family betterment with which these American values are linked. This group should be among the constituencies targeted by American public diplomacy. To enlist their support requires convincing them that U.S. goals, which this group may currently oppose, are inextricably linked to other goals—family and personal betterment and improvements in health, education, and opportunity—that this group favors.<sup>20</sup>

King’s treatment of adversaries is also instructive. King rarely identified adversaries. Even when speaking of those he deemed responsible for the travails of black people, he relied on the passive voice (indicated in bold font below), thereby cushioning the impact of his criticism:

And when our organization was formed ten years ago, racial segregation **was still** a structured part of the **architecture of southern society**. Negroes with the pangs of hunger and the anguish of thirst **were denied** access to the average lunch counter. The downtown restaurants **were still off-limits** for the black man. Negroes, burdened with the fatigue of travel, **were still barred** from the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. Negro boys and girls in dire need of recreational activities **were not allowed** to inhale the fresh air of the big city parks. Negroes in desperate need of allowing their mental buckets to sink deep into the wells of knowledge **were confronted** with a firm “no” when they sought to use the city libraries. Ten years ago, legislative halls of the South **were still ringing** loud with such words as “interposition” and “nullification.” All types of conniving methods **were still being used** to keep the Negro from becoming a registered voter. A decade ago, not a single Negro entered the legislative chambers of the South except as a porter or a chauffeur. Ten years ago, all too many Negroes **were still harried** by day and haunted by night by a corroding sense of fear and a nagging sense of nobody-ness.<sup>21</sup>

In this passage, the passive voice is both appropriate and effective: appropriate because the travails were in the past and have since been overcome, and effective because the

<sup>19</sup> “Beyond Vietnam,” 1967.

<sup>20</sup> See text below for further discussion regarding the Islamic context.

<sup>21</sup> “Where Do We Go from Here?” 1967.

passive voice castigates past adversaries without necessarily implicating present ones. The following passage reflects the same stance:

From the old plantations of the South to the newer ghettos of the North, the Negro *has been confined* to a life of voicelessness and powerlessness. *Stripped* of the right to make decisions concerning his life and destiny *he has been subject* to the authoritarian and sometimes whimsical decisions of the white power structure [emphasis added].<sup>22</sup>

In the above passage, King points to the “white power structure.” For King, this constituted a fairly specific labeling of an adversary. Even this relatively innocuous labeling was unusual, for he rarely referred to specific adversaries. On those few occasions when he did, he seldom described them as invidiously as does the phrase “white power structure,” a term that could be considered denigrating to white America generally and thus might inhibit his ability to gain the support of this prospective constituency.

Instead, King preferred to characterize adversaries in more impersonal terms. For example, he referred to the “bullies and the guns and the dogs and the tear gas” without referring to who was controlling the dogs or wielding the guns or the tear gas. He referred to “a system that still oppresses” without referring to who controlled or supported that system.

Nevertheless, on those infrequent occasions when King did not use the passive voice and referred directly to adversaries, he chose labels that were intensely pejorative: for example, “bloodthirsty mobs,” “hooded perpetrators of violence,” “close-minded reactionaries,”<sup>23</sup> “Klansmen,” and “White Citizens Councilors [sic].”<sup>24</sup>

King’s occasional references to adversaries also may have been designed to appeal to the constituency he sought. Characterizing the adversary in terms of ideological extremes may have been a conscious strategy, implying there is a choice to be made: between supporting King and the goals he espouses or supporting the extremists and the goals they espouse. When the rhetoric is framed this way, the targeted constituency may be more likely to adopt King’s position.

This point of characterization, too, may be applicable to public diplomacy in the Middle East. Care should be taken in the labeling of adversaries so as not unintentionally to disparage those to whom the United States is trying to appeal. Whether there are circumstances in which intentional disparagement may be warranted remains an open issue. In general, adversaries might be identified, not as individuals, but as unnamed perpetrators among those committed to extremism, totalitarianism, murder, exploitation of women, and other odious activities that the targeted constituency resists.<sup>25</sup>

### **Mandela’s Public Message**

Mandela, like King, claimed to seek a broad constituency.

Though certain individuals raised the question of a united front of all the oppressed groups, the various non-European organisations stood miles apart from one another

<sup>22</sup> “Where Do We Go from Here?” 1967.

<sup>23</sup> “Give Us the Ballot,” 1957

<sup>24</sup> “Where Do We Go from Here?” 1967.

<sup>25</sup> See text below.

and the efforts of those for co-ordination and unity were like a voice crying in the wilderness and it seemed that the day would never dawn when the oppressed people would stand and fight together shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy. Today we talk of the struggle of the oppressed people which, though it is waged through their respective autonomous organisations, is gravitating towards one central command.<sup>26</sup>

Attaining a broad constituency, however, proved to be elusive for Mandela, partly because of a greater fragmentation among the “oppressed people” (Mandela’s core constituency) than there had been among King’s core constituency. But achieving a broad constituency also may have been hindered by the often-divisive rhetoric Mandela employed in his pre-prison phase:

The Society of Young Africa (or SOYA), like its parent body the Unity Movement from which it broke away a few years ago, is an insignificant sect of bitter and frustrated intellectuals who have completely lost confidence in themselves, who have no political ambitions whatsoever and who abhor serious political struggle. In the whole history of their existence they have never found it possible to rise above the level of saboteurs and scandalmongers. Together with the Peter Makhenes and the Sons of Zululand they invariably disappear from the political scene and suddenly come to light fighting side by side with the police to oppose the just struggles of the African people. Africans know who their friends and enemies are and these cliques are treated throughout the country with the contempt they deserve. No useful purpose will be served by wasting more ink and paper on bogus organisations which, under the pretext of ultra-revolutionary language, permit themselves to be used by the police against the struggles of their kith and kin. The attitude of former members of the PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] on the stay-at-home [issue] has been one of shocking contradiction and amazing confusion. Nothing has been more disastrous to themselves than their pathetic attempts to sabotage the demonstrations. Even locally there were many former PAC people who bitterly disagreed with their leaders and who felt that they could not follow the stupid and disastrous blunders they were advocating.<sup>27</sup>

Such vituperative rhetoric stands in stark contrast to the modulated discourse of King. Those referred to in the Mandela quotation may have been competing leaders whom he wished to discredit, rather than adversarial audiences. Nonetheless, the language Mandela used may have made it more difficult to appeal to some of those whose support he was seeking.

In addition, the subjects of Mandela’s castigation extended beyond competing leaders to adversaries. At times, as did King, Mandela took great care to identify and limit the adversary.

I would like to emphasize the aims of our Campaign over again. We are not in opposition to any government or class of people. We are opposing a system which has for years kept a vast section of the non-European people in bondage.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “No Easy Walk to Freedom,” 1953.

<sup>27</sup> “General Strike,” 1961.

<sup>28</sup> “We Defy: 10,000 Volunteers Protest Against ‘Unjust Laws,’” *Drum*, August 1952.

But much of Mandela's rhetoric made this claim difficult to believe. Often, his language could be interpreted as viewing all whites as adversaries.

The cumulative effect of all these measures is to prop up and perpetuate the artificial and decaying policy of the supremacy of the white men. The attitude of the government to us is that: "Let's beat them down with guns and batons and trample them under our feet. We must be ready to drown the whole country in blood if only there is the slightest chance of preserving white supremacy." But there is nothing inherently superior about the herrenvolk idea of the supremacy of the whites. In China, India, Indonesia and Korea, American, British, Dutch and French Imperialism, based on the concept of the supremacy of Europeans over Asians, has been completely and perfectly exploded.<sup>29</sup>

At times, Mandela made efforts to praise those whites who supported his cause and who could be construed as actual or potential parts of his constituency:

European students at the University of Rhodes, and at the Witwatersrand University, also played a prominent part in the demonstrations. Their support showed that even amongst the Whites the forces of challenge and opposition to White supremacy exist and are ready to join battle whenever the call is made.<sup>30</sup>

This reveals an attempt to distinguish whites generally from whites who believed in white supremacy. By this bifurcation, Mandela sought to enhance his appeal to a broader constituency than the one already predisposed to support the beliefs and goals he was advocating.

But sometimes his rhetoric failed to distinguish carefully and adequately between those whites who supported or might support his goals and those who opposed them. The introduction Mandela gave to the argument made at his trial particularly illustrates this failure.

I might also mention that in the course of this application I am frequently going to refer to the white man and the white people. I want at once to make it clear that I am no racist, and I detest racialism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or from a white man. The terminology that I am going to employ will be compelled on me by the nature of the application I am making.<sup>31</sup>

Mandela's claims not to be a "racialist" could have been dismissed by whites based on what appears to be his frequent use of racialism. It is not that Mandela was insincere or incorrect in claiming that he was not a racist and that all whites were not his adversaries. Even if it was unintended, his language made it easier for some whites to believe he was insincere or incorrect. And the use of rhetoric that invites this belief may have contributed to Mandela's failure to amass a broad appeal among whites prior to his imprisonment.

After Mandela emerged from prison, he was, at least publicly, a different and improved leader. Before his imprisonment, Mandela was in the leadership of the African Na-

<sup>29</sup> "No Easy Walk to Freedom," 1953.

<sup>30</sup> "General Strike," 1961.

<sup>31</sup> "Black Man in a White Court," 1962.

tional Congress (ANC). The ANC was a fractionalized organization, one of several representing black people in South Africa. Thus, he was constantly competing for a constituency both inside and outside the ANC, and that constituency was narrow; it was limited to blacks and some of the other oppressed people.

While in prison, Mandela's perspective and stature increased. First, he became the leader of the ANC prisoners, which entailed fighting for improved conditions and representing prisoners in meetings with government officials, foreign dignitaries, and, most important, journalists. Second, he benefited from the strategic decision of the ANC to cast Mandela as the central figure in its international political campaign in 1980.

By the time of his release, Mandela was legendary. His was the face of and the name synonymous with the movement to end apartheid, a stark difference from when his was a name among many in an organization among many and he was fighting desperately for a constituency. The strategy of the ANC gave Mandela a constituency that had become broader and deeper than it had been, extending beyond South Africa to include the international community and consisting of a sizeable white component.

Mandela's public comments reflected these changes. As the following quotations illustrate, he became more careful in calling for a broad constituency and in selecting his adversary, frequently characterizing the latter as "apartheid" rather than as "whites."

It is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured. We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa. The freedom movement is a political home for you too. We call on the international community to continue the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process towards the complete eradication of apartheid.<sup>32</sup>

Mandela's tactics did not transform completely; his characterization of "whites" as adversaries was less frequent but it still occurred.

The extent of the deprivation of millions of people has to be seen to be believed. The injury is made that more intolerable by the opulence of our white compatriots and the deliberate distortion of the economy to feed that opulence.<sup>33</sup>

[T]he white minority government is using every means at its disposal to maintain economic power in the hands of the whites and big business in particular. The intention is, of course, to ensure that whites continue to enjoy a privileged life style.<sup>34</sup>

The differences in approaches between Mandela and King may have been the result of different contexts inducing different tactics. King sought a broader constituency by appealing to and enlisting the aid of moderate whites. Mandela was more polarizing. He did not strive, as did King, to appeal to whites. Perhaps in his earlier, pre-imprisonment phase, he considered attaining such support to be so unlikely that the way to move forward was not

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<sup>32</sup> Address to Rally in Cape Town, 1990.

<sup>33</sup> Address to the Joint Session of the Houses of Congress, 1990.

<sup>34</sup> "Opening Address by Cde Nelson Mandela on the Occasion of the Signing of a Statement of Intent to Set Up a National Capacity for Economic Research and Policy Formulation," November 23, 1991, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1991/sp911123.html> (online as of August 6, 2004).

through internal change, as King contemplated and indeed achieved, but through a greater polarization to galvanize the situation to crisis levels and thereby compel action from the international community. In this scenario, “the international community” becomes subrogated to the role of “broader constituency” that Mandela evoked indirectly, whose counterpart within the United States King had mobilized directly.

Assuming this was Mandela’s intended strategy, the question presented is, Can this strategy be a model for public diplomacy in the Middle East? Which better applies to public diplomacy in the Middle East, the context and strategy of King, who focused on a broad and expanding core constituency, or the context and strategy of Mandela, who focused initially on mobilizing his constituency by severe and hostile depiction of its adversary, while later modulating this message, making the constituency broader and more inclusive?

## Implications and Concluding Observations

The preceding question highlights a dilemma facing U.S. public diplomacy in general, and especially in the Middle East.

First, there is a risk that a new, perhaps more sensitive and tactful public diplomacy effort may be too passive and ineffectual because its strategy is to appeal to an overly broad constituency (embracing all of the first two categories of constituents discussed above—those who accept that the values America seeks are goods and those who may believe that the values America seeks are not goods, but who nonetheless see them as a means to achieve other core goals), and therefore perhaps appearing bland and trite.<sup>35</sup>

Second, there is a risk of appearing combative and arrogant if the adopted strategy seeks to mobilize the more receptive constituency(ies) by aggressively identifying and targeting specific adversaries within the Muslim community.<sup>36</sup>

Identifying real “adversaries” both within the Middle East,<sup>37</sup> as well as outside it,<sup>38</sup> may hedge against the first risk but would increase exposure to the second.

Yet this dilemma is perhaps too sharply drawn. Mixed strategies may be feasible with different emphasis placed on avoiding one risk without unduly increasing the other. Moreover, the effective mix may prudently change or alternate over time, as did Mandela’s strategy and message before and following his imprisonment.

To translate and transfer to the Islamic Middle East the framework we have used in analyzing the King and Mandela experiences are feasible tasks, although perhaps something of a stretch.

In both contexts the challenge—facing King and Mandela in the past and now facing U.S. public diplomacy—is how to formulate and transmit a compelling case espousing public goods: civil rights in the United States and South Africa in the King and Mandela contexts; open and free societies, tolerance, and human rights in the case of U.S. public diplomacy.

<sup>35</sup> This first risk might be called the “King risk.”

<sup>36</sup> The second risk might be called the “Mandela risk.”

<sup>37</sup> For example, the militant and autocratic Islamists. See Lewis, *op. cit.*, 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Such as some Europeans (especially those in Germany and France) who have adamantly and perennially opposed admission of Muslim Turkey to the European Union.



As in the U.S. and South African settings, Middle East ethnography and sociology are no less susceptible to distinctions among different groups of Muslims in terms of their acceptance or rejection of the public goods that the United States cherishes for itself and favors for others. For example, Cheryl Benard distinguishes among four ideological positions in the Muslim world.<sup>39</sup> Ranging across the right-to-left spectrum, they are

- *fundamentalists*, who reject democratic values and Western culture and endorse violence to resist these values
- *traditionalists*, who want a conservative society and are suspicious of modernity, innovation, and change
- *modernists*, who want to reform Islam to bring it into line with the modern world
- *secularists*, who want Islam to accept a division between mosque and state.

Benard suggests that the primary constituency for a realistic public diplomacy should be the modernists. The secularists and traditionalists comprise in varying degrees intermediate and shifting groups<sup>40</sup> that, depending on the issue and circumstances, may join with the modernists. Fundamentalists can be consigned—more or less unalterably—to an adversarial role. Benard suggests they should be opposed “energetically.”<sup>41</sup> It can be inferred, moreover, that such energetic opposition can contribute to unifying and strengthening the modernist constituency.

Other putative experts describe Islamic constituencies and adversaries in terms that are philosophically and theologically closely congruent with Benard’s discussion, though their expositions tend to be more vague and less programmatic than Benard’s.<sup>42</sup>

As is always the case with discretely categorizing things that exist across a spectrum, it may be that the ideological spectrum cannot be so neatly cleaved into these four categories. There may be a significant overlap of traditionalists and modernists: people who are troubled by the problems in their societies due to a persistent rejection of modernity but who wish to retain traditional values. These skeptical modernists (or progressive traditionalists) may be inclined toward modernizing Islam, if only partially or slowly, yet nonetheless may be suspicious of a fuller reformation. Depending on the tactics employed, if public diplomacy were to oppose fundamentalists too “energetically,” the effect might be to repel traditionalists or skeptical modernists whose support may be valuable.

Here, the King and Mandela case studies illustrate potential effects of different tactics. The “Mandela risk” warns of stridently targeting fundamentalists in such a broad way that traditionalists and skeptical modernists also feel targeted and their support is driven away. Following King’s approach would counsel focusing not on the fundamentalists, but on

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<sup>39</sup> This discussion is drawn from Cheryl Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1716-CMEPP, 2003; and Cheryl Benard, “Five Pillars of Democracy: How the West Can Promote an Islamic Reformation,” *RAND Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Spring 2004, pp. 10–13.

<sup>40</sup> See Benard, *op. cit.*, 2003 and 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Benard’s program for “energetic” opposition to the fundamentalists includes the following: challenging and exposing the inaccuracies in their interpretations of Islam; exposing their linkage to illegal groups; demonstrating their inability to develop their countries and communities; and exposing their corruption, hypocrisy, and immorality (Benard, *op. cit.*, 2003 and 2004).

<sup>42</sup> See Jack Miles, “Religion and American Foreign Policy,” *Survival*, Institute for Strategic Studies, Spring 2004; and Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism*, New York: Norton, 2003.

the goods the modernists and maybe the progressive traditionalists seek. The “King risk,” however, is that polarization may be instrumentally necessary, and failing to target the fundamentalists “energetically” may dissipate the sought-after galvanizing effect on the constituency.

By whatever means the risks faced by an overly aggressive or overly passive public diplomacy may be hedged, one general inference from the previous discussion should be repeated: It should not be assumed, as it sometimes has been, that skills, techniques, and tactics that have been effective in marketing private goods will be applicable to and effective in promoting public goods.

That said, it is nonetheless important to recognize that concentrations of creative people and innovative ideas are not confined to the government agencies charged with responsibility for conducting public diplomacy. Marketing private goods is, as we have emphasized, very different from an effective and sustained effort to market public goods through public diplomacy. However, this proposition is quite different from contending that government—(i.e., the “public sector”) should be the only or even the principal locus of public diplomacy. Enlisting, as well as refocusing, the talents of the information/communication/publicist sectors and practitioners should be a priority concern for enhancing U.S. public diplomacy.

Nancy Snow makes the point forcefully:

Public diplomacy cannot come primarily from the U.S. government because it is our President and our government officials whose images predominate in explaining U.S. public policy. Official spin has its place, but it is always under suspicion or parsed for clues and secret codes. The primary source for America’s image campaign must be drawn from the American people.<sup>43</sup>

With these thoughts in mind, a few approaches—some new, some retreads—are worth consideration:

- The tasks of public diplomacy and the obstacles confronting them are so challenging that the enterprise should seek to enlist creative talent and solicit new ideas from the private sector, through *outsourcing of major elements* of the public diplomacy mission. Whether the motivational skills and communicative capabilities of a King or a Mandela can be replicated though this process is dubious. In any event, government should not be the exclusive instrument of public diplomacy. Responsible business, academic, research, and other nongovernmental organizations could be enlisted and motivated through a competitive bidding process. Outsourcing should be linked to a regular mid-course assessment, with rebidding of outsourced contracts informed by the assessment.
- It would be worthwhile to consider differing modes of communicating the “big ideas” of public diplomacy through debate and discussion rather than through the typical monologic conveyance of the message. Other modalities are worth attention, such as structured debates, call-in shows, “conversation and controversy” program-

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<sup>43</sup> Nancy Snow, “How to Build an Effective U.S. Public Diplomacy: Ten Steps for Change,” Address Delivered to the World Affairs Council, Palm Desert, Calif., December 14, 2003, in *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. 70, No. 12, April 1, 2004, pp. 369–374.

- ming, and live interaction among different elements of the audience, including members of constituency and adversary groups.
- Current efforts to bring honest, unbiased information to people in the Middle East may provide platforms for implementing the foregoing ideas. *Radio Sawa* and *Al Horra* are publicly funded but independently operated endeavors of public diplomacy. They build from past successes of outsourcing public diplomacy through radio transmissions, but success in this medium may be applied to other media. Such television programming is already under way through *Al Horra*, but other media, such as print and public speeches, should not be overlooked. *Radio Sawa* broadcasts popular music interspersed with news. An implicit assumption of its approach is that the listener will be more engaged by the music and news reporting than the news reporting alone. This rationale is equally applicable to debates, call-in programs, and live interaction among different elements of the audience. Indeed, such approaches have the added benefit of using tools that directly reflect the goals public diplomacy seeks: open debate, free expression of competing and conflicting ideas, and participation by citizens with sharply different views. The conduct of public diplomacy can be enhanced by employing instruments that directly reflect the collective goods that it seeks. In this case, the medium can become the public diplomacy message.

Still, a reformed and enhanced public diplomacy should be accompanied by limited expectations about what it can realistically accomplish. U.S. policies—notably in the Israel-Palestine dispute as well as in Iraq—inevitably and inherently will arouse in the Middle East and Muslim worlds opposition and deafness to the public diplomacy message that the United States wishes to transmit. While these policies have their own rationale and logic, the reality is that they do and will limit what public diplomacy can or should be expected to accomplish. The antipathy for the United States that some U.S. policies arouse is yet another argument that supports outsourcing some aspects of public diplomacy. The message America is trying to sell about pluralism, freedom, and democracy need not be delivered by the U.S. government. The message itself may be popular among potential constituents who view the United States unfavorably, but if the government delivers the message, the message may go unheard. Nevertheless, even if outsourcing proves more effective, expectations should be limited. While outsourcing may put some distance between a potentially favorable message (pluralism, freedom, and democracy) and an unfavorable messenger (the United States government), inevitably the two will be linked.