

Stretching the Parameters of Diplomatic Protocol: Incursion into Public Diplomacy

Shahidul Alam
Independent University

Abstract

The end of the Cold War saw the United States retrenching its public diplomacy program. However, as the sole remaining superpower, it saw the opportunity to spread its values and ideals—particularly those of liberal democracy, human rights, and free market economy—to those countries that were lacking in them. Paradoxically, intense public diplomacy efforts were required in the pursuit of that objective. Traditional diplomats then began to take on public diplomacy functions, but, in so doing, often violated Article 41 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. They were mostly from the United States, while the rest were from Europe and regional powers, whereas the host countries were mostly developing nations complaining of interference in their internal political affairs. While some such interference may be expected, they are better done through traditional diplomats discreetly communicating with the host government. Cowboy diplomacy by traditional diplomats probably does more harm than good to both the home country aspirations in, and the internal political dynamics of, the host nation.

Keywords

public diplomacy, traditional diplomacy, 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, home country, host country, foreign policy, press conference, cowboy diplomacy, national interest, national security.

Introduction

At a seminar in Dhaka, India's high commissioner to Bangladesh, Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, referred to those Bangladeshi water experts who opposed the Tipaimukh project¹ as "so-called" specialists.² That he had made that remark in the presence of Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni compounded the diplomatic faux pas.³ After a hiatus of several days, a number of which were marked by verbal protests, Moni issued a statement explaining her position at a press conference: "I personally feel he [Chakravarty] might have breached diplomatic rules."⁴ Not long after having committed the diplomatic blunder, Chakravarty, at a conference on "Bangladesh-India Economic Relations" held on July 20, 2009, again crossed the line of proper diplomatic norm. He termed 80 percent of the Bangladeshis who seek Indian visa as "touts and brokers", and alleged that around 25,000 of the total number of Bangladeshis who enter India with legal visas each year does not return to their country.⁵ On this occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh was prompt in refuting Chakravarty's remarks.⁶ The high commissioner's comments that had given rise to so much controversy were really an outcome of his foray into public diplomacy, or rather, its misuse.

This paper will examine a phenomenon that has perceptibly been making the news following the September 11, 2001 attacks (commonly known as 9/11) by Al-Qaeda terrorists on symbols of American financial and military power: top diplomats engaging in public diplomacy in the countries of their accreditation. While some of the activities involve diplomats from the relatively more influential developing countries of a region posted in weaker developing nations, as exemplified by the Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, the majority relate to ambassadors from advanced countries posted, or visiting, in that category of states. Recorded incidences of top diplomats engaging in public diplomacy, as well as the frequency of the

¹ A considerable body of literature exists on the subject of the Tipaimukh project, although it is characterized by the unevenness in quality of the individual works. One such endeavor, although marked by a disconcerting writing style, does manage to encapsulate the relevant geographical features of the project. The entire paragraph is presented verbatim: "The TIPAIMUKH dam and the barrage at Phulertal, 100 km straight downstream --- is part of a multipurpose project: Tipaimukh Hydro Electric Multipurpose Project or THEMP. It is named after location of the project: at a remote village (Keimmai) of the Tipaimukh subdivision (240 1' N, 930 1'E), a patch of lush bamboo-groove [sic] hills in South West district (Churachandpur) of Manipur bordering with Tamenglong district of Mizoram where the river Barak (locally named 'tuirong', tui = river, rong = corpse, an allusion to the dead bodies and waste as floods and strong currents bring down the river) is joined by another river (locally known as tuivai --- tui = water, vai = wanderer), approaching laterally with a more convoluted course. Their combined surge is going to be contained at Tipaimukh at the mouth of (the) gorge. It is going to be contained at Tipaimukh, more than 200 km (according to our rough calculation from the Google pictures) from the Bangladesh border Upazila (sub-district) Zakiganj of Sylhet, just one of several such structures envisioned in and around the region." [M. Nazmul Alam and Abul Kashem Mozumder, *Tipaimukh and Beyond*, (Dhaka: AH Publishing House, 2009), 1].

² "Pinak 'might have broken' diplomatic norms," *The Daily Star*, July 2, 2009, 7. Chakravarty had also rather audaciously and arrogantly declared that, "No international law can stop Tipaimukh" Alam and Mozumder, *Ibid*, 48. The Indian high commissioner's remark predictably drew a storm of protest from various quarters in Bangladesh. The main opposition party in Parliament, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), through its Parliamentary Party (BNPP), demanded his immediate withdrawal from his post for "violating diplomatic norms and interfering in the country's internal affairs." The opposition chief whip made his party's position very clear: "This envoy has long been making derogative [sic] remarks breaching diplomatic etiquette. The way he talks amounts to meddling in our internal affairs, and could affect the bilateral relations [between Bangladesh and India]. So we want him to be immediately withdrawn from Bangladesh" "Pinak must go," [*The Daily Star*, June 24, 2009, 1].

³ Alam and Mozumder come down hard on the Indian high commissioner's diplomatic faux pas with some derisive comments of their own: "It is said that the Pinaki Babu had two stints of posting [in Bangladesh] albeit with lesser visibility and therefore, is supposed to be no stranger to the people of this region. It is further alleged that the Babu was not only born and brought up in what was once well known as Bikrampur, his earlier education up to grade VIII was also here. From his conduct, however, one can hardly be sure if he had any further real education subsequent to joining of the common Diaspora for the other side of the fence [in West Bengal, India]." [*Ibid*, note 18 to Chapter 6, "Diplomatic Ripples in the South Block and Elsewhere", 53].

⁴ *The Daily Star*, July 1, 2009, 1. Dipu Moni's silence before she made her personal position clear had drawn the principal opposition's ire, which did not fail to capitalize on it politically. The BNPP criticized her for not warning the Indian high commissioner, or even registering a protest against his comments on the Tipaimukh issue and Bangladesh water experts. "She has in fact committed an unpardonable offence," it felt. "This proves once again that sovereignty and national interests are not in safe hands" [*The Daily Star*, June 24, 2009, 15]. Alam and Mozumder, in a picturesque and sarcastic comment, while filling in the blank during the foreign minister's period of silence, allude to the statement she had actually made following the high commissioner's gaffe, which, in fact, draws attention to her about-turn in the face of continual verbal protests: "Remarkably enough, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister ... perhaps believing in the dictum 'never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity' thought that the disparaging remarks of the very special guest [Chakravarty] only deserves her silence and instead, lambasted those who were calling the dam a death trap as nothing but scale mongering [sic] and inciting the people against... friendly India" [*Ibid*, 48]. They cite *The Bangladesh Observer* of July 2, 2009 in giving the following version of the foreign minister's mild rebuke: "Personally I think he did not follow the limits the foreign diplomats are needed to abide by some restrictions" [*Ibid*, 50]. However, the secretary-general of the ruling party, Awami League, and the minister for local government, rural development and cooperatives differed with the foreign minister and, instead, offered his own perspective: "The Indian High Commissioner, as the representative of a friendly neighbouring country, he expressed his opinion and views frankly" [*The New Age*, July 3, 2009, cited by Alam and Mozumder, *Ibid*]. This position is really not that different from that of Dipu Moni's original statement on the issue.

⁵ Alam and Mozumder, citing several sources [*Ibid*, 49]. Also, "Government refutes Pinak's remark" [*The Daily Star*, July 23, 2009, 15]. The conference was jointly arranged by the FBCCI [Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries] and FICCI [Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries].

⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Chakravarty's allegation that Bangladeshis overstay in India "does not match with the information available with the government" [*The Daily Star*, *Ibid*]. The Indian high commission in Dhaka issued its own clarification, saying that the high commissioner was only highlighting a well-known problem of touts and brokers forcibly occupying the visa queue, thereby displacing and harassing genuine visa applicants" ["Indian High Commission clarifies," *The Daily Star*, *Ibid*]. However, that still does not explain how 80 percent of visa seekers could be touts and brokers.

engagements, show that most of the envoys are from the United States. These forays have resulted in expressions of outrage by the host governments against the foreign individuals meddling in their respective country's internal affairs and raised question marks on whether the stretching of the parameters of traditional diplomatic practices to include public diplomacy has not added an unwelcome dimension to the conduct of bilateral, and in some cases, multilateral relations.

Traditional Diplomacy

Dictionary definitions of the term “diplomacy” demonstrate striking similarities in their content, particularly in the context of this paper. For one, diplomacy is 1) the art or practice of conducting international relations, as in negotiating alliances, treaties, and agreements, and 2) a tact and skill in dealing with people.⁷ A second defines the term as 1) art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations, and 2) the skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility.⁸ A third lexical meaning of the term includes 1) international relations: the management of communication and relationships between nations by members and employees of each other's government and 2) tact: skill in dealing with other people.⁹ The feature of diplomacy that stands out as conspicuously common to all three definitions are tact and skill in dealing with people. In other words, the emphasis placed on a diplomat's work is the delicate art of using quiet diplomacy in being able to maximize his or her nation's interest. This requires considerable skill, since the diplomat has to tread a sensitive path for attaining his or her purpose without ruffling the host government's feathers. Among the functions of a diplomatic mission is that of promoting friendly relations between the home and host nations. The idea is to promote friendly relations, not undermine them by engaging in cowboy diplomacy (signifying contravention of the customs and rules of diplomatic behavior) that undertaking irresponsible public diplomacy would very likely entail. Diplomacy's methods include “secret negotiation by accredited envoys (though political leaders also negotiate) and international agreements and laws ... The goal of diplomacy is to further the state's interests as dictated by geography, history, and economics. Safeguarding the state's independence, security, and integrity is of prime importance; preserving the widest possible freedom of action for the state is nearly as important. Beyond that, diplomacy seeks maximum national advantage without using force and preferably without causing resentment.”¹⁰ The key points to note in this concise, yet comprehensive, representation of traditional diplomacy is discretion and the diplomat's act of taking care not to unnecessarily raise the host country's ire.

That tradition is being tested in this age of globalization, especially after 9/11. Professor Alan Henrikson of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy explains the changing world and its ramifications for diplomacy: “with history accelerating as it is, national governments, international organizations, and those who represent them are called upon to make very rapid and precise decisions. The future is upon us much faster than it has been in the past. The exigencies of political decision-making in the world today put a premium on anticipation—on insight and foresight, as well as hindsight.”¹¹ In this environment, “diplomats must be able to function as lobbyists and as public-relations advocates—doing their ‘own’ work, instead of relying in their representational and liaison roles on host government ‘interlocutors,’ in the State Department or Foreign Ministry, to relay their messages for them. In situations of very high interdependence ... domestic and foreign affairs are becoming almost indistinguishable.”¹²

This is a different perspective on the role of diplomacy and diplomats, one that takes into account the changing international system, and it would explain at least partly the phenomenon of senior diplomats engaging in public diplomacy in various parts of the world. However, while the practice has spread since 9/11, evidence suggests that it has neither become extensive nor pervasive enough to be counted as a phenomenon that has made traditional diplomacy obsolete. That tradition has been partly codified in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The relevant article is reproduced for the purposes of this paper:

Without prejudice to their privileges and immunities, it is the duty of all persons enjoying such privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State. They also have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of that State. All official business with the receiving State entrusted with or through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the receiving State or such other ministry as may be agreed.¹³

This Article has been used by aggrieved host nations in accusing foreign diplomats of improper behavior and instances will be cited in due course. It will also been taken up in a discussion on the primary theme of this paper.

⁷ “Diplomacy,” *Answers.com*, accessed October 20, 2009, <http://www.answers.com/topic/diplomacy>.

⁸ “Diplomacy,” *Merriam-Webster*, accessed October 30, 2009, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diplomacy>.

⁹ “Diplomacy,” *Encarta*, MSN, accessed October 30, 2009, http://www.encyarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861604847/diplomacy.html.

¹⁰ “Diplomacy,” *Britannica Ready Reference Encyclopedia*, (New Delhi: Encyclopaedia Britannica [India] Pvt. Ltd and Impulse Marketing, 2006).

¹¹ Alan K. Henrikson, *Fletcher News*, 2005, 3.

¹² *Ibid*, 4.

¹³ “Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations,” United Nations, Vienna, April 18, 1961.

Public Diplomacy

Dean Edmund A. Gullion of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy first came up with the term “public diplomacy” in 1965 to describe, as he explained in 1967, a whole range of communications, information, and propaganda.¹⁴ He used the term in connection with the foundation of the Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy of the Fletcher School.¹⁵ The Murrow Center brochure characterized public diplomacy in the following terms: “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.”¹⁶ This description of the term contains clear indicators that could be construed to advocate stretching the parameters of traditional diplomacy, although it does not explicitly say that traditional diplomats should engage in public diplomacy. Furthermore, Nicholas J. Cull of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy is not wholeheartedly taken in by the definition, cautioning that, while Gullion and the Murrow Center came up with the term “public diplomacy,” their definition of it remains contested and controversial.¹⁷

A considerable body of literature exists that tries to explain the term “public diplomacy” from various standpoints. A leading scholar on the subject, quoting the US Advisory Commission of Public Diplomacy, provides what he labels as the “classic definition” of the term: “Public Diplomacy—the open exchange of ideas and information—is an inherent characteristic of democratic societies. Its global mission is central to... foreign policy. And it remains indispensable to ... [national] interests, ideals and leadership role in the world.”¹⁸ He then goes on to offer a more explicit and comprehensive definition: 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: *the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries*; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; *and the processes of inter-cultural communication.*”¹⁹ Taylor has broadened the definition to a considerable extent beyond that of the one offered by the U.S. Advisory Commission, further than that of the Murrow Center, and, in the process, has opened the theoretical door for traditional diplomats to take recourse for engaging in public diplomacy in practice.

Ben Mor stops short of advocating the blurring of lines between traditional and public diplomacy, but argues for a more vigorous application of public diplomacy, particularly in light of the U.S. Advisory Commission of Public Diplomacy’s 2002 report that “it is essential to recognize that U.S. foreign policy has been precariously weakened by a failure to systematically include public diplomacy in the formulation and implementation of policy.”²⁰ He is dissatisfied that, in spite of the increasing importance of public diplomacy in war or peace, “diplomatic theory is still dominated by a concern with government-to-government communication and with the application of ‘objective,’ ‘hard power’ perceptions, images, and impressions – especially when they pertain to public opinion – are not at the forefront of analysis. Even less attention has been devoted to the *interplay* between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power in the foreign policies and interactions of states.”²¹

His explicit, and implicit, advocacy for a robust, dynamic public diplomacy also appears to cast doubt on the efficacy of traditional diplomacy in being able to deliver on a crucial objective in the post-Cold War, more specifically, the post-9/11 world: impressing upon foreign elites and general citizenry that the values, policies, and actions of a particular country deserve their and their government’s support. From a realistic standpoint that indicates American values, policies, and actions. This point will be taken up shortly. At this point, we will take up the issues of soft power, a comparison between traditional and public diplomacy, and a new definition of public diplomacy that purports to synthesize propaganda and public relations as integral and complementary components of the function.

Joseph Nye, former Dean, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council (of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency) in the Clinton Administration, suggests soft

¹⁴ “The Anti-Propaganda Tradition in the United States,” Public Diplomacy Alumni Association, accessed October 30, 2009, <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/19.htm#PD>.

¹⁵ “Public Diplomacy,” Wikipedia, accessed October 30, 2009, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_diplomacy.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Nicholas J. Cull, “‘Public Diplomacy’ Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase,” USC Center on Public Diplomacy, accessed October 2009, <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/gullion.pdf>.

¹⁸ “US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, 1991 Report,” quoted in Philip M. Taylor, “What is Public Diplomacy?” accessed October 30, 2009, [http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=25&paper=626what_is_Public_Diplomacy_\(2009-10\)](http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=25&paper=626what_is_Public_Diplomacy_(2009-10)).

¹⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

²⁰ Ben D. Mor, “Public Diplomacy in Grand Strategy,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2 (2006): 157, accessed October 31, 2009, <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=78&paper=2747>.

²¹ Ibid., 157-158.

power as a potent diplomatic tool that the United States could use. He elaborates on its philosophical underpinning: “Above all, Americans will have to become more aware of cultural differences; an effective approach requires less parochialism and more sensitivity to perceptions abroad.”²² However, Americans have, prior to 9/11, been accused in a number of countries of being driven by the concept of cultural universalism, and of indifference, or insensitivity, towards their society and culture.²³ As we shall see, they continue to be hounded by similar accusations from various quarters. Nye elucidates on the ways in which soft power could be effectively projected: “If you frame your policies in a way that’s broad, that includes the interests of others, [then] they feel they’ve been consulted, [and] you are more likely to be seen as legitimate, more likely to get cooperation. But soft power also grows out of your values and ideals, like democracy and human rights, when you live out of them. And it also grows out of your popular culture...when it’s attractive to others.”²⁴ One would assume that traditional diplomats would also have to adhere to, and espouse, the same principles, although they would, in keeping with tradition, have to go about their advocacy in discreet fashion, and, thereby adhere to convention.

Philip Taylor distinguishes between traditional and public diplomacy that, theoretically, appears to be a reasonable comparison:

“Traditional Diplomacy”

- Government elite to foreign government elite (elite vs. mass)
- Professional civil services
- Secrecy justified in terms of not alerting rival/adversary diplomatic alliances
- Less accountable to public criticism
- “Secret diplomacy leads to war”

Public Diplomacy

- Government to foreign publics
- Professional media practitioners
- Publicity justified in terms of democratic accountability/open government
- Open to public scrutiny, thus by telling “the truth”
- Public diplomacy leads to “greater mutual understanding and peace”²⁵

From a practical standpoint, there is good reason to hold that public diplomacy also entails significant interaction between the host governments and the public diplomacy officials of foreign missions. It is equally reasonable to aver that not all interaction of public diplomacy officers takes place with the masses. Often, that interaction occurs with only what could be termed ‘the critical mass’ (really an extended—from the customary landed gentry, old families, business and industrial magnates, high bureaucrats, seasoned politicians—elite of opinion leaders, opinion formers, academics and civil society leaders). Moreover, public diplomacy officials could be members of the professional civil services (as can be found in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, to name a few countries).²⁶ Furthermore, one is not sure about what Taylor implies by the term ‘the truth’, but, again, going by the experiences of different countries, public diplomacy practitioners have been accused of obfuscating the truth, or, more specifically, telling half-truths, white lies, and even plain untruths. And, with apparently increasing frequency, the public diplomacy function in several countries has also been taken up by traditional diplomats. These last two points will be duly taken up in greater detail.

Michael McClellan, in an effort to place public diplomacy in the context of traditional diplomacy, manages to synthesize the concepts of propaganda and public relations into the idea of public diplomacy without actually being able

²² Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “The Decline of America’s Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, (May/June 2004): accessed October 31, 2009, <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/AmericasSoftPower.pdf>. Philip Taylor determines public [and cultural] diplomacy to be a key element of soft power, and breaks down different attributes of public diplomacy as an of soft power that has relevance in the context of this paper:

- Long term = cultural and educational exchanges, establishment and maintenance of credibility and mutual trust;
- Short term = credible information dissemination through all available media [especially Broadcasting];
- News based [Public Affairs/Public Information/Media Operations] for domestic audiences;
- Public Diplomacy for overseas audiences.

Taylor ends with a pertinent question in relation to the theme of this paper, particularly if a couple of terms are transposed, with ‘traditional diplomacy’ and ‘public diplomacy’ being substituted for ‘national’ and ‘international,’ respectively: “But where is the line between national and international anymore?” [Taylor, op.cit.]

²³ Cultural universalism, an idea that the United States held dear for a long time in its worldview, is the belief that, like human rights, moral values are fundamentally the same at all times and all places. However, not all countries will agree to even all the human rights that the United States holds inalienable as being applicable to their own societies, or, indeed, in exactly the same substance and form. Countries like Malaysia, China, Singapore and many other traditional nations argue from the cultural relativist viewpoint, which holds that values are not universal, but a function of contingent circumstance. Cultural relativism maintains that a nation’s culture and history will be powerful determinants of its morality. These countries have intermittently made it clear that they do not necessarily subscribe to the American perspective. Interestingly, and significantly, the United States, since engaging in its ‘War on Terror’ following 9/11, seems to have noticeably tilted towards the relativist position as it has publicly acknowledged the primacy of other cultures and traditions in their own lands, which may differ significantly from its own.

²⁴ Joseph Nye, Jr., “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics,” Council on Foreign Relations, accessed October 31, 2009, <http://www.cfr.org/publication.html?id=6939>.

²⁵ Taylor, op.cit.

²⁶ Of course, opinion leaders and opinion formers could, and do, come from the ranks of the customarily regarded elite class in many countries, especially those in South Asia, but many are representatives from outside this group.

to bring the role of traditional diplomacy into the mix. A professional public diplomat, McClennan borrows the lexical definitions of the two terms to declare them individually inadequate, even if they are relevant, to explain the term ‘public diplomacy.’ “[T]he strategic planning and execution of informational, cultural and educational programming by an advocate country to create a public opinion environment in a target country or countries that will enable target country political leaders to make decisions that are supportive of advocate country’s foreign policy objectives.”²⁷ He explains his own definition: “... public diplomacy involves active, planned use of cultural, educational and informational programming to effect a desired result that is related to a government’s foreign policy objectives.”²⁸ The objective would be for the public diplomacy campaign to induce a desired outcome in terms of that country’s broad foreign policy goals from the host government by using cultural, educational and informational tools. This has been a recognized *modus operandi* of public diplomacy and its parishioners. However, when the same objective is sought by using political tools in openly public forums outside the realm of government institutions by traditional high diplomats, then that activity constitutes, in terms of the distinguishing characteristics offered by Taylor, crossing the boundary into the domain of public diplomacy by traditional diplomacy.²⁹

Revival of Vigorous Public Diplomacy in the United States

On October 1, 1999, the position of under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs was created during the Clinton Administration after Title XIII Section 1313 of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (112 Stat. 2681-776). Subdivision A of the Act, also known as the Foreign Affairs Agencies Consolidation Act of 1998, abolished the United States Information Agency and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Evelyn Lieberman was appointed to become the first under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs, and she worked in that capacity from October 1, 1999 to January 19, 2001.³⁰ The under secretary “leads America’s public diplomacy outreach, which includes communications with international audiences, cultural programming, academic grants, educational exchanges, international visitor programs, and U.S. Government efforts to confront ideological support for terrorism. The Under Secretary oversees the bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Public Affairs and International Information Programs, and participates in foreign policy development.”³¹ The insertion of the clause about the need to combat ideological support for terrorism is both a recognition of immediate threat perception, as well as a real and perceived history of the United States requiring a (preferably ideological) *bete noire* to focus its foreign policy attention on. The important aspect of the creation of the new post is the very fact of its creation, which attests to the growing importance of public diplomacy to take on the challenges of the post-Cold War world.

Judith McHale, who became undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs on May 26, 2009, articulated the demands on public diplomacy made by that world, and warned of the pitfalls associated with meeting those demands: “The advance of democracy and open markets has empowered millions to demand more control over their own destinies... This has far-reaching implications for our foreign policy and national security. Governments inclined to support U.S. policies will back away if their populations do not trust us.

“Today, traditional government-to-government diplomacy is just not enough. Our ability to build and sustain the kind of partnerships we need to address the challenges of this century—and seize its opportunities—will depend on bolstering our credibility with the people of the world and forging an ethic of common purpose.

“We need to listen more and lecture less... And we need to explain our positions and policies upfront and not after the fact when opinions have already hardened.”³² McHale has, particularly in light of her remark on the inadequacy of traditional government-to-government diplomacy made a strong plea for bolstering public diplomacy as a tool for furthering the United States’ foreign policy objectives. It is a prayer for more professionals in public diplomacy to be on the scene in capitals around the world, and, most crucially, for listening to what McClennan’s “target countries” have to say.

²⁷ Michael McClennan, “Public Diplomacy in the Context of Traditional Diplomacy,” paper presented at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy on October 14, 2004, accessed October 30, 2009, <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/45.htm>. For the record, these are the definitions he uses: “Propaganda is the systematic propagation of a doctrine or cause or of information reflecting the views and interests of those advocating such a doctrine or cause” (*American Heritage Dictionary*). “Public Relations is the business of inducing the public to have understanding for and goodwill toward a person, form, or institution” (*Merriam-Webster Online*). By “advocate” he refers to the government engaging in a public diplomacy campaign, and by “target” he indicates the foreign environment in which the public diplomacy campaign is taking place.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Taylor, *op.cit.*

³⁰ “Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs,” Wikipedia, accessed September 26, 2009, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Under_Secretary_of_State_for_Public_Diplomacy_and_Public_Affairs.

³¹ “Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs,” U.S. Department of State, accessed September 26, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/r/>.

³² Judith McHale, “Public Diplomacy: A National Security Imperative,” Center for a New American Security, Washington D.C., June 11, 2009, accessed November 7, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/r/remarks/124640.htm>.

Patricia Kushlis and Patricia Sharpe, both former United States Information Agency (USIA) officers, make just as strong a case for public diplomacy not to languish in the doldrums of hubris and parsimony that had abolished the USIA. “Sustained public diplomacy can ease the way for a *démarche*,” they contend. “Given today’s hyper-communicative, democratizing world, successful foreign policy cannot be made in secret by a tight group of trusted confidants. In stable democracies and even in autocratic situations, support for (or opposition to) a government’s foreign policy comes from many directions: the media, educational establishments, opposition parties, other parts of the bureaucracy, the business community, labor unions, NGOs, students and religious leaders. To ensure support when we need it, the U.S. must be laying the groundwork for a whole range of contingencies day in, day out, through public diplomacy.”³³

There are other public diplomacy scholars and practitioners who have expounded on the shortcomings in U.S. public diplomacy, while emphasizing the urgency of using this device to make up for the inadequacies of traditional diplomacy. For example, Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas, urging the United States to reorient its focus on public diplomacy to suit the needs of the post- Cold War world characterized by both globalization and its attendant paradoxical facets, present their viewpoint: “The failure of current attempts at U.S. public diplomacy can be attributed in part to their dependence on old paradigms of ideological warfare. The conditions for the production and enactment of public diplomacy have changed significantly because of the ways that global “interdependence” has radically altered the space of diplomacy... American foreign policy is not only rendered more global by communications technology but also more local by interventions in selected conflicts in which issues of ‘cultural difference’ magnify the problems of communication encountered by American public diplomacy.”³⁴

It is entirely possible that the United States, which found itself as a superpower in a unipolar international system following the demise of the Cold War, did not bargain for the problems that it would face in pursuing its stated goal of spreading freedom, democracy, and free enterprise to those nations of the world that lacked those attributes. It has been banking on the preponderance of its military might to carry political weight for achieving those objectives. Notwithstanding its power, however, it was faced with the scourge of terror, which, until the end of 2010, continued to draw its attention in different parts of the world, most notably in Afghanistan, but also at home.

Public diplomacy advocates believe that the de-emphasizing of public diplomacy that followed the euphoria of having won the Cold War blinded American policymakers to the critical role it had played in gaining that victory, and have argued for revitalizing it for promoting American values and interests in an increasingly globalized world characterized by emerging centers of economic and military power, and non-state actors adept at using sophisticated technology for gaining their ends, some of which are palpably inimical to human welfare and progress. Their cause was given a fillip by U.S. Congressman Henry Hyde, chair of the House International Relations Committee, who, in introducing the Freedom Promotion Act of 2002, recognized the crucial role that public diplomacy could play in the post-Cold War international system: “Public diplomacy—which consists of systematic efforts to communicate not with foreign governments but with the people themselves—has a central role to play in the task of making the world safer for the just interests of the United States, its citizens, and its allies.”³⁵

One is left wondering if Hyde’s call for public diplomacy to focus more on interaction with the people of host countries has not been taken up zealously by traditional diplomats of the United States, with envoys from other countries, especially from the European Union, following their lead. A significant aspect of such foray across an unacknowledged, but tacitly accepted, line is that the routine efforts of public diplomacy officials in host states do not seem to elicit hostile reaction from those countries’ governments or the press in accusing them of interfering in their internal affairs, but not infrequently draw a heap of criticism along those lines whenever traditional diplomats take on that role. Penny Von Eschen, commenting on Hyde’s characterization of public diplomacy, has a different take on it. She thinks that it suggests that “the fundamental problem with public diplomacy is the same as the problem of any U.S. diplomacy: there has been so little of it.”³⁶ If there has been a dearth of public diplomacy, like that of traditional diplomacy, in giving full effect to foreign policy, as Von Eschen suggests, then there is sufficient ground for the practitioners of each set for gearing up a notch or two in their respective fields, rather than one crossing over into the other’s domain for providing added impetus there. If, indeed, there is any stimulus to be gained in the first place. In practice, there is general acceptance in diplomatic usage for traditional diplomats to engage in public diplomacy, but only discreetly and sparingly, so as not to raise the ire of the host government. However, this tradition has at least been eroded, especially since the beginning of the new millennium, going by evidence from the experience of an array of countries.

³³ Patricia H. Kushlis and Patricia Lee Sharpe, “Public Diplomacy Matters More Than Ever,” *Foreign Service Journal* (October 2006): 29-30, accessed October 31, 2009, <http://www.afsa.org/fsj/oct06/publicdiplomacy.pdf>.

³⁴ Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas, “Enduring Freedom: Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Policy,” *American Quarterly*, 57, 2 (2005): 322, accessed October 31, 2009, <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=78&paper=2569>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 309-310.

³⁶ Penny M. Von Eschen, “Enduring Public Diplomacy,” *Ibid.*, 336, <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/vp01.cfm?outfit=pmt&requesttimeout=500&folder=78&paper=2839>.

Diplomatic Excursions into Public Diplomacy

In practice, when considered in the context of Article 41 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, traditional diplomats stationed in foreign countries have deliberately strayed into the realm of public diplomacy, as will become clear from the incidences that are being related. Prior to 2000, going by newspaper reports since 1972 in a country like Bangladesh, the incidences of such forays were rather few and far between. At least a perusal of some of the handful of daily national newspapers then in circulation, like *The Bangladesh Observer*, *The Bangladesh Times*, *Dainik Ittefaq*, and *Dainik Bangla*, reveals that there was only scant news of what were, or what could be construed as, diplomatic breaches of Article 41. Certainly, news about press conferences where envoys washed the host country's dirty linen in public, or made negative, or hostile, remarks about the country's politics and the political system, could not be found. That is not to say that displeasures to this effect were not expressed by the diplomats, but they were almost certainly made through the proper channels, which, in most cases, would have been the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We will adhere to Article 41 (1) and (2) of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to delineate traditional diplomatic protocols and *modi operandi* in countries of accreditation, primarily because this detail is still extant and serves as a benchmark for official diplomatic etiquette, and to differentiate from public diplomacy functions, which, following Philip Taylor, involve relevant home government officials and host country publics. Having made this distinction clear as the starting point of reference for the theme of this paper, we will argue that individual cases of the breach of Article 41 (1) and (2) of the 1961 Vienna Convention will take place, and, in so doing, may very well elicit negative reactions from various quarters in the host countries, including the government, the major and minor political parties, and the media. Bangladesh is a prime example of a country where, since 2000, diplomatic forays into public diplomacy have taken place on a fairly regular basis, but it is not the only country experiencing the phenomenon, as the rest of this section will try to establish. We have already referred to the Indian high commissioner's public outbursts, and mentioned some of the reactions, fairly lukewarm, almost apologetic, from the government, much stronger from the principal opposition party, and harsh from some academics, at the outset of this paper. A former Bangladesh career ambassador, terming High Commissioner Chakravarty's remarks "avoidable," has come to the conclusion that they had placed the government of Sheikh Hasina in an "embarrassing position" just when her regime was in the process of developing a wide range and pattern of bilateral political and economic relationships with the Congress-led government of Dr. Manmohan Singh in India.³⁷

Another former Bangladesh career diplomat gives a thoughtful account of diplomatic transgressions that, among other deleterious effects, have interfered with the political process in Bangladesh. He was giving his perspective on the British high commissioner in Dhaka, Steven Evans's views expressed at a "Meet the Press" event of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU), in itself an exercise in public diplomacy. The envoy maintained that his predecessor, Anwar Chowdhury, had no role to play, as was a popular perception in the country, in the imposition of emergency in Bangladesh.³⁸ Furthermore, he dismissed any notion that ambassadors and high commissioners stationed in Dhaka had flouted diplomatic norms during the period leading up to the emergency because they were well conversant with the notional "red line."³⁹ Islam's comment on Evans' avowal is a self-explanatory exercise in addressing a self-righteous viewpoint: "Evans should have made a little effort and read the back issues of Dhaka newspapers before defending his predecessor. If he had, he would have known why people in this country believe that Anwar interfered in our internal affairs and that he had a hand in the imposition of emergency. In his frequent television appearances, Anwar behaved like a Bangladeshi politician, even alluding to his preference for one of the two mainstream parties."⁴⁰

Shahid Alam, in a string of articles as a columnist for *The New Nation*, has used these, and similar, newspaper reports to write extensively on maverick diplomats and Bangladesh government response or non-response to their activities. The

³⁷ Barrister Harun ur Rashid, "Indian envoy's avoidable remarks," 2009, accessed November 19, 2009, http://www.sydneybashi-bangla.com/Articles/Harun_Indianenvoy.pdf. Rashid was Bangladesh's ambassador to the United Nations, Geneva, and is a frequent writer on international affairs in the major English language newspapers in Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina is in her second term as prime minister of Bangladesh [the first lasted from 1996 to 2001] after her party Awami League and its partners in a grand alliance were voted to power in 2009.

³⁸ M. Serajul Islam, "Diplomatic Norms Or 'Red Line'—Is It Being Enforced In Bangladesh?" Centre For Foreign Affairs Studies, July 21, 2009, accessed November 19, 2009, <http://cfasonline.org/articles/details.php?id=87>. High Commissioner Stevens participated in the press conference on DRU's invitation. Presumably, his participation was cleared by the Bangladesh government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], which would be the normal practice in such situations, but there have been instances where the top diplomats from several missions did not bother to apprise the MFA before embarking on their public diplomacy ventures. The Bangladesh foreign minister had publicly warned the erring diplomats on this issue, and the text of his admonitions would be taken up in detail shortly. An emergency was proclaimed in Bangladesh on January 11, 2007 by a civilian caretaker government propped up by the country's armed forces, and it continued in power for close to two years before making way for a duly elected government. There have been persistent allegations that the dark machinations of divergent groups of internal and external actors and forces, who took advantage of the prevailing dysfunctional politics and political process and system obtaining in the country, were instrumental in bringing about the emergency.

³⁹ Ibid. The term "red line" is in reference to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which recognizes that diplomats stay within the symbolic "red line" so long as they do not interfere in the host country's internal affairs.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Anwar Chowdhury is a British national of Bangladeshi origin.

stricture delivered by the Bangladesh foreign minister to the so-called “Tuesday Group” for violating diplomatic etiquette is at once a sharp personal reprimand and an expression of official government displeasure, one that Alam strongly endorses with an exhortation for more of the same. Foreign Minister Morshed Khan’s public admonition may be seen as a payback against undesired public diplomacy, but it also amply demonstrates how cowboy diplomacy can justifiably raise the ire of host governments, including leading to the deterioration in bilateral relations. Relevant excerpts from Alam’s piece are reproduced: “In an unusually blunt, but long overdue, statement, Khan told the foreign diplomats posted in Dhaka to observe diplomatic protocol during their tour of duty in this country. The Foreign Minister has very appropriately pointed out that the ‘Tuesday Group’ members can discuss bilateral issues with the government, but cannot publicly discuss any matters concerning political or constitutional reform. And, as he stated, ‘No country can ask another to effect changes in its Constitution.’”⁴¹

Not long after, a senior Bangladesh government official clarified that the government (then of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia’s Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led coalition) did not recognize the so-called “Tuesday Group,” and posed a question that, in effect, highlights the plight of the developing countries being at the receiving end of maverick diplomats from advanced nations engaging in undesirable public diplomacy: “Will the countries of the so-called grouping allow our [Bangladesh’s] ambassadors or high commissioners accredited at those countries to speak about their electoral system if they see any loophole of [sic] their voting system or think of requirement for reform?”⁴² It was left to the country’s foreign minister to spell out the appropriate diplomatic etiquette during the course of a traditional diplomat serving in the host country. “If they have anything to say,” he said, “the only window for them is the foreign ministry.”⁴³

Significantly, and reinforcing the feeling in the various quarters about the undesirability of free-for-all diplomacy, a former senior civil servant-turned-politician, who had been a state minister in the 1996-2001 Sheikh Hasina administration, an elected Member of Parliament in 2009 as a candidate of Awami League, one of the two major political parties in Bangladesh, has also blamed diplomats for aiding in the ushering of the 2007 emergency interregnum in the country. “[U]nfortunately representative ambassadors of some democratic countries gave a helping hand,” he accuses. “In their assessment, the economic interests of their respective countries could be better served by a military rule bereft of political support; such a government by terrorizing the people could provide lease, concessions and rights in favour of these countries; a government based on popular support reflected through free and fair election was assessed as too strong to grant such leases, concessions and rights. The facade of an interim caretaker government in the front initially and its subsequent replacement by a ‘popularly’ elected military dictator too willing to listen to them and cater to their needs was also in part designed by them. Later, reports published by the Human Rights Watch in January, 2007, fortunately made these roles of usually elected democratic countries quite clear to our people and conscious citizenry in their respective countries.”⁴⁴ A strong indictment indeed, but one not too far off the mark either.

If diplomatic activism was responsible for the installation of the military-backed caretaker government in Bangladesh, other countries have also experienced the undesirable outcomes of traditional diplomats engaging in maverick public diplomacy. At this point, some of them will be recounted to reinforce this paper’s viewpoint that traditional diplomats’ foray into the arena of public diplomacy could result in the host government taking umbrage, and, thereby, creating problems in bilateral relations.

In 2009, Nepal’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Upendra Yadav, accused the Indian envoy to Kathmandu, Rakesh Sood, of having breached diplomatic norms by meeting former King Gyanendra Shah without having informed the Nepali foreign ministry.⁴⁵ Nine years earlier, the Tanzanian government served a notice on the US ambassador, Reverend Charles Stith, charging him of having violated diplomatic decorum by expressing his views on Zanzibar through the mass media instead of

⁴¹ Shahid Alam, “Now the Foreign Minister is talking, but more needed,” *The New Nation*, October 3, 2005, 5. The so-called “Tuesday Group” refers to, in effect, the European Union envoys stationed in Dhaka who would usually meet on Tuesdays to discuss various issues. While it was noticeably vocal during the latter part of the 2001-06 Khaleda Zia government, and, on a number of occasions, aired their views over the electronic and print media, it has become conspicuously silent since the end of that regime. Various inferences could be drawn regarding this shift, but they fall outside the purview of this study. Shahid Alam is the name used by G.M. Shahidul Alam for the purpose of newspaper writing. A collection of his writings during the emergency has been published as *From the New Nation: Writings during the emergency* [2008], Shahidul Alam, Dhaka: Ankur Prakashani. Four articles chronicling maverick diplomats engaging in public diplomacy along with the author’s comments are included in the anthology: “Now It is EU’s Turn to Dispense ‘Wisdom’” [appeared in *The New Nation* on June 13, 2007], “On Milam and Uncertain Times” [*The New Nation*, June 6, 2007], “On Insidious NGOs and Civil Society-Wallahs, Meddling Diplomats” [*The New Nation*, April 25, 2007], and “Errant NGOs, Dicey Diplomats, Random Issues, Random Thoughts” [*The New Nation*, September 5, 2007].

⁴² Shahid Alam, “Adi ranking, democracy and tiresome Tuesday group,” *The New Nation*, October 3, 2005, 5.

⁴³ Shahid Alam, “Crossing the boundary of diplomatic etiquette,” *The New Nation*, July 12, 2005, 5.

⁴⁴ Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, *Notes from A Prison Bangladesh*, (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2009), 61.

⁴⁵ Accessed October 18, 2009, <http://www.gossipcraze.com/gossip/Nepal-Accuses-Indian-Envoy-Of-Breaching-Diplomatic-Norms>. After a prolonged agitation by the Communist Party, later joined in by mass protests by all the major political parties of Nepal for abolishing the ancient monarchy in that country, King Gyanendra Shah abdicated, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal was established on May 28, 2008. One does not need to exercise much imagination to realize how sensitive the Nepalese government would have been to the breach of diplomatic norm of the kind engaged in by the Indian envoy.

using the acceptable diplomatic channels.⁴⁶ Pakistan, in 2008, and Iran, in 2009, took diplomats to task on essentially two different aspects of the same issue. The Foreign Office in Islamabad, miffed by a spate of unwarranted public diplomacy, asked the diplomats stationed in Pakistan to refrain from speaking out in public on the political situation in the country, significantly adding that their comments could be interpreted as interference in the country's internal affairs.⁴⁷ Iran, on its part, mulled over expelling Western diplomats on the charge of having had a hand in fomenting unrest that had shaken the country following the June 12, 2009 presidential election.⁴⁸

Perhaps the most celebrated case of a national government being at loggerheads with errant diplomats is the longstanding one of President Robert Mugabe and his regime in Harare against an assortment of Western diplomats, governments, and the media. The international, particularly Western, media, which is generally looked upon anywhere as an independent source of news and views, became an unwitting barometer for measuring Mugabe's forceful stand against real and perceived interference in his country's internal affairs by foreign, especially Western, governments and diplomats. From expelling journalists from the country in early 2001 to enacting tough laws restricting foreign reporters in 2002 to deporting an American journalist in 2003 on charges of conducting a hate campaign against Mugabe to briefly jailing a *Times* (of London) journalist in 2008, Harare made it clear that it would not tolerate negative reporting about the regime running its affairs. For years, international TV news channels, like BBC and CNN, were kept out of the country on that pretext.⁴⁹ However, the Zimbabwean president was sending out a message to institutions beyond that of the media.

The primary targets of Zimbabwe's president and government have been the United States and Great Britain, although international agencies have not been spared, either. After ordering a halt to their activities by all aid agencies in 2008, the U.N. Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, who had gone to Zimbabwe on a personal invitation from Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, was detained overnight at the Harare International Airport, expelled from the country, and sent back to South Africa the following year.⁵⁰ The reason for the treatment is not difficult to guess. But Mugabe's special treatment, which was tantamount to him using his allegoric boot to symbolically kick people out of his country, was reserved for erring or recalcitrant diplomats and the countries he did not particularly care for on the grounds of real and perceived hostility against him and his regime. He delivered a blistering attack on what he described as "bloodthirsty" Western critics, led by then British Prime Minister Tony Blair and then U.S. President George Bush.⁵¹ A few months prior to delivering his vitriolic denunciation, Samantha Power outlined the probable immediate reason for him doing so. The United States and the rest of Western Europe, following Tony Blair's lead, had imposed sanctions against Mugabe and 74 of his closest aides. Power succinctly renders Zimbabwe's president's defiant reaction: "Mugabe swats away American and European criticism by citing imperial sins. 'How can these countries who have stolen land from the Red Indians, the Aborigines, and the Eskimos dare to tell us what to do with our land?' he has asked."⁵²

Mugabe provided ample excuses to come down hard on foreign, specifically American, diplomats. In 2007, the U.S. ambassador to Harare publicly stated that the opposition to Mugabe's regime was growing within Zimbabwe.⁵³ Even if that was true, it was a loaded statement to make from inside Zimbabwe, almost certain to elicit hostile reaction from a person recognized as being sensitive to both international and domestic criticism. It was no surprise that, through his foreign minister, Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, Mugabe warned that he would not hesitate to boot out any diplomat who interfered in

⁴⁶ "Tanzania Notes to U.S. Envoy on Violating Diplomatic Norms" *Xinhua News Agency*, June 9, 2000, accessed October 18, 2009, <http://highbeam.com/doc/1P2-18259939.html>. Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part of the United Republic of Tanzania. In the late 1990s, political differences surfaced between the governments of Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland. Naturally, Dar es Salaam could be expected to be jittery regarding any violation of diplomatic norms in the context of Zanzibar, and to lodge angry protests against the transgressor.

⁴⁷ "Diplomats urged to abide by norms. Comments on political situation should be avoided" *Dawn Internet Edition*, February 28, 2008, accessed October 18, 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/2008/02/28/top10.htm>. In early 2008, Pakistan was going through a serious political crisis. On December 27, 2007, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2008. They were, consequently, postponed, and rescheduled for February 18, 2008. President Pervez Musharraf's ruling party suffered a resounding defeat, and the months immediately prior to, and following, the event were particularly politically problematic for the entire country.

⁴⁸ "Iran considers dispelling Western diplomats," *Haaretz*, June 23, 2009, accessed October 22, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1094751.html>. Iran was gripped by a wave of public protests against alleged electoral fraud.

⁴⁹ The details regarding these news items may be seen in "Zimbabwe Tells 2 Foreign Journalists to Leave," February 18, 2001; "Zimbabwe Proposes Keeping Reporters Out"; Rachel L. Swarns, December 1, 2001; "Zimbabwe Tightens Curbs on Media and Foreign Journalists," Rachel L. Swarns, February 1, 2002; "Despite Court Order, Zimbabwe Departs American Journalist," May 17, 2003; and "Times Journalist Still in Zimbabwe Jail," Daniel J. Walkin, April 5, 2008, *New York Times*, accessed September 26, 2009, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/zimbabwe/index.html?query>.

⁵⁰ "Zimbabwe Tells All Aid Groups to Halt Efforts," *New York Times*, June 6, 2008, accessed September 26, 2009, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/zimbabwe/index.html?query>. "UN Investigator on Torture Detained at Airport, Expelled from Zimbabwe," accessed October 31, 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-10-29-voa46.cfm>.

⁵¹ Michael Wines, "Mugabe Denounces 'Bloodthirsty' Western Critics," April 19, 2004, accessed September 26, 2009, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/zimbabwe/index.html?query>.

⁵² Samantha Power, "How to Kill a Country," *The Atlantic*, December 2003, accessed October 2, 2009, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200312/power>.

⁵³ "Opposition in Zimbabwe Mount, Says U.S. Diplomat," *New York Times*, March 20, 2007, accessed on September 26, 2009, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/zimbabwe/index.html?query>.

the country's internal politics. The foreign minister summoned Western diplomats stationed in Harare and "told them that Zimbabwe will not allow any interference in its internal affairs and that those who are going to continue funding and supporting this programme will be expelled."⁵⁴ The warning was clear and specific against taking recourse to cowboy diplomacy. The caution was delivered to traditional diplomats, and not to public diplomacy officials who were also stationed in Harare.

The United States must have succeeded in rousing Mugabe's anger to an extent that led him to use rather impolite words to describe its high diplomats. For instance, in an interview given to the Zimbabwean newspaper *The Herald*, he said, in reference to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson, "You would not speak to an idiot of that nature. I was very angry with him, and he thinks he could dictate to us what to do and what not to do."⁵⁵ And he was no less outspoken in his depiction of Carson's predecessor, Jendayi Frazer: "A little American girl trotting around the globe like a prostitute."⁵⁶ Colorful adjectives, but also revealing of Mugabe's state of mind.

A more serious incident took place in May 2008, when Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi summoned U.S. Ambassador, James McGree, to Harare and accused him of contravening Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Specifically, Mumbengegwi charged McGree of circumventing diplomatic protocol by embarking on a "fact-finding mission" designed to support his "false claims of political violence against the MDC," and instructed him that he could not travel outside the capital city without permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The reprimand followed an incident in which McGree and other diplomats from the European Union, Tanzania, Japan, and the Netherlands were detained for approximately an hour at a police roadblock as they were returning from a fact-finding mission to investigate charges of state-sponsored political violence.⁵⁷

Conclusion

In light of the supporting evidence presented, we reprise our contention that, since 2000, and particularly following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the symbols of American financial and military might, top traditional diplomats have been more visibly engaging in public diplomacy in the countries of their accreditation than they did before the onset of the new millennium. When considered in terms of the number of countries used to highlight cases of traditional diplomats stretching the parameters of diplomatic protocol as defined by Article 41 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, our contention cannot, of course, be considered to be a global phenomenon. Further study is required by appreciably expanding the sample size of the countries for arriving at a more generally applicable conclusion. Available information on the subject during the period from 2000 to 2009 has constrained this study to be circumspect about making any claim to having discerned a unilateral phenomenon.

However, based on the cases studied, and by contrasting them with the relative dearth of records of stretching the parameters of diplomacy prior to 2000, it may be said that, in specific regions of the world, that phenomenon has become a practice, and host governments have generally reacted negatively to several such endeavors. Not that such forays always elicit criticism, or are unappreciated, as Dr. Maleeha Lodhi's commentary on U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2009 visit to Pakistan illustrates. Lodhi was, at different times, Pakistan's ambassador to Washington, D.C. and high commissioner to London, and she appraises, "U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Pakistan was a striking and impressive display of public diplomacy....She broke from the traditional mould of diplomatic engagement... by meeting people beyond the troika of power – media persons, university students, legislators, businessmen and members of civil society. This signaled an effort to move bilateral relations beyond the conventional government-to-government mode."⁵⁸

We have noted how Pakistan has publicly admonished traditional diplomats from the West, including the United States, for venturing into public diplomacy. Here is an important lesson to be learnt regarding the parameters of diplomatic

⁵⁴ "Mugabe threatens diplomats with expulsion," *Guardian*, March 7, 2007, accessed October 22, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/mar/20/topstories3.zimbabwe>.

⁵⁵ "The discrete charm of Robert Mugabe," *Foreign Policy*, accessed October 2, 2009, http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/06/i_am_rubber_you_are_glue.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "Foreign minister summons US ambassador," *The Zimbabwe Times*, May 21 2008, accessed on October 2, 2009, <http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com/?p=157>. An unlikely power-sharing partnership between President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and his political rival Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC [Movement for Democratic Change] party was forged in September 2008, although it was fully implemented only on February 13, 2009. It sputtered along for a while until MDC unilaterally withdrew from the coalition government on October 16, 2009. It collapsed because of MDC's persistent allegations that Mugabe was not fulfilling the terms of the power-sharing agreement. Following the withdrawal, ZANU-PF resumed its repression on the main opposition, as is evidenced by the Zimbabwe police raid on Tsvangirai's MDC party executives' house on October 24, 2009 on the pretext of searching for weapons. ["Zimbabwe Police Raid Rivals' House," *Associated Press*, in *The New York Times*, October 25, 2009, accessed November 21, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/25/world/africa/25zimbabwe.html?_4=1.

⁵⁸ Maleeha Lodhi, "Testing times for Pakistan-US Relations," *Financial Times*, November 17, 2009, accessed November 19, 2009, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ca6512-d372-11de-9607-00144feabdc0.html?nckick_check=1.

norms in host countries. Traditional diplomats are normally not political policymakers of the countries they represent; they are essentially executors of those policies that are pertinent to the country they are accredited to, and are involved in government-to-government (or, international organization-to-host government) interaction on matters ranging from the routine to the politically sensitive.

While acknowledging that host governments get irked by traditional diplomats undertaking unauthorized public diplomacy, there is no getting around the reality that traditional diplomats have long been interfering in the host countries' internal political affairs, although this has usually been conducted discreetly, with the appropriate government functionaries. This function will probably gain in frequency of occurrence, and/or in intensity, for some of the reasons advanced by Alan Henrikson.⁵⁹ However, when this activity is carried out by the public diplomacy department officials, it does not seem to elicit the same kind of negative reaction that traditional diplomats do when they involve themselves in the act. One likely explanation for such contrasting reaction could be that governments (and the knowledgeable public) have come to expect public diplomacy functionaries to cultivate public opinion in their countries, to interact with their private groups and interests and the media, to report on foreign affairs and its impact on policy matters, to promote intercultural communication, and to engage in subtle, and sometimes not too subtle propaganda to promote the home country's interests, ideals, and other agenda. They also acknowledge, and usually accept, that their activities might show them and their policies in a less than favourable light to sections of their own people. However, when traditional diplomats publicly criticize them in their own country, they feel that they have crossed the line, and have embarked on an activity that is neither expected nor keeping to diplomatic norms. They possibly feel that traditional diplomats acting this way could prod opposition political parties, as well as the general public, to form a disapproving estimation of the government. And this is a factor that they would find more damaging, and, hence, unacceptable, than the negative opinion their diplomatic reports could induce in their home governments. In effect, the host governments could accuse them of interfering in their internal affairs, and publicly give vent to their feelings of outrage at the transgression of diplomatic norms.

Those norms, to reiterate, seem to have been rather more frequently violated by traditional diplomats, especially those from the United States. The explanation might lie in the very downsizing of the institutions of public diplomacy (like the abolishing of the USIA) following the end of the Cold War. Paradoxically, that particular institution was utilized to promote American values, policies, and actions to win over nations, governments, and people during the Cold War. And, yet, those same objectives, particularly including the promotion of liberal democracy and market economy in countries lacking them, were being pursued with much intensity by the post- Cold War administrations in Washington. The additional effort required for intensifying the endeavor would have entailed strengthening its public diplomacy program. Several former practitioners have, as we have seen, urged doing exactly that. They have advocated the measure for rectifying the situation that "there has been so little of it." The position of Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs was created as the new millennium was about to dawn.

By that time, the relative dearth in public diplomacy had been made up by traditional diplomats taking on more and more of the functions of public diplomacy, but, at times, in the form of washing the host country's dirty laundry in public, bluntly criticizing the host government at press conferences or in public arenas, bypassing the host country protocols (like notifying, or getting permission from, the foreign ministry) in carrying out some of those activities. The unusual aggressiveness displayed by diplomats expected and/or trained to be tactful in their sensitive dealings with the host government could be attributed to the fact that they were functioning outside their normal milieu and thought that blunt talks could achieve the objective of promoting American values and interests more effectively than the traditional methods used by the regular public diplomacy functionaries.

Whether the trend that has been apparent since the turn of the century will continue to flourish in the face of multifarious host government complaints against the practice, and, in the United States' instance, the revamping and revitalizing of public diplomacy departments, only time will tell. The matter will partly depend on how the home nation assesses its interests as being served or harmed by cowboy diplomacy indulged in by traditional diplomats. If it believes that bilateral relations are being hurt enough to override the putative benefits to be gained from such action, then the chances are strong that cowboy diplomacy will be reined in. If, however, the reverse correlation is the case, then the home country may feel encouraged to let the practice continue. In that case, and really that should be the mode of dealing with the issue, the host government, primarily through its foreign ministry, should make it very clear to the diplomats stationed on its soil that it will not tolerate any violation of Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. There might be some costs in terms of economic benefits, but the good it does for national honour and pride should more than compensate for that.

The reality is that traditional diplomats have interfered, and will continue to interfere, in the domestic political affairs of a host country. However, if that is done discreetly with the appropriate government institutions, then the two parties could exchange their respective viewpoints, sharply if that is what it takes, without the envoys having to take the unpleasant step of resorting to public diplomacy. Outspoken airing of views on a host nation's domestic politics, particularly if it is made with a

⁵⁹ Henrikson, op.cit.

nod to the opposition, made publicly by ambassadors or high commissioners is blatant interference in the country's internal political affairs. It is a situation that neither the home, nor the host, country would want. If public diplomacy functionaries carry out their duties as they normally do, then the home nation's interests would probably be served without ruffling the feathers of the host nation. Traditional diplomats should ideally be acting the way they are supposed to, robustly, if necessary, but discreetly with the government. Cowboy diplomats probably do more harm than good to both their home country's foreign policy objectives and the host nation's pride and sense of sovereignty by stretching the parameters of diplomatic protocol.

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G.M. Shahidul Alam, M.A.L.D. (The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University), Ph.D (Boston University), is from Bangladesh. He is an educationist, novelist, newspaper columnist, filmmaker, actor, and a former diplomat. Alam began his professional career as a Lecturer in the Department of Public Administration of Dhaka University. He then left teaching for a brief stint in the diplomatic service of Bangladesh. He resigned from the service to concentrate on writing and returning to the teaching profession. Alam has taught at Boston University, and, after coming back to his country, has been teaching at Independent University, Bangladesh since 2007. He has had several articles on Political Science, Public Administration, International Relations, and Media published in journals in the United States, United Kingdom, and Bangladesh. His book of short stories, Uneven Octagon, and novel, Green Fire, have also been published. He was a leader writer for the oldest English-language newspaper of his country, The Bangladesh Observer. He was a columnist for The New Nation, and currently is in the same capacity at daily sun. Alam occasionally writes features, non-fiction, and book reviews for The Daily Star. He is currently Head of the Media and Communication Department, Independent University, Bangladesh.