

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A REMEDY FOR NATO'S IMAGE PROBLEM

*Kamu Diplomasisi: NATO'nun İmaj Sorununun Çaresi*

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### **Abstract:**

The new security threats that have appeared after the Cold War have showed that NATO still matters in helping to ensure global security. However, NATO's image has recently been deteriorating and its credibility has been damaged. That is why an effective public diplomacy seems indispensable to overcome this problem. Even though NATO has tried to implement an active public diplomacy since 2004 through its Public Diplomacy Division, the efforts seem to not yet be fulfilling. Thus, it is crucial for the Alliance to reshape its public diplomacy strategy.

**Keywords:** *NATO, NATO operations, public diplomacy, public opinion, soft power*

### **Özet:**

Soğuk Savaş sonrası ortaya çıkan yeni güvenlik tehditleri, küresel güvenliğin sağlanmasında halen NATO'ya ihtiyaç olduğunu gözler önüne sermiştir. Ancak çeşitli faktörlere bağlı olarak son zamanlarda NATO'nun imajının bozulduğu ve inandırıcılığının sarsıldığı görülmektedir. Bu sebeple, söz konusu sorunun çözümünde etkin bir kamu diplomasisinin uygulanması zaruridir. Kamu Diplomasisi Departmanı aracılığıyla 2004'ten beri NATO'nun aktif bir kamu diplomasisi uygulamaya çalışmasına rağmen bu çabaların yeterli olduğunu söylemek mümkün değildir. Dolayısıyla, İttifak'ın kamu diplomasisi stratejisini yeniden şekillendirmesi elzemdir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *NATO, NATO operasyonları, kamu diplomasisi, kamuoyu, yumuşak güç*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, international security, which came into being within the framework of the alliances formed in the bipolar world with spheres of influence and nuclear deterrence, has acquired a rather different dimension. After 1991, the US and Europe's security strategies, which collectively confronted the communist threat, lost their meaning and *raison d'être*. The end of the Cold War has also given birth to expectations for the maintenance of permanent peace in the whole world. In his study entitled "The End of History and the Last Man," Francis Fukuyama stated that liberalism, as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of the communism threat, has put an end to ideological conflicts and class segregation in the world. The then US President George H. W. Bush regarded the aftermath of the Cold War as a period where "a new world order" would dominate. To ensure this, there was a need for a new alliance which was based on interstate cooperation and common action, and thus democracy, peace, welfare and disarmament (the wish of the founders of the United Nations) would eventually be implemented.<sup>1</sup> However, after time, it was seen that these optimistic views were not the reflection of the reality and new security threats became rather alarming.

Mere military matters (which formed the main agenda of the security issues in the post-Cold War period) as a result of a paradigm shift, have been replaced by new security threats that are centered upon the individual and society. One of the main characteristic features of the new security threats is their being international in nature. In other words, these threats neither appear just because of the actions of a certain state nor pose a threat for a single state. Thus, in the world where "insecurity gets globalized," the settlement of the security problems have been of utmost importance on a global level.

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<sup>1</sup> President Bush's speech to Congress on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1991. Accessed January 1, 2012. <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/pal10.html>

At this point, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whose *raison d'être* and continuity is being questioned, has undergone a change in ideological, strategic, and organizational senses. Although its *raison d'être* and continuity is being probed, this organization has been a framework which aims at meeting the security need of the new world order. Nevertheless, the legal nature of the NATO operations conducted outside of its scope has especially been the subject of criticism. In the same vein, the good image of the NATO in the international arena has started to disappear as a result of the following reasons: the increase of civilian losses with the NATO operations, the dominant view that the organization acts for the introduction and implementation of the US's strategic goals, long-lasting operations, and the numerous deaths of NATO soldiers in various conflicts. This problem urgently needs a resolution since the loss in the credibility of international organizations may lead them to non-functionality with time and disintegration in the long run.

In this changing world, which has been shaped by communication and information revolutions, the most effective tool to create a positive image, renew an image, ensure prestige and credibility, or communicate a message to foreign publics is through public diplomacy. Hence, giving importance to public diplomacy and executing an effective strategy in this regard are rather important for the future of the Alliance. The aim of this study is to expose NATO's image problem with member state and non-member state publics and discuss the public diplomacy to be followed in order to resolve this problem.

## **1. WHAT IS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY?**

Public diplomacy can be defined as an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public.<sup>2</sup> The term 'public diplomacy' was first applied to the process of

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<sup>2</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009), 12.

international information and cultural relations in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, a retired American diplomat turned Dean of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University. According to Gullion, 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.”<sup>3</sup>

In today’s international relations, the defense of national interests cannot only be ensured by classical diplomacy tools such as diplomatic negotiations, diplomatic initiatives, or demarches. The first reason of this change in matters of diplomacy is the proliferation of actors in the international system. The influx of the number of states, transnational organizations, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, and other non-state actors left traditional government-to-government diplomacy insufficient for the international relations of a country. Nowadays, non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations have begun to develop strategies to influence public opinions; hence states should be able to follow policies aiming not only at other states or international organizations but also at foreign publics.

In a globalized world, public opinion matters more than ever. Yet, because of communication and information revolutions, publics have become more distrustful of the governments and the international organizations. That is why the ability to influence public opinions (in other words, public diplomacy), has become one of the most crucial elements of foreign policy. This feature of public diplomacy can be found in Hans Tuch’s definition: “... a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies.”<sup>4</sup> These national goals and interests are communicated to foreign publics through a variety of means,

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<sup>3</sup> “What is Public Diplomacy?”, The Edward R. Morrow Center of Public Diplomacy. Accessed January 1, 2012. <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/public-diplomacy.html>

<sup>4</sup> Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating With the World: U.S. Public Diplomacy Overseas* (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1990), 3.

including international broadcasting, the cultivation of foreign journalists and academics, cultural activities, educational exchanges and scholarships, programmed visits and conferences, and publications. For example, the effects of the BBC worldwide channel, Hollywood movies, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, or the DAAD Scholarship Program on national public diplomacy cannot be denied.

	Traditional public diplomacy	21 <sup>st</sup> century public diplomacy
<i>Conditions</i>	Conflict, tensions between states	Peace
<i>Goals</i>	To achieve political change in target countries by changing behaviour	Political and economic interest promotion to create receptive environment and positive reputation of the country abroad
<i>Strategies</i>	Persuasion Managing publics	Building and maintaining relationships Engaging with publics
<i>Direction of communication</i>	One-way communication (monologue)	Two-way communication (dialogue)
<i>Research</i>	Very little, if any	PD based on scientific research where feedback is also important
<i>Message context</i>	Ideologies Interests Information	Ideas Values Collaboration
<i>Target audiences (publics)</i>	'general' public of the target nation; Sender and receivers of messages	Segmented, well-defined publics + domestic publics; Participants
<i>Channels</i>	Traditional mass media	Old and new media; often personalised
<i>Budget</i>	Sponsored by government	Public and private partnership

**Source:** Gyorgy, Szondi. "Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences." *Netherlands Institute of International Relations* (October 2008):11.

However, as some of these tools can be used for propaganda, it would be pertinent to differentiate public diplomacy from propaganda. Public diplomacy is "a government's attempt to shape foreign public opinion

through *overt*, structured dissemination of *truthful* information in such a way so as to support one's own national objectives, interests, and goals."<sup>5</sup> That is to say, the source of information used in public diplomacy is certain and this information is accurate. Yet propaganda often lacks credibility and unlike public diplomacy, meaning that it could be counterproductive. Conveying information and selling a positive image is part of public diplomacy, but it also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies.<sup>6</sup>

As public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize their resources of "soft power" to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, it would be useful to touch on the concept of "soft power."

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF SOFT POWER**

The concept of 'soft power,' which was first coined by Joseph S. Nye through his 1990 published book called *Bound to Lead* and was also promoted in his 2004 book entitled *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, is defined as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion."<sup>7</sup> Contrasted with hard power which is the use of military and economic might to make others change their position, soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others through persuasion and attraction. Hard power can rest on inducements or threats (via the carrot and stick concept) and this is not always the necessary or desirable strategy for achieving an aim. Sometimes, it can be possible to achieve a goal without tangible threats or payoffs. A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values,

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<sup>5</sup> Jim Riggins. "A Strategic Assessment of Public Diplomacy." *USAF* (1998):4.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social*. Vol. 616 No 1 (March 2008):101.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr. "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics." (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 5.

emulating its example, and/or aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness. It means soft power co-opts people rather than coerces them through the ability to “win hearts and minds” of foreign publics.

Soft power comes from the nation’s attractive culture, political values, and its foreign policy. When a country’s culture includes universal values and its politics serve to other interests, the possibility to obtain what this country wants would increase because of its attractiveness and its power of persuasion. For example, nowadays the US benefits from a universalized culture due to its film industry, entertainment industry, brands and popular culture. In today’s world, countries which have adopted democracy, human rights, individual rights and freedoms as their political values will become more advantageous in terms of enticement. Besides, a country’s soft power increases when the country’s politics are seen as legitimate to others. For example, the illegal and bilateral use of force in international relations are more than often criticized and condemned by international community. The surveys done after the beginning of the 2003 Iraq war have shown that the popularity and attraction of the US has considerably decreased.<sup>8</sup>

Nye lists a wide range of various examples as the proxy measures of soft power:

foreign immigrants	Nobel prize winners
asylum applications	life expectancy
international students	overseas aids
tourists	number of Internet hosts
book sales and music sales	human rights
popular sports	spending on public diplomacy

These elements constitute resources of soft power and they are not power per se but instead highlight the potential for power. The owners of these resources have to convert them into power.

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<sup>8</sup> Nye, “Soft Power,” 22.

As for the relations between soft power and public diplomacy, the latter one is the mechanism to deploy soft power. It is possible for an international actor to have public diplomacy and not soft power (like North Korea) or soft power and minimal public diplomacy (like Ireland).<sup>9</sup> Even though soft power and public diplomacy are not the same thing, as public diplomacy contributes to the maintenance and promotion of a country's soft power, it would not be wrong to say that they feed off each other. In the long run, successful public diplomacy promotes national interests and achieves foreign policy goals through soft power, while the investment in public diplomacy boosts soft power thanks to resulting good impressions, positive images, and reputations.

### **3. THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

Even though “public diplomacy” is a new term, the art of public diplomacy is quite long-established. Public diplomacy efforts can first be seen in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, France promoted its culture throughout Europe. French not only became the language of diplomacy, but was even used in some foreign courts such as Prussia and Russia. During the French Revolution, over the heads of other national governments, France sought to appeal directly to foreign populations by promoting its revolutionary ideology. Italy, Germany, and other various countries founded diverse institutions in order to introduce their culture to countries overseas.<sup>11</sup> The outbreak of World War I saw a rapid acceleration of efforts to deploy soft power, as most of the governments established offices to propagandize their cause. The US was a relative latecomer to the idea of using information and culture for the purposes of diplomacy, as President Woodrow Wilson established a Committee on Public Information in 1917. The advent of radio in the 1920s led many governments into the arena of foreign language broadcasting in order to

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<sup>9</sup> Cull, “Public Diplomacy,” 15.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Waller. “The Public Diplomacy Reader.” (Washington: The Institute of World Politics Press, 2008), 241.

<sup>11</sup> Nye. “Soft Power,” 101.



promote favorable image to foreign publics. Radio played a significant role during World War II as well. The Voice of America, which broadcasts nearly in 27 languages, is perhaps the leading example for prominent role of radio.

The battle to spread the ideology throughout the Cold War significantly contributed to the gain of importance to public diplomacy. It can be said that US public diplomacy emerged due to necessity of fighting against communism. As close combat was not possible due to the delicate balance of terror during Cold War, the ability to gain hearts and minds came into prominence. Towards the end of the period, American culture spread through the help of movies, music and brands started to go beyond “the Iron Curtain” and shake the Eastern bloc. According to Nye, “when the Berlin Wall finally collapsed, it was destroyed not by an artillery barrage but by hammers and bulldozers wielded by those who had lost faith in communism.”<sup>12</sup>

In his interview with *L'Express* (a French weekly news magazine) in April 2003, French sociologist Dominique Wolton said: “Globalization took place in three stages: the first stage was the end of the Cold War and the new world order with the foundation of the UN, the second stage was the opening of borders and the establishment of free marketing and the third stage which is still in progress was the information and culture age.”<sup>13</sup> The rapid development of new information technologies is not only a result of wider globalization – it is also one of its key drivers. The information age makes public diplomacy easier and indispensable because of new technologies used by many people. These new technologies resulted in substantially decreasing the costs of processing and transmitting information. According to International Telecommunication Union’s latest statistics, today more

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Get Smart.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 88 No. 4 (July-August 2009): 161.

<sup>13</sup> Dominique Wolton. “Le monde n’est pas un village.” *L'Express* (April 2003): 69.

than 2 billion people worldwide use the Internet – the most powerful tool to obtain information.<sup>14</sup>

The Internet has fostered new forms of communication, including hundreds of thousands of blogs, chatrooms, special-interest websites and social media applications (such as YouTube and MySpace). New or previously relatively silent actors from civil society, the private sector, national bodies, activist and militant groups, criminal organizations and even terrorist cells are all taking advantage of new media technologies to disseminate their products, policies, opinions and propaganda.<sup>15</sup> As the new communication technologies and social media tools help to keep people informed, today's audiences are no longer simply passive news recipients. For example, it is not possible to neglect the effect of these tools on the mobilization of millions of people across the globe to combat the recent famine in Somalia. Furthermore, the recent social media-infused revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt thoroughly demonstrated how wired the world has become and furthermore, and how unpredictable the uses of social media will be in the future.<sup>16</sup> In the Middle East and North Africa, Twitter and Facebook are helping to reshape the political landscape in a way no one could have previously imagined.

In brief, thanks to a developed communication network, all kinds of information have become accessible for everyone. Thus whether be it states, international organizations and other legal or illegal groups through which manages to introduce themselves and their activities, this manner will get the better of the information age.

However, it should be highlighted that effective public diplomacy is a two-way street that involves listening as well as talking. Listening is an

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<sup>14</sup> ICT Statistics Database, International Telecommunication Union. Accessed January 3, 2012. <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ICTEYE/Indicators/Indicators.aspx#>.

<sup>15</sup> Stefanie Babst. "Reinventing NATO's Public Diplomacy." *NATO Defence College*, Research Paper No. 41 (November 2008):1.

<sup>16</sup> Fergus Hanson, "New Public Diplomacy." *The Lowy Institute for International Policy* (April 2011): 2.

actor's attempt to manage the international environment by collecting and collating data about publics and their opinions overseas, later using that data to redirect its policy or its wider public diplomacy approach accordingly.<sup>17</sup> Public diplomacy's aim is to convey an appropriate message in order to have a certain image in the eyes of others; yet if this message cannot be heard, all efforts will be futile. That is why research on foreign public opinion should be an important part of public diplomacy efforts.

According to Nye, governments should pay special attention to three dimensions of public diplomacy<sup>18</sup>: the first and most immediate dimension is *daily communication* which includes the explanation of general conditions of domestic and foreign policies. In modern democracy, the government officials are generally quite careful as to what they are going to say to the domestic press. Yet they frequently ignore the foreign press, which is a major mistake. The second dimension is: *strategic communication* which is a development of a series of simple themes, as it is the case in a political or a commercial campaign. The campaign plans symbolic events and communications over the course of the next year to reinforce central themes or to advance a particular government policy. The third dimension of public diplomacy is the *development of lasting relationships with key individuals* over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels.

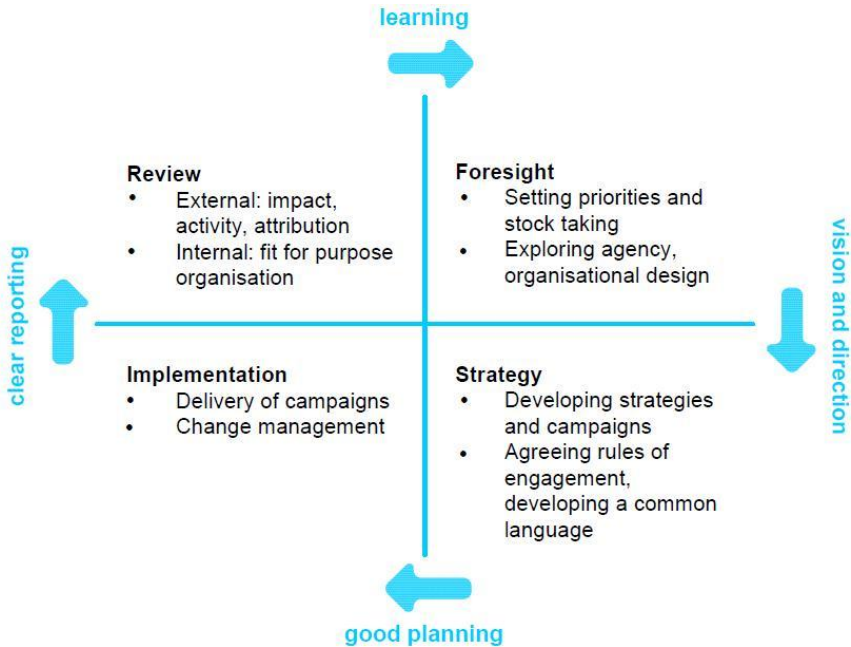
Another feature of public diplomacy is the participation of different actors in the process. One country's public diplomacy is formed through the activities of multiple actors and organizations: politicians, political parties, civil society, media, journalists, artists, writers, publishers, business men, universities, academicians... etc. Mark Leonard and Andrew Small state that "the major difference between public and traditional diplomacy is that public diplomacy involves a much broader

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<sup>17</sup> Cull, *Public Diplomacy*, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph S. Nye Jr. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." 101-102.

group of people on both sides, and a broader set of interests that go beyond those of the government of the day.”<sup>19</sup> As for public diplomacy activities, the following can be considered: international broadcasting, cultivation of foreign journalists and academics, cultural activities, educational exchanges and scholarships, programmed visits and conferences, and publications.



**Source:** David Steven. “Evaluation and the New Public Diplomacy.” Presentation to the Future of Public Diplomacy Conference. 842<sup>nd</sup> Wilton Park, UK (March 2, 2007): 6.

Even though public diplomacy has appeared as a state-oriented concept, in today’s globalized world, it cannot be neglected by international organizations, especially by NATO (which seems to have an image problem both among member and non-member states).

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<sup>19</sup> M. Leonard and A. Small, “Norwegian Public Diplomacy.” *The Foreign Center* (2003): 16.

#### **4. MEMBER AND NON-MEMBER STATES' PERCEPTIONS OF NATO**

The end of the Cold War meant a dramatic shift of paradigm: an organization left without an arch enemy and seemingly without a reason for existence. Hence, it is a necessity for NATO, which has had a radical change in order to comply with the new world order, to explain its *raison d'être* to international community. Simon Walker, Director of Corporate Communication at Reuters news agency says that "in [today's] environment, no organization can afford to be bad at communicating [...] public institutions exist only by public consent and you need to take with you the hearts and minds of the people who consent to your existence."<sup>20</sup> As in today's international system, which was restructured with communication and information revolutions, the ability to influence foreign publics and agendas requires an effective public diplomacy, NATO has started to follow a strategy in this regard through its Public Diplomacy Division after 2004. For understanding the necessity of a comprehensive and multi-faced public diplomacy, it would be enough to touch on member and non-member states' perception of NATO.

As it is known, the Alliance consists of democratic countries, and in democratic countries, the consent of national public opinion on foreign and security policies to be followed is indispensable, especially if these policies have some risk of casualties and financial burden.<sup>21</sup> According to NATO's New Strategic Concept, the Allies should always be ready for crisis management operations and low density conflicts, that is to say the risk of casualties and financial burden will come into question in member states in future. Thus, it is essential for the Allies to convince their publics of the legitimacy and necessity of NATO's operations.

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<sup>20</sup> "Workshop Examines Strategies for Effective Public Diplomacy." *NATO*, 2003. Accessed January 2, 2012.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_20058.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_20058.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>21</sup> "NATO 2010 Stratejik Konsept Değerlendirmesi." *BUSAM*, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi (January 2010): 37.

Recent surveys have indicated that the publics of various NATO member state have some suspicions about the need for NATO. According to the Transatlantic Trends 2011 survey results, among the EU NATO members, those who said that NATO was essential for their country's security ranged from a high of 73% in the Netherlands to a low of 37% in (EU candidate) Turkey.<sup>22</sup> This rate is below 60% in Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain. As in previous years, Turkey was the NATO member with the lowest support for NATO, with only 37% saying that NATO is essential.<sup>23</sup>

Much like in member states' publics, NATO's perception in the outside world is far from being enduring. A January 2011 survey done by the Levada Center, one of Russia's leading research centers, showed NATO being described as an 'adversary' by 23% of Russians. The Levada Center also emphasized that, on any given week, it is possible to see Russian newspapers running stories which in their titles speak about the "demise of NATO," "criminal bombings of civilians by Allied planes," "NATO rejecting Russian proposals" etc.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, NATO's image as an aggressor and opponent during the Cold War is a large obstacle in terms of NATO-Russia rapprochement. However, the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council gave a new perspective to the relations between the two entities, signaling that Russians perception of NATO can change over time thanks to effective public diplomacy.

However, without doubt, the geography where NATO's image has deteriorated the most is within the Arab world. For the Arab public, NATO has no separate identity from those of the Western powers that created the Alliance and its constituent members. In this way, the

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<sup>22</sup> "Transatlantic Trends 2011." The German Marshall Fund, 2011. Accessed January 5, 2012. [http://www.gmfus.org/publications\\_/TT/TT2011\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/publications_/TT/TT2011_final_web.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> "Transatlantic Trends 2011." The German Marshall Fund, 2011. Accessed January 5, 2012. [http://www.gmfus.org/publications\\_/TT/TT2011\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/publications_/TT/TT2011_final_web.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> "How NATO is Perceived in Russia." August 19, 2011. Accessed January 5, 2012. [http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/How\\_NATO\\_is\\_Perceived\\_in\\_Russia\\_\(or\\_Lessons\\_in\\_Optimism\)](http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/How_NATO_is_Perceived_in_Russia_(or_Lessons_in_Optimism)).

Alliance's image has been formed by attitudes towards events in the Arab world involving prominent NATO members. These include France's colonial rule, especially in regards to the Algerian War; Italy's involvement in Arab north Africa; the United Kingdom's occupation of and control of influence in the Gulf region; and the seemingly unlimited and unwavering support provided to Israel by the United States.<sup>25</sup>

As for the relationship with the rising power, relations between NATO and China are at low levels. During NATO's bombing of Belgrade in 1999, its bombs hit China's embassy in this city, resulting in the deaths of 3 Chinese reporters and this "accident" caused a serious crisis in relations. Even though NATO declared that it was a mistake, the Chinese people believed that the bombing was a punishment for China's stance against NATO's intervention in Balkans.<sup>26</sup> China-NATO relations broke off after the bombing of the Chinese embassy, have recently begun to improve due to official contacts and academic exchanges. Yet, the recent news about talks held by Iran, Russia, and China on a proposal to establish a joint missile defense shield as a counterweight to NATO defense shield, can give an opinion on the level of the relationship between NATO and China.<sup>27</sup> Like the NATO-Russia Council, NATO might offer China a chance to create a joint NATO-China Council as a forum of dialogue and enhanced understanding with the intent to improve relations.

Regarding Africa, the first NATO mission on the continent was the support given to the African Union mission in Sudan. NATO has also started to fight against maritime piracy around the Horn of Africa.

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<sup>25</sup> Mustafa Alani. "Arab perspectives on NATO." *NATO Review* (Spring 2005). Accessed January 6, 2012. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue4/english/contents.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Rosalie Chen, "China Perceives America: perspectives of international relations experts," *Journal of Contemporary China*. Vol. 12 No. 35 (2003): 295.

<sup>27</sup> "İran, Rusya ve Çin NATO'ya karşı 'ortak füze kalkanı' kuruyor," *Radikal*, September 26, 2011. Accessed January 7, 2012.

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&VersionID=7965&Date=22.06.2008&ArticleID=1064499>.

Although its support to these two missions provided a positive perception of NATO, latest military intervention in Libya has drawn various reactions of people throughout the continent, as well as outside Africa. This reaction again showed that people across Africa generally do not want to see Western powers interfering to their continent's affairs, due to their combined historical experiences. As there are former colonial powers among NATO members, the Alliance must choose its maneuvers towards African countries rather meticulously. The best choice would be to support countries like Uganda and Liberia, which fight against terrorist groups to ensure domestic security, and to contribute to the African Union missions.

## **5. NATO'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS**

Being aware of its image problem, NATO has started to implement a visible public diplomacy with the creation of the Committee on Public Diplomacy. Succeeding the Committee on Information and Cultural Relations, which was one of the Organization's first committees, the Committee on Public Diplomacy was created in 2004. It acts as an advisory body to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on communication, media and public engagement issues.<sup>28</sup> It makes recommendations to the NAC on how to encourage public understanding of, and support for, the aims of NATO. In this respect, the Committee is responsible for the planning, implementation and assessment of NATO's public diplomacy strategy.

Regarding public diplomacy strategies, first of all, it must be emphasized that there are different public diplomacy strategies and what may have worked brilliantly in one case may not be the best approach in another. Stephanie Babst, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, expresses that:

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<sup>28</sup> Committee for Public Diplomacy, *NATO*. Accessed January 7, 2012. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_69272.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_69272.htm?selectedLocale=en).



“One strategy may focus on initiating, feeding and broadening a discussion (engagement strategy); another may serve the sole purpose of steering towards a consensus in order to bring about change (shaping strategy). A public diplomacy strategy may also be used to confront an existing consensus and change the current course of action (disruptive strategy); or, as our military tries to do in confronting the Taliban in Afghanistan, it could aim to destroy an adversary’s propaganda.”<sup>29</sup>

As for NATO’s public diplomacy strategy, there are six key principles that shape NATO’s public diplomacy approach:<sup>30</sup>

1. Public diplomacy is about listening.
2. Public diplomacy must be connected to policy.
3. Public diplomacy must be credible to be effective.
4. Public diplomacy is not always about you.
5. Public diplomacy needs to respond to the challenges of the 2.0 web world.
6. Public diplomacy requires proper planning, training and resources.

Without doubt, conveying a message and explaining oneself to others are key elements for implementing public diplomacy. Nevertheless, listening is indispensable for both collecting and analyzing the opinions of the target groups and also understanding their motives and beliefs. Without listening, it would not be possible to determine necessary steps for an effective public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy must be consistent with the policy followed. In other words, if what one does is different from what one says, then one

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<sup>29</sup> Stefanie Babst, “Public Diplomacy- The Art of Engaging and Influencing,” *Speech at the NATO PjP Symposium*, January 22, 2009. Accessed January 7, 2012. [http://www.atlantic-community.org/app/webroot/files/articlepdf/Babst\\_Public\\_Diplomacy.pdf](http://www.atlantic-community.org/app/webroot/files/articlepdf/Babst_Public_Diplomacy.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Babst, “Public Diplomacy”, 4.

cannot expect others to believe in one's words. Hence, public diplomacy must be connected to policy.

Public diplomacy must be built on overt and correct information, because trying to lie or manipulate others will cause a loss of credibility, making it difficult to gain the hearts and minds of a public that does not trust a source. Besides, despite the overflow of information in today's round-the-clock media environment, deception and lies are not easily forgiven.

It is quite normal that a government or an international organization try to implement its own public diplomacy through its own tools. Yet, policy issues can be better communicated by third parties, such as think tanks and academics, than through official statements.

Nowadays, as Web 2.0 tools allow direct, customized, interactive, multifunctional and often audiovisual communications across the globe, they have become unavoidable for states as well as international organizations. In Western countries, online news has become the top source of information, and that new social media applications are rapidly on the rise around the world. Taking into account this reality, NATO seems to try to use its web site more efficiently and other audiovisual tools such as online lectures, videos and discussions in order to make NATO's interface to the outside world (including member state publics) more transparent and interactive.

Public diplomacy must be adopted as a serious political instrument, not a tool dedicated to a case or a special period. That is why public diplomacy must become an integral part of national policy planning. Governments should also invest in creating and training a cadre of public diplomats.

Furthermore, it seems that in the past years, NATO has enforced its efforts to reach out to the young generation, through facilitating networks among students and young political leaders, offering summer schools and

fellowships and organizing seminars and workshops across NATO and partner nations. As there is a need for engaging the young generation in Allied countries that have only vague ideas of what exactly the Transatlantic Alliance entails, it is clearly an important step in terms of public diplomacy. National and international surveys clearly demonstrate that the post-Cold War generation has only a faint idea of the Alliance's new missions and policies, be it fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia or NATO's partnership projects and programs.<sup>31</sup>

It would not be wrong to say that public diplomacy followed during the preparation of the NATO's New Strategic Concept was quite successful. With the terms of Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, it was "the most open and inclusive process ever in the history of the Alliance."<sup>32</sup> NATO's Public Diplomacy Division organized more than 140 outreach activities on the new Strategic Concept in member countries, including conferences, seminars, workshops, background briefings for journalists, essay competitions for students together with multiple digital discussions - all with an aim of providing young people the opportunity to post their ideas and comments about the Alliance's future roles on web platforms.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, all of these efforts are important progressions, yet as the impact of public diplomacy can often be seen only over the long term, it is early to talk about a considerable success in rebranding NATO's image.

## **6. RESHAPING NATO'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FOR THE FUTURE**

Even though NATO has tried to implement an active public diplomacy since 2004, these efforts do not seem quite fulfilled when taking into

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<sup>31</sup> Stefanie Babst, "Does NATO Need Rebranding," *Business Ukraine*, December 12, 2009. Accessed January 7, 2012. [http://www.bunews.com.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=197:does-nato-need-rebranding&catid=22:opinion-&Itemid=31](http://www.bunews.com.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197:does-nato-need-rebranding&catid=22:opinion-&Itemid=31).

<sup>32</sup> Stefanie Babst, "NATO's New Strategic Concept: Inspired by the Masses?" *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9:1 (2010): 62-63.

<sup>33</sup> Babst, "NATO's New Strategic Concept," 63.

account the perception of NATO worldwide. First of all, in an attempt to renew its image, NATO needs to present itself as a security actor in its own right and as an organization where policy and strategy is developed and decided by the collective efforts and participation of all Allies. It is important not only for overcoming some clichés such as “NATO is a tool for US-led use of force,” but also for strengthening convergence between members. The Alliance must show that it defends the interests of Europeans as well as Americans. For instance, Turkish people have generally shown some suspicion about the fulfillment of NATO’s obligations, especially concerning the invocation of Article 5<sup>34</sup> of NATO’s founding treaty for the sake of Turkey.

This is important not only for member states’ public opinion but also for that of non-member states. Such a presentation will help the Alliance to differentiate itself in Arab minds from those Allies that have historically played important roles in the Middle East and, in particular, from the US. The best way for NATO to overcome prejudice is to demonstrate its sincere desire to engage the Middle East and Arab world. This is possible if the Alliance presents its bridge-building strategy in terms of a need for common policies and a genuine partnership between Western and Arab worlds to address the changes in the global security environment since the end of the Cold War (particularly, the security threats confronting the international community since 9/11). In this way, NATO must offer, and be seen offering, a two-way dialogue and cooperation, rather than simply pursuing its own interests and security agenda.

Furthermore, Babst points out that: “Many NATO Allies have only recently realized that if they want to carry the Alliance’s messages convincingly to global audiences, they cannot afford to limit their efforts to their national elites, ignoring the rest of the population. [...] In today’s media world, organizations can no longer afford to preach and assume

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<sup>34</sup> Article 5 states that an attack on a NATO country is generally considered as an attack on the entire alliance.

that the public is listening.”<sup>35</sup> Clearly, it is not possible to follow an effective public diplomacy by only targeting national elites; otherwise publics can obtain information about NATO through other sources. In this case, it will be more difficult to correct misinformation than to inform people about NATO.

Besides, if NATO wants to give the image of an organization which serves for global peace and security, in addition to providing stability and protecting universal values, it must give its soft power prominence over military power. For example, through the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, the Alliance has provided military advice, training and a consolidated approach to new security challenges. It would be worthwhile for NATO's image to continue to offer a host of expertise to make armed forces more effective and able to function in a democratic environment. Human rights training, international law, defense planning and border security are all areas of strength for NATO.

Another main factor that worsens the Alliance's image is civilian casualties during NATO operations. The United Nations (UN) reported that about 1,500 people were killed in Afghanistan during the first six months of 2011.<sup>36</sup> NATO had to also acknowledge civilian casualties in its Tripoli strikes. As these casualties leave NATO in a difficult situation before both the international community and the Afghan people, the Allies must act carefully and meticulously to avoid civilian casualties. For that purpose, a tactical order revision which envisages reducing air strikes on areas that likely to be inhabited by civilians, stopping night time raids and having multiple sources of information before attacking targets can be considered.

The legitimacy of NATO operations is another important subject. During the interventions in Balkans and in Libya, the main argument

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<sup>35</sup> Stefanie Babst, “Reinventing NATO's Public Diplomacy,” *NATO Defence College*. Research Paper No. 41 (November 2008):5.

<sup>36</sup> “Afganistan'da sivil kayıplar artıyor,” *EURONEWS*, July 14, 2011. Accessed January 9, 2012. [tr.euronews.net/2011/07/14/afganistan-da-sivil-kayiplar-artiyor](http://tr.euronews.net/2011/07/14/afganistan-da-sivil-kayiplar-artiyor) .

submitted by NATO was the responsibility to protect civilians. After the second World War, the concept of universal human rights became the main topic of international community, and protection of these rights came to forefront thanks to the expanding dimension of human rights and international regulations on this subject. Within this context, the concept of humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect civilians came into prominence.

Following the genocide in Rwanda and the international community's failure to intervene in the conflict, the intervention of the international community for the sake of protecting populations was added to UN agenda. In September of 2000, the Canadian government established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which suggested using the term "responsibility to protect" as a way to avoid the "right to intervene" or "obligation to intervene" doctrine.<sup>37</sup> In December of 2001, the ICISS released its report "The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)." The report presented the idea that sovereignty is a responsibility and that the international community had the responsibility to prevent mass atrocities. Economic, political, and social measures were to be used along with diplomatic engagement. Military intervention was presented as a last resort. The R2P includes efforts to rebuild by bringing security and justice to the victim populations and by finding the root cause of mass atrocities.<sup>38</sup>

During the UN General Assembly Summit in 2005, member states included R2P in the Outcome Document agreeing to paragraphs 138 and 139 which gave final language to the scope of this concept. According to paragraph 139:

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<sup>37</sup> Haines, Steven and George Kassimeris, eds., "Chapter 18, Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and the Use of Force", *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Warfare*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010 ), 307-329.

<sup>38</sup> "Responsibility to Protect," *Report from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*, 2001. Accessed January 9, 2012. <http://www.iciss.ca/pdf/Commission-Report.pdf>.

“The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means [...] to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action [...] in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII.”

In April 2006, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reaffirmed the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 in Resolution (S/RES/1674). The next major advancement was the release of the 2009 report called “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect” by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. This report emphasized that “Member states were united on restricting Responsibility to Protect’s scope to the four crimes of: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Several member states were explicit that mass atrocities committed within a state’s borders can be considered as threats to international peace and security. A handful of member states rejected the use of coercive action in any circumstance, whilst others suggested that the UN first work on Pillars 1 and 2 of the R2P strategy. Yet, far more states were of the view that, should other measures have failed, coercive action and even the use of force is warranted by the UN Charter to save lives.”<sup>39</sup>

In summary, the R2P can constitute an argument for a military intervention. Yet, the lack of a comprehensive definition of the genocide and the ethnic cleansing concepts constitutes an obstacle to have consensus on the application of R2P. Hence, where should one draw the line in determining when military intervention is, *prima facie*, defensible? What other conditions or restraints, if any, should apply in determining whether and how that intervention should proceed? And, the most difficult of all, who should have the ultimate authority to determine

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<sup>39</sup> “Implementing the Responsibility to Protect The 2009 General Assembly Debate: An Assessment,” *Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect*. Report. August 2009.

whether an intrusion into a sovereign state, involving the use of force on a potentially massive scale, should actually go ahead? What if the UN Security Council does not take action to implement R2P? All of these questions demonstrate that the concept of the R2P does not yet have exact borders. Therefore, it is not always possible to convince the international community about the legitimacy of an intervention and this situation stands as stumbling block before NATO operations as well. For example, there are criticisms about Libya operations.

However, it would be wrong to say that the international community is against the use of force under all circumstances. If its legitimacy and necessity are convincing, the use of force can be acceptable. For example, the 1995 NATO operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was largely supported by the international community.<sup>40</sup> Besides, in Turkey (where NATO's popularity is the lowest in comparison with other members), public opinion supports the use of force to provide medical and food assistance to civilian victims of wars (90%), prevent an imminent terrorist attack (89%), prevent the spread of nuclear weapons (86%), to stop the fighting in a civil war (85%) and to provide peacekeeping troops (84%).<sup>41</sup> This data indicates that Turkish public opinion is more supportive of use of military force for rather soft security reasons.

Within this context, one focus of the positive NATO image can be NATO's abilities. After recalling NATO's involvement in a series of international events which surpassed its transatlantic boundaries, former Secretary General David Scheffer expresses:

“Why am I recalling these steps? Three reasons. First they show that NATO's out-of-area evolution happened out of necessity.

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<sup>40</sup> “The Impact of Casualty Aversion on Humanitarian Intervention.” Accessed January 9, 2012. [http://www.thepicaproject.org/?page\\_id=692](http://www.thepicaproject.org/?page_id=692).

<sup>41</sup> Ebru Canan-Sokullu and Burcu Ertunc, “Turks are Getting Apart from NATO,” *BETAM*, Bahçesehir University, Research Brief 11/110. May 6<sup>th</sup> 2011. Accessed January 9, 2012. <http://betam.bahcesehir.edu.tr/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/ResearchBrief110.pdf>.



Second, in taking on these new missions, NATO demonstrated an ability to adapt to entirely new challenges. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Alliance also demonstrated the stamina to engage for the long term, and – as in the case of Kosovo – to take the heat for controversial decisions.”<sup>42</sup>

Clearly, as long as NATO shows that its business is conflict prevention and peace-building, and to not wage war, even the out-of-area missions will have a positive effect on NATO's image. That is why it is indispensable for NATO to implement a comprehensive approach to deliver integrated effort in peace-building and crisis-response. Applying a comprehensive approach means to not limit itself to military intervention, but also considers the period before and after a confrontation by adapting its actions to work in political, social and economic realms. Within this framework, NATO should particularly focus on how it will more effectively manage the transition from a military mission to a civilian-dominated mission, or vice versa. Here, besides the political will of all NATO member states, the Alliance is in need of better and more adequate capabilities to ensure interoperability between defense and security systems. For example, NATO's military, police and civilian staff must be equipped with interoperable command, control and communications systems.

Another point to consider within this scope is the length of NATO operations. When an operation proceeds for too long, the authority gap in relevant country will widen and the reconstruction activities will not achieve its intended results. Therefore, the erosion of trust towards interfering powers or international organizations would come into question. In such a case, the legitimacy, accuracy and effectiveness of the operation can become a matter of debate. For instance, the NATO

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<sup>42</sup> Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, “Global NATO? Remarks by Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Clingendael Institute.” October 29, 2004. Accessed January 10, 2012. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_21123.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_21123.htm).

operation in Afghanistan is about to become one of the longest wars in the region's recent history.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the effectiveness of NATO's public diplomacy is dependent on having a consensus for its execution as a political instrument. Public diplomacy needs to become an integral part of national foreign and defense policy planning, and consequently, of national decision-making at the highest level. Understanding public diplomacy as a serious political instrument also means providing the necessary financial resources. As designing and executing a public diplomacy campaign is not without expense, governments need to mobilize the necessary funds to get public diplomacy underway. It is also indispensable for NATO to analyze the underlying motives of public trends and attitudes towards the Alliance and to assess the impact of its communication activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In today's globalized world, information, culture and communication have become key words of the diplomacy. The information technology revolution, that has enabled everybody to easily access all kind of information, has complicated the task of influencing an audience's way of thinking. Furthermore, today's audiences are no longer passive news recipients, as they can now immediately show their dissatisfaction.

As today's public opinions matter more than ever, the ability to gain the hearts and minds of foreign publics through public diplomacy have become crucial. Today, most of the countries (and even international organizations) try to implement active public diplomacy, highlighting why neglecting this domain is not an option for the Alliance. Thus, the creation of the Public Diplomacy Division demonstrated that NATO not only wants to improve its communication with others, but also wants to convey a better and proactive image to the international community.

Within the frame of its public diplomacy strategy, the first thing to do is to struggle to overcome Cold War stereotypes and widespread suspicions that the United States wants to push the organization into assuming the role of a global policeman. Hence, instead of acting unilaterally, it would be useful for NATO to work together with its partners in order to achieve trust. The creation of specific mechanisms for coordination, cooperation and mechanisms to foster transparency and build confidence would strengthen the relationships with non-NATO members. NATO should also feature its performances in the field of current operations and missions, crisis management or civil emergency planning. Clearly, NATO's ability and willingness to engage in civil-military action has a significant impact on what kind of image NATO projects to the outside world.

The impact of public diplomacy can often only be seen over the long term and its evaluation measures concepts are intangible. Therefore, the Allies must continue to invest in public diplomacy being aware of the long process that requires time, labor, and cost.

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