

**FURTHER OPERATIONALIZING PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN 3D OPERATIONS: A
DEFENCE SUPPORT TO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (DSPD) MODEL IN AFGHANISTAN
OR OTHERWISE?**

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DRAFT
MAY 2009

Abstract: Canada should consider the intentional use of public diplomacy within military operations in Afghanistan or other theatres of war in the future. Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD) has increasingly become mentioned in academic papers and policy advisories in the United States. This institutional and conceptual design places emphasis on the employment of modern public diplomacy practices during military operations. In considering how these American models could bond with Canadian institutions and policies during the engagement in Afghanistan or otherwise, preliminary research suggests that the implementation of such strategies would require convergence (in message) and cooperation (in practice) between foreign ministries and defence agencies (especially DFAIT and DND). But more fundamentally, it would give further strategic direction when conceiving and carrying out 3D (defence, development, diplomacy) operations.

We have a problem on our hands. Canada, popularly defined in terms of the peacekeeper and the honest broker, is beginning to show signs of an oncoming, if not imminent, identity crisis. The 'new liberalism' that has reportedly shaped our foreign and defence policies since the Second World War is becoming unpinned. Faced with a brutal insurgency, a weak state and norms that are inconceivable in the Western conscious, tough questions about Canada itself and its role in the world have to be asked. For now, at least, the complexity of our 'engagement' in Afghanistan is to blame. Perhaps a report from the North-South Institute summarizes this predicament best: "the situation in Afghanistan is of existential dimensions to the international community."¹

While this tone is laced with lament, it ought not to be. Afghanistan has been an entirely new experience for Canadians. We have never acted in this capacity or in this context before. The ongoing conflict, more than any other in recent memory, has demonstrated a clashing between Canada's widely held myths on one hand, and realities on the other. This collision has been worsened by the flow of information emanating almost entirely from the Department of National Defence (DND), largely excluding the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) from the Afghan equation. Communication between the federal government and the Canadian public, says the Independent Panel on Canada's Future in Afghanistan, lacks "frank and constructive"² dialogue. For instance, using the political spectrum to investigate the forces supposedly shape Canadian foreign policy, Adam Chapnick observes that, "the so-called liberal internationalist values have hardly been liberal, or even Liberal. Rather, they have generally been reflective of the Tory underpinnings of a society founding on the principles of 'peace, order, and good government.'"³ Conservative or otherwise, the relevant point is that our reflected and projected self-image is at a turning point. Canadian Forces on the front lines in Afghanistan are representing the rest of Canada not just to foreign governments and civilians in Western nations, but to the men and women of Afghanistan. The immediate issue is simple: the place of Canada in the minds of Afghans does, and will continue to, factor into not only the security situation, but also the long-term political and social fora of the country.

To meet the goals of the Bonn Agreement, followed by the Afghanistan Compact, the Canadian approach is hinged on defense, development and diplomacy, guised as the 3D umbrella. "Afghanistan is a litmus test for the international community. Getting Afghanistan right is crucial, yet 3D has not developed into a

¹ Martin Fischer. German and Canadian Perspectives on Statebuilding in Afghanistan. Ottawa: The North-South Institute, 2008, p. 2.

² John Manley, Derek Burney (et al). Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2008, p. 36. Throughout the paper, the Panel's findings will be dubbed as the Manley Report.

³ Adam Chapnick, "Peace, Order and Good Government: The Conservative Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy." International Journal 60, no. 3 (2005), p. 637.

truly integrated and results-driven approach,"⁴ said a report from the Centre for International Governance Innovation. The three pillars are out of step with one another, justifying the impetus to bring new ideas to the table. But as much as we would like to deny it, the issues on hand are broader than specific peacebuilding and statebuilding processes aimed at Afghanistan. Rather, this war has stressed the fundamental relationships between, and perceptions of, Western governments. As the CIGI report states again, "Canada went into Afghanistan to support NATO and the United States, fight against drugs and terrorism and improve the life of the people... this has not only seen the 3D policy, but the whole international community put to the test."⁵

The Canadian Forces do not practice public diplomacy intentionally – the art of engaging publics abroad and at home - but perhaps they ought to. Bruce Gregory, an American scholar from George Washington University, sums up public diplomacy as, "the means by which states, associations of states, and non-state actors understand cultures, attitudes and behavior; build and manage relationships; and influence opinions and actions to advance their interests and values."⁶ Now, all militaries, by virtue of being active in theatre, partake in public diplomacy unknowingly. Intentionally, however, public diplomacy has traditionally been the exclusive responsibility foreign affairs agencies. Until recently, militaries have gotten off the hook of having to devise a strategy that reflects Gregory's definition. The Canadian Forces have persevered abnormally well without having to explain themselves to others. After all, the explaining was already done: Canada was a peacekeeping nation. This satisfied both foreign and domestic audiences. Though it was not a public relations strategy, it was surely a brilliant, even if unintentional, public diplomacy methodology. After all, it was this image that led to one American Senator to call Canada "the stern daughter of the voice of God."⁷ But shedding this long superficial skin in Afghanistan marks nothing short of a new chapter for the Canadian Forces. With soldiers on the front lines and leading the show, it is increasingly important that public diplomacy is embedded into military strategy for the sake of connecting with international and domestic publics. Thus, this paper contextualizes intentional military public diplomacy as a strategic imperative for Canada, and suggests that much can be learned allegorically, if not literally, from American defence support to public diplomacy (DSPD).⁸

⁴ Julian Wright. Canada in Afghanistan: Assessing the 3D Approach. Waterloo: Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2005, p. 6.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Gregory, Bruce. "Public Diplomacy and National Security." Small Wars Journal (2008). 14 Aug. 2008. 20 Oct. 2008 <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/docs-temp/82-gregory.pdf>>, p. 2.

⁷ Dean Acheson used this as a title for his piece in: Livingston Merchant, ed. Neighbors taken for Granted: Canada and the United States. New York: Praeger 1966.

⁸ While the definition of public diplomacy given stresses two-way communications between populations at home and abroad, this paper will be mostly considered with examining strategic information flows with populations abroad. This should not, however, negate the importance of engaging domestic populations so that they too can bi-directionally connect with publics abroad.

Middle power states such as Canada and the Netherlands, some argue, are especially apt and able to conduct public diplomacy.⁹ One of Canada's few public diplomacy scholars, Evan Potter, states that "Canada has the very national qualities that fuel soft power: support for mediation and multilateralism, a recognized intellectual leadership in addressing global problems, and expertise in the use of communication technologies."¹⁰ In the post-Cold War world, these attributes became currency for the branding of Canada. By 1995, the imperative to share Canada with the world was well realized.¹¹ While this was largely reliant on cultural exports and educational opportunities, it still proved that Canada had a lot to offer to the international community. Acknowledging Canada's importance, however, and developing adequate policy to support this belief are two very different issues in the diplomatic world. Especially when self-promotion was easily deemed frivolous in the economically stark 1990s. Further budget cuts when Stephen Harper was first elected Prime Minister suggest that Canadian public diplomacy is understood as being dispensable.¹²

Canada has a very different public diplomacy agenda than its southern counterpart, the United States. For better, but more likely for worse, Canada's public diplomacy experience is very much of an original nature. It is not contextualized as part of a broader security strategy, nor is it a component of the broader movement towards utilizing new diplomatic mediums for the information age, as in the United States.¹³ The responsibility for all public diplomacy efforts falls under DFAIT, putting a glass ceiling on capability and possibility. Melissa Rudderham of the American University of Afghanistan, suggests that Canada's

lack of resources and coordination at the national level, reinforced by the number of practitioners unable or unwilling to speak on the topic, point to a lack of political, institutional, and ultimately public will to practice public diplomacy in a truly effective manner.¹⁴

This is problematic in the Afghan theatre, where the use of strategic communication is as important as many military assets. It became evident shortly after the invasion of Afghanistan to policymakers and scholars that the West must win the hearts and minds of those overseas who are either sympathetic but inactive, or neutral to the

⁹ Melissa Rudderham. Middle Power Pull: Can Middle Powers use Public Diplomacy to Ameliorate the Image of the West? Working paper. Vol. 46. Toronto: YCISS Working Paper, 2008.

¹⁰ Evan Potter. Branding Canada: Projecting Canada's Soft Power through Public Diplomacy. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009, p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹² Jeff Davis. "Public Diplomacy Not a Priority for Conservatives." Embassy Magazine. 28 Nov. 2007.

¹³ For some examples of this shift, see: Henry J. Hyde, ed. The Role of Public Diplomacy in Support of the Anti-Terrorism Campaign : Congressional Hearing. Boston: DIANE Company, 2001. Or see: Robert B. Satloff. The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror : Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East. New York: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004.

¹⁴ Rudderham 2008, p. 16.

insurgent fighters.¹⁵ This can only be done through some sort of dialogue and mutual understanding between publics. These imperatives are most important where 3D operations are the adequate response to a conflict. As Donald Rumsfeld once said, “victory in the long war ultimately depends on strategic communication.”¹⁶ This was echoed by Seth Jones from the RAND Corporation, citing that the “key problem is what local Afghans at the village level think.”¹⁷ To work towards long-term solutions for the West, regardless of end-dates, such interactions must go far beyond psychological operations (PSYOPS) and information operations (IOs) that are traditionally practiced by modern militaries. There is a need to think big, but to be realistic at the same time. Part of this is the acknowledgement that any benefit from public diplomacy actions now will not be seen easily for years, if not decades.¹⁸

The question of nomenclature and their connotations for institutions is an interesting one. Peacekeeping is certainly not a proper title for operations in Afghanistan.¹⁹ Sean Maloney, a Canadian scholar and the official historian for the Canadian government in Afghanistan, suggests that the more accurate label is ‘stabilization force.’²⁰ Here, the use of lethal force is understood as necessary, an idea that many Canadians are uncomfortable with. But it secondly contextualizes the engagement as less of a defensive operation, than a security operation, including other governmental actors to bring a holistic sense of ‘stability’ to Afghanistan. *Canada’s Engagement in Afghanistan*, as was laid down in the June 2008 policy statement,²¹ illustrates conclusively that Canada’s operations in the country involve a host of actors and institutions that are able to get along only when strategy and leadership are static. While there is shared willingness for many non-military agencies to take part, the complexity on the ground makes it practically a nightmare. As such, Canada’s foremost current foreign commitment is primarily under the auspices of the military, which consequently has a leading or at least an intensified

¹⁵ The first document exploring exactly how to do this was the acclaimed and influential: Edward P. Djerejian, ed. Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction of U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World. Washington: Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, 2003. This document also put out the call for institutional reorganization, which is evident in this paper.

¹⁶ Ann Scott Tyson, *Washington Post*, “Rumsfeld Urges Media to Fight Terror,” 18 February 2006. Westview Press, 2004.

¹⁷ Seth Jones. “Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence,” Ottawa: Parliament Hill, December 10, 2007.

¹⁸ The author acknowledges the brevity of the discourse on the battle of ideas during this paper. It is not the place of this analysis to fully discuss that topic. For the best available document dealing with that issue, see: Djerejian 2003.

¹⁹ Of course, it is important to note that claims of Canada being a peacekeeping nation in recent years are disputed greatly. For more of a debate on this issue see Jack Granastein. Whose War is it? Toronto: Harper Collins Canada, 2007. and Sean Maloney. Canada and UN Peacekeeping. St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2003.

²⁰ Sean M. Maloney. “From Myth to Reality Check; From Peacekeeping to Stabilization” Policy Options September (2005): 40-46.

²¹ Government of Canada, Canada’s Engagement in Afghanistan. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2008.

role, in guiding foreign policy.

Considering recent history, having defence usher the direction of foreign affairs, even slightly, is counterintuitive for Canada. Traditionally foreign affairs would dictate military activities abroad. In the Mackenzie-King days, the Department of External Affairs (DEA) was given a heightened role to reflect Canada's internationalist aspirations (and King's own bias). With the rise of the DEA, DND naturally lost its top-tier status. Although the interwar years were naturally peculiar ones, this relationship between the two agencies has persisted with some fluctuation until present day. As a consequence, it has drastically changed how Canadian policymakers conceive matters of national security abroad. This relationship was best articulated by R.B. Byers in his widely cited 1986 Adelphi Paper, *Canadian Security and Defence: the Legacy and the Challenges*.

In the pursuit of international peace and security, the Canadian government has correctly maintained that defence policy should be consistent with, and subordinate to, foreign policy. [...] All too frequently the lack of a Canadian security policy has meant that the security aspects of foreign policy on one hand and defence policy on the other have been implemented separately by different Departments – primarily by National Defence and by External Affairs. In effect, the concept of 'security policy' has been alien to Canada's approach to international affairs; but Canada's security interesting would be better served if this situation were rectified.²²

Thus, if stabilization is dependent upon a sense of security policy, then both defence and foreign affairs are in the drivers seat. The pillars that have guided DFAIT since World War Two make it evident that Canada's internationalism was to be value-driven, placing emphasis on accepting international responsibility, the rule of law, human rights, encouragement unity, and attainment political liberty.²³ These ideas were originally perpetuated in Louis St. Laurent's 1947 Gray Lecture at the University of Toronto and have managed to stick around from then onwards. They were later reinforced by Lloyd Axworthy's doctrine, articulated by his various efforts throughout the mid-1990s. Famously, the political scientist Kim Richard Nossal would call this the "foreign policy for wimps."²⁴ Axworthy responded to Nossal's claim by pointing to Canada's "robust" ability to influence "the behaviour of other nations not through military intimidation but through a variety of diplomatic and political tools."²⁵ The doctrine, called "pulpit diplomacy" by some, made the assumption that hard power was on the decline, and that soft power would be the

²² R.B. Byers. *Adelphi Papers 214: Canadian Security and Defence: The Legacy and the Challenges*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1986, p. 5.

²³ Louis St. Laurent. *The Foundations of Canadian Policy in World Affairs*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 13 January 1947.

²⁴ Kim Richard Nossal. "Foreign Policy for Wimps." Ottawa: Ottawa Citizen: 23 April 1998, p. A19.

²⁵ Lloyd Axworthy, "Why 'soft-power' is the right policy for Canada." Ottawa: Ottawa Citizen, 25 April 1998, p. B6.

predominant path for Canada.²⁶ The military's training, doctrine, procurement, budget and organization would all be deeply influenced by this. Most substantially, however, it removed any sort of capability to bring newer 'soft' practices into the domain of the Canadian Forces aside from peacekeeping. It also made the allusion that the military was incapable of using its assets to support Canada's internationalist values, as articulated by St. Laurent. These factors critically separated the roles of the military and of foreign affairs in the Canadian climate.

Afghanistan challenges these past norms and ideas. Just as there is no simple foreign policy solution for the troubled country, as a report from the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, stipulates, "there is no military solution to Afghanistan's problem."²⁷ Deciphering which practices should remain in the nest of a single agency, and which should be divided between multiple departments is a difficult question. Worse, poking and prodding at the status quo of interagency coordination did not come soon enough. Competitive and solo institutional stances have remained intact well into Canada's tenure in Afghanistan, and their divergent world views have clashed into one another. As pointed out by the Manley Report, "effectiveness would be enhanced by aligning *national* and *departmental* priorities and operations more closely – and more collaboratively."²⁸ It seems like a no brainer, but the inability to reconcile departmental difference has been daunting. Janice Stein and Eugene Lang accurately describe this in their recent book, *The Unexpected War*.

All governments have some rivalry among their institutions, but the endless bickering and the institutional quarrels that have hobbled Canada's capacity to make a difference abroad are of a different order of magnitude. Few solid bridges span the three most important departments.... shared understandings, [and] an ability to think outside the institutional box, are not yet what they need to be in Canada.²⁹

"The Canadian military, diplomats, aid personnel and other agencies are acting in far greater harmony than they were when we last visited,"³⁰ stated a recent report from the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence. Progress is being made. Yet still, traditional diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan have been hampered by a lack of vision and leadership that other departments can get behind.³¹ The 'institutional

²⁶ For a comprehensive, realistic review of the doctrine, see: Fen O. Hampson and Dean F. Oliver. "Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine." *International Journal* 53, no. 3 (1998): 379-406.

²⁷ Colin Kenny, David Tkachuk (et al). *How Are We Doing in Afghanistan? Canadians Need to Know*. Ottawa: Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, 2008, p. 61.

²⁸ Manley, Burney (et al) 2008, p. 26. Emphasis added.

²⁹ Janice G. Stein and Eugene Lang. *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*. Toronto: Penguin Group, 2007, p. 283.

³⁰ Kenny, Tkachuk (et al) 2008, p. 50.

³¹ Manley, Burney (et al) 2008, pp. 27-28.

box,' thus, remains intact during both peacetime and wartime. Taking the example of public diplomacy, for instance, Evan Potter's newly released, 'Branding Canada', is the nation's first comprehensive analysis of Canadian public diplomacy efforts.³² While it is rightfully thorough in terms of traditional public diplomacy – culture, education, economic and tourism – it makes mention of security and defence only several times. Strategically thinking about, or in terms of, public diplomacy is absent in security and defence, despite their intimate relationship with foreign affairs. So, incidental, if not accidental, public diplomacy takes place.

Potter did, however, give kudos to the cooperation of DFAIT, DND and CIDA in the operation of the Kandahar provincial reconstruction team (PRT).³³ The initiative is often cited as a prime example of the 3D approach in action. Fundamentally, these teams are a way to balance the goals of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): fighting the war and building the state.³⁴ The combination of these two operations – in any theatre, let alone in the merciless Afghan landscape – is an enormous undertaking and strains all agencies involved. Yet, a PRT, or any 3D operation where all agencies are present, is a well-formatted medium to unknowingly practice a very modern form of public diplomacy that places emphasis on dialogue, inclusiveness and mutual understanding. But actually accomplishing this while working on development projects is another matter entirely. A 2007 report published by Chief Review Services of DND notes that Canada's PRT, while bringing progress to the region, has been fixated on short-term projects that reflect little inter-agency strategic planning and lack further long-term vision.³⁵ This is, of course, indicative of the learning curve which policy, military and other personnel have been challenged with. Taking the PRT as representative of 3D, the divergence of practices and the realities of the mission has meant that Canada's 3D efforts are lost in translation.³⁶

There is obviously a great irony in this. Since Canada's 2005 International Policy Statement, the 3D approach has been looked at gleefully and critically by many scholars and policymakers. While this idea of Canada's holistic approach to international engagement gives one a pleasant fix of idealism, pragmatism is another issue entirely. By virtue of its fundamental role and the abrasive situation in Afghanistan, defence has remained the most evident pillar.³⁷ As Stephen Cornish

³² For this collection, see: Potter 2009.

³³ Ibid., p. 268.

³⁴ Barbara J. Stapleton. "A Means to What End? Why Provincial Reconstruction Teams are Peripherhaps to the Bigger Political Challenges in Afghanistan." Calgary Papers in Military and Strategic Studies. Vol. 3. Calgary: Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, 2008, p. 6.

³⁵ Chief Review Services. Evaluation of CF/DND Participation in the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2007.

³⁶ This sentence was borrowed from the title of a recently defended MA thesis at RMC: Hrychuk, Heather. *Lost in Translation: The Search for 3D in Afghanistan*. Thesis. Royal Military College of Canada, 2007.

³⁷ Stephen Cornish. "No Room for Humanitarianism in 3D Policies: Have Forcible Humanitarian Interventions and Integrated Approaches Lost Their Way?" Calgary Papers in Military and Strategic Studies. Vol. 3. Calgary: Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, 2008, p. 76.

postulates, “it is increasingly difficult to see how such a level playing field [between the departments] could ever be created in Afghanistan.”³⁸ This is problematic, aside from the obvious issue of not fulfilling the prescribed doctrine. Cornish suggests, somewhat cunningly, that the use of defence, even out of necessity, can undermine the good work that is actually being done in the diplomatic and development sectors. Thus, if 3D is out of the question, so is the most positive formulation of accidental public diplomacy within the military.

So, we have to start thinking about designing deliberate public diplomacy efforts. One way is by broadening the role of the soldier, even more, in theatre. Boots, not shoes, are predominant on the ground. Cornish’s findings can easily be widened to point at broader issues in play. If soldiers are disproportionately present, they are increasingly forced to take on the traits of diplomatic and development personnel. As if unification of DND and the revolution in military affairs was not enough, the comprehensive policy adopted by Canada for Kandahar has placed increased pressure on the department. Maxing out our personnel capability, the major problem is that the Canadian Forces have been chronically underfunded and do not have the adequate equipment and training to conduct information operations to the degree that the Afghan conflict demands.³⁹ While this could be wholly blamed on the monetary scapegoat, it also points to a broader confusion of the Canadian Forces’ role in the war.

Between 2001 and 2007, there was a profound alteration in the goals of the Afghan mission shared by ISAF. At its outset and with little political guidance, the Government of Canada signed on to bring down the local Taliban regime and to help with the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Shortly thereafter, the end-state of Afghanistan became more complex, and with it, the task at hand.⁴⁰ The mission became far more ambitious for the international community, placing increased emphasis on not only achieving stability, but also on building the Afghan state. Canada’s policy on Afghanistan has, thus, been consistently in motion.⁴¹ Problematically and paradoxically, two Canadian scholars suggest that there is a “large gap between the current objectives sought and the means provided to date.”⁴² Switching strategy in Afghanistan, as scholar Elinor Sloan argues, has temporarily yielded the transformation of the Canadian Forces.⁴³ This poses an enormous threat to the growth of the mission-specific Canadian soldier that this conflict demands.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jessica Davis. “From Kosovo to Afghanistan: Canada and Information Operations.” Canadian Military Journal (Autumn 2005): 33-42.

⁴⁰ For further discussion, see: Roi, M.L. and Smolyne G.. “End States, Resource Allocation and NATO Strategy in Afghanistan.” Diplomacy and Statecraft 19 no. 2 (2008): 289-320.

⁴¹ Colin Kenny, Michael A. Meighen (et al). Canadian Troops in Afghanistan: Taking a Hard Look at a Hard Mission. Ottawa: Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, 2007, pp. 1-2.

⁴² Ibid., p. 312.

⁴³ Elinor Sloan. “Military Transformation: Key Aspects and Canadian Approaches.” Ottawa: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007.

But there is a larger symptomatic problem that has a direct bearing on any sort of interagency coordination needed for public diplomacy: there is a requirement for a strategy throughout all government agencies *before* this sort mission creep takes place. With a politically uncertain mission, at least originally, proper holistic planning was downplayed.⁴⁴ Perhaps the reason that this problem has reached its present severity, as Joshua Kertzer suggests, is that the Canadian understanding of counterinsurgency campaigns seems to be “muddled” at best.⁴⁵ He contends that, “viewing the engagement through the prism of counter-insurgency strategy helps clarify the integrated nature of the mission and suggests both the continuity and the change present in Canadian grand strategy.”⁴⁶ If public diplomacy is a fundamental component of counterinsurgency, then perhaps underestimating the role of such doctrine has presented a never-ending problem. Aside from the ‘war of ideas’ itself, this strategic lapse has meant that Canadians, and other ISAF countries, have underestimated the amount of bodies needed on the ground to inspire vast societal change. As Ian Hope, commanding officer of Operation Orion, said in a speech at the Royal Military College, the ultimate barrier between Canadian capability and hearts and minds operations is the number of CF personnel on the ground.⁴⁷

Gordon Smith warns that Afghans are “deeply wary of foreigners on its soil.”⁴⁸ Their recent history is one of warfare, and the Western intervention is prolonging violence. Some difficult questions have to be asked. What does it say to the people of Afghanistan when the Government of Canada declares a definitive end-date for its mission? Or when Canada’s strategies and priorities in Afghanistan change and evolve? Or when the extent of their interaction with the Canadian Forces is a brief encounter centering around a brief Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) development, a mediation, or worse, a firefight? The Afghans’ understanding of Canada and the West are shaped by their perception of these events. Polls cited in the Manley Report suggest that the majority of Afghans welcome ISAF into their country. But still, there is a large group who feel differently.⁴⁹ Another report asks a very serious, yet simple question: “We think we’re the good guys. What do Afghans think?”⁵⁰

Afghans are not as disconnected from one another or information outlets as might be thought. A recent report from the Asia Foundation revealed that 84

⁴⁴ For an analysis of this problem on a much higher level, see: Strachan, Hew. “The Lost Meaning of Strategy” *Survival* 47 no. 3 (2005): 33-54.

⁴⁵ Joshua D Kertzer. “ISAF in Afghanistan, or Learning to Love Counter-Insurgency.” *Policy Options* (September 2008): 14-20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Ian Hope. “Military History and the Modern Battlefield.” Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston. 9 Feb. 2009.

⁴⁸ Gordon Smith. *Canada in Afghanistan: Is it Working?* Calgary: Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, 2007, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Manley, Burney (et al) 2008, p. 88.

⁵⁰ Kenny, Meighen (et al) 2007, p. 5.

percent of households have a working radio, while televisions and phones are predominant in urban areas and relatively rare in rural regions.⁵¹ There is a popular view that public opinion only really matters in developed and democratically legitimate countries. When there is so much at stake in the Afghan state, this cannot be so. Afghans themselves, as ISAF forces openly acknowledge, are the true stakeholders. As the Manley Report says, “the aim of Canadian policy is to leave Afghanistan to Afghans, in a country better governed, more peaceful and more secure.”⁵² While these indicators – governance, peace and security – are noble aims, they have limited the essence of ‘local’ stabilization and statebuilding. They are premised upon Western conceptions and ideals. Ensuring that Afghans connect with and are heard, one way or another, by foreign individuals to discern how they can take these markers and make them their own is immensely important. Understanding that their country is *theirs*, is a sure way to leave a positive mark Afghan ethos, and allow Afghanistan into the Western ethos. It is a two way process.

A way to work towards a sustainable solution, as is currently being attempted by the Americans, is to purposely embed public diplomacy operations within the armed forces. This is done by connecting civilian public diplomacy efforts with the information operations conducted by the military. Part of this – and what is still certainly being struggled with⁵³ - was that the military had to learn from their civilian counterparts to expand their views to enable the use of public diplomacy. It needs to be doctrinally acknowledged, just as it was in the Special Joint Committee Paper on Defence’s 1994 report that preceded that year’s White Paper,⁵⁴ for instance, that overlapping and deeply seeded national values can guide defence operations. One author explains this civil-military cooperation.

Public diplomacy is the principal information tool of our civilian governments, while military information operations are a subset of military power. Certain aspects of military information operations closely parallel the concepts employed in the use of information and public diplomacy at the national level.⁵⁵

How can this be done in the case of Afghanistan?⁵⁶ One of the most convincing solutions is a small, but important institutional reorganization. In this regard, a pertinent development that has come out of the post-invasion has been defense support to public diplomacy. This term places a policy imperative on linking

⁵¹ Ruth Rennie, Sudhindra Sharma (et al). Afghanistan in 2008. San Francisco: Asia Foundation, 2008, p. 117.

⁵² Manley, Burney (et al) 2008, p. 88.

⁵³ Jed Willard. The Pentagon and Public Diplomacy: In Flux. Medford: Fletcher School of Public Diplomacy, Tufts University. 2008.

⁵⁴ Special Joint Committee on Canada’s Defence Policy. Security in a Changing World. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1994.

⁵⁵ David Baker. The War of Ideas: Aspects for the National Public Diplomacy Effort and Possibilities for Military Support. U.S. Army War College. 2005, p. 1.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of this relationship, though less specific with the Afghan case, see: Willard, 2008.

defensive operations with the function of public diplomacy, by way of inter-departmental cooperation in practice and convergence in message.⁵⁷ It is an institutional arrangement by which public diplomacy efforts are not only mandated to specific departments, but also overseen and assessed for effectiveness. At the very least, Canadian officials can learn from this model, embracing it allegorically if not literally.

Perhaps on the conceptual level, the goals of DSPD can be understood best by remarks made by Dr. David Kilcullen, former Chief Strategist of the US Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

We need to create “unity of effort” at best, and collaboration or deconfliction at least. This depends less on a shared command and control hierarchy, and more on a shared diagnosis of the problem, platforms for collaboration, information sharing and deconfliction. Each player must understand the others’ strengths, weaknesses, capabilities and objectives, and inter-agency teams must be structured for versatility (the ability to perform a wide variety of tasks) and agility (the ability to transition rapidly and smoothly between tasks).⁵⁸

DSPD is a buffer, a utility, to foster cohesion and downplay conflict between agencies (and their sub-agencies) in a policy environment that changes quickly. As Jed Willard of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government says, “DSPD is specifically working on structures and means to improve communications, regionally and globally, between agencies and within DOD.”⁵⁹ Thus, as an organization it hopes to open up new avenues for the negotiation of public diplomatic matters between interagency actors. Until the election of Barrack Obama, the Assistant Undersecretary for Defense Support to Public Diplomacy was Michael Doran, a well-noted scholar on Middle Eastern radicalism. Doran seemed to have a very good grasp on the institutional hurdles that public diplomacy has long faced. Citing the parameters of his office, he stated that “we don’t do PD... we strive to create – or recreate as some would argue – a system that supports the dissemination of a single core message through multiple means.”⁶⁰ DSPD is not a medium of public diplomacy; it is a mode for its delivery. With respect to military PSYOPS, the definition of DSPD is expanded slightly more.

Military Support to Public Diplomacy (MSPD) [which is synonymous with DSPD] may be defined as those measures taken by DOD components to support and facilitate the public diplomacy (PD)

⁵⁷ For quick overviews of this term, see James M. Gannon. Operationalizing Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. Naval War College. 2006. Also see Baker 2005.

⁵⁸ David J. Kilcullen. "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency." US Government Counterinsurgency Conference. Washington D.C. 26 Sept. 2006.

⁵⁹ Williard 2008, p. 19.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

efforts of the USG [United States Government]. DOD may conduct MSPD as part of approved guidelines for theater security cooperation and may collaborate with other agencies' PD programs that directly support DOD missions.⁶¹

In sum, DSPD calls for the employment of ideas and values perpetuated by a nation's foreign affairs bureau through its military operations. Thus, DSPD can be conceived in two ways: objectively as an actual governmental office, and conceptually as a mind map for institutional coordination.

Beyond these rudimentary definitions, there is shockingly little analysis of the function of DSPD. This is for many reasons that have long hindered the study of public diplomacy. First, when public diplomacy and the military are considered together, it seems to almost always result in ideas of deceptive propaganda. Secondly, there is a genuine belief that PYSOPS and IOs go far enough to connect with others in theatre. And third, there is a norm that public diplomacy must be confined to agencies dealing with foreign affairs. These beliefs present a fundamental problem. Public diplomacy is part of contemporary warfare, but its function is not integrated into the defensive agencies. And where integration does exist, there is a profound misunderstanding of how public diplomacy fits into a broader strategy, rather than a short-term tactic. This sort of institutional and conceptual lapse is the essential dichotomy that ought to be bridged.

It is also important to consider the ways in which public diplomacy can exist on the ground in a conflict like Afghanistan, as conducted by the military. David Steven, the founder of River Path Associates, a British strategic consulting firm, identifies the four major methods that are susceptible to a DSPD arrangement. *Engagement strategies* seek to encourage conversation by fostering a sort of harmony between groups. *Shaping strategies* redesign the debate by bringing in all actors on a precise issue with the purpose of reaching a resolution, again by open dialogue and mutual understanding. *Disruptive strategies* seek to decimate the opponent's interests to create a more favorable battleground for coalition forces. Lastly, *destructive strategies* employed against enemies "can be used to confuse and undermine the adversary. Alternatively, in some cases public diplomacy in this context takes the form of ignoring, belittling, or marginalizing, a refusal to accept a group's legitimacy."⁶² These methods, when used over a long period, enable armed forces to perform shrewd public diplomacy in places where civilian agencies cannot reach.

⁶¹ Cited from Baker 2005, p. 6.: Department of Defense, [Military Psychological Operations unclassified attachment, DOD S-3321.1](#). Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 28 November 2003, p. 2.

⁶² David Steven. "The new public diplomacy and Afghanistan." Seminar on Strategic Communications, Public Diplomacy and Afghanistan. UK Defence Academy, London. 4 June 2008.

The ultimate manifestation of conceptual DSPD, thus far, has undoubtedly been the recent development of US Government's Africa Command (AFRICOM). This entity is charged with the role of US civil and military representation on the continent. Under this mandate, one of its predominant activities is the deliverance of public diplomacy. The Command is composed equally of members from the Department of State and of the Department of Defense. With this in mind, many observers point to AFRICOM as a successful example of civil-military cooperation while conducting public diplomacy.⁶³ Certainly the entity is very much reflective of the general principles of DSPD, acting as an incubator for its real-world analysis. Scholars and policymakers are looking closely, and time will determine the institution's viability in this regard. It will, more broadly, also indicate if civil and military sides can come together in any situation to work on public diplomacy matters.

In looking at the example of the United States, five major lessons can be learned for Canada from DSPD as an institution and as a conceptual framework. First, that *a public diplomacy strategy should be conceived in parallel with defensive strategy*. The military does not intentionally practice public diplomacy presently and this capability will never be developed if it is not done in line with other institutional planning. While this paper has focused on the Afghan case, it is likely too late for Canadian policy to be altered before July 2011. What Canada's engagement in Afghanistan has principally shown the policy community is that it is difficult to change mandates on the fly – that a relatively static strategy with clear goals must be determined at the outset of a conflict. Public diplomacy must be part of operational planning from the beginning.

Second, *develop the institutional capacity for public diplomacy to be managed outside of DFAIT*. Michael Doran's DSDP office was doing excellent work in buffering and ushering the public diplomacy development process between agencies. Canada, if it is to diversify its public diplomacy efforts, can learn much from this institutional design. While such an office would not need to supersede other agencies, it would require adequate clout to ensure the coherence and coordination of public diplomacy efforts.

Third, *ensure the coordination in practice between federal agencies and, where possible, civil actors*. Canada's efforts to practice public diplomacy have already included many non-governmental actors. This sort of inclusion must be expanded to federal government agencies, especially when they are working cohesively on specific initiatives (i.e. the PRT in Kandahar). But the lead must come from the government.

⁶³ The University of Southern California's Centre for Public Diplomacy is currently undertaking a project to analyze this sort of cooperation between Department of State and the Department of Defense on public diplomacy. For more on AFRICOM, see: Sean McFate. "U.S. Africa Command: A New Paradigm?" *Military Review* (2008): 10-22.

Fourth, *ensure convergence in message between departments*. Each federal department has its own message, world views, mandates, and personalities. In a highly integrated 3D (or similar) environment, coherence of message through public diplomacy is a requirement. This, of course, will be pointedly important abroad, but also at home to make sure the Canadian public-understands what the Government of Canada is doing in such environments. This is especially important when there are many stakeholders in a specific operation, including some who are not proportionately present on the ground.

Fifth, *encourage the study and professionalization of public diplomacy in Canada*. There are few scholars writing on public diplomacy in Canada. While their work is very good, public diplomacy remains almost exclusively in the domain of the federal government and some highly specialized provincial agencies. This routine needs to be broken. In the United States, whole university departments, several magazines and a few academic journals are dedicated to public diplomacy. Moreover, there is a strong push from Washington for scholars and stakeholders to pursue public diplomacy through research and advocacy. There is simply not any sort of similar encouragement in Canada.

The other option, of course, is that Canada rests back on its reputation, despite its current inaccuracy. A non-policy is always an option. The enactment of any sort of broader strategy is complicated by the fact that Canada is part of a coalition force, though operating primarily within a single province. Another issue is that the diplomatic clout of the United States surely penetrates our public diplomacy sphere. These matters can perhaps be reconciled, so long as our sight remains set on accurately representing Canada abroad, listening to foreign audiences and figuring out how to maximize the usefulness of the assets and personnel that we have.

Wartime generally brings broader reforms to the institutions that guide defence and foreign policy. Perhaps this is a fitting time to be hopeful for institutional change and for the consideration of new ideas, including the broader consideration of intentionally devising a public diplomacy plan. Major-General Daniel Gosselin, Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy, affirmed this with a Hellyer-meets-Hillier reformist tone while speaking at the Royal Military College in 2007:

In short, the war in Afghanistan is doing what wars tend to do to military organizations: shake them to their core, re-focus the priorities of the organization toward operational primacy and help to remove bureaucratic cobwebs.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Daniel Gosselin. "The Perfect Wave: The Canadian Military Facing its Most Significant Change in 50 Years." CDAI Graduate Studies Symposium: Canada's Security Interests - Lessons of History. Currie Hall, Kingston, Ontario. 27 Oct. 2007.

Melissa Rudderham from the American University of Afghanistan argues that Canada is well-placed to conduct public diplomacy to represent the virtues of the Western world. There certainly is a possibility to capitalize on Canada's aptness for "engagement, dialogue, [and] mutuality"⁶⁵ that few other nations have at their disposal. The importance of multilateralism in Canadian international relations has long meant that Canadians bring just enough to the table. This time, however, Canada is once again punching above its weight and its public diplomacy strategy should be reflective of this. After all, Canada has long proven itself as an able diplomatic actor, from John Wendell Holmes and the early days of the United Nations,⁶⁶ to the pursuit of mission-oriented diplomacy under Lloyd Axworthy,⁶⁷ to the lesser-known Peter Jones and the current practice of track-two diplomacy.⁶⁸

To explain itself to the world, one must know oneself. While public diplomacy has traditionally rested in the domain of the state, its responsibility is increasingly spread amongst other social and civic actors.⁶⁹ In both state and society there is an imperative for Canada to step up its strategic communications with populations abroad. This is an immediate concern, as the Canadian image is evolving in an age of asymmetric adversities. If Canadian policymakers can reconcile the importance of deeply embedded communication strategies within ongoing military and diplomatic change and mission creep, then public diplomacy within 3D efforts may stand a chance. If not in Afghanistan, then elsewhere in the near future, the capability for the intentional practice of public diplomacy within the military will need to exist. Surely the transforming nature of warfare necessitates nothing less.

⁶⁵ Rudderham 2008, p. 17.

⁶⁶ For an excellent and recently released account, see: Adam Chapnick, Canada's Voice: The Public Life of John Wendell Holmes. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009.

⁶⁷ Kim Richard Nossal. "Mission Diplomacy and the 'Cult of the Initiative' in Canadian Foreign Policy." in Cooper, Andrew and Hayes, Geoffrey. Worthwhile Initiatives? Canadian Mission-Oriented Diplomacy. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 2000.

⁶⁸ Peter Jones, "Canada and Track-Two Diplomacy." A Changing World: Canadian Foreign Policy Priorities no. 1, Canadian International Council, 2008.

⁶⁹ Peter G. Peterson. "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terror." Foreign Affairs 81 no. 5 (2002), p. 78.