

PROACTIVELY PRESERVING THE INWARD QUIET: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND NATO

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“Because the inward quiet of a kingdom depends on the good measures that are taken from without, to make friends that are able to oppose the designs of those who would attempt to disturb it...”

Francois de Callières, *The Art of Diplomacy*¹

With the rise of Daesh,² the growing refugee crisis in Europe, and the increasing tensions between the West and Russia over Ukraine, NATO is faced with many threats to the collective security and stability of the region, which NATO members have agreed to defend and protect. As Francois de Callières’s observes, the inward quiet of a kingdom requires making friends with those who are willing to oppose the plans of those who would disturb the quiet. Callières also observed that a diplomat must ‘make choice of fit instruments, who know how to apply those means rightly, in order to gain the hearts and inclinations of the persons they have to deal with’.³ To address the issues confronting NATO and its members, the organization must engage and develop solid relationships with those within the organization, publics of member nations, regional organizations (i.e. the European Union), and with those publics outside the organization. NATO must select the right range of instruments to gain the hearts and inclinations of the people in order to address the threats to the region’s security and stability.

Today much emphasis is placed on Strategic Communications (StratCom), ‘a choice of fit instruments’, applied appropriately to garner support and cooperation for a nation or organization’s policies. This emphasis is apparent within NATO in recently updated policies, the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration, and the inauguration of

1 François de Callières, *The Art of Diplomacy*, (1716), Keens-Soper, H.M.A. & Schweizer, K.W. editors (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1983). p. 68.

2 Zeba Khan. 2014. ‘Words matter in ‘ISIS’ war, so use ‘Daesh’’, in *The Boston Globe* (Last accessed 30-Aug-2015). Online <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/10/09/words-matter-isis-war-use-daesh/V85GYEuasEEJgrUun0dMUP/story.html>

3 F Callières, *The Art of Diplomacy*, pp. 65-66.

the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga.⁴ However, the following paragraphs will argue while good strategic use of communication tactics and mechanisms are of utmost importance in the current international environment, there is an overemphasis on StratCom without full consideration of what makes communication effective, impactful, and necessarily strategic. To dissect this further, the article will examine how public diplomacy is defined within the NATO StratCom paradigm, as well as critically analysing its relationship to other components of StratCom, specifically public affairs and information operations based on publically available policy documents.

There are few accessible policy documents on the different elements of NATO StratCom. Most of the policy documents that provide greater detail on the role and function of military public affairs, information operations, and psychological operations fall under the purview of the International Military Staff (IMS) and Allied Command Operations (ACO). Given the recent adoption of the StratCom framework into NATO the civilian elements of StratCom appear less developed and long-used elements, such as information operations and psychological operations, are not entirely integrated into the civilian elements of public diplomacy and public affairs, or the organization as a whole. This article addresses these issues and offers ways to conceptualize and implement public diplomacy to fit within the StratCom framework. The objective is to envision what public diplomacy can and ought to be beyond effective communication.

By altering the conceptual understanding of the term both within the StratCom framework and in contrast to other elements of strategic communication, the role of public diplomacy within NATO will assume an even greater strategic importance. This logically leads to a re-conceptualization of public diplomacy as a part of NATO StratCom, further examined through its function based on the core practices of public diplomacy. Then, a renewed strategic role for NATO public diplomacy must be provided to facilitate true strategic communications and the grand strategy within the organization itself.

The whole before the sum total

NATO's formal adoption of a StratCom policy is a bold and progressive move, especially in light of the fact that some nations still struggle to define and codify

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4 'Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration', (NATO, 04 April 2009), (Last modified 8 May 2014, last accessed 6 Sep 2015). Online http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease#top.

how communications, statecraft, and other elements of state power should coalesce.⁵ However, as Commander Dr. Steve Tatham and LTC Rita Le Page observe, the NATO StratCom concept is not without its flaws. These imperfections permeate all elements of Strategic Communications within the organization as well as impacting individual member nations, which have yet to adopt or define the concept for themselves.⁶ Tatham and Le Page argue for corporate understanding and policy for StratCom across NATO and for each member nation. To be certain, consensus about what a strategy is and how it should be used within a political-military organization is absolutely necessary for the strategy to be effective, but defining StratCom overlooks bigger conceptual issues which will continue to undermine the concept unless these problems are addressed. The component parts that comprise NATO StratCom—public affairs (political and military), public diplomacy, information operations, and psychological operations⁷—are each laden with debate and confusion as to what they are and how they should be used.⁸ Academics and practitioners have struggled for decades to adequately define, distinguish, or correlate public diplomacy with propaganda, public affairs, public relations, and soft power.⁹ Furthermore, the argument could be made that the new terms that have been incorporated into the lexicons of many governments and organizations since 9/11, such as smart power, soft power, and even strategic communications, are euphemisms or attempts to avoid terms that are difficult to define or carry negative connotations.¹⁰

Looking at the individual elements of NATO StratCom and their intended functions, there is very little that distinguishes each of the terms from the others. Specifically, according to NATO StratCom policy, the terms *public affairs* and *public diplomacy* share many characteristics depending on the definitions used. Public diplomacy is the *‘civilian communications and outreach efforts and tools responsible for promoting*

5 Paul Cornish, et. al., ‘Strategic Communications and National Strategy: A Chatham House Report’, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, (2011), (Last accessed 29-Aug-2015). Online <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/International%20Security/r0911stratcomms.pdf>; Commander Dr. Steve Tatham and LTC Rita Le Page, ‘NATO Strategic Communication: More to be Done’, National Defence Academy of Latvia, Centre for Security and Strategic Research, 2014, (Last accessed 30-Aug-2015). <http://www.naa.mil.lv/~media/NAA/AZPC/Publikacijas/DSPC%20PP%201%20-%20NATO%20StratCom.ashx>.

6 Ibid.

7 PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communication Policy, (29 September 2009), pp. 1-2.

8 Paul Cornish, et. al., ‘Strategic Communications and National Strategy’, p. vii.

9 Eytan Gilboa, ‘Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy’, in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, No. 1, (2008), pp. 55-77.

10 Definitions for words such as public diplomacy and propaganda continue to be debated among scholars, practitioners, and political leaders. Using new terms to connote similar functions is an attempt to side-step these issues, but this does not mean the problems surrounding the terms disappear. See David W Guth, ‘Black, White, and Shades of Gray: The Sixty-Year Debate Over Propaganda versus Public Diplomacy’, in the *Journal of Promotional Management*, Vol. 14, (2009), 309-325; and Richard Holbrooke, ‘Get the message out’, in *The Washington Post*, (2001). (Last accessed 06-05-2012) Online <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/13/AR2010121305410.html>

awareness of and building understanding and support for NATO's policies, operations and activities, in the short, medium and long term, in complement to the national efforts of Allies'.¹¹ Whereas, *public affairs* (civilian) is the '*civilian engagement through the media to inform the public* of NATO policies, operations and activities in a timely, accurate, responsive, and proactive manner'.¹² The definition for *military public affairs* overlaps further with the definition of *public diplomacy*, to include *promoting NATO military aims* by raising *awareness* and *understanding* through media relations, internal and community relations. All three of the terms use communication to inform the public about NATO policies and operations to garner public understanding and support.

These overlapping definitions raise important questions about NATO StratCom doctrine and policy. First, the defined terms lack meaningful distinction and, as a result, the concepts lack any connection or correlation, thus undermining the very objective of the NATO StratCom policy. Some scholars argue that much of what is termed public diplomacy is in fact public relations¹³ and public affairs is the use of public relations techniques by governments. Scholars and practitioners of public diplomacy argue against equating public diplomacy with public affairs or public relations.¹⁴ Etyan Gilboa argues that:

...PR, advertising, political campaigns, and movies are related to public diplomacy as much as baseball is related to cricket. Advertising and branding of products are specific and self-defining; movie-makers want to entertain, political strategies work in familiar domestic settings, and PR rarely goes beyond clichés. Public diplomacy, on the other hand, has to deal with complex and multifaceted issues, must provide appropriate context to foreign policy decisions, and cope with social and political impetus not easily understood abroad. In short, public diplomacy cannot be reduced to slogans and images.¹⁵

Though unable to reach consensus regarding these concepts, there is general agreement that these are separate mechanisms, each with its own function and role within a state or organization. Public affairs denotes a government's efforts to engage

11 PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communication Policy, (29 September 2009), pp. 1-2, emphasis added.

12 Ibid., emphasis added.

13 S. H. Signitzer and T. Coombs, 'Public Relations and Public Diplomacy: Conceptual Convergences', *Public Relations Review* Vol. 18 (No. 2), (1992), pp. 137-147.

14 W. Kiehl, *America's Dialogue with the World*. (Public Diplomacy Council, Washington, D.C., 2006); J. L'Etang, 'Public Relations and Diplomacy in a Globalized World: An Issue of Public Communication', in *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 53 (No. 4), (2009), pp. 607-626.; H. Tuch, *Communicating with the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas*, (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990).

15 Gilboa, 'Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy', p. 68.

with domestic audiences to garner support and consensus for government policies,¹⁶ and Jan Melissen argues that:

...separating public affairs (aimed at domestic audiences) from public diplomacy (dealing with overseas target groups) is increasingly at odds with the 'interconnected' realities of global relationships. It is commonly known that information directed at a domestic audience often reaches foreign publics, or the other way round, but the relationship between public affairs and public diplomacy has become more intricate than that.¹⁷

Thus, there is a need to define and understand each element of StratCom on its own terms before integrating them into a concept, policy, or strategy.

A second issue is that each of these definitions emphasizes producing and disseminating mass communication. This is understandable given their designation as components of StratCom, but even the definition of StratCom gives primacy to *communication*.¹⁸ NATO defines *Strategic communication* as 'the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO *communications activities* and capabilities—Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate—in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims'.¹⁹ The objective of NATO StratCom is to ensure effective communication as measured by speed, widespread distribution, as well as support and understanding of NATO's policies and objectives. This is a very functional, superficial conception of strategic communications. Importance is placed, not on the relational aspect of communication or the content of communication, but rather on the mechanics, technology, infrastructure, roles of different types of communicators within the NATO StratCom apparatus, and communications environment.²⁰

This is problematic as many observe the need for NATO to bolster the organization's soft power²¹ and the organization itself notes the need to alter its approach to regional

16 Stephen Stockwell, 'Public Relations and Government' in *Public Relations: Theory and Practice*, ed. by Jane Johnstone and Clara Zawawi, (Allen & Unwin, Australia, 2009), pp. 414-442.

17 Jan Melissen, ed., *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, (Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p. 8.

18 Commander Dr. Steve Tatham and LTC Rita Le Page, 'NATO Strategic Communication: More to be Done', p. 3.

19 PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communication Policy, (29 September 2009), pp. 1-2.

20 Ibid., p. 1. 'NATO Strategic Communications should be modern in technique and technology in order to match the information cycle...'

21 Indra Adnan, 3 May 2012. 'Why NATO needs soft power', CPD Blog, (Last accessed 6 Sep 2015). Online http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/why_nato_needs_soft_power/; Philip Seib, 'NATO Still Pondering Soft Power', in *The Huffington Post*, 12 Apr 2012. (Last accessed 6 Aug 2015). Online http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-seib/nato_b_1389974.html.

defence and security to address the changing international environment.²² The significance attributed to the functional and technological aspects of communication over the last decade is a symptom of the Information Age and of the way in which the international political environment is constantly shaped by the ever-changing information environment—both in terms of the available communication technology and the speed of information dissemination. This reaction to the rapid advance of communication technologies, which enables greater access to information and makes communication easier for much of the world, is not a new phenomenon.

With the introduction of the printing press, political leaders were forced to adapt to an increasingly educated and informed public, as with the introduction of the telegraph, underwater cables, and the industrialization of communication at the turn of the twentieth century. Historically and currently, the tendency is to either celebrate the liberalization of information and communication, or to attempt to control it. As NATO's mission is to defend and secure the values of 'individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law',²³ NATO StratCom should also reflect these values in how the organization integrates this concept into the organization.

Public Diplomacy as Diplomacy with the Public

Let's examine the concept of public diplomacy. The term originated in 1962, largely as a way for the US to avoid using the term propaganda to signify the government's significant international communication programs. However, much of the literature on public diplomacy, acknowledges that the idea of a nation or organization engaging with the people of another nation vs. the government is not unique to the twentieth or twenty-first century, and is in fact an ancient practice.²⁴

Returning to the observations made by de Callières, it would seem that even for a diplomat in the eighteenth century, as the practice and art of diplomacy was still developing, that it was still the duty of a diplomat to engage with the people of a nation as much as it was important to engage with those in power. Other examples of statesmen either being admonished to attend to the public of a nation or individuals

22 'Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration', (NATO, 2009), (Last accessed 6 Aug 2015). Online http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease#top.

23 'Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization' (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, November 2010), (Last accessed 29 Aug 2015). Online http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf.

24 Nicholas J Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*. (Figueroa Press, Los Angeles, 2009); Melissen, ed., *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, p. 3.

urging their government to engage with the public include Benjamin Franklin,²⁵ who was advised to address 'the people without doors' and Arthur Bullard,²⁶ who lambasted President Woodrow Wilson for practicing diplomacy as in Old World, instead of practicing 'democratic diplomacy' as befitted a democratic nation. Bullard wrote '[it] is an anomaly, a denial of our own democratic faith, that our Republics should accredit its ambassadors to the kings and not to the peoples of Europe'.²⁷ By the end of World War II, the Department of State planned to continue the operations of the Office of War Information and Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs based on the idea that as the world was becoming more democratized, US diplomacy should be more democratic. Even stepping away from US examples, from the end of the nineteenth century up until World War II, the internationalist movement swept most of the world. Internationalists generally believed that greater international engagement and exchange would minimize conflict and eliminate war altogether.²⁸ Governments and private organizations initiated and funded cultural exchanges with this in mind.

This suggests that, over time, the term *public diplomacy* has been excessively synced to the mechanical act of communication. More recent literature on the concept acknowledges the prioritization of the technical act of communication and influence over both listening and relationship building.²⁹ Taking the term and translating it literally as *diplomacy with the public* leads to a different understanding of the concept and poses interesting possibilities in terms of its function and role in NATO. Thinking of the concept as a diplomatic function does not in any way diminish its importance or undermine strategic communication, as diplomacy still includes influence and communication. These elements are weighed against other aspects of diplomatic function and behaviour to include negotiation, dialogue, and representation. Defining *public diplomacy* as *engagement, representation, and relationship-building* heightens its strategic

25 The Benjamin Franklin Papers, Vol. 8, p. 87. Online <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/>; Benjamin Carp, *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution*. (Oxford University Press, 2007).

While serving as a colonial agent in London, Benjamin Franklin wrote to Thomas Leech of the Assembly of Correspondence in Pennsylvania, that he had been advised by a lawyer regarding colonial complaints to Parliament. 'One Thing that he recommends to be done before we push our Points in Parliament, viz. removing the Prejudices that Art and Accident have spread among the People of this Country [England] against us, and obtaining for us the good Opinion of the Bulk of Mankind without Doors...' As Benjamin Carp explains, with the advent of the printing press, the relaxation of censorship by the British government, and the opening of Parliament, the term 'without doors' began to refer to the general public, outside the closed doors of Parliament.

26 Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1980). According to Stephen Vaughn, Bullard's article influenced President Wilson's ideas about establishing the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Bullard would serve as the CPI representative in Russia once the US entered World War I.

27 Arthur Bullard, 'Democracy and Diplomacy', in *The Atlantic Monthly*, (1917), p. 492.

28 Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

importance and adds depth beyond merely communicating to the public. As Bruce Gregory observes, '[diplomacy's] context...changes with time and circumstance... What changed was not a generic concept of diplomacy that included a public dimension. What changed was situational...Public diplomacy has always been a part of diplomacy'.³⁰ There is precedent to consider public diplomacy as diplomacy, as much as there is to consider it communication.

Public Diplomacy in a Defence Alliance

One of the other issues confronting NATO StratCom, particularly with regard to public diplomacy, is the question of how a multi-national defence organization, created largely to mitigate military threats to member nations, should employ public diplomacy. Though much of NATO policy on public diplomacy emphasizes dissemination of information and the act of communication, the term public diplomacy entails more. Public diplomacy includes engagement with the media, advocacy, and people to people exchanges.

According to public diplomacy scholar Nicholas Cull, public diplomacy is comprised of core practices, which have been used by leaders and private actors to engage with publics for centuries and can be identified in historical records. These core practices include *listening*, *advocacy*, *international broadcasting*, *exchange diplomacy*, and *cultural diplomacy*. *Listening* is where an entity gathers information about foreign audiences and their opinions; sometimes a form of intelligence gathering. *Advocacy* is when an actor promotes specific policies to the people of another nation or group. *International broadcasting* is when an actor uses communication technology (i.e. radio, television, the Internet) to engage with the public or provide information to the public. *Cultural diplomacy* is when an actor highlights his nation's cultural achievements to the people of other nations. *Exchange diplomacy* is when people from different nations travel to host nations or learn about another nation's culture.³¹ Most of these core practices can be implemented in NATO public diplomacy activities; some are already in place, but require greater attention.

In outlining the NATO StratCom infrastructure, the policy does not give *listening* much consideration.³² NATO has two bodies, which are identified as either advising public diplomacy or carrying out public diplomacy. Public Diplomacy Committee

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30 Bruce Gregory, *The Paradox of US Public Diplomacy: Its Rise and 'Demise'*, (Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication, George Washington University, 2014), p. 7.

31 Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, pp. 18–23.

32 PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communication Policy, (29 September 2009), pp. 1-2.

Within the 2009 Strategic Communication policy, one of the last principles of NATO strategic communications includes 'soliciting public view and adapting efforts as necessary'.

members '...share their experiences on national information and communication programmes and *the perception of their respective public regarding the Alliance and its activities*'.³³ There is no mention of seeking to understand public opinion that exists outside of the NATO member nations. Within the International Staff, the Public Diplomacy Division is comprised of the NATO Multimedia Library, the NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv, and the Information Centre in Moscow. Yet there is no centralized group within NATO tasked with listening.³⁴

This is not to say public opinion outside member nations is not evaluated. In 2013, NATO conducted a study of Russian public opinion in the Novgorod Province.³⁵ The study is an invaluable resource, demonstrating the gaps between what is known, understood, and believed about NATO among the public versus what is known or understood based on what is reported in the news and just the general knowledge of those surveyed. Perhaps of greatest significance, the report demonstrates that a gap exists between listening and informing. Respondents were asked whether Russia needed to collaborate with NATO on various threats. A majority of those surveyed believed Russia and NATO should collaborate on combatting piracy and terrorism, with a slight majority agreeing that the two should collaborate on destroying obsolete weapons.³⁶ Respondents were also asked if they knew of the NATO-Russia Council and what the council did. Most were aware of its existence, but did not know what the council did.³⁷ The survey report also demonstrates how the Russian public (within Novgorod) still views NATO suspiciously concerning some issues and on other issues sees NATO as an outright threat. A proactive public diplomacy apparatus would consider these views and adjust public diplomacy engagement to address these issues.

However, when the organization intervened in Libya in 2011, it would seem that NATO policy was informed by public opinion. Said Sadiki describes how large swaths of the Arab public supported NATO intervention in Libya and that the intervention altered Arab public opinion toward the organization.³⁸ However, in asking Moroccan

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33 'Committee on Public Diplomacy', North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (26 Nov 2014), (Last accessed 29 Aug 2015), Online http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69272.htm

34 'NATO Bi-SC Information Operations Reference Book', North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (March 2010), (Last accessed 29 Aug 2015), Online <https://info.publicintelligence.net/NATO-IO-Reference.pdf>. NATO

Information Operations does include gathering cultural and social information, but the information is to support information operations, in designated areas or crisis regions.

35 'Russian Public Opinion of NATO: Novgorod Province', North Atlantic Treaty Organization, (November 2013), (Last accessed 30 Aug 2015). Online http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2013_nio/20131202_131129-nio-survey-summary.pdf

36 'Russian Public Opinion of NATO: Novgorod Province', (November 2013), p. 9.

37 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

38 Said Sadiki, 'Arab Public Opinion and NATO after International Military Operations in Libya', in the Turkish Journal of International Relations. Vol. 11, No. 2, (2012), pp. 78-89.

students about the motives behind the NATO intervention, 90% of those surveyed believed NATO's reasons for going into Libya were more than humanitarian. As Sadiki points out, while Arab public opinion is toward NATO changing, more is needed to ameliorate the Cold War image of NATO as a subsidiary of the United States and an enemy of Islam. He advocates for more person-to-person engagement to facilitate this.³⁹ As Stephanie Babst observes, though the organization has changed rapidly since its creation, the image of the organization in the eyes of the public remains largely the same.⁴⁰ The stasis in attitudes toward NATO is a reflection of how public diplomacy and even NATO's StratCom framework is an incomplete strategy, since it focuses on the distribution of information and responding to media, rather than listening to public opinion and allowing this to inform policy.

NATO strategic communications emphasizes *advocacy* for nearly each element. As discussed in the paragraphs above, civil public affairs, military public affairs, and public diplomacy promote or advocate the political and military aims of NATO. NATO public diplomacy advocates policies through civilian communication and outreach to build understanding in correlation with the individual efforts of the Allies. NATO public affairs, both military and civilian, specifically engage the media to inform and promote NATO objectives. Again, priority is given to 'informing' without strategic connection to the other elements of StratCom or to NATO itself.

The core practice of *international broadcasting* is typically thought of as making use of state owned media platforms such as radio stations, TV channels, newspapers, and magazines. Today, the Internet and social media provide opportunities for non-state entities to create and use their own platform for international broadcasts. NATO makes use of these tools with the NATO YouTube channel, Facebook page, and Twitter feed. Videos such as 'Agile Spirit 2015: Building Defence Skills in Georgia',⁴¹ and 'What's happening in South Ossetia'⁴² are examples of both *international broadcasting* and *advocacy*, since they provide background information and also promote NATO policies in key areas. Yet, while on-line options provide a cost-effective means of engaging with audiences, the medium is limited. First, NATO must consider whether their target audience has the technical capability to access these information resources. Second, with dedicated pages on social media platforms, the user must actively choose to follow the page in order to receive updated information and videos, or seek out the pages of

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39 Ibid., pp. 84-85.

40 Stephanie Babst, 'Reinventing NATO's Public Diplomacy', Research Paper, NATO Defense College Research Division No. 41, (2008), pp. 2-8.

41 'Agile Spirit 2015: Building Defence Skills in Georgia', NATO, (Last accessed 30 Aug 2015) on YouTube, Online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8d9hedwjEQ>,

42 'What's happening in South Ossetia', NATO (Last accessed 30 Aug 2015) on YouTube, Online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDwgJFrUfdo>

their own volition. Single-entity owned or administered broadcasting platforms may be viewed with suspicion and scepticism. The content is often labelled as propaganda and discounted. NATO international broadcasting should be used to inform and educate the public about the organization, how it works, and what issues the organization is working on in relation to world events, as well as discuss the concerns of member nations. As an alternative to single-entity owned media platforms, NATO could create regular short broadcasts and printed materials to reach more audiences.

By emphasising the act of communicating, or the 'informing' aspect of communication, other forms of engagement are overlooked. Moreover, the pace of the international communication environment today often intensifies leaders' perceptions of the need to react or respond to overwhelming amounts of new information. To become more strategic about how a nation or organization communicates, more attention and emphasis should be given to slower, relational forms of communication. These include *exchange diplomacy* and *cultural diplomacy*. As noted earlier, NATO could do more to change its image internationally through education and personal engagement. NATO schools currently offer fellowships for partner nations and allied nations, but these could and should be expanded. Furthermore, teachers and leaders within NATO should be encouraged to teach and learn at other state and military schools. There is a great opportunity to not only to forge personal connections, but also to broaden knowledge and experience by increasing our repertoire for approaches to handling various challenges. NATO officers were pleased and surprised that they could learn from their Ukrainian students while they were training them.⁴³ This type of exchange offers opportunities for more *listening*.

Cultural diplomacy might be seen as a challenge for a political-military organization, like NATO. However, NATO has a political culture that 'refers to the specifically political orientations—attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system'.⁴⁴ As an organization that is set-up to defend a particular political culture, the organization projects and upholds that culture in specific ways. When NATO provides training and assistance to other nations, the organization is in fact engaged in a type of cultural diplomacy. Moreover, NATO member nations each have their own culture. Personal engagement with other member nations, or with people outside the organization, offers the opportunity to share personalised views of national culture as well as an understanding of the political culture NATO that defends.

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43 'Helping Ukraine Defend Itself', (Last accessed 31 Aug 2015) on YouTube, Online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRy6QXQe9j8>

44 G.A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. (Sage Productions, Inc., Newbury Park, CA, 1989), p. 12.

Another area where NATO could improve its soft power and conduct public diplomacy by action, rather than speaking, is through humanitarian aid. Nation states have used humanitarian aid to facilitate larger foreign policy and diplomatic objectives since the early nineteenth century, and more recently public diplomacy scholars have begun to include humanitarian aid as a practice of public diplomacy. Humanitarian assistance done well and with respect and consideration to recipients can not only alter public perceptions, but also foster dialogue. NATO member nations all have private organizations that provide humanitarian aid, and their national governments contribute funding to these organizations, as well as to international aid organizations. NATO can facilitate the process by providing protection for aid workers and their supplies. NATO can also aid logistics and help aid organizations broker entry into conflict areas. These are small acts that can leave long-lasting impressions, communicating through actions rather than words.

The Strategic Role of Public Diplomacy in NATO

This article has highlighted some of the conceptual issues within the NATO StratCom framework and offered an alternative way to understand public diplomacy in relation to other elements within that framework. The previous section broke down public diplomacy further, analysing how the identified core practices of public diplomacy could be used or improved within NATO. In conclusion, the final paragraphs will look at three strategic objectives of public diplomacy to further integrate the concept into the NATO StratCom framework and the overall organization itself.

The challenges confronting not only NATO, but also every nation today demand that nation-states, state allies, and regional partners take people power seriously. Essentially since 2001, the greatest threats to instability have emanated from small and large non-state organizations including piracy, cartels, cyber criminals, and terrorist organizations, as well as grass roots movements to de-stabilize and overthrow governments, resource shortages, and population displacement due to conflict. The problem that NATO and many nation-states face is that much of their intelligence collection infrastructure gives priority and primacy to nation-state intelligence. Many of the events of the last decade have caught nations off guard because warning indicators have gone unobserved. This is due to the fact that most reconnaissance and intelligence collection is directed at national governments and militaries, not the people. What many leaders overlook is that power is relational and relative to another actor or actors.⁴⁵ Furthermore, as David Jablonsky outlines, national power is comprised of both the psychological and informational alongside political, economic, and military capabilities, size of population, and access to natural resources. A people

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45 David Jablonsky, 'National Power', in *Parameters*, Vol. 27, No. 1. (1997), pp. 34-54.

strongly united psychologically can overcome militarily and economically superior powers, there are many examples of such cases throughout history. In addition, the '...enhanced communication and dissemination of information...is a two-edged sword that cuts across all the social determinants of power in national strategy'.⁴⁶

In order to better prepare and respond to developing threats, **the first strategic objective** of public diplomacy must be to *listen* and allow the knowledge gained by listening to *inform policy*.

Public aims to influence foreign publics on the understanding that this makes the implementation of foreign policy *vis-a-vis* third countries more acceptable and effective. In a world where national and global interests frequently overlap, *engaging in dialogue with foreign publics is a condition for effective foreign policy*...Indeed, the main reason behind renewed emphasis on PD is the increasing power of citizens and civil society actors.⁴⁷

While serving to guide NATO public diplomacy generally, *listening* should also inform policy, in much the same way any other form of intelligence, political or military, does. With all attention focused on collecting information and intelligence at the national level, there are few tasked with collecting and analysing public views and considerations, even outside of NATO policies and objectives. Listening should not just focus on the key issues of concern, but also be alert to trends in public opinion. This provides an alternative approach to intelligence analysis, focusing on drivers or indicators rather than attempting to predict specific outcomes and intentions.⁴⁸ Qualitative forces synthesis analysis requires the identification of forces, such as political, military, economic, psychosocial, and informational.⁴⁹ The benefit of this type of analysis is that it affords the opportunity to identify trends and potential crises before they develop, allowing time to intervene. Identifying these forces serves as an early warning. With the Georgian-Russian War in 2008 and the on-going fighting over Crimea and parts of Ukraine, good listening in Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine might have provided early warning indicators of prevailing tensions and provided more options for NATO and member nations to respond.

This leads to **the second strategic objective of public diplomacy**. If public diplomacy is applied as *diplomacy with the public*, rather than a strategic approach to producing

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46 Ibid.

47 Filippos Proedrou and Christos Frangonikolopoulos, 'Refocusing Public Diplomacy: The Need for Strategic Discursive Public Diplomacy', in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 23, No. 4, (2012.), pg. 729, emphasis added.

48 Richard Clark, *Intelligence Analysis: A Target-Centric Approach*, (CQ Press, Los Angeles, 2013).

49 According to Clark, the forces are dependent on the actor and the situation an analyst is trying to predict. The forces can also be internal, external, or in response to forces.

information and disseminating it, then public diplomacy offers the opportunity to build and maintain lines of communication even in the event of a crisis. A government may sever ties with NATO or a member nation, but if personal relationships are maintained within a nation or group, there is still a channel of communication for negotiation and compromise to mitigate tensions and possible escalation. Additionally, a government or entity may disagree with NATO policies or actions, but with public engagement, NATO can keep dialogue going, again ensuring tensions are minimal.

The **third strategic objective of public diplomacy** is to serve as a baseline for offensive and defensive operations, to inform NATO military information and psychological operations. When tensions reach a tipping point, all forces or nations must transition from peacetime operations to combat operations. Public diplomacy can facilitate this transition, as the first two strategic objectives already indicate. If the first strategic objective is met, then information and psychological operations have a baseline of intelligence with which to formulate and execute operations. Though the second objective of mitigating crisis may fail once armed conflict begins, if public diplomacy has in fact built relationships and lines of communication, these can and may remain available despite armed conflict. If such lines are open, these can serve to restore peace. Furthermore, the crisis mitigation objective can also facilitate the transition from combat operations to peacetime operations.

Events and current threats in the course of the last fourteen years have overwhelmingly demonstrated that the traditional tools of state power are effective or can be used in isolation. NATO already recognizes this and has moved to adapt to the new environment, yet the organization must do more to fully flesh out the individual elements of StratCom, making greater distinctions between them. The organization must determine how each element correlates with the other mechanisms of StratCom and integrate civilian strategic communication with the military. Finally, NATO should not only consider communication in terms of speaking, producing, and disseminating information to the public. Communication is a human act, between humans and should also include building relationships, listening, and fostering dialogue. Ultimately, the aim of NATO public diplomacy should be to utilize the core practices, in conjunction with the other elements of NATO StratCom to preserve the inward quiet of the region. *Strategic* use of public diplomacy would allow NATO to address potential threats early on and potentially avert a crisis altogether.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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