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Diplomacy in the Media Age: Three Models of Uses and Effects

EYTAN GILBOA

This study offers three conceptual models to promote systematic research into uses of the media as a major instrument of foreign policy and international negotiations: *public diplomacy*, where state and nonstate actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies; *media diplomacy*, where officials use the media to communicate with actors and to promote conflict resolution; and *media-broker diplomacy*, where journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations. The first two models, while previously defined, undergo serious revision in this study. The third model is new. This article demonstrates the analytical usefulness of the models through applications to various examples and case studies of significant contemporary diplomatic processes.

In his classic study of diplomacy, Nicolson complained that the term 'diplomacy' was used to describe a constellation of different phenomena including foreign policy, negotiation, means to pursue negotiation, one of the areas of the foreign service, and a talent for negotiation.¹ Nonetheless, three of these uses refer directly to negotiation and the remaining two also involve aspects of negotiation. In this study 'diplomacy' refers primarily to international negotiation, to a communication system through which representatives of states and international or global actors, including elected and appointed officials, express and defend their interests, state their grievances, and issue threats and ultimatums. It is a channel of contact for clarifying positions, probing for information, and convincing states and other actors to support one's position.²

Traditional diplomacy was highly formal, institutional, interpersonal, slow, and usually protected by secrecy.³ In his famous 'Fourteen Points' speech of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson advocated 'open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view',⁴ thus heralding what came to be known as the 'new diplomacy'. This was primarily associated with exposing diplomacy to the media and

public opinion, and with direct and unmediated conduct of negotiations by politicians and high-ranking officials, including heads of state and ministers.⁵ The issue of whether such exposure is beneficial or not has been a subject of much debate, but it is undeniable that it has become a permanent and irreversible feature of international negotiation. Eban has argued that 'nothing has done more to revolutionize the diplomatic craft than the current vogue of persistent media attention ... [and] there is no way of putting the clock back to an era in which negotiations were sheltered from domestic constituencies',⁶ while Ross Perot has said that 'embassies are relics of the days of sailing ships. At one time, when you had no world communication, your ambassador spoke for you in that country. But now, with instantaneous communication around the world, the ambassador is primarily in a social role'.⁷

Interrelated changes in politics, international relations, and mass communication have greatly expanded the media's role in diplomacy. Growing mass participation in political processes has transformed many societies from autocracies into democracies. The revolution in communication and information technologies, the capability to broadcast – often live – almost every significant development in world events to almost every place on the globe, and the creation and expansion of the Internet, have led to the globalization of electronic communication and journalism and to substantial growth in networks, stations and communications consumers worldwide.

These revolutionary changes have altered the meaning of power in contemporary world politics. It is a nation or leader's image and control of information flow, and not just their military and economic power, that help determine their status in the international community. 'Soft power', defined as 'the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attraction rather than coercion', is gradually replacing the more traditional forms of power.⁸ 'In a rapidly changing world', wrote Nye and Owens, 'information about what is occurring becomes a central commodity of international relations, just as the threat and use of military force was seen as the central power resource in an international system overshadowed by the potential clash of superpowers'.⁹ The mass media, global television in particular, have become a central source of information about world affairs. As Mowlana has suggested, 'the technologies and institutions of communication that have become so central to world politics and economics over the past couple of

decades have fundamentally altered the nature and sources of power and influence, both domestically and internationally'.¹⁰ Consequently, Kalb has concluded that 'indeed, only the foolish foreign leader can any longer afford to underestimate the power of TV news'.¹¹

Politicians and journalists have suggested that the convergence of the revolutionary changes in politics and communication has created a new media-dominated governing system. Lugar has called this system 'medialism' and Gergen has referred to it as 'teledemocracy'.¹² A few observers have suggested that this transformation in media power has created a new phenomenon in foreign relations, known as the 'CNN (Cable News Network) Effect', whereby – primarily in crises involving the possibility of humanitarian intervention – officials have lost control over decisionmaking to global television.¹³

These fundamental changes in diplomacy, politics and global communication have created new modes of interactions between media and diplomacy. In turn, there has been an effort to coin phrases that capture the new role of the global media – and television in particular – in diplomacy: hence *media diplomacy*, *teleplomacy*, *photoplomacy*, *soundbite diplomacy*, *instant diplomacy* and *real-time diplomacy*. However, such developments notwithstanding, to date the media's expanding role in diplomacy has received little real attention in the disciplines of international relations, political science and communication. Scholars have lagged behind politicians in understanding the significance of political communication in domestic and international affairs, with most studies of diplomacy ignoring the role of mass communication; hence, existing knowledge is fragmented and deals only with some facets of media-diplomacy interactions.¹⁴

Kalb observed a few years ago that 'academics are now coming to appreciate what successful politicians have known for decades – that the press is a key player in the process of governance'.¹⁵ However, while this awareness is now becoming more widespread, the highly complex interdisciplinary nature of research on media and diplomacy, coupled with a lack of analytical tools and models, has inhibited progress in the field. Scholars have lumped together very different media-diplomacy interactions under fashionable but tautological headings such as 'media diplomacy', 'television diplomacy' or the 'CNN Effect', and this has resulted in conceptual confusion.

This study offers three conceptual models designed to promote systematic research into uses of the media as an instrument of foreign policy and international negotiations: *public diplomacy*, where state and nonstate actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies; *media diplomacy*, where officials use the media to communicate with actors and to promote conflict resolution; and *media-broker diplomacy*, where journalists temporarily assume the role of diplomats and serve as mediators in international negotiations. The first two models already exist but are in need of considerable revision. The third is new. Each model is appropriate only when certain characteristics or conditions are present, and each has different professional and ethical ramifications for the three main actors involved in diplomacy: officials, the media and public opinion. In this article, the presentation of each model follows a similar pattern: first, conceptual clarification and development; next, presentation and analysis of principal variants; finally, a discussion of major effects and implications. It demonstrates the analytical usefulness of the models by applying them to various examples and case studies of significant contemporary diplomatic processes.

Public Diplomacy: Cultivating Favourable Images Abroad

The core idea of *public diplomacy* 'is one of direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments'.¹⁶ In terms of content, 'it describes activities, directed abroad in the fields of information, education, and culture, whose objective is to influence a foreign government, by influencing its citizens'.¹⁷ The mass media – and international broadcasting in particular – are just one of the channels used in public diplomacy. Others include cultural and scientific exchanges of students, scholars, intellectuals and artists; participation in festivals and exhibitions; building and maintaining cultural centers; teaching a language; and establishing local friendship leagues and trade associations. The mass media channels are used directly to affect the general public, while the other, mostly cultural, channels are oriented toward elite audiences believed to have influence on public opinion. While uses of the mass media focus on current affairs, the cultural channels deal more with fundamental long-term perceptions of countries and societies. Three variants of public

diplomacy are suggested based on the characteristics of the participants, their goals and methods.

Variants

The basic variant. This refers to the use of the media and other means to win the critical battle for the minds of people in countries with hostile governments. It seeks to create a favourable image for a country's policies, actions, and political and economic system, assuming that if public opinion in the target society is persuaded to accept that image, it will exert pressure on its government to alter existing, hostile, attitudes and policy. The idea is to use public diplomacy to provide the public in the target society with more balanced information on one's own country, in order to counter the domestic propaganda of the target society's government.

Thus, during the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union developed and extensively utilized public diplomacy in order to shape public attitudes all over the world towards their respective ideologies.¹⁸ Their main weapon was international broadcasting, including radio stations, such as the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe on the American side, and Radio Moscow on the Soviet side.¹⁹ In the late 1980s the US government added overseas television programmes, such as *Worldnet* and *Dialogue*, to its arsenal of public diplomacy media channels. The Reagan administration established Radio and Television Martí designed to destabilize the Castro regime in Cuba, and President Bill Clinton established Radio Free Asia – primarily to promote democracy and protection of human rights in China – and Radio Free Iraq – to undermine Saddam Hussein's regime.

The nonstate transnational variant. Most definitions of public diplomacy, including the two cited earlier in this section, refer to the basic Cold War variant. Although they describe the goals and means of public diplomacy, they say nothing about those who initiate and use it. This omission probably results from the widely held notion that only governments conduct public diplomacy. While this might have been true for most of the Cold War years, it certainly has not been valid for at least the last two decades. Thus, in order to reflect the growth in new nonstate actors and the interdependence between all the actors in the global arena, Signitzer and Coombs offered this broader definition of public diplomacy: 'The way in which both

government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions.²⁰

The campaign for democracy and human rights in several countries, including China, which has been initiated and pursued by nonstate actors, demonstrates this broader nonstate transnational application of public diplomacy. In 1989 the 'pro-democracy' opposition movement in China exerted pressure on the Chinese government to begin democratic reforms and to respect human rights.²¹ The United States criticized violations of human rights in China, and many groups in America called for sanctions against the Communist government. The Reagan and Bush administrations however, refrained from using sanctions such as the suspension of trade privileges, arguing that these would only damage the fragile relations between the two countries without helping the cause of human rights. In May 1989 the pro-democracy opposition exploited a dramatic media event – the summit meeting between the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping – to demonstrate against their government's anti-democratic policies and the lack of suitable jobs and income for the educated.²² Demonstrators praised Gorbachev for the reforms he instituted in the USSR and called on their government to follow his example. The demonstrations led to the violent crackdown at Tiananmen Square; their purpose was to exert public pressure on the Chinese government and on Western governments to adopt harsher measures against Chinese human rights violations.

Live coverage of the demonstrations on CNN and other networks helped the campaign.²³ VOA and other international short-wave broadcasters reported on the demonstrations and the inability of the government to contain them. The Chinese government interpreted the VOA broadcasts as interference in their domestic affairs and in turn jammed broadcasts and expelled journalists who reported the unrest.²⁴ In this and other cases, such as the campaign to abolish apartheid in South Africa, dissident nonstate actors sought to achieve their domestic goals by creating linkages with influential individuals and groups in foreign societies, particularly in the US and Europe.

The domestic public relations variant. In the basic variant, a government uses its own means of communication, such as radio stations, to conduct public diplomacy. But in the domestic public

relations variant it hires public relations firms and lobbyists in the target country to achieve its aims.²⁵ A government preferring this method believes it is much more effective than direct government-sponsored public diplomacy, and that it may help to conceal the true forces and the funding sources behind the effort. The establishment of a local support group or a movement in the target country could also strengthen the legitimacy and authenticity of the campaign. A local public relations firm is likely to know best how to achieve the desired goals in a given political and cultural context, how to identify the weaknesses in the positions of the government interested in the campaign, and how to deal with them effectively. This variant of public diplomacy also includes using scientific knowledge and methods of public opinion research known as 'strategic public diplomacy'.²⁶

The domestic public relations variant has appeared several times, including during Kuwait's campaign for liberation in the 1990–91 Gulf conflict. President Bush needed sufficient public, congressional and media support to act to forcefully remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. To generate support from the American public for existing US war policy and to prevent this policy from being changed, the Kuwaiti monarchs in exile hired the American public relations firm Hill and Knowlton to conduct a major public diplomacy campaign within the United States.²⁷

More and more countries with image problems in the United States and the West are employing international public relations firms to conduct public diplomacy on their behalf. Suffering from a severe negative drug image, Colombia, for example, hired the Sawyer Miller Group to erase this image.²⁸ It was reported that the military rulers of Burma – suffering from US sanctions and often described in very negative terms as generals who took office by hijacking a 1990 election, keeping hundreds of opponents in inhumane prisons, and dealing with Asian drug lords – employed Jefferson Waterman International and the Atlantic Group to repair Burma's image and to overturn US sanctions.²⁹

Effects

All three variants have significant effects on negotiators, the media and public opinion. Public diplomacy may be perceived in different and sometimes contradictory ways by different actors. The Chinese government saw the pro-democracy demonstrations as American use of the basic Cold War variant: the use of international broadcasting

to inspire public unrest in China that would force the Chinese government to alter its policy towards democratic reforms. From the US perspective, however, the pro-democracy campaign in China was an example of the nonstate transnational variant: an opposition group in China using a media event on Chinese soil to exert public pressure in the United States on the Bush administration to adopt harsher measures against Chinese human rights violations. Unless one suggests that the Bush administration orchestrated the entire campaign to put pressure on itself, the application of the conceptual variants to the available data shows that the United States interpretation was the correct one.

Sometimes the domestic public relations variant includes a reversed goal. If the classic goal of public diplomacy is to get the public of a country to pressurize its own government to *change* its foreign or domestic policy, occasionally in this variant, the goal is exactly the opposite, to direct public debate so that government policy *does not change*. In this case, the government of state A supports the government of state B, but many segments in country A oppose their government's policy towards B. State B fears that under public pressure, government A may change its existing favourable policy towards B, so state B tries to persuade the public of A that B deserves A's support. The reversed goal appeared, for example, in Kuwait's public diplomacy during the Gulf War, when the goal was to prevent any erosion in public support for an American-led war to liberate Kuwait.

The traditional basic variant of public diplomacy is used primarily against authoritarian regimes while the other two, primarily the domestic one, are used in democratic societies. The basic variant is being used against violations of human rights in Asia and against regimes such as those of Cuba and Iraq. The end of the Cold War, however, and the democratization of many countries in the former Soviet Union, in eastern Europe, and in other parts of the world, substantially reduced the main incentive for extensive use of this variant. In recent years public diplomacy has been used in nontraditional formats, including new participants such as nonstate actors; new types of relations between state and nonstate actors; new goals, such as cultivating support in a foreign country to maintain rather than change policy; and new means and techniques, such as the hiring of public relations firms.

The domestic public relations variant raises several ethical and professional problems. The activities of the public relations firm, Hill

and Knowlton, hired by Kuwait during the Gulf conflict, became very controversial. One senior official of the firm explained that 'we disseminated information in a void as a basis for Americans to form opinions', and another added 'teachers get awards. We get blamed for teaching'.³⁰ But critics argued that the firm established a fake popular movement, Citizens for a Free Kuwait, and used questionable evidence and suspect witnesses to influence public opinion in the United States and consequently to affect critical decisions in the United States and the UN.³¹

The means and performance of public diplomacy have always been controversial. But officials and scholars seem to agree that it has an even greater role in the post-Cold War era. In an article published in the *Washington Times* (31 December 1996) under the title 'A New Diplomacy for a New Age', Lewis Manilow, the Chairman of the US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, argued that 'people have more power to influence their governments than ever before', and that America needs a new diplomacy and a new kind of a diplomat 'who understands that a meeting with an environmental action group may have more long-term value than a meeting with the minister of the environment', and 'who can articulate a case to a newly free media'. Laqueur also maintained that public diplomacy in its broadest sense has become a more important instrument for dealing with US problems in the post-Cold War era than the traditional military and economic tools.³² Nye and Owens explained that 'America's increasing technical ability to communicate with the public in foreign countries, literally over the heads of their rulers via satellite, provides a great opportunity to foster democracy'.³³ Metzl also suggested that when great powers are unable or unwilling to intervene militarily to stop mass human rights abuses, the international community should employ 'information intervention', including monitoring and blocking radio and television broadcasts that incite violence and genocide, and countering them with peace broadcasting.³⁴

Media Diplomacy: Promoting Conflict Resolution

Media diplomacy has frequently been confused with *public diplomacy*.³⁵ After defining public diplomacy as propaganda, Van Dinh explained that this diplomacy has 'become synonymous with TV diplomacy. Politicians and diplomats use TV for international propaganda, which

in turn merges into domestic propaganda'.³⁶ But most of the examples he gave for TV diplomacy did not constitute propaganda. The televised ultimatum President Kennedy sent to the USSR about the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Nixon's visit to China in 1972 and Sadat's 1977 visit to Jerusalem were not acts of propaganda; they were designed to achieve breakthroughs in crises and conflicts. In a pioneering book, Cohen explained the differences between public diplomacy and media diplomacy in the following way: 'Media diplomacy includes all those aspects of public diplomacy where the media are involved as well as others not associated with public diplomacy including the sending of signals by governments through the media, and the use of the media as a source of information'.³⁷ Note that this definition seeks to characterize media diplomacy both as a part of and as somehow distinct from public diplomacy. Fortner wrote that 'any effort to influence press accounts of events, personalities, or agreements on behalf of a nation-state is public diplomacy'.³⁸ Ebo defined media diplomacy as 'the use of the media to articulate and promote foreign policy'.³⁹

This article suggests that, based on different phases in conflict, conflict resolution processes and policy goals, it is necessary to distinguish between two fundamentally different efforts to influence press accounts: *public diplomacy*, when the sides are engaged in confrontation and primarily employ propaganda, and *media diplomacy*, when one or both sides are ready for conflict resolution and seek negotiation and agreements. In this study, media diplomacy refers to officials' uses of the media to communicate with state and nonstate actors, to build confidence and advance negotiations, and to mobilize public support for agreements. Media diplomacy is pursued through various routine and special media activities including press conferences, interviews and leaks, as well as visits of heads of state and mediators to rival countries and spectacular media events organized to usher in new policy eras. Here again, three variants are suggested.

Variants

The basic communication variant. The argument suggested by Wood that 'when politicians wish to mediate they use diplomatic channels, secure and private; when they wish to confront they use open forms of mass communication'⁴⁰ requires substantial modification. In the absence of direct channels of communication, or when one side is unsure how the other would react to conditions for negotiations or to proposals for conflict resolution, officials use the media, with or

without attribution, to send signals and messages to leaders of rival states and nonstate actors.⁴¹ State Department spokesperson Nicholas Burns admitted:

I sometimes read carefully calibrated statements to communicate with those governments with which we have no diplomatic relations – Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea. ... Given the concentration of journalists in Washington and our position in the world, the US is uniquely situated to use television to our best advantage, with our friends as well as with our adversaries.⁴²

Sometimes, during grave international crises, the media provides the only channel for communication and negotiation between rival actors. During the first phase of the 1979–81 Iran hostage crisis, the United States communicated with the terrorists holding the hostages exclusively through the press.⁴³ A similar case occurred in the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner to Beirut.⁴⁴ Officials often use global television rather than traditional diplomatic channels to deliver messages: during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict, US Secretary of State James Baker delivered the last ultimatum to Saddam Hussein through CNN, and not through the US Ambassador to Iraq.⁴⁵ Similarly, in January 1998, Iranian President Mohammed Khatami chose CNN to send a conciliatory message to the United States.⁴⁶

Officials also use the media, and even attitudes towards journalists on rival sides, to indicate peace intentions. In January 1994, Syrian leader Hafez-al Assad met with President Clinton in Geneva in order to convey Syria's interest in peace with Israel. At the same time, however, Assad barred Israeli reporters from participating in the press conference he held with Clinton at the end of the meeting, indicating Syria's lack of sincere intentions.⁴⁷ This changed in September 1994 when Syrian foreign minister Farouq al-Shara answered a question by an Israeli reporter for the first time – at a press conference in London – and later gave a first-ever interview to Israeli television. Although the contents of these interviews were disappointing to Israel, Syria's new attitude towards Israeli journalists was seen as an attempt to build the confidence required for peace with Israel.⁴⁸

The travelling diplomacy variant. 'Travelling diplomacy' refers to the use of correspondents accompanying heads of state, foreign ministers, or other high level officials when they travel abroad to accomplish

diplomatic missions. Revolutions in transportation and communication made this variant possible and have allowed it to develop. As air travel has become simple, convenient and inexpensive, heads of state and ministers have become more and more involved in direct mediation and negotiation, both in bilateral and multilateral settings. They often speak on secured telephone lines and meet frequently. They fly abroad on their own planes with many correspondents accompanying them and reporting their moves. This development has enabled high-ranking officials to use correspondents aboard their planes and those who are accompanying them to send signals, suggest proposals, make threats, and in general communicate with policymakers and domestic and global audiences. Often this can be done without attribution: thus, a correspondent travelling with an American secretary of state, for example, may be required by the preestablished ground rules of his interview to characterize his source as 'a senior State Department official' aboard the plane.

The classic example of this variant was Henry Kissinger's 1973–74 'shuttle diplomacy' in the Middle East. Although Kissinger devoted little attention to the media in his public statements, memoirs and writings, he is probably the inventor of modern media diplomacy.⁴⁹ After the 1973 Arab–Israeli war, Kissinger became a mediator between the two sides.⁵⁰ His relentless efforts to achieve disengagement and interim agreements between Israel and its neighbours included the extensive use of senior American diplomatic correspondents aboard his plane.⁵¹ He gave them background reports, information and leaks in an effort to affect the negotiations and his mediation effort. Mediation in the Arab–Israeli conflict at that time was extremely difficult, and frequently the talks ran into deadlocks. Kissinger's media diplomacy helped to secure the concessions needed to break the deadlocks.

Kissinger was able to develop an intimate relationship with the correspondents aboard his plane, who knew more than the US ambassadors in the places he visited. For local journalists, policymakers and diplomats these correspondents became instant sources of information about the secretary of state's aims and plans. Sensing the growing power of television and soundbites, Kissinger gave special attention to television reporters aboard his plane: Marvin Kalb of CBS, Ted Koppel of ABC and Richard Valeriani of NBC. They and others – some of the best-known and most influential journalists in the United States – fully supported his diplomatic missions and admired his sophisticated techniques.⁵²

Many leaders have adopted some of Kissinger's techniques of media diplomacy.⁵³ Today, significant visits abroad are usually extensively covered by global television and the local media. An American president visiting foreign countries is accompanied by hundreds of correspondents who follow every step of his schedule. Some are allowed to accompany him on his plane. This provides opportunities for media diplomacy but also requires very careful preparation and implementation of ideas and actions.

The media events variant. Media events represent media diplomacy at its best, attracting wide audiences around the world and interrupting scheduled broadcasting.⁵⁴ They are broadcast live, organized outside the media, pre-planned, and presented with reverence and ceremony. Dayan and Katz identified several direct effects of media events on diplomacy: trivializing the role of ambassadors, breaking diplomatic deadlocks and creating a climate conducive to negotiations, and creating a favourable climate for a contract or to seal a bargain.⁵⁵ The distinction between the last two effects is significant because media events can be used at the onset of negotiations to build confidence and facilitate negotiations, or at the end of negotiations to mobilize public support for an agreement that has already been achieved.

I suggest the existence of an intermediary effect that occurs when officials use media events to cultivate public support for a peace process *after* the conclusion of the initial phase and *before* moving on to the next phase. This effect typically appears in cases where a breakthrough has been achieved, but the sides have a long way to go before translating principles into a final peace agreement. The intermediary effect mobilizes sufficient public support inside the societies involved for the next phase in the negotiations. All three effects of media events have appeared in 'summit diplomacy' and Arab-Israeli peacemaking.

Gorbachev's summits with Reagan and Bush demonstrate how the two superpowers used the media in the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War era. The summits reflected the dramatic changes in superpower relations. As media events they motivated individuals, groups and nations 'to reassess their relations with each other in light of the actions taking place live in front of their eyes'.⁵⁶ The first 1985 Gorbachev-Reagan summit demonstrated the initial effect, the use of a media event to begin a process of conciliation. The following summits demonstrated the intermediary effect, where each

event represented a step forward in the movement from confrontation to cooperation. The Gorbachev–Bush summit held in Washington in May 1990 ended the Cold War. Gorbachev used the summits with Reagan and Bush to cultivate public support at home and abroad for his major political and economic reforms. Reagan used the summits to legitimize the dramatic shift in his attitudes toward the Soviet Union, which he had branded ‘the evil empire’ at the beginning of his presidency.

Media events became a popular and frequently used media diplomacy technique in Arab–Israeli peacemaking. The November 1977 visit of Egypt’s president Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem and the 1991 Madrid Peace conference demonstrate the initial effect.⁵⁷ The signing ceremonies of three major documents represent the intermediary effect: the Camp David Accords of September 1978, the Israel–PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) Declaration of Principles of September 1993, and the Israel–Jordan Washington Declaration of July 1994. The signing ceremonies of two peace treaties demonstrate the ‘sealing effect’ of media events: the Israeli–Egyptian peace treaty of March 1979 and the Israeli–Jordanian peace treaty of October 1994.

Effects

Global television has increased the speed at which diplomatic messages are exchanged from weeks to minutes. This change in the pace of diplomatic communication represents a serious dilemma for policymakers, particularly in crisis situations. If they respond immediately without taking the time to consider policy options carefully, they may make a mistake. But if they offer no response, they may create the impression, both at home and abroad, that they are confused, do not know what to do, or have no control over the event or the issue at hand. Policymakers, wrote Hoge,

worry about a “loss of control” and decry the absence of quiet time to deliberate choices, reach private agreements and mold the public’s understanding. ... Today’s pervasive media increases the pressure on politicians to respond promptly to news accounts that by their very immediacy are incomplete, without context and sometimes wrong. Yet friend and foe have come to expect signals instantly, and any vacuum will be filled quickly by something.⁵⁸

While fast diplomatic communication may cause policy mistakes, it may also enable policymakers to respond effectively to a developing crisis. Global television coverage may function as a real-time source of information on events that require immediate action, which in turn may have a crucial impact on the final outcome. Due to the live CNN coverage of the August 1991 Russian coup attempt, Bush felt that Gorbachev's government had a chance to survive and when 'he spoke out at news conferences in support of the democratic forces in Moscow, his words would travel much swifter by global TV than by any diplomatic channel. These facts, in addition to the pictures of resistance inside and outside the Russian parliament building, energized the resisters'.⁵⁹

Media events are likely to fail if the participants do not cooperate to make them successful. This was the main reason for the failure of the 1991 Arab-Israeli Peace Conference held in Madrid. Following the victory in the Gulf War, the United States initiated the Madrid media event to break the deadlock in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. The event was held under the joint sponsorship of Bush and Gorbachev and was covered by some 4,500 journalists. However, the conference failed to produce the intended results due to the absence of even minimal cooperation among the adversaries, who felt the United States had pressurized them into participation in the conference. The lack of progress contrasted sharply with the high expectations for rapid peacemaking that the media had engendered, thereby leading to disappointment and confusion.

Media diplomacy includes various uses of the media by officials and mediators to promote negotiation and conflict resolution. This model helps to place communication-based diplomatic processes and affairs, such as media events, in the proper context. Media events are designed jointly by two or more former enemies to mobilize domestic and world public opinion for changing their relations or for agreements. It would therefore be more appropriate to define them as media diplomacy pursued in the context of conflict resolution than as public diplomacy, usually pursued when relations are antagonistic.

Media-Broker Diplomacy: Journalists Turning Mediators

Theories of negotiation and conflict resolution emphasize the significance of 'pre-negotiation' stages, the role of 'third parties' and 'track two diplomacy'.⁶⁰ In the pre-negotiation stage, the sides explore

the advantages and shortcomings of a specific negotiation process and make a decision – based on information received from the other party and other domestic and external considerations – on whether to enter formal negotiations. Third parties are often needed to help enemies begin negotiations: these can be formal representatives of superpowers, neutral states, international and global organizations, or ordinary individuals, who facilitate negotiations by talking to parties in conflict and persuading them to consider negotiation as a viable option. Third parties are particularly helpful in the pre-negotiation stage. Track two diplomacy refers to unofficial mediators and informal forms of negotiation. It is possible and useful to view journalists acting independently as ‘third parties’, pursuing ‘track two diplomacy’ particularly in ‘pre-negotiation stages’.

Arno described the news media as third parties in national and international conflict, helping primarily to transmit messages between the sides.⁶¹ While discussing the globalization of electronic journalism, Gurevitch also noted the new role of journalists as ‘international political brokers’.⁶² He cited the examples of Walter Cronkite from *CBS News*, who helped to arrange Sadat’s historic visit to Jerusalem, and television news anchors, such as Dan Rather from *CBS News*, who rushed to interview Saddam Hussein in Baghdad during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict. These examples, argues Gurevitch, suggest that globalized television ‘may launch reportorial initiatives that tend to blur the distinction between the roles of reporters and diplomats’. News anchors interviewing the Iraqi president ‘slid, almost imperceptibly, into the roles of advocates, as if representing their own government, and negotiators, exploring with their interviewee avenues for resolving the crisis’.

The examples cited by Gurevitch and others imply that the model is not only a hypothetical abstraction but actually has occurred in contemporary diplomacy.⁶³ I suggest *Media-broker diplomacy* as a term to capture the essence of this new conceptual model. It refers to unofficial third party roles played by the news media primarily in pre-negotiation stages. The definition itself points to the main differences between *media diplomacy* and *media-broker diplomacy*. The differences lie in the actual activities of the journalists in the two models and in the source of that activity. In media diplomacy reporters pursue their profession and follow moves initiated by policymakers, who in effect use the media in ways outlined above. But in media-broker diplomacy, journalists act more as diplomats

initiating and conducting critical diplomatic moves. Geyer and Newsom suggested that reporters who interviewed leaders unavailable to diplomats due to official policy or other constraints, such as Fidel Castro or PLO leader Yasser Arafat before the Oslo breakthrough in his relations with Israel, were conducting diplomacy.⁶⁴ However, according to the distinction suggested here, an interview used by a leader to influence public opinion in another country is public diplomacy, and it is media diplomacy if the purpose is to transmit policy messages to a rival leader or country, and not media-broker diplomacy, which consists of mediation and negotiation of terms and conditions. Three variants of media-broker diplomacy are suggested.

Variants

The direct intervention variant. This variant refers to situations where journalists are actively and directly engaged in international negotiation. Cronkite's role in the initial critical stage of the Israeli–Egyptian peace process well illustrates this classic variant of the media-broker model. After Sadat stated in November 1977 that he was ready to travel to Jerusalem to seek peace with Israel, Cronkite asked him what he needed to go. Just a 'proper invitation' from Israel, Sadat responded.⁶⁵ Cronkite followed up by inquiring how soon he could go, with Sadat answering '[at] the earliest time possible'. Cronkite took the initiative by suggesting a possible time table: 'that could be, say, within a week?' to which Sadat responded 'you can say that, yes'. Cronkite informed Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin of the results of his conversation with Sadat, causing Begin to respond: 'tell him [Sadat] he's got an invitation'. This reaction, 'tell him...', demonstrates how Begin perceived Cronkite as an actual mediator and not just as a journalist. Cronkite recalled that he pressed Begin for details, with Begin agreeing to make a statement to his parliament the following day and later to talk to the US ambassador to Israel about forwarding the invitation. A few days later Sadat arrived in Israel and history was made.

Cronkite did not believe Sadat would really go to Jerusalem and said he only wanted to 'knock down the speculation over the visit'. But lack of motivation or of a special plan to engage in diplomacy does not mean that the reporter was not performing a diplomatic role. Cronkite acknowledged his diplomatic contribution and distinguished between unintended planning and results:

A problem with the anchor's exalted position is the tendency for her or him to slide from observer to player. Sometimes this is the unintended result of a purely journalistic exercise, such as our Sadat-Begin interviews ... the important point is that television journalism, in this case at least, speeded up the process, brought it into the open, removed a lot of possibly obstructionist middlemen, and made it difficult for principals to renege on their very public agreement.⁶⁶

Any professional diplomat would be extremely proud of achievements like these. Cronkite's colleagues in the printed press praised his intervention. William Safire, for example, wrote in the *New York Times* (17 November 1977), 'It took Walter Cronkite of CBS, placing an electronic hand on the backs of Israel and Egypt, to bring them together'.

The bridging variant. This variant typically occurs when representatives of rival sides are brought together on the air for discussions of the issues dividing them. It is more likely to happen when there is no formal third party helping enemies to engage in conflict resolution. A well-known and respected journalist associated with a highly regarded programme has a better chance of successfully performing this role. Ted Koppel's *Nightline* is a good example of this variant.⁶⁷ Two particular special programmes that *Nightline* broadcast, in 1985 from South Africa and in 1988 from Israel, were credited with facilitating significant steps toward conflict resolution in these countries.⁶⁸ In South Africa, Koppel brought together representatives of the government and the African National Congress (ANC) for the first time. In Israel, he brought together representatives of Israel and the PLO on one stage for the first time.

It should be noted that in both cases the representatives of both sides were mainly interested in talking to the moderator and in influencing American public opinion, and not in a meaningful dialogue. The Palestinians even insisted on placing a wall on the stage between themselves and the Israeli participants. Regardless of the initial motivation of the rival sides, Koppel pursued classic means of successful pre-negotiation by bestowing credibility and legitimizing the participants, empowering and equalizing the parties, and providing direct communication. These means helped to realize goals of pre-negotiation, including the removal of psychological barriers to

negotiation, eliminating mutual dehumanization and demonization, defining the conflict as a mutual problem, considering negotiation as a viable option to resolve the conflict, cultivating domestic support for negotiation, and emphasizing the need to open official negotiations.

The Israeli and the Palestinian participants felt that the programme was a significant diplomatic event pushing them towards official direct negotiation. Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian representative, said that 'the show broke barriers. It made acceptable the idea of an encounter between Palestinians and Israelis'.⁶⁹ Ehud Olmert, an Israeli representative, commented that 'there was this sense that this was more than just a TV show, that this was a political event, an international event, that TV had become more than just a technical instrument'. A few years later, Israel and the PLO conducted official indirect talks in Washington and direct secret talks in Oslo, leading to mutual recognition and to a major breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Likewise, the white government in South Africa officially negotiated with the ANC an agreement to end apartheid.

Nightline's motto: 'bringing people together who are worlds apart' reveals the programme's self-declared mission. Observers have agreed: 'What else is *Nightline* but an electronic negotiating table with the anchor bringing combatants together, searching for answers, probing for common ground? Koppel may never get Kissinger's old job, but he is already television's Secretary of State.'⁷⁰ Koppel, as noted earlier, was one of the selected correspondents accompanying Kissinger on his diplomatic travels, and was exposed to his uses of the media to advance negotiations.

The secret variant. Secret media-broker diplomacy appears to be a contradiction in terms. Journalists are supposed to uncover events, not to conceal them, and officials are hesitant to employ journalists in delicate negotiations, since this could increase the risk of premature disclosure. Yet, foreign affairs bureaucracies are known for being rigid and often resistant to fundamental changes in relations with rival countries, and their personnel may leak information on negotiations, particularly if they oppose them. Thus, in certain sensitive cases officials prefer outsiders, including reporters, to ensure secrecy.⁷¹ An experienced journalist, who enjoys the trust of high-level politicians or officials, best knows how to protect secret negotiations from his colleagues. Also, a veteran diplomatic correspondent will have accumulated considerable knowledge and experience about the

intricacies of negotiations, perhaps as much as professional diplomats, and can execute a diplomatic mission effectively.

At the height of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis a senior official at the Soviet Embassy in Washington used John Scali, the diplomatic correspondent for *ABC News*, as a go-between for the US and the Soviet Union.⁷² Scali had excellent ties with US officials, who valued his accurate and professional reporting. Anxious to know whether their proposal to end the crisis would be acceptable to the United States but fearing to lose face and credibility should it be rejected, the Soviets asked Scali to pass it on to US officials. Although American officials were somewhat confused about the communication channel selected by the Soviets, Secretary of State Dean Rusk took the proposal seriously, met with Scali, and gave him America's positive response.⁷³

Scali had to cope with major professional and ethical dilemmas, since he continued to report on the crisis while knowing that there was another significant story in which he was participating: 'I covered the entire Cuban missile crisis on TV and radio and never said one word, even while I was covering it, about what I was doing behind the scenes.'⁷⁴ If Scali had ceased his routine reporting, colleagues and officials might have suspected that something was wrong and questioned him about his activities. Scali explained that parallel reporting and secret mediation was not difficult for him because 'it was a crisis of magnitude that surely represented an incredible disaster had it reached what appeared to be its logical conclusion'. Even after the crisis, Scali claimed that he could not reveal his role, because Kennedy had asked him to continue mediating in an effort to get Soviet bombers out of Cuba.

Effects

Four parameters should help to examine media-broker diplomacy: initiation and motivation, awareness, action, and consequences. *Initiation and motivation* refer to the identity of those who initiate media-broker diplomacy: the journalists themselves, policymakers, or other interested parties. *Awareness* refers to the correspondents' own knowledge and understanding of their actions. *Action* refers to the specific measures taken by a reporter in order to promote a diplomatic move, and *consequences* are the results of these measures. Application of these parameters to the various examples reveal different types of media-broker diplomacy. Cronkite did not preplan a diplomatic role but was drawn into one, Koppel clearly initiated

television electronic town meetings between rivals on *Nightline*, while Scali was drafted into a secret diplomatic mission. All the journalists involved in the cases discussed here were aware of the mediation roles they were performing. Cronkite and Koppel took deliberate actions to facilitate negotiations, while Scali was more passive. The consequences of all these various mediation efforts were significant and were viewed by both the participants and observers as a major contribution to the beginning of official negotiations.

The variant pursued by Cronkite was the only spontaneous one. In background conversations or in special interviews with high-level policymakers, experienced and well-known journalists may identify a potential for negotiations (Sadat–Begin) or attempt to negotiate on behalf of a particular actor (the US versus Saddam Hussein). In an official interview, a series of questions and answers may create a diplomatic move or accelerate one that is already in the making. In this mode, journalists function primarily as catalysts for negotiations. All three journalist-mediators were well known news anchors and reporters who used their positions to influence sensitive negotiations. Kissinger accurately identified the source of their power: while referring to American television coverage of the war in Vietnam he pointed out that ‘the news anchor turned into a political figure, in the sense that only a president could have reached as many people – and certainly not with such regularity’.⁷⁵

From the governmental perspective, only officially authorized diplomacy is legitimate. ‘There is no place in diplomacy for journalists or anyone not authorized by the government’, says Hodding Carter.⁷⁶ His colleague in the Carter administration, Robert Beckel, argues that it ‘is a big mistake’ for journalists to be ‘actively engaged in diplomacy’, but he considers Scali’s role to be legitimate because it was authorized ‘and the government felt that he was the best avenue to pass information back and forth’. Senior American policymakers were divided on the contributions of *Nightline* to conflict resolution. Harold Saunders, an Assistant Secretary of State, said that ‘television diplomacy generally hinders foreign policy. If you take *Nightline*, etc., I don’t think those dialogues are particularly useful because they are not very well prepared’. He explained that the participants were engaged in debates and scoring points instead of ‘learning how to handle sensitive issues creatively’. Phyllis Oakely, a State Department Spokeswoman, however, argued that ‘the Koppel Arab–Israeli show was well done. It was useful in presenting the

passions of both sides and how difficult it is to make an agreement'. Richard Haass made a similar observation, adding that the programme 'helped at the margins. And that's not bad. A lot of history happens at the margins'.⁷⁷

Conclusions

This study offers three conceptual models that serve in defining and analyzing various roles of the media in contemporary diplomacy. The first two – more familiar – models, public and media diplomacy, have been redefined, revised, updated and restructured. The third model, media-broker diplomacy, has been created to analyze a relatively new and unique involvement of journalists in diplomacy. Each model corresponds to a particular basic media-diplomacy relationship.

Figure 1 clearly illustrates the main differences between the three models. The figure is particularly helpful in distinguishing between public diplomacy and media diplomacy. While both these models deal with uses of the media to influence governments and public opinion, they substantially differ in contexts, sides, time frames, goals, methods, targets and media. Media diplomacy is pursued in the context of conflict resolution, while public diplomacy is conducted in the context of confrontation; media diplomacy usually aims at short term results while public diplomacy aims at long range outcomes; media diplomacy is more specific than public diplomacy – whereas the latter is designed to create a friendly climate within a foreign society towards fundamental political and social issues, such as capitalism versus communism or human rights, the former is designed to create a favourable climate for a particular diplomatic process at a particular time and in a particular context. In addition, while public diplomacy primarily entails one-sided propaganda designed to foster an image abroad, media diplomacy primarily entails a serious appeal, sometimes made jointly by two rival sides, for conflict resolution directed at both domestic and foreign constituencies; finally, public diplomacy is conducted through multiple channels while media diplomacy is exclusively conducted through the mass media. Media-broker diplomacy is somewhat different from media diplomacy in context, time frame, goals and medium but is very different in initiators, method, sides and target. While officials usually initiate, conduct and dominate media diplomacy, journalists usually initiate, conduct and dominate media-broker diplomacy.

FIGURE 1
PUBLIC, MEDIA, AND MEDIA-BROKER DIPLOMACY: A COMPARISON

Attribute	Public Diplomacy	Media Diplomacy	Media-Broker Diplomacy
Context	Confrontation	Conflict resolution	Negotiations
Initiators	Officials	Officials	Journalists
Time frame	Long range	Short range	Immediate
Goals	General	Specific	Very specific
Method	Promote favourable image	Appeal for conflict resolution	Mediation
Sides	One sided	Joint	All sides
Target	Foreign societies	Domestic/foreign societies	Officials/public opinion
Medium	Multiple channels	Mass media	Mass media

The study of the media's involvement in diplomacy is becoming increasingly important as heads of state and nonstate actors make increasing use of the media as a major instrument for communication and negotiation. Prominent journalists have even occasionally assumed the role of diplomats, both in crises and peacemaking situations. These uses of the media have had significant impact on the conduct and coverage of diplomacy. In the information age, the inclusion, and sometimes the exclusion, of the media from diplomacy will have even more dramatic effects on negotiations.⁷⁸ As a greater number of people all over the world watch the same news, leaders and government officials of state and nonstate actors will use the mass media, particularly television, more frequently in both actual negotiations and in the pre-negotiation stages. Furthermore, the media's growing involvement in diplomacy has practical implications for officials pursuing peacemaking processes. The media can help or hinder negotiations. Knowledge of how to avoid the pitfalls or how to use the media to advance negotiations may often determine whether a particular peacemaking effort is successful.

The complex nature of the media's involvement in diplomacy is also demonstrated by examining the issue of influence and effects. Although there is a wide consensus that the media has transformed diplomacy, the question remains whether the media has functioned primarily as an autonomous actor (and an influential, even dominant one) or as a sophisticated tool in the hands of officials. In the public and media diplomacy models, the media is used by officials, while in the media-broker model, the media functions predominantly as an autonomous actor.

The media has brought new – primarily nonstate – actors into the foreign policymaking process, and has been a source of quickly updated and available information to policymakers.⁷⁹ It has also accelerated the pace of diplomatic communication from weeks to minutes and has focused world attention on crises in places such as Bosnia, Rwanda or Somalia, and on global issues such as terrorism, global warming and human rights. In some cases leaders have had to address these issues even when it appears that they have not been high on their agenda.

The media diplomacy and public diplomacy models show that leaders and officials have demonstrated considerable ability to harness the growing power of global communication to achieve diplomatic goals at home and abroad. Often, they have had more control over the media process than the journalists themselves. Newsom said, for example, that ‘in the last analysis it is the executive that has the power to dominate the news’, and Neuman argued that ‘media technology is rarely as powerful in the hands of journalists as it is in the hands of political figures who can summon the talent to exploit the new invention’.⁸⁰ The media, therefore, has transformed diplomacy by providing leaders and officials with new tools rather than by functioning as an independent actor.

Despite the obvious significance of the media’s roles in contemporary and future diplomacy, be it as a political tool or as an independent actor, research on this topic is still scarce and underdeveloped. Better understanding of these roles is vital not only for the sake of progress in the field of research but also for actual negotiations. This article offers conceptual models for analysis that can help to explore and understand how the media has affected diplomacy and provide a basic intellectual infrastructure that can help to establish the necessary interdisciplinary bridges between islands of theory on media-diplomacy relations in international relations, political science, and communication.

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