

WORKING PAPER

SEPTEMBER 2010

**INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING AND
ITS CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC
DIPLOMACY**

**ANNMAREE O'KEEFFE AND
ALEX OLIVER**

PREFACE

Public diplomacy is an important mainstay of international diplomatic activity. Its usefulness lies in the way it projects a positive image of a country's strengths to a foreign audience. That projection can take many forms – hosting the Olympic Games, offering scholarships to foreign students or sponsoring artistic tours abroad. Yet, whatever the form, the objective of public diplomacy remains constant – to influence foreign public opinion in a way that supports a country's national interest.

One of the most efficient and effective ways for governments to reach the greatest number of people in foreign countries has been international broadcasting. Created in the early 20th century by countries wanting to keep their colonial outposts in touch with metropolitan views, international broadcasting has become a core element of public diplomacy. The BBC and Voice of America, although representing two distinctly different editorial and management models, stand out internationally as the most prominent of the longstanding public international broadcasters.

In Australia, however, governments of both sides have failed to grasp the importance of either public diplomacy or international broadcasting. Canberra's public diplomacy budget is anaemic and shrinking over time. Despite their impressive achievements, Australia's international broadcasting services — Radio Australia and Australia Network — have been periodically affected by threatened closure and slashed budgets.

While funding for Australia's international broadcasting has stabilised in recent years, the international arena has become much more competitive. The past decade has seen a ramping up of investment in international broadcasting by many governments as part of strategic public diplomacy campaigns. Countries across a broad spectrum of political, economic and cultural tradition have invested heavily in their broadcasters as a way of communicating their national image and values. Many of these cashed-up broadcasters have targeted audiences in Australia's region: Asia and the Pacific.

In the Lowy Institute's 2009 Blue Ribbon Panel Report *Australia's Diplomatic Deficit* we touched on the important role which Australia's public international broadcasters play as key public diplomacy vehicles in the Asia Pacific. The anomalies we pointed out at the time included the lack of attention, resourcing and strategic focus given to Australia's public diplomacy efforts, the lack of strategic collaboration between our international broadcasters and our foreign policy efforts, and the sustained underfunding of public diplomacy against a background of relentlessly eroding diplomacy budgets.

This presented us with two questions: what is driving other countries to increase their international broadcasting investments and are there any lessons for Australia from the international experience? To answer these questions, the Lowy Institute accepted a commission from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to undertake an extensive study of the relationship between public diplomacy and international broadcasting.

This paper is the outcome of a major research project conducted between December 2009 and June 2010, and offers a rare look into this important component of

diplomatic operations. It is intended to contribute to public debate about the shape and future of Australia's public international broadcasting services and to the broader question of the role of public diplomacy in Australia's international relations.

Michael Wesley
Executive Director
10 September 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International broadcasting is one of the principal means of presenting a country's perspective, views and values to foreign publics and their leaders, and a fundamental component of a nation's public diplomacy. This study surveyed the international broadcasting operations of ten major broadcasting nations - the UK, US, France, Germany, Netherlands, China, Korea, Japan, Canada and Qatar (Al Jazeera) – to examine the relationship between public diplomacy and international broadcasting, identify major industry trends, and consider the implications for Australia.

Key findings and conclusions: in brief

The international broadcasting industry has experienced a period of rapid expansion and transformation:

- major broadcasting nations have invested heavily in international broadcasting over the last 15 years, particularly in television and 24-hour news services. Generously-funded new entrants such as Al Jazeera have achieved strong footholds in areas of strategic interest. Budgets remain largely stable despite the financial crisis;
- many broadcasters have introduced comprehensive services in the Asia-Pacific;
- technological transformations include multimedia broadcasting, live streaming, use of new media vehicles and delivering content to mobile phones. Short-wave audiences are declining, but supplemented by FM rebroadcasting partnerships.

International broadcasting is a key tool of public diplomacy for nations which see public diplomacy as a staple of their diplomatic efforts, and is effective in enhancing their international image, standing and perceptions amongst foreign publics. However:

- independence is crucial to the credibility of the broadcaster and its ability to attract and maintain audiences;
- longevity, consistency, stable funding and effective cooperation with the ministry of foreign affairs are important factors in success.

Australia's public diplomacy is poorly funded and lacks strategic focus and coherence, and this affects its international broadcasting endeavours:

- Radio Australia and Australia Network have received erratic support and direction in the past;
- despite a period of stability, the comparatively low level of resourcing and complicated funding and structural arrangements hinder their ability to meet the challenges presented by rapid industry transformation and intense competition.

This compromises the broadcasters' ability to project Australia's voice effectively as a middle power in the region.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Rapid expansion

Over the last fifteen years, government-funded international broadcasting has expanded rapidly, launching into television and 24-hour news services:

- Al Jazeera launched in Arabic in 1996 and introduced English in 2006, and is now the most watched station in the Middle East for international news (around 40 per cent of viewers). With 10 new bureaux planned from 2010, its 79 bureaux makes it the largest news-gathering network globally;
- CCTV launched its English service in 2000, and broadcasts via six TV channels worldwide. China Radio International now broadcasts in 58 languages, almost double the coverage of the BBC World Service;
- BBC World Service expanded from radio into television with Arabic and Persian TV services in 2008-9; Germany's Deutsche Welle moved into television in 1992 and has expanded into Asia, Latin America, the US and Middle East, and France24 TV launched in 2006 in French and English, adding an Arabic-language service in 2009.

Principal developments

The major international broadcasters have expanded aggressively into the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America and Pacific markets over the last decade, particularly in the provision of (costly) TV services. Short-wave radio is declining, but is supplemented by FM rebroadcasting partnerships. Multimedia broadcasting is the norm, with websites seen as the third media pillar, and most broadcasters are streaming live content and harnessing new-media techniques, particularly with content direct to mobile handsets. Massive investments characterised the last decade in international broadcasting, and funding arrangements remain relatively stable, despite the impact of the global financial crisis. The implications of the latest funding negotiations for the BBC World Service remain unclear. Commercial revenue models (where legislation permits) have proved largely unfruitful.

International broadcasting essentials

Governments are driven by five broad goals in their international broadcasting: to provide credible alternative sources of information and ideas, particularly where there is an information deficit (eg former colonies); to access diasporas; to preserve non-English languages; to counter Western and English-language media, cultural or political dominance, and to project a country's culture, ideals, values and expertise.

Regardless of the particular goal, the prerequisite for a successful international broadcaster is credibility, and this is earned only if a broadcaster operates with complete editorial independence from its funding government. Legislative protection is the most effective guarantee of independence (as in the UK, US, Netherlands, Germany, and Japan). The perception of CCTV as a propaganda vehicle for the Chinese government jeopardises its credibility and audience loyalty.

Apart from the crucial requirement of independence, the review of international broadcasters indicated that several other factors are fundamental in a successful broadcasting endeavour: longevity and consistency (including a stable funding environment) and a cooperative relationship with the ministry of foreign affairs, to ensure that the broadcaster's strategic (as opposed to editorial) direction is broadly aligned with the country's foreign policy objectives.

Public diplomacy and international broadcasting

Public diplomacy is a key element of a nation's soft power in an era of global interconnectedness and increasingly powerful international and non-state actors. The UK, US, China and key European nations invest heavily in the basic tools of public diplomacy: cultural councils, education and exchange programs, and international broadcasting. The BBC World Service is seen as contributing more to the UK's image overseas than any other British institution, including the defence forces, UK aid and the UK government itself.

Australia's public diplomacy

As a middle power uniquely situated in Asia, Australia must work effectively to project its views and manage its relationships with its increasingly powerful neighbours. However, Australia's resourcing of diplomacy has eroded damagingly over the last decades, and the impact on its public diplomacy has been acute. Other than a significant investment in educational exchanges (largely through development assistance programs), Australia's public diplomacy is minimal. The largest portion of its very small budget is now directed to the Australia Network. In addition to (and perhaps because of) this inadequate resourcing, Australia's public diplomacy efforts appear as a poorly coordinated, disjointed series of activities, inadequately monitored for effectiveness and lacking integration with broader foreign policy objectives.

Australia's international broadcasting

Radio Australia and the Australia Network (the fourth incarnation of the television service launched in 1994) are Australia's international broadcasters. Both have experienced struggles over control and funding, although the last ten years have seen relatively stable support from government. Radio Australia has been broadcasting since 1939 but experienced a halving of its budget in 1997 and significant cutbacks to foreign-language services. Its real funding today is around half that of twenty years ago. Neither broadcaster controls its own transmission infrastructure, and broadcasting services are housed under different government departments and resourced under separate funding arrangements. The Australia Network operates under a five-year contract. All these factors present potential obstacles to the broadcasters' long-term planning ability, and their capacity to build and maintain audiences and promote Australia's interests effectively.

Australia's investment in international broadcasting is small, and its expenditure per capita (based on Australia's population) is far less than other major broadcasting nations. Yet international broadcasting is a cost-effective means of reaching audiences in their millions, particularly compared with other high-investment vehicles such as the recent Shanghai World Expo. For many public diplomacy activities, engagement with the audience is fleeting. International broadcasting has the potential to reach

audiences on a more regular and sustained basis, and costs between a quarter and a third per audience member reached than did the Shanghai Expo.

Despite volatile histories and tight financial constraints, both international broadcasters have achieved strong reputations in the region, built audiences, provided essential services in regional incidents (as Radio Australia did during the East Timor referendum in 1999) and filled a need for an independent source of news (such as in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar).

Implications for Australia

Australia's international broadcasters have survived and even prospered over decades of erratic direction and funding. However, they operate in a policy and funding environment which hinders them in keeping pace with rapidly-evolving international developments. If the government persists in its current mode of under-resourcing public diplomacy and the international broadcasting vehicle which is a valuable contributor to Australia's foreign policy goals, Australia will struggle in this intensely competitive environment to maintain audiences and an effective voice in the region.

Contents

	Page
INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING	6
The evolution of public diplomacy: new definitions	6
International broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy	8
A century of international broadcasting	9
The public diplomacy goals of international broadcasting: views from around the world	10
CHAPTER 2: A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTERS	15
1. Legislation and governance	15
Underpinning legislation: mission and independence articulated	
Governance and funding arrangements	
2. Geographic coverage	19
Europe	
Middle East and Asia	
United States and Canada	
3. Evolution of media – the rise of television and online media and decline of short-wave radio	23
4. Future plans	25
5. Alternative sources of funding	29
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSING BROADCASTING’S CONTRIBUTION	30
International broadcasting’s effectiveness	30
Independence the lynchpin	32
Longevity and consistency	33
The importance of clear goals	34

Cooperation on strategic direction	35
Geographic targeting: playing to existing strengths and focusing on strategic challenges and opportunities	37
Media strategies: TV, online, FM, consolidating the media portfolio	37
Financial challenges: quarantining the broadcaster from budget cuts	38
Increased competition and market saturation	39
Conclusion	40
CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IN AUSTRALIA	42
Australia's place in the world and the importance of an effective public diplomacy effort	42
Australia's public diplomacy	44
Comparison of public diplomacy budgets internationally	46
Imbalance of components of public diplomacy program	48
History of Australian international broadcasting	49
The impact of variable support on Australian broadcasters' audiences	52
Australian international broadcasting today: overcoming a legacy of historical inconsistency	53
Unique constraints	55
CHAPTER 5: LESSONS FROM ABROAD	56
Independence, credibility and audience loyalty	57
Longevity and consistency	58
Financial security and predictability	60
Strategic direction	60

CHAPTER 6: WHY AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IS IMPORTANT	62
The cost effectiveness of international broadcasting	62
Reinforcing Australia’s international strategic objectives	64
Addressing mistrust and misconceptions	
Projecting a positive and attractive image for Australia	
Acting as a responsible leader in the region	
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS FOR AUSTRALIA	68
ANNEX 1: COMPARATIVE INDICATORS OF THE BROADCASTERS	70
INDEX OF TABLES AND FIGURES	
Table 1: Geographic coverage	22
Table 2: Comparison of annual public diplomacy and international broadcasting budgets	47
Figure1: Australian Public Diplomacy Expenditure 1998-2009	46
Figure 2: Australia and international television funding history	54
The BBC’s international operations	61

INTRODUCTION

For more than eighty years, international broadcasting funded by government has played an important role in advancing the strategic and national interests of countries around the world. It is one of the principal means of presenting a country's perspective, views and values to foreign publics and their leaders. A growing number of countries are investing increasing amounts in their international broadcasting efforts as part of targeted public diplomacy programs.

This study looks at the way government-funded international broadcasting is operating across a number of the major economies, its relationship to its host country's public diplomacy program and its contribution to the achievement of international strategic objectives. It examines developments in the international broadcasting arena and the major evolutions and trends over recent decades. In particular, the study investigates the rationale behind the apparent escalation in governments' investments in international broadcasting and in public diplomacy generally. It then seeks to identify the lessons coming out of the international experience and to determine if they are of value to Australia.

The broadcasters chosen for the comparative study represent a cross-section of major public broadcasters from countries of differing political, economic and cultural traditions. While exhaustive coverage was not feasible, the sample includes nations which are "like-minded" with Australia (the UK, Netherlands and Canada), and our important neighbours China, Japan and South Korea. The United States, France and Germany were selected because of their long-standing reputations as international broadcasting nations, and Qatar, because Al Jazeera has become the leading source of news and information in the Middle East.¹

While there are also numerous examples of successful commercial international networks, they fall outside the scope of this study, which was to investigate the role of government-funded broadcasting in a nation's public diplomacy programs. However, the unique case of the BBC, which is an amalgam of government-funded and commercial enterprises, is included.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the relationship between public diplomacy and international broadcasting, tracing the history of its evolution through to its current position within the respective countries' public diplomacy efforts. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the particular characteristics of other countries' broadcasters while Chapter 3 offers an analysis of their experience. Chapter 4 traces the relationship between public diplomacy and international broadcasting in Australia. Chapter 5 then considers the applicability of the lessons from other countries to Australia's own approach to international broadcasting. Chapter 6 looks at the importance of Australia's international broadcasting services in supporting Australia's broader diplomatic efforts, while the final chapter provides concluding commentary.

¹ Al Jazeera was the most-watched channel for international news in 2010 (39 per cent of respondents) in a survey of 3,976 people from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates: Shibley Telhami, *2010 Arab Public Opinion Poll*, conducted by the University of Maryland in conjunction with Zogby International, 5 August 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/0805_arab_opinion_poll_telhami.aspx

The conduct of the study

The Lowy Institute conducted two extensive research trips: one to major broadcasting nations in Asia (China, Japan and Korea) and to the United States and Canada, and another to the established broadcasters in the United Kingdom and Europe (France, the Netherlands and Germany) and the newer broadcaster Al Jazeera, based in Qatar. The researchers visited relevant government ministries of each broadcasting nation, together with the broadcasters themselves. Additional interviews were conducted with external commentators from research institutions and think tanks.

This report combines the results of the Lowy Institute's field work with extensive desk research of the current literature and web-based resources.

For the purposes of this report and in line with popular interpretation, the transmission platforms used for international broadcasting have been deemed as radio, television, online (including web and podcasts) and handheld communication devices.

CHAPTER 1: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

International relations has entered a new era, with sweeping changes wrought by the end of the Cold War, the events of 9/11 and the information revolution. The ease of global interconnectedness has created a public with an unprecedented ability to inform itself on international issues. Increasingly potent international actors are projecting a voice on the global stage,² including extremist groups, NGOs, powerful individuals and other non-state actors. As one practitioner put it: “*the breathtaking spread of information around the world is robbing diplomacy of much of its information advantage as regards events abroad*”.³

The new asymmetrical conflict heralded by 9/11 presented radically different challenges to the great-power conflicts of the previous century. No longer were governments the sole repository of power in the information age. Communicating with foreign publics — or “public diplomacy” — became vitally important for a nation’s security and prosperity. Settling into the inertia of peace for a decade after the Cold War’s end, governments’ attention to public diplomacy waned. But the challenges of the post 9/11 world thrust public diplomacy into the spotlight again, as nations grappled with the need to communicate with foreign publics in the myriad new ways posed by the information revolution.

The evolution of public diplomacy: new definitions

Over its history, public diplomacy has been practised in different ways. One nation’s public diplomacy might be understood by others as propaganda. This leads to questions about the nature of public diplomacy, the way it is interpreted and practised, its components, and ultimately its effectiveness.

The term *public diplomacy* was originally coined in the mid-60s by former US diplomat, Edmund Gullion, to put a distance between US Government information activities and the increasingly pejorative term, “propaganda”.⁴ The practice of propaganda had its origins in World War I and the work of the Creel Committee, which had been tasked with convincing the US population to support America’s entry into the Great War. The result was a six-month war propaganda campaign which whipped up anti-German sentiment across the country.⁵

While this early 20th century practice of propaganda was based on its simple appeal to emotion rather than intellect, it has evolved considerably in the last decade into the largely well-regarded discipline of public diplomacy. It has become one of the tools of a

² Brian Hocking, Reconfiguring public diplomacy: from competition to collaboration, Engagement. *Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World*, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2008, London, 62

³ Dr Albert Spiegel, Public Diplomacy – the German View, speech by the Head of the Federal Foreign Office Directorate-General for Cultural Relations and Education Policy, British Council Staff Conference, 13/19 March 2002, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/Archiv/2002/020318-GermanPublicDiplomacy.html>

⁴ University of Southern California, Center on Public Diplomacy http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/index.php/about/what_is_pd

⁵ Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*; London, 2008, p 67

nation's "soft power": the ability (as described by its major proponent, Joseph Nye), to "affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values and policies."⁶

The practice of public diplomacy is now a significant element of the soft power employed by many countries, including the UK, the US and a number of European nations.⁷ By comparison, in the People's Republic of China, the practice remains rooted in its origins, and the Chinese government still uses the Mandarin word for *propaganda* to describe its extensive efforts to influence international thinking and opinion on China, although in recognition of the sensitivities surrounding the word in English, the Chinese government has stopped using the word "propaganda" in foreign languages.⁸

Former US Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, James Glassman, defined public diplomacy in 2008 as "*diplomacy aimed at publics, as opposed to officials.... [it] has as its mission the achievement of the national interest. Public diplomacy performs this mission in a particular way: by understanding, informing, engaging and persuading foreign publics ... to make it easier to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals*".⁹ The UK has expressed it simply as "*help[ing] achieve our foreign policy goals through engagement with foreign publics*".¹⁰ In practice, public diplomacy is generally understood as the implementation of a strategically-formulated program of activities by government, including cultural, educational and communication activities, designed to shape foreign public opinion by promoting the attractiveness of a country's ideals and values.¹¹

The power and effectiveness of public diplomacy have been debated over the last two decades as nations wrestle with the emerging forces transforming the conduct of international relations: globalisation, the communications and information revolutions and the rise of non-state actors. Combined with the increasingly complex international challenges such as war, terrorism, natural disasters, the environment, energy demand, resource competition and pandemics, these forces are challenging the traditional international policy approaches of government and forcing governments to rethink the way they operate.¹²

In this evolving environment, influencing publics, both domestically and internationally, has become a critical component in projecting a nation's voice and identity internationally and conducting its foreign policy. As US Defense Secretary Robert Gates argued in 2008:

⁶ Joseph S Nye, Public Diplomacy and Soft Power, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2008, p 94

⁷ See for example, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (SCFADT), 2007, *Australia's public diplomacy: building our image*, p 1

⁸ Anne-Marie Brady, testimony to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 30 April 2009

⁹ James K Glassman, The new age of public diplomacy, speech by the US Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Chatham House, London, 11 September 2008

¹⁰ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Engagement. Public Diplomacy in a Globalised World*, 2008, London, Executive Summary, p 7

¹¹ For example, see Steffen Bay Rasmussen, The messages and practices of the European Union's public diplomacy, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Volume 5, 2010, pp 263-287, p 265, outlining definitions by Michael McClellan, Joseph Nye and Jan Melissen

¹² See for example Lowy Institute for International Policy, *Australia's diplomatic deficit. Blue Ribbon Panel Report*, Sydney, March 2009, p 11; Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *Active diplomacy for a changing world. The UK's international priorities*, London, March 2006, p 46; James K Glassman, The new age of public diplomacy

“non-military efforts ... tools of persuasion and inspiration ... were indispensable to the outcome of the defining struggle of the 20th century. They are just as indispensable in the 21st century — and perhaps even more so”.¹³ In a post 9/11 world, the resurgent public diplomacy has come to be known as “the new public diplomacy”: a public diplomacy adapted to the challenges of the information age — interaction with non-state actors, two-way communication, global 24/7 media, the increasing influence of public opinion, branding, social networking and cultural homogenisation.¹⁴

For small and medium-sized nations, the need to project soft power effectively is even more pronounced. Great powers like the US, China and Russia attract attention easily. Middle powers, like Australia, Canada, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden, have smaller hard-power capabilities and less economic clout.¹⁵ They strive for visibility on the international stage against a proliferation of nations and non-state actors, all competing in an increasingly crowded information marketplace.¹⁶ The 2007 report on public diplomacy in Australia by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade stressed that *“Australia is in intense competition with other countries also seeking to be heard on matters of importance to them.”*¹⁷

The same report argues that public diplomacy, with a coherent strategy, proper resources and a sophisticated approach, can provide middle powers such as Australia with a means to garner influence well beyond their hard-power capabilities.¹⁸ There is an important qualification, though: the success of a nation’s public diplomacy depends not only on the way it engages foreign publics and the messages it communicates through public diplomacy, but on the substance of its values and foreign policy. To recall Joseph Nye, *“the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture, in places where it is attractive to others, its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)”*.¹⁹ Without those critical foundations of authenticity, legitimacy and moral authority, public diplomacy risks lapsing into propaganda and the opportunity for genuine engagement is lost.

International broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy

To implement a public diplomacy program, a government employs an array of tools. The range is broad, but generally includes activities such as:

- cultural diplomacy: events, tours or the activities of cultural institutes such as the British Council, Japan Foundation, Confucius Centres and the Goethe Institute
- educational diplomacy: scholarships, exchanges, study tours
- visitors programs: media and special visitors

¹³ Robert M Gates, US Global Leadership Campaign, speech by the US Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC, 15 July 2008

¹⁴ Eytan Gilboa, The public diplomacy of middle powers, *PD magazine*, Issue 2, Summer 2009 pp 22-28, <http://publicdiplomacymagazine.com/the-public-diplomacy-of-middle-powers/>

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ For example, Hocking, Reconfiguring public diplomacy; Gilboa, The public diplomacy of middle powers

¹⁷ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, p xi

¹⁸ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, p 24

¹⁹ Nye, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*, p 95

- communications programs: media and public relations, information management and branding, and
- international broadcasting

Many of these activities are highly targeted, designed to reach discrete but influential audiences. International broadcasting, by comparison, offers governments the opportunity to reach and target the broadest spectrum of foreign publics and on a regular, consistent basis.

Today, international broadcasting is being used by developed and emerging-economy countries across the world to promote their cultures, ideas, perspectives and products. In the last decade, there has been an exponential growth in government-funded international broadcasting. But while this expansion appears to have slowed in the wake of the global financial crisis and tight government budgets, it remains a significant and visible feature in a range of public diplomacy programs, even where overarching public diplomacy strategies and clearly defined objectives are absent.

A century of international broadcasting

Starting with the use of short-wave radio in the early 20th century, the revolution in communications technology has been a major catalyst in broadening the audience for public diplomacy activities. This technology, ranging from the popularisation of satellite television through to the rapid development of cheap, accessible handheld communication devices, has had a big impact on international broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy. The direct targeting of a foreign country's population at all levels is now not only feasible but a reality, via media that is popular, accessible and mobile.

Over its 80-year history, the style, presentation and rationale for international broadcasting have evolved, shaped by global events, threats and conflicts. Colonial imperatives, World War II, the Cold War and the War on Terrorism have each had very significant roles in the way government-sponsored international broadcasting has developed and been used as an instrument of public diplomacy.

Colonial responsibilities in the Dutch East Indies prompted the Dutch Government to start its international broadcasts in 1927. This was soon followed by the British Government's BBC Empire Service, which commenced transmitting in 1932. World War II saw the growth in the use of foreign-directed broadcasters on both sides of the war. Radio Japan was used by the Imperial Japanese Army as a propaganda tool, gaining infamy through the "Tokyo Rose" legend — the nickname given by American servicemen to the broadcaster's female war-time presenters. Voice of America (VOA) was heard for the first time in 1942 following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and quickly became an important element of the country's war effort.

The Cold War period was a time of expansion and creativity for the US international broadcasters, as VOA was joined by Radio Free Europe (RFE), Radio Liberty (RL) and later Radio Marti²⁰ in the quest to fight communism. In 1961, when President Kennedy appointed Ed Murrow as the head of the US Information Agency (USIA), the home of VOA, the USA made clear the importance it ascribed to international broadcasting and its

²⁰ Broadcasting into Cuba from the early 1980s

role in public diplomacy. Murrow had made his name as a fearless commentator with his CBS radio programs, “See it Now” during the 1950s, and had been an opponent of the Joe McCarthy anti-communism campaign in the early 1950s.

VOA and its associated broadcasters, under the umbrella of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), prospered for much of the second half of the 20th century, as an important element in the USA’s soft-power armaments in the Cold War. In the 1990s, VOA’s star faded as it bore the effects of the Clinton Administration’s cost-cutting in public diplomacy institutions in the wake of the USA’s ideological victory over the USSR. Its star was to re-emerge in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. The War on Terrorism not only revived VOA, but instigated a reallocation of geographic and language priorities by already established broadcasters, and propelled the growth and multiplication of Arab-based broadcasting services, including the rapid expansion of Al Jazeera and the launch of Al Arabiya.

The evolution of public diplomacy as a discipline has itself had an important impact on the development of international broadcasting, contributing to a sharper and more astute understanding of what audiences need and want to see and hear for public diplomacy objectives to be met.

Most importantly, the information technology revolution has created its own revolution in international broadcasting, taking it from a static-ridden, short-wave radio-based exercise to a potent multi-media, mobile and interactive instrument. Broadcasters in their multitudes, often competing to attract and impress the same audiences, have become more accessible, flexible and innovative in their media platforms. They deliver programming through radio, TV and internet, still transmitting with the old technologies but increasingly through the rapidly evolving new wireless mobile internet devices. Twenty-first century international broadcasting exploits the digital potential and makes use of podcasting, webcasting, streaming; it is 24/7 in nature and its appeal is widespread.

The public diplomacy goals of international broadcasting: views from around the world

A big question about international broadcasting and its role in public diplomacy is why so many governments have adopted it as one of their key public diplomacy planks. Commercial, and arguably more appealing, broadcasters are already crowding the international market-place.

So what prompts a government to spend annually tens of millions of dollars on their country’s broadcaster to attract a fickle audience? While there are overlaps in the answers for every one of those broadcasters, the diversity underscores the plurality of international broadcasting’s role in public diplomacy. Our survey of broadcasting nations demonstrated the broad variation in their goals for their international broadcasters, ranging from a post-colonial sense of responsibility to a more modern desire to promote cultural diversity in a globalised world.

Even within Europe, there are subtle differences between each nation’s perspective on the role of international broadcasting and their goals for their international broadcasting efforts. These stem from their historical background, their legislative arrangements and

their cultural standpoints, some of which are articulated in their formal missions and goals.

Historically, the BBC World Service (BBCWS) and Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW) had similar aspirations — to reach their colonial populations with news in their home language. Radio France International (RFI) emerged in the ‘70s with a similar goal, but in a post-colonial context. For all three, there remains a lingering and quite compelling sense of responsibility towards former colonies, particularly those with insufficient resources for maintaining a healthy fourth estate. For France, this is one of the chief *raison d’être* for services in the Maghreb countries of North Africa.²¹

A second motive is the desire to promote (or at least preserve) the use of nations’ (non-English) mother tongues. For France, this is a major driver of the broadcasting effort. TV5 Monde exists primarily for this purpose — to support *La Francophonie* around the globe. The position of Secretary of State *chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie* illustrates the gravity of this task, as does the Preamble to the TV5 Charter, for which the “*pièce angulaire [cornerstone] [is] du développement d’une francophonie vivante et dynamique ...*”.²² In part, this derives from the EU initiative ‘mother tongue plus two’,²³ but our interviews suggested deeper forces in play, stemming from the European imperative to maintain cultural diversity and counter the threat of Anglo-American hegemony and homogeneity. Curiously, given its lack of imperial baggage, Deutsche Welle’s (DW) formal mission statement stresses “in particular” the promotion of the German language. Even when broadcasting in other languages, DW presenters speak with a German accent. For RNW, the mission is less to promote the Dutch language than to reach Dutch speakers outside the Netherlands.

A final and overarching goal common to the European broadcasters is the desire and need to represent their nations to the world. This equates to a public diplomacy goal, emanating from the ambition to further their foreign policy aims. It is specifically articulated in the BBC Charter, which charges the BBC with “*bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK*”, “*representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities*”²⁴ and “*to be the world’s best known and most respected voice in international broadcasting, thereby bringing benefit to Britain.*”²⁵ In the Netherlands, one of the primary goals for RNW in its Media Act is to “*disseminate a realistic image of the Netherlands abroad*”, and in the Deutsche Welle Act, DW is required to “*convey the image of Germany as a cultural state in the European tradition and as a free and democratic constitutional state*”.²⁶ The French government was explicit at the launch of France 24 about the need to convey the

²¹ Including former colonial possessions Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania; Interview with Rene Troccaz, Director Adjoint de cabinet du Secrétaire d’État chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie, 5 February 2010

²² TV5 Monde, *Préambule, La Charte TV5*, Bruxelles, 19 September 2005, <http://www.bakom.admin.ch/org/international/01014/index.html?lang=en>

²³ Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The European indicator of language competence*, Brussels, 2005, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/com356_en.pdf

²⁴ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Broadcasting Copy of Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation*, October 2006 (BBC Charter)

²⁵ Foreign and Commonwealth Office and The British Broadcasting Corporation, *Broadcasting agreement for the provision of the BBC World Service*, Annex B, (BBCWS Broadcasting Agreement), information provided by the FCO

²⁶ Deutsche Welle Act, s 4, provided by Deutsche Welle; Media Act 2008, Netherlands, http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0025028/geldigheidsdatum_08-09-2010

French point of view and balance Anglo-American cultural imperialism.²⁷ The 2010 French budget papers outline the overall goal of the new overarching vehicle controlling all the international broadcasting operations of France, l'Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France (l'AEF) : *to develop the French presence in the audiovisual world to contribute to the influence of France, to la Francophilie and the promotion of la Francophonie ... to reflect diversity of culture and points of view and French and French-speaking culture and values*".²⁸ For France, soft power is a uniquely French concept. It seeks through its international broadcasting to present all perspectives, whether African, Western, European, Asian or Middle Eastern, rather than a national or regional perspective, such as (in the view of France) the Voice of America and Al Jazeera. The format of France 24 — news, debate, culture, information — illustrates this shift from promoting the French language to promoting the French way.

Promoting cultural diversity is a goal shared by the German broadcaster, Deutsche Welle (DW), which explains in the *Deutsche Welle Act* that "[DW] should provide a forum in Europe and on other continents for German (and other) points of view on important topics, primarily in the areas of politics, culture, and economics, with the aim of promoting understanding and the exchange of ideas among different cultures and peoples".²⁹

The Arabic and English language broadcaster, Al Jazeera, is unique among the surveyed broadcasters in the way it perceives its role as an international broadcaster. In fact, the roles of its Arabic and English services are subtly different, and the services themselves are quite distinct. Both aim to cover the news from a grassroots perspective, to "balance the information flow from South to North" and to be "the channel of reference for the Middle East and Africa".³⁰ However, while the Arabic channel aims to "tell the truth" and to provide "the opinion, and the other opinion", the English channel's mission is to "set the news agenda" while presenting an alternative³¹ to the Western-dominated English language news media: "the channel will set the news agenda, bridging cultures and providing a unique grassroots perspective from under-reported regions around the world to a potential global audience of over one billion English speakers".³²

Rather than representing the interests of Qatar to the world, Al Jazeera aims to represent the interests and meet the information needs of the Arab world. The strict Qatari censorship laws in place when the current Emir came to power have been wound back, leaving Al Jazeera as one of the few media services in the region which provides a credible source of news, but from a non-Western perspective, in contrast to the BBC/CNN international news services.

For Japan and South Korea, the common objective has been to promote a better understanding and appreciation of their cultures and world views. And, like China, each

²⁷ John Ward Anderson, All news all the time, and now in French, *The Washington Post*, 7 December 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/06/AR2006120602116.html>

²⁸ Republique Francaise, *Mission Interministerielle Projets Annuels de Performances Annexe au Projet de Loi de Finances pour 2010, Medias*, http://www.performance-publique.gouv.fr/farandole/2010/pap/pdf/PAP2010_BG_Medias.pdf, p 110, author's translation

²⁹ Deutsche Welle Act, s 4

³⁰ Al Jazeera English, media release, *Bureaux and Correspondents*, 10 October 2006, <http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185226544965.html>

³¹ Interview with Al Anstey, Director of Media Development, Al Jazeera Network, 17 February 2010

³² Al Jazeera English website, *Corporate Profile*, <http://i.aljazeera.net/?i=4538>

has a channel dedicated to their internationally dispersed diasporas, although for differing reasons. Recent legislation has enabled South Koreans living overseas to vote in national elections, and this has provided a further incentive for the South Korean government to support the Korean-language KBS World TV, which started broadcasting in 2003. South Korea's earlier entry into international television broadcasting, the Arirang service, was prompted by the popularity of the Korean Wave ("Hallyu") cultural phenomenon which captivated East Asia in the mid-1990s. Arirang was to be a vehicle to ride the wave of that popularity, as a culture-focused English-language service, broadcasting initially to foreign residents and tourists in Korea and then expanded in 1999 to international audiences. Despite its promising beginnings, more than a decade later, with no supporting legislation and a very limited budget, it is a broadcaster that seems uncertain of its role and independence.

With the stated objective of promoting international understanding of Japan and its perspectives, Japan's aim in international broadcasting is similar to its European counterparts. Yet it has been a relative latecomer to international telecasting. It was only in 2009 that it established a foreigner-focused international broadcaster, in the wake of concerns expressed by Japanese politicians and other leaders in the mid-2000s that Japan was being left behind in international broadcasting. NHK World's linkage to Japan's other public diplomacy efforts is very limited, and its own ambitions are to become the credible voice of views from Asia and to use Japan's comparative advantage in business to provide a niche news service.³³

China's international broadcasters have no doubts about their role: they are an integral element of China's public diplomacy efforts. In part, their task is to mount a counter-offensive on the "*Western media's ideological assault on the rest of the world*".³⁴ But the Chinese Government is sending two messages through its use of and investment in international broadcasting. Firstly, it is using its media resources to impress and remind the world that it cannot be taken advantage of again following the humiliations of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. The second is the endeavour to depict China as an attractive, internationally responsible and respected member of the global community.³⁵

The US perspective on international broadcasting reflects its great power role. The goal of the BBG (which controls the various US Government-funded broadcasters including VOA), is not to promote the USA, but to demonstrate the parity of ideas. According to BBG's executive director, Jeff Trimbel, America already promotes itself very effectively in other ways.³⁶ Instead, BBG is an integral part of America's soft-power efforts — the legislation which establishes BBG clearly links US-sponsored broadcasting entities with US foreign policy, requiring that VOA include editorials which present the views of the US government. But rather than reflecting the views of a particular administration, the legislation promotes broader US philosophies of freedom of speech and access to information, reinforcing the inviolable principles of the First Amendment.

Canada's approach to international broadcasting is unique among the G8 countries. Its very limited investment in international broadcasting is matched by its very limited interest in using it to promote the country or to advance its foreign policy objectives.

³³ Interviews with NHK Executives, February 2010

³⁴ Anne-Marie Brady, US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, April 2009

³⁵ Interview with Russ Moses, Dean, The Beijing Center, Beijing February 2010

³⁶ Interview with Jeff Trimbel, Executive Director, Broadcasting Board of Governors, Washington, February 2010

Indications are that it has no plans to change this position.³⁷ Canada's long-standing concern is about the impact of American culture on Canada, which appears to drive much of what could be described as the current public diplomacy effort. Canadian Heritage's website notes that "*Canada has a relatively small and diverse population and we live next door to the most powerful and pervasive culture in the world*". Broadcasting's role in Canada is to protect domestically, rather than to promote internationally.

Reviewing this wide spectrum of national objectives for the international broadcasting exercise, there are five broad reasons driving governments to use international broadcasting to achieve their public diplomacy goals:

- to provide credible alternative sources of information and ideas, particularly to nations which may have insufficient resources to support robust independent media (such as former colonial possessions)
- to access and influence the overseas-residing diaspora
- to preserve non-English languages
- to counter Western and English-language media, cultural or political dominance, and
- to project a country's culture, ideals, values and expertise.

Whether these enterprises are successful in achieving these ambitious and diverse goals is a challenging question, which we examine in Chapter 3. What is clear, though, is that there is a broad variation in the structures and strategies that governments have employed for the broadcasting tools they have chosen to wield in pursuing these public diplomacy goals. We discuss these in detail in the next chapter.

³⁷ Interviews with officials from Canadian Heritage and Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, February 2010

CHAPTER 2: A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTERS

The last decade has witnessed a dramatic increase in the competition broadcasters find themselves facing:

*“it is not just easier for new players to enter the arena, more and more actually want to do so....thus we see France, Iran, the Arab world, Italy and Russia all intent on opening up new international broadcasting operations.”*³⁸

In this burgeoning market of broadcasters all competing for attention,³⁹ the government-funded broadcasters seek to differentiate themselves from each other and from their commercial counterparts. At one end of the spectrum is the BBC, dubbed by Kofi Annan as “*perhaps Britain’s greatest gift to the world this century*”.⁴⁰ At the other end are the Chinese broadcasters CCTV and CRI, whose content is strictly controlled by the powerful Central Propaganda Department, which is responsible for monitoring the news media and broadcasting to “*see that they correctly and in a timely fashion promote the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) current line, guiding principles and policies.*”⁴¹ In assessing what creates these sorts of perceptions, our review of the broadcasters revealed some critical variations in the structures and strategies they have employed for their international broadcasters in striving to project their nations’ voices effectively and achieve their public diplomacy goals.

Of all of the structures and strategies we reviewed, a broadcaster’s independence — both editorial and managerial — emerged as the lynchpin of its credibility, crucial to its functioning as a public diplomacy tool. The value of this independence is analysed in detail in Chapter 3, but where a broadcaster is funded by government, a pre-requisite for independence is the mechanism in place to protect it. This chapter outlines the various mechanisms broadcasters employ, together with other structural and strategic arrangements, ranging from the legislative, governance and funding arrangements underpinning each service, to their choice of media and geographic targeting and their plans for the future in this increasingly complex arena.

1. Legislation and governance

Underpinning legislation: mission and independence articulated

The BBCWS, RNW and DW are all creatures of statute, and to a significant extent these legislative arrangements determine the missions of the broadcasters and their relationships with government. The BBCWS is governed under the BBC Charter, together with the Broadcasting Agreement which outlines its relationship with the Foreign and

³⁸ Richard Sambrook, (former) Director, BBC Global News Division, *Global voice. Britain’s future in international broadcasting*, London, 2007, p 9

³⁹ *The Economist*, International broadcasters. Waves in the web, 12 August 2010, http://www.economist.com/node/16791638?story_id=16791638

⁴⁰ Speech by Kofi Annan in 1999 at the opening of the BBC’s Washington DC news bureau, referred to in BBC Press Office media release, *The BBC in the Arab world*, 3 March 2008, http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2008/03_march/03_arabic_worldservice.shtml

⁴¹ Powers and responsibilities of the Central Propaganda Department, reproduced in Anne-Maree Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, p 15

Commonwealth Office.⁴² Under that Agreement, the BBC must set the objectives, priorities and targets for the service with the Foreign Secretary. Importantly, the BBC must obtain the Foreign Secretary's written approval for the opening or closing of any language service.⁴³ However, both the Charter and the Agreement specifically provide for the BBCWS's editorial and managerial independence.⁴⁴

RNW is governed by the Netherlands Media Act 2008, which stipulates that its mission is to:

- inform Dutch speaking people abroad,
 - provide independent information in countries with an information deficit, and
 - disseminate a realistic image of the Netherlands abroad,⁴⁵
- all free of government influence.⁴⁶

In Germany, the Deutsche Welle Act outlines its goals more qualitatively as “...intended to convey the image of Germany as a cultural state in the European tradition and as a free and democratic constitutional state. They should provide a forum in Europe and on other continents for German (and other) points of view on important topics, primarily in the areas of politics, culture, and economics, with the aim of promoting understanding and the exchange of ideas among different cultures and peoples. In so doing, Deutsche Welle shall, in particular, promote the German language.” Editorial independence is specifically protected in the Act, and the executive bodies are responsible only to the German public.⁴⁷

Japan's broadcaster, NHK, and its international arm NHK World, are governed under the provisions of the Broadcast Law (“Hoso Ho”) enacted in 1950 and still in force today. Freedom of expression is assured in that legislation through the protection of programming from external interference and the guarantee of impartiality, integrity and autonomy.

In South Korea, only KBS has the protection of legislation and is enshrined in the South Korean Constitution. The legal status of Arirang is unclear because it was created through the Korea International Broadcasting Foundation which itself has no underpinning legislation, being established by the government as a non-profit foundation under the provisions of the South Korean Civil Code in 1996.

While the US broadcasters under the BBG umbrella are fully government-funded and incorporated into the public diplomacy of the US through the terms of its legislation,⁴⁸ BBG guards tenaciously its role as a firewall, ensuring the credibility of the broadcasters by keeping BBG journalists separate from the rest of the US government and from potential political pressure. That role has been enshrined in the agency's enabling legislation, the US International Broadcasting Act 1994. While the Act establishes the

⁴² See p 11

⁴³ BBCWS Broadcasting Agreement, Clause 10

⁴⁴ Ibid, Clause 9

⁴⁵ Netherlands Media Act 2008, Article 2.72, our emphasis,
http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0025028/geldigheidsdatum_08-09-2010

⁴⁶ Ibid, Article 2.1

⁴⁷ Deutsche Welle Act, sections 8(3), 11(3), 26(1)

⁴⁸ See p 13

BBG as an independent agency, it also stipulates that US international broadcasting must include editorials which present the views of the US government and have the capacity to support US foreign-policy objectives during crises abroad.

The Act also requires the Board to consult with the Secretary of State in making determinations on the addition or deletion of language services in recognition of the possible foreign-policy implications. The emphasis is on consultation but the Board is advised to give careful consideration to the Secretary of State's views.

The protection of Canadian culture figures large in the rationale for CBC's (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) existence. This is enshrined in the Broadcasting Act of 1991 which describes broadcasting in Canada as a cultural act to be focused on cultural objectives.

Alone among the nations surveyed (apart from China), the international broadcasting services in France and Qatar (for Al Jazeera) are not governed by enabling legislation. Their missions and independence are articulated differently, through journalistic codes of ethics⁴⁹ and mission statements.⁵⁰

Governance and funding arrangements

As with their legislative genesis, the funding arrangements in place for each broadcaster influence to varying degrees its relationship with government.⁵¹

While the BBCWS is funded by a Parliamentary grant-in-aid, the funds are administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office,⁵² and the terms of their relationship are dictated in the Broadcasting Agreement.⁵³ The BBCWS is, like the rest of the BBC, accountable to the BBC Trust, whose 12 Trustees are appointed by the Queen on advice from her ministers.

DW's funding derives mainly from the Ministry of Culture and Communications (under the Chancellery, through television licence fees)⁵⁴ but, again, as a statutory body, it is largely independent of its funding ministry. There is a strict governance structure in place under the Deutsche Welle Act, where the Broadcasting Board and Administrative Board comprise a diverse membership prescribed under the Act to include elected members appointed from various levels of government, church, social, employer and union organisations. Although the funding body is the Chancellery, additional funding (for strategic purposes) comes from time to time from the German Foreign Office (for example, around €4-5 million for the Arabic TV service and other specific programming initiatives).⁵⁵

⁴⁹ For example, Al Jazeera English, *Code of Ethics*, <http://english.aljazeera.net/aboutus/2006/11/2008525185733692771.html>, and see Chapter 3, p 33

⁵⁰ See p 11-12

⁵¹ Annex 1 sets out the funding sources and budgets for the surveyed broadcasters

⁵² BBCWS website, *How is the World Service funded?*

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/institutional/2009/03/000000_funding.shtml

⁵³ See pp 15-16

⁵⁴ Interview with Adelheid Feilcke, Director of International Relations, DW, Bonn, 12 February 2010

⁵⁵ Interview with Dr Klaus Schmidt, Head of Division, Division 608: Public Relations (Abroad), Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Foreign Office, Germany), 16 February 2010

The Netherlands' Media Act 2008⁵⁶ (and its predecessors), stipulates RNW's relationship with its Supervisory Board. Funding, as in Germany, comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Of all the European services visited, RNW had by far the most autonomous existence, with a true arm's-length relationship with the funding ministry and almost no relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁷

The French holding company, L'AEF, is the new overarching vehicle controlling all the international broadcasting operations of France. L'AEF is under the control of the Prime Minister's Office but the various broadcasters are funded largely by the Ministry of Culture and Communication through the French broadcasting licence fees,⁵⁸ with contributions to individual broadcasters (RFI and TV5) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the Prime Minister's office (France 24).⁵⁹

The Emir of Qatar funds Al Jazeera, with advertising revenue contributing a small amount. There is a broadcasting board which sits above the Chairman, who is a Qatari Sheikh and related to the Emir.

In Japan, NHK's budgetary responsibilities lie with the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, who also seeks the National Diet's approval of new governors to the NHK's board, which is the decision-making body for significant matters including the appointment of the President. Funding for NHK and its international channels comes almost entirely from licence-receiving fees which, in accordance with the Broadcast Law, are payable by any person in Japan with a television. In 2009 this contributed 96.9 per cent (649 billion yen) of NHK's budget, out of which NHK World received three per cent⁶⁰ or approximately US\$200m to cover all elements of its international broadcasting, including the internet.⁶¹

The operations of South Korea's Arirang are constrained by its limited budget, particularly given its global coverage. The government, through the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, is the principal source of its funds. Arirang Radio is also funded by the Broadcasting and Communications Development Fund, which in turn is funded by South Korean broadcasting and communications enterprises. For KBS, the expansion to KBS World TV was an internal corporate decision and funding for its operation comes from within its own bottom line. However, unlike Arirang, but similar to the arrangements in France and Japan, KBS's funding is legislatively guaranteed through television licence fees, with the Broadcasting Act stipulating that "*expenses...be met by the television broadcast receiving fees.*"⁶²

⁵⁶ See p 26

⁵⁷ Interviews with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RNW, and Department of Communication and Media, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Netherlands, February 2010

⁵⁸ Licence fees for public broadcasting, for households with televisions, http://www.impots.gouv.fr/portal/dgi/public/particuliers.impot;jsessionid=ZLJVUIXVXGWW3QFIEMRSFFOAVARXAI1?espId=1&pageId=part_redevance&impot=RTV&sfid=50

⁵⁹ Interview with Rene Troccaz, Director Adjoint de cabinet du Secrétaire d'État chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie, 5 February 2010

⁶⁰ Out of NHK's total income of 669.9 billion yen (US\$6.8 billion), FY 2009

⁶¹ While NHK World's budget has increased from two per cent of the total NHK budget to three per cent, there has not been an overall increase for NHK. The increase has been achieved through an internal reordering of the budget by NHK

⁶² Republic of Korea Broadcasting Act, Article 56, first enforcement decree, March 2000

China's broadcasts are controlled by the State Committee Information Office, or as it is called in China, the Office for Foreign Propaganda (SCIO/OFP), which in turn is controlled tightly by the Central Propaganda Department. While this authority has little legal standing, its power comes from the significant emphasis the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) places on the role of propaganda in promoting China's interests.⁶³ While official confirmation of the funding available to CCTV has not been forthcoming, the figure commonly used by commentators and industry sources is a massive 45 billion yuan (around US\$6.6 billion).⁶⁴ In testimony to the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission in April 2009, Anne-Marie Brady referred to a Beijing announcement in early 2009 that it would invest this amount into its main media outlets to strengthen their international news coverage and global presence.⁶⁵

Funding for public diplomacy in the USA is located in annual State Department/Foreign Operations appropriations legislation, which provides funds for public diplomacy within the State Department and separate funding for international broadcasting. The Secretary of State has a legislated role in the governance of the BBG, which is headed by a bipartisan board comprising nine members. Eight — four from each of the two political parties — are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, while the ninth, the Chair, is the Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy representing the Secretary of State.

Radio Canada International (RCI) is funded as part of the CBC, by the Department of Canadian Heritage. As such, it too has suffered significant budget cuts because of the way the government funds the CBC in total. Forty per cent of CBC's annual allocation from the government has not changed in 32 years. The other 60 per cent is linked to salaries and so is indexed. The rest of its revenue comes from commercial activities — advertising and subscriptions — and represents a third of its total revenue.

Among the ten broadcasters, the majority is underpinned by legislative protection. Importantly, that legislation, where it exists, attempts to guarantee the broadcaster's independence. In the various funding arrangements, the role of domestic ministries (particularly cultural ministries) is conspicuous, despite the broadcasters' contributions to foreign policy objectives through public diplomacy. Only the broadcasters in the USA and the UK (and to a lesser extent, France) receive their funding via appropriations which are identifiably for foreign policy activities. Annex 1 provides a full comparison of broadcasters' budgets, audience numbers, media and sources of funding.

2. Geographic coverage

The geographic coverage and choice of language services by international broadcasters is driven by several factors: history, geopolitics, statutory obligations and by the broadcaster's own ambition for its service. The continental European broadcasters are in one group, identifying targets based on history and geopolitical challenges and opportunities. The BBCWS, Al Jazeera and CCTV are all global operators, though with

⁶³ Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing Dictatorship*, p 9

⁶⁴ For example, see *The Economist*, International broadcasters. Waves in the web

⁶⁵ At the time of the launch of CCTV International Arabic in 2009, the South China Morning Post reported in January 2009 that CCTV had a budget of 45 billion yuan (US\$6.6 billion). South China Morning Post's pro-Beijing reputation may indicate the reliability of the figure

radically different agendas: the BBCWS has a huge longstanding constituency and a desire to maintain its global leadership, whereas Al Jazeera and CCTV are driven more by a desire to achieve rapid global reach and present a world view which differs dramatically from that of the West. The BBG is unique among the global broadcasters in that legislation prohibits it from duplicating existing services provided by governments of other democratic nations: its efforts are focused on bringing ideas of democracy and freedom to underdeveloped, undemocratic or unstable countries of interest to the USA.

Europe

For the major European broadcasters, the locations and language choices are a combination of two factors: history and geopolitics. The former colonial powers have historically served their colonies and they continue to do so in the post-colonial context. They and their fellow broadcasting nations are also deliberate in their choice of languages and coverage, which are often highly reflective of the government's foreign-policy settings. The end of the Cold War, 9/11 and the Iraq war shifted the strategic focus from Eastern Europe to the Middle East, and the ascent of Al Jazeera's Arabic service from 1996 also changed the playing field for the major broadcasters. In a decade which saw the rise of Asia and the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and the strengthening of the EU, the global financial crisis has imposed severe strain on government budgets, and the choice of countries and languages has therefore assumed even greater importance.

In Britain, the last five years has seen a major change in focus from the early Imperial origins of the BBC World Service to a highly strategic geopolitical approach as it shifts its emphasis onto the Middle East. Similar developments are being seen in France and the Netherlands, which have comparable colonial backgrounds and have traditionally offered services to their former colonies. Like the UK, France is seeing the need to pull back from some of the former Soviet nations but faces difficulties in managing a retreat while minimising resistance from its workforce.⁶⁶ Its decision to broadcast in English and Arabic for France 24 was entirely consistent with its policy of extending French influence in the Arab world and communicating a French perspective to the English-speaking world.

The Netherlands, with its far smaller budget, is very disciplined in its geographic and language strategy. With only one television service (in Dutch), the majority of its broadcasting is on radio (and online) in ten languages, and it selects focus countries based on strict criteria: whether there is an existing relationship with the Netherlands (for example, a former colony), whether the opportunities for distribution exist (unlike in countries which censor the media), and what services already exist in the country (from other broadcasters). It then examines the strategic value in broadcasting to the country based on its trade and cultural relations, inward immigration (to the Netherlands), development and diplomatic relationships and status in the G20. As a result, the priority regions represent a mix of former colonies, trade opportunities, migrant sources and foreign-policy opportunities.

Deutsche Welle broadcasts on radio in 30 languages, and continues to broadcast in Eastern Europe. The German Foreign Office describes this as a distinctly German

⁶⁶ Interview with Rene Troccaz, Director Adjoint de cabinet du Secrétaire d'État chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie, 5 February 2010

priority, differing from other services such as the BBCWS which are withdrawing, particularly from stable EU states in the former Soviet Union.

Middle East and Asia

Al Jazeera's aim is to be a global force redressing the imbalance that the Arab world perceives in the information flow dominated by the Western media. It broadcasts only in Arabic (from 1996) and English (from 2006), but its geographic coverage is broad (to the extent that it is not banned or blocked), with the English service aiming for global coverage and broadcasting strategically from four media centres which 'follow the sun': Kuala Lumpur, Qatar, London and Washington.

China's CCTV has a global reach, broadcasting to 140 countries (via six satellites). Its rapid ascent, fuelled by immense government investment, is illustrated by its burgeoning television network. Undeterred by the cost of broadcasting television in different languages, the network has grown from one to six channels in ten years, four of them opening in the last three years alone. In 2000, CCTV 9 was launched as a 24-hour English-language news channel focusing on international news from China's perspective as well as news on China. China Radio International (CRI) is broadcast via an extensive network of short-wave transmitters (50), AM, internet and satellites as well as the World Radio Network. With 58 languages and 30 overseas bureaux, its language broadcasts exceed the BBCWS's 32, DW's 30, RFI's 11 and RNW's 10. CRI's English-language broadcasting targets North America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific.

The latest Chinese international channel, China Xinhua News Network Corporation (CNC) was started by Xinhua News Agency in January 2010. It is initially broadcasting in Chinese, with plans to broadcast English programs from 2010.

For NHK in Japan, geographic coverage and the broadcasting languages are corporate decisions. Coverage is global, with Japanese and English the significant languages. Like VOA, Japan's international services cannot be broadcast domestically, protecting against any possibility of using international broadcasting for propaganda purposes internally. This is increasingly seen as an empty measure (as for the USA), since much of the international broadcaster's programming can be viewed by domestic Japanese audiences via the internet.

The government-sponsored international broadcasting environment in South Korea is characterised by a difficult relationship between the two broadcasters. This is despite the fact that, unlike KBS, Arirang is dedicated to an international non-Korean audience. KBS remains predominantly the domestic broadcaster with its KBS World TV programs broadcast only in Korean and targeting Koreans living overseas — although it apparently has ambition, according to KOIS, to expand into English broadcasting.⁶⁷ The confusing aspect of the duopoly is that KBS, although predominantly domestic, has responsibility for international radio while Arirang's radio service is broadcast domestically, despite being in English.

⁶⁷ Interview with KOIS official, Seoul, February 2010

United States and Canada

The broadcasting profile of the USA's BBG is the combined result of some strategic focus, legislative obligations, decisions by Congress on where it should broadcast, BBG's own broadcasting decisions, and a bureaucratic turf war with the State Department. Unlike other international broadcasters, BBG's statutory obligations require that it not duplicate services by other government-supported broadcasters offered in democratic nations: its mandate is to promote information and ideas to support freedom and democracy.⁶⁸ This leads it to focus on underdeveloped, undemocratic or unstable countries of interest to the USA. Broadcasting in 60 languages, it has the largest language portfolio of all the international broadcasters.

Canada's RCI, broadcasting in the UN's six official languages plus Portuguese, was initially internationally focused, but increasingly there has been a conscious effort for RCI to reflect Canadian values and realities.

Below, Table 1 summarises the geographic and language coverage of the surveyed broadcasters.

Table 1: Geographic coverage

Current

Europe	Eastern Europe	Africa	Middle East	Central Asia	Asia	Pacific	North America	Latin Amer/ C'bean
BBCWS DW AJ (E) Fr24, RFI, TV5 RNW CCTV/CRI Arirang NHK World RCI	DW BBCWS AJ (E) CCTV/ CRI BBG	BBCWS RFI DW CCTV/ CRI Arirang NHK World BBG RCI	BBCWS AJ (A) RFI DW AJ (E) RNW CCTV/CRI Arirang NHK World BBG RCI	BBCWS DW AJ (E) CCTV/CRI NHK World BBG	BBCWS DW AJ (E) RFI RNW RFI, Fr24, TV5 CCTV/CRI Arirang NHK World RNW World BBG	BBCWS DW AJ (E) TV5 CCTV/ CRI Arirang NHK World RNW (Oceania only)	BBCWS DW CCTV/CRI Arirang NHK World	BBCWS RFI, CCTV/CRI Arirang NHK World BBG RCI

Increasing or proposed new focus areas

Russia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East	Central & South Asia	Asia	Pacific	North America	Latin Amer/ C'bean
BBCWS	BBCWS RNW AJ (E)	BBCWS RFI/Fr24 DW BBG	BBCWS (Afghan) DW (India) RNW (India)	BBCWS (S-E Asia) DW (China) RNW (Indonesia, China) Fr24	Fr24	AJ (E) RNW	DW AJ (E) Fr24 RNW

The current geographic coverage of the surveyed broadcasters strongly reflects dominant geo-strategic and trade interests for each of the ten countries. The heavy focus on the Middle East, Africa and the Asia-Pacific is significant.

⁶⁸ United States Code Chapter 71, section 6201, <http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/22C71.txt>

3. Evolution of media – the rise of television and online media and decline of short-wave radio

The past two decades have seen the most established international broadcasters aggressively expanding their television broadcasting. More significantly, there has been a proliferation of new entrants into international television broadcasting, a development which has contributed to the intense competition in this global arena.

Al Jazeera launched its Arabic service in 1996 and CCTV its English service in 2000, both of which commenced their global push with 24-hour television news services overseas. Ten years after its Arabic launch, Al Jazeera launched its English-language service in 2006, which, according to officials, reached an instant audience of 90 million. BBCWS then launched its first television services in 2008 and 2009 in Arabic and Persian. DW launched DW-TV in 1992 and has been expanding it since into Asia, Latin America, the USA and the Arab World (2005). France 24 launched in 2006, commenced its Arabic service in 2009 and aims to have 24-hour programming in Arabic in 2010.⁶⁹ Arirang launched its international TV service in 1999, KBS in 2003 and Japan its NHK World TV service in 2009. With a strategy that illustrates the primacy of television in the new broadcasting era, Al Jazeera eschews radio and offers a television service complemented by a comprehensive online presence. Deterred by the high cost of satellite distribution, RNW does not broadcast on television in languages other than Dutch, but disseminates audiovisual programs online.

The last two decades have also ushered in a major technological transformation in the way broadcasters deliver their services, and even in the way they produce and manage their content. All the major broadcasters now offer a comprehensive online service, often in many languages: VOA's website is published in 53 languages, DW's in all 31 of its radio service languages, and BBCWS in 30 of its 32 languages. The BBCWS describes the growth of its online services as outstripping all predictions and targets — with 7.3 million weekly users (up 39 per cent from the previous year), 27 million monthly video views and four million WAP site page impressions in early 2010.⁷⁰ To place this development in context, however, even the BBCWS's website's 7.3 million weekly users represent a fraction (10 per cent) of its 180 million global audience, although it sees this as a “valuable long term opportunity”.⁷¹ France 24 has a similarly small online presence with 4 million unique visitors per month.⁷²

Broadcasters describe themselves as “multimedia broadcasters” and content providers, and most place the development of their online and multimedia presence as a strategic priority.⁷³ One of Al Jazeera's constant priorities is to be at the “leading edge” on media, and anticipates a strong focus on social media.⁷⁴ The latest arrival to international broadcasting, Xinhua, also recognises the significance and flexibility of multimedia products, particularly for mobile and website use. DW is seeking to improve the

⁶⁹ Republique Francaise, *Mission Interministerielle Projets Annuels de Performances Annexe au Projet de Loi de Finances pour 2010, Medias*, p 96

⁷⁰ BBC World Service, *Annual Review 2009/10*, p 29

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p 27

⁷² RFI strategic priorities, in Republique Francaise, *Mission Interministerielle Projets Annuels de Performances Annexe au Projet de Loi de Finances pour 2010, Medias*, p 96

⁷³ *Ibid*, at 110; BBC World Service, *Annual Review 2008/9*, p 19; Deutsche Welle, *Management Report for Financial Year 2009*, http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup_pdf/0,,5789395,00.pdf, p 2-3

⁷⁴ Interview with Al Anstey, Director of Media Development, Al Jazeera, 17 February 2010

integration of broadcast and online contents and sees its website as its ‘third media pillar’.⁷⁵ Broadcasts (audio and video) are streamed via internet portals, and, with few exceptions, content is available direct to mobile-phone handsets, free of charge. Both BBCWS and RNW recently introduced new “content management” systems to produce and publish content, including to broadcasting partners and direct to mobiles.⁷⁶ They recognise the importance of interactivity with audiences and the potential of online tools to communicate with audiences in new ways.

RNW and DW now view their content as packages of information: audio, video, text and images. Both broadcasters, together with Al Jazeera, explicitly stated that they follow a “produce once, publish everywhere” rule. One program is treated as a series of files which can be disseminated on various platforms: TV, radio, online, and delivered to the mobile handset. RNW and DW are also embracing ‘pull’ as opposed to ‘push’ strategies to draw in younger audiences, particularly the future elites. Innovative multimedia strategies are crucial in attracting and engaging youth: these require development of sophisticated content-to-handset delivery and new, more interactive communication tools such as blogs and social networks, and video gaming and add-ons such as widgets, video-players (France 24’s Catchup TV) and video search engines.

Coinciding with the rise of television and multimedia offerings, short-wave radio broadcasting is declining. The BBCWS reported a 20 million AM (short- and medium-wave) audience loss in 2010, contributing to its overall audience fall from 188 million in 2009 to 180 million in 2010. While the superior-quality FM services are building audiences, they are not keeping pace with the short-wave declines.⁷⁷ Cost is a deterrent, with the geographic reach of FM smaller than that of short wave and requiring many relay stations. Partnerships between the broadcasters and local FM services are consequently assuming greater importance. Short-wave radio services remain important, however, in developing and poor nations with limited access to television (Africa in particular). They are still the most economic means of disseminating news.⁷⁸ Interestingly, as VOA and BBCWS reduce and eliminate short-wave broadcasting in a number of their target countries, CRI is picking up the frequencies they are discarding.

Despite its cost, however, television is the future in this new era of international broadcasting. The BBCWS sees TV as the “*preferred medium for news and information in many important markets*”,⁷⁹ and its BBC Arabic service became its largest language service in 2010.⁸⁰ Al Jazeera has successfully chosen this as its primary medium, and CCTV and Xinhua are following suit. One commentator noted that there is an astonishing 95 per cent (home) satellite penetration in the Arab nations, and the industry association CASBAA reports a 45 per cent penetration of subscription TV across the Asia-Pacific.⁸¹ The push of the major broadcasters into television, often at the cost of their traditional

⁷⁵ www.dw-world.de, *Chronology*

⁷⁶ eg BBC World Service, *Annual Review 2008/9*, p 19

⁷⁷ BBC World Service, *Annual Review 2009/10*, p 27

⁷⁸ Interview with Bernard Valero, (Spokesperson for the Ministry), Director de la Communication et du Porte-parolat, Porte-parole, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et Européennes, Paris, 5 February 2010

⁷⁹ Nigel Chapman, Transforming BBC World Service for a digital age: a strategy for 2010 and beyond, speech to staff by the (former) Director of the BBC World Service, 25 October 2005, http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/2010/docs/051025_fullspeech.pdf, p 5

⁸⁰ Total audience 22 million, BBC World Service, *Annual Review 2009/10*, p 1

⁸¹ Cable & Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia, http://atac.casbaa.com/country_regional.aspx

radio services, shows an irrevocable, and perhaps irreversible, trajectory towards a TV-driven broadcasting arena.

4. Future plans

The last decade has been an expansionary one for most international broadcasters. While the global financial crisis slowed their progress, broadcasters continue to look at ways to expand their global presence in television and their geographic coverage overall. For the few that are unaffected by significant financial constraints, their expansion proceeds apace across all media — television, radio, online and multimedia.

In Europe, the early part of the new decade will see the strategic plans for the major broadcasters in Europe adjusted for the straitened financial circumstances they face as a result of the global financial crisis.

Budgets for the BBCWS received a boost of £70 million over three years from 2008-11.⁸² Its next funding round, however, is due in October 2010,⁸³ when the impact of the financial crisis will hit the nation's budget and the public service heavily. The UK's budget of approximately £700 billion⁸⁴ faces cuts of £40 billion a year for the next four years,⁸⁵ a large portion of which will be made in spending reductions, although the extent to which the BBCWS will be affected by this is uncertain. If necessary, the BBCWS's strategy is to achieve cost efficiencies and reprioritise,⁸⁶ its aggressive expansion and big investments having been made over 2008-9 with the launch of the Arabic and Persian TV services. Together, these cost around an additional £40 million annually — 15 per cent of the annual budget of the BBCWS at the time. Focus areas in the near term are sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, Afghanistan and Russia. There are also plans to further develop its online content delivery and mobile phone service.

In France, l'AEF has already achieved significant cost efficiencies. The France 24 annual budget of approximately €100 million was achieved with a budget increase across all the services (RFI, TV5 Monde and France 24) of only approximately €25 million.⁸⁷ Despite the financial crisis, RFI and France 24 are both slated to receive budget increases in 2010, but stabilising for the following three years.⁸⁸ Specifically targeting elite and opinion-leaders,⁸⁹ l'AEF plans to develop France 24's distribution, primarily in the Asia-Pacific⁹⁰

⁸² BBC Press Office media release, *World Service receives £70m funding increase over next three years in Comprehensive Spending Review*, 9 October 2007,

http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2007/10_october/09/ws.shtml

⁸³ Her Majesty's Treasury, *Budget 2010*, June 2010,

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/junebudget_complete.pdf, p 2

⁸⁴ Her Majesty's Treasury, *The Spending Review Framework*, June 2010,

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/spending_review_framework_080610.pdf, p 4

⁸⁵ Her Majesty's Treasury, *Budget 2010*, p 2

⁸⁶ Interviews with Jessica Macfarlane, Head, FCO and Stakeholder Liaison and Mark Bunting, Head of Strategy, BBC Global News, 2 February 2010

⁸⁷ Interview with Frank Melloul, Chief Strategy and Development Officer, L'Audiovisuel extérieur de la France, 8 February 2010

⁸⁸ Information provided by l'AEF

⁸⁹ Interview with Rene Troccaz, Directeur Adjoint de cabinet du Secrétaire d'État chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie, 5 February 2010

⁹⁰ France 24 commenced broadcasting its English service in Asia in early 2009, and TV5 Monde launched its Pacific service later that year

and Latin America, and the Arabic-language TV service will increase from 10 to 24 hours per day. For RFI, the strategy is to develop FM distribution and web radio, while mounting a staged withdrawal from post Cold War Europe.

Both DW and RNW expect funding to be tight for the next funding round. RNW commences a five-year plan in 2010, and hopes for a small adjustment for inflation. To achieve cost efficiencies, it is increasing its use of partner radio stations (currently around 3,500 partners worldwide) to maximise its global radio distribution. While this involves a significant loss of editorial control, this is a compromise that RNW accepts. It plans to expand its English-language content in sub-Saharan Africa, and to continue its Arabic services in the Middle East after the three-year trial is complete in 2010. Indonesia and China are priorities, as is India — with English programming and a pilot Hindi service. Other priorities are Spanish and Portuguese services to Latin America, Dutch to Suriname and maximising reach in English to the USA. Pragmatically, there are no plans to introduce TV services in languages other than Dutch, and the RNW focus remains primarily on analysis, background and features. With France 24, BBCWS, DW and Al Jazeera all providing 24-hour news services in its region alone, RNW is content to leave that field to better-resourced broadcasters.⁹¹

After a period of aggressive economising in the ‘NATO crisis’ of the 90s,⁹² DW’s funding stabilised around 2002-3. It experienced a modest budget increase of four per cent between 2007 and 2008 and seeks, but is not optimistic about, an increase in 2010. DW’s target is the future elite — a youth target it has specifically selected in an attempt to differentiate itself from the other major services and find a unique selling proposition. It sees Latin America, the Middle East, China and India as areas where there is potential for large youth audiences, and it plans increased programming in Spanish for the Latin American market. In a major change, DW plans to split its principal German/English service (which is broadcast in Europe, Africa, USA and Asia) into two separate services — requiring investment in more English and German programming and increased distribution costs.⁹³

With its funding coming almost entirely from the wealthy Emir of Qatar, Al Jazeera has been able to pursue an aggressive growth strategy since its inception in 1996. The 2006 launch of Al Jazeera English was a very substantial investment, bringing the estimated 2008 budget of Al Jazeera (which does not publicise its financial information) to around US\$300 million annually.⁹⁴ The sports rights for its 14 sports channels (exclusive rights to the English football and World Cup for the Middle East) are a significant factor in its budget.

While 2009 saw a tightening of the purse-strings highlighted by the introduction of a formal budget for the first time, Al Jazeera’s expansionist strategies are set to continue, with ten more bureaux planned for 2010-11.⁹⁵ This would bring it to a total to 79

⁹¹ Interview with Lem van Eupen, Head of Strategy and Business Development, RNW, Hilversum, 10 February 2010

⁹² Staff numbers fell from 2,500 to 1,500 in 2010; Interview with Adelheid Feilcke, Director of International Relations, DW, Bonn, 12 February 2010

⁹³ Interview with Adelheid Feilcke, Director of International Relations, DW, Bonn, 12 February 2010

⁹⁴ Dierdre Klein, Director of Communications, Middle East Broadcasting Networks Inc, letter to Paul Steiger, Editor-in-Chief, ProPublica, 16 July 2008,

http://s3.amazonaws.com/propublica/assets/alhurra/mbn_response_080716.pdf, p 3

⁹⁵ *The Economist*, International broadcasters. Waves in the web

bureaux,⁹⁶ making Al Jazeera the largest network worldwide in terms of its global news-gathering coverage. The broadcaster is circumspect about divulging its strategies, but has said it plans to “penetrate new markets”, which probably include the United States, where its distribution was decimated in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the controversies surrounding Al Jazeera’s coverage.⁹⁷

Like Al Jazeera, CCTV and Xinhua are expected to continue their vigorous expansion strategy, following Hu Jintao’s 2007 promise⁹⁸ to strengthen China’s soft power through a comprehensive media and cultural projection strategy. Its reputed US\$6.6 billion budget⁹⁹ makes China a global broadcasting heavyweight. Xinhua’s decision to move into 24-hour TV news coverage in Mandarin, and later in 2010 in English, although an internal Xinhua management decision, aligns with China’s broader objectives to target the world.

Budgets for the broadcasters in Japan and South Korea are expected to remain tight, and future plans are modest. Although NHK’s corporate plan for 2009-2011 proposes to enhance international broadcasting of news and information from Japan and Asia to the world, NHK World is a relatively small part of NHK’s stable of operations and is not anticipating any increases to fund this objective. Like the BBCWS, any ‘enhancements’ will be gained through efficiencies and reprioritisation.¹⁰⁰ This funding scenario will impede progress towards its very ambitious goal of being compared favourably with CNN and the BBCWS the benchmarks in international broadcasting. With budgets in the range of 50 per cent of those of the BBCWS, Al Jazeera and DW, the NHK corporate decision-makers face a difficult task in lifting Japan’s international broadcasting profile.

Working on an annual budget of around US\$43 million and attempting global coverage, Arirang’s operations are constrained by its limited budget and prospects for any increase. While it struggles to maintain some semblance of independence from the Korean government, Arirang has decided to promote South Korean interests through major national events. So while its principal geographic focus in 2009 was Asia (including Myanmar and Laos), the strong focus in 2010 will be on the G20 countries in the lead-up to the G20 Summit in November.

The USA’s BBG is quarantined from Federal Budget cuts because of its inclusion within the budget allocations for State Department/Foreign Operations. In addition to the core allocation, BBG receives supplementals each year for emerging priorities identified by Congress, although because supplementals are not multi-year, support beyond the initial year has to be found from within BBG’s base allocation.

Canada continues to place negligible emphasis on international broadcasting as its broader public diplomacy efforts recede with lack of both funding and disposition. As with other aspects of Canada’s austere approach to public diplomacy, it has a very limited interest in using international broadcasting to promote the country or to advance its foreign-policy objectives. Indications are that it has no plans to change this position, and budgets for international broadcasting remain constrained.

⁹⁶ The USA, Canada, Latin America and Africa are potential locations

⁹⁷ Interview with Al Anstey, Director of Media Development, Al Jazeera Network, 17 February 2010

⁹⁸ Hu Jintao, keynote address to the 17th National Congress of the CPC, 25 October 2007, <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/66102/6290205.html>

⁹⁹ Figure reported in South China Morning Post, 6 January 2009

¹⁰⁰ Interviews with NHK executives, Tokyo, February 2010

5. Alternative sources of funding

In times of tight budgets, the concept of obtaining substantial streams of commercial revenue is attractive to many broadcasters. However, for various reasons, commercial revenue is unlikely to make a significant contribution to broadcasters' budgets in the short term. The BBCWS is prohibited by its statutes from broadcasting advertising material, and its ability to generate commercial revenue from other sources is very limited. In the Netherlands, the situation is similar for RNW, which currently receives no commercial income. VOA and its BBG affiliates are entirely government-funded.

Of those whose constitutions and enabling statutes permit advertising, the prospects are not promising. While DW is permitted to seek revenue from advertising, the amount of commercial content on its service has been minimal, reportedly at a rate of one commercial per hour of broadcasting time.

The French government has mandated more commercial content from France 24, but its current commercial revenue is about €2-3 million of its €300 million budget (less than one per cent). The official target is 30 per cent in the next five years, but l'AEF management is not confident of reaching this goal. To date, the government continues to fund France 24 as a key public diplomacy vehicle.¹⁰¹

Al Jazeera is in a very similar predicament. The Emir of Qatar had originally planned to fund the service for five years until 2001, at which point it was intended to be self-sustaining.¹⁰² However, four years after the Arabic channel's launch, advertising revenues were only about US\$15 million, an estimated 15 per cent of its operating budget at the time.¹⁰³ The difficulty is attributed to pressure on advertisers in the Middle East from governments unhappy with Al Jazeera's aggressive reporting (for example, in Saudi Arabia, other GCC states and the USA).¹⁰⁴ In an attempt to build commercial revenue, Al Jazeera has recently opened a commercial bureau in Kuala Lumpur. However, there are no signs that the Emir intends to withdraw or cut its funding in the short term, and the ambitious expansion program of ten new bureaux suggests the service is confident of meeting its operating requirements.

Japan and South Korea have both played with alternative, private-sector based options for funding international broadcasting initiatives. However, in both cases financial crises hobbled these ambitions. In the case of South Korea, Arirang's conception as a non-profit foundation aiming to encourage private sector contributions became unworkable when South Korea was hit by the 1997 Asian financial crisis. In Japan, NHK World was to be funded (after an initial investment of capital from NHK) under the Japan International Broadcasting Inc, which had had the authority to allocate up to 40 per cent equity to the private sector (including Japanese television groups). However, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis stymied any significant private sector involvement.

¹⁰¹ See p 11

¹⁰² Hugh Miles, *Al-Jazeera. The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel that is challenging the West*, Great Britain, 2005, p 346

¹⁰³ Rick Zednik, Perspectives on War. Inside Al Jazeera, *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2002, 44-47, p 47

¹⁰⁴ K Byrd and T Kawarabayashi, *Al-Jazeera "The opinion and the other opinion". Sustaining a free press in the Middle East*, MIT Media in Transition 3 conference, 2-4 May 2003, p 15

Across the spectrum of international broadcasters surveyed, whether from developed or emerging economies, commercial revenue has not materialised to the extent where any broadcaster could envisage becoming self-sustaining. This is a reality which governments will need to recognise in future funding decisions.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYSING BROADCASTING'S CONTRIBUTION

Public diplomacy is at a crossroads. Although governments accept its importance in facing the increasingly complex international challenges of the era, and acknowledge that soft power can be more effective than coercion or military force in achieving foreign policy goals,¹⁰⁵ the global financial crisis has put significant pressure on government spending.

In considering how to balance military and diplomatic measures in addressing the raft of global challenges affecting national interests, a central issue is the funding available for diplomacy. When budget pressures bite, the public diplomacy budget is very vulnerable within the broader Foreign Affairs budget: its benefits are often intangible and distant, do not lend themselves to precise measurement, and require long-term and consistent effort, focus and investment.¹⁰⁶

Within this fractious environment of public diplomacy, what is evident across the countries surveyed is that where public diplomacy is supported by government, international broadcasting is recognised, and resourced, as a valuable tool. In Chapter 4, Table 2,¹⁰⁷ national expenditures on public diplomacy and international broadcasting are compared. A glance at their investments shows that the UK, China, France, Germany and, more recently, the USA (in a resurgence of emphasis), explicitly acknowledge the importance of public diplomacy and invest heavily in the basic tools, particularly the international broadcasters and the cultural exchange councils such as the British Council, the Goethe and the Confucius Institutes. Faith in the public diplomacy product is evident in these consistent and continuing investments by the high-spending public diplomacy nations. Coincidentally or not, the Anholt nation brands index over the last two years has placed the traditional big investors in public diplomacy — Germany, the UK and France — in the top four positions on the index, with the USA climbing up to first place from seventh last year.¹⁰⁸

International broadcasting's effectiveness

The process of evaluating the public diplomacy programs is highly complex: One UK Foreign Office report described attempts at evaluation “*like a forester going out to measure how far his trees have grown overnight without a ruler*”.¹⁰⁹ Foreign ministries generally respond to this challenge with a variety of techniques, including polling, media analysis, and stakeholder and impact surveys. This can be a costly process in itself: a 2008 report on the impact of the work of the British Council estimated that “supporting and managing the system globally requires in the order of 50-100 full time equivalent

¹⁰⁵ Robert M Gates, US Global Leadership Campaign, see also Chapter 1, and Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*, pp 6, 9-16

¹⁰⁶ United Kingdom House of Commons, Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Eighth Report, 7. Public Diplomacy. Measuring effectiveness and value for money*, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfa/1371/137102.htm>, 2006

¹⁰⁷ At p 47

¹⁰⁸ GfK Roper Public Affairs and Media, *The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index Highlights Report*, October 2009, <http://www.simonanholt.com/Publications/publications-other-articles.aspx>; *Nation Brands Index 2009*, <http://nation-branding.info/2009/10/07/nation-brands-index-2009/>

¹⁰⁹ Louise Vintner and David Knox, *Measuring the impact of public diplomacy: can it be done?*, in Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *Engagement. Public diplomacy in a globalised world*. London, 2008, p 160-171

staff, equivalent to about one per cent ... across the business.”¹¹⁰ Commentators point though to continuing work on new approaches and measurement tools which can be effective indicators of the impact of public diplomacy programs.¹¹¹ The July 2010 report by the US Government Accountability Office on engaging foreign audiences found that the State Department lacks the information necessary to assess the effectiveness of its public diplomacy platforms.¹¹² However, as Rick Ruth, Director of Policy and Evaluation at the US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, remarked in mid-2010:

*“you can measure public diplomacy ... you just have to decide to do it and commit the resources to do it”.*¹¹³

As with other public diplomacy tools, the task of measuring international broadcasting’s impact and effectiveness in achieving public diplomacy goals is difficult. Audience surveys only go part of the way: they measure numbers of people exposed to the broadcaster, but not the impact of its communications on their attitudes to the broadcasting nation.

This raises the pivotal question of why, when international broadcasting is so costly and its effectiveness so difficult to measure, nations continue to invest such substantial sums in their international broadcasters.

In an effort to demonstrate the effectiveness of the BBC’s international broadcasting operations, the BBC commissioned a survey in 2010 on attitudes to the BBC and other international news services in Kenya, Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey. Respondents were asked which British organisations and programs make them think more or less positively about the country, including the armed forces, the British Council, the UK Government and UK foreign aid. According to the Director General of the BBC, Mark Thomson, 80 per cent of respondents said that the BBC made them think more positively about the UK, far more than any of the other British institutions mentioned, including UK foreign aid.¹¹⁴

Together, the BBC World Service and BBC World News are broadly regarded as the benchmark for international broadcasting, and the strikingly positive results of the BBC’s 2010 survey may not be able to be replicated by some of the other nations’ broadcasters. According to a report commissioned by the UK’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, it is the broadcaster’s news service that sets it apart from other public diplomacy activities:

“Historically, the most potent element of international broadcasting has been its use of news, especially when that news is objective. This aligned the entire practice of international broadcasting with the ethical culture of domestic

¹¹⁰ National Audit Office, *The British Council. Achieving Impact. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General*, HC 625 Session 2007-2008, 11 June 2008, p 22

¹¹¹ For example, Ali Fisher (previous director of British Council think-tank, Counterpoint; Anna Godfrey (BBC World Trust); Gerry Power (formerly BBC World Trust)

¹¹² United States Government Accountability Office, *Report to the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives. Engaging foreign audiences. Assessment of public diplomacy platforms could help improve State Department Plans to Expand Engagement*. GAO 10-767, July 2010

¹¹³ Tijana Milosevic, *Advisory commission on public diplomacy examines evaluation tools*, <http://www.alliance-exchange.org/policy-monitor/07/21/2010/advisory-commission-public-diplomacy-examines-evaluation-tools>, 21 July 2010

¹¹⁴ Mark Thomson, *Nation speaking peace unto nation: The BBC’s global mission*, speech by the BBC Director General at Chatham House, 12 May 2010, pp 6-7

broadcast journalism and turned international broadcasting into a mechanism for diffusing this culture."¹¹⁵

In other words, the broadcaster's reputation rises or falls on the credibility of the news it reports. It is not a question of quality, depth or superficiality; it is an issue of objectivity and independence. Most of the international broadcasters in our study agreed — independence is the lynchpin of credibility. As soon as interference is detected, credibility is shattered and audience loyalty vanishes. Reputation, a Dutch culture ministry spokesperson explained, once gone, is irretrievable.¹¹⁶

Independence the lynchpin

Among the broadcasters considered in this report, the two extremes of the credibility spectrum are the BBCWS on one hand and China's CCTV on the other. BBCWS is widely acknowledged as the standard-bearer for respected, independent, credible broadcasting, and the 2010 attitudinal survey indicated it has a significantly beneficial impact on the UK's public diplomacy effort. A recent Foreign and Commonwealth Office review of public diplomacy explained that "*effective public diplomacy requires credibility ... perhaps the strongest example of the value of a reputation for credibility is the reputation of the BBC, which through its telling of bad news — as well as good — throughout the Second World War effectively reversed the reputation for creativity with the truth that Britain had earned in the First World War*".¹¹⁷ The same has been said about the USA's RFE/RL. At a 2004 conference examining the impact of US international broadcasting in the Cold War based on archival material from the other side of the former Iron Curtain, one participant argued that "*the ability to criticize the United States gained RFE/RL standing in the eyes of Soviet bloc listeners*".¹¹⁸

At the other end of the credibility spectrum are the Chinese broadcasters, CCTV and Xinhua. Despite the massive injection of funding and the efforts to make them attractive to an international audience, the tight control exercised by the Office for Foreign Propaganda¹¹⁹ jeopardises the broadcasters' credibility. In an already crowded international market, they struggle to achieve the reputation needed to reach the public diplomacy goals set by the government, leading to a probable gap between the Chinese Government's public diplomacy aspirations for its international broadcasting and the outcome. While CCTV's publicity material cites potential audiences in the several millions across the globe, surveys on CRI and CCTV suggest that they attract very small numbers.¹²⁰ Instead of being a positive contribution, they risk confirming negative

¹¹⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, University of Southern California, Center on Public Diplomacy, 2009; p 21

¹¹⁶ Interview with drs. A D (Nol) Reijnders, Department of Communication and Media, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Netherlands, 9 February 2010

¹¹⁷ Nicholas J Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Seven Lessons for its future from its past*, in Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Engagement*, p 7

¹¹⁸ *Cold war broadcasting impact*, Report on a Conference organized by the Hoover Institution and the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, p 36

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 2, p 19

¹²⁰ For example, CRI had a 2.8 per cent awareness in Indonesia in March 2009, behind BBCWS (19.8 per cent), VOA (16.5 per cent) and Radio Australia at 5.7 per cent (Taylor Nelson Sofres for the Voice of America, InterMedia Research, *Indonesia – National Survey March 2009*); CRI had a 1.5 per cent awareness in Vietnam urban areas in February/March 2009, behind BBCWS's 13.2 per cent and VOA's 7.1 per cent (Nielsen and Intermedia Research, February/March 2009). In Cambodia in 2008, CRI awareness

international perceptions of China among some audiences. At the same time, there is some anecdotal evidence which points to the popularity of CCTV at least in some Pacific Island countries where it provides a colourful alternative to bland local broadcasters.¹²¹

Other international broadcasters recognise their independence as the lynchpin of their credibility, and are highly protective of it. This is reflected in their legislative frameworks:¹²² the BBCWS, DW, RNW, NHK and VOA expressly protect the broadcasters' (or journalists', in the case of VOA) editorial independence in the governing statutes; for Al Jazeera, the independence is in the broadcaster's code of ethics. While the legislative and governing frameworks in France are silent on editorial independence, the French broadcasters believe themselves to be strongly independent, editorially, from government (which holds a reciprocal view). The French broadcasters have a reputation for being robust in their criticism of government, despite the lack of statutory ring-fencing for the broadcaster.

While not subjected to the same level of control as its Chinese counterparts, the South Korean broadcaster, Arirang, has had difficulty in resisting editorial pressure from government because of its lack of statutory independence and the absence of any legislative guarantee for survival and support.

Overall, it seems that strong legislative protections foster independence, and ultimately, credibility. This was a lesson learnt by VOA when, in 1976, an official charter was enacted to counter political influence and manipulation. The Charter, signed into law by President Ford, stated that VOA would best serve the interests of the USA by being a "*consistently reliable and authoritative source of news ...accurate, objective and comprehensive*".¹²³ Even when presenting US policies, the Charter required VOA to "*present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies*". Once the Charter took effect and US embassy efforts to shape VOA broadcasts declined, VOA's credibility and audience grew significantly.¹²⁴

Longevity and consistency

What is the role played by history? For the BBCWS, RNW, RFI (and later TV5 Monde), each broadcasting nation had a colonial history and an audience of native speakers, often with strong loyalties to the colonial power, and language affinities, or both. These nations started broadcasting initially to reach their colonies and speakers of their languages. Japan and Germany had both been broadcasting over short-wave radio prior to the Second World War, but reshaped their services after the war as part of their post-war reincarnations. These were the forerunners of public diplomacy broadcasting, specifically introduced to promulgate positive messages about the broadcasting nation. Today, they

was 2 per cent, behind VOA (63 per cent) and Radio Australia (13 per cent), (Intermedia Research, fieldwork September 2008). All survey information provided by ABC

¹²¹ eg CCTV was the second most-watched station in Vanuatu (urban areas) at 12 per cent of viewers surveyed, behind TBV at 72 per cent and ahead of Australia Network at 2 per cent, (*Tebbutt research surveys in the main urban areas of 5 Pacific countries – December 2009. Research commissioned by Australia Network and Radio Australia, 2009, information provided by the ABC*)

¹²² See Chapter 2

¹²³ VOA Charter, drafted in 1960, signed into law (Public Law 94-350) on July 12 1976

¹²⁴ Sanford J Ungar, Pitch Imperfect. The Trouble at the Voice of America, *Foreign Affairs*, 84 (3) 2005, pp 7-13

have two major advantages over newcomers: longstanding audiences or constituencies, and longevity.

Longevity alone though is not sufficient to maintain a strong global constituency, as the experience of VOA so potently illustrates. Beginning with the hearts and minds campaign complementing the hard power of World War II, VOA was shaped and refined for the post-war tensions and client-state wars which characterised the Cold War, and enjoyed several prosperous decades. However, once ideological victory was declared against the USSR and its managing body, the USIA, was killed off in a burst of 1990s Dead History optimism, the future of VOA and other BBG stablemates was less clear. After the demise of USIA, BBG became an independent federal agency, and just as the country was entering one of its most difficult periods in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, its hitherto finely targeted, strategic broadcaster experienced an intense period of uncertainty and change.

America's public diplomacy arsenal was critically weakened and a vital element, its international broadcaster, was lacking in clear and consistent direction. What followed were a range of debates about the bureaucratic and other challenges facing US public diplomacy, against the realisation that just when the country needed an effective, coordinated and strategic public diplomacy effort to confront global terror and increasingly strong anti-American feelings, the crucial machinery had been dismantled and reassembled in a way that was not producing the necessary results.¹²⁵ After 9/11, it soon became clear that for any revitalised public diplomacy to be effective in the new millennium, it had to adjust to the new communications technology. VOA has slowly reasserted its position. But unlike its earlier years when the airwaves were sparsely populated, it now has to operate in a near-saturated market, making success, or at least effectiveness, heavily dependent on clear strategic goals. So while it has the advantage of longevity, BBG has been faced with the challenge of having to make up for lost years at a time when the competition is tough.

Where there is a lack of longevity, historical constituency and consistency, however, the examples of Al Jazeera, France 24 and (to a lesser extent) CCTV are clear illustrations that a muscular and well-funded approach to international broadcasting can make headway where the traditional pathways to an audience are missing. This approach is, above all, extremely costly. Al Jazeera's annual budget, at an estimated US\$350-400 million, has almost reached that of the BBCWS. France 24, reaching (at most) half the audience of either of those services, is costing around US\$140 million in 2010. Both of these are dwarfed by China's estimated US\$6.6 billion, although it is not clear what period this covers nor the true extent of the audiences reached.

The importance of clear goals

Clear goals and direction are fundamental ingredients for successful broadcasting. Part of a broadcaster's strategic strength lies in the selection of the target markets and target audiences. For the BBCWS, RNW and RFI, a post-colonial sense of responsibility dictates the selection of some of their markets. Often this coincides with a desire (or in RNW's case, a mandate) to address a broadcasting deficit — and ensures the audience has a predisposition to the broadcaster because it addresses an information need or a pre-existing loyalty.

¹²⁵ Sarah Ellen Graham, US public diplomacy in the Asia Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges in a time of transition, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 2008 (4), pp 336–356

The preservation of non-English languages is the key reason for the existence and strength of TV5 Monde. The EU initiative ‘mother tongue plus two’ sustains this mission, which is also important for France 24 and DW.

Probably the easiest and least ambitious objective is to provide an information service to the various diasporas: this is explicit for RNW, and was the first goal of the DW short-wave radio service after WWII. KBS World TV targets the South Korean diaspora, NHK World Premium is the Japanese-language channel for overseas Japanese audiences, and CCTV4 was established to reach the Chinese diaspora in Mandarin.

For the majority of the broadcasters, the overarching ambition, though, is the pure public diplomacy objective of representing the nation to the world to further its foreign policy aims. The French and Germans have aspirations of representing their point of view and maintaining cultural diversity (against, implicitly, the globally successful English language media). The Dutch are anxious to regain the attractive power of the Netherlands’ image as the most liberal social democracy in Europe, if not the world — as well as presenting a realistic image of itself to nations which are the common sources of immigrants.

Al Jazeera is clear in its mission to reverse the perceived imbalance in information flow between north and south (West and the rest), and present an Arab and a ‘grassroots’ view to the rest of the world. Japan seeks to be the voice of views from Asia and use its comparative advantage in business to attract business audiences. VOA is unique in that its governing legislation specifically obliges it to disseminate a democratic ideology (and not to duplicate services that already exist in Western democratic nations). The BBCWS is in its own class here, as in many other ways. Its history, longevity, consistency and ubiquity have generated massive, admiring and loyal audiences, and reflect enormous credit back to the UK, in line with its goal *“to be the world’s best known and most respected voice in international broadcasting, thereby bringing benefit to Britain.”*¹²⁶

Canada’s narrow strategic goal, to maintain national unity and promote and protect its culture domestically against what it sees as an overbearing neighbour, does not require the government to understand or support a more ambitious international broadcasting service in any meaningful way.

The existence of clear goals drives an effective broadcasting strategy, and the successful broadcasters have honed and refined their objectives and pursue them in a very focused way. Those who are less clear about their roles in the public diplomacy strategy of their nations are those who are struggling both for audiences and resources.

Cooperation on strategic direction

The effectiveness of broadcasting as a public diplomacy vehicle appears to depend to an observable degree on the relationship between broadcaster and government and the way they cooperate on strategic objectives. This is not to say that government gets a say on content or that editorial independence must be compromised.

Quite the opposite: governments maintain this fine balance between strategic cooperation

¹²⁶ BBCWS Broadcasting Agreement, Annex B

and editorial independence by irrevocably protecting that independence and respecting it. For the BBCWS, the Broadcasting Agreement and Charter insist on editorial and managerial independence, but there is a comprehensive structure of cooperation between the broadcaster and the Foreign Office (including the overseas posts) revolving around geopolitical strategy: where to open services, where to cut them, which audiences to target, which languages to broadcast. Decisions such as the one in 2006 to close many of the Central European services and invest in Arabic and Persian language TV were assisted by the Foreign Office, and the required funding boost achieved through its advocacy to Government. Similarly, DW's and RNW's Arabic-language services were enabled by supplementary funding from their foreign offices. Auswärtiges Amt, the German Federal Foreign Office, has close ties and regular communications with DW, despite not being its principal source of funding.

On the opposite side of the equation, the Chinese broadcasters' usefulness as soft-power tools are hampered by tight government control and the perception that its broadcasting is nicely packaged government propaganda. While China's broadcasters are reflecting the perspectives, aspects and views which the Chinese Government want them to portray, its smaller audiences indicate that, despite its massive investments, it may be sacrificing credibility for the sake of control.

The Chinese example illustrates that governments must understand that international broadcasting is not a strategic tool for promulgating specific foreign-policy messages or achieving precise short-term goals. Rather, in the Nye 'soft power' sense, good international broadcasting attracts people to a nation, makes them like, admire and respect it, so that ultimately, the path is smoothed when foreign policy is implemented.

It is difficult to determine the connections between the South Korean and Japanese governments' limited interest in international broadcasting as a public diplomacy tool and the respective international broadcasters' market success. Is their comparatively weaker penetration due to content or accessibility, or can it be directly linked to the absence of strategic direction? In the case of Japan, while funding is secure, strategic direction for NHK World in terms of the Japanese Government's broader foreign interests is absent, and NHK World reflects the goals and objectives of the NHK corporation. For South Korea, while Arirang is considered to be part of the government's range of public diplomacy institutions, it too lacks focused strategic direction, its weakness exacerbated by financial insecurity.

Al Jazeera is distinctive here, as in other areas. Its relationship with the Emir and the Qatar Government is evident not in what is presented, according to commentators, but what is omitted: critical reportage on the Qatar government is minimal. Al Jazeera's phenomenal success indicates that, despite this, it is valued for its willingness to push the boundaries of the permissible in the Muslim world, and because it so vigorously presents a non-Western perspective. While the degree of involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Al Jazeera's strategic discussions is unclear, its confidence in the broadcaster is manifest in its unflinching financial support.

Of all the Western broadcaster/government relationships, that between the US Government (and State Department) and the BBG is arguably the closest. It is certainly the most tightly directed by legislation, with the 1994 International Broadcasting Act dictating that US international broadcasting must be "*consistent with the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States*", produce a "*clear and effective presentation of the*

policies of the [US] Government ... [and] present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies".¹²⁷ Under these conditions, maintaining the balance between credibility and cooperation is a perilous task — what is apparently a sharper tool risks, if misused, being seen as propaganda.

However, evidence suggests that the US has managed to strike a workable balance for VOA and the US international broadcasters which originated in the Cold War (such as RFE and RL). In his fierce defence of the “Radios” in the face of budget cuts in the 1990s,¹²⁸ former RFE/RL chairman Malcolm S Forbes Jr credited this balance, and the Radios’ effectiveness, to the “shield” provided by the BBG (then the Board for International Broadcasting):

*“...Without that shield and independence, the temptation to meddle in broadcasting — as was seen with Voice of America in Iraq and in other regrettable instances — is absolutely irresistible to policymakers ...The impact of the Radios in Eastern Europe, of course, has been enormous. They broke the monopoly on information... Because we broke through the isolation barrier, communism was not able to silence the idea that you could have an alternative system of individual choice and responsibility.”*¹²⁹

Geographic targeting: playing to existing strengths and focusing on strategic challenges and opportunities

Broadcasters with colonial histories spend a portion of their resources on maintaining services to former colonies and to nations where there is an information deficit. However, most of the broadcasters are now targeting regions where there are emerging strategic and trade interests: Asia (particularly China and South East Asia), sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Russia. Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish and Russian-language services are receiving additional emphasis.

Geopolitical challenges are also influencing the choice of audience, and the growth of Arabic-language services among the broadcasters illustrate the strategic emphasis on maintaining the information flow and building ties with the Arab world.

For those nations without legislative direction, the slate of strategic opportunities is very broad and the challenge becomes one of prioritisation and focus. One of the more interesting approaches is that of RNW, which is constrained by its smaller budgets to a very disciplined strategy. It filters the globe through a series of lenses: existing relationships, distribution opportunities, immigration patterns, trade, cultural, development and diplomatic relations, and whether there is a need for independent broadcasting.

Media strategies: TV, online, FM, consolidating the media portfolio

The last two decades have seen a seismic shift in the global media environment — the most obvious development being the rise of the internet. This has presented opportunities

¹²⁷ 1994 International Broadcasting Act (Public Law 103-236) consolidated all non-military US government international broadcasting services under the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

¹²⁸ Eg Malcolm S Forbes Jr, Rescuing and reviving radios for democracy, *Forbes* 154(7) 1994, p 25

¹²⁹ Malcolm S Forbes Jr, RFE/RL: more important than ever, *Forbes* 151(6) 1993, p 31

and challenges to broadcasters: new ways to reach audiences and alternative delivery mechanisms (podcasts, webcasts and the improvement of live streaming techniques). Most broadcasters see their multimedia and new media offerings as one of their key priorities this decade, and treat their online presence as an integrated part of a comprehensive multimedia strategy. The sophisticated mobile-phone technology has accelerated this development and is driving a transformation in the way audiences use media, with the established broadcasters embracing ‘pull’ vs ‘push’ strategies to attract younger audiences with interactive communication tools and content tailored to demand. As yet, though, online audiences represent a small portion of the established broadcasters’ total audiences, and this presents a major growth opportunity in an otherwise near-saturated media market.

However, a less obvious transformation has also taken place. Where short-wave radio was the primary vehicle for international broadcasters, the emerging markets in developing regions such as Asia and the Middle East are embracing television. While this is massively more expensive than radio in terms of production and distribution, for the consumer, it’s relatively cheap, with a small satellite dish costing less than US\$100.

Where the broadcasters’ budgets allow, TV is increasingly the most powerful medium for international broadcasting. In key strategic markets such as the Middle East, satellite television has enormous (up to 95 per cent, according to one commentator) penetration, and the situation is similar in Asia. Where transistor radios were formerly the cheapest way to receive broadcasting, the communications revolution is making television a far more affordable option. Broadcasters are responding to this transformation by reprioritising and rationalising their offers: France 24, for example, was launched on TV in three languages, making cuts to other services to finance the transition. BBCWS similarly economised in other areas to launch its TV services in Arabic and Persian. DW-TV is planning to split its English and German channel into separate services, and CCTV and Xinhua demonstrate the massive investments China is prepared to make in television.

Despite China’s takeover of short-wave frequencies relinquished by the BBC and VOA, FM is rapidly replacing short wave as the radio medium of choice on the basis that it offers far greater quality. Increased costs are again the result, with more relay stations required. This is generating a further mini-revolution in broadcasting, with broadcasters seeking partnerships with FM licencees in order to maximise their FM reach at a lower cost — and unavoidably losing some control over content.

Financial challenges: quarantining the broadcaster from budget cuts

Most government ministries and broadcasters report pressures on budgets (even Al Jazeera). But how this plays out in budget prospects for the broadcasters varies significantly. In Europe, none (with the possible exception of the BBCWS) are expecting budget cuts in the short term. Most are optimistic that they will maintain their current budgets at least in nominal, if not real terms, over the next three to four years. Because of the nature of the State Department’s budget appropriation, BBG is expecting a 1.5 per cent increase in their 2011 budget.

So while other areas of government spending are expected to be rationalised significantly because of the financial crisis (including other public diplomacy budgets), broadcasting has generally been insulated from this trend. What this illustrates is the value that the Western governments surveyed for this report — Canada excepted — place on the

broadcasting function as a key element of their public diplomacy efforts. There are still pressures on the broadcasters, though, as production and distribution costs rise; most say they will need to trim services even if their budgets remain intact. Their expansion into new markets is not slowed, however; rather, there is a reprioritisation and a refocusing as they support new television services and rationalise in other areas.

However, the financial situation facing NHK World and the South Korean Arirang is different again. With NHK World taking its share from the larger NHK budget, the decision on its share is a corporate one, although it expects that its allocation in 2010 will remain roughly the same. Arirang has no such guarantee and of all the broadcasters, its funding situation is the most precarious. The earlier attempts by both the Japanese and South Korean governments to involve the private sector in the financing of their then fledgling international broadcasters suggest a different perspective by both on the strategic value of international broadcasting. It is perhaps not coincidental that the private sector was initially seen as an important source of funding before the impact of financial crises. Neither country has been quick to step in where the private sector ultimately could not.

China remains the big spender, and it is reasonable to assume that it will continue to support its significant investment in international broadcasting.

Increased competition and market saturation

Broadcasters talk of the ‘new era’ in international broadcasting. The last twenty years have transformed not only the menu of media options for broadcasters, but also the breadth of competition in the market. The new technology has lowered barriers to entry and reduced costs.¹³⁰

Broadcasting has evolved from being the ‘public good’ it was the early part of the last century. It has moved through a period of being a strategic tool in the second half of the century to becoming a highly evolved communication tool used by governments in this century, in an exceptionally competitive market. The dominance of Western media is diminishing: the rise of *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya* demonstrate the “end of media imperialism”¹³¹ and the increasing influence of media in developing nations.

The result is a market in which a multitude of offerings proliferate and in which the consumer is increasingly powerful and demanding. In a market so near saturation, any new initiatives require extremely careful targeting — in terms of consumer, location and media offer. For a deep-pocketed government such as China’s, such discipline is not required and the global scattergun approach is possible. Where budgets are tight, though, pragmatism is required — and so RNW firmly refuses to be drawn into a contest with its counterparts on television services in other languages, and largely leaves the competitive field of news to better-resourced broadcasters.

In regions of strategic importance or opportunity (sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East), most broadcasters already have a presence or are

¹³⁰ *The Economist*, International broadcasters. Waves in the web

¹³¹ Philip Fiske De Gouveia, Foreign Policy Centre, The 2006 Madrid Conference on Public Diplomacy, p 6 of 28, <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/documents/276.asp>

building one. Their priorities — both current and future — appear to be largely in line with their sponsoring government's broader strategic objectives. Within regions, specific country or sub-regional priorities change, depending on the broader evolving strategic interest as demonstrated by the significantly increased emphasis on the Middle East. Asia too is an area of significant interest, with several European broadcasters expanding or strengthening their footprint.

Conclusion

The ten international broadcasters surveyed for this report represent a full spectrum of political, ideological and cultural underpinnings. Each broadcaster was created by its government to serve the country's public diplomacy goals. Each reflects the country's history, culture and geopolitical reality. Across the broad spectrum, the main goals were:

- to provide credible alternative sources of information and ideas, particularly to nations which may have insufficient resources to support a robust independent media (such as former colonial possessions)
- to access and influence the overseas-residing diaspora
- to preserve non-English languages
- to counter western and English-language media, cultural or political dominance, and
- to project a country's culture, ideals, values and expertise.

For international broadcasters to make the most effective and lasting contribution to their country's broader public diplomacy goals, our findings identified five fundamental elements which distinguish them from one another, determining their degree of success:

- credibility built on independence
- financial security
- legislative protection
- strategic direction, and
- longevity.

Independence stands out as the single defining factor which guarantees the broadcaster's credibility and is the foundation for its reputation. If the crucial characteristic which sets international broadcasting apart as an effective public diplomacy tool is the way it treats news and current affairs, then reliable independence is the standard by which audiences determine which broadcasters they trust. It is on the basis of the broadcaster's credibility that the international audience will judge and react to the sponsoring government.

To have the time to achieve credibility, however, the broadcaster needs both financial security and legislative protection. Financial security is imperative, to help the broadcaster meet the challenges of the quickly evolving 21st century environment of broadcasting in a market which is crowded and still accepting new entrants. Legislative protection for its independence and certainty for its goals provides it with the ability to withstand the periodic and usually domestic attacks on the viability of and rationale for its existence. It also gives it the armour against pressure — whether overt or covert — to bend to certain interests.

Even with financial security and legislative protection, a broadcaster can still be a less than effective element of public diplomacy if strategic direction is missing or unclear. That is not to say that the broadcaster becomes the tool or the mouthpiece of the government but rather, it has a clear mission, supported by strategic objectives, which guides its operations. Without this strategic direction, it risks becoming just another channel in an already crowded international field where the competition is tough, mostly commercial, and so unhindered by government expectations and constraints.

Longevity — while possibly not as critical as the other four elements — is an important factor in maintaining recognition and reputation. The longevity of the BBC brand has arguably assisted significantly in maintaining its market share and in consequence, its contribution to the UK's public diplomacy. It may be less tangible, but it is important.

The common lesson from the international experience is that for international broadcasting to play a significant role in a country's public diplomacy, the country must be prepared to make the right investments — not just in financial terms, but in working with the broadcaster to set the strategic focus which will meet the government's public diplomacy goals, while preserving intact the broadcaster's reputation.

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IN AUSTRALIA

Australia's place in the world and the importance of an effective public diplomacy effort

*“We are at the dawn of the Asia-Pacific century. Our relationships with the major powers in our region, and the relationships of these powers with one another, will determine the strategic environment in which we operate... the shifting of global strategic and economic weight to the Asia-Pacific is changing the strategic calculus of our region.”*¹³²

Australia's geopolitical situation is unique. It is a true middle power, with the world's 13th largest economy¹³³ and 13th largest defence budget.¹³⁴ We are the sixth largest country in area and have the third largest ocean territory. The Australian dollar is the sixth most traded currency in the world,¹³⁵ and Australia is the 13th largest donor of aid.¹³⁶ We are a prosperous nation: Australia is forecast to have the world's sixth highest GDP per capita for 2010, increasing from 11th position in 2009.¹³⁷

Yet unlike other middle powers of broadly comparable scale (for example the Netherlands, Sweden or Canada), we do not belong to any natural regional grouping, security alliance or economic bloc, such as NATO or NAFTA. Unlike Canada, we do not share a border with an economic and military superpower, nor do we enjoy the benefits of EU membership as is the case for the Netherlands or Sweden.

Australia is a country whose recent history and traditional allies lie outside the region, but whose primary engagements are now predominantly within the region. Australia's engagement with Asia has grown by a factor of more than four since 1990 — “significantly outstripping our engagement with the rest of the world”.¹³⁸ Australia's primary security relationship is with the USA, its colonial origins are British, and yet its top two trading partners are now China and Japan, with Korea ranking fifth, Singapore

¹³² Kevin Rudd, *The establishment of the National Security College of Australia*, speech by the Prime Minister of Australia at the opening of the National Security College, Australian National University, Canberra, 24 April 2010, <http://www.pm.gov.au/node/5877>

¹³³ International Monetary Fund, *World economic outlook database*, April 2010, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/01/weodata/index.aspx>

¹³⁴ The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2010*, pp 462-468

¹³⁵ Bank for International Settlements, *Triennial Central Bank Survey 2007*, <http://www.bis.org/publ/rpfxf07t.pdf>

¹³⁶ OECD statistics <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=CSP2008>

¹³⁷ Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, *Advancing Australia's interests internationally*, *Election 2010*, <http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/more---policies/advancing-australia-s-interests-internationally/>; International Monetary Fund, *World economic outlook database*, April 2010, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/01/weodata/index.aspx>

¹³⁸ Kevin Rudd, speech by the Prime Minister of Australia to the Asialink Asia Society National Forum, Parliament House, 25 May 2010, citing the 2009 PricewaterhouseCoopers Melbourne Institute Asialink Index

sixth and India eighth.¹³⁹ Australia is an island, with a small population, in the midst of Asia's "teeming millions".¹⁴⁰

This unique set of geopolitical realities makes it all the more important that Australia works effectively on the international stage and manages its relationships with the emerging superpowers who are our neighbours. Inevitably, tensions have stemmed from Australia's geopolitical incongruity in the Asia region. Religious, political and socio-economic differences between Australia and its neighbours have manifested themselves in terrorist attacks (Bali), in diplomatic tensions (Balibo five investigations, Stern Hu arrest) and trade altercations (Rio Tinto/Chinalco deal).

Recognising this vulnerability, the National Security Statement in 2008 attested that "*our diplomacy must be the best in the world*".¹⁴¹ In the past, Australia has been a creative middle power advocating effectively in the region, sponsoring the APEC concept, for example, and active in the formation of the G20. With RAMSI (the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands), our presence in East Timor during the referendum on independence and our work in Papua New Guinea, Australia has been "a demonstrable force for good in our region".¹⁴²

The last two decades, however, have seen a gradual degradation of the resources allocated to diplomacy in Australia, and our public diplomacy has suffered accordingly.¹⁴³ The government has explicitly acknowledged that the resourcing of diplomacy must be improved.¹⁴⁴ The new secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Dennis Richardson, refers to the department's "great hangover" — its contraction in size between the early 90s and 2008.¹⁴⁵ As yet, though, there has been no significant funding injection or long-term plan for its regeneration.¹⁴⁶

For Australia to project its voice effectively in the region to maximise its prosperity and security, the government must re-examine the balance between its hard-power and soft-power investments. For an effective advocacy of its interests on the global stage, Australia is diplomatically underweight.¹⁴⁷ This underinvestment permeates the diplomatic functions, including public diplomacy.

Yet Australia's particular geopolitical circumstances call for an effective public diplomacy effort. With its prosperity (having one of the highest per capita GDPs in the world) comes a responsibility to provide poorer nations in the region with development assistance. Australia has taken up this responsibility and implements an aid program which focuses predominantly on the region. However, foreign aid is not a substitute for a

¹³⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Composition of Trade Australia 2008-09*, November 2009, http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/stats-pubs/cot_fy_2008_09.pdf

¹⁴⁰ Allan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed, 2007, p 212

¹⁴¹ Kevin Rudd, *The first national security statement to the Parliament*, address by the Prime Minister of Australia, 4 December 2008

¹⁴² John Howard, *Australia's long term challenges*, address by the Prime Minister of Australia to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Hilton on the Park, Melbourne, 25 February 2004

¹⁴³ Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*

¹⁴⁴ Rudd, *The first national security statement to the Parliament*

¹⁴⁵ Dennis Richardson, interview with Monica Attard, Sunday Profile, ABC local radio, 16 May 2010, <http://www.abc.net.au/sundayprofile/stories/2900317.htm>

¹⁴⁶ See for example Alex Oliver and Andrew Shearer, Diplomacy in ruins, *The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 March 2010, p 4

¹⁴⁷ Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*

well-considered and resourced public diplomacy effort. Making Australia, with all its cultural and political differences, attractive in the region — in other words, projecting its soft power — should be a fundamental aspect of Australia’s efforts in minimising tensions, facilitating prosperous trade and ultimately, enhancing its influence.

It is imperative in this context that Australia makes itself better understood in the region, and international broadcasting is a basic tool for doing that. The first three chapters of this report examined the ways in which international broadcasting has been used over the past century by other governments as one of their primary public diplomacy vehicles and as a key element in projecting their soft power. International broadcasting can play a similarly substantial role in enhancing Australia’s soft power. In the past, evidence suggests it has played that role successfully. The challenge for the Australian government in recalibrating its public diplomacy is to ensure that it understands, resources and positions the international broadcasting tool as effectively as possible.

Australia’s public diplomacy

Like other nations, Australia’s public diplomacy aims to understand, engage with and inform foreign publics about the nation’s values, culture and aims. The ultimate goal is to attract and influence those publics, encouraging their governments to support Australia’s strategic interests and foreign policy goals — in Nye’s words, “*getting [them] to want what [Australia] wants*”.¹⁴⁸ It differs from traditional diplomacy in that it targets foreign publics rather than their governments. If implemented effectively, it reinforces Australia’s over-arching diplomatic infrastructure in advancing the interests of Australia and Australians internationally,¹⁴⁹ ultimately supporting Australia’s prosperity and promoting its strategic interests.

When the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade undertook its review of Australian public diplomacy in 2007, it examined the myriad ways in which public diplomacy has been defined by governments over the last decade. Ultimately, it adopted the definition that “*public diplomacy is work or activities undertaken to understand, inform and engage individuals and organisations in other countries in order to shape their perceptions in ways that will promote Australia and Australia’s policy goals internationally.*”¹⁵⁰

Like that of other developed nations, Australia’s public diplomacy is a mix of activities including cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges and scholarships, media relations, website communications, special visitors programs, international broadcasting and the efforts of a suite of cultural councils. In the expanded sense, it also includes the international activities of a diverse range of organisations such as Screen Australia, the Australian Sports Commission, Defence, AusAID and Austrade.¹⁵¹

As this list shows, Australia has a full array of public diplomacy activities. However, the 2007 Senate Committee review concluded that Australia faces fierce competition in getting its voice heard and heeded internationally. The review found that some countries

¹⁴⁸ Joseph S Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, p 5

¹⁴⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Budget, portfolio budget statements 2010-2011, budget related paper no 1.10, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*, p 13

¹⁵⁰ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, Chapters 1 and 2

¹⁵¹ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, Chapter 4

were “devoting considerable resources to public diplomacy and even smaller countries such as Norway have developed public diplomacy strategies to gain a comparative advantage in international affairs.”¹⁵²

This international jostling for notice is not the only major challenge confronting the successful implementation of Australia’s public diplomacy agenda. Despite the importance of public diplomacy to a middle power such as Australia with activist aspirations, public diplomacy in Australia suffers from some key weaknesses. These range from a comparatively heavy emphasis on educational and cultural diplomacy, a lack of integration with foreign policy making and implementation, poor coordination resulting in a disconnected series of activities, combined with scant monitoring of effectiveness, and crucially, compounded by inadequate resourcing.¹⁵³ One participant in the Senate committee’s hearings commented that “*the reality is that Australian public diplomacy has been relegated to a level of importance equivalent to that of Embassy gardens*”.¹⁵⁴ Lacking conceptual clarity, methodical approaches and meaningful attention from government, Australia’s public diplomacy struggles to achieve strategic cohesion.

The Senate Committee made twenty recommendations to redress the deficiencies it identified, ranging from a comprehensive restructuring of the interdepartmental committee (IDC) responsible for coordinating Australia’s public diplomacy efforts across the various relevant departments and agencies, to investigating new technologies for delivering Australia’s public diplomacy messages. On the question of coordination, the Committee was particularly firm in recommending a more powerful and active coordination role for the IDC.¹⁵⁵ Where there is such a plethora of contributors to public diplomacy, the task of synchronising their efforts to maximise impact¹⁵⁶ (and equally, to minimise damage, as in the case of the Indian students crisis) is enormous.

As though to reinforce the Embassy garden analogy, in responding to the committee’s report, the government accepted only four of the twenty recommendations (one of which was to report back after two years), noted the others and rejected one. This sparse response conforms with successive governments’ inattention to public diplomacy in Australia. In 1998-9, public diplomacy funding amounted to 9.4 per cent of DFAT’s total expenditure.¹⁵⁷ In 2008-9, it was accorded just under six per cent.¹⁵⁸ This decline in relative funding is exacerbated by a corresponding fall in the Department’s overall budget, which has trended down in real terms over the same period, and fallen strongly in comparison with Government expenditure overall.¹⁵⁹ It is a clear illustration of the importance accorded to public diplomacy in Australia that a foreign affairs department under funding pressure cuts its public diplomacy budget disproportionately to the rest of the service.

¹⁵² SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, Chapter 15, par 15.8

¹⁵³ Lowy Institute, *Australia’s diplomatic deficit*, pp 32-33

¹⁵⁴ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, p 188

¹⁵⁵ SCFADT, *Australia’s public diplomacy*, p 103, 109

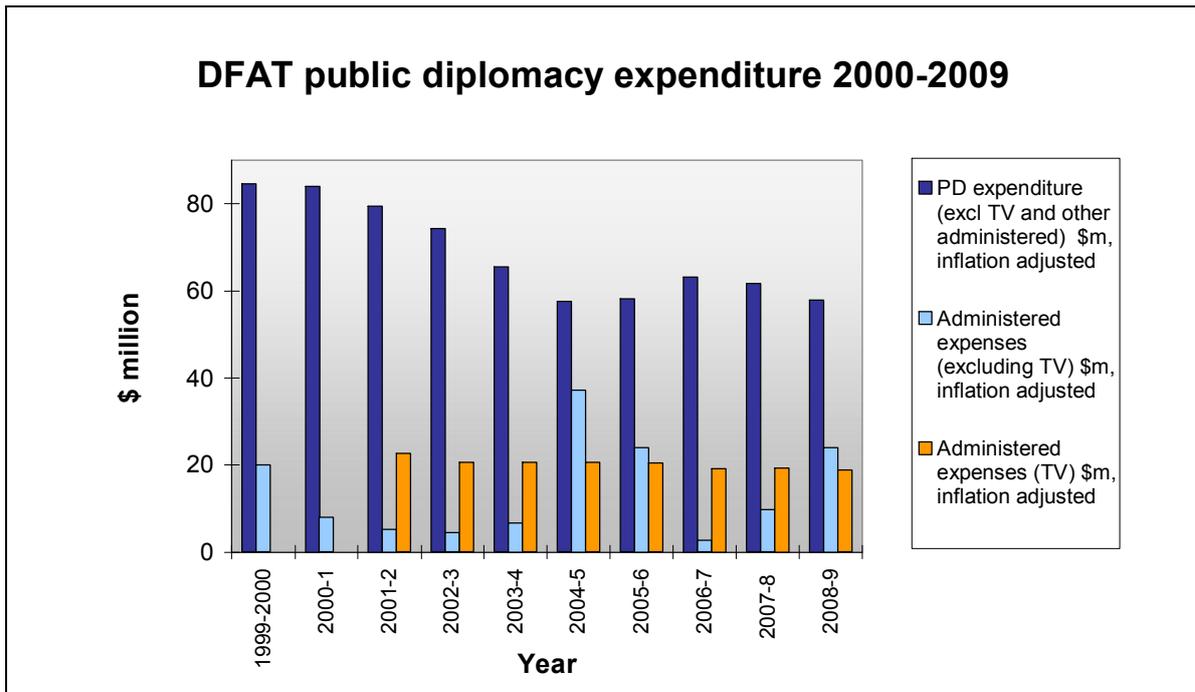
¹⁵⁶ Lowy Institute, *Australia’s diplomatic deficit*, p 30

¹⁵⁷ Excluding expenses administered by the department on behalf of Government

¹⁵⁸ Total expenses excluding administered items, DFAT *Annual Reports* 1998-9 to 2008-9.

¹⁵⁹ See Lowy Institute, *Australia’s diplomatic deficit*, pp 25-26.

Figure 1: Australian Public Diplomacy Expenditure 1998-2009



Based on DFAT Annual Reports, with appropriations data for international television provided by ABC (because DFAT reporting is inconsistent on including international television expenditure). International television is an expense administered by DFAT on behalf of Government. PD expenditure is the price of departmental outputs, which excludes administered expenses. Other administered expenses include public diplomacy grants and costs of international expos. The spikes in 2004-6 and 2008-9 relate to the 2005 World Expo in Aichi, Japan and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.

Interestingly, the report devoted little space to Australia’s international broadcasting, despite the fact that, as a proportion of DFAT’s expenditure on public diplomacy, it comprises anywhere from a third to more than half, in the case in the 2010 budget. This suggests a lack of awareness of the significance of international broadcasting in Australia’s public diplomacy efforts.

Comparison of public diplomacy budgets internationally

Comparisons of budgets with those of other countries is always difficult, but perhaps especially so with public diplomacy budgets, where different countries treat functions such as aid, international broadcasting and international exchanges and scholarships in different ways. Table 2 in this chapter therefore has some important gaps and qualifications, which are noted beneath it. However, for the most reliable comparison, we have excluded rather than included expenditure, so the data presented is based only on conservative estimates and reliable data.

The data listed in the table demonstrate that the investments by the UK, US, France, Germany and the Netherlands in public diplomacy and international broadcasting run into the hundreds of millions of dollars on an annual basis, with the US investment well over US\$1 billion. Aside from a very significant investment in overseas scholarships, Australia’s investments are small in comparison.

Table 2: Comparison of annual public diplomacy and international broadcasting budgets (Exchange rates April 2010 (average for month))

Country	Public diplomacy budget (excluding international broadcasting) (\$USm equivalent*)	International broadcasting (\$USm equivalent*)	International broadcasting expenditure per capita, per annum \$US ¹⁶⁰
UK	\$347 ¹⁶¹	\$415	\$6.75
France	\$681 ¹⁶²	\$420	\$6.74
Germany	\$969 ¹⁶³	\$369	\$4.49
Netherlands	\$111 ¹⁶⁴	\$62	\$3.75
China	Not available	[\$6600 ¹⁶⁵]	n/a
South Korea	Not available	\$44 ¹⁶⁶	n/a
Japan	No consolidated figure available but there has been a steady decline in the public diplomacy budget for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the last nine years.	\$215 ¹⁶⁷	\$1.69
USA	\$1081 ¹⁶⁸	\$717	\$2.34
Canada	No consolidated Public Diplomacy budget; no dedicated Public Diplomacy funding for Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as of 2009	\$15	\$0.44
Australia	\$243 ¹⁶⁹	\$34 ¹⁷⁰	\$1.56

¹⁶⁰ Per capita calculations based on total national populations, World Bank World Development Indicators; http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators?cid=GPD_WDI

¹⁶¹ 2010 budget figure includes British Council, Chevening scholarships, campaign costs and Wilton Park. No data on PD activities other than British Council and Chevening scholarships. Total PD expenditure is a minimum estimate. Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *Departmental Report and Resource Accounts 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009*,

http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc0809/hc04/0460/0460_ii.asp

¹⁶² 2009 Ministère des Affaires Étrangères expenditure on public diplomacy, and includes some educational exchanges and some Alliance Française costs but not overseas lycées (the network of French schools worldwide – estimated at over €550million annually by Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, London, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2005, p 69). Includes the cultural institutes (Instituts Français). Information gathered with assistance of Embassy of France, Canberra

¹⁶³ 2010 figure and includes Goethe Institute, German schools abroad and other cultural and public diplomacy activities eg visits and embassy activities. Information provided by German Federal Foreign Office

¹⁶⁴ 2010 figure; no data on international exchanges is available. Cultural diplomacy includes other PD activities - data from the 2010 Homogeneous Budget for International Cooperation administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “raising the Netherlands’ cultural profile and creating a positive image in the Netherlands and abroad”.¹⁶⁴ Does not include educational exchanges. See Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *What is the HGIS?*, <http://www.minbuza.nl/dsresource?objectid=buzabeheer:183544&type=org>

¹⁶⁵ It has not been possible to obtain an official confirmation of this figure or to determine the period it covers. It has been assumed by the authors of this paper that because of its size, this figure covers several years

¹⁶⁶ Arirang only, KBS figure not available

¹⁶⁷ FY 2009

¹⁶⁸ FY 2009 which represents an increase on FY 2008 which was \$890; FY2010 request was for a further increase to take the budget to \$1253

Imbalance of components of public diplomacy program

The bulk (A\$200 million, or nearly 80 per cent) of Australia's public diplomacy expenditure is invested in international scholarships — the Australia Awards — which consolidate the Endeavour Awards and AusAID development scholarships under one banner for the first time in 2010. This represents a heavy reliance on scholarships to do the work of public diplomacy, although the majority of the scholarships are funded by AusAID and consequently have development, rather than strictly public diplomacy, as their principal objective. Of the remaining expenditure, cultural diplomacy receives around \$7.5 million, with just over \$6 million for the bilateral cultural councils (including the Australia-China/India/Japan/Indonesian councils, which receive the most funding), and approximately \$1.3 million granted through the Australia International Cultural Council. The Australia Network receives the largest portion of this remainder, accounting for approximately \$19 million per annum.

Once international scholarships are removed from the equation, Australia's very small investment in public diplomacy becomes apparent. Among the Western broadcasters surveyed, its per capita investment in international broadcasting is the second lowest, and its funding of cultural diplomacy through the cultural councils looks trivial in comparison with the British Council, the French cultural institutes and Lycées and Germany's Goethe.¹⁷¹ Australia's investment in cultural and general public diplomacy combined is around half that of the Netherlands (a country of five million less people).

However, there have been steps taken recently by the Australian Government to strengthen Australia's image overseas. In May 2010, the then Minister for Trade, Simon Crean, unveiled the Brand Australia campaign, "Australia Unlimited", with The Shanghai Expo and World Cup in South Africa the venues for its inaugural activities. The program aims to "*broaden perceptions of Australia in the international marketplace so it is regarded as highly as a global citizen and business partner, as it is a world class destination. Brand Australia will use the country's many achievements to position Australia as a unique, strong, fair and future-focused nation.*"¹⁷²

The Brand Australia campaign is a promising step forward, but cannot be expected to be a proxy for a comprehensive whole-of-government public diplomacy effort addressing the issues raised in the Senate Committee report and reinforced in our own 2009 Blue Ribbon Panel Report on Australia's instruments of international policy.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ DFAT expenditure includes administered grants and grants to bilateral cultural councils and AICC. Educational exchanges (mainly delivered through AusAID) estimated at A\$200m 2008-9 (see Prime Minister of Australia, *Australia Awards*, media release 13 November 2009, <http://pmrudd.archive.dpmc.gov.au/node/6325>)

¹⁷⁰ Broadcasting expenditure for Australia Network and Radio Australia, includes some additional transmission costs but not ABC base transmission funding

¹⁷¹ British Council: £201m, 2009-10 budget; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Departmental Report and Resource Accounts 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009*; Goethe Institute and other cultural activities including German schools abroad: €698m, 2010 budget, information provided by Auswärtiges Amt; French public diplomacy budget €507m, *Budget 2009*, http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/activite-budget_824/budgets_14541/budget-2009_19313/index.html, information provided by the Embassy of France, Canberra. French Lycées expenditure estimated at over €600m annually by Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, p 69

¹⁷² *Brand Australia. Australia unlimited: the nation's new brand*, 14 May 2010,

<http://www.austrade.gov.au/default.aspx?ArticleID=12584>

¹⁷³ Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*, pp 30-33

The overarching need is for the Australian government to examine the way it practises public diplomacy and assess the various instruments of public diplomacy for the contribution they make. International broadcasting is one of Australia's major financial investments in public diplomacy, and yet it has received scant attention since the mid-1990s.

History of Australian international broadcasting

International broadcasting has been a fixture in Australia's international public profile since 1939. Its long history has at times been chequered, but often distinguished. In 2010, our offshore broadcasting has a relatively complicated structure, with Radio Australia falling under the ABC Charter and funded by the ABC, and the Australia Network (the television broadcasting arm) run by the ABC but funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Radio Australia began short-wave broadcasting in 1939, in cooperation with Britain's BBC External Service as part of the war effort in countering enemy war propaganda.¹⁷⁴ Its genesis lay in the Menzies government's faith in broadcasting to counter the propaganda broadcasts of wartime Japan into Australia's neighbouring region. There also seems to have been a desire on the part of the Anglophile Prime Minister to adopt the British model of broadcasting on the basis that *"the credibility of the service would be enhanced if it followed the British model of a broadcaster independent of direct Government control"*.¹⁷⁵

By 1945, it was broadcasting in 15 languages including German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian and French, as well as Afrikaans, Indonesian, Japanese, Thai, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tok Pisin and occasional Fukienese.

Following the war, Radio Australia became an instrument to attract immigration: broadcasts in English to attract British migrants, and Dutch and German-language broadcasts to attract Europeans disillusioned or displaced by the war. It then assumed a role in the Cold War to counter communism in the region, alongside the BBC World Service (BBCWS), Voice of America (VOA) and Deutsche Welle (DW).¹⁷⁶

Radio Australia's history is littered with struggles over its role, control, funding and independence, which has left it at times battle weary, lacking a clear mandate and confident direction. Since its wartime inception, various government bodies fought for control over its broadcasts: the Department of Information (seeking control over content in the 1940s), the Department of External Affairs (pursuing control over policy direction from the 1940s until the corporatisation of the ABC in 1983), and the ABC itself (seeking editorial independence).¹⁷⁷ There were also tussles in the fifties and sixties over the model of the broadcaster: whether to adopt the BBC model of independence or the VOA model

¹⁷⁴ SCFADT, *The role and future of Radio Australia and Australia Television*, May 1997, par 2.8 (SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*)

¹⁷⁵ Kim Jackson, *The Role and Funding of Radio Australia*, Parliamentary brief, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia, 2000, http://www.aph.au/library/intguide/sp/radio_australia.htm#Mansfield

¹⁷⁶ Macgregor Duncan, Andrew Leigh and David Madden, Changing the channel in Asia, *The Diplomat*, October/November 2005, pp 34-36, p 34

¹⁷⁷ Andrew M Clark, Your Asia-Pacific Network: the use of Radio Australia by the Australian Government, *Pacific Journalism Review* 9, 2003, pp 80-101, p 81-83

at the time, of government control and foreign policy mouthpiece.¹⁷⁸ In the end, the BBC model appeared to prevail in times of peace, and the VOA in times of crisis.¹⁷⁹ By 1989, however, the government appears to have recognised the value of Radio Australia's independence, declaring:

*“We see it as fundamental to Radio Australia’s reputation that the Government be able to assert to the governments of neighbouring countries that Radio Australia is beyond the editorial or programming control of the Australian Government.”*¹⁸⁰

Within the ABC itself, Radio Australia received “erratic” attention¹⁸¹ and was at times isolated both managerially and even geographically: for a long period, it was housed separately from the ABC.¹⁸² This lack of attention left it vulnerable, and between 1989 and 1996, its staff had fallen from 213 to 144.¹⁸³

In terms of legislation covering the ABC's external broadcasting responsibilities, the 1983 Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act differs from the current Act in that it required the ABC to (in section 6(1):

*“transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs and television programs*¹⁸⁴ *of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will*

- 1) *encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs; and*
- 2) *enable Australians living or travelling outside Australia to obtain information about Australian affairs and Australian attitudes on world affairs.”*

In 1994, the Act was changed, and the requirement to broadcast specifically in television was removed (although there was no mention of this in the second reading speech of the amending bill). Ironically, that was the year in which Australia Television was launched, with Radio Australia presenters providing news updates in Asian languages. Initially, the service was funded with a \$5.4 million start-up grant,¹⁸⁵ on the basis that it would become self-funding over time — a goal that was probably over-ambitious at the time, and was never realised during its short four-year life span, leaving it highly vulnerable to withdrawal of government support.¹⁸⁶ In its short lifetime, though, it had built up a significant audience, with a December 1995 Nielsen study showing that its penetration of the Asian market equalled that of CNN and BBC and was second only to Hong Kong Star Television.¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁸ Clark, *Your Asia-Pacific Network*, p 82

¹⁷⁹ Clark, *Your Asia-Pacific Network*, p 83

¹⁸⁰ Submission by DFAT to the 1989 Revill Review, as cited in Stuart Revill and Rodney Tiffin, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, unpublished paper, 1997, p 9

¹⁸¹ Revill and Tiffin, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, p 15

¹⁸² ABC, *Radio Australia Review*, September 1989, par 11.3; Revill and Tiffin, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, p 15

¹⁸³ Revill and Tiffin, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, p 17

¹⁸⁴ Our emphasis

¹⁸⁵ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 3, par 3.51

¹⁸⁶ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 3, par 3.45; Annabel Crabb, ABC regains Asia-Pacific TV, *The Age*, 21 June 2001, p 8

¹⁸⁷ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 7, par 7.13

With the incoming Coalition government in 1996, Radio Australia and Australia Television faced a potentially debilitating funding crisis. This compounded a period of struggle within the ABC in the early 1990s over the competing needs of Radio Australia, Australia Television and the ABC's domestic services in a tightening budget context.¹⁸⁸ During its election campaign of 1995, the Coalition had issued its communications policy, stating:

*“Radio Australia has a proud place in the ABC. It has been providing overseas services for half a century benefiting not only Australian expatriates but also the nationals of many countries, particularly those in our region. The Coalition is strongly supportive of Radio Australia’s existing services and will ensure that they are not prejudiced or downgraded in any way.”*¹⁸⁹

However, the new government faced a budget deficit and sought cuts across the public service. For the ABC, this culminated in the Mansfield review whose report, released in January 1997, recommended closing Radio Australia and privatising or ceasing the Australia Television service (the government having already announced in mid-1996 its decision to sell Australia Television).¹⁹⁰

Radio Australia survived this episode, partly through a vigorous grassroots campaign. Reports at the time indicate support from media organisations and government officials in Asia and the Pacific Islands — including an offer from Papua New Guinea’s Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan to return \$1 million in aid in order to keep open the service to Papua New Guinea.¹⁹¹ DFAT also mobilised, wary of the impact on Australia’s relations within the region, and Foreign Minister Downer stated that the recommended closure *“failed to take proper account of the genuine foreign and trade policy implications of such a move”*.¹⁹²

Ultimately, the events of 1997 saw Radio Australia’s budget halved from \$13.5 million to \$6.3 million and its staffing cut from 144 in 1996 to 67 in 1997-98. It resorted to seeking rebroadcasting partnerships in order to save its service to Asia. In what now looks a regrettable error, the Cox Peninsula transmitter, owned at the time by government, was shut down and later sold off to a Christian evangelical broadcaster. This led to an unfortunate perception of religious interference in Moslem Indonesia.¹⁹³ Again, short-term financial imperatives overrode sensible forward planning, and potentially compromised the nation’s interests in the region. Even today, the ABC leases time for a transmitter on the Cox Peninsula in order to effectively broadcast in short wave to our nearest northern neighbours.

The fate of the international television broadcaster, Australia Television, was more complicated. Looking back over the events of 1996-7, Donald McDonald, the ABC Chairman, observed a decade later that:

“Australia Television had been languishing for some years, afflicted by a kind of financial anaemia, difficulties brought about by shifts in Government attitudes and expectations about its funding ... [its] end had effectively been determined once

¹⁸⁸ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 3, pars 3.43-3.63

¹⁸⁹ June Factor, *Sold over and out*, *Eureka Street*, October 2000, p 12

¹⁹⁰ Australia may sell Asia satellite TV service, *Reuters*, 16 July 1996

¹⁹¹ Revill and Tiffin, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, p 41

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p 40

¹⁹³ June Factor, *Sold over and out*, *Eureka Street*, October 2000, p 13

*the ABC Board had decided, in 1995, that no further ABC base funding would be diverted to it.*¹⁹⁴

The service was put to commercial tender, and on the Mansfield report's recommendation, would have been abandoned by government if that tender failed. At the time, the then Minister for Communications and the Arts backed the Mansfield recommendations, while Kim Beazley, then opposition leader, argued against closure, saying "it'd be yet another suggestion that Australia was hauling up the drawbridge".¹⁹⁵ The Seven Network won the contract in 1997 and operated Australia Television for four years. Its lack of commercial viability, combined with unpredictable government funding,¹⁹⁶ prompted Seven to shut it down in early 2001 after running a skeleton program for several months which attracted severe criticism both within and outside Australia.¹⁹⁷

However, emerging unrest in some parts of the South Pacific and events in East Timor appear to have caused a change of heart in the Government. In 2001, it announced that it would fund (through DFAT) a new international TV service for Asia, contributing \$75 million over five years. Around the same time, Radio Australia received a funding boost (\$9 million over 3 years) for short-wave broadcasting to South East Asia, with Ministers Downer and Alston announcing that:

*"recent events have highlighted the value of Australia's international broadcasting activities in conveying accurate news and information to the region as well as providing an Australian perspective ... an editorially independent Australian television presence in the region, projecting accurate images and perceptions about Australia and its way of life, is very much in the national interest."*¹⁹⁸

The new television service was dubbed *ABC Asia Pacific* and was launched at the end of 2001 after the ABC won the five-year, \$50m tender for the service. Again in 2005 the government called for tenders and the ABC won the contract against other contenders, including Sky News Australia. It was decided at this time to rebrand the service with a more 'generic' name, and *Australia Network* was launched in August 2006.

The impact of variable support on Australian broadcasters' audiences

Survey data for both Australian broadcasters indicates a marked correlation between audience reach and financial support. Information on Radio Australia audiences suggests that the 1997 funding cuts and subsequent events had a prolonged impact on its reach. In Indonesia, for example, the regular weekly audience for Radio Australia exceeded 2.3

¹⁹⁴ Donald McDonald, *The renewal of a tradition: international broadcasting and the ABC*, address by the Chairman of the ABC to The Asia Society AustralAsia Centre, CEO Asia Update Luncheon, Melbourne, 21 November 2006,

http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/documents/asia_society_06.pdf

¹⁹⁵ Maureen Burns, A short wave to globalism: Radio Australia Online, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 32(3) 2008, pp 335-347, p 337

¹⁹⁶ See Figure 2 p 54

¹⁹⁷ Geoff Elliott, Here's Humphrey, our man in Asia, *The Australian*, 5 February 2001, p 33

¹⁹⁸ Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Richard Alston, Minister for Communications, the Information Economy and the Arts, *Broadcasts to Asia-Pacific region*, media release, 8 August 2000

million people at the time of the 1997 Senate Committee review.¹⁹⁹ After the budget cuts of 1997, The ABC reported a “sharp decline” in its reach in Asia following the closure of the Cox Peninsula transmitters,²⁰⁰ and in 2009, Radio Australia’s weekly reach in Indonesia was estimated at 0.7 million.²⁰¹ This fall coincides with a drop in the number of hours of broadcasting in Bahasa daily from the nine hours it enjoyed at its peak in the late 1980s to the 3.5 hours it broadcasts today.²⁰²

For the Australia Network, comparable audience data suggests a similar correlation between funding and audience numbers. Subscriber numbers in 1997 were approximately 15.3 million five years after launch,²⁰³ with total reach around 20 million.²⁰⁴ In 2003, eighteen months after the end of the Seven Network’s stewardship, subscriber numbers were reported as only 10 million (50 per cent less than in 1997).²⁰⁵ In 2010, the reach to subscribers in Asia and India is over 22 million, with total reach now estimated at over 32 million.²⁰⁶ After nine years of relatively stable funding levels, Australia Network has managed to achieve a penetration in the region (particularly in the Pacific) which positions it as a genuine challenger to its international counterparts.²⁰⁷

Australian international broadcasting today: overcoming a legacy of historical inconsistency

The history of Radio Australia and the Australia Network traces an erratic international broadcasting effort, suffering a volatile funding environment and varying levels of attention from within both the ABC and government. While the *raison d’être* of some western international broadcasters was reassessed in the mid 1990’s in light of the Cold War’s end, Australia’s international broadcasting was not evaluated for its fitness to adapt to the changing international context nor its potential to advance Australia’s strategic interests in the face of new geopolitical realities. Instead, decisions on Australia’s international broadcasters were made both by government²⁰⁸ and the ABC itself²⁰⁹ primarily on the basis of budget considerations, the competing claims of the services themselves and the imperative of maintaining domestic public broadcasting.²¹⁰

¹⁹⁹ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 5, par 5.8; ABC, *Submission. Review of the role and functions of the ABC*, September 1996, http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/documents/mansfield_submission96.pdf, p 46

²⁰⁰ ABC, *Annual Report 1997-98*, p 6

²⁰¹ Both languages, Indonesian and English, information provided by the ABC, based on 2009 InterMedia Research, Taylor Nelson Sofres for the Voice of America

²⁰² Information provided by the ABC

²⁰³ ABC, *Submission. Review of the role and functions of the ABC* 1996, p 59

²⁰⁴ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 7, par 7.13

²⁰⁵ ABC, *Annual Report 2002-3*, p 70

²⁰⁶ Subscriber data provided by the ABC, June 2010

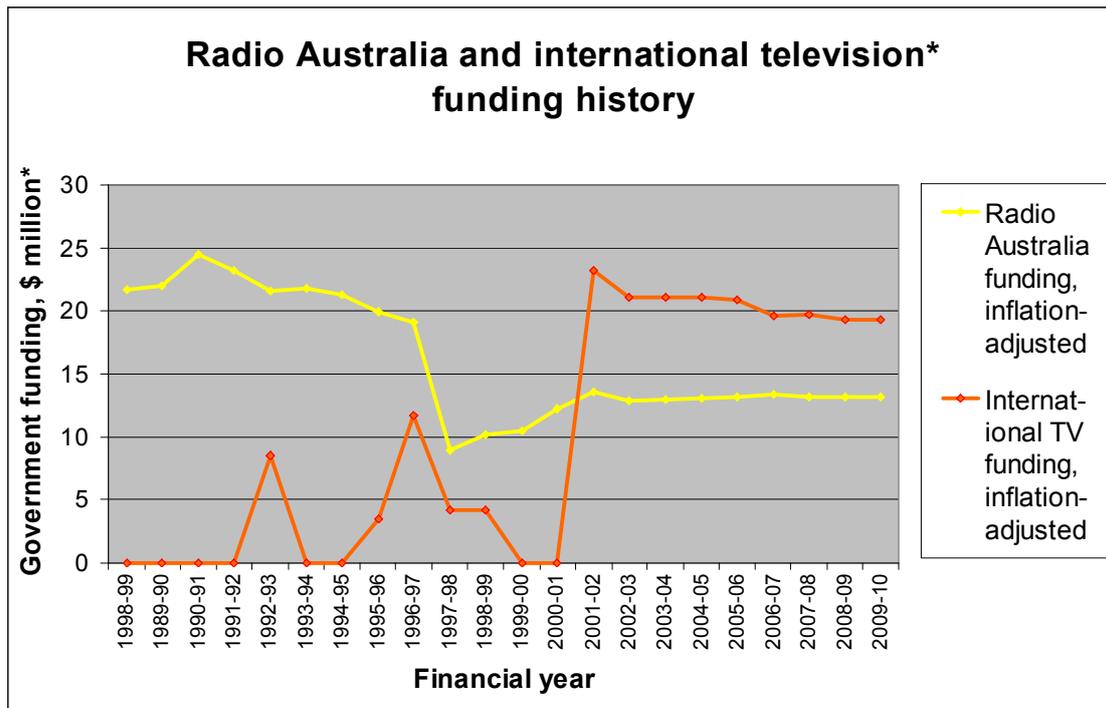
²⁰⁷ Reach and awareness of Radio Australia and Australia Network are discussed in more detail at p 58

²⁰⁸ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 4

²⁰⁹ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Executive Summary, par 11

²¹⁰ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 4

Figure 2



*International television includes Australia Television, ABC Asia-Pacific and Australia Network. Funding excludes base transmission costs, but includes additional transmission costs provided by government to enhance Radio Australia in Asia Pacific from 2000-01, and extra shortwave transmission funding from May 1999. Before mid-1999, transmission services were provided free of charge by the former National Transmission Authority. Inflation adjusted using 2009/10 as reference year.²¹¹

There is evidence, though, that since the 1997 upheavals, both government and the ABC have changed tack and shifted emphasis towards a more consistent and serious effort at international broadcasting. The trajectories of their funding histories (see Figure 2) speak volumes: periods of budgetary pressure, shocks and volatility before 2000-2001, followed by a sustained period of investment (or reinvestment, in the case of Radio Australia) and relative stability.

In 2002, launching the ABC Asia Pacific Service, ABC Chairman Donald McDonald hinted in his speech at the gradual shift taking place in government's attitude to the international broadcaster, contending:

*Now we have the right model for television in that region, ABC Asia Pacific has been mandated into existence with the appropriate level of resources from the appropriate source — the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs.*²¹²

In 2007, the ABC reaffirmed its commitment to international broadcasting by bringing Radio Australia and Australia Network television into a new division — ABC

²¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6401.0, *Consumer Price Index, Australia, all groups*

²¹² Donald McDonald, speech by the Chairman of the ABC at the official launch of ABC Asia Pacific, 13 February 2002, <http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/speeches/s504091.htm>

International — led by an executive director with sole responsibility for international broadcasting.²¹³

Unique constraints

Despite nearly a decade of stabilisation and consolidation, Australia's government-funded international broadcasting presents an anomalous model compared with its equivalents abroad. It is a combination of two ABC-managed services under two distinct brands and with different websites. They are resourced under two discrete funding systems: Radio Australia is funded from the annual allocation provided to the ABC from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, and the Australia Network is the subject of a five-year contract funded and managed by DFAT. It is the fourth incarnation of Australia's international television service in seventeen years, counting the period it was operated by Seven.

A critical constraint for both Radio Australia and the various incarnations of the international television service appears to have been the lack of control over their transmission infrastructure. Initially, the transmission budget was controlled by various government bodies, including the last government owner, the National Transmission Agency. This was sold in 1999 to a private UK-based corporation, later acquired by Macquarie Bank, which then onsold it to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board in 2009. As the Senate Committee reported in 1997, Australia's broadcaster was an "anomaly" even then amongst other international broadcasters, all of whom had control over their means of transmission.²¹⁴ Control would have allowed the broadcasters to lease and exchange time with other international broadcasters to maximise reach in the most cost-effective way. Recommendations to transfer control to the broadcasters themselves have been made by "*virtually every inquiry and review conducted into Australia's international broadcasting services over decades*".²¹⁵

Internationally, Australia Network and its predecessors are also unique in that no other government-funded international broadcaster surveyed for this review operates under a commercial contract or is outsourced to the private sector. International broadcasting is generally treated as a significant component of the international relations infrastructure, and none of the foreign governments surveyed indicated an inclination to outsource it.

It could be argued that Australia's complex arrangement for its international broadcasters encumbers the Government in constructing a coherent and strategically sound approach to international broadcasting as an important element of Australia's public diplomacy efforts. Instead, it suggests ad hoc decision-making, with limited consideration of what the government hopes to achieve overall from its investment in international broadcasting.

²¹³ ABC, *ABC bolsters its commitment to international broadcasting*, media release 7 February 2007, <http://www.abc.net.au/corp/pubs/media/s1842867.htm>

²¹⁴ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 6, par 6.4

²¹⁵ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, Chapter 6, par 6.5

CHAPTER 5: LESSONS FROM ABROAD

Since the early years of international broadcasting in Australia, the rationale for its existence has evolved, shaped by global and regional events and challenged by varying resource constraints.

The recent domestic media debate over the appropriateness of the ABC's continued involvement in international television has centred largely on the rights and wrongs of a publicly funded broadcaster — as opposed to a commercial entity — having responsibility for an international television channel. What has not been evident is a serious debate about the geostrategic role of government-funded international broadcasting and its place on the government's public diplomacy agenda.²¹⁶

One of the central findings from the review of international broadcasters was that there is a distinct correlation between the nations which place a high value on public diplomacy and those which invest substantial amounts in international broadcasting.²¹⁷ The UK, China, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA explicitly acknowledge the importance of public diplomacy, at the same time investing strongly in international broadcasting.

Australia's international broadcasters, conversely, have operated under a series of governments which have neglected to embrace public diplomacy as a means of projecting Australia's soft power. Its public diplomacy has suffered from erratic resourcing in the past and a lack of strategic and organisational coherence.²¹⁸ Similarly, the role of international broadcasting in Australia's public diplomacy efforts is not high on the federal government's agenda.

Government neglect of Australia's international broadcasters and the overall lack of interest in their potential as public diplomacy tools is arguably a wasted opportunity. Drawing on the international lessons described in Chapter 3, Australia has the potential to build on what has been a reasonably successful investment in international broadcasting over the last decade and make it far more productive. The Australian broadcasters' resilience, despite fitful attention and irregular funding in the past, suggests that they have at least some of the elements for a successful international broadcasting effort outlined in Chapter 3: independence, credibility, financial security or predictability, legislative protection, strategic direction and longevity.

The public reaction internationally against the proposed downsizing of Radio Australia in 1996 suggested a broad-based loyalty to the broadcaster within the region, attributable to its longevity as a credible source of information and ideas independent of the receiving countries' governments.²¹⁹ The goodwill which successive Australian governments generated in providing this service to needy countries in our region demonstrates the

²¹⁶ But note eg Hamish McDonald, *The choice is as simple as ABC*, <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/the-choice-is-as-simple-as-abc-20100716-10e31.html>, 17 July 2010

²¹⁷ For example, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Active diplomacy for a changing world*, p 47

²¹⁸ See pp 44-46, and Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*, p 30-33

²¹⁹ See Chapters 1 and 3

capacity for international broadcasting to contribute to the exercise of Australia's public diplomacy as a projection of its soft power.

However, the benefits which would normally accompany the Australian government's investment in a long-standing service to the region have been undermined by the erratic funding it received in the past. While funding has been stable over the last decade, it is diminishing in real terms and the on-again, off-again approach the government has taken to Australia Network and its predecessors has weakened the brand recognition which is normally a benefit of longevity. The contractual arrangement for Australia Network may further limit long-term planning and development, and the experience of the Seven network in the late 1990s suggested that a low-cost solution with limited government support and a reliance on commercial revenue was not the answer.

Without a comprehensive framework for public diplomacy in Australia which incorporates a clear strategic statement and understanding of the role of Australia's international broadcasting in serving its government's public diplomacy objectives, Australia's international broadcasters will continue to sit outside this framework, vulnerable to the vagaries of political fortunes.

Independence, credibility and audience loyalty

In analysing the major international broadcasters, we concluded that the most important factor in guaranteeing a broadcaster's credibility and its reputation for impartiality and objectivity was its unassailable independence. Of all the broadcasters in this review, BBCWS is seen by its peers as the benchmark, and provides a starting-point for applying the international lessons to the Australian context. Although the BBC's corporate and governance framework is different from the ABC's,²²⁰ the underlying principles and dual role of domestic and international public broadcaster offer important similarities.

It is the BBC's independence from government interference in its editorial and managerial control which anchors its reputation. The fact that one of its international broadcasting arms is commercially funded only reinforces its credibility: both BBC World News and BBCWS benefit from the same guarantee of independence in the BBC Charter,²²¹ and they profit from each other's reputations. The protection from editorial interference is also recognised in the governing statutes of DW, RNW, NHK and VOA.

While the legislative basis for the ABC's independence (and by association Radio Australia and currently the Australia Network) is not as overtly expressed as that of the BBC, the 1983 Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act charges its board with the responsibility to "*maintain the independence and integrity of the Corporation*" and to "*ensure that the gathering and presentation by the Corporation of news and information is accurate and impartial according to the recognised standards of objective journalism*".²²² For the Australia Network, the Request for Tender documentation²²³

²²⁰ See box on p 61 for a description of the operations of the BBC's international services

²²¹ For BBCWS, this protection is repeated in the BBCWS Broadcasting Agreement

²²² Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983, Section 8, Duties of the Board

²²³ As a commercial-in-confidence document, the portion of the contract between ABC and DFAT dealing with the objectives for the Australia Network service was provided to the researchers. In contrast, the broadcasting services agreement between the BBC and FCO is available on the internet and was provided to the researchers by the FCO

stipulates the government's requirement for a credible, reliable and independent voice in the region.

While audience loyalty will be generated by a number of factors, credible independent reporting is, according to a majority of the broadcasters interviewed, the primary force in attracting and keeping audiences. The Australian international broadcasters' reputation for independent reporting must be accorded some credit for the reach they have clawed back following the setbacks of the late 1990s. Figures from recent surveys demonstrate the success of both services in the last decade: they now have a slight but important edge on their competitors in their target areas — the Asia-Pacific neighbourhood. A December 2009 survey shows that in four of the five Pacific countries surveyed (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Samoa), Australia Network was the most viewed of all the international TV channels, reaching between 40 and 90 per cent of adults in major urban areas each week.²²⁴ Radio Australia's reach in the Pacific, although less than Australia Network's, is also significant, particularly in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, where just over 50 per cent of the adults surveyed had listened to Radio Australia in the previous week. In Papua New Guinea, the reach had increased by more than 10 per cent in 12 months from 27 per cent to 38 per cent. In an eight-country survey in Asia last year, Australia Network was the highest-ranked government-funded broadcaster among popular TV channels watched.²²⁵

Longevity and consistency

The accumulation of reputation and recognition takes time. While a significant injection of money over a short time-frame can assist a newcomer such as Al Jazeera or France 24²²⁶ to compete with incumbents and their longer-term investments, the advantage of longevity is that years of reliable service build a stronger brand.

ABC's Radio Australia has been broadcasting into the Asia-Pacific for more than seven decades. With the exception of Samoa and to a lesser extent, Fiji, awareness of Radio Australia in the Pacific countries surveyed in 2009 is high. In Asia, the picture is less consistent. In East Timor, awareness is relatively high and is significantly higher than for either BBC or VOA. In Cambodia, it is higher than the BBC but below VOA. In Indonesia, awareness is relatively lower than BBC or VOA, although higher than other international broadcasters including DW. In Vietnam, awareness of Radio Australia falls behind BBC and VOA.

A closer analysis of the history of Radio Australia's broadcasting patterns to these countries would help explain these inconsistencies, and why Radio Australia, despite its longevity as a broadcaster to the region, does not have greater recognition. This is outside the scope of this study. However, a probable factor is the significant cutbacks it suffered in the 1990s — for example, the severe trimming of its Indonesian Bahasa programming.²²⁷ Yet Indonesia was and remains one of the highest international strategic priorities for Australia. It is Australia's second nearest and by far our most populous

²²⁴ Tebbutt research surveys in the main urban areas of 5 Pacific countries – December 2009. Research commissioned by Australia Network and Radio Australia, information provided by the ABC

²²⁵ TV channels watched last 30 days, Synovate Pax, Q4'08 – Q3'09 results. Prepared for Australia Network, 8 markets: Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Manila, Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, India; information provided by the ABC

²²⁶ See p 34

²²⁷ See p 52

neighbour, with a population of 232 million.²²⁸ It was the largest recipient of Australian aid in 2009-10,²²⁹ but it receives only 3.5 hours of Radio Australia broadcasting per day in its native language.

The picture is less simple than it appears, because online and television platforms contribute to the overall reach of Australia's broadcasters in Indonesia. As sources of news and current affairs, the internet and international TV are used by an estimated one per cent of the Indonesian population, compared with international radio's 0.2 per cent.²³⁰ However, radio itself is used daily by 14 per cent of Indonesians, second only to television (84 per cent) and as a medium, it is far from obsolete. With China amplifying its short-wave presence in the region, Australia's radio service to Indonesia looks undersized.

Despite its chequered and relatively shorter history, Australia Network's awareness results tend to be stronger, albeit with some regional variations. In Jakarta, its reach ranks in the top ten international news broadcasters (both commercial and government-funded, including CNN, BBC World, CNBC, and Al Jazeera English).²³¹ In the Pacific, awareness of Australia Network is consistently higher, and even in Samoa, where Australian broadcasting trails somewhat, it has a 60 per cent awareness ranking.²³²

The lesson from the Radio Australia and Australia Network experiences is that, unlike internationally more prominent broadcasters analysed as part of this study, the Australian broadcasters have weathered significant budget cutbacks and inconsistent support, while both government and the ABC at various times deliberated on the value of maintaining the services as an international public good. As a result, access and exposure to target audiences have suffered, particularly in the case of Radio Australia. Australia Network has been forced to overcome the hurdles of being a new broadcaster, not just once, but three times, as it and its predecessors were redefined and relaunched into an increasingly competitive market. Its relatively short contract period exposes it to further variability.

The separate identities of Australia's radio and television broadcasters may also be acting as a significant restraint on their reputation and recognition. While there are precedents for this in the international context — France 24 and RFI, CCTV and CRI, for example — a single brand such as the BBC's (which houses three international services, a domestic service and one website under the one banner),²³³ would allow each service to capitalise on and reinforce the achievements of the other.

The Australian international broadcasters have limited resources and operate in a crowded market which is still accepting new entrants. Their dual branding may well have been a needless distraction from their task of fostering the loyalty of Radio Australia audiences, building on its long-held reputation and providing a firmer platform for expansion.

²²⁸ DFAT, Indonesia fact sheet, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fs/indo.pdf>

²²⁹ DFAT, Indonesia country brief, http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/indonesia_brief.html

²³⁰ 2009 data, both languages, Indonesian and English, information provided by the ABC, based on 2009 InterMedia Research, Taylor Nelson Sofres for the Voice of America

²³¹ Synovate Pax, *Q4'08 – Q3'09 results. Prepared for Australia Network*, information provided by the ABC

²³² *Tebbutt research surveys in the main urban areas of 5 Pacific countries – December 2009. Research commissioned by Australia Network and Radio Australia*, information provided by the ABC

²³³ See box on p 61

Financial security and predictability

Financial security — or at least predictability — has been an important factor in the stable reputations of the major international broadcasters. In a stroke of unfortunate timing, Radio Australia’s budget and transmission woes of the mid-1990s²³⁴ occurred precisely at the time when the big international broadcasters were moving eastwards to the Asia-Pacific and Australia’s traditional target audiences. TV5 Monde launched its Asia service in 1996, the year of the Al Jazeera launch, and DW had already started broadcasting into the Asia Pacific in 1995.²³⁵

While there was a recalibration in the post-Cold War period (particularly for VOA), the budget corrections for the major broadcasters were minor in comparison with the budget halving that Radio Australia sustained.²³⁶ DW, for example, had its budget cut from DM636 to DM606 in 1999 — a reduction of less than five per cent which was nevertheless viewed by DW as a “slashing” that demanded “sweeping cost-cutting measures”.²³⁷ The surveyed broadcasters generally reported a return to budget stability by early 2000s. Even in the wake of the global financial crisis, they expect their budgets to remain relatively intact.²³⁸

Although partially recovered from its mid-90s nadir, Radio Australia’s operating budget today is lower (even without accounting for inflation) than it was in the 1988/9 financial year.

The more serious financial attention the government has accorded Australia Network in the last decade has counteracted to some extent its various identity changes, ownership shifts and strategic about-faces. With its comparatively small budgets,²³⁹ though, in a highly competitive market, it will be difficult for it to make substantial inroads in reach and awareness in the region.

Strategic direction

The role of international broadcasting in Australia’s public diplomacy is defined in the 1983 Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act.²⁴⁰ As outlined in the previous chapter, this has historically evolved to govern only the international radio component of international broadcasting, with the television function shifted to DFAT’s control. In the absence of a statutory framework, the objectives for the Australia Network appear to be governed only by the Request for Tender documentation, which articulates via an exhaustive list the government’s detailed requirements for a television service to the Asia-Pacific region.

By comparison, the relationship between the BBCWS and the FCO is clearly articulated in the Broadcasting Agreement, and the Agreement is precise about what is required of

²³⁴ See pp 49-54

²³⁵ Deutsche Welle website, Chronology, 1995-1999, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,12073,00.html>

²³⁶ See p 49

²³⁷ Deutsche Welle website, Chronology, 1995-1999, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,12073,00.html>

²³⁸ See p 25

²³⁹ See Table 2, p 47

²⁴⁰ Section 6

the BBCWS: “to be the world’s best known and most respected voice in international broadcasting, thereby bringing benefit to Britain.”²⁴¹

In Australia, strategic planning for the international broadcasters is largely left to ABC’s senior management, overseen by its board. While this may be a direction consciously chosen by the Australian government, it differs from the BBCWS approach and that of many of the ministries of foreign affairs in the survey countries. Their highly articulated public diplomacy strategies (particularly in Europe and the US), strong and concise statements of their objectives for international broadcasting and a formalised working relationship with their respective international broadcasters ensure that strategic direction is aligned with the country’s foreign policy objectives.

THE BBC’S INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

The public face of the BBC’s international operations comprises:

- *BBC World Service*: news and information in 32 languages through radio, TV and online;
- *BBC World News*: global English TV news channel;
- *BBC Worldwide*: BBC-badged TV channels and other services
- *BBC website*: providing access to all BBC’s services including news and information

While the two international news services, BBC World Service and BBC World News, are part of the BBC Global News Division, they are funded differently. World Service receives grant-in-aid from the British Government’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The BBC World News and BBC Worldwide are commercial operations, and the BBC websites benefit from a mix of public funding and advertising revenue. Each service operates under the BBC banner and the operations of all four adhere to the requirements set out in the BBC’s Charter. Individually and in combination they contribute to the internationally respected brand value of the BBC. As BBC-branded services, each is contributing significantly to the UK Government’s public diplomacy efforts.

Unable to continue relying solely on radio to broadcast its news, the BBC made a corporate decision in the early 1990s to move into international television. However, the government of the day refused to provide public funding for an international television channel. To proceed, the BBC had to adapt to a commercial model, and BBC World News is now an international market leader. The BBC World Service eventually extended into television in 2008 and 2009, launching the Arabic and Persian TV services with the support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The different funding sources oblige the BBC to abide by separate reporting requirements for each of the services, in accordance with its annual reporting requirements and the broadcasting agreement with the FCO for the BBC World Service. This agreement sets out the conditions for the grant-in-aid, stipulating that the “*BBC will obtain audit assurance that there has been no material subsidy between grant-in-aid and licence fee funds*”. At the same time, BBC’s international commercial operations are still able to support publicly funded services.

The BBC World News, BBC Worldwide and BBCWS all benefit from the BBC banner and benefit from the legislative protection the Charter provides the BBC, and there is a visible and consistent adherence across all services to the BBC’s basic principles of independence and integrity.

²⁴¹ BBCWS Broadcasting Agreement, Annex B

CHAPTER 6: WHY AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IS IMPORTANT

*Radio Australia serves an ambassadorial function for the Australian Government ... [its] broadcasts play a vital role in helping the Australian Government build credibility in the Asia-Pacific region.*²⁴²

In the history of Australia's international broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific, there are a number of examples which directly illustrate its effectiveness in projecting Australia's soft power. In 2000, following the referendum on independence in East Timor and the tensions between Jakarta and Canberra, the then Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Communications (Alexander Downer and Richard Alston) issued a statement attesting the value of Australia's international broadcasting activities.²⁴³ This was a belated correction of the Government's 1996-7 near-abandonment of international broadcasting following the Mansfield inquiry.

The Senate Committee's 1997 review of Australia's international broadcasting reported that in the period following Pauline Hanson's maiden speech, Radio Australia and Australia Television programs conveying Australia's successful multiculturalism had "helped to dispel doubts about Australian racial tolerance following accounts of the race debate broadcast on local media stations in the region".²⁴⁴ Similarly, a survey of Radio Australia's listeners in the 1990s reportedly found that Indonesian listeners had changed their attitude to Australia, learning of the abolition of the White Australia policy, freedom of religion, the teaching of Indonesian in Australian schools and Australia's aid to the region.²⁴⁵

These are specific examples of the power of international broadcasting to change attitudes. Combined with these, the promising penetration and awareness results that Radio Australia and Australia Network have achieved over the last decade illustrate their potential in engaging and informing substantial audiences in the region.

The cost effectiveness of international broadcasting

International broadcasting reaches audiences in their millions. The BBC World Service's weekly audience is estimated at close to 200 million. In terms of 'available homes', Voice of America and Al Jazeera reach similar numbers, and Deutsche Welle, France 24, CCTV and Arirang reach between 50 — 100 million each.

Radio Australia reaches at least 2.7 million²⁴⁶ people monthly and the Australia Network, reaches seven million viewers",²⁴⁷ although on an 'available homes' basis the reach is far higher (for Australia Network, 32 million homes in its Asian markets). On current

²⁴² Clark, *Your Asia-Pacific Network*, p 99

²⁴³ See p 52

²⁴⁴ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, May 1997, Executive Summary, par 22

²⁴⁵ Duncan, Leigh and Madden, *Changing the channel in Asia*, p 34

²⁴⁶ This includes countries surveyed: Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Pacific Islands, East Timor, and the markets Bangkok, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Manila, Singapore, Seoul, Taipei and India. It excludes reach data for China, Burma, Vietnam and the French Pacific. Data provided by ABC International, June 2010

²⁴⁷ DFAT, *Annual Report 2007-2008*, October 2008, p 221

budgets, even the lower reach figures translate to annual expenditures per audience head of \$4.20 for Radio Australia and \$2.75 for Australia Network.

As a tool of public diplomacy, international broadcasting is a remarkably cost-effective way of reaching audiences in their millions on a regular basis. As one of the submissions to the 1997 Senate Committee put it, “*a high profile as an international broadcaster is a relatively cheap means of projecting ... Australia’s comparative advantages ... high educational standards, the richness of our cultural life ... the cosmopolitan and democratic nature of our society*”.²⁴⁸ The committee itself asserted boldly that “*there is no other viable and cost-effective means of projecting and promoting Australia to tens of millions of people in the Asia Pacific region and beyond*”.²⁴⁹

Measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy activities is notoriously difficult.²⁵⁰ Most foreign ministries do not do it well, and Australia is no exception, monitoring outputs rather than outcomes and failing to set measurable goals.²⁵¹ However, certain types of activity provide some indices, and for a point of comparison with international broadcasting, we examined this year’s Shanghai Expo as one of DFAT’s flagship public diplomacy exercises.

The Shanghai Expo organisers estimate a final audience of 70 million, although on current attendance figures, the actual number may be more like 40 million.²⁵² DFAT estimates the attendance at the Australian pavilion at around seven million.²⁵³ With expenditure on the event estimated at \$91 million,²⁵⁴ the cost per audience member will be around \$13. At \$4.20 and \$2.75 per audience head for Radio Australia and Australia Network respectively, international broadcasting reaches more people for far less.

Apart from the difference in cost, what distinguishes this type of event from international broadcasting is the nature of the engagement: the interaction and exposure to Australia is a single (and possibly fleeting) occasion. Broadcasting, on the other hand, has the potential to reach audiences regularly and on a sustained basis — providing an opportunity to build a more nuanced understanding and deeper engagement.

The Australian government spends between \$31 and \$36 million annually on international broadcasting.²⁵⁵ The Australia Network expenditure is around \$19.3 million and forms anywhere up to half of DFAT’s public diplomacy outlay.

These are significant sums. But the amounts are small in comparison with the investment of other nations in their international broadcasters. In Australia’s particular geopolitical

²⁴⁸ Rod Tiffen, submission to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee 1997, cited in Revill and Tiffen, *The decline and fall of Radio Australia*, p 14

²⁴⁹ SCFADT, *The role and future of RA and AT*, May 1997, Executive Summary, par 19

²⁵⁰ See Chapter 3, p 30

²⁵¹ Pierre C Pahlavi, Evaluating public diplomacy programmes, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 2 (2007) 255-281, p 259; Lowy Institute, *Australia’s diplomatic deficit*, p 32

²⁵² *Low visitor numbers dent high hopes*, <http://www.watoday.com.au/travel/travel-news/low-visitor-numbers-dent-shanghai-expos-high-hopes-20100510-umk4.html>, 10 May 2010; *Visitor numbers top 5 million*, <http://en.expo2010.cn/a/20100524/000004.htm>

²⁵³ DFAT, *Annual Report 2008-2009*, p 204

²⁵⁴ DFAT *Portfolio Budget Statements 2009-10 and 2010-11*; DFAT *Annual Report 2007-2008 and Annual Report 2008-2009*

²⁵⁵ The amount depends on whether transmission costs are included. Transmission is currently outsourced and most is accounted for separately

situation, international broadcasting provides a cost-effective way to project Australia's soft power and strengthen its presence in the region.

Reinforcing Australia's international strategic objectives

Addressing mistrust and misconceptions

Australia is critical of its own Asia-literacy,²⁵⁶ but it has a limited appreciation of how uninformed other countries in the region are about Australia, and in some cases, their ambivalence. In the 2006 Lowy Institute Poll on Australia, Indonesia and the world, the Indonesians surveyed rated Australia at 51° on a "warmth of feelings" scale of 1-100, equal with Iran, and behind Japan (64°), China (58°), India (56°) and the USA (54°).²⁵⁷ There has been a longstanding concern held by both governments that the nations did not understand one another, and that their populations harbour suspicions about each other's intent. On his recent visit to Australia, President Yudhuyonho told Parliament that:

*"the most persistent problem in our relations is the persistence of age-old stereotypes—misleading, simplistic mental caricature that depicts the other side in a bad light.... in Indonesia there are people who remain afflicted with Australia phobia — those who believe that the notion of White Australia still persists, that Australia harbours ill intention toward Indonesia and is either sympathetic to or supports separatist elements in our country."*²⁵⁸

Indonesia is our closest neighbour after Papua New Guinea. It is a country of 230 million people. Accounting for \$4.1 billion of Australia's annual exports, it is Australia's 11th largest export market.²⁵⁹ A cooperative relationship between the two countries is essential, not only on trade, but on numerous international issues of intense concern to Australia, including terrorism, people-smuggling, illegal fishing and pandemics. Similarly, Australia's bilateral relationship with China has become an incontrovertible national priority, with a majority of Australians now judging China as the world's leading economic power.²⁶⁰ But few think Australia is doing enough to pressure China to improve its human rights record, any many fear its military might.²⁶¹

There is therefore a significant disconnect between the importance of Australia's relationships with key nations in its region, and the lack of understanding and trust between the populations of those nations and Australia. This indicates a real opportunity for an active public diplomacy effort in the region, and not only to vulnerable states in the Pacific. Building understanding and trust is precisely the function of the new public diplomacy, and Australia has at its disposal international broadcasters of established reputation to play a role in informing populations in the region and addressing misconceptions. When relations between Canberra and governments of neighbouring

²⁵⁶ Tony Abbott, speech to the Asialink Asia Society National Forum, Parliament House, 25 May 2010, and Kevin Rudd, speech to the Asialink Asia Society National Forum, Parliament House, 25 May 2010

²⁵⁷ Ivan Cook, *The Lowy Institute Poll 2006. Australia, Indonesia and the world. Public opinion and foreign policy*. 2006, p 27

²⁵⁸ Susilo Bambang Yudhuyonho, address by the President of Indonesia to Parliament, Hansard, House of Representatives, 10 March 2010, p 2139

²⁵⁹ DFAT *Indonesia country brief*, http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/indonesia_brief.html accessed 9 June; DFAT *Indonesia Fact Sheet*, <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fs/indo.pdf> accessed 9 June 2010

²⁶⁰ Fergus Hanson, *The Lowy Institute Poll 2010. Australia and the world. Public opinion and foreign policy*. 2010, pp 9-10, 24, 25

²⁶¹ Ibid

countries become fractious, international broadcasting can play a positive role in maintaining Australia's reputation.

Projecting a positive and attractive image for Australia

Both within its region and outside, Australia has important bilateral relationships, many of them positive and low in the tensions that occasionally test relations with some of our neighbours. In *Australia's diplomatic deficit*, we remarked on the complexity of Australia's engagements in a globalised world²⁶² — its deep integration into the global economy, our reliance on our exports (worth \$250 billion and around one fifth of our GDP)²⁶³ and the importance of foreign investment in Australia, not to mention the million Australians living overseas.²⁶⁴

This level of global engagement provides both an opportunity and an imperative to project Australia's image positively and attract the people of other nations to us — as a destination for travel or education, as a partner in investment and business, and as a dynamic presence in the Asia Pacific. International broadcasting is one of the few public diplomacy vehicles with the ability to reach audiences in their millions, and the medium is well suited for communicating these positive images, values and attributes.

Acting as a responsible leader in the region

Australia's prosperity and its place in the region bring with it humanitarian responsibilities. Successive governments have argued this, and recently Bob McMullan²⁶⁵ reiterated that "*our principal area of responsibility will be in Asia and the Pacific. That is where most Australians see our future and where, particularly in the Pacific, the rest of the world expects Australia to take a lead, and we should.*"²⁶⁶ In part, Australia acquires these responsibilities with its development assistance, with around 50 per cent of the total aid budget allocated annually to the region, half of which goes to the Pacific and Papua New Guinea.

The emphasis on assisting Australia's closest neighbours is driven partly by humanitarian considerations and the development challenges facing those countries. But it also recognises that instability in the region threatens Australia's security and prosperity. Since the early 2000s, this has been a major factor driving Australia's national security strategy in responding to deteriorating political situations in the region, such as in the Solomon Islands and Fiji:

*"The program aims to assist developing countries reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development in line with Australia's national interest. Australia assists developing countries build stronger communities and more stable governments which improves Australia's economic and security interests."*²⁶⁷

²⁶² Lowy Institute, *Australia's diplomatic deficit*, p 4

²⁶³ Commonwealth of Australia, *Composition of Trade Australia 2009*, Canberra, May 2010, p 2, GDP data from World Development Indicators database, World Bank, 1 July 2010.

²⁶⁴ Approximate estimate, Michael Fullilove, *World wide webs: diasporas and the international system*. Lowy Institute Paper 22, Sydney, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2008, p 23

²⁶⁵ Former Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance

²⁶⁶ Bob McMullan, Budget Debate Speech, House of Representatives, Hansard, May 26 2010.

²⁶⁷ *Australia's international development assistance – a good international citizen*, statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith, and Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, Commonwealth budget paper, 11 May 2010

Aid is therefore a vital component of Australia's soft-power approach to the region, and Australia's aid agency, AusAID, has achieved a high profile as the leading donor of aid throughout the region.

However, AusAID is not the only important element of Australia's soft-power approach in the Pacific. Australia's international broadcasters work in parallel with it as soft-power and transformational development tools.

Radio Australia has been an important feature of the Pacific's political and community landscape since the Second World War. In a region which has been shaped and marred by coups and conflict throughout much of this time, Radio Australia has been an alternative and credible news source where local media outlets have struggled to provide a service, either because of lack of resources or political interference.

During Radio Australia's resurgence at the end of the 1990s, it played a significant role in supporting Australia's response to the emerging instability in the region. Broadcasts into East Timor in the late '90s were crucial in supporting Australia's policy and the actions of Interfet during the referendum on independence. The bilingual East Timor and Indonesian election sites were "spectacularly successful" in late 1999, with Radio Australia Online receiving more than 2 million accesses in September and October 1999.²⁶⁸ Those achievements were pivotal in the Federal Government's decision to reinvest in the Australia Network through DFAT.²⁶⁹

In other parts of the region, Radio Australia started services to Cambodia in 2007 and FM services to Laos in 2008, with Radio Australia the only English-language foreign broadcaster currently permitted to broadcast in Laos 24 hours a day, seven days a week.²⁷⁰ Indicating the value of an independent voice countering that of a repressive regime, Radio Australia's broadcasts in the Mandarin language had been accessed by a significant audience in Myanmar in the '80s, even though not their native language, because other radio services were blocked internally. Radio (particularly SW and AM) still plays a larger role in Myanmar than any other medium providing news and current affairs to the population: nearly 10 per cent of people listen to international radio daily, and Radio Free Asia, Voice of America and the BBCWS have a significant presence. Yet Radio Australia's new Burmese language service currently broadcasts for only 45 minutes a day into Myanmar; there is a substantial opportunity to increase this, providing Burmese people with reliable and independent news and current affairs from the region, in the absence of credible local sources.

Australian broadcasters perform a valuable service in the region, where there is a need for credible, reliable and well-resourced alternative sources of information. The ABC's international division also has a development group supported by AusAID and the World Bank, which focuses on Asia-Pacific media capacity-building. That these services are provided by the Australian government is one of the reasons they work together as an instrument of soft power: Australia is projecting an image of itself as a responsible and openhanded neighbour.

²⁶⁸ Radio Australia timeline, <http://blogs.radioaustralia.net.au/70/history/timeline/>

²⁶⁹ See p 49

²⁷⁰ Radio Australia timeline

This deceptively simple service — provision of information and news — does more than reflect favourably on Australia: some of Australia Network’s surveys²⁷¹ measure viewing by “elite” audiences,²⁷² and the channel’s reach into those markets demonstrates that the audiences who view it for news and information are in a position to influence the direction of their own countries’ policies. Informed populaces support transparency and ultimately, this promotes better governance in the region. The result is a stronger framework for economic development, stability and security — all of which help Australia achieve its foreign policy goals.

²⁷¹ Synovate Pax, *Q4’08 – Q3’09 results. Prepared for Australia Network*, information provided by the ABC

²⁷² Top 20 per cent by household income

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

Australia's international broadcasters operate in a unique geopolitical environment. As one of the most prosperous middle powers on the globe, Australia occupies a privileged place within the Asia-Pacific region. Among its neighbours are the poorer and less stable nations of the Pacific, but also some of the most populous emerging economies in the world, like Indonesia, China and India, and the developed economies of Japan, Singapore and Korea. This paradoxical position confers both opportunities and obligations on Australia.

Opportunities, because among those close neighbours are Australia's strongest and fastest-growing trading partners. Building trust, promoting understanding, and engaging these nations by projecting our image and generating interest in our culture, expertise, ideals and values can only benefit Australia's long-term interests.

Obligations, because along with our prosperity and unique situation within our region come responsibilities towards our poorer or unstable neighbours. Aside from assisting them with our substantial aid program, promoting stability in the region will foster Australia's security and prosperity.

International broadcasting is a powerful tool which Australia can wield to capitalise on these opportunities and address these obligations. Other nations have demonstrated how highly they value international broadcasting by investing immense resources in it as a means of achieving their public diplomacy goals and furthering their foreign policies. It is a versatile tool, used to achieve a broad spectrum of public diplomacy objectives: providing alternative sources of information and ideas to countries without robust media systems of their own, communicating with diasporas, preserving languages, maintaining cultural diversity and projecting national identities.

The last decade has been one of massive expansion in government-funded international broadcasting. While the global financial crisis has curtailed the budgets of some broadcasting nations, their investments have given them an edge in building strategic footholds in places where their international interests lie, including the increasingly pivotal Asia-Pacific. Undoubtedly, the international broadcasting landscape is undergoing rapid transformation. The market is becoming intensely crowded, and short-wave radio, once the staple of the government-funded broadcaster, is waning in influence. But FM transmission is rapidly gaining traction, and the information revolution has propelled the more sophisticated broadcasters into an era of multimedia ascendancy.

Australia's international broadcasters have been operating in a policy and financial environment which has impaired their ability to keep pace with these transformative developments. Despite the relative stability of the last decade, Australia's funding of international broadcasting still falls considerably short of that of its international counterparts. Australia spends less on a per capita basis than all of the broadcasters in our review (and less than a quarter that of the UK and France), with the exception of Canada, which has effectively abandoned the arena. But the periodically erratic resourcing of the past is not the only factor which has hampered Radio Australia and the Australia Network in their task of attracting and maintaining audiences and promoting Australia's interests effectively. Struggles over the control and direction of both broadcasters have made consistency and strategic coherence elusive goals. This has compounded the impact of the

low level of resourcing Australian governments have dispensed on international broadcasting, and counteracted the benefits that would generally come from its longevity.

Australia's broadcasters function under a framework that provides little assurance of funding stability and leaves the Australia Network in a state of statutory limbo. Not only are the platforms of Australia's international broadcasting housed in separate government portfolios (although currently under the ABC's roof), they operate as two separate identities, unable to exploit the reinforcing and multiplying benefits of one strong brand, and ill-equipped to overcome that without more abundant resourcing.

The resilience of Radio Australia and the Australia Network following the '90s crisis suggests Australian international broadcasters have the potential to further Australia's national interests in a more strategic and beneficial way. The most successful international broadcasters work closely with their ministries of foreign affairs in identifying strategic priorities (as opposed to content) and emerging geopolitical issues. But such cooperation can only occur where there is a workable level of trust between the broadcaster and its funding government. In circumstances where the Australian government is uncertain even of the appropriate corporate model for international broadcasting (privately or publicly managed) and hesitant to commit meaningful resources to the broadcasting effort, such trust is unlikely to develop.

What this points to is a larger issue for the Australian government — its limited appreciation of the role and value of international broadcasting as one of public diplomacy's primary tools, and more importantly, its diffidence about the value of public diplomacy in projecting Australia's soft power.

With its eroding resource base constraining its capacity across the entire diplomatic agenda, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade does what it can with the Australia Network. But the history of Radio Australia and the Australia Network shows that in some sense, Australian governments of all colours have failed to develop and enunciate a sophisticated comprehension of the role and potential of international broadcasting in furthering the nation's foreign policy. While formal systems for measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy platforms are still evolving, this is offset for international broadcasting by quantifiable audience reach and loyalty, by the distinguished reputations of the exemplars like the BBC, and by the enduring belief in the value of international broadcasting demonstrated by the governments which nurture and sustain it.

Ultimately, the question is whether the Australian Government has a meaningful commitment to public diplomacy as a critical element of Australia's foreign policy strategy. Other advanced nations place a high value on public diplomacy and resource it well. Australia spends little on public diplomacy, and its approach to it, and to international broadcasting, is complicated and confused.

As a central component of that public diplomacy effort, international broadcasting has the potential to play a significant role in advancing Australia's national interests. The debate about international broadcasting is not about protecting fiefdoms, but about the much broader question of how to manage and resource Australia's public diplomacy and its powerful tools. Unless the Australian government addresses this, it runs the risk of shackling a valuable contributor to Australia's foreign policy goals.

ANNEX 1: Comparative indicators of the broadcasters

Broadcaster	Budget (\$US equiv millions)	Audience numbers ²⁷³	Geographic/audience focus	Media ²⁷⁴	Principal source of funding
BBC World Service	\$415 ²⁷⁵	180 million ²⁷⁶	Global with television emphasis on Middle East. Current priorities Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia, Afghanistan, Russia	Radio/TV	Govt (FCO)
Al Jazeera English	\$350-400 ²⁷⁷	190 million ²⁷⁸	Global. Current priorities US, Latin America, Africa	TV	Govt (Emir of Qatar)
Al Jazeera Arabic		50+ million ²⁷⁹	Middle East and Arab-speaking diaspora	TV	
France: Total l'AEF	\$420 ²⁸⁰				Govt - principally Ministry of Culture and Communication, through licence fee; but also Ministry of Foreign Affairs (RFI, TV5) and Prime Minister's office (France 24)
France 24	\$138 ²⁸¹	100 million ²⁸⁴	Global aspirations (but in French, English and Arabic only). Current priorities Asia-Pacific and Latin America	TV	
RFI (including Radio Monte Carlo Doualiya (Arabic service))	\$178 ²⁸²	36 million ²⁸⁵	Focus on Europe, Middle East, China and former colonies in Africa, Asia, South America	Radio	
TV5 Monde	\$97 ²⁸³	54 million ²⁸⁶	French speakers	TV	
Deutsche Welle	\$370 ²⁸⁷	86 million ²⁸⁸	Global. Current priorities Latin America, Middle East, China, India	TV/Radio	Govt (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)

²⁷³ Audience numbers reflect broadcaster's own estimates and cannot be confirmed independently

²⁷⁴ All broadcasters have online services

²⁷⁵ 2010, advised by FCO

²⁷⁶ BBCWS, *Annual Review 2009-10*, p 2

²⁷⁷ 2010 estimate, various sources

²⁷⁸ Advised by Al Jazeera

²⁷⁹ R. MacMillan; Al Jazeera widens reach, eyes US cable deals, Reuters, 14 May 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN1454158320080515>

²⁸⁰ 2010, advised by l'AEF

²⁸¹ 2010, advised by l'AEF

²⁸² 2010, advised by l'AEF

²⁸³ As a consortium broadcaster with membership comprising France, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and the Canadian province of Quebec, this amount represents an estimate of the total, based on the French contribution of US \$72 million. France is responsible for 80 per cent of the cost of TV5 Monde.

²⁸⁴ Published estimate of potential audience, although l'AEF approximation of actual reach is 20 million

²⁸⁵ Published estimate

²⁸⁶ Published estimate

²⁸⁷ 2009, dw-world.de

²⁸⁸ Advised by DW

Broadcaster	Budget (\$US equiv millions)	Audience numbers ²⁷³	Geographic/audience focus	Media ²⁷⁴	Principal source of funding
Radio Netherlands Worldwide	\$62 ²⁸⁹	NA (awaiting response)	Radio – global: Europe, North and South America, Indonesia, Africa, China, India, Middle East, Oceania. Current priorities Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, China, India, Indonesia, Latin America, US in English	Radio TV in Dutch only	Govt (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)
China: CCTV9 CCTV4 CRI	\$6,600 ²⁹⁰	45 million 50 million Not accessed	Global Chinese diaspora English broadcasting targeting North America, Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific	Radio/TV	Govt
South Korea: Arirang	\$44	82.5 million	Europe, North America, Asia (excluding Korea), Australia and the Pacific	TV	Govt (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism)
KBS World Radio KBS World TV	Not accessed	Not accessed	Global Korean diaspora	Radio TV	
Japan: NHK World includes NHK World TV, World Premium, Radio Japan	\$215 ²⁹¹	Not provided	Global	Radio/TV	Govt through receiving licences
US Broadcasting Board of Governors ²⁹² comprising: Voice of America Middle East Broadcasting Networks Radio Free Europe Radio Free Asia Office of Cuba Broadcasting	\$717 including: \$194 \$110 \$90 \$36 \$35	171 million	Latin America, Eastern + Central Europe, Central Asia, Middle East, North Africa, Africa, South Asia, East Asia	Radio/TV	Govt (State Dept/Foreign Office appropriations)

²⁸⁹ Advised by RNW

²⁹⁰ Unconfirmed budget over unknown period, reported in the South China Morning Post, 2009

²⁹¹ FY 2009

²⁹² All FY 2009 figures

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are indebted to the many experts in public diplomacy and international broadcasting who so generously gave of their time to contribute to this study.

In particular, we would like to thank the following people who assisted or agreed to be interviewed for this research, and who provided a wealth of expertise as well as invaluable insights, information, introductions and advice.

In Canada:

We are grateful for the assistance extended in Ottawa by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. At Canadian Heritage: Alan Zimmerman, Director, Public and Regional Affairs; at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: Bill Chambers, Vice President, Brand, Communications and Corporate Affairs. We also gratefully acknowledge the help provided by the Australian High Commission in Ottawa.

For China:

We are extremely grateful for the assistance provided by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Canberra and the Australian Embassy in Beijing; the contributions of Professor Russell Moses, Dean of The Beijing Center, Ligong Mi at Xinhua News Agency, Jeremy Goldkorn of Danwei, Beijing and Stephen McDonald at ABC Beijing were of great assistance.

For France:

We are indebted to the French Embassy in Canberra and the Consulate-General of France in Sydney for their generous help; at the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et Européennes: M Rene Troccaz, Director Adjoint de cabinet du Secrétaire d'État chargé de la Coopération et de la Francophonie and M Bernard Valero, Director de la Communication et du Porte-parolat; M Frank Melloul, Chief Strategy and Development Officer, Audiovisuel extérieur de la France; M Luc Levy, Presence française, Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision.

In Germany:

We received tremendously helpful information and advice from Deutsche Welle staff, including Adelheid Feilcke, Director of International Relations in Bonn. At Auswärtiges Amt: Dr Klaus Schmidt, Head of Division, Public Relations (Abroad). We are also very grateful for the help provided by the Australian Embassy in Berlin.

For Japan:

The Embassy of Japan in Canberra and the Australian Embassy in Tokyo were immensely helpful; at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenjiro Monji, Director General, Public Diplomacy Department; at Japan International Broadcasting Inc: Harsuhisa Takashima, President and CEO; at the Japanese Centre for International Exchange: Tadashi Yamamoto, President, and Hideoko Katsumat, member of NHK board; at NHK: Toshiyuki Sato, Special Controller, General Broadcasting Administration; Makoto Hara, Director General, International Planning and Broadcasting Dept, NHK World, and Aya Fujito, Senior Manager, strategic planning division.

In the Netherlands:

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Ilse van Overveld, Head Foreign Policy Communication and Public Diplomacy Division and André de Loos, Senior Policy Officer, Financial and Economic Affairs Department; At the Department of Communications and Media, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, drs A.D. (Nol) Reijnders; Professor dr Jan Melissen at Clingendael (Netherlands Institute for International Relations); at Radio Netherlands Worldwide, Lem van Eupen, Head of Strategy and Business Development, and Herman van Gelderen, Project Manager, Africa. We also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the Australian Embassy in The Hague.

In Qatar (for Al Jazeera):

At Al Jazeera: Ezzeddine Abdelmoula, Head of Research Resources Section, Aljazeera Centre for Studies; Al Anstey, Director of Media Development; Satnam Matharu, Director, Communications and International Relations; Dan Nolan, Christina Aivaliotis and with particular thanks to Carla Liuzzo; at Northwestern University in Qatar: Richard Roth and Timothy Fournier.

In South Korea:

At Arirang: Michael Won, Global Marketing/Managing Director, Matt Lee, Policy Planning and Budget Senior Manager, Min Yong-Eung, TV Programming team manager, Kim Hyung-Seok, Policy Planning and Budget team director; At the Korean Culture and Information Service: Hyung-sik Kong, Director, Culture Promotion Division. We are also very grateful for the assistance of the Australian Embassy in Seoul.

In the United Kingdom:

Leaders in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and executives at the BBC World Service, BBC Global News and BBC World Service Trust; staff at the Australian High Commission in London; Dr Alasdair Pinkerton at Royal Holloway, University of London; Dr Ali Fisher from Mappamundi Consulting.

In the United States of America:

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the US Embassy in Canberra and the US State Department; at the Broadcasting Board of Governors: Jeffrey N Trimble, Executive Director, and Letitia M King, Director, Office of Public Affairs. The Australian Embassy in Washington also provided valuable assistance.

We are enormously grateful for the contributions of those who reviewed this report at various stages in its development: in particular, our thanks to Dr Richard Grant at the Asia:NZ Foundation and to Ali Fisher. Malcolm Cook, Michael Fullilove, Andrew Shearer and Mark Thirlwell provided extensive assistance. We also valued highly the expertise and cooperation of the staff at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australia Network. Finally, a number of Lowy Institute interns also contributed to the study, including Verena Stocker and Fergus McDonald. The authors are, as always, indebted to Jo Bottcher for her expert research skills, publication and proofreading assistance.

LOWY INSTITUTE

FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICY

WWW.LOWYINSTITUTE.ORG