PROMOTING SECURITY THROUGH PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Mihai-Marcel NEAG
mmneag@yahoo.com
“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy, Sibiu, Romania

Abstract

Every sphere of everyday life involves interactions between people-interactions that we hope to build positive communities and nations. The public diplomacy is the link between communication and foreign policy and is based on the fundamental premise that today, people’s lives are indestructibly connected, as they share the problems and opportunities brought about by economic interdependence, globalization, climate changes, terrorism, and all the other problems that require collaboration and common global cooperation. Therefore, it is obvious that it is in the interest of the nation to share and expand its ideas and values with, as well as within the international community.

Keywords: public diplomacy, military diplomacy, defense diplomacy, smart power

1. Introduction

Under the impact of globalization, international contemporary relations entered a process of resizing, which tends to remove the state monopoly over foreign policy. In the international system the non-state actors have a dynamic role in influencing a country’s image abroad, and the information technologies offer them multiple mechanisms of communication. In this situation, diplomatic activities are accompanied by a process of communication, both on the internal and external markets. More and more states launch information campaigns meant to contribute to the achievement of foreign policy priorities, but also to obtain the support of their own societies.

In the context of participatory democracy, the adherence of the public opinion towards the government policy is an indispensable element for the survival of any government. External strategies concerning the change or strengthening the perception of international public opinion towards a particular country are also part of these campaigns. The term “public diplomacy” has been coined to describe aspects of international relations, which manifest themselves outside of the interaction between the state structures.

2. Diplomacy and Military Action

Over time, diplomacy has adapted its norms, rules and practices in relation to historical changes by adding new layers, rather than replacing the traditional ones. Like the nature of human interactions, the deep character of diplomacy and its perennial methods survive as the primary and fundamental institutions. Despite the changes and adjustments, it is evident that
diplomacy as an institution will not disappear under the impact of globalization. But diplomacy evolves, so that systematic screenings in the future are becoming increasingly necessary for the decision makers in national governments or transnational organizations.

It is obvious that in the current international system, the military actions in support of peace are a more frequent form of conveying the foreign policy options. International missions of the armed forces, through their ability to promote particular values in the world, have a pronounced character of legitimacy. As an instrument of foreign policy of a state, diplomacy still proves effective in international relations, as it has an alternative and/or military support, which provides complementary roles to both military diplomacy and to military policy of a state [1].

Growth in the number of multinational missions exponentially increase the diplomatic component of the military domain, which refers to the way and circumstances in which “the army is being used, directly or indirectly, as an explicit tool for a broader foreign policy” [2]. The role of the defense diplomacy is complementary to that of national defense and is carried out by civilian officials, policy makers and specialized professionals within military institutions, as well as by the military commanders in the theatres of operations that have significant contributions in promoting the state’s foreign policy.

Participation in international military operations has led to a new way of thinking and perceiving the role of the army, the military involvement and the means used in these types of missions. At the same time, a new kind of communication and co-operation has been shaped and developed, both within the military and in the society that has also facilitated the process of military reform, particularly in the former communist countries.

The phrase ‘defense diplomacy’ has come to be widely used by policymakers and military strategists of the NATO countries, in the mid ’90s, having a meaning for all the national security system components as well as the way they are reflected or are interpreted in international relations. The concept involves the development, on multiple levels, of coherent cooperation in the fields of inter-state security and military agreements, with visible impact upon the following components: strengthening of institutions, building of strategic dialogue and exchanges in the field of information, promoting stability through cooperation and measures to increase confidence and security, improving the democratic civil control, of the military reform, of military training.

It was established that “diplomacy is the software for the national security policy; the army provides the hardware. None may be alone the computer” [3]. The main players in the defense diplomacy are military organizations, the civil society can be involved in addressing issues related to the field of education, research or in evaluating the effectiveness of cooperation programs. Defense diplomacy items include military partnership, cooperation, exercises, participation in multinational structures, assistance programs, military aid, exchanges of information, military attachés’ activities, and items related to arms control, exchange of personnel, etc.

In the opinion of specialists, there are differences in terms of the ways in which each country defines and follows its goals of military diplomacy. The French approach in this regard includes a wide vision of the available tools, including building and peacekeeping operations. In the USA, the military diplomacy is focused on the activities the Pentagon carries with and in different countries of the world: expanding cooperation and consolidation of democracy in many countries, the financing of education and military training by which young officers and civilians from other countries...
benefit from scholarships, financing of sales of military equipment and conducting joint exercises within The Partnership for Peace (the majority being fully or partially funding by the USA). Germany and Canada target and develop a climate of trust in the armed forces of the partner states, both in military, democratic and political and socio-economic terms. In Romania, diplomacy is constantly changing, at present, a wide range of activities, aimed at the training of national and international military personnel and civilians to carry out military objectives, and not only, are underway [4].

The defense diplomacy represents a process affecting the democratization and reform of the security sector, but also to achieve a strategic defense community at regional and international level, based on common values and objectives. For these reasons, the defense diplomacy can be regarded as being similar to a mission of the armed forces, although it does not necessarily involve a conventional approach regarding the use of military means (capabilities) to ensure or enforce peace.

At present, the ability of the states to influence each other through the use of military capabilities was increasingly replaced by their ability to use the information as a means to dominate in conflict situations. From this perspective, the defense diplomacy becomes a fundamental mission of the modern military system, but also a tool for promoting security interests nationally and internationally. Sometimes, errors in foreign policy can be just as disastrous as the mistakes of the war.

3. Public Diplomacy and Foreign Policy

The phrase public diplomacy was established after 1990 when, having obtained the theoretical consistency and also actional coherence, it began to be a preoccupation of most governments [5]. It is used for the first time in January, 1865, in an article published in the Times newspaper, stating that: “America’s politicians must remember that, if they want to make a certain impression upon us, they must be an example for their own people too and there are some exciting examples of the public diplomacy” [6].

Political researcher Joseph Nye describes public diplomacy as a political expression of soft power, a concept that was introduced in the early 90s. In international politics, power is the ability of an actor to influence one another to do certain actions that would not otherwise be undertaken. Therefore, the hard power is the ability of an actor to compel another to execute certain actions and includes as tactics the military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions. In contrast, the soft power refers to the ability to convince an actor to undertake those actions. The combination of the two results in smart power, an approach that uses the most appropriate strategic tactics of the two dimensions of power mentioned above [7].

Public diplomacy has become a field of study and as a tool to promote the foreign policy objectives of both governments and international organizations, non-governmental organizations, multinational companies and others. Starting from the premise that diplomacy is “the best means that civilization has been able to invent in order to ensure that international relations should not be governed only by force” [8] in the current international context, public diplomacy comes across as a central element of the national strategy of foreign policy or of the communication strategy of international organizations or non-governmental ones.

Public diplomacy targets individuals, social groups, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. Thus, while the classical diplomacy sets up and manages communication relationships with governments, the public diplomacy is considering communication with different audiences in other countries.
Nicholas J. Cull, professor of public diplomacy at the University of Southern California, has built a classification of the current public diplomacy, on five main elements: listening, advocating, cultural diplomacy, diplomacy of exchange and broadcasting of news/international programs, to which, I think, military public diplomacy may be added.

Listening is the action of an actor to manage the international environment through gathering and selection of data about external public perceptions and the use of these data for the redirection of foreign policy as a whole [9].

Advocating in the public diplomacy means that an actor is trying to manage the international environment by been engaged in an activity of international communication to promote a particular idea or policy or general interests of the actor in a foreign public mind. The objective of the diplomatic advocating is to persuade the relevant authorities of other nations either to do something that the diplomats’ government wants or not to do something that it does not want them to do [10].

Cultural diplomacy is taking place on several plans for the promotion of culture and represents the action by which an actor tries to manage the international environment by providing knowledge about heritage/cultural potential to the various categories of external public. Public diplomacy reaches a maximum potential when it contribute to the image of the country, because it can overcome the bias of the target audience towards the official messages.

Exchange diplomacy is the trial of an actor to manage the international environment by sending its citizens abroad and the mutual acceptance of citizens from abroad, for a period of studies and/or cultural knowledge [11].

Broadcasting of news/international programs is when an actor tries to manage the international environment through the use of radio, television and Internet in engaging with the foreign public. Analyst Steven Livingston drew the attention to the fact that mass media profoundly affects the decision-making process in the foreign policy, and the former Secretary of Defense, James Schlesinger, argued that in the post-cold war era USA have come to make the foreign policy as a response to the “impulse and image” [12].

Military public diplomacy is the attempt of a state actor to manage the international environment through the presence of its armed forces in certain areas without the expression of intentions for the use of force through the exercises in international waters, demonstration activities, joint exercises, exchanges of military personnel for training activities, CIMIC type, as well as psychological operations [13]. Psychological operations cover a wide range of actions led on the population and foreign combatants in the area of operations, in order to influence the perceptions, emotions, their attitudes according to a specified purpose.

US Department of Defense defines psychological operations as operations planned for the transmission of information and selected indicators to foreign audiences in order to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately, the behavior of governments, organizations, groups and individuals, in ways favorable to the originator’s objectives [14].

In January 1962, the US Army has replaced the concept of psychological warfare with that of psychological operations – PSYOPS, – because these actions were aimed not just at military targets but also the civil population, during that time, as Călin Hentea well points out, and set against communist wars of national liberation, a conduct of a psychological warfare against civilians would become extremely “politically incorrect” [15].

In all consolidated democracies, the military has an increasingly important role in the public diplomacy, a fact reflected by the existence in the Department of Defense
The perceptions of peoples about other states have a direct effect on the ability of states to achieve and maintain alliances in pursuit of common political objectives, including the effectiveness of joint military operations, subsumed under some major decisions on foreign policy. Whether it is propaganda, manipulation or change of individual attitudes or convictions, they are all based on the representation of a person, group, or event, structured in an image. It is formed as either directly (through living together in the same space, through economic, political, military relations, etc.) or indirectly (through mediated perceptions) and “the farther a person or a group who has an image of a country or a people is, the more diffuse and confusing his vision will be” [19]. Of course, public diplomacy can be seen as an evolution of propaganda or psychological war during the world wars, the cold war and the war against terrorism.

Most nations behave on the international level similar to companies battling for influence and power, on the basis of compliance with the rules of international law, treaties and agreements. There are, however, cases in which the threat of rivalry becomes equivalent to vital national interests and diplomacy becomes the main tool which makes coalitions, influencing the public and elites from abroad regarding the righteous of a cause and closely cooperates with the military factor in getting decisive spaces outside the national territory for the possible deployment of the armed forces (free air zone, free anchoring in the harbor, permit for the transportation of men and materials, etc.) [20].

In terms of national security, public diplomacy has the following roles:

Promoting the vital national interests. Public diplomacy is the main instrument of diplomacy to ensure the promotion of the vital national interests of a state outside its national territory, through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences, in order to influence political behavior of target governments.
The main tool of foreign policy. Public diplomacy helps in forming perceptions about the policies and objectives of a state, being a key element of foreign policy. Public diplomacy can promote a favorable climate of public opinion in other countries if it is credible, flexible and proactive and if it has adequate resources.

Smart power tool. Public diplomacy plays a central role as a tool for smart power and the essential tool of the statehood of the 21st century.

Joseph Nye points out that public diplomacy is an important tool in the arsenal of smart power, but smart public diplomacy requires an understanding of the reliability, self criticism and civil society’s role in generating soft power. If it degenerates into propaganda, public diplomacy not only fails to convince, but can undermine the power of the soft power [21]. That is why it must remain a two-way communication process, because soft power depends, first of all, on the understanding of the way other people think [22].

Opinion shaper of target audience abroad. There are ideas that highlight the fact that the world public opinion may be associated with a new type of actor of the system of international relations [23], a fact which justifies us to state that any act of effective public diplomacy is based on communication and dialogue with the target audience abroad.

In this process, listening and learning, coupled with compelling discussions with trainers and opinion leaders are of major importance. The climate of public opinion abroad can be affected only if the diplomats who submit public diplomacy have gained credibility in their relationships with opinion leaders from that country.

Presenter and promoter of national values. An important role of public diplomacy is that of promoter of the national values of a country. Exchanges in the field of education or culture, together with the organization of seminars and international conferences are some of the distinct actions that public diplomacy ensures the promotion of national values.

Supporter of the establishment of alliances and international cooperation. Based on the principles set out by national security strategy, public diplomacy promotes the making of alliances and international cooperation in the multilateral framework, thus ensuring the pursuit of national interests at international affairs level and homeland security of territory and population.

However, it should be highlighted that any approach to public diplomacy concerning national, regional or international security issues, has a higher efficiency when it is supported by the actions of the military public diplomacy and the events of the 21st century, starting with the intervention in Afghanistan and more recently, the events in Ukraine and Syria, confirm it.

Bridge with citizens living abroad. Public diplomacy is that part of diplomacy that ensures the maintaining and development of the relationship of a state with its citizens living abroad. Most times, this connection is achieved through diplomacy, cultural exhibitions, cultural events, thematic cultural programs carried out in creative partnership, collaboration and academic exchanges and scholarships for citizens living abroad.

Cultivator of economic, cultural, educational and scientific exchanges. Public diplomacy supports the development of economic, cultural, educational and scientific exchanges by the promotion of investment or business opportunities, supporting the business environment in order to increase its presence on foreign markets, promoting strategic economic projects, promoting its own artists in the international circuit (participation in festivals, art fairs, etc.), increasing awareness of and access to cultural, scientific, historical, and linguistic heritage, promotion of the younger generation of artists and scientists, encouraging the study of national language, history and literature, and developing access to the books written in the mother tongue and by national authors.
5. Conclusions
Public diplomacy can be defined in various terms. It can be understood as a process by which it promotes itself, at all levels, including individuals, accurate and complete information, to understand your own country.

Public diplomacy focuses on ways in which a country (or a multi-lateral organization) communicates with citizens of other states. Effective public democracy starts from the premise that dialogue, rather than a presentation in order to sell something, is often the centerpiece in achieving the goals of foreign policies. Within the vast area of public diplomacy, we can mention “public diplomacy events” (country presentations, promotion of culture and traditions, organization of shows, concerts, exhibitions and conferences), which contribute to the strengthening the position and improving the image of any country.

The advantage of understanding the world in which we live comes from the ability to rationalize the risks, threats and hazard as well. The international community must forge a consensus on international security issues that have major common interests of states, arising from the common threats directed against national security, at the regional level, on groups of countries and globally. These are liable to lead to a common consciousness which will urge to common behaviors and consequently, to common actions. Mutual understanding and cooperation in tackling the process of communication and information, at the national, regional and global, level are initiatives to be developed within the public diplomacy.

Although the use of military power is increasingly blamed in international politics, it continues to be used for unlocking strategic situations, playing a major role in the setting up of international relations and global security environment. From this perspective, of utmost importance is the need for national and international bodies to determine the limit up to which the armed forces may be involved in conducting foreign policy, in order to avoid possible excesses in this extremely sensitive area and with consequences at regional and even global level. This is even more necessary in the current period when the international situation is very alert and unpredictable and the use of the armed forces appears to be the most effective one and with immediate effects.

REFERENCES
18. *Ibidem*, 77-78.