

DISCUSSION PAPERS IN DIPLOMACY

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Medium-Sized States:***

Norway and Canada

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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED STATES:
NORWAY AND CANADA¹

Jozef Bátora

The media explosion and the information revolution that have swept the globe in the 1990s have created a complex information-intensive global environment in which international crises play out directly into domestic political debates of nations and domestic issues are debated by foreign audiences. Foreign policy, previously an exclusive realm managed by diplomats behind closed doors is increasingly democratized – citizen activists, NGOs, domestic ministries, private enterprises, academics and other actors participate directly in foreign policy and frame public debates about foreign policy issues in value-based terms (Nye 1990, 2002, 2004; Matlary 2002; Leonard et al 2002). Peter Van Ham (2002:252) suggests there is a shift in political paradigms from the modern world of geopolitics and power towards a postmodern world of images and influence. Power in such an environment no longer stems solely from persuasion or coercion, but increasingly from information sharing and attraction, which are essential for the development of soft power. Promotion of the latter is the essential purpose of *public diplomacy*.

For small and medium-sized states public diplomacy represents an opportunity to gain influence and shape international agenda in ways that go beyond their limited hard power resources (related to size, military and economic strength). Despite such a potential of public diplomacy for small and medium-sized states, the literature on public diplomacy has been dominated by accounts on major powers (Tuch 1990; Nye 1990, 2002, 2004; Leonard et al. 2002; Späth 2004) and the character of public diplomacy performed by small and medium-sized states has hardly been explored so far. The purpose of this paper is to suggest some initial ideas which might be useful in further exploration of the specifics of small and medium-sized states' public diplomacy and their strategies

1) An earlier version of this article was presented to the International Conference on Multistakeholder Diplomacy, Malta, February 11-13, 2005. I am grateful for comments by Elin H. Allern, Daryl Copeland, John E. Fossum, Ljupco Gjorgjinski, Brian Hocking, Alan K. Henrikson, Dominic Kelly, Bertrand de La Chapelle, Chris Lamb, Janne Haaland Matlary, Raymond Saner, Biljana Scott and Øyvind Østerud.

for connecting the resources of their domestic constituencies with governmental efforts to promote soft power. Using empirical evidence from Norway and Canada – two countries with widely similar foreign policy agendas but different domestic constituencies – the paper will explore what coordination mechanisms are used by such states in steering the public diplomacy related efforts of multiple domestic actors or stakeholders.

The first part of the paper discusses public diplomacy and its two-dimensional character bridging the traditional divide between home and abroad. The second part addresses the specific features and challenges that small and medium-sized states face in the conduct of their public diplomacy. The third part describes some of the experiences of the Canadian and the Norwegian foreign ministries in engaging domestic actors in public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy as a multistakeholder activity between home and abroad

Diplomacy is a set of norms and rules regulating relations between states. As such it is embedded in organizational structures, procedures, routines and habits of foreign ministries (Bátora 2005). Diplomacy is traditionally carried out by diplomats according to institutionalized professional standards and habits. Diplomatic negotiations and other diplomatic interactions are therefore conducted with strong emphasis on the professional norms of the diplomatic community with all its peculiarities including protocol and secrecy. For centuries diplomacy has also had a public face. Public ceremonies organized whenever an ambassador arrived at a capital in late Middle Ages communicated a great deal to the assembled crowds about the sovereign that the ambassador represented (Jones 1984; Anderson 1993; Hamilton and Langhorne 1995). Moreover, following the increase in literacy and the rise of national newspapers and later more sophisticated kinds of mass media, communication with the public has been the daily bread of diplomats of all nations (Berridge 1995). The most common understanding of public diplomacy as governmental communication with foreign publics² therefore hardly justifies the level of interest among practitioners and

2) The Planning Group for Integration of USIA into the Dept. of State (June 20, 1997) defined public diplomacy in the following manner: ‘Public Diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences.’ (see <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/1.htm>)

academics that the term has been awarded in recent years. If, however, we embrace the fairly general definition of public diplomacy as 'basically compris[ing] all a nation does to explain itself to the world' suggested by Cynthia Schneider (2004:1), we might get a starting point for understanding the innovative and challenging character of the newly evolving diplomatic environment in which soft power and behavior associated with it play a central role.

As Nye (2004:x) holds, soft power:

arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. [...] When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend so much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion, and many values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive.

The soft power of a state is created through activities of multiple actors and organizations with impacts on foreign publics – artists, art galleries and music channels; civic activists and NGOs; politicians, political parties and political philosophers; writers and literary associations; journalists and media groups; business people, enterprises and products; academics and universities; religious leaders and religious groups and so on. Leonard and Small (2003:16) underscore this point when they argue that '[t]he major difference between public and traditional diplomacy is that public diplomacy involves a much broader group of people on both sides, and a broader set of interests that go beyond those of the government of the day.' What most proponents of ideas related to public diplomacy and soft power do not clarify, though, is the question of how one differentiates between 'just any' international activities by societal actors with impacts on foreign audiences, and those activities of societal actors which would qualify as public diplomacy. For instance, while British football hooligans causing trouble at football stadiums overseas are also an activity through which Britain 'explains itself to the world', it would hardly be considered public diplomacy.³ On

3) This does not mean, however, that only positive images of a country and its society would create positive perceptions by foreigners. As Nye (2004:17) notes, the 'Czech film director Milos Forman recounts that when the Communist government let in the American film *Twelve Angry Men* because of its harsh portrait of American institutions, Czech intellectuals responded by thinking, 'If that country can make this kind of thing, films about itself, oh, that country must have a pride and must have an inner strength, and must

the other hand, a song performed by a selected group of internationally renowned British pop–music artists with the aim to raise awareness of poverty in Africa and raise funds to fight it, would more likely be considered public diplomacy. One could suggest that *public diplomacy comprises all activities by state and non–state actors that contribute to the maintenance and promotion of a country’s soft power.*

Soft power or the power of attraction and seduction is however not solely developed around state structures. Religions, regions, cities and political movements all represent social structures which attract imagination and allegiance among people around the globe. Christianity and Islam, Tuscany and Scotland, New York and Paris, communism and environmentalism have all occupied people’s minds and shaped their behavior due to the deeply seductive sets of values associated with them. In a global information–intensive environment, states’ efforts to enhance their soft power are challenged by the soft power of non–state entities, be they ideational (for example, religions or political movements) or territorial (regions, cities), or both. In the struggle to ‘occupy the mind space’ (Smith and Sutherland 2002:158) of people around the world, states hence do not compete only with other states but also with ideational and territorial non–state structures. This competition for peoples’ attention and imagination is taking place in an emerging global public domain which, as Ruggie (2004:519) suggests, is

an institutionalized arena of discourse, contestation, and action organized around the production of global public goods. It is constituted by interactions among non–state actors as well as states. It permits the direct expression and pursuit of a variety of human interests, not merely those mediated (filtered, interpreted, promoted) by states. It ‘exists’ in transnational non–territorial spatial formations, and is anchored in norms and expectations as well as institutional networks and circuits within, across, and beyond states. Furthermore, it differs from anything in the past that might resemble it in its dynamic density, and by operating in real time.

be strong enough and must be free.’ Negative images can create positive perceptions in the minds of a foreign audience. This indicates that the actual effect of any public diplomacy – that is the images that a country is associated with abroad – is not the property of the country itself, but rather of the foreign audience and its perception. The same country can hence be perceived differently by various foreign audiences and hence have varying images or identities. On the reflective nature of identity see for instance Ringmar (1996), Neumann (1996), van Ham (2002).

The challenge for state actors in such an environment is to make themselves attractive and relevant as sources of soft power. This involves efforts by the state at forging meaning–connections with soft power assets associated with non–state structures (ideational or territorial) at home and abroad. Value– and image assets that constitute the basis of the attractiveness of a state are embedded within societal actors of the respective state. What foreign ministries (who represent the official face of a state abroad) try to do, is to harness the potential of the positive images and values associated with domestic non–state actors. Clearly, directive steering is not always possible in a democratic society and non–state actors often choose not to let themselves be associated with any state. In such a situation, governments (and notably foreign ministries) try to find issue–areas of common concern, shared values and common images that would enable cooperation and mutual support between governmental activities and the activities of societal actors, which would provide mutual benefits in terms of soft power. Thus, what eventually evolves between foreign ministries and non–state actors are essentially *network relationships*.⁴

Any conduct of public diplomacy – the promotion of soft power of a state – therefore necessarily involves interaction of governments with multiple stakeholders at home. Such an interaction benefits not only the state (or the foreign ministry) but also the non–state actors, because values, images and other assets associated with a state might have an enabling effect on the activities of these actors (Leonard et al. 2002:9). Hence, although public diplomacy in the most commonly used meaning of the term seeks to engage actors abroad (that is, *outside* the state), an essential pre–condition for a successful public diplomacy is the attractiveness of the ideas and values that a state represents to the actors *inside* the state. The state, in other words, needs to be attractive not only to foreigners, but also (and perhaps more importantly) to the domestic constituency, who will then gladly associate their actions abroad with their state and hence promote its soft power.

Association of non–state actors with the state is the primary means through which the state can harness the image– and value resources of non–state actors. In this way, the state’s ability to capture the mind space of foreign audiences is enhanced. In turn, such an increase in soft power abroad increases the likelihood

4) The basic assumption of any network relationship is that one party is dependent on resources controlled by another, relationships are based on trust and mutual benefits, which might at times be asymmetric and therefore involving a sense of mutual obligation (Powell 1990).

that non-state actors at home would find it appropriate and indeed beneficial to associate themselves with their state.

Identification of images and values with potential to foster synergies between the activities of governments and societal actors is central to the development of any public diplomacy strategy. Constitution, maintenance and application of such *shared value- and image platforms* around which synergies between official foreign policy and international actions of societal actors can be developed are subject to different strategies in small and medium-sized states on the one hand and in major powers on the other.

The public diplomacy of small and medium-sized states

A major challenge for small and medium-sized states is receiving recognition by the rest of the world for who they claim to be. Foreign perceptions of small and medium-sized states are usually characterized by lack of information and at best by long-established stereotypes. This applies not only to the perceptions of small states by the societies of major powers or to perceptions of small states by societies on the other side of the globe, but also to perceptions by societies immediately neighboring each other. Hence, when in the early 1990s an Austrian daily newspaper conducted a poll asking residents of Vienna whether their city was located to the west or to the east of Prague, 70 per cent answered that Vienna was to the west.⁵

In their conduct of public diplomacy, small and medium-sized states face a different set of challenges than major powers. One of the U.S. practitioners of public diplomacy reflected upon the issue in the following manner:

A major power is going to be the subject of discussion and controversy no matter what it does. [...] Generally, the smaller powers do not enter the global public discussion unless a crisis or scandal envelops them. It is unfortunate, but these seem to be the events that attract the global media and interest the mass audiences to which they cater. Perhaps it is for this very reason that smaller powers need public diplomacy programs, just as major powers do. The task for the smaller powers is to be heard on the stories that matter to them, to explain their positions and aspirations during

5) This anecdote was mentioned by Erhard Busek in his lecture 'Europe – What Path Will It Take?', Stanford Institute for International Studies, April 24, 2004.

the non-crisis moments, and to do so in a way that captures attention (Smith 1998).

Leonard and Small (2003:1) argue in a similar fashion, when they propose that '[f]or large countries like the United States, the United Kingdom or China, public diplomacy is mainly focused on changing images and 're-branding' – but Norway's central public diplomacy problem is that of invisibility.' One might hence propose, with a degree of reservation, that the first difference between the public diplomacy of major powers and small states is related to its *mission*. Thus, while the efforts of the former are first and foremost focused on *explaining, advocacy*, and possibly *re-branding*, those of the latter are focused on *capturing attention*. However, elements of explaining and advocacy are present in the public diplomacy of small and medium-sized states, especially in times of crises – examples of which include Canadian news management during the outbreak of SARS and Norwegian efforts to explain its whaling activities. Conversely, major powers also have a need to capture attention in particular situations. Some recent examples related to the situation following the 2004 tsunami in Asia include the US efforts to showcase the humanitarian relief operations conducted by the Marines in the afflicted countries and thereby moderate the somewhat 'hawkish' image that the US troops have acquired in the media reports covering the recent Iraq conflict. Another example would be Britain's (and notably Tony Blair's) sturdy effort to redirect the focus of the heightened level of public compassion with the suffering populations in Asia towards the permanently suffering populations in Africa, which has been Britain's long-term foreign aid priority.

A further difference between the public diplomacy of major powers and that of small and medium-sized states is related to the *volume or breadth of messages and images* used in public diplomacy. While major powers usually have a broader cultural impact and a larger reservoir of messages and images that they represent and that represent them, the smaller countries, those who have been successful in getting an international profile, usually focus their public diplomacy efforts at a few niche-areas. Norway is a case in point with its strongly promoted profile as an international peace-broker (Egeland 1988; Tvedt 1997; Dobinson and Dale 2000; Matlary 2002; Leonard et al 2002:54, 169–174; Nye 2004:10, 112). While such orientation on a few niche messages and values enables small states to capture attention, it also has to do with the more general foreign policy tendency of small and medium-sized states to concentrate their scarce resources on a few niche areas which provide them with comparative advantages in international affairs (see Evans and Grant 1991; Cooper 1997).

Finally, a third difference is related to what might be termed *outset legitimacy*. While major powers usually dispose over considerable hard power resources, and their national interests are hence among other features also defined in military terms, a number of small and medium-sized countries have managed to define their national interest to include what Nye (2004:9) termed *attractive causes* such as peacemaking or developmental aid. Hence, for instance the concept of *human security* as a foreign policy priority enabled the Canadian government to gain the support of numerous international NGOs and other small and medium-sized governments, which proved decisive in reaching the International Treaty to Ban Landmines in the Ottawa Process in 1998 (see Price 1998; Cameron et al 1998; Axworthy 2003). Comparing the Canadian position with that of the United States, the Canadian scholar Michael Ignatieff suggested that ‘we have something they want. They need legitimacy’ (cf. Nye 2004:10). Similarly, as Egeland (1988:176-77) has argued, ‘public human rights initiatives from the big power run the risk of being misunderstood and counter-attacked as neo-imperialistic acts of interference [...], while Norway, with limited economic resources, but a good ‘non-imperialist’ image, concentrates on ending the Third World under-development.’

All of the elements characterizing small and medium-sized states’ public diplomacy can be found in the efforts of Canada and Norway. Before addressing the public diplomacy of these two countries, a caveat is necessary. Using examples of the efforts by Canadian and Norwegian foreign ministries to engage domestic stakeholders in the development of shared value and image-platforms, means that only a part of the overall picture will be covered. First, other governmental agencies besides the foreign ministry are involved in the coordination and conduct of public diplomacy in both countries. Second, by discussing the efforts of the government (foreign ministry) to reach out to societal actors and not the other way around, the paper runs the risk of providing a profoundly state-centric perspective on a process which is far more complex and multi-dimensional. A more thorough set of analyses will be necessary to further explore the complexities of the processes sketched in what follows.

Canada: inclusive and fragmented public diplomacy

Internationally, Canada had been struggling with outmoded perceptions. As Potter (2001:7) has argued, there is

a huge gap between how Canadians view themselves and how others perceive them. In the eyes of the world Canada remains largely what it was a century ago, namely, a resource economy, and according to a recent review of Canada's international brand, contemporary elements – dynamism, innovation, technology, tolerance, competitiveness and multiculturalism – are conspicuously absent. [...] In short, Canada has an image problem, with 'image' being defined as one part presence and one part promotion.

To address this image problem, the Communications Bureau of the then Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade came up with the *Promoting Canada Abroad Initiative*. Built around the slogan *Canada–Cool–Connected*, the communications strategy featured 6 specific themes around which promotion would be centered: Captivating, Civil, Competitive, Creative, Caring, Cosmopolitan. A binder was produced by the Communications Bureau and distributed to all Canadian missions around the world containing speech modules, factoids, messages, web-ready module papers and other tools that could be applied in support of public outreach activities organized around these 6 image- and value platforms. In addition to the binder, the Communications Bureau also developed a password protected web-site where topical information, photos, video-material and other updates were posted for downloads by Canadian representatives at missions abroad.⁶

Despite the comprehensiveness of this effort, as several of my 2003 interviews with the staff of the Communications Bureau indicated, there were serious problems in getting other governmental departments, provinces and other Canadian civil society actors to adopt the public diplomacy strategy and tools developed as part of the Promoting Canada Abroad Initiative. Problems were related to bureaucratic turf-battles among federal departments, because for instance promoting Canada as a competitive and technologically advanced nation

6) A number of Canadian Missions were able to make good use of the strategic initiative in their efforts at engaging societal actors abroad in cooperation and exchanges with societal actors in Canada. The Internet-supported Arts exchange between a school in Barbados and a school in Ontario organized by the Canadian High Commission in Barbados might serve as a good example. (see <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/barbados/connected-en.asp>)

has traditionally been the responsibility of Industry Canada, while for instance promotion of Canada as a cosmopolitan and multicultural society has been conducted by Canadian Heritage. Further problems were related to provincial efforts at independent promotion of provincial assets and identity abroad (most notable are the efforts of Quebec).⁷ Furthermore, there were problems in particular foreign societies in relation to the meanings that people associated with the Canada–Cool–Connected slogan. Its use had to be abandoned for instance in China, because there the word ‘cool’ had evoked meanings of ‘cold’ or ‘icy’, and not the intended meanings of ‘trendy’ or ‘easy-going’.⁸

In addition to the problems related to coordination and misunderstood meanings abroad, there has been a tendency among the Canadian public of waning interest in Canadian foreign policy, which had a negative effect on the overall level of societal consensus on foreign policy values and Canadian image abroad. As one of the central persons behind the Promoting Canada Abroad initiative, Daryl Copeland (2003) notes,

Canadians still like to think of themselves as worldly and generous, and retain a nostalgic attachment to development assistance and peacekeeping. Nonetheless, the foundation which supports those pillars has eroded seriously. As a result, the postwar consensus on Canada’s role and position, born of notions of Pearsonian internationalism, middle power diplomacy and a vision of Canada as an ‘honest broker’, ‘helpful fixer’ and compassionate donor, is unraveling.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has therefore been trying to look for ways to encourage domestic actors to become involved in debates, and therefore to restore a level of consensus about the main values and priorities of foreign policy. Two recent IT-supported initiatives stand out as innovative attempts to involve the public in discussions of foreign policy – the Dialogue on Foreign Policy and the Canadian International Policy Web-Site.

7) On the conduct of Quebec’s public diplomacy see *Le Québec dans un ensemble international en mutation. Plan Stratégique 2001–2004*, Ministère des Relations internationales, Quebec, pp.51-55 (http://www.mri.gouv.qc.ca/en/pdf/Plan_strat_bchure_int_PA.pdf)

8) Based on 2003 interviews with the staff of the Communications Bureau conducted by the author.

The Dialogue on Foreign Policy: old wine in new bottles?

Due to long-term trends in Canadian foreign policy making towards openness and transparency, Canada today represents a model of inclusive management of international policy (Hocking 2004:15). In the 1970s, the Trudeau administration initiated a series of dialogues with Canadians on foreign policy priorities. Following up on this tradition, the 1994 National Forum on Canada's International Relations sponsored by the ministers of foreign affairs, trade and national defense involved discussions with the Canadian public, which produced the strategic paper *Canada in the World – Canadian Foreign Policy Review* published in 1995. According to its Preface, '[e]nsuring Canada's success as a society in a changing world must be a shared enterprise. The future of each one of us depends on it. That is why the Government is pledged to an open foreign policy process'.⁹

Building on this legacy, DFAIT (and today Foreign Affairs Canada – FAC) have been actively engaging a broad array of domestic actors in institutionalized forms of consultation and cooperation with the aim of strengthening the legitimacy of foreign policy processes. Technological developments have greatly enhanced the ability of the Department to reach out and engage domestic constituencies on a continuous basis.

The latest comprehensive public consultation initiative was the *Dialogue on Foreign Policy* conducted from January to May 2003. DFAIT published a Dialogue Paper outlining current foreign policy priorities and formulated questions concerning those priorities and values that Canada should stand for internationally. An *eDialogue* web-site was launched, where citizens could download relevant documents and post their opinions and ideas on interactive message boards organized by themes. Citizens could also e-mail in their suggestions and propositions. In addition to the electronic discussions there was a series of town-hall meetings across the country attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other governmental ministers, as well as 19 expert roundtables on issues related to the Dialogue. The Dialogue web-site featured material from these expert roundtables including netcasts, as well as weekly summaries of contributions. The web-site registered about 62,500 visits, the Dialogue Paper was downloaded about 28,000 times and nearly 2,000 people

9) *Canada in the World – Canadian Foreign Policy Review*, 1995 (http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/cnd-world/menu-en.asp)

registered as participants on the online web–forum, which upon completion featured approximately 3,500 replies to dialogue questions.¹⁰ The result was the ministerial report *Dialogue on Foreign Policy: Report to Canadians* presented in June 2003.¹¹

The electronic discussions and town–hall meetings represent an unprecedented way of directly involving citizens, civil society organizations, businesses and sub–state actors such as provinces and municipalities in forming basic value guidelines for Canada’s presence in the world. As one of the senior DFAIT officers pointed out to me,

The new thing about [the Dialogue] was the fact that the traditional mode of communication with the public – the press release mode – was abandoned in this case and one has tried to engage in an actual discussion with the public. The Dialogue is a good case of how two–way communication with the public works.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs writes in the introduction to the Report:

...the widespread engagement in town halls, on the Web site and in written submissions reaffirmed for me how strongly Canadians believe that direct citizen involvement must remain central to sound government, in the making of our country's foreign policy as well as in the reform and renewal of multilateral forms of governance.

The advice summarized in this report will be vital to the work of policy development that will proceed in the months ahead. At a critical time in global affairs, your contributions will help guide our foreign policy and strengthen Canada's voice abroad.

However, the actual level of the civil society actors’ influence on the foreign policy strategies pursued in the end is uncertain and the impact of the Dialogue on the foreign policy making process should therefore not be overestimated. Evaluation of the inputs and the process that led to the production of the Final Report were far from transparent and, according to interview information, the text of the Report was drafted more or less by one person on Parliament Hill. The Report was presented to the Government and the public on a late afternoon before a long–weekend and received therefore relatively meager attention. What is more,

10) <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/participate/dialoguereport-en.asp>

11) <http://www.foreign-policy-dialogue.ca/pdf/FinalReport.pdf>

even internally the Report was received with some hesitation. As a senior DFAIT officer observed:

The notion of the Dialogue on Foreign Policy has unfortunately not been credited enough attention by the senior management and by the Department in general. Sometimes this has to do with personalities, but the most important obstacle is the culture at DFAIT – diplomats simply feel discomfort when having to address the public. [...] There is a buzz-word very often used: ‘deliberations *inform* our policy making’. This is a rather ambiguous word that simply does not disclose to what extent the deliberations have real impact – they can just be noted and passed by with no regard to them, but they may also have more substantial impact.¹²

In an effort to improve this situation, Foreign Affairs Canada had been using web-sites to introduce a more permanent form of public consultation on foreign policy values and priorities called the Policy eDiscussions.

Policy eDiscussions: consultation and domestic network building

The *eDiscussions* web-site was made operational in November 2004.¹³ It includes the *Feature Issue* section, where topical issues for public discussion are posted by FAC. Proposed topics of eDiscussions since November 2004 have included: ‘Renewing Multilateral Institutions’, ‘Security’, ‘Canada–US Relations’ and ‘Showcasing Canadian Talent and Know–How Abroad’. The general public can then post their opinions on the web-site for a particular period of time (usually about 4 weeks). Upon completion of an eDiscussion period, citizens’ online contributions are summarized by Foreign Affairs Research staff. The summaries are then circulated to the so-called ‘Grad Student Committee’ consisting of graduate students at various Canadian universities for review and comment, and returned back to FAC. Policy Research then completes the summary and circulates it to appropriate parties internally at FAC. FAC then draft a reply to the summary and the draft is posted on the Policy Planning web-site. A new discussion is opened, and the old one is archived and left accessible on the web-site for future reference.¹⁴

12) Interview conducted by the author at DFAIT in November 2003.

13) <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/menu-en.asp>

14) For a description of the whole process see http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cip-pic/current_discussions/input-en.asp

The process that led up to the launch of the site is an interesting indication of how FAC had been attempting to establish 'contact points' throughout the society and hence develop its network with domestic societal actors. To create awareness about the site and get citizens involved from the start, three months prior to launching the site (in July 2004), Policy Planning Branch posted a web-site proposal on the Internet and started to contact Canadian universities, NGOs and provincial authorities. The aim was to find interested individuals who could serve as 'contact points' for the future policy discussion process. At the universities the persons playing the role of FAC's 'contact point' would be responsible for providing feedback on the web-site content to FAC, alerting students and faculty on topical issues posted on the Canadian International Policy web-site, and for communicating with other 'contact points' across Canada. The process of disseminating the call for volunteer contact persons was initiated through a list serve message sent through POLCAN – 'a list serve for political scientists' – run by the Canadian Political Science Association. Through this process, a network of individual volunteers working as FAC's contact points throughout Canada was created.

It is interesting to note FAC's effort at supporting the outreach web-based activities through human input 'on the ground'. Although the outreach activity and even the initial contact with the 'contact persons' and organizations throughout the country was in electronic form referring to web-sites for further information, FAC's efforts indicate that reliance on technology alone does not guarantee the desired level of citizens' involvement. This indicates that FAC's effort at citizen consultation and eventually engagement is not mere 'window dressing', but a serious attempt at creating a fairly stable structure of contacts throughout the Canadian society that would facilitate FAC's interactions with the domestic constituency.

Public consultation and engagement as a way of strengthening national unity

Besides potentially enhancing the legitimacy of the foreign policy steps taken by the federal government, efforts to foster public consultations on foreign policy also serve a different purpose in the Canadian case – namely enhancement and strengthening of Canadian unity and identity in the light of provincial efforts for greater international visibility and role (this concerns in particular Quebec). As Axworthy (2003:58-59) points out:

The most valuable lesson I learned from applying our foreign policy to the cause of national unity came through the insightful work of a young

Quebecker, Daniel Laprès [...]. He presented me with a plan to bring Canadian foreign policy to the young people of Quebec as a prime illustration of how they could fulfill their ambitions for global activism through participating in making and delivering Canadian policy, rather than through efforts to seek sovereignty.

[W]e launched a campaign of direct involvement with young people and NGOs [...]. Our efforts also demonstrated how an activist, internationalist policy can help shape an identity and promote unity in the country. International accomplishments reinforce our basic values and enhance our pride as a people. The extent to which Canadians see their country playing a useful, effective role abroad adds to the sense of cohesion, confidence that is an indispensable part of our national makeup.

A *Public Diplomacy Program* was established at DFAIT in 1998 with the aim of presenting Canada's international role and achievements to the domestic constituency, where youth is the most important target group. In French the program is called *la diplomatie ouverte* (open diplomacy) and, as one of the interviewees pointed out, it seeks to invest FAC with a more human face in direct interaction with various provincial constituencies, which otherwise only scarcely come into contact with federal departments. The program is therefore administratively located under the Federal-Provincial Relations Bureau. With an annual budget of CAD 8 million, the Program sends out foreign service officers to hold lectures at various venues around Canada, organizes seminars and sessions for young participants (for example, the model UN exercise), as well as supporting teachers at local schools.

A series of well-developed web-sites directed at young Canadians have been supporting the engagement process. The Youth-portal developed by FAC¹⁵ features a cluster of web-sites providing a wide array of information from international career development to a web-site for teachers including templates of course-outlines and lesson plans on topics like *La Francophonie* and the History of Canada's International Relations.¹⁶

15) <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/culture/youth-en.asp>

16) http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/edu_guides-en.asp

Norway: selective and centralized public diplomacy

At a seminar in 2002, the Norwegian foreign minister declared that ‘Peace processes make us interesting. We need a couple of such products. The Cold War is no longer such a product’ (quoted in Matlary 2002:60).

Elaborating further on the rationale behind this statement, Matlary (ibid.) points out that while Norway was considered a strategic priority by the U.S. and other NATO allies during the Cold War due to its northern border with the Soviet Union, this status evaporated following the end of the ideological confrontation and Norway needs to look for new ways of making itself visible on the international scene. Norway’s *invisibility* was identified by Leonard and Small (2003) as *the* central problem of Norwegian public diplomacy. As they point out:

There are a number of factors that perpetuate Norway’s invisibility: it is small – in population, economy and presence; it is isolated – politically, geographically and culturally; it lacks linguistic attraction – many Norwegians speak English but not vice versa; it lacks brands or icons – there are no emissaries for the Norwegian identity; it is similar to Scandinavia – its shared culture does not help to distinguish it from the rest (ibid.: 2).

To solve this problem, the Norwegian foreign ministry contracted the London-based Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) to develop a public diplomacy strategy for Norway. In 2002 and 2003, a number of seminars were held in Oslo attended by FPC, representatives of the Norwegian foreign ministry, and a number of stakeholders ranging from other governmental agencies, NGO activists, academics, journalists and business-people in order to identify shared images and value-platforms around which Norway’s image could be developed. These meetings had the character of discussions behind closed doors where only a selected few influential opinion-makers would participate. The result was a strategic report presented to the Norwegian public in June 2003 (see Leonard and Small 2003) and identifying four shared image- and value-platforms (or ‘stories’ to use the terminology of the report) around which coherence in presenting Norway to the world should be built:

- a *humanitarian superpower* / a *peacemaker*
- a society *living with nature*
- a society with a high level of *equality*
- an *internationalist* society / a society with a *spirit of adventure*

While the formulation of a coherent set of image- and value-platforms around which Norway's identity abroad should be projected may be new, the values associated with the four pillars of the public diplomacy strategy have long been present in Norwegian society and have permeated Norwegian political life for decades. As Dobinson and Dale (2000) point out, there has been an unusually broad political unity around the notions of peace as a foreign policy priority, around social democratic values underscoring equality and not least around environmental questions (see also Østerud 1986). Norwegian NGOs as well as the Norwegian government have been heavily involved in developmental work, promotion of human rights and peace-building in various regions around the world since the 1950s. The most recent examples of such peace-efforts include Sri Lanka, Colombia and the Middle East. A symbiotic relationship has developed between the government and NGOs, where the Norwegian Foreign Ministry has learned to rely on the experiences and contact-networks of NGOs on the ground in crisis-regions, while participating NGOs could attract higher governmental financial support (Tvedt 1997). Egeland (1988) suggests that a 'Norwegian model' of cooperation has emerged, where NGOs' activities and values are closely coordinated with governmental foreign policy priorities and values, which represent a multistakeholder approach in practice. Several of the successful peace negotiations conducted by Norwegian actors were used as examples of how deeply rooted Norwegian actors (both governmental and non-governmental) are in the above mentioned values. Dobinson and Dale (2000) describe it as the *Norwegian backpack*, which is a metaphor for a cognitive framework containing the deeply rooted values of equality, peace and natural environment with which Norwegian actors approach conflict situations abroad.¹⁷

17) The 'value backpack' is demonstrated for instance when conflicting parties in a civil war are invited to Norway to negotiate a solution. The usual ritual is that all the participants are invited for walks in the forests north of Oslo (as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were during the negotiations leading to the Oslo peace agreement in 1993) or to spend time at the private cottage of a Norwegian NGO-representative (as for instance Guatemalan guerilla-representatives got to experience in mid-1990s) (Dobinson and Dale 2000:51-53). Norwegian actors approach foreign conflicts with their very specific value-basis, which is fairly consistent across the spectrum of Norwegian actors involved in peace negotiations. This could perhaps be characterized as *inward oriented internationalism* – applying one's peculiar life-experience, habits and worldviews on situations outside one's own cultural sphere in the belief of universal equality of human beings.

Absence of broad public debate on foreign policy priorities

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry's reliance on various forms of cooperation, information exchange and coordination with a selected number of civil society actors (a model applied also in the above mentioned consultation meetings in the development process of Norway's public diplomacy strategy) is in sharp contrast to the Foreign Ministry's reluctance to engage in broader public debates of foreign policy priorities and values. As Allern and Lorentzen (2002) have shown, while other ministries of the Norwegian government rely on a broad array of consultative mechanisms to engage the domestic public in discussions of policy initiatives and priorities, the only mechanism the Foreign Ministry has applied in consulting the public has been issue-specific conferences and committees where only selected groups of societal actors have been invited to participate. This corporatist and selective approach to public consultation may be related to the fact that traditionally the foreign ministry has struggled with a low level of legitimacy and respect within the broad strata of the egalitarian Norwegian society skeptical of what it perceived as secretive and quasi-aristocratic practices among the diplomats (Neumann 1998). Due to these problematic relations with the domestic society, the professional bias towards protecting information was at the Ministry always seconded by a need to share information with the public in order to get public support and approval of foreign policy activities.¹⁸

The internet has become an effective vehicle for such public outreach activities. Ever since the Norwegian government established its official web-sites, the web-site of the Foreign Ministry has been the most extensive in terms of the amount of documents posted and the number of visitors.¹⁹ Web-sites of all Norwegian embassies now have a standardized design and informational architecture, and are connected to the Norway Portal introduced in late 2003.²⁰ The portal is 'Norway's official face to the world' and received the Good Design 2004 award of the Norwegian Design Council. Every embassy web-site on the Norway Portal has culturally-specific features (local language, local information by the Norwegian embassy and so on) and the Portal receives 150,000 visitors per month.

While the quality of the design of the Ministry web-site and of the Norway Portal is high, the pattern that the publishing of documents on the web-sites

18) Based on interviews with N-MFA staff conducted by the author in 2003.

19) See <http://odin.dep.no/N-MFA/norsk/tema/informasjonsarbeide/internett/bn.html>

20) <http://www.norway.info/>

follows is that of press-releases and one-way communication. The N-MFA does not encourage the public to voice opinions on foreign policy priorities or values that Norway should represent. The Minister and the spokesperson of the Ministry are the most usual channels for the Ministry's communication with the public. In its own parlance, the Ministry is always trying to show a 'united outside face'.²¹

The coordination of public diplomacy through institutional integration of outside actors

The logic of the 'united outside face' is present in the way the Norwegian Foreign Ministry approaches coordination of Norwegian public diplomacy. As State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Widvey pointed out at a meeting of the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce in Ottawa in 2003:

At the moment there are very many different organizations and associations whose work in some way or other impacts on Norway's image abroad. I am thinking about the different ministries, but also about the Norwegian Trade Council, the Norwegian Tourist Board and different cultural institutions. This diversity is good in the sense that it stimulates creativity, but it is a problem in the sense that different messages sometimes conflict. Reducing this fragmentation would help co-ordinate the messages and avoid overlapping and thereby improve their effectiveness. The Norwegian Government has already taken steps in that regard by deciding to create a new body that will include the Trade Council, the Tourist Board, the State Fund for Regional Development and the office in charge of state guidance to inventors. The idea is that this will create synergies and make a clearer link between innovation and internationalisation (Widvey 2003).

The new body created as of January 1, 2004 is a state-owned company called *Innovation Norway*. With offices in all 19 Norwegian counties and in 30 cities abroad, the aim of Innovation Norway is to help to 'release the potential of different districts and regions by contributing towards innovation, internationalisation and promotion.'²² Its main stakeholders are enterprises and regional governments. To ensure effective coordination and effective use of resources, the Norwegian government found it appropriate to integrate the

21) In Norwegian the phrase is 'felles ansikt utad'.

22) See http://www.invanor.no/templates/Page_45053.aspx

representatives of Innovation Norway into the Norwegian Foreign Service and co-locate their offices in Norwegian diplomatic missions.

A further amalgamation followed later in 2004, when the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) was administratively placed under the Norwegian foreign ministry as a directorate. NORAD has traditionally had wide networks of contacts and cooperation mechanisms with various Norwegian NGOs and academic institutions active internationally. Through the amalgamation, the Foreign Ministry hopes to achieve more effective coordination of foreign policy activities performed by multiple actors and not least improve coherence of messages and images about Norway that these actors project abroad. As Widvey (ibid.) further argued:

We can probably all agree on the fact that focusing on few, clearly targeted messages works better than many different, and sometimes conflicting, stories. The *KISS principle – Keep It Simple, Stupid!* – works in this field too. [...] This does not mean that we should hide our difference. Diversity is a necessary element of a democratic society. But I believe that it should be possible to create a national umbrella, under which many different stories, adapted to local circumstances, can be told. That would reduce the risk of ambiguous communication. And it would contribute to an image of Norway that is representative and clear enough to make a mark internationally. (italics added)

That said, the centralizing tendency and selective corporatist approach that seem to characterize the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's approach towards coordinating presentation of Norway abroad should not be overstated. Both NORAD and Innovation Norway have extensive contact networks with internationally active members of Norwegian society. Through the amalgamations, such actors might establish a more formalized place inside the foreign affairs administration, which in turn might lead to a gradual change of organizational culture in the Norwegian foreign ministry, possibly over time leading to more openness to broad public consultations.

Conclusion: Is there a need for a multidirectional value positioning?

This paper suggests an understanding of public diplomacy as comprising a two-dimensional set of activities through which a state can increase its soft power (attractiveness). The main challenge to the conventional understanding of public diplomacy as governmental communication with foreign publics rests on the idea that public diplomacy is based on association of the state with value- and image-resources of the domestic societal actors. This prompts states (foreign ministries) to devise coordination strategies to engage domestic actors in forging shared value- and image-platforms around which synergies in engaging foreign publics can emerge. The biggest challenge that the notion of public diplomacy presents for foreign ministries is hence *not* the fact that they need to communicate with broad foreign audiences and to do so at high velocity in an information-intensive environment. Diplomats have always communicated with foreign publics with the aim of capturing attention for their country's views or advocacy of their country's values, and it is hence merely a question of adapting the organizational procedures and technological infrastructures of foreign ministries so that they continue being effective at conducting their public activities abroad. What *does* represent a substantial challenge for foreign ministries in relation to public diplomacy, however, is the fact that diplomats have traditionally not been used to engaging domestic actors in the conduct of diplomatic affairs. The need to do so constitutes an institutional crisis undermining the very institutional identity of foreign ministries as the exclusive agencies dealing with foreign affairs.²³ Contemporary public diplomacy challenges basic notions of who is a diplomat, and indeed what is and what is not diplomacy.

Returning to the two cases presented here, one can note that efforts to coordinate public diplomacy in Canada have had an inclusive character, where a broad array of societal actors was engaged in open public consultations with FAC. At the same time, the FAC did not try to forge consensus around the set of image- and value-platforms which its representatives at Canadian embassies abroad use to present Canada to foreign audiences. The Canada-Cool-Connected initiative is an FAC-initiative only, while other federal, provincial and non-state actors have other ways of presenting themselves to foreign audiences. Canadian public diplomacy, if understood as efforts by actors other than FAC aimed at increasing Canada's attractiveness, therefore seems fragmented featuring

23) For the notion of an institutional crisis see March and Olsen (1989), Olsen (1996).

numerous messages, images and values. It is plausible to consider this situation merely as a reflection of Canada's nature as a *deeply diverse* country. As Fossum (2003:2-3) points out, *deep diversity* involves a situation of:

a multitude of different collective goals and conceptions of the polity. Groups and collectives have different relations to the overarching entity: there is no overall agreement on what the country (or polity) is for; and there are different collective goals as to what the society ought to be and ought to look like.

In a certain sense, the absence of an overarching set of image- and value-platforms does not necessarily need to be a negative. The fragmented character of the images and values presented by Canadian actors abroad, if indeed perceived as a reflection of deep diversity, might in fact be adding to the country's attractiveness when perceived from abroad. There are a number of societies in Europe and elsewhere around the world which might find the Canadian model inspiring.

Norway, on the other hand, relies in its coordination of public diplomacy on a centralized and corporatist approach. The Foreign Ministry is by and large the lead agency coordinating what is to be presented as 'Norwegian' abroad. To this end, a single set of messages and images capturing the essence of Norway have been decided upon in closed consultations with a group of selected societal stakeholders. The image- and value-platforms that were chosen (peace, nature, equality) represent causes or values, which virtually any society in the world would find attractive. Given this attractiveness, international activities by Norwegian actors (both state and non-state) presented as promoting one or several of the values, are hence likely to achieve greater viability virtually anywhere in the world. What the Norwegian state has managed, is to position or embed itself in what might be called *multi-directional value- and image platforms*, which most of the Norwegian society can identify with, and which at the same time are attractive to most political regimes, most religions and most cultures around the world. This positioning greatly enhances the ability of the Norwegian government (and of the Foreign Ministry) to attract societal actors into associating themselves with their state. What is more, a focus on peace also

enables Norway to capture attention and mind space among audiences abroad because peace negotiations draw the attention of the world's media.²⁴

Thus, what constitutes the primary difference between Canada and Norway in addition to the differences in their respective approaches to public diplomacy coordination is the character of the value positioning. While the image- and value-platforms of Norway are multidirectional (viable at home and abroad), those of the Canadian foreign ministry are *unidirectional* – they reflect the way Canadians see themselves and features images and values that Canadians might find attractive. While it might increase the attractiveness (soft power) of the federal government among the domestic societal actors and hence increase the likelihood of their association with Canada it is not certain that characteristics such as 'competitive' or 'cosmopolitan' would be perceived as attractive in certain parts of the world. On the other hand, there is hardly any society, political regime or religious group in the world that would not cherish peace, nature and equality. One could hence propose that in addition to the three characteristics of public diplomacy of small and medium-sized states mentioned above, a successful public diplomacy strategy will seek to position the country not only in locally attractive image- and value-platforms, but also in their global equivalents. Such a positioning will in turn contribute to increasing the attractiveness (soft power) of the respective state among the non-state actors active in the home constituency.

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24) In addition to the actual peace-negotiations conducted by Norwegian actors, the Nobel Peace Prize awarded in Oslo every year has also been an event attracting the attention of world media. The Nobel Peace Concert, which in recent years has been able to present celebrities of the global music and film industries – including stars such as Tom Cruise and Oprah Winfrey as hosts and Andrea Bocelli and Paul McCartney as performers – has also been an effective way for Norway to capture attention and promote its 'peace-nation-image' among an increasingly broad global audience.

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