

Public Diplomacy and Transformation of International Broadcasting

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Abstract

Defining “international broadcasting” is the starting point in this essay. Histories of international broadcasting are said to be important as they often seek to answer whether international broadcasting accomplished or assisted in the accomplishment of the goals assigned to it. Before analyzing transformations of international broadcasting as an element of a foreign policy in the media arena, Monroe Price reviews other transformations which include the changes brought about by the end of the cold war, the domestic pressures to transform international broadcasting, the responses to the ethnic conflicts before the turn of the century and the implications of new technology. Finally, the essay concludes that the events of September 11 brought to the foreground debates over the future of public diplomacy and international broadcasting. Might there be a “revolution in public diplomacy”? Price suggests the move may be towards “re-branding” and, indeed, international broadcasting may move from being an active proponent of the relationship of media to democracy, to a function more closely tied to issues of media and global security.

Resumen

Definir el concepto de “la transmisión internacional de los medios de comunicación” es el punto de partida en este ensayo. A la vez, se señala que la historia de la transmisiones internacionales de los medios es importante, en tanto que pretende conocer si dichas transmisiones lograron o coadyuvaron en el logro de los objetivos que le fueron asignados. Antes de analizar la transformación en las transmisiones internacionales como elemento de las política exterior de cobertura de los medios, Monroe Price examina otras transformaciones importantes, tales como los cambios ocasionados por el final de la guerra fría, las presiones internas para transformar las transmisiones internacionales, las respuestas a conflictos étnicos antes del cambio de siglo y las implicaciones de nuevas tecnologías. Finalmente, se concluye que los acontecimientos del 11 de septiembre trajeron a colación debates sobre el futuro de la diplomacia pública y las transmisiones internacionales de medios. En caso de haber una “revolución en la diplomacia pública”, Monroe asegura que las transmisiones internacionales de medios deberán dejar de ser un proponente activo en la relación de medios y democracia para tener una función más relacionada con asuntos de los medios y seguridad mundial.

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1. Introduction

International broadcasting encapsulates many of the conflicts and difficulties central to the need that one society may feel to shape the information space of another. There is the struggle to harmonize goals of “objectivity” with the need to act as an effective instrument of propaganda, the potential split between advancing national policy and acting as a credible journalistic enterprise and the tension between promotion of favorable regimes and the nourishment of dissent.

In this essay, I review transformations of international broadcasting as an element of a foreign policy of media space, focusing particularly, though not exclusively, on the United States. But to understand the limits and discourse in which immediate pressures to change take place, other transformations must be reviewed. These include the changes brought about by the end of the cold war, the domestic pressures to transform international broadcasting as a fiercer tool of surrogacy, the responses to the ethnic conflicts before the turn of the century, and the implications of changed technology.

2. Histories and Definitions

International broadcasting is the elegant term for a complex combination of State-sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring State’s boundaries. It is the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of another. It involves what was once with pride called propaganda.¹ The Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, and the BBC World Service are the best-known ex-

¹ Martin, *International Propaganda*.

emplars, but the practitioners are legion. Lines, of course, are blurred. Newer satellite services are often linked to government or regional policy but are not “state-sponsored” in the literal sense. There are those who argue that CNN is an instrument of US hegemony, consciously or unconsciously, but it is not an international broadcaster in the club-like definition of the term. Similarly Al Jazeera has been described as bearing the heavy bias of its regional political setting, but it is not state-sponsored nor does it appear to be state-financed.²

The category is not defined by the technology of distribution. International “broadcasters” have traditionally used shortwave radio as a dominant mode of distributing their signals, but now many technologies, including FM, Internet, and satellite to home, are involved. A line is usually drawn between “international broadcasters” who are transparently such and so-called “clandestine” or “black” radios, instruments of information transfer that are secretly sponsored by governments, intelligence agencies, or state-linked political movements. There are varying styles in international broadcasting, a British style, a French style, and one or more American styles (reflecting the division between US-sponsored broadcasters).³ These differences in style track

2 See Ajami, Fouad, *“What the Muslim World is Watching”*, *New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 18, 2001, p. 48.

3 These questions of style touch on ways the American approach to international broadcasting is different, for example, from that of the United Kingdom. United States international broadcasting was evolving into a cluster of aggressive broadcasters with specific sectoral managements. There are those who favored a television broadcasting system that emulates the BBC World Service as a unified source of reliable, factual, and dispassionate information over this cluster approach. Also, under its latest reorganization, the VOA, together with the external radios, are subject to the Broadcasting Board of Governors, as indicated, many of whom are political appointees. Many of the members in the 1990s were advocates of the ethos of surrogacy ---and policy-driven radio on the VOA---. One member was appointed to protect Radio and TV Marti in order to assure that the Cuban exile community was served.

The advocates of a unified “objective” broadcaster also consider that the pressure to transform into the surrogate function and to have a specific national

broadcasting histories, varying foreign policy objectives, responses to the nature of societies targeted, political involvement at home, and deep-seated domestic cultural proclivities.

Histories of international broadcasting often seek to answer ---usually inconclusively--- whether international broadcasting accomplished or assisted in the accomplishment of the goals assigned to it.⁴ Accounts of the effectiveness of international broadcasting are often told through justificatory memoirs and rarely by the disaffected.⁵ The claims of achievement among the most avid believers are expansive. A book by Michael Nelson, former chairman of the Reuters Foundation, eloquently summarizes the position of many who support international broadcasting and are confounded by the under-appreciation of radio as a tool in altering the global political landscape. Nelson asks rhetorically, "Why did the West win the cold war? Not by use of arms. Weapons did not breach the Iron Curtain.

political objective is destructive to the ability of the VOA to perform its functions. They consider that the proliferation of radios leads to the gratuitous duplication of resources and the use of those resources in ways that compromise the "objectivity" of the United States international broadcasters.

⁴ See Olechowska, Elzbieta and Aster, Howard, *Challenges for International Broadcasting V*, Mosaic, Oakville, 1998; Abshire, David M., *International Broadcasting: A New Dimension Of Western Diplomacy*, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1976; Wasburn, Philo C., *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality*, Praeger, Westport, CT, 1992. There are many books that deal with these questions. See, e.g., Nelson, Michael, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 1997; Taylor, Philip M., *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992; Bennett, W. Lance and Paletz, David L., *Taken By Storm: The Media, Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1994; Cohen, Yoel, *Media Diplomacy: The Foreign Office in the Mass Communication Age*, Frank Cass, London, 1986; Nason, James O. H., "International Broadcasting as an Instrument of Foreign Policy", *Millennium* 6, 1977; Renier, Olive and Rubinstein, Vladimir, *Assigned to Listen: The Evesham Experience 1939-1943*, BBC External Services, London, 1986.

⁵ See Hopkins, Mark, "A Babel of Broadcasts," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Jul. 1999, p. 44.

The Western invasion was by radio, which was mightier than the sword. 'Those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle', wrote Sun Tzu".⁶ Among the contradictors, a former Voice of America correspondent criticizes those in Congress who think, "simplistically that United States broadcasts of otherwise unavailable news and information poison authoritarian regimes and fertilize the intellectual, if not revolutionary soil so that Western democratic ideals and free markets will blossom".⁷ In 1927 Harold Lasswell wrote: "The truth is that all governments are engaged to some extent in propaganda as part of their ordinary peace-time functions. They make propaganda on behalf of diplomatic friends or against diplomatic antagonists and this is unavoidable".⁸

The Voice of America, through World War II, was the symbol of US international broadcasting. In the post war era, as a response to the cold war, under a group of US citizens, with CIA backing and ultimately virtually full CIA funding, the surrogate radios, then called Radio Free Europe (targeting Central and Eastern Europe) and Radio Liberation (targeting the Soviet Union) came into existence. For a very long time, the Radios maintained that they were wholly independent of the government, privately funded, and, until the issue was forced, the government denied its clandestine relationship to them. Later, the Radios merged (Radio Liberation became Radio Liberty) and the federal government acknowledged its financing role. The advantages of the two (increasingly similar) styles ---VOA "full service" broadcasting (largely telling America's story to the world) and the Radios' highly targeted surrogate style (narrating for the targeted society an account of events tran-

6 Nelson, Michael, *War of the Black Heavens*.

7 Hopkins, Mark, "A Babel of Broadcasts".

8 Lasswell, Harold D., *Propaganda Technique in the World War 14*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1927.

spiring there)--- have been debated in Congress for several decades, and this intensified when resources became scarcer in the post-Soviet period.

The cold war was a time when international broadcasting raised specific issues of negotiation, unilateralism, and multilateral agreement in affecting media space. When the use of ideologically-inspired radio broadcasting was at its height in the cold war, the United States maintained a strong condemnation of radio-jamming technology in many contexts, a legal position that still exists and is invoked. Jamming is the blocking of programming through co-channeling on the same frequencies or the "deliberate use of interfering radio signals sent from one or more transmitters to garble emissions from other transmitters in order to make them unintelligible at reception".⁹ The United States and the West generally claimed that their right to broadcast putatively objective radio programs abroad meant that an interference with these transmissions was a breach of international law in terms of both specific radio conventions and broader rights of free expression.¹⁰ With respect to the older technologies, the Soviets and the Cubans had quite a different understanding. To them, and to many developing countries, state sovereignty precluded such undesirable foreign transmissions, and jamming was, and for Cuba remains, an often-used countermeasure.¹¹

The legal status of jamming has been much discussed, especially in connection with Radio Marti and disputes between Cuba and the United States over the legality of US

9 Whitton, John B. and Larson, Arthur D., *Propaganda Towards Disarmament in the War of Words*, World Rule of Law Center, Duke University, Dobbs Ferry, NY, 1964, p. 210.

10 Martin, *International Propaganda* 87, p. 223.

11 Kessler, Bruce, "Politics Among the Airwaves: An Analysis of Soviet and Western Perspectives on International Broadcasting and the Right to Exchange Ideas and Information Regardless of Frontiers," *Houston Journal of International Law* 7, 1985, p. 237 and 248.

broadcasts and subsequent retaliations.¹² In the case of Cuba and the United States, legal relations were established by the North America Radio Broadcasting Agreement (NARBA), which became effective in 1960. It is a "treaty among certain North American countries providing a system of priorities and engineering standards designed to minimize interference and to promote the orderly use of the AM channels in the North American region".¹³ NARBA established power levels at which broadcasting stations were required to operate to avoid objectionable interference. In addition the ITU Radio Regulations have provided that the shortwave band is "the internationally accepted method in which information can be transmitted across national borders," while the AM band is for domestic use. Radio Marti operates on the shortwave and AM band.

3. Transformations in the Wake of the Cold War

As the cold war ended and with it the established basis for this ethereal penetration of sovereign borders, fundamental geopolitical change has required the reconfiguration of international broadcasting as new targets, new justifications, and new purposes were explored. Until resuscitated by the war on terrorism, international broadcasting underwent a deep crisis of purpose and credibility in the mid-

¹² Bayer, Stephen D. "The Legal Aspects of TV Marti in Relation to the Law of Direct Broadcasting Satellites," *Emory Law Journal* 41, 1992, p. 541; see also Arcia, Omar Javier, "War over the Airwaves: A Comparative Analysis of US and Cuban Views on International Law and Policy Governing Transnational Broadcasts," *Journal of Transnational Law & Policy* 5, 1996, p. 199; Alexandre, L., "Television Marti: 'Open Skies' Over the South," in *Beyond National Sovereignty*, ed. K. Nordenstren and Herber Schiller, Ablex Publishing, Norwood, NJ, 1993.

¹³ US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Department of State Under Secretary for Security Assistance, Science and Technology James L. Buckley's testimony, *Region 2 Administrative Radio Conference on Medium Wave Frequency (MF) Broadcasting: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Operations of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 97th Cong., 4th sess., 1981.

1990s. Budget considerations, new technologies, and new industrial modes of distributing information were influential in the reassessment process.

During this time, Canada and Australia came close to eliminating external broadcasting. The Australians had a lesser involvement in classic European cold war politics, and instead, had specialized as a major source of information in Southeast Asia and Oceania. Still, as would be true in the United States, Australian external broadcasting was the victim of a general budget cutting process. Australian commercial broadcasters also objected to the continuation of the service. Australian companies, like those of the media mogul Kerry Packer, sought to extend their sphere of influence into places such as Vietnam and Cambodia where international services operated. Ultimately, after Australian troops took a dominant position in peacekeeping in East Timor, and after an effective public outcry at home, Radio Australia's budget was restored and, to some extent, expanded. A unique effort to couple an Australian international television broadcasting presence in cooperation with a subsidized commercial channel failed, with international radio becoming the favored survivor.¹⁴ In Canada the budget cuts were more lasting.¹⁵

In 1999, Deutsche Welle, the German external broadcaster, was required, also for budget reasons, to dismiss staff for the first time since 1949. In October 1999 its di-

¹⁴ "New Operator of Aussie TV to be Decided Soon", *Jakarta Post*, Apr. 9, 2001.

¹⁵ To maintain and reinforce its service, the management at Radio Canada International made a conscious decision to be part of "Team Canada." These are assortments of business and industrial leaders sent to various countries to promote goods and services. RCI determined that Team Canada activities, "rather than just being a news story, were an integral part of reflecting what's happening in Canada." "Radio Canada International plans for 1999," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, Jan. 1, 1999, *World Broadcast Information, China*, WBI/0001/WB; Source: *Voice of America*, 19 December 1998.

rector announced a new strategy for DW in light of these budget cuts. The principles declared were similar to changes marked for many other external broadcasters. Radio broadcasts would continue for regions with significant information deficiencies (broadcasting to the Balkans would continue and programs for Indonesia and crisis areas in Africa and Asia would be expanded). DW Radio would be discontinued in liberalized regions that were well served by privatized information markets (Japanese language programming for Japan and Spanish radio programs for Latin America were therefore cut). DW television would be maintained and Internet offerings expanded. As a kind of plaintive cry, the Director justified DW's existence because "growing Anglo-American media domination requires consistent offering of foreign language services and increased international cooperation".¹⁶

In the United Kingdom, after outliving the spasms of fascism, cold war and decolonization, it became necessary for the BBC World Service to find a more inclusive definition for its long-term purposes. In 1993 John Tusa, the outspoken former head of the enterprise, argued that international broadcasting from the United Kingdom should not "turn on the hinge of a particular political dispute or ideological difference, nor one particular period of history or the immediate needs of a particular part of the globe." Defining the criteria for a sustained World Service, he added: "It must be relevant to all audiences worldwide.... It must appeal to a global rather than an elite audience. It must be 'international' rather than foreign." The Service's broadcasts, Tusa wrote, can do a multiplicity of different things for different people. "In part, the broadcasts operate

¹⁶ "DW services and staff cuts outlined," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, Oct. 15, 1999, *World Broadcast Information*, WBI/0042/WB; Source: *Deutsche Welle* press release, Cologne, in German Oct. 7, 1999.

like aid, transferring knowledge and skills; they have an element of cultural advertisement; they are an instrument of informal diplomacy; they bring individuals in touch with a nation".¹⁷

Threatened cuts in the early 1980s nearly forced the closure of BBC services like the Burmese, though it typified the function most readily justified, providing transmissions to people whose oppressive governments deprived them of access to other reliable sources of news. Later in the decade capital budgets actually increased, enabling a dramatic improvement in transmission facilities, and a consequent jump in the listening figures. With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as with the American Radios, the Service redefined opportunity and found itself with another new role, namely assisting in transitions in the old Soviet bloc. Attentive to warnings not to allow itself to become too defined by particular disputes or historical events, the BBC World Service survived the passing of the global crisis of confidence with almost all its European services intact.¹⁸

In the US, the invention and growth of CNN caused some to raise monetary objections to the continued existence of such entities as the Voice of America and the so-called surrogate radios.¹⁹ After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the once-vigorous Russian international broadcasting efforts deteriorated markedly. Shortly after

¹⁷ Tusa, John, "Media: Britannia Rules the Airwaves", *The Independent*, Dec. 9, 1992, Media page, p. 19.

¹⁸ Popham, Peter, "The Empire Talks Back", *Independent Magazine*, Jan. 17 1996, p. 2.

¹⁹ CNN broadcasts largely in English, though that was changing. British and US international broadcasters broadcast in more than 65 languages and reach mass audiences (more than 200 million readers/listeners/viewers a week), not just the affluent that can afford television. See Flournoy, Don M. and Stewart, Robert K., *CNN: Making News in the Global Market*, University of Luton Press, Luton, 1997.

coming in to office, President Bill Clinton called for the consolidation of all US international broadcasting. This was a low point in the prospects for international radio. Consolidation was to be an opportunity to reduce budgets, rethink missions, and question assumptions. Under his initial proposal, the budget of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) would be slashed, as a prelude to later elimination of the Radios. On April 30, 1994, the President signed into law the US International Broadcasting Act. The Voice of America and the Radios, including Radio Marti, would report to the International Broadcasting Bureau within what was the soon to be abolished United States Information Agency (USIA).²⁰ In obeisance to history, the surrogates, RFE/RL and Radio Free Asia, reported directly to the Bureau's Board of Governors as privately incorporated, federally funded grantees. Their employees were not part of the US civil service as were those of other components, the VOA and Radio-TV Marti, for example. The legislation also authorized the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to oversee the Broadcasting Bureau, establish and maintain broadcasting standards, set broadcast priorities of the different language services, and assess the quality, effectiveness, and professional integrity of all activities. Typical of the mood of the time, the act, ominously, expressed the sense of Congress that the private sector should assume all funding for the radios not later than the end of fiscal year 1999.

The tenor of government and society was far less supportive than it would be less than a decade later. In the mid 1990s the institutions of international broadcasting were under pressure from the great private media moguls and their political counterparts. They argued that international broadcasting was unnecessary in the "age of CNN".

²⁰ *United States International Broadcasting Act*, Pub. L. No. 103-236, title. III.

The Radios and the VOA were, together, considered gold-plated cold war relics, with high salaries and an obsolete mission. That year, too, the President certified that significant national interest required relocating the operations of RFE/RL from Munich, Germany, to Prague in the Czech Republic.

In the face of this effective opposition, the Radios began to rethink their missions. No longer facing an authoritarian regime where they served as surrogates expressing the views of dissenters, they created a new role for themselves: facilitating transitions. The Radios' missions, they claimed, had evolved from the purely surrogate task of providing news and analysis on internal events where no such media were available, to compensating for the limitations of domestic media and setting a standard by which emerging free media could judge themselves.

RFE/RL asserted three primary missions for itself in the transition period: (1) to act as a traditional broadcaster by providing information and news on important issues such as democracy and political organization, the environment, and economic growth; (2) to provide assistance to indigenous radio stations; and (3) to train indigenous radio personnel and broadcasters. RFE/RL offered itself as a "model of Western journalism, an alternative news source, and insurance against resurgent government censorship abroad." It developed bureaus in all former Eastern European target countries and the former Soviet republics and rebroadcast on stations licensed within those states.

The mood of the times would affect bureaucratic predictions. Lobbying groups and public officials favored "surrogacy" or a more hard-hitting approach by tax-supported international broadcasting institutions. This bias tipped ardor and revenue, ardor's manifestation, to the Radios over the Voice of America. On October 30, 1997, two new US

funded radio services to Iran and Iraq began transmitting.²¹ Produced by RFE/RL, these services originated in Prague. The service to Iran was originally to be called Radio Free Iran and had its political sources in Congress rather than in the State Department. In May 1997, after the election of President Khatami, the State Department sought to postpone or cancel the Iranian service as part of a general diplomatic overture. By April 1998, the State Department, under intense congressional pressure fostered by RFE/RL and those who favored the surrogate approach, justified the new service as designed to enrich domestic political debate inside the country and not to undermine the government.

The implications of global change and increased private competition on the Radios can be seen in the emphases for the continuation of national services as articulated by the US Congress:

It is the sense of Congress that Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty should continue to broadcast to the peoples of Central Europe, Eurasia, and the Persian Gulf until such time as (1) a particular nation has clearly demonstrated the successful establishment and consolidation of democratic rule, and (2) its domestic media which provide balanced, accurate, and comprehensive news and information, is firmly established and widely accessible to the national audience, thus making redundant broadcasts by Radio Free Europe or Radio Liberty. At such time as a particular nation meets both of these conditions, RFE/RL should phase out broadcasting to that nation.²²

²¹ VOA has been broadcasting to Iraq in Arabic for more than half a century and to Iran in a restored Farsi Service since 1979.

²² *United States Code*, title 22, sec. 6211.

4. Transformations and Radio Free Asia

Radio Free Asia is a case study in the focused effort to transform international broadcasting to affect information space in target countries.²³ This surrogate service, established in the US International Broadcasting Act of 1994, was designed to target China, Vietnam, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and North Korea.²⁴ RFA is a modern iteration of cold war use of the airwaves, emphasizing a turn from the traditional cold war targets to new ones. The debates about Radio Free Asia echo those about other surrogate radios. These debates are important within the United States, as well, because of a general shift to purposeful, designated and sharper-edged surrogate approaches.

Radio Free Asia is also an example of another hypothesis: instruments of international broadcasting are a reflection of the priorities and internal politics of the sending nation. Most foreign policy, it is said, including international broadcasting, can be described as shaped by domestic politics.²⁵ There are a number of themes in the RFA story that illustrate the relationship between domestic politics in the United States and the design of international broadcasting. For example, what emerges from the debate is the introduction of Radio Free Asia as a domestic trade-off

²³ This section is based on research done by Dr. Michael Likosky during graduate work at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford.

²⁴ As a historic matter, a surrogate service directed at China had previously existed from 1951 to 1953. "Radio Free Asia, an allegedly public-supported (but in reality, CIA-financed) international broadcasting station operated out of San Francisco, but transmitting from Manila, was founded. Its dual mission was to strengthen resistance within China to the new Communist government plus prevent overseas China in Asia from 'falling victim to communist Chinese propaganda' ". John A. Lent, ed., *Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific: A Continental Survey of Radio and Television*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1978. The creation of RFA was once again debated during the Vietnam War. CRS Report for Congress, *Radio Free Asia*, Jan. 2, 1997.

²⁵ James Rosenau, ed., *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, Free Press, New York, 1967.

to build support for “most-favored-nation” treatment for China. In the 1990s when there were numerous objections to China’s human rights policies and a liberalized trade policy was held hostage to a more aggressive attitude toward China, RFA was a convenient technique for gaining votes: those who favored free trade could demonstrate their loyalty through the fist of radio at the same time as facilitating the glove of opening economic markets.

The subsequent international debate over the broadcasts of RFA took on the character of many past battles over US international broadcasting to older target sites including the Soviet Union and Cuba. On the one hand, the United States argued that its privilege to broadcast was contained within Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights giving everyone the right “to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.²⁶ These arguments assumed, as has already been mentioned, that the “right” of individuals in target countries gave the United States the correlative power or duty under the international legal regime, to satisfy legal and informational disabilities that such individuals might have. China, Korea, and Vietnam argued that such broadcasting violates international tenets and agreements on domestic sovereignty.

5. Transformations and Information Intervention

Transformations in international broadcasting were also occasioned by the ethnic conflicts that closed the twentieth century. There is a complicated balance as the international community seeks to find as it alters media space to prevent future conflict and the potential for genocide. Training journalists, fostering new voices, and sparking local,

²⁶ *United States Code*, title 22, section 6201, para. 1.

indigenous media are all steps toward increasing stability and enhancing the plurality and diversity of political participation. But there are contexts where the ground for these more advanced measures was barren. In countries such as Cambodia and Rwanda, at particular times, the deployment of international radios may be a major mechanism for introducing a mood hospitable to peace or to help initiate useful political shifts. Combinations of monitoring, so-called peace broadcasting (neutral, outside efforts to provide information), and jamming are now emerging as elements of formulae for preventing conflict and promoting healing after war and genocide.²⁷

In Cambodia, in the mid-1990s, when the international community entered, there was little in the way of indigenous media and UN radio was created to ensure that there was a "fair" information source during the first elections. But afterwards, the UN radio ceased. In order to fill what was perceived as a void, Radio Free Asia sought to establish an FM relay station in Phnom Penh.²⁸ The Hun Sen controlled Information Ministry agreed to allow the station, but before the agreement was concluded and the station actually took concrete shape, the station's authorization was put in doubt. Newspapers charged Hun Sen with fear of RFA and VOA broadcasts "because the RFA broadcast constitutes a powerful missile that can destroy all tactics conducted by the dictatorial clique in the twinkling of an eye". With RFA's FM broadcast in Phnom Penh, "people can be informed immediately of what the Hun Sen government has done whether for national development or national destruction".

²⁷ See Metzl, *"Rwandan Genocide"*.

²⁸ *"Government Plans to Ban US-funded RFA Criticized," Samleng Yuveak-chon Khmer*, Apr. 8, 1999, reprinted in *World Broadcast Information*, Lexis News Library, Lexis News Library, BBCSWB file.

International broadcasters, in these newly altered conflict resolution and peacekeeping roles, often must work with concurrent efforts to block disfavored communications, altering the position of the international community. Especially in the contexts of threatened genocide or potentially large-scale deprivation of human rights, different forms of intervention have been found warranted. These modern interventions are even more drastic than jamming and not within the standard definition. The airwaves have to be ---or so it seems--- affected negatively and positively. In the bombing of transmitters in Afghanistan, before the international broadcaster took over the air space, local transmitters were destroyed on the grounds that they were used for the spewing of speech that incited or intensified conflict.²⁹ In another example, in May 1999, at the height of the conflict in Yugoslavia, the Eutelsat Board of Directors discontinued transmitting the Radio-TV Serbia (RTS) satellite program and thus made RTS inaccessible in European countries.³⁰

6. Transformations and New Technologies

One important question is how international broadcasting is affected by new technologies. There are innovations, but one could also conclude that external broadcasting remains a primarily low-tech enterprise and that radio, and

²⁹ Sufficiently similar to be cited here was the decision of Israel to destroy the building of the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation in January 2002. Palestinian leaders and international media watchdogs condemned the Israeli attack on the Ramallah headquarters. Israel had contended that Palestinian radio and television incited violence. The destruction of the Palestinian broadcasting headquarters renewed a debate on the propriety of attacking civilian-operated media outlets. *"Analysis: Israel destroys Palestinian broadcasting HQ in West Bank"*, *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, Jan. 24, 2002, BBC Monitoring Research.

³⁰ Of course, this was during an armed intervention. See *"Eutelsat Decision 'Culmination of Hypocrisy' "*, *Tanjung News Agency*, May 27, 1999, reprinted in *World Broadcast Information*, Lexis News Library, Jun. 4, 1999, BBCSWB file.

shortwave radio at that, is its most effective tool. In the post-war review of how to build up Afghan media, one approach was to sponsor a series of low power transmitters that would reach local areas rather than seek a national audience. Changes, such as the expansion of VOA into television, satellite feeds to a large number of independent or State-owned FM radio stations around the world, the introduction of monitoring, jamming, and broadcast aircraft as part of a means of introducing messages, often during war, and, of course, the turn to the Internet have suggested that modernization is necessary and useful. But do these new efforts make a difference? Do new technologies make States particularly permeable to the extensions of other States, and have the sending States used new technologies in ways that have affected the strategies of international broadcasters?

In late 1996 and early 1997, then President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, cracked down on independent media during opposition rallies protesting his regime's annulment of opposition victories in fourteen municipal elections across Serbia. The BBC, VOA, and RFE all sought to fill the information vacuum. VOA not only expanded its Serbian language broadcasts on shortwave and medium wave to reach more listeners in Yugoslavia, it leased time on a Eutelsat TV transponder to simulcast its Serbian language radio broadcasts within ten days after Milosevic attempted to close down independent Serbian radio station B-92.³¹ The Serbian language VOA radio-TV simulcasts, were pioneering efforts for planned expansion in VOA-TV programming of the late 1990s and beyond.

The 1999 NATO campaign against Yugoslavia provides additional insights into adaptation to new or different tech-

³¹ Several hundred thousand homes in Yugoslavia were equipped with satellite dishes capable of receiving international TV signals independently of local cable or terrestrial channels controlled by the government.

nologies. During the campaign, the Yugoslav government closed down all foreign broadcasting and banned the re-transmission of international broadcasters on domestic radio stations to the extent they could. In October 1998, during the period of threat of NATO attacks, the then Serbian Information Minister Aleksandar Vucic issued a decree that banned the "rebroadcasting of foreign media reports that aim to spread fear, panic, or defeatism." He singled out Deutsche Welle for its "numerous fabrications" about events in Kosovo and claimed that the Voice of America was conducting a propaganda campaign against Serbia.

This is a way to prevent the psychological-propaganda war which some foreign countries have waged against us either by broadcasting their programs or parts of their programs on domestic radio and TV stations or by directly or indirectly influencing the editorial concepts of certain media companies, especially if this originated from countries which are directly threatening to use military force against us.³²

With the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe's broadcasting taken off the air on stations inside Serbia, in April 1999 the chair of the International Broadcasting Board announced that the US government had decided to join in building the "ring around Serbia". The decision was to deploy FM transmitters so that the US agencies could get signals into Serbia and communicate to the Serbian people. The FM transmitters would beam into Serbia from surrounding countries though, at the time, international broadcasting officials were not specific about which countries were involved. The FM transmitters were constructed with funds provided by USAID. Though FM has a limited range,

³² "Information Minister Defends Relay Ban", *Tanjug News Agency*, Oct. 10, 1998, reprinted in *World Broadcast Information*, Lexis News Library, Oct. 16, 1998, BBCSWB file.

is problematic in hilly terrain, and more vulnerable to jamming than shortwave, the policy makers resorted to FM because it is the radio medium of choice in Serbia.³³ The construction of any strategy to transmit FM signals required a complicated effort to obtain rights to use of transmitters. In the case of Serbia, use was made of facilities in Kosovo and Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb entity.

In the summer of 2001, the United Kingdom announced the curtailment of shortwave transmissions of their international broadcasting arm to the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Listeners instead would have to access the World Service on the Internet or listen to a limited service rebroadcast on FM by local stations. The move ended the tradition, established in 1932 when the Empire Service, as it was then called, first went on air, of punctuating each hour with the familiar signature "This is London" and providing many listeners with their first live voice from a distant land.³⁴ The Voice of America cutback on its shortwave services as well, but expanded its Internet content. The context in which the BBC World Service and the Voice of America functioned had changed, and changed dramatically. New technologies, including the Internet, now, in specified locales, had greater audiences than traditional modes for distributing their messages. Virtually for the first time, because of the boundary-less nature of the Internet, a Congressional-imposed rule that the VOA could not be directed at a US domestic audience was technologically threatened in a meaningful way.

³³ "US to Surround Serbia with FM transmitters", Voice of America broadcast, Apr. 10, 1999, reprinted in *World Broadcast Information*, Lexis News Library, Apr. 16, 1999, BBCSWB file.

³⁴ "BBC World Service to Cut Back Broadcasts", *Daily Telegraph*, May 26, 2001.

7. Conclusion

The events of September 11 and the “war against terrorism” brought to the foreground debates over the future of public diplomacy and international broadcasting. These debates sharpened an understanding of the interest one society has in the media space of others. There are few other contexts in which there is so direct a discussion of a national purpose to alter the mix of voices, to affect the market for loyalties, to achieve greater civic participation in target societies and, finally, to win over hearts and minds. If there is a “revolution in public diplomacy,” international broadcasting will be one critical site for its implementation. The move may be toward “rebranding,” to use a current hot-button phrase, from an emphasis on a general process of representing the United States to one far more instrumental in its emphasis on specific content. International broadcasting may move from being an active proponent of the relationship of media to democracy to a function more closely tied to issues of media and global security. The very institutions of international broadcasting could begin to mimic their commercial counterparts. There may be a move from news to entertainment, from “objective and impartial” reportage to promotion of a particular culture or style. New technologies, new genres, new kinds of partnerships—all these will certainly characterize the future of international broadcasting. The revered Canadian activist and writer Graham Spry had a relevant warning (though he was speaking of domestic public service broadcasting): “To trust this weapon [the shaping of public opinion through electronic media] to advertising agents and interested corporations seems the uttermost folly”.³⁵

³⁵ Letter from Graham Spry, 1931, quoted in McChesney, Robert M., *Graham Spry and the Future of Public Broadcasting*, *Canadian Journal of Communications* 24, 1999.