



THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURES OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND POLITICAL WARFARE

*"Oh, I know your motives are good, they always are ... I wish sometimes you had a few bad motives, you might understand a little more about human beings. And that applies to your country too, Pyle." --- Fowler in *The Quiet American* (1955)*

"Public diplomacy" has been a recurrent mantra in discussions of US foreign policy since 11 September 2001. Charlotte Beers, the advertising executive who was appointed Assistant Secretary of State less than a month after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, proclaimed, "We promote U.S. interests not only through our policies but also in our beliefs and values. Never have these intangibles been more important than right now."^[iii] In August 2004, the challenge remained: US National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice who asserted, "We must work to dispel destructive myths about American society and about American policy", and five months after that Secretary-of-State-designate Rice promised at her confirmation hearings "to do much more to confront hateful propaganda, dispel dangerous myths, and get out the truth".^[iiii] This plaint was echoed by Karen Hughes, the close confidante of President George W. Bush and eventual successor to Beers in July 2005, "We need to engage more vigorously. We cannot expect people to give a fair hearing to our ideas if we don't forcefully advocate them."^[v] Even Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld chipped in, "It's quite clear to me that we do not have a coherent approach to this....we as free people have not developed the skills to counter [Islamic extremism]."^[vi]

These constructions of public diplomacy's role compress vital assertions and concerns about 21st-century US foreign policy. All assevere that the success of that policy cannot rest upon the simple projection of the "hard power" of military operations. All hold out the attainable prospect that the "soft power" of a projection of the American political, social and cultural system can achieve the Government's objectives because American values are universally-held values; however, all point to the difficulty that someone or something is blocking the recognition of that equation. As President Bush complained, only a few weeks after *Le Monde* had declared that "we are all American": I'm amazed. I'm amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. I am --- like most Americans, I just can't believe it because I know how good we are.^[vii]

In contrast to the grand sweep of these ambitions, the solution for public diplomacy is set out in narrow, mechanistic terms of delivery rather than content. Indeed, the political dimension is sometimes set aside for the concept of

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“selling America”. Beers joined the State Department with the comment, “This is definitely the most elegant brand I--I've ever had to work with,” a promise inverted into jeremiad by Senator Henry Hyde, “How is it that the country that invented Hollywood and Madison Avenue has such trouble promoting a positive image of itself overseas?”^[vii] In more prosaic language, the Council for Foreign Relations concluded, “The promise of America's public diplomacy has not been realized due to a lack of political will, the absence of an overall strategy, a deficit of trained professionals, cultural constraints, structural shortcomings, and a scarcity of resources.” (AQ 320)

Artificially detached from the strategy, objectives, and operations of US foreign policy, public diplomacy is fixed within simple ideological binaries. President Bush’s dictum, issued nine days after 9-11, that “you are with us or you are with the terrorists” is re-presented by his close advisors, two-and-a-half years after the war in Iraq, as a global campaign against “an enemy determined to destroy our way of life and substitute for it a fanatical vision of dictatorial and theocratic rule. At its root, the struggle is an ideological contest, a war of ideas that engages all of us, public servant and private citizen, regardless of nationality”^[viii] A State Department official, speaking “on background” to the *New York Times* about the appointment of Karen Hughes, set out the problem caused by such simplicities: “The problem is American policy, not inadequate public relations, and...no amount of marketing will change minds in the Muslim world about the war in Iraq or American support of Israel.”^[ix]

Historical reflection illuminates both the bases and the follies of the current projection of US foreign policy. The term “public diplomacy” was coined by MIT’s Edward Gullion in 1965 but twenty years before that, a group of American businessmen, newspaper editors, journalists, and academics published an open letter calling for a strategy of “Explaining America” to wage the emerging Cold War. Public diplomacy would not be superimposed as “information” for a strategy confronting the Soviet Union. Rather, it would be integrated into that strategy; the US would not vanquish Moscow with military might but would tear down the Iron Curtain with political warfare:

We must supplement our picture of America with vigorous offensive action. In this period of political warfare we may be able to register a truth which is harmful to our opponents when we cannot undertake the long education effort to implant a truth which is helpful to ourselves.^[x]

Political warfare was never a firmly fixed concept within US foreign policy. Its implementation was always subject to the tensions of bureaucratic conflicts, to the indecisions of high-level officials, to the limitations of resources, and

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occasionally to the escalation from Cold War to hot war. Political warfare was always present, however, in the construction and presentation of the US fight against a Communist enemy, be this a direct contest against the “evil empire” of the Soviet Union or China, an attempt to separate “satellite areas” from Moscow or Beijing, or most often, a battle for control of the “developing world”. Perhaps most significantly, political warfare did not terminate with the downfall of the Soviet system. Foes were redefined as “rogue states” and “countries of concern”; programs and operations were reshaped for interventions in areas such as the Balkans and for efforts at regime change in countries such as Iraq.

From the 1940s to the 1990s, whatever its specific form, whatever its specific successes or failures, political warfare would eventually founder upon a fundamental tension: was the objective that it was pursuing the extension of US power or the “liberation” of captive peoples? The ideological claim of extending freedom co-existed with other geopolitical, economic, and military goals; in the words of the US Government’s global blueprint against Soviet Communism, NSC 68:

We must lead in building a successfully functioning political and economic system in the free world. It is only by practical affirmation, abroad as well as at home, of our essential values, that we can preserve our own integrity, in which lies the real frustration of the Kremlin design. But beyond thus affirming our values our policy and actions must be such as to foster a fundamental change in the nature of the Soviet system.^[xii]

It is the contention of this essay that the accession of the George W. Bush Administration has elevated this tension. On the one hand, the Bush Presidency has hung its policy on the promise that America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. On the other its “first objective”, set out in a 1992 Defense Planning Guidance and taken up at the first National Security Council meetings of the new Administration, was “to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival”. Facing this tension, public diplomacy assumes a dual role. It is essential to political warfare as “information” exposing the nature of the enemy and, more importantly, as the presentation of a positive United States with political and economic systems that should be emulated by other nations. At the same time, public diplomacy’s depiction of freedom can never overcome the tension between liberation and power, between self-determination and the extension of an American military presence, between the promotion of human rights and the limits placed on human rights in the name of the War on Terror. Indeed, public diplomacy’s presentation of transcendent American

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values can only succeed as long as other actors in the “new information society” of the 21st century leave its assertions unchallenged.

In May 1948 George Kennan, the head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, proposed "The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare" against the Soviet Union: “Having assumed greater international responsibilities than ever before in our history and having been engaged by the full might of the Kremlin's political warfare, we cannot afford to leave unmobilized our resources for covert political warfare.”

Kennan has been historically framed as the father of “containment” and, at an initial level, his proposal was a practical implementation of that strategy. The first significant *ad hoc* programme of political warfare in the early Cold War had been the initiative, devised by Kennan and other Truman Administration officials, to prevent Communist parties taking power in French and Italian elections in spring 1948; the apparent success of that mission enabled the US Government to proceed with the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Kennan, however, was beyond containment. A month before the French and Italian elections, the Policy Planning Staff was setting out the objective of QUOTE. Kennan’s political warfare was part of a strategy to fulfil the objective of victory over, rather than co-existence with, the Communist foe.

Most of Kennan’s memorandum was implemented over the next eighteen months. The Office of Policy Coordination, created in June 1948, filled a gap in the foreign policy bureaucracy: the CIA’s legal mandate was for collection and analysis of intelligence, not covert operations in support of political warfare. Funded through a variety of secret arrangements, most significantly access to five percent of Marshall Plan counterpart funding, the OPC could pursue an ambitious programme on both sides of the Iron Curtain. A high-ranking officer later remarked about the budget for covert operations, “We couldn’t spend it all....There were no limits and nobody had to account for it. It was amazing.”^[xii] Campaigns were launched to “liberate” the Baltic States, the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Albania.

The OPC’s efforts were complemented by an equally significant implementation of Kennan’s political strategy: the development of a State-private network. Kennan set out in his May 1948 memorandum: What is proposed here is an operation in the traditional American form: organized public support of resistance to tyranny in foreign countries. Throughout our history, private American citizens have banded together to champion the cause of freedom for people suffering under oppression.^[xiii] The best-known initiative was the creation of the National Committee for Free

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Europe, which oversaw not only Radio Free Europe but also the Free European University in Exile, book and pamphlet programmes, and even drops of information into Eastern Europe by hot-air balloon. NCFE, however, was one of hundreds of operations in which covert support was given to private groups in every sphere of American and international society.^[xiv]

Perhaps most significantly, Kennan's vision of political warfare and victory over Moscow was endorsed at the highest level. NSC 20/4, approved by the National Security Council in November 1948, established that the US Government should "encourage and promote the gradual retraction of undue Russian power and influence from the present perimeter areas around traditional Russian boundaries and the emergence of the satellite countries as entities independent of the USSR". US activity would also "eradicate the myth by which people remote from Soviet military influence are held in a position of subservience to Moscow and to cause the world at large to see and understand the true nature of the USSR and the Soviet-directed world communist party, and to adopt a logical and realistic attitude toward them".

Yet this vision and its covert dimension was limited by divisions over the design and implementation of political warfare. At first glance NSC 68, the 1950 blueprint for a global campaign against Soviet Communism, reaffirmed the tenets of NSC 20, but far from being the clearly-defined culmination of Kennan's conception, it was a compromise document, holding together divergent approaches of hard power, public diplomacy, and political warfare through its ideological constructions and projections. In January 1950 Kennan warned Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "No automatic means of 'stopping communism' on our part, particularly where it *is* primarily a matter of men's minds. Military occupation or direct military action not always fool-proof remedy, and not even seriously advocated for most of Asia --- even by strongest critics of our policy."^[xv] Kennan was on his way out of the Department, however, replaced as Director of the Policy Planning Staff by Paul Nitze. Preparing NSC 68, Nitze set out a different priority for Acheson, the need to face "the possibility of a quick Soviet decision to resort to military action, locally or generally"^[xvi]

From one side of the policymaking divide, Nitze was emphasizing a militarised approach in which the first demand on the United States was be the development of the hydrogen bomb and a significant increase, prominently displayed, of conventional forces. From the other, officials warned that political warfare, at least in pursuit of the liberation of Eastern Europe, would be counter-productive. Charles Bohlen told a special gathering of political warfare specialists, from the Government and the "private" sphere, in 1952 that "the present end result of [our] operations....would be to get people killed"^[xvii]

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Officials at the highest levels offered no resolution. The Truman Administration settled for the general wording of “the gradual retraction of undue Russian power and influence” while its successor under President Dwight Eisenhower Administration spent months examining the strategy, only to cling to the general injunction “to create and exploit troublesome problems for the USSR [and] complicate control in the satellites” while eschewing operations to exploit fully the death of Stalin and the East German uprising of June 1953.^[xviii] In the vacuum, those who sought a more aggressive approach continued with day-to-day programmes such as Radio Free Europe and awaited opportunities, notably Khrushchev’s Secret Speech of February 1956 denouncing his Communist predecessors.^[xix]

In one sense, Bohlen was proved right and political warfare for liberation ended when Soviet tanks suppressed the Hungarian Revolution in November 1956; President Dwight Eisenhower complained, “This was indeed a bitter pill for us to swallow. We say we are at the end of our patience, but what can we do that is really constructive?”^[xx] The by-word for the American approach towards Eastern Europe became “evolution”. Yet, in an arguably broader and more significant development, the setback behind the Iron Curtain reinforced a shift of Kennan’s strategy to other arenas. From Southeast Asia to the Middle East to Latin America to Africa, covert operations underpinned the quest for hearts and minds, mobilising support for “good” governments and pursuing the removal of “bad” ones. The Doolittle Report of 1954 rationalised a “New Look” strategy which supported this pursuit of victory through covert means and held it in tension with “hard power”:

It is now clear that we are facing an implacable enemy whose avowed objective is world domination by whatever means and at whatever cost. There are no rules in such a game. Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply. If the U.S. is to survive, long-standing American concepts of “fair play” must be reconsidered.^[xxi]

Eventually those tensions would be exposed. The campaign to topple Fidel Castro expanded into the paramilitary operation at the Bay of Pigs. In the aftermath of the failed invasion, responsibility for covert political warfare was formally handed to the military, but intervention in Vietnam would prove the ultimate crisis for the system. The issue was not only that hard power had failed to defeat the insurgency but that it had overtaken and arguably sabotaged the “soft power” dimension of the strategy. Economic uplift, civic action, and revolutionary development all fell before the increasing “militarisation” of American involvement, an outcome captured in the alleged comment of an

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American commander after the battle of Hue in 1968, "We had to destroy this village in order to save it."^[xxii]

Yet, just as political warfare had adapted and expanded after the shock of Budapest in 1956, so it may be contended that disaster in Southeast Asia, demonstrated the malleability, rather than the demise, of the approach. Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon's National Security Advisor, took on the responsibility for covert interventions, pursuing the overthrow of "enemies" without recourse to military force; in one famous example, he demanded the removal of Chile's Allende Government: "Not concerned risks involved. No involvement of embassy. \$10,000,000 available, more if necessary. Full-time job - best men we have.... Make the economy scream. 48 hours for plan of action."^[xxiii] A decade later, despite (and possibly because of) Congressional investigations and public castigations of "dirty tricks", Ronald Reagan's officials would frame the renewed global crusade against the "evil empire" as Project Truth and Project Democracy, leading to new organisations for political warfare such as the National Endowment for Democracy.

The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union offered retrospective justification for generations of political warfare. Celebrants could finally resolve the tension between soft and hard power: victory was due to the promotion of the American system and its values *and* to an unprecedented escalation of defense spending that forced the Soviets into economic and political bankruptcy. Whether or not this contention was accurate reflection or wishful reconstruction, it opened up a further issue: was political warfare necessary after the disappearance of America's primary foe and the supposed "end of history" with its triumph of Western liberalism?

Less than a year after the breakup of the Soviet Union and, perhaps more significantly, the failure of the Gulf War to remove Saddam Hussein from power, an Assistant Secretary of Defense named Paul Wolfowitz set out an answer. In the innocuously-titled Defense Planning Guidance, Wolfowitz argued: Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and Southwest Asia.^[xxiv] The first Bush Administration initially stood aside from the document when portions were leaked in the *New York Times* but a version was adopted in January 1993, weeks before Bill Clinton assumed the Presidency.

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The Defense Planning Guidance was a clear statement that America's fight against enemies was not finished; indeed, it indicated that the Cold War was always more than a bipolar struggle between Washington and Moscow. It went further, however, with an attempted resolution of the tensions in political warfare, a resolution through the unification of objectives. For more than 40 years, the United States had been balancing the exertion of power --- for geopolitical, economic, and military goals --- with the quest for liberation. Wolfowitz's solution was to elevate "power" from a means into an end: geopolitical maneuver, economic strategy, military deployment, and the campaign for "freedom" would be pursued insofar as they advanced an American dominance "detering potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role".^[xxv]

The Clinton Administration clearly differed, in methods and ends, from the Defense Planning Guidance's intent. Wolfowitz's all-but-stated unilateralism did not fit the Clinton approach of "engagement and enlargement" in Europe and the former Communist bloc as well as a declared reliance of action through the United Nations. Russia and China were not to be treated as rivals but as potential partners in the post-Cold War political and economic system. Some elements of the Clinton policy and rhetoric, however, played into the hands of Wolfowitz's strategy. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake's 1994 declaration of "recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family [of democratic nations] but also assault its basic values" identified those who could be held up as the rivals threatening an American preponderance of power.^[xxvi] Structures for the use of new communications technologies and "information warfare" such as the State Department's International Information Programs and an International Public Information office, created by a secret Presidential Decision Direction, were put in place.^[xxvii] Meanwhile, "opposition" groups with ties to the first Bush Administration stepped up the pressure. The Project for a New American Century, formed in 1997 "to make the case and rally support for American global leadership" wrote an open letter to President Clinton calling for "a strategy for removing Saddam's regime from power [through] a full complement of diplomatic, political and military efforts".

The Clinton Administration, however, did not put emphasis on the use of political warfare to topple purported enemies. The CIA's strategic influence section lost approximately 90 percent of its personnel, with only a rump corps of 20 staffers by late 2001; a long-serving officer explained, "We had precious few assets left. And none of them were spring chickens."^[xxviii] The Pentagon's Public Diplomacy Directorate was abolished, while long-term projects such as the



support of the Iraqi National Congress were complicated by animosity from the CIA and State Department towards the INC's leader, Ahmad Chalabi.^[xxxix]

Thus, it was only with the belated victory of President George W. Bush in the 2000 election that the principles of the Defense Planning Guidance could be put into practice through the development of new campaigns. At the first National Security Council meetings of the new Administration, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld summarised the plans to make an example of regime change in Baghdad: "Imagine what the region would look like without Saddam and with a regime that's aligned with U.S. interests. It would change everything in the region and beyond it. It would demonstrate what U.S. policy is all about."^[xxx] The plans were deferred for most of 2001 because of unwelcome diversions, such as the confrontation with China over the downing of a US reconnaissance plane and turmoil between Israeli and Palestinian groups, but the tragedy of 9/11 offered a platform for the conjunction of "hard power" and political warfare. The reaction of National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice reaction was to ask her staff, "How do we capitalize on these opportunities?", while Rumsfeld tried to establish the basis for a campaign against Iraq, "Best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H. [Saddam Hussein] at same time. Not only UBL [Osama bin Laden].... Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not."^[xxxi]

On the surface, public diplomacy was a central part of this revitalized effort. Beers was approved by Congress as the new Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs on 7 October; meanwhile, the White House established an Office of Global Communications to co-ordinate its efforts with those of allies such as Britain and with American officials in the field. Co-ordination was supposedly furthered with National Security Council committees, formed in early 2002, and a Deputy National Security Advisor for strategic communication and global outreach.^[xxxii] The operational budget for State Department public diplomacy alone reached \$685 million by the 2004 fiscal year. Discreet funding of "moderate" radio and television programmes, schools, think tanks, and political workshops accompanied high-profile campaigns including the Shared Values initiative, which sought through television, radio, Internet, and publications to demonstrate that the American ideology was a universal ideology.^[xxxiii] The "Muslim Life in America" website featured an engineer from San Francisco who proclaimed, "American values are, by and large, very consistent with Islamic values, with a focus on family, faith, hard work, and an obligation to better self and society."^[xxxiv] Advertisements of 30 and 60 seconds were filmed for broadcast throughout the Arab world, and public figures such as Muhammad Ali were asked to make appearances on the channel Al Jazeera.^[xxxv]

In the broader strategy of political warfare, however, State Department programs

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were marginal at best. Beers complained that implementation was hindered by “a clumsy camel” of Department bureaucracy with staff still mourning the passing of the US Information Agency. Beers also did not have the advantage of the overriding objective of establishing and enhancing American power: “We were asking [officials] to deal with intangible values like emotion, religion, and trust. It wasn’t easy.”^[xxxvi] She was surpassed by a Pentagon who, in contrast to Beers’ office or indeed any other group within the State Department, could link “intelligence”, analysis, and dissemination of information. The Office of Special Projects, supervised by Assistant Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith, was established to advance or even create the pretext for operations against Iraq. In this effort, the Pentagon tried to displace Beers through covert manipulation of “information”. It worked with the Iraqi National Congress to place 108 articles in the US and overseas press on topics from the cruelty of Saddam Hussein’s regime to the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.^[xxxvii] By early 2002, the Department of Defense was confident enough to plan an Office of Strategic Influence to disseminate disinformation as well as “true” stories. A leak to the press stymied the effort although Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assured the press, “I’ll give you the corpse...but I’m gonna keep doing every single thing that needs to be done and I have.”^[xxxviii]

Despite these bureaucratic tensions, US political warfare was successful in so far as it could establish the cause for military intervention, first against Afghanistan and then against Iraq. Beyond the general presentation of American good v. Saddam’s evil, the threat of WMDs was complemented by the “positive” presentation of US liberation of the Iraqi people and the spread of freedom throughout the Middle East. Seeking international support, President Bush set out the rhetorical case three weeks before the first attacks upon Baghdad: “A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress to the lives of millions.”^[xxxix]

Political warfare could thus complement and support the use of “hard power” for regime change. From just before the bombing and invasion, when US sources put out the story that Saddam’s Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz had fled to northern Iraq,^[xl] “information” combined the presentation of dissension and disarray in the Iraqi political and military leadership with the promise of a joyous public welcoming US and British forces. The audio-visual high point of victory came on 9 April with the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s statue in Firdaus Square, an event stage-managed by US forces to the extent of bringing in members of Chalabi’s “Free Iraqi Forces” while keeping out other Iraqis with a cordon around the square.^[xli]

The harder task for political warfare arose when the Iraqi welcome proved

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problematic. Hard power might be able to remove a dictator but it could not mobilise public acceptance of a successor regime. "President" Chalabi, sheltered behind razor wire and US Marines in Baghdad's Hunting Club, failed to win significant backing, and the first US head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, General Jay Garner, left after only a month of frustrations. The failure of reconstruction efforts, which put Rumsfeld's "freedom's untidy" reaction to post-Saddam looting into ironic perspective, was soon matched by a breakdown in security throughout many areas of the country.^[xliii] Amidst the disorder and increasing hostility towards American troops, Rumsfeld's Assistant Secretary, Douglas Feith, maintained that the Iraqis "had flowers in their minds".^[xliiii] Perhaps, but two years later, the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad would admit that the US was "not doing very well" "not doing very well" in convincing Iraqis and others in the region that the US had no devious motives such as designs on Iraq's oil or other underhanded motives.^[xliv]

As significant as the Iraqi case was and continues to be in the construction and reception of US political warfare, it should be recognised as part of a wider challenge for political warfare that existed before March 2003. The Pew Research Group found in December 2002 that "despite an initial outpouring of sympathy for America following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, discontent with the United States has grown around the world over the past two years".^[xlv] The Shared Values campaign was dented and eventually set aside when Arab countries refused to air the State Department's promotional spots. The Middle East Partnership Initiative failed to make significant headway and efforts such as Radio Sawa were ridiculed by observers in the region. Beers resigned in March 2003, citing reasons of health; her eventual successor, veteran diplomat Margaret Tutwiler, lasted only five months before taking a job on Wall Street.^[xlvi]

Nor did the removal of Saddam check this sceptical response to US campaigns. Political warriors discussed methods without agreement on the target --- terrorism, Islamic extremism, other enemy states --- or the root cause for animosity towards the "West", so interagency meetings "could clarify what path to take".^[xlvii] A July 2003 "strategic communications exercise", with the objective of improving the American image in the Muslim world and fostering a stable democracy in Iraq, collapsed; one participant explained, "Things were so dysfunctional we saw little point in playing through the scenario."^[xlviii] Patricia Harrison, formerly the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, could only offer a stay-the-course invocation:

You never declare victory. You do not declare that it's the end of history and go home. The job is to continue pushing the boulder up and up, to keep investing, keep connecting.^[xlix]

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In another shift of direction in 2003, the White House adopted a classified strategy called Muslim World Outreach to influence Islamic opinion through the projection of democracy, women's rights, and tolerance by "provid[ing] money and help[ing] create the political space for moderate Muslims to organize, publish, broadcast, and translate their work". Rumsfeld, asking subordinates "Are we winning or losing the Global War on Terror?", pondered, "Should we create a foundation to entice radical madrassas to a more moderate course?" Special attention was paid to possible "regime change" in Iran with millions of dollars designated "for opposition and pro-democracy groups abroad and longer broadcasts criticizing the Iranian government".^[ii]

Yet US public diplomacy efforts, and the broader approach of US political warfare, will be perpetually troubled because of the tension between "power" and "liberation". Policymakers in Washington might attempt their own resolutions with the notion of "a balance of power favoring freedom" but it cannot be assumed that this construction will be accepted without question or reservation by those outside "America". The problem is not just that Congressional funding for "official" programmes of democracy promotion, notably the Middle East Partnership Initiative, has decreased more than 25 percent; "democracy" itself has proven problematic. The US continues to support regimes such as those in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia whose commitment to "freedom" is far from certain: a Council on Foreign Relations report concluded, "[Many people in Central Asia and the Middle East] simply cannot understand why a country whose democratic institutions they so much admire provides political, economic and military aid to absolute monarchs and military dictators."^[iii] Political movements such as Hamas who may come to power in democratic elections must be rejected by US officials because they are "terrorist organizations",^[iv] while Latin American diplomats, told by Washington to support "democracy" to condemn leaders such as Castro in Cuba and Chavez in Venezuela, respond, "In many countries, people are asking, 'What is the value of democracy when I am still living in poverty?'"^[v]

For all the attention to the course of US foreign policy since 9/11, the fundamental problem remains the one that faced George Kennan when he crafted the Cold War strategy of political warfare: "preponderance of power" and "freedom" are competing objectives:

We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population...In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our

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national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives.^[liv]

Kennan and his staff eventually set aside the possible conflict between American dominance and a universal freedom with the reassertion that “we are, for all our shortcomings, not only great but good, and therefore a dynamic force in the mind of the world”.^[lv] More than 50 years later, a “senior advisor” to President Bush re-presented greatness and goodness to a journalist, “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create own reality. And while you’re studying that reality -- - judiciously, as you will --- we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors.”^[lvi]

The tension could not be dissipated so easily, however. Within the Washington bureaucracy, it would emerge in the battle over means: was the American position to be defended and extended through an emphasis on the “hard power” of nuclear weapons and conventional forces or through the “soft power” of political and economic influence supported by the projection of a superior American culture? The Manichaeian division in the Administration’s rhetoric tilted towards the former: given that terrorists “hate our country and oppose everything we stand for”, asserted Vice Presidency Dick Cheney, “this continuing threat demands a unified, effective response...to hunt down the terrorists before they can hit us again”.^[lvii] Facing a conflict with an enemy who might not accept public diplomacy’s equation of American and universal values, an American general declared, “As much as I would love the Iraqis to love me, and my doctrine tells me I want to win the hearts and minds, I know I’m not going to do that.”^[lviii]

It is in this environment that public diplomacy operates, always seeking to resolve these tensions, forever unable to equate power with freedom.^[lix] Most considerations of US policy and operations evade or miss this fundamental, however; leaving unexamined the possibility of a “preponderance of power”, they assert that the flaws in public diplomacy are simply in the mechanics of its delivery.^[lx] Indeed, there is a suspension of analysis which borders on cognitive dissonance. Jim Hoagland, the *Washington Post* columnist who often channels the perspectives of Government officials, neatly shifts the focus to the receiver of America’s message: “Even as we struggle to understand their grievances, we need to ask also: Why do they hate themselves?”^[lxi]

In 1975, testifying before a Senate committee, Kennan called his proposal of political warfare “the greatest mistake I ever made”.^[lxii] The comment, widely repeated in Kennan’s obituaries in 2005, can be too easily taken as a renunciation

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of a strategic concept that was supposed to frame US policymaking in the Cold War and, much later, the “War on Terror”. In a contest with the Soviet Union defined as a “total” conflict, political warfare was an inevitable alternative to a military campaign that could not be waged. The issue was by which departments and by which methods political warfare would be pursued, as well as the ideology and policies that it would promote. Any “failure” lay, not with Kennan, but in the continuing attempt of US policymakers and Presidents to hold up a universal, uncomplicated “freedom” in public when hard power accompanies soft power in the pursuit of American objectives and when, as Vice President Dick Cheney has argued, the US Government “has to work...sort of the dark side, if you will....A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion...”.^[lxiii] In the caustic words of a State Department official reacting to Condoleezza Rice’s repeated injunctions for an effective public diplomacy, “This is all feel-good mumbo jumbo.”^[lxiv] Or, as Osama Siblani, the publisher of the *Arab-American News*, summarised the eternal dilemma, “They could have the prophet Mohammed doing public relations and it wouldn’t help.”^[lxv]

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^{lii} Quoted in Ralph Dannheiser, "Senate Panel Speeds Action on Nominees to Key State Posts", 24 September 2001, <http://israel.usembassy.gov/publish/peace/archives/2001/september/092516.html>.

^{liii} Leta Hong Fincher, "Rice: US Must Work Harder to Counter Anti-American Sentiment," *Voice of America*, 20 August 2004, www.voanews.com/article.cfm?objectID=05D1EBD5-5655-40B5-ACA3632737B5DA83; "Confirmation Hearing of Condoleezza Rice," *New York Times*, 18 January 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/18/Politics/18TEXT-RICE.html>

^{liiv} Mike Allen, "Hughes Hopes to Burnish Image of U.S.: Nominee Says Ideas Will Prevail," *Washington Post*, 23 July 2005, p. A04
Indeed, Hughes' echo of Rice was word-perfect: "America must also improve our rapid response and do much more to confront hateful propaganda, dispel myths, and get out the truth."

^{liv} Donald Rumsfeld, quoted in "Rumsfeld: Terrorism is Not the Problem," *TomPaine.com*, 8 June 2004, http://www.tompaine.com/articles/20040608/rumsfeld_terrorism_is_not_the_problem.php; See also Donald H. Rumsfeld, "War of Words," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 July 2005, reprinted at <http://mediachannel.org/blog/book/print/197>

^{lv} George W. Bush, quoted in *CNN Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer*, 14 October 2001, <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/011014/le.00.html>

^{lvii} NBC Nightly News, 7 November 2001, transcript at http://www.prfirms.org/resources/news/bush_hires_110701.asp; Henry Hyde to House International Relations Committee, 10 October 2001, reprinted at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept_11/hyde_001.htm

^{lviii} George W. Bush to Joint Session of Congress, 20 September 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>; Stephen J. Hadley and Frances Fragos Townsend, "What We Saw in London," *New York Times*, 23 July 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/23/opinion/23hadley.html>

^{lix} Elisabeth Bumiller, "Bush Picks Adviser to Repair Tarnished U.S. Image Abroad," *New York Times*, 12 March 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/12/politics/12hughes.html>

^{lx} Wallace Carroll to Edward Barrett, 2 June 1950, US National Archives, Department of State, Lot 64 D 563, Records of the Policy Planning Staff, Subject File, Box 11A, Political and Psychological Warfare, 1947-1950

^{lxii} NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," 14 April 1950, reprinted at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>

^{lxiii} Quoted in Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared in the Early Years of the CIA* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1995), pp. 40-1

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[xiii] Policy Planning Staff, "The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare," 4 May 1948, US National Archives, RG 273, National Security Council Records, NSC 10/2

[xiv] See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?* (London: Granta, 1999); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The US Crusade against the Soviet Union, 1945-1956* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Helen Laville and Hugh Wilford (eds.), *The State-Private Network: The United States Government, American Citizen Groups, and the Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

[xv] George Kennan to Dean Acheson, 6 January 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950: Volume I, National Security Affairs*, pp. 129-30

[xvi] Paul Nitze study on Recent Soviet Moves, 8 February 1950, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950: Volume I, National Security Affairs*, pp. 145-7

[xvii] Record of Princeton Meetings, 10-11 May 1952, *US Declassified Document Reference System* (Woodbridge CT: Thomson Gale), US DDRS 1988 1164

[xviii] NSC 162/2, 30 October 1953, *Documents of the National Security Council 1947-1977* (Frederick MD: University Publications of America), Reel 3

[xix] See Lucas, *Freedom's War*, pp. 249-65

[xx] 303rd National Security Council meeting, 8 November 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Ann Whitman Series, National Security Council, Box 8

[xxi] Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency (Doolittle Report), 30 September 1954, pp. 6-7, reprinted at

<http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32500.pdf>

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[xix] *Ibid.*

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Steven Weisman, "U.S. Expands Aid to Iran's Democracy Advocates Abroad," *New York Times*, 29 May 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/29/international/middleeast/29iran.html>

During the June 2005 Presidential elections in Iran, President Bush intervened with a message to the Iranian public, "Today, Iran is ruled by men who suppress liberty at home and spread terror across the world....As you stand for your own liberty, the people of America stand with you." The Iranian Intelligence Minister responded, "I say to Bush: 'Thank you.' He motivated people to vote in retaliation." [Robin Wright and Michael A. Fletcher, "Bush Denounces Iran's Election," *Washington Post*, 17 June 2005, p. 18; Brian Murphy, "Bush's Barbs on Iran Backfire," *Seattle Times*, 20 June 2005,

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[xxii] Robin Wright, "Campaign to Change Mideast Under Fire," *Washington Post*, 9 June 2005, p. A18; R. Jeffrey Smith and Glenn Kessler, "U.S. Opposed Calls at NATO for Probe of Uzbek Killings," *Washington Post*, 14 June 2005, p. A15;

Jackson Diehl, "Align with Democrats in Central Asia," *Washington Post*, p. A15

Before the Presidential elections in Egypt in summer 2005, in which President Hosni Mubarak was easily returned to office amidst rulings which prevented opposition parties and candidates from standing, Laura Bush praised Mubarak's "bold step". Condoleeza Rice proclaimed, "President Mubarak has unlocked the door for change." [Condoleeza Rice, "Given Our History, the US Has No Cause for False Pride," *The Independent*, 22 June 2005,

<http://comment.independent.co.uk/podium/story.jsp?story=648696>]

One of the founders of the coalition movement challenging Mubarak commented, "We were shocked at the statements made [by Rice]. I don't think the content of her remarks met the expectations of the people or the opposition." [Steven R.

Weisman, "Rice Urges Egyptians and Saudis to Democratize," *New York Times*,

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21 June 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/21/international/middleeast/21rice.html>]

[lii] Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. to Shun Hamas Members, Even if Democratically Elected," *New York Times*, 7 June 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/07/politics/07hamas.html>

Richard Haass, head of policy planning in the State Department from 2001 to 2003, later commented, "Look, I was part of the incubation of this policy [of democracy promotion]. But I don't think you can make it the controlling issue. The administration has set itself up for inconsistency." [David E. Sanger, "There's Democracy, and There's An Oil Pipeline," *New York Times*, 29 May 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/29/weekinreview/29sanger.html>]

[liii] Esteban Tomic, Chilean Ambassador to the U.S., quoted in Joel Brinkley, "U.S. Proposal in the O.A.S. Draws Fire as an Attack on Venezuela," *New York Times*, 22 May 2005,

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<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/2496/future/kennan/pps23.html>

[liv] George Kennan to Dean Acheson, 15 May 1949, *The State Department Policy Planning Staff Papers, Volume III: 1949*, p. 43

[lv] Ron Suskind, "Without a Doubt," *New York Times*, 17 October 2004, reprinted at <http://cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/sloth/2004-10-16b.html>

[lvii] Quoted in Peter Baker, "At Air Force Academy, Cheney Talks of 9/11," *Washington Post*, 2 June 2005, p. A02

[lviii] Lieutenant General Thomas F. Metz quoted in Richard Hinn Sinreich, "'It Isn't War'," *Washington Post*, 22 August 2004, p. B07

[lix] "In much of the world, the image of the U.S. under Mr. Bush has morphed from an idealized champion of liberty to a heavily armed thug in camouflage fatigues. America is increasingly being seen as a dangerously arrogant military power that is due for a comeuppance." (Bob Herbert, "America, a Symbol of....", *New York Times*, 30 May 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/30/opinion/30herbert.html>)

[lx] Tellingly Michael Ignatieff, who has written in support of an American "benevolent empire", identified this tension before finding a way to stay the course for "freedom": "The problem here while no one wants imperialism to win, no one in his right mind can want liberty to fail either." ["Who Are Americans to Think That Freedom is Theirs to Spread?", *New York Times Magazine*, 26 June 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/26/magazine/26EXCEPTION.html>]

[lxi] Jim Hoagland, "It's More Than Us They Hate," *Washington Post*, 26 May 2005, p. A27

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[^{lxiii}] See, for example, Tim Weiner and Barbara Crossette, "George F. Kennan Dies at 101; Leading Strategist of the Cold War," *New York Times*, 18 March 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/18/politics/18kennan.html>

[^{lxiii}] Quoted in Joseph Lelyveld, "Interrogating Ourselves," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 June 2005,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/12/magazine/12TORTURE.html>

[^{lxiv}] Quoted in Robin Wright, "U.S. Struggles to Win Hearts, Minds in the Muslim World," *Washington Post*, 20 August 2004, p. A01

[^{lxv}] Quoted in William Douglas, "U.S. Turns to Madison Avenue for PR War," *Newsday*, 23 October 2001, reprinted at

<http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/1024-06.htm>