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# COUNTERING THE AUTHORITARIAN CHALLENGE

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## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, SOFT POWER, AND SHARP POWER

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*Joseph S. Nye, Jr.*

**P**OWER is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want. You can affect their behavior in three main ways: threats of coercion ('sticks'); inducements or payments ('carrots'); and attraction and persuasion that makes others want what you want. A country may often obtain preferred outcomes in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, and aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness.

While many real-world situations involve all three types of power, and soft power alone is rarely sufficient, its presence can be a force-multiplier. It is important to be able to set the agenda

and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change through the threat or use of military or economic weapons. This soft power—getting others to want the outcomes that you want—coopts people rather than coerces them. If you have soft power, you can economize on your use of carrots and sticks. As U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower once noted, leadership is the ability to get others to do what you want, not only because you tell them to do so and enforce your orders, but also because they instinctively want to do it for you.

**O**f course, soft power has its limitations. Much of a country's soft power is produced by its civil society, and that makes it more difficult for

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Photo: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

*Putin visiting RT headquarters, Russia's sharpest media tool*

governments to wield. Policymakers can give orders to their military forces, but at least in democracies, it is harder for them to direct artists, universities, and foundations. Moreover, soft power usually takes longer to show results. Swords are swifter than words, but over the long term, words can change the minds behind the swords. The Berlin Wall collapsed not under an artillery barrage, but from hammers and bulldozers wielded by people whose minds had been affected by ideas that had penetrated the Iron Curtain over the preceding decades. The Roman Empire rested on the success of its legions, but its longevity also depended on the attraction of its culture.

The current impatience of populist governments and reluctance to fund soft-power instruments reflects their narrow time horizons rather than a secular decline in the importance of soft power. Ironically, authoritarian governments like China that have longer time horizons have not curtailed their investments in soft power.

Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. It is neither the possession of any one country, nor only of countries. For example, companies invest heavily in their brands, and non-governmental activists often attack company brands

to press them to change their practices. Non-profit organizations manage their images to increase their soft power.

In international politics, 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).

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Soft power is ubiquitous at all levels of human behavior from individuals to nations, and it is likely to become increasingly important because of the information revolution that we are living through.

### THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION AND SOFT POWER

Information revolutions are not new—witness the dramatic effects of Gutenberg’s printing press in the sixteenth century. Yet the current information revolution is changing the nature of power and increasing its diffusion. One can date the current information revolution from Moore’s Law in Silicon Valley in the 1960s—the number of transistors on a computer chip doubling every couple of years.

As a result, computing power increased dramatically, and by the

beginning of the twenty-first century it cost one-thousandth of what it had in the early 1970s. In 1993, there were about 50 websites in the world; by 2000, that number surpassed five million. Today, more than three and a half

billion people are online; by 2020 that is projected to grow to five or six billion people, and the Internet of Things will also connect tens of billions of devices.

The key characteristic of this

information revolution is not the *speed* of communications: for a century and a half, instantaneous communication by telegraph has been possible between Europe and North America. The crucial change is the enormous reduction in the *cost* of transmitting and storing information. If the price of an automobile had declined as rapidly as the price of computing power, one could buy a car today for the same price as a cheap lunch. When the price of a technology declines so rapidly, it becomes widely accessible and barriers to entry are reduced. For all practical purposes, the amount of information that can be transmitted worldwide is effectively infinite. And the costs of information storage have also declined dramatically, making possible the current era of big data. Information that once would fill a warehouse now fits in your shirt pocket.

In the middle of the twentieth century, people feared that the computers and communications of the current information revolution would create central governmental control, as dramatized in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*. Instead, as computing power has decreased in cost, and computers have shrunk to the size of smart phones, watches, and other portable devices, their decentralizing effects have outweighed their centralizing effects.

*This role of non-state actors does not mean the end of the nation-state. Governments remain the most powerful actors on the global stage, but the stage has become more crowded.*

Governments remain the most powerful actors on the global stage, but the stage has become more crowded. Moreover, many of those other actors can compete effectively in the realm of

soft power. A powerful navy is important in controlling sea-lanes, but it does not provide much help on the internet. In nineteenth-century Europe, the mark of a great power was the ability to prevail in war, but as noted by John Arquilla, who teaches at the U.S.

Yet ironically, this technological trend has also decentralized surveillance, so most people now voluntarily carry a tracking device in their pocket that continually violates their privacy as it searches for cell towers. And ubiquitous social media create new transnational groups and open opportunities for manipulation by governments and others.

Information provides power, and more people have access to more information than ever before—for good and for ill. That power can be used not only by governments, but also by non-state actors ranging from large corporations and non-profits to criminals, terrorists, and informal ad-hoc groups.

This role of non-state actors does not mean the end of the nation-state.

Naval Postgraduate School, in today's global information age, victory may sometimes depend not on whose army wins, but on whose story wins.

Public diplomacy and the power to attract and persuade become increasingly important, but public diplomacy is changing. Long gone are the days when "small teams of American foreign service officers drove Jeeps to the hinterlands of Latin America and other remote regions of the world to show reel-to-reel movies to isolated audiences," as former U.S. ambassador to Syria Christopher Ross has noted.

Technological advances have led to a dramatic reduction in the cost of processing and transmitting information. The result is an explosion of information, and that has produced

what Nobel Prize-winning economist Herbert A. Simon termed a “paradox of plenty.” Plenty of information leads to scarcity of attention. When people are overwhelmed with the volume of information confronting them, it is hard to know where to focus. Attention, rather than information, becomes the scarce resource. Reputation becomes even more important than in the past, and political struggles occur over the creation and destruction of credibility, which is affected by social and political affinities.

**S**ocial media have added a new complication. These so-called “free” services are based on a profit model in which the user or customer is actually the product, with their information and attention being sold to advertisers. Big data allows micro targeting of advertisements and messages to narrowly selected audiences. Algorithms are designed to learn what keeps users engaged, so that they can be served more advertisements.

Emotions such as outrage stimulate engagement, and false news that is outrageous has been shown to engage more viewers than accurate news. For

example, a *New York Times* article once referred to a 2018 study of demonstrations in Germany that found that “YouTube’s algorithm systematically directs

users toward extremist content [...] It looks like reality, but deforms reality because it is biased toward watch time.” Fact checking by conventional news media is often unable to keep up in the race for attention. As we shall see below, the nature of this profit model has also been exploited as a weapon by Russia and non-state actors.

*Reputation has always mattered in world politics, but the role of credibility becomes an even more important power resource. Information that appears to be propaganda may turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country’s reputation for credibility.*

**R**eputation has always mattered in world politics, but the role of credibility becomes an even more important power resource. Information that appears to be propaganda may not only be scorned; it may also turn out to be counterproductive if it undermines a country’s reputation for credibility. During the Iraq War, the treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo—in a manner inconsistent with American values—led to perceptions of hypocrisy that could not be reversed by broadcasting pictures of Muslims living well in the United States. Presidential claims that prove to be demonstrably false undercut American credibility and reduce American soft power.

The effectiveness of public diplomacy is measured by minds changed (as measured by interviews or polls), not dollars spent. It is interesting to note that polls and the consultancy Portland's index of the *Soft Power 30* show a decline in American soft power since the beginning of the Trump Administration.

Tweets can help to set the global agenda, but they do not produce soft power if they are not credible.

*The effectiveness of public diplomacy is measured by minds changed not dollars spent.*

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Former Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Edmund Gullion is sometimes credited with coining the term “public diplomacy” in 1965, but as Bar-Ilan University’s Eytan Gilboa points out, public diplomacy is not new, and its essence is the “good impression that a country seeks to make on the public of another country.” It is an effort to appear attractive and to create soft power. Some cynics dismiss it as simply propaganda, but such cynicism misunderstands that simple propaganda often lacks credibility and thus fails to attract, although it can have other effects. For example, a study of recent Russian media messages in Ukraine found them persuasive only to those already predisposed in Russia’s favor. But even though it did not change minds, it did polarize its audience.

Nor is public diplomacy merely public relations campaigns. Selling a positive image is part of it, but public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies.

In terms of time horizons, Mark Leonard of the European Council on Foreign Relations has distinguished three important aspects of public diplomacy. The first and most immediate dimension is daily communication, which involves

explaining the context of domestic and foreign policy decisions. After making decisions, government officials in modern democracies usually devote a good deal of attention to what and how to tell the press. But they generally focus on the domestic press. In the age of the internet and social media, it is often difficult to distinguish domestic and foreign press, or to be clear about what constitutes “the press.”

In dealing with crises and breaking news, a rapid-response capability means that false charges or misleading information must be answered immediately. After dramatic events such as a mass shooting, for instance, different groups flood social media with interpretations, some of which are deliberately false but designed to create trends for algorithms that skew the ensuing debate. The need

to monitor social media and to respond quickly enough is often a difficult skill for bureaucracies to master.

The second dimension is strategic communication, which develops a set of simple themes, much as a political or advertising campaign does. The campaign plans symbolic events and communications over the course of the next year or so to reinforce central themes or to advance a particular government policy. Special themes focus on particular policy initiatives. For example, after the Reagan Administration decided to implement NATO's two-track decision of deploying missiles while negotiating to remove existing Soviet intermediate-range missiles, former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz concluded:

I don't think we could have pulled it off if it hadn't been for a very active program of public diplomacy. Because the Soviets were very active all through 1983 [...] with peace movements and all kinds of efforts to dissuade our friends in Europe from deploying.

More recently, as the Bush and Obama administrations sought to counter radical jihadists, the U.S. State Department developed a campaign to attract Muslims

by demonstrating tolerance and hospitality, albeit with mixed results.

A third dimension of public diplomacy has a longer time horizon and involves the development of lasting

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relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels.

Each year, nearly one million foreign students study in the United States, and hundreds of thousands—including

several hundred heads of governments—have participated in American cultural and academic exchanges. These exchanges have helped to educate world leaders including Egypt's Anwar Sadat, Germany's Helmut Schmidt, and the UK's Margaret Thatcher. Unfortunately, in promoting the hard-power nature of its approach, the Trump Administration tried to slash many of these exchange programs.

Each of these three aspects of public diplomacy plays an important role in helping to create an attractive image of a country that can improve its prospects of obtaining its desired outcomes. Yet even the best advertising cannot sell an unpopular



product. Policies that appear to be narrowly self-serving or arrogantly presented are unlikely to produce soft power. At best, long-standing friendly relationships may lead others to be slightly more tolerant in their responses. Friends will sometimes give you the benefit of the doubt and this is what is meant by an enabling or a disabling environment for policy.

A communications strategy cannot work if it cuts against the grain of policy. Actions speak louder than words. As former U.S. Senator Charles Hagel has noted, many people in Washington DC after 9/11 were suddenly talking about the need for renewed public diplomacy to “get our message out.” Yet, as he went on to say in a 2003 speech at the National Press Club in Washington, DC,

Madison Avenue-style packaging cannot market a contradictory or confusing message. We need to reassess the fundamentals of our diplomatic approach [...]. Policy and diplomacy must match, or marketing becomes a confusing and transparent barrage of mixed messages.

This remains as true for Twitter and Facebook campaigns as for broadcasts.

The most effective public diplomacy is a two-way street that involves listening as well as talking. Attraction is about the minds of others, and we need to understand better what is going on there and what values we

share. This is why exchanges are often more effective than mere broadcasting.

By definition, soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires an understanding of how they are hearing your messages and adapting accordingly. Unlike hard power, soft power depends on what is happening in the minds of the beholders. It is crucial to understand the target audience. Yet research on foreign public opinion is woefully under-funded.

All information goes through cultural filters, and what we think are clear statements are rarely heard as intended. Telling is far less influential than actions and symbols that show as well as tell. This is why the Bush Administration’s initiatives on increasing development assistance or combating HIV/AIDS were so important and why the current administration’s cuts are damaging American soft power.

It is interesting that the provision of tsunami relief to Indonesia in 2004 helped to reverse in part the precipitous slide in the United States’ standing in Indonesian polls that began after the Iraq War. And American efforts to support public health, including the efforts to combat the Ebola virus in West Africa during the Obama Administration, were important in helping to restore the soft power of the United States.

Broadcasting remains important and many people rely on television for their news. Increasingly, however, younger generations get their news via social media and the internet. Something like half of Americans report getting news from social media often or sometimes, with Facebook being the dominant source. Overseas, mobile telephones have now made such media available to people previously unable to afford a computer. Moreover, the developments in computing power, cheap storage, and artificial intelligence have allowed the development of low-cost, flexible micro-messaging that allows for the targeting of messages to particular groups and individuals.

A combination of personal visits and internet resources can create both virtual and real networks of young people who want to learn about each other's cultures, or diasporas that maintain transnational contacts, as well as affinity groups that are susceptible to fake news.

Not only do actions need to reinforce words; it is important to remember that the same words and images that are most successful in communicating to a domestic audience may have negative

effects on a foreign audience. When President Bush used the term "axis of evil" to refer to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea in his 2002 State of the Union address, it was well received domestically.

*While President Trump's advisors have tried to explain that his slogan "America First" does not mean "America Alone," many foreign audiences heard a message that their interests were devalued and secondary.*

However, foreigners reacted against lumping together disparate diplomatic situations under a moralistic label. Similarly, while President Trump's advisors have tried to explain that his slogan "America First" does not mean "America Alone," many foreign audiences heard a message that their interests were devalued and secondary.

Even when policy and communications are "in-sync," wielding soft-power resources in an information age is difficult. For one thing, government communications and public diplomacy are only a small fraction of the total communications among societies in an age that is awash in information. Hollywood movies that offend religious fundamentalists in other countries or activities by American missionaries that appear to devalue Islam will always be outside the control of government.

Some skeptics have concluded that Americans should accept the inevitable and allow market forces to take care of the presentation of American culture

and image to foreigners. Why pour money into Voice of America (VOA) when CNN, MSNBC, or Fox can do the work for free? But such a conclusion is too facile.

Market forces portray only the profitable mass dimensions of American culture, thus reinforcing foreign images of a one-dimensional country. The role for public diplomacy remains. Developing long-term relationships is not always profitable in the short term, and thus leaving it simply to the market may lead to under-investment. While higher education may pay for itself, and non-profit organizations can help, many exchange programs would shrink without government support.

At the same time, postmodern publics are generally skeptical of authority, and governments are often mistrusted. Thus, it often behooves governments to keep in the background and to work with private actors. Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enjoy more trust than governments do, and although they are difficult to control, they can be useful channels of communication. American foundations and NGOs played important roles in the consolidation

of democracy in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War. Similarly, for countries like the United Kingdom and the United States, which enjoy significant immigrant populations, such diasporas can provide culturally sensitive and linguistically skilled connections.

Building relationships among political parties in different countries was pioneered by Germany, where the major parties have foundations for foreign contacts that are partly supported by government funds.

During the Reagan Administration, the United States followed suit when it established the National Endowment for Democracy, which provided funds for the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, as well as trade unions and chambers of commerce, to promote democracy and civil society overseas. In the eyes of the West, this was open public diplomacy carried out by quasi-governmental instruments, but in the eyes of some authoritarian governments, these instruments were designed for regime change and subversion.

Indirect public diplomacy has the benefit that it is often able to take more risks in presenting a range of views. It is sometimes domestically

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difficult for governments to support the presentation of views that are critical of their own policies. Yet such criticism is often the most effective way of establishing credibility. Part of the soft power of the United States grows out of the openness of American society and polity and the fact that a free press, the U.S. Congress, and the courts can criticize and correct policies. When government instruments avoid such criticism, they not only diminish their own credibility, but also fail to capitalize on an important source of attraction for foreign elites (even when they are fiercely critical of government policies). In fact, some observers believe that American civil society—including Hollywood, television, foundations, and universities—does more to create soft power than does the government.

Even the military can sometimes play a role in the generation of soft power. In addition to the aura of power that is generated by its hard-power capabilities, the military has a broad range of officer exchanges, joint training, and assistance programs with other countries in peacetime. The Pentagon's international military and educational training program include sessions on democracy and human rights along with military training.

In wartime, military psychological operations (PSYOPS) are an important

way to influence foreign behavior. An enemy outpost, for example, can be destroyed by a cruise missile or captured by ground forces, or enemy soldiers can be convinced to desert and leave the post undefended. Such PSYOPS often involve deception and disinformation that is effective in war but counterproductive in peace.

The dangers of a military role in public diplomacy arise when the military tries to apply wartime tactics in ambiguous situations. This is particularly tempting in the current ill-defined war on terrorism that blurs the distinction between normal civilian activities and traditional war. Russian theories of “hybrid war” increasingly use a variety of measures short of open kinetic force wielded by formal armies. The net result of such efforts is to undercut rather than create soft power. Information warfare may involve intangibles, but that does not make it soft power.

### **THE AUTHORITARIAN CHALLENGE AND SHARP POWER**

Over the past decade, Russia and China have spent tens of billions of dollars to shape public perceptions and behavior around the world, using tools that exploit the asymmetry of openness between their own restrictive systems and democratic societies. The effects are global, but in the United States, concern has focused on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential

election and on Chinese efforts to control the discussion of sensitive topics in American publications, movies, and classrooms.

In a 2017 report, co-authors Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the National Endowment for Democracy labeled these efforts at manipulation as “sharp power” and argue that the expansion and refinement of Chinese and Russian sharp power should prompt policy-makers in democracies to respond. They contrast sharp power, which “pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the targeted countries,” with soft power, which harnesses the allure of culture and values to enhance a country’s strength. They further argue that democracies must not just “inoculate themselves against malign authoritarian influence,” but also “take a far more assertive posture on behalf of their own principles.”

The challenge posed by Chinese and Russian information warfare is real, but at the same time democratic societies should avoid changing public diplomacy to imitate their adversaries.

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To do so would be to weaken their soft power. Although soft power can be used for bad ends, its means depend on voluntarism, which is preferable from the

point of view of human autonomy. Hard power, by contrast, rests on inducements by payment or coercion by threat.

If someone puts a gun to your head and demands your wallet, it does not matter what you want or think. That is hard power. If the person is trying to persuade you to give up your wallet freely, everything depends on what you want or think. That is soft power. Sharp power—the deceptive use of

information for hostile purposes—is a type of hard power.

The manipulation of ideas, political perceptions, and electoral processes has a long history. Both the United States and the Soviet Union resorted to such methods during the Cold War. Authoritarian governments have long tried to use fake news and social disruption to reduce the attractiveness of democracy. In the 1980s, the Soviet Union’s KGB seeded the rumor that AIDS was the product of the U.S. government’s experiments with biological

weapons; the rumor started with an anonymous letter to a small New Delhi newspaper and then was propagated globally by widespread reproduction and constant repetition. In 2016, an updated version of the same technique was used to create “Pizzagate,” the false rumor that Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager had abused children in a Washington restaurant.

What is new is not the basic model; it is the speed with which such disinformation can spread and the low cost of spreading it in the current information environment. Electrons are cheaper, faster, safer, and more deniable than spies. With its armies of paid trolls and botnets, along with outlets such as *Russia Today (RT)* and *Sputnik*, Russian intelligence, after hacking into the emails of the Democratic National Committee and senior Clinton campaign officials, could distract and disrupt news cycles week after week. While it is impossible to say whether Russian efforts swayed the outcome of an over-determined event like the 2016 U.S. election, Russia’s efforts to discredit American democracy led to a widespread backlash in American attitudes towards Russia.

Although sharp power disrupted Western democratic processes, it has done little to enhance the soft power of its perpetrators—and in some cases it has done the opposite. China

wants both the soft power of attraction and the coercive sharp power of disruption and censorship, but these two are hard to combine. In Australia, for example, public approval of China was growing until accounts of its use of sharp-power tools, including meddling in Australian politics, set it back considerably. According to George Washington University political scientist David Shambaugh, China spends US\$ 10 billion a year on its soft-power instruments, but it has received minimal return on its investment. The *Soft Power 30* index ranks China as 25<sup>th</sup> (and Russia 26<sup>th</sup>) out of 30 countries assessed.

Sharp power and soft power work in very different ways, although the fact that they both use intangible information sometimes make them at first appear similar. All persuasion involves choices about how to frame information. When that framing shades into deception, which limits the subject’s voluntary choices, it crosses the line into coercion.

Openness and limits on deliberate deception distinguish soft from sharp power and should remain the hallmark of democratic public diplomacy. When Moscow’s *RT* or Beijing’s *Xinhua* broadcast openly in other countries, they are employing soft power, which should be accepted as legitimate public diplomacy even if the message is unwelcome.

When they covertly back radio stations in other countries, or establish fake accounts on social media, they cross the line into sharp power, which should be exposed. Without proper disclosure, the principle of voluntarism has been breached. (The distinction applies to American diplomacy as well: during the Cold War, secret funding for anti-communist parties in the 1948 Italian election and the CIA's covert support to the anti-communist cultural foundation the Congress for Cultural Freedom were examples of sharp power, not soft power.)

Today's information technology introduces additional complications. In the 1960s, American television news anchor and broadcaster Edward R. Murrow noted that the most important part of international communications was not the ten thousand miles of electronics, but the final three feet of personal contact. In a world of social media, "Friends" are a click away, and fake friends are easy to fabricate; they can propagate fake news generated by paid trolls and mechanical bots.

Fake news has been defined as "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent." Discerning the dividing line between soft and sharp power online is a task not

only for governments and the press, but also for the private sector. During U.S. Congressional hearings in 2018, Facebook's CEO was pressed by legislators to outline policies to do so.

As democracies respond to sharp power, they have to be careful not to overreact, so as not to undercut their

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own soft power. Much of this soft power comes from civil societies—in the case of the United States, Hollywood,

universities, and foundations more than official public diplomacy efforts—and closing down access or ending openness would waste this crucial asset. Authoritarian countries such as China and Russia have trouble generating their own soft power precisely because of their unwillingness to free the vast talents of their civil societies. Shutting down legitimate Chinese and Russian soft-power tools would be counterproductive.

Like any form of power, soft power is often used for competitive zero-sum purposes, but it can also have positive-sum effects. For example, if China and the United States wish to avoid conflict, exchange programs that increase American attraction to China, and vice versa, can be good for both countries. And on transnational challenges such as climate change, soft power can help to build the trust and networks that make cooperation possible.

Yet as much as it would be a mistake to prohibit Chinese soft-power efforts simply because they sometimes shade into sharp power, it is important to monitor the dividing line carefully. Take the 500 Confucius Institutes and 1,000 Confucius classrooms that China supports in universities and schools around the world to teach Chinese language and culture. Government backing does not mean they are necessarily a sharp-power threat. The *BBC* also gets government backing, but is independent enough to remain a credible soft-power instrument. Only when a Confucius Institute crosses the line and tries to infringe on academic freedom (as has occurred in some instances) should it be treated as sharp power.

**D**emocracies should be careful about offensive actions. Information warfare can play a useful tactical role on the battlefield, as in the war against the (self-proclaimed) Islamic State. But it would be a mistake to launch major programs of covert information warfare. Such actions would not stay covert for long and, when revealed, would undercut soft power. Western public diplomacy will do best if it remembers the importance of credibility to soft power.

In the realm of defensive measures, meanwhile, there are some steps that democratic governments can take to counter the authoritarians' aggressive information warfare techniques. Democracies have to develop better strategies for deterrence and resilience. In the 1980s, the Reagan Administration developed an inter-agency Active Measures Working Group, chaired by a State Department official, that exposed Soviet plots such as the false AIDS rumor; and in France in 2017, Emmanuel Macron's election campaign was successful in exposing Russian interference in the presidential election.

Openness remains the best defense. Faced with the current challenge, the press, academics, civic organizations, government, and the private sector should focus on exposing information-warfare techniques, inoculating the public by exposure, and avoiding the temptation to turn our public diplomacy into a sharp-power competition. Openness is a key source of democracies' ability to attract and persuade. Democracies can afford to practice open public diplomacy, despite the new information environment, because that openness provides them the ultimate advantage of soft power. ●



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