

DEMOCRACY ACROSS THE AIRWAVES:
THE STRATEGIC WORK OF AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IN
AZERBAIJAN AND IRAN

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty
Of
The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

By

LAUREN NAOMI BRODSKY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

MAY 2010

Dissertation Committee
Andrew C. Hess, Chair
Carolyn Gideon
William C. Martel

UMI Number: 3422072

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3422072

Copyright 2010 by ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This edition of the work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Lauren Brodsky

Lauren_G.Brodsky@tufts.edu

Lngbrodsky11@gmail.com

EDUCATION

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, MA

Ph.D. awarded August 2010; **M.A.L.D.** awarded May 2004

- Dissertation: “*Democracy Across The Airwaves: The strategic work of American international broadcasting in Azerbaijan and Iran*”
- Ph.D. fields of study: International Communications, U.S. Diplomatic History, and Southwest Asia & Islamic Civilization
- Master’s thesis: “*American Public Diplomacy and Southwest Asia*”
- Activities: *Al Nakhala* (Journal on Southwest Asia) Staff Editor, 2004, and student leader of Ph.D. weekly colloquium, 2005-2006

University of Pennsylvania, 1994-1998, Philadelphia, PA

Bachelor of Arts in European History

- Honors & Activities: Benjamin Franklin Scholar, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society, Dean’s List, Mortar Board Senior Honor Society and Senior Writing Advisor
- Internships: National Public Radio (NPR) in Philadelphia and National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in New York

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, MA

Research Fellow, Program for Southwest Asia & Islamic Civilization, 2004-2006, 2009-2010.

- Manage on-campus training programs for diplomats from Saudi Arabia and Armenia.
- Prepare syllabi and reading material for Masters level courses on Southwest/Central Asia and Islamic Civilization.
- Write grants and proposals to foreign governments for future diplomatic training programs at the Fletcher School.

United States Department of State, Washington, DC

Graduate Student Intern, Bureau of International Information Programs – Near East/South Asia Division, 2003

- Covered hearings on Capitol Hill and conferences related to the Middle East, South Asia, and the Muslim world.
- Published articles for the Department of State’s English language, foreign language and official embassy sites.
- Posted reports read internally by Foreign Service Officers in Washington and abroad.

Creative Good, Inc., New York, NY

Senior Analyst, 2000-2002. Creative Good is a boutique Internet Consulting Firm.

- Analyzed Internet industry data, facilitated focus groups and conducted management interviews to identify key organizational challenges and create online strategies for clients including AARP, Hewlett-Packard, and Novartis Pharmaceuticals.
- Wrote proposals outlining strategic online challenges across industries.
- Published monthly columns analyzing web best practices for Creative Good/Ziff-Davis website.
- Copy edited and developed columns written by junior analysts.

Random House, Inc. New York, NY

Production Manager, Random House Audio, 1998-2000

- Coordinated studio production of 150 audiobooks a year.
- Managed a team of 25 freelance producers, editors and scriptwriters.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tufts University, Experimental College, Medford, MA, Spring 2010

- Proposed, developed and taught “Broadcasting, Democracy, and Global Communications” to undergraduates

Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York,

Department of Political Science, Lecturer, Albany, NY, 2008-2009

- Taught 300-level courses, “International Relations: Practice” and “American Foreign Policy,” to undergraduates

Skidmore College, University Without Walls, Saratoga Springs, NY, 2007-2008

- Proposed, developed and taught “Media and International Conflict” and “The History and Politics of Oil” for Skidmore’s online college

Diplomatic Training Programs of the Fletcher School, Medford, MA, 2004-2008

- Lecturer: “*Global Media and Foreign Policy,*” Diplomatic Training Program for students from Dar Al-Hekma College, Saudi Arabia, 2008
- Guest Lecturer: “*Public and Transformational Diplomacy: Understanding Media Tools,*” Diplomatic Training Program for the United Arab Emirates, 2007
- Guest Lecturer: “*Media and International Conflict: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh,*” Diplomatic Training Program for the Republic of Armenia, 2006 & 2007
- Guest Lecturer: “*Academic Writing,*” Diplomatic Training Program for the Republic of Armenia, 2006 & 2007
- Writing Teacher for Saudi Diplomats, Diplomatic Training Program for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2004-2005

The Fletcher School, Writing Tutor/Leader of Writing Seminars for Graduate Students, 2003-2006

PUBLICATIONS

- “Broadcasting Democracy: Matching Foreign Policy Goals and Messages,” *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Special Edition 2008, Volume 32:3
- “The role of the International Media and Public Opinion in the debate over Turkey’s EU membership,” *Insight Turkey*, July-September 2006, Volume 8, Number 3
- “Sowing seeds of democracy in post-Soviet granite,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 11/31/05 (online version: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1031/p09s01-coop.html>)
- “Film by Afghan women journalists highlights plight of Afghan women,” *The Washington File* (www.usinfo.state.gov), 7/21/03
- “South Asians study democracy at American Studies Institute,” *The Washington File*, 7/17/03
- “Conference examines role of International Exchange Programs,” *The Washington File*, 7/16/03
- “Poll shows Americans concerned over situation in Iraq,” *The Washington File*, 7/3/03
- “Seeds of Peace works with youths to lay foundation for peace,” *The Washington File*, 7/3/03
- “President Musharraf seeks enlightened, moderate Pakistan,” *The Washington File*, 6/27/03
- “Challenges to Afghan reconstruction outlined at Congressional Hearing,” *The Washington File*, 6/23/03

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

- International Studies Association 51st Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA, February 2010, Presented paper entitled, “Reporting the Iranian Elections: The distinct democracy promotion styles of RFE/RL and VOA”
- Edward R. Murrow 100th Anniversary Conference, The Fletcher School, Medford, MA, April 2008, Presented Paper entitled, “What is the message? American International Broadcasting and Democracy Promotion”
- International Studies Association 49th Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA, March 2008, Presented Paper entitled, “Selling Democracy to Azerbaijan”
- Central European University, Summer University Participant, “Cultural Policymaking in Post Communist Countries,” Budapest, Hungary, July 2007
- International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention, Chicago, IL, February 2007, Presented Paper entitled, “Internet News, the Changing Nature of Journalism, and Misinformation: What are the risks for scholars?”

ABSTRACT

At the end of the Cold War, American public diplomacy struggled to articulate its mission in a rapidly changing political and media environment. The days of one enemy, challenging American democracy, were gone. To many policy makers, public diplomacy's heyday was in the past – as evidenced through the dismantling of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in the early 1990s. This perception changed, however, after September 11, 2001, when calls for improving America's image abroad – both in the Muslim world and amongst close allies – could be heard in scholarly and policy circles. Now, nearly a decade into the quest to revamp and rebuild public diplomacy in the information age, the question remains of just how effective and targeted America's message is. To confront this issue, my dissertation examines two key institutions of American international broadcasting – Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) – and examines their work in two key Muslim states, from an American foreign policy perspective – Iran and Azerbaijan. In doing so, I examine whether promoting democracy is a strategic priority at RFE/RL and VOA. By considering public diplomacy organizations through the lens of democracy promotion, I am able to articulate similarities and differences between the broadcasters, in order to make a larger concluding statement about the role of American public diplomacy in foreign policymaking. As such, I argue that grouping public diplomacy organizations together, assuming parallel missions, misses the mark and limits the role of these organizations in gaining funding and in achieving their strategic goals. First, policymakers must understand the mission-oriented work of the international broadcasters, and then they will be better equipped to utilize these organizations in support of foreign policy goals. When this can be achieved, American public diplomacy will finally be given a “seat” at the policy table, and will experience a much-needed revival in the post-Cold War political context.

DEDICATION

For Hannah, who at 4 years old continues to amaze me. I know you can do anything you
set out to do!

You always made me smile when you would pretend to be a mommy working on a “big
paper.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I complete the seven-year process of graduate school, I first and foremost want to thank my wonderful husband, Gregg. Without his support, it would have been impossible to follow the dream of completing a Ph.D. Juggling two careers and raising a child is most definitely a challenge, and so I feel very lucky to have someone who believed in me and helped push me forward.

In addition, I want to thank my mom, Roberta, my dad, Billy, and my brother, David, who have also supported this effort to the fullest – along with Gregg – acting as my editors, a printing service, childcare help and much more!

This achievement would not have been possible if it was not for the total support of Professor Andrew C. Hess and Bernie Kelley-Leccese. They have acted as a second family to me over the years, opening many doors to lectures and programs, all while supporting my research through travel grants to conferences and to Azerbaijan, Prague and Budapest. I believe that without Professor Hess' encouragement early on, a Ph.D. would never have been possible. I am also very appreciative of my readers, Professors Carolyn Gideon and Bill Martel, who have supported my effort and given me advise that will carry me into the next stages of my career. I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful staff at Fletcher and the support of Jenifer Burckett-Picker along the way.

In addition, I have amazingly supportive friends, both inside and outside of Fletcher, who have encouraged me throughout the years. I am particularly grateful for the guidance of Abi Linnington, Stephanie Schmidt, Elin Suleymanov, Jennifer Manganello and to the wonderful Fletcher students I have worked with at the Southwest Asia Office – from Geoffrey Gresh and Leigh Nolan to Vugar Mammadov, and all the others along the way.

I also wish to thank all of the employees at BBG, the State Department, RFE/RL and VOA who gave me such candid access to their work and to Jeff Gardner for many important introductions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: The American International Broadcasters in the Global Environment.....	1
The Post Cold-War Political Environment: Complex Interdependence.....	12
The Post-Cold War Media Environment: The Information Revolution.....	18
Research questions.....	23
CHAPTER 2: International Broadcasting as a Democracy Promoter.....	26
The public diplomacy literature.....	27
The role of democracy promotion in policymaking.....	37
The democratizing effect of the media.....	45
The Broadcasting Democracy Promotion Spectrum.....	50
<i>Picture: The Broadcasting Democracy Promotion Spectrum.....</i>	51
Challenges to democracy.....	53
<i>Picture: “Armenia Breaks Ceasefire With Azerbaijan” web page.....</i>	54
<i>Picture: “Iran: Freedom to Trade Internationally vs. Crude Oil Prices”.....</i>	58
The application of organization theory to RFE/RL and VOA.....	60
Research methodology.....	67
<i>Picture: Map of Azeri populations.....</i>	70
<i>Picture: How strategy impacts tactics at VOA and RFE/RL.....</i>	84
<i>Table: Structure of Content Analysis.....</i>	85
CHAPTER 3: Media Opportunities and Constraints:	
Governance in Iran and Azerbaijan.....	90
U.S. Foreign Policy and Azerbaijan.....	93
U.S. Foreign Policy and Iran.....	97
<i>Picture: 110th Congress: Bills on Iran.....</i>	99
<i>Picture: U.S. Department of State “Iran” web site.....</i>	100
Azerbaijani independence and governance.....	106
The Azerbaijani media landscape.....	112
The 2005 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan.....	115
The 2008 presidential election in Azerbaijan.....	121
Is there a place for democracy in Azerbaijan?.....	124
Reform and revolution in Iran.....	133
The Iranian leadership.....	139
Is there a future for democracy in Iran?.....	144
The Iranian media landscape and blogosphere.....	148
Parallels across the case studies.....	154
The American role in the market for loyalties.....	157
CHAPTER 4: America’s Voice Abroad:	
The history and charter of Voice of America.....	159
Considering the Link: The parental role of the BBG.....	161
<i>Picture: BBG organizational chart.....</i>	168
<i>Picture: BBG funding overview.....</i>	169

<i>Picture</i> : “Key uses of U.S. Strategic Communications Budget Resources For the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal year 2008”	170
VOA: History and mission.....	171
<i>Picture</i> : VOA Charter web page.....	176
<i>Picture</i> : VOA 2.0.....	185
The fight for independence.....	186
Myth.....	192
Broadcasting.....	194
<i>Tables</i> : VOA Radio Broadcast Hours.....	195-196
The legacy of exemplar democracy promotion.....	199
Employees.....	202
Measuring effectiveness.....	205
CHAPTER 5: Promoting Liberty: The mission of Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty.....	213
The history and mission of RFE/RL.....	217
Myth.....	227
RFE/RL with one mission.....	230
<i>Picture</i> : RFE/RL mission statement web page... ..	232
The Hungarian Revolution of 1956.....	235
<i>Picture</i> : Hungarian Revolt.....	236
Measuring effectiveness.....	249
Employees.....	256
A champion of democracy.....	258
CHAPTER 6: Broadcasting to Iran: 2007-2009.....	263
Employee perspectives.....	267
<i>Picture</i> : “Persian Letters: About this blog”.....	273
<i>Picture</i> : “Persian Letters,” November 23, 2009.....	275
<i>Picture</i> : “VOA Public Relations Blog”.....	283
Content analysis of RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts.....	285
<i>Chart</i> : VOA Broadcasting to Iran by theme.....	287
<i>Chart</i> : RFE/RL Broadcasting to Iran by theme.....	288
<i>Charts</i> : VOA Broadcasting to Iran & RFE/RL Broadcasting to Iran.....	290
The 2009 Election in Iran: When Iran trumps the international news agenda... ..	293
<i>Picture</i> : VOA Editorial: “The Benefits of Direct Diplomacy”.....	299
<i>Picture</i> : RFE/RL: “Necessary Gesture or Bad Decision?”.....	300
<i>Picture</i> : RFE/RL: “Who Killed Neda? (Revisited)”.....	301
CHAPTER 7: Broadcasting to Azerbaijan: 2007-2009.....	303
<i>Picture</i> : RFE/RL: Radio Azadliq newspaper.....	305-306
Employee perspectives.....	309
Content Analysis of RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts.....	318
<i>Chart</i> : Comparing RFE/RL and VOA Broadcasting to Azerbaijan.....	319

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion: What can be learned by mapping the broadcasters?.....	322
<i>Picture: The Broadcasting Democracy Promotion Spectrum, revisited</i>	324
Findings and recommendations.....	327
<i>Picture: Public diplomacy in the age of complexity</i>	336
A public diplomacy redesign.....	338
<i>Picture: Public diplomacy and the image and interests of the U.S.</i>	340
Democracy promotion and the future of American public diplomacy.....	345
APPENDIX 1: Interviews.....	350
APPENDIX 2: The Flight From Hungary.....	351
APPENDIX 3: RFE/RL and VOA web images, 2007-2009.....	354
APPENDIX 4: RFE/RL and VOA web images, Iran, June – July 2009.....	362
APPENDIX 5: Examples of daily comparisons of VOA and RFE/RL broadcasting, 2007-2009.....	366
APPENDIX 6: Content Analysis Data.....	370
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	396

CHAPTER 1

Introduction:

The American International Broadcasters in the Global Environment

“The ‘weapons of advocacy’ had fallen into a long decline since their heyday in the Cold War...”

“The radio and TV stations and glossy magazines that we have propagated across the Muslim world have accomplished almost nothing...”

-James Traub, “Persuading Them,” The New York Times¹

Almost a decade after the September 11, 2001 attacks that brought terrorism and the ‘war of ideas’ into the foreground of the American political consciousness, policy analysts continue to call for improved, increased and revamped American public diplomacy, as noted above. These calls are not unwarranted: Public diplomacy as a political tool had fallen by the wayside at the end of the Cold War, when the lead agency, the United States Information Agency (USIA), was dismantled and its functions swallowed up by the U.S. Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).² The unthinkable happened: the diplomat and those tasked with promoting the diplomat’s policy lines are now housed under one roof. It seemed to many career USIA employees that public diplomacy had lost its credibility, or at least had gone soft.

¹ Published in the *New York Times Magazine*, November 25, 2007, accessed March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/magazine/25WWLN-lede-t.html?_r=1.

² The most recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report on public diplomacy states, “The BBG, as the overseer of U.S. international broadcasting efforts, aims to support U.S. strategic communications objectives by broadcasting fair and accurate information, while maintaining its journalistic independence as a news organization. The BBG operates 75 language services divided among its five broadcasting entities – Voice of America (VOA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.” Two of these entities – VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) – will be the focus of my research. GAO Report to Congressional Committees, United States Government Accountability Office, “U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight,” May 2009, GAO-09-679SP, 6.

In addition, public diplomacy faced a decreased budget and weakened staff, a trend that continues to plague the U.S. government today: “State has experienced a shortage of public diplomacy staff since 1999 when the United States Information Agency was merged into the department. In 2003, the General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that State experienced a 13 percent vacancy rate in its public diplomacy positions. Similar findings were reported by GAO in May 2006, and data from November 2007 show a vacancy rate of over 13 percent.”³ In other words, American public diplomacy is still experiencing deficits caused by its post-Cold War reformulation.

This can be explained by the utopia of the post-Cold War world, a world where an American information program seemed less necessary. Formulating a strong public diplomacy strategy was certainly not a priority in the 1990s, as America’s image and interests appeared to be secured. However, this perception quickly changed after September 11, 2001, when Americans subsequently faced two foreign wars – Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. Suddenly, there was an adversary and an ideological clash – between the forces of democracy and those of tyranny and terrorism. Retooling public diplomacy was imperative.

American policymakers agreed that influencing public opinion abroad was again an important strategic goal serving American interests. But could it be done? Was public diplomacy too fractured, too far-gone to be utilized as a foreign policy tool? Quickly, it became apparent that public diplomacy needed to be ‘fixed.’ Some scholars and analysts suggested a Corporation of Public Diplomacy or, as envisioned by Kristin Lord in a Brookings Report, a USA*World Trust, which would consist of a global public

³ Ibid, 23.

diplomacy network.⁴ But some were concerned that the U.S. government could no longer handle the task of political influence, and that NGOs and the private sector should become the dominant players in the public diplomacy landscape. Further, to add to the challenge, the information age changed international communications and challenged shortwave radio, the pillar of past public diplomacy and broadcasting efforts. In other words, the Internet and the 24-hour news cycle had changed the game.

For those, like myself, committed to reformulating U.S. public diplomacy in the context of globalization, it appeared necessary to consider first the strategic goals of communications programs and then assess the success of such programs – all within the context of the post-9/11 political environment and the information age media environment. This line of thinking has promoted a debate about strategy – i.e. is the current goal of American public diplomacy to promote a positive image? Or is it to promote America’s interests abroad? Bruce Sherman, the Director of Strategic Planning at the BBG, argued that following American image is problematic, and instead, broadcasting must focus on supporting long-term policy interests.⁵ But much of the post 9-11 discussion of public diplomacy focuses on decreasing public opinion polls abroad, or even confused the concepts of image and interests.⁶ Even the GAO reports:

⁴ For more information, see: Kristin Lord, “The USA-World Trust: Bringing the Power of Networks to U.S. Public Diplomacy,” *The Brookings Institution*, Winter 2009, (Accessed March 19, 2010), http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/winter_public_diplomacy_lord.aspx.

⁵ Bruce Sherman, Director, Strategic Planning, Broadcast Board of Governors, Phone Interview, April 28, 2008.

⁶ Though the research for my dissertation began in 2007, it was in fact influenced by negative public opinion polls that emerged in the wake of the U.S. led war in Iraq. A 2007 study found that the image of the United States is “bad and getting worse.” And according to Pew Charitable Trusts, “between 2002 and 2007 favorable views fell from 60 to 30 percent in Germany, 61 to 29 in Indonesia and 30 to 9 in Turkey,” indicating that the decline included non-Muslim and Muslim states, and allies as well. For more information, see: *World Public Opinion 2007* (Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2007), 28 and James Traub, “Persuading Them: Want the World to Like us Again? Think Diplomacy,” *The New York Times Magazine*, November 25, 2007, 19.

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. government has spent at least \$10 billion on communications efforts designed to advance the strategic interests of the United States. However, foreign public opinion polling data shows that negative views toward the United States persist despite the collective efforts to counteract them by the State Department (State), Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Defense (DOD), and other U.S. government agencies. Based on the significant role U.S. strategic communications and public diplomacy efforts can play in promoting U.S. national security objectives... we highlight these efforts as an urgent issue for the new administration and Congress.⁷

Should public diplomacy's success be assessed by public opinion polls? Does this measurement match strategic public diplomacy goals? The GAO authors seem to use public opinion abroad as a gauge for U.S. strategic interests. But in reflecting upon public diplomacy efforts in the Cold War – whereby the strategic interest of ending the rule of communist regimes was measured by democratic openings abroad – it appears that current strategy and desired outcomes must be reconciled to guide public diplomats.

That is not to say that public opinion polls should be dismissed or ignored. Kristin Lord notes that favorable public opinion will make America's strategic interests abroad easier to attain: "Though America increasingly must engage, persuade, and attract the cooperation of foreign publics in order to achieve national interests, our country must do so in a world that has changed markedly since our public diplomacy institutions were created. Public opinion holds more sway than any previous time in history."⁸ America must persuade public opinion abroad in order to achieve our national interests. But ultimately, these polls are a gauge for success in achieving American national interests; they do not embody the national interest.

⁷ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, 1.

⁸ Kristin Lord, 12.

Therefore, to assist the rebirth of public diplomacy, policy analysts must not only look at polls, they must ask: *What are the strategic interests of the United States that public diplomacy campaigns support?* The GAO report noted that “in June 2007, the previous administration released a national communications strategy, which established three objectives: (1) offer a positive vision of hope and opportunity, (2) nurture common interests and values, and (3) help isolate and marginalize violent extremists.”⁹ However, these goals are tactical guidelines – they do not speak to the overarching strategic interest of the United States. This vague strategic viewpoint is a weakness for implementing improved public diplomacy. Strategy must be understood in order for tactics to match. Therefore, the question remains, what is America’s strategic interest abroad?

The most recent GAO report notes, in fact, that strategy is evasive in the discussion of public diplomacy: “The United States’ current national communications strategy lacks a number of desirable characteristics identified by GAO, such as a clear definition of the problem, desired results and a delineation of agency roles and responsibilities.”¹⁰ Washington and the U.S. public diplomacy community must better define strategy, outline tactics and coordinate an effort to “promote U.S. national security objectives, such as countering ideological support for violent extremism.”¹¹ As the GAO report fails to identify the priority, I will turn towards the White House to articulate American national interests.

During the two post-September 11, 2001 administrations, both Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have identified key strategic interests of the U.S.: fighting

⁹ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, 10.

¹⁰ Ibid, 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

terrorism, securing energy independence, promoting democracy, and others. Democracy promotion has been a centerpiece of many presidencies, from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush. Democracy promotion was undeniably a dominant U.S. foreign policy message in the Bush administration. For example, “The President devoted his second inaugural address to the subject (of democracy) . . . and the White House has launched a series of initiatives designed to foster democracy across the globe, not least the military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq.”¹² The National Security Strategy of the United States under the Bush administration also articulated democracy as a primary goal, guiding the U.S. to “expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy.”¹³ And, in a speech given at Georgetown University unveiling the State Department’s new concept of transformational diplomacy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice explained that the global democratic vision of the U.S. is “to work with our many partners around the world to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people—and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system...”¹⁴ Throughout the Bush administration there was a sense that spreading democracy would also be a boon for other American strategic interests, from fighting terrorism, to winning the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, to fighting Islamic fundamentalism.

And despite this push for democracy abroad, the Bush administration faced deteriorating views of democracy abroad. According to the 2007 findings of the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 75 percent of Nigerians and 72 percent of Kenyans “like”

¹² Michael Mandelbaum, “Democracy Without America,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007.

¹³ The National Security Strategy of the United States, (Accessed June 1, 2008), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss1.html>.

¹⁴ Condoleezza Rice, “Transformational Democracy,” Speech given at Georgetown University, January 18, 2006, (Accessed June 1, 2008), www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59339/htm.

American ideas about democracy, demonstrating a favorable opinion in Africa. (These results were mirrored in Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Ethiopia.) But in the Middle East and South Asia, 81 percent of Turks, 72 percent of Pakistanis, and 71 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza “dislike” American ideas about democracy.¹⁵ This is particularly concerning coming from Turkey—an example of a secular, democratic, Muslim state. This study indicates an important link between image and interests – not only is it a strategic interest of the U.S. to promote democracy abroad in Muslim states, but countering negative public opinion about democracy has also become an important goal. In other words, image and interests do collide. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell perhaps best articulated this connection: “We are selling a product. The product we are selling is democracy.”¹⁶

President Obama inherited a White House where democracy promotion was high on the political agenda:

The Bush administration more than doubled the democracy promotion budget — from \$650 million in 2001 to a requested \$1.72 billion in 2009 — largely owing to the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There was also a formal institutionalization of the ‘freedom agenda’ as a key pillar of U.S. foreign policy. This institutionalization came about with the signing into law of the ADVANCE Democracy Act and Bush's National Presidential Security Directive (NSPD) 58 entitled ‘Institutionalizing the Freedom Agenda.’¹⁷

However, the Freedom Agenda and President Bush’s articulation of democracy promotion had many critics. “Many democracy commentators have lamented that Bush's repeated conflation of democracy promotion with the Iraq War has given the long-time

¹⁵ “Global Unease with Major World Powers,” Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007, (Accessed March 31, 2010), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256>.

¹⁶ Quoted in Peter Van Ham, “War, Lies and Videotape: Public Diplomacy and the USA’s War on Terrorism,” *Security Dialogue*, 34, No. 4, December 1, 2003.

¹⁷ Anthony Fenton, “Bush, Obama, and the ‘Freedom Agenda,’” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, January 27, 2009, (Accessed April 15, 2010), http://www.fpif.org/articles/bush_obama_and_the_freedom_agenda.

foreign policy priority a bad name.”¹⁸ Thomas Carothers, an ardent supporter of U.S. democracy promotion, who will be evaluated further in chapter 2, noted that, “by relentlessly associating it (democracy promotion) with the Iraq war and regime change, he caused many in the world to see it as a hypocritical cover for aggressive interventionism serving U.S. security needs.”¹⁹

Therefore, it is not surprising that President Obama has disassociated “the United States from this unfortunate legacy.”²⁰ To do so, “Obama has pledged to rebrand democracy promotion so that it ‘cannot become a casualty of the Iraq War.’ Seeking ‘durable bipartisan support’ for his democracy policies while avoiding ‘mere rhetoric,’ Obama’s team has said they will foster ‘concrete outcomes that will advance democracy.’”²¹ In other words, democracy promotion continues to be central to the Obama administration, even if there has been a focus on redesigning tactics.

The Obama administration indicated early on that it planned to increase funding for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and other organizations. Therefore, “One thing is clear: The Bush administration’s institutionalization of the ‘freedom agenda’ as a core pillar of U.S. foreign policy, combined with Obama’s apparent commitment to democracy promotion ... suggests that, despite appearances that may

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Promotion Under Obama: Finding a Way Forward,” *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Policy Brief 77, February 2009, 1. However, on page 3, Carothers challenges the notion that the “Freedom Agenda” was as much of a policy change as deemed by critics: “Underneath his lofty prodemocracy rhetoric and mild prodding of Arab counterparts, business as usual continued for the most part, that is, close U.S. security and economic ties with autocratic Arab allies like Saudi Arabia, the smaller Gulf states, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.” And on page 4, he notes that “the place of democracy in Bush foreign policy was no greater, and in some ways was less, than in the foreign policies of his recent predecessors.”

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Anthony Fenton, “Bush, Obama, and the ‘Freedom Agenda,’” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, January 27, 2009, (Accessed April 15, 2010), http://www.fpif.org/articles/bush_obama_and_the_freedom_agenda..

emerge to the contrary, we are likely to see more continuity than change in U.S. foreign policy.”²²

As Carothers explains, President Obama’s redesign on democracy promotion “will be more about changing *how* the United States goes about supporting democracy abroad than *what* emphasis to place on democracy relative to other interests.”²³ Carothers argues that there is reason to be positive not only about the possibility for President Obama to breathe new credibility into U.S. democracy promotion, but also that “the global trend is not so bad.” Carothers looks to the 2009 Freedom House report and notes that, “since 2000 authoritarianism has decreased – the number of not-free countries has declined from 48 to 42 – while the number of free countries has risen from 86 to 89.”²⁴ And, Carothers notes that new opportunities exist for democracy promotion in the information age: “The diffusion of new communications technologies continues to open innovative avenues for citizen empowerment and peaceful resistance to authoritarianism.”²⁵

Therefore, in light of the new opportunities for democracy promotion, Carothers argues that, “in reformulating U.S. democracy promotion, the new administration should continue efforts to dissociate the subject from regime change, counterterrorism excesses, and general hubris.”²⁶ In other words, a redesign is necessary, but abandoning democracy promotion is not. Therefore, it appears that the U.S. national interest will continue to be advancing the cause of democracy abroad.

²² Ibid.

²³ Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Promotion Under Obama: Finding a Way Forward,” *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Policy Brief 77, February 2009, 1.

²⁴ Ibid, 5.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, 6.

But despite this strategic interest, democracy promotion is not universally accepted practice. Long before critics of President Bush's 'Freedom Agenda' called for a rethinking of U.S. foreign policy goals, diplomats expressed a discomfort with an earlier iteration of democracy promotion: that of rolling back the communist influence abroad. In a recent study examining attitudes and opinions of former United States Information Agency (USIA) employees during the Cold War, democracy promotion ranked low on the list of objectives for U.S. public diplomacy.²⁷ In this study, former USIA employees ranked democracy promotion 16th out of 20 priorities guiding U.S. public diplomacy—more important were objectives such as creating 'a positive image for the U.S.,' 'an understanding of American life,' and countering 'disinformation campaigns.' However, taking a closer look at the study shows that many of the objectives given higher priority than democracy promotion are part of, or furthered by, promoting the ideals and values central to democracy, such as 'advancing U.S. foreign policy' and 'defending U.S. ideals abroad.'²⁸ This indicates a support for the values of democracy, but a discomfort with democracy promotion, outright. This discomfort existed long before the Bush administration.

In the same study, democracy initiatives were ranked 20th in a list of 23 effective public diplomacy initiatives, indicating a belief by former USIA employees that democracy promotion is either not a focus or is not worth focusing on due to ineffectiveness.²⁹ In the study, only 'psychological warfare,' 'disinformation campaigns,' and 'paid advertisements' ranked lower than democracy promotion efforts (numbers 21-

²⁷ Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, "The Collapse of American Public Diplomacy: What Diplomatic Experts Say about Rebuilding America's Image in the World—A View from the Trenches," presented at "The International Studies Association Annual Convention," San Francisco, California, March 2008.

²⁸ Ibid, 9.

²⁹ Ibid, 14.

23), indicating the disfavor towards promoting democracy, despite its central role in U.S. foreign policy objectives, during the Cold War. Therefore, Fitzpatrick explains that “despite conventional wisdom that American public diplomacy’s primary mission during the Cold War was to defeat communism, this specific objective ranked eleventh on this list of objectives considered by former USIA officers to be most important to the primary mission of public diplomacy during the Cold War.”³⁰ This study indicates that even during the Cold War, the strategic national interests guiding public diplomacy were debated, or disconnected from public diplomacy goals.

Therefore, my research considers whether American public diplomacy is reflective of American strategic interests today. This is based on a belief that public diplomacy must support the interests of the U.S. to be deemed effective and to gain further Congressional funding. Therefore, as democracy promotion abroad is a central strategic interest of the U.S. in the post-9/11 political age, it is imperative to ask whether this strategic interest is reflected in current public diplomacy efforts. To do so, I will evaluate the work of the American international broadcasters – specifically Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Voice of America (VOA).³¹ These organizations are examples of Cold War era public diplomacy centerpieces that must retool and re-strategize to be players in the new political arena and the information age. Therefore, my research will evaluate how the American strategic interest of democracy promotion impacts RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts, and what can be learned about the possibilities of U.S. public diplomacy through this lens.

³⁰ Ibid, 8.

³¹ Monroe Price defines international broadcasting as an “elegant term for a complex combination of state-sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring state’s boundaries.” Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 200.

The Post-Cold War Political Environment: Complex Interdependence

“Ultimately, the United States is going to do what’s in its best interests, even though that may mean that people don’t find us particularly popular.”

-James K. Glassman, Former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, September 17, 2008

Public diplomacy has, unfortunately, become a catchall phrase for fixing America’s image problems and achieving America’s interests abroad. This grouping has created a situation whereby success is not only difficult to define, but for the most part, elusive. Ultimately, public diplomacy cannot solve all problems of America’s image and interests. Therefore, practitioners, scholars and policy analysts must note the various applications of public diplomacy and the challenges of each application.

The first application of public diplomacy is communications efforts coupled with a military engagement – in cases such as the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq – usually referred to as strategic communications. In such conflict cases, a communications strategy would be focused for the most part on promoting American security interests, and would become an extension of U.S. military strategy. In other cases, where the use of military force is either irrelevant or unlikely to be the tool of choice, influence and public diplomacy will take center stage. When that occurs, communications programs are attempting to create bottom-up political change to avoid the costly need for top-down change brought about by military intervention.

I have chosen to focus my research on this second application of public diplomacy – when the use of force is not imminently in the equation – as I believe that general calls for public diplomacy are rallying calls to deal with challenges in the international arena when the use of force is less relevant. These instances are increasing –

in our globalized world, military force is deemed to be less and less the effective tool it was in the past. Threats in the globalized world – from non-state actors, to climate change, to nuclear proliferation – require non-military or non-traditional responses and create new opportunities for political influence to be used as a successful tool.

As such, the research design I have developed evaluates two case countries where public diplomacy is used to promote American interests, in states where military intervention is either inappropriate or likely unsuccessful. I will consider American public diplomacy in two Muslim states – Iran and Azerbaijan – where the use of force is unlikely in the immediate future. Both case countries have elements that are key to understanding the application of public diplomacy in the post-Cold War international environment and were chosen for their common religious and ethnic backgrounds, and for their different political contexts, as will be discussed further in chapter 2.

As I will focus on cases in which public diplomacy is applied in arenas where the use of force has been deemed either an unlikely or unattractive political tool, I will consider the framework of complex interdependence in our current political environment. Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye describe three characteristics of complex interdependence: First, the idea that “multiple channels connect societies” – that societies are connected by both formal and informal ties. Second, there is an absence of a hierarchy of issues, meaning, “Military security does not consistently dominate the agenda.” Goals of energy security and political alliances function together with national and regional security. And third, “military force is not used by governments toward other

governments ... on the issues when complex interdependence prevails.”³² The political dynamic in Iran and Azerbaijan is not evoking a military response by the U.S. Instead influence, alliances, international organizations and multinational companies dominate the political scene in the Caspian region.

Complex interdependence prevails in this region as many strategic goals come into play – and the use of force will not help achieve these goals. One goal is political influence, which is particularly relevant as Russia continues to exert influence in former Soviet republics – such as Georgia – and other states find their democratic transitions unraveling from within – such as in Kyrgyzstan. Another issue on the agenda is energy, as the U.S. and other global players – from Russia to China and India – are increasingly interested in Eurasian oil resources, particularly in oil-rich Azerbaijan and the Persian Gulf. Lastly, security issues are also on the political agenda, as the Middle East is an exporter of ideologies and funding that fan the fires of terrorism (particularly in the case of Iran, whereby assistance is given to the military arm of Hezbollah) and as contested borders and independence movements can lead to Eurasian wars (particularly in Azerbaijan, whose border conflict with Armenia remains unsettled).

Therefore, America’s strategic goal in the Caspian region is influence – which is both a prize and a tool – as influence will help place the issues most important to U.S. on the complex policy agenda. Brzezinski argues that through influence in the region, America will ensure its strength. Therefore, how America “copes with the complex Eurasian power relationships” will be a central part of America’s “capacity to exercise

³² Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, (Scott, Foresman and Company, 2001.) Also in Asa A. Clark IV, Thomas F. Lynch III, and Rich Waddell, eds. *Understanding International Relations: The Value of Alternative Lenses*, (McGraw-Hill, 1993), 293-4.

global primacy.”³³ Influence is the key to political success in the age of globalization, particularly in regions where complex interdependence prevails, such as Eurasia.

To ensure success, America will need to rely heavily on information technology:

The American [global system] relies heavily on the indirect exercise of influence on dependent foreign elites, while drawing much benefit from the appeal of its democratic institutions... Cultural domination has been an underappreciated facet of American global power... America’s mass culture exercises a magnetic appeal, especially on the world’s youth. American television programs and films account for about three-fourths of the global market... The language of the Internet is English, and an overwhelming proportion of the global computer chatter also originates from America, influencing the content of global conversation. Lastly, America has become a Mecca for those seeking advanced education, with approximately half a million foreign students flocking to the United States... Graduates from American universities are to be found in almost every cabinet on every continent.³⁴

Therefore, America has the tools and appeal to ensure its influence in the region – through information technology.

According to Brzezinski, the Caspian, and Eurasia as a whole, is a region where no player can dominate, but no state wants to be excluded. Therefore, American influence can be a successful tool of political power:

America is too distant to be dominant [in] Eurasia but too powerful not to be engaged. All the states in the area view American engagement as necessary to their survival. Russia is too weak to regain imperial domination over the region or to exclude others from it, but it is also too close and too strong to be excluded. Turkey and Iran are strong enough to be influential, but their own vulnerabilities could make the area unable to cope with both the challenge from the north and the region’s internal conflicts. China is too powerful not to be feared by Russia and the Central Asian states, yet its very presence and economic dynamism facilitates Central Asia’s quest for wider global outreach.³⁵

³³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, (New York: Basic Books, 1997), xiii – xiv.

³⁴ Ibid, 25.

³⁵ Ibid, 149.

America's interest in the region is maintaining or strengthening its role as an influential player, checking those players whose influence could undo American standing in the region and cause security threats to the U.S. - such as Russia, China, India and Iran. This geopolitical dynamic is global – and influence is an essential tool in the arsenal available to American policy makers.

To achieve this influence, Keohane and Nye point to three policy tools useful when the model of complex interdependence prevails: linkage strategies, agenda setting, and transnational and transgovernmental relations. The first, linkage strategies, shows what is 'complex' about complex interdependence: "As the utility of force declines, and as issues become more equal in importance, the distribution of power within each issue will become more important."³⁶ Therefore the role of the U.S. and the tools used must be dynamic for each issue and policy goal within the system of complex interdependence. Agenda setting, the second tool, is also a term and theoretical approach in the study of communications, and perhaps is the most relevant tool for the study of public diplomacy. Keohane and Nye explain that "the lack of clear hierarchy among multiple issues leads us to expect that the politics of agenda formation and control will become more important."³⁷

Therefore, the U.S. must attempt to place its strategic goals high on the media/political agenda abroad, despite the many other players influencing politics the Caspian states of Azerbaijan and Iran. Keohane and Nye argue that the complexity of issues blurs the lines between domestic and international politics, creating a situation where political bargaining on issues crosses over borders, as is the case when a foreign

³⁶ Ibid, 294.

³⁷ Ibid, 295.

government attempts to influence the domestic politics and culture of another state through information technology. Ultimately, in the model of complex interdependence, power is the ability of an actor to get another to do what they are not doing. And this power can reach across borders.

The model of complex interdependence gives legitimacy to the practice of American public diplomacy in the Caspian region: As many issues are on the political agenda, the U.S. must use agenda-setting tools and relationship building through public diplomacy to influence foreign publics for the good of U.S. strategic interests. In other words, public diplomacy tactics must match strategic U.S. interests.

The Post-Cold War Media Environment: The Information Revolution

“Many Americans can identify with modernization, technology, and the Internet because one of the most important things these do is increase individual choice. At their best, they empower and emancipate the individual. But for traditional societies, such as Egypt’s, the collective, the group, is much more important than the individual, and empowering the individual is equated with dividing the society.”

- Thomas L. Friedman, “Space Rangers,” *The New York Times*³⁸

In the age of globalization, local and global politics connect through information technologies. And it is due in part to the information revolution that opportunities for influence abroad are enhanced. Information technologies have fundamentally changed societies, as noted by Manuel Castells. Castells explains that the Internet has become the basis for the organizational form of the information age. He notes the relevance of the network: “A network is a set of interconnected nodes. Networks are very old forms of human practice, but they have taken on a new life in our time by becoming information networks, powered by the Internet.”³⁹ Through the network, individuals have the ability to select affiliation and personal meaning: “The virtual communitarian culture adds a social dimension to technological sharing, by making the Internet a medium of selective social interaction and symbolic belonging.”⁴⁰ With the Internet has come new choices and new networks.

But this selective type of belonging poses challenges to governments and traditional societies. In this system, change is happening at a rapid pace and “individuals

³⁸ Thomas L. Friedman, “Space Rangers,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 2001, (Accessed April 15, 2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/13/opinion/13FRIE.html>.

³⁹ Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 37.

have become increasingly central to the course of events.”⁴¹ An increase of individualism, a concept often connected to American democracy, is a fundamental change for communal societies across the globe, especially in the Muslim world. Therefore, in the age of the Internet, American concepts of individualism have been transported to faraway regions. While posing a cultural challenge, this also poses an opportunity for American influence abroad.

James Rosenau explains this phenomenon through his model of distant proximities, which demonstrates the role of media influence in the age of globalization. Rosenau argues that globalization and localization unite in current world politics: “Distant proximities encompass the tensions between core and periphery, between national and transnational systems... between urban and rural, between coherence and incoherence, between integration and disintegration...”⁴² These concepts, indicate the different cultural reactions to the age of information, and the linkages made possible by it. The power of individuals now challenges authoritarian regimes, and sources of legitimacy in communal societies are eroding. And the pace of this change is rapid. This means not only a decline in state power, but also an increase in the mobility of people and ideas. Ultimately, states cannot completely defend their borders from ideas that run contrary to the nature of the regime and the society.

With the international media fostering an exchange of ideas, local politics becomes global, and the actions of individuals in the U.S. can affect people abroad, and vice versa. Another model – Monroe Price’s market for loyalties – argues that in this

⁴¹ James N. Rosenau, *Distant Proximities: Dynamics beyond Globalization*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 25.

⁴² *Ibid*, 5.

political system, foreign voices can resonate in local politics. Price's model demonstrates "a 'market for loyalties,' in which large scale competitors for power, in a shuffle for allegiances, use the regulation of communications to organize a cartel of imagery."⁴³ American public diplomats offer one of many messages on the media market, to be consumed by an audience. In the market for loyalties, local government has perhaps the strongest role in influencing the world-view of a local audience. But, according to Price, foreign governments can compete and resonate in the process of shaping world-views and national identities of local audiences. This is a new opportunity for public diplomacy, made possible in the information age.

The market for loyalties ultimately acts like a market: "The 'sellers' in this market are all those whose myths and dreams and history can somehow be converted into power and wealth – classically states, governments, interest groups, business and others. The 'buyers' are citizens, subjects, nationals, consumers – recipients of the packages of information, propaganda, advertisements, drama, and news propounded by the media. The consumer 'pays' for one set of identities or another in several ways that, together, we call 'loyalty' or 'citizenship.'"⁴⁴ Therefore, political influence is a contest for shaping national identity, which impacts world-view and foreign policy.

The American international broadcasters have a role in this market. Media globalization has created a new political environment whereby "barriers to entry are lowered for those excluded from the old political cartel," creating a situation where new,

⁴³ Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 32.

⁴⁴ Monroe E. Price, "The Market for Loyalties: Electronic media and the global competition for allegiances," *Yale Law Journal* (1994): 667, 669-70.

international voices can compete for influence in the formation of national identity.⁴⁵ This doesn't mean that states – either democratic or authoritarian – will take challenges to their message lightly. What it does mean, however, is that there is an opportunity for an American message abroad and that it is possible to compete against the “cartel” in target states. This framework helps articulate not only the complexity of choice in the globalized media society – even in states that do not have free press – but also defines the context within which the American international broadcasters operate.

Therefore, the media landscape has fundamentally changed since the Cold War. However, organizations such as VOA and RFE/RL were born to operate in the previous political and media landscape. These organizations must innovate to re-envision themselves in the information age. My research will demonstrate the ways in which RFE/RL and VOA have been able to innovate, and what Cold War era legacies remain.

One Cold War legacy in the American media arena is the Smith-Mundt Act, which articulates the parameters within which the U.S. can engage in public diplomacy. This act, the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Public Law 402), was signed into law by President Harry Truman on January 27, 1948. The act specifically separated foreign and local broadcasting, as noted in section 501 (a):

Information produced by VOA for audiences outside the United States shall not be disseminated within the United States ... but, on request, shall be available in the English language at VOA, at all reasonable times following its release as information abroad, for examination only by representatives of United States press associations, newspapers, magazines, radio systems, and stations, and by research students and scholars, and, on request, shall be made available for examination only to Members of Congress.

⁴⁵ Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*, 33.

It should be noted that the Smith-Mundt Act established these parameters before the founding of RFE/RL. However, the act had a profound impact on Cold War broadcasting, and continues to be influential law today. Now, in the information age, the relevance of Smith-Mundt is debated – i.e. is it possible to broadcast to foreign audiences and completely avoid media saturation domestically in the information age? Quite simply, this is not possible. Furthermore, in my interviews at both VOA and RFE/RL, employees seemed aware and pleased with the growing domestic audience. American international broadcasting is most definitely shedding its Cold War past, and to confront this change, in 2009 a “Smith-Mundt Symposium” was formed to discuss the future of American “discourse” at home and abroad.⁴⁶ It is clear that the context for American public diplomacy has changed in the information age. Therefore, a reevaluation of the purpose and goals of American public diplomacy is necessary. My research will add to this reevaluation.

⁴⁶ For more information, see: 2009 Smith-Mundt Symposium, (Accessed April 16, 2010), <http://mountainrunner.us/symposium/>.

Research questions

Based on the policy and media constraints and opportunities outlined above, my research aims to assess whether strategies guiding the American international broadcasters translate into tactics, and whether this strategy centers on principles of democracy promotion. In other words, do RFE/RL and VOA suffer from a lack of strategic guidance? Are tactics defined by the overarching goal of promoting democracy abroad? By evaluating the role of U.S. national interests in American public diplomacy, my study will add to the growing body of literature evaluating the tool of American public diplomacy in the information age. Therefore, my dissertation will ask the following research questions:

(Q1) *Is promoting democratic values a strategic priority for RFE/RL and VOA in their reporting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan?* In addressing this primary question, my research will attempt to fill in the gap noted in the GAO report – i.e. that public diplomacy lacks strategic guidance. To assess broadcasting strategy, I will ask the following question:

(Q1A) *Are the employees of VOA and RFE/RL guided by mission statements that prioritize democracy promotion? Do employees view their work as an element of democracy promotion?* I will examine the organizational perspective at both RFE/RL and VOA to understand whether these organizations are tasked with missions that prioritize democracy promotion.

And to consider whether strategy impacts tactics, I will consider the following research question:

(Q1B) *Do RFE/RL and VOA prioritize stories with democratic values in order to support a general strategic goal of democracy promotion?* To address this question, I will observe broadcasting content of both organizations and discuss tactical decision making with employees at VOA and RFE/RL.

In addition, I will consider the role of measurement at both VOA and RFE/RL. I believe this is an important additional piece of research. By understanding how VOA and RFE/RL are evaluated, the challenges to gaining more funding and political support will become clear. As these organizations must explain their results in the intangible field of communications and influence, it is particularly interesting to understand how each organization contends with this issue.

In fact, the GAO report notes the problem: “While agencies have made some progress in developing performance measurement systems, limited data exist on the ultimate effect of U.S. outreach efforts relative to the top-level goals outlined in the national communications strategy.”⁴⁷ And later, the report notes, “U.S. agencies have not fully demonstrated the effect of their strategic communication efforts on the national communication goals.”⁴⁸ Therefore, I will ask:

(Q2) *How is the strategy of RFE/RL and VOA evaluated? What are the measures of effectiveness (MOEs)?*

⁴⁷ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 15.

These research questions will illuminate a full picture of the strategy and tactics of VOA and RFE/RL, in order to assess the role of these organizations supporting the U.S. goal of promoting democratic principles abroad. And by looking at American public diplomacy through the organizational lens, my research will shed light on the possibilities and challenges of media influence in post-Cold War political and media environments. The following chapter will consider not only the public diplomacy and democracy promotion literatures, which my research aims to impact, but will also demonstrate the organizational constraints of the American international broadcasters.

CHAPTER 2:

International Broadcasting as a Democracy Promoter

The American international broadcasters, especially Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Voice of America (VOA), are historic and valued tools of U.S. foreign policy. But little research has been done as to whether American foreign policy goals are reflected in broadcasting since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Therefore, I hope to fill in a gap in the public diplomacy literature. My aim is to identify the role that democracy promotion, a fundamental element of U.S. foreign policymaking, plays in broadcasting missions and content. In doing so, I will note the nuanced differences between RFE/RL and VOA.

As such, this chapter will not only evaluate the literatures relevant to my research – especially that of public diplomacy and democracy promotion – but will also consider relevant theories that articulate the organizational constraints of RFE/RL and VOA. This foundation will ground my methodology, which aims to evaluate the recent work of both organizations broadcasting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan.

Based on a belief that scholarship must first focus on creating an understanding of the goals of the various public diplomacy organizations before attempting to measure the success of these goals, I hope to add to the understanding of American international broadcasters, a first step to evaluating their role in the post Cold War age. Therefore, by asking whether democracy promotion is central to the broadcasting missions of RFE/RL and VOA, I will articulate what I believe is an essential difference between the two broadcasters, one that goes unnoticed in the public diplomacy literature.

The public diplomacy literature

Public diplomacy, perhaps because it is often compared to propaganda, is difficult to define. Therefore, it is not surprising that a bulk of the literature on the subject attempts to articulate a definition – perhaps to create a boundary for the function of this governmental tool and reach consensus on its possibilities.

As such, Jarol B. Manheim’s book, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy*, offers classic definitions. Manheim articulates four levels of diplomacy – (1) government-to-government, (2) diplomat-to-diplomat, (3) people-to-people and (4) government-to-people, which includes international broadcasting – the latter two are public diplomacy. Manheim explains that public diplomacy intends to “influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage.”⁴⁹ As Manheim groups VOA and RFE/RL into the fourth category, he is able to categorize the broadcasters as government programs attempting to influence foreign publics. While this grouping is appropriate, I would argue that it sets a precedent for perhaps a rigid grouping of the broadcasters that fails to note their missionary differences.

A cousin concept to public diplomacy is that of ‘soft power’ – first articulated by Joseph Nye, Jr. In his books, *The Paradox of American Power* and *Soft Power*, Nye argues that by attracting foreign publics, America can exert a different type of power than hard power (military might and economic prowess). He distinguishes soft power from influence, since “after all, influence can also rest on the hard power of threats and payments.” Instead, soft power is “the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to

⁴⁹ Jarol B. Manheim, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

acquiescence.”⁵⁰ Ultimately, soft power is the ability to get others to want what you want. Like public diplomacy, it is a bottom-up political tool, attempting to foster change eventually at the level of the regime via appealing to the public.

Josef Joffe agrees that America is poised for using soft power: “America has the world’s most open culture, and therefore the world is most open to it.”⁵¹ Nye points out that America is the cultural center of globalization, but that it has always borrowed from other cultures, making American culture easily understood by foreigners.⁵² It follows that if America is truly everyone’s second culture, then the foundation for promoting American culture abroad already exists. Building upon that point, David Hoffman argues that democracy is a connecting value to cultures across the globe: “Freedom of speech and exchange of information are not just luxuries; they are the currency on which global commerce, politics and culture increasingly depend.”⁵³ Therefore, the literature naturally links the notions of using soft power and attracting foreign publics to the values of democracy. This linkage is particularly relevant to my research, and it is here that we see the intersection of American public diplomacy and democracy promotion.

But who is involved in public diplomacy? Increasingly this work is spreading beyond the confines of Washington, into the business community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In other words, in the age of globalization, broadcasters like RFE/RL and VOA do not have ownership over the American image or promoting

⁵⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 6. Nye distinguishes soft power from public diplomacy, relevant for my research, by arguing that public diplomats are involved in ‘strategic communications.’ It is my opinion that RFE/RL and VOA fall into the category of ‘strategic communications’ and therefore are defined as traditional public diplomacy.

⁵¹ Joseph Joffe, “America the Inescapable,” *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, June 8, 1997.

⁵² Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵³ David Hoffman, “Beyond Public Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2003.

America's interests. However, I have chosen to focus on these traditional lines of public diplomacy because organizations such as RFE/RL and VOA continue to receive funding from the U.S. Congress and therefore must be evaluated and understood.⁵⁴

One complication facing the traditional avenues of governmental public diplomacy is the historic concern over propaganda. This has long been a concern in American politics, as the propaganda of the enemy, from the Germans to the Soviets, was considered so vile that Americans feared coming anywhere near such abusive uses of governmental communications. This distaste has an impact today – it fosters defensiveness amongst employees at the broadcasters, which was apparent to me during my visits at VOA in Washington and RFE/RL in Prague.

The distinction between propaganda and public diplomacy continues to be important for public diplomats, and a substantial focus of the public diplomacy literature considers this subject. Mark Blitz explains that Americans are more comfortable with concepts of information: Americans “do not propagandize, we inform.”⁵⁵ But Nancy Snow argues that there is very little difference between propaganda and public diplomacy. She defines propaganda as intentional one-way communication flows that are advantageous to the propagandist.⁵⁶ With that definition, the work of RFE/RL and VOA could be construed as propaganda. However, Jacques Ellul argues that propaganda must

⁵⁴ While my research will focus on ‘traditional’ public diplomacy, I do so with the full knowledge that in the age of the information revolution, and with increased involvement of the private sector and NGOs, it is impossible to fully consider any one aspect of public diplomacy without acknowledging the influence and role of other players.

⁵⁵ Mark Blitz, “Public Diplomacy and The Private Sector,” in *Public Diplomacy: USA vs. USSR*, Ed. Richard F. Staar, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 95.

⁵⁶ Nancy Snow, *Information War: American Propaganda, Free Speech and Opinion Control Since 9-11*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).

be total in its influence.⁵⁷ According to Ellul, the target audience must come to see the world through the propagandists' view, not only when reading the newspaper but also at school, on posters in cafes, and beyond. Ultimately, American public diplomacy will not achieve this total influence, and therefore, according to Ellul's definition, is outside the grip of propaganda. Total influence is now impossible given Internet access. However, even if public diplomacy is defined as a separate concept from propaganda, the mere management of media outlets by governments fosters parallels. Therefore, it seems that there is a discomfort here, similar to the discomfort with democracy promotion outlined in the previous chapter.

The literature on public diplomacy must contend with two intersecting but distinct goals – that of enhancing America's image abroad and that of promoting America's interests. These factors come together when the public diplomacy literature focuses on the issue of counterterrorism. For example, in Helena K. Finn's article, she argues that public diplomacy is crucial to national security and claims that, "such a perspective is sorely lacking today, when many policymakers appear to believe that military force has become a sufficient response to Islamic terrorism. They would do well to keep in mind what their predecessors knew: that dialogue is essential to winning the hearts and minds of moderate elements in societies vulnerable to radicalism."⁵⁸ Therefore, the public diplomacy literature since September 11, 2001 has honed in on the idea of enhancing America's image within Muslim countries in defense of America's interest, namely security.

⁵⁷ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

⁵⁸ Helena K. Finn, "The Case for Cultural Diplomacy: Engaging Foreign Audiences," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003.

Some authors enhance the nuance of this conversation, such as Peter Van Ham who argues that a strategy focused on communicating with Arab audiences must consider local communications methods. He explains that news seekers in the Arab world continue to get information from neighbors, which is unlike Western information seeking methods, now dominated by the individualistic nature of the information revolution.⁵⁹

Understanding the differences between communal and individual information seeking methods is only one of the ways that public diplomats can improve the capabilities in communicating, and perhaps influencing, a foreign audience.

Nancy Snow also believes that the problem with American public diplomacy is a lack of understanding target audiences. For that reason, she has critiqued the State Department's former public diplomacy campaign, "Shared Values," which was led by then-Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Charlotte Beers. The "Shared Values" campaign was a set of ads produced by the State Department, aimed at Muslims across the Middle East and South Asia. These ads displayed Muslim Americans articulating the common values shared by Americans and Muslims. "Ultimately, the Shared Values campaign illustrated an administration that fundamentally misunderstood the 'target audience' of the Islamic world and thought that a little sugarcoating could go a long way toward explaining a very complicated story."⁶⁰ While Snow noted the problem with the campaign, she did not provide any guidelines for going beyond the "Shared Values" campaign, and she does not give any context to

⁵⁹ Peter Van Ham, "War, Lies and Videotape: Public Diplomacy and the USA's War on Terrorism," *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 4, (2003), 427-444.

⁶⁰ Nancy Snow, 102.

communicating with Muslims in the Islamic world, which must take into account the socio-cultural conditions which are distinct from Muslim-Americans.

A few authors attempt to draft a strategy for successful public diplomacy, including Newt Gingrich. Gingrich's article, "Rogue State Department," had a powerful impact inside the public diplomacy community, as it called for sweeping change of America's public diplomacy structure. The Gingrich article evaluates the effectiveness of the State Department in a hope to bring about change. Gingrich argues that the mission of public diplomacy must be based on "facts, values and consequences" not "process, politeness, and accommodation."⁶¹ According to Gingrich, "the State Department needs to experience a culture shock, a top-to-bottom transformation that will make it a more effective communicator of U.S. values around the world, place it more directly under the control of the President of the United States, and enable it to promote freedom and combat tyranny. Anything less is a disservice to this nation."⁶² Gingrich suggested major changes to the public diplomacy work of the State Department; but his critique did not examine the work of the international broadcasters or take up the specific operational and strategic planning problems at State.

Despite this growing body of public diplomacy literature, some scholars have come to see public diplomacy as overplayed. Edelstein and Krebs argue that public diplomacy has become the "holy grail" of American foreign policy, and that it is a futile quest. They pointed to the 2003 GAO study, which showed that \$600 million of funding

⁶¹ Newt Gingrich, "Rogue State Department," *Foreign Policy*, July 2003, (accessed November 24, 2008), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2003/07/01/rogue_state_department.

⁶² Ibid.

devoted to improving the American image was deemed ineffective.⁶³ Instead, they support an economic development solution – decreasing the gap between the world’s rich and poor – rather than a media solution to deal with the deteriorating opinion of America globally.⁶⁴ Economic and trade solutions can be helpful in improving relations between nations, but from the perspective of the public diplomat, Edelstein and Krebs offer little in terms of actionable goals. Instead they argued that public diplomacy goals are ineffective and unattainable.

The above literature evaluates the traditional avenues of public diplomacy – from relationship building through international exchange to radio broadcasting. Adding to the complexity of the public diplomacy landscape is the new opportunities made possible in the Internet age – particularly social networking – often described as web 2.0. Social networking combines these traditional outlets of public diplomacy – for exchange can now happen through the media. Therefore, the most recent public diplomacy literature has attempted to analyze these new tools and evaluate the opportunities and challenges for public diplomacy organizations

One author who takes a close look at “public diplomacy 2.0” is Amelia Arsenault. She argues that public diplomacy must stay in step with the web 2.0 environment:

New technologies have not replaced traditional modes of outreach. They are, however, making them more germane and at the same time more unpredictable as mechanisms for shaping foreign opinion and cross-nation relationships... A 2.0 world necessitates a public diplomacy 2.0 strategy characterized by more nuanced

⁶³ The most recent GAO accounting report on the subject said that since September 11, 2001, the U.S. government has spent at least \$10 billion on communication efforts and that polling continues to show “negative views towards the United States persist.” GAO Report to Congressional Committees, United States Government Accountability Office, “U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight,” May 2009, GAO-09-679SP, 1.

⁶⁴ David M. Edelstein and Ronald R. Krebs, “Washington’s Troubling Obsession with Public Diplomacy,” *Survival* 47, no. 1, (2005), 89-104.

reactive and proactive outreach strategies that consider... broad and interrelated developments in the contemporary and media environment.⁶⁵

Therefore, with the rise of web 2.0, new opportunities exist for public diplomacy to become multidimensional –a move from one-way to two-way flows of communications. The growing wave of social networking is increasingly relevant in the Muslim world: “For example, 72 percent of Saudi and 46.5 percent of UAE netizens now regularly participate in social media activities such as blogging and social networking. Facebook, the world’s most popular social network, regularly attracts more than 125 million unique visitors per month, only a fifth of whom are American.”⁶⁶ Arsenault notes a big opportunity here for public diplomacy: “Since 9/11, calls for increased dialogue between cultures and nations have abounded. Dialogue in its most basic definition refers to a conversation between two people. Dialogue is a model for public diplomacy 2.0...”⁶⁷ While the opportunity is large, the strategies and tactics of public diplomacy 2.0 are in their infancy.

The GAO report reflects a growing consensus in the U.S. government that public diplomacy communications tactics must innovate to compete in the 2.0 age: “Dynamic shifts in how target audiences obtain and use information had led many public diplomacy practitioners to conclude that the United States must more fully engage emerging social networks and technologies (such as Facebook and Twitter) in order to remain relevant... However, substantial questions exist regarding the challenges associated with this new

⁶⁵ Amelia Arsenault, “Public Diplomacy 2.0,” in *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Philip Seib (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 136.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

approach.”⁶⁸ While the GAO report notes that many questions exist about the tactical realities of a public diplomacy 2.0 strategy, the report argues, “current information suggests a failure to adapt in this dynamic communications environment could significantly raise the risk that U.S. public diplomacy efforts could become increasingly irrelevant.”⁶⁹ While the GAO report notes that the move to social networking for public diplomacy organizations is like venturing into new and untested waters, there is also a sense that keeping current and innovating is a requirement for survival in the 2.0 age.

--

The above literature on public diplomacy can be separated into two categories. In the first, public diplomacy is defined and contrasted with soft power and propaganda, and it is defined as a policy tool in the context of globalization. In the second, it is promoted as a policy tool with recommendations, though these recommendations are often vague. Nowhere in the literature is there a discussion of the actual goals of public diplomacy from an organizational perspective – so rather than looking inside of public diplomacy organizations, the literature focuses instead on an increased need and potential results. In addition, there is only a recent acknowledgement of the contextual complexities of the information revolution, and the communication differences between those in the West and the target audiences in the Muslim world. Therefore, the literature suffers from two weaknesses: First, it rests on an assumption that public diplomacy will have a positive

⁶⁸ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, 2. The report also notes on page 33 that “there is a general lack of adequate research and understanding of how government entities can and should operate in a social network environment.”

⁶⁹ Ibid, 31. In fact, the GAO report even offered suggestions for applying a 2.0 strategy on page 32: “The BBG’s international broadcasting has the potential to help form social networks of like-minded people who listen to services such as the Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia and then pass along this information through word of mouth, blogs, Internet sites, and other means.”

influence, while few authors provide any evidence supporting this assumption or any studies actually measuring the effectiveness of public diplomacy (with the exception of the GAO report). Second, the literature assumes that the role of public diplomacy will be similar in dissimilar countries, frequently grouping Arabs or the Muslim world into one category, despite country, ethnic, tribal and regional differences, and now information resource differences. The contribution my research will make to this literature is to create a more vivid strategic view from inside two institutions of public diplomacy, in order to understand the tactics employed by RFE/RL and VOA. From this view it will be possible to make a clearer statement on the possible outcomes of various public diplomacy programs.

The role of democracy promotion in policymaking

The American push for democracy abroad has its roots in democratic peace theory - the belief that democracy adds to the likelihood of peace – and this perspective has had a great impact on American public diplomacy. Dougherty and Phaltzgraff define democratic peace theory: “Liberals tend to be pacifists; liberal governments prefer negotiation to war (as do their publics); liberal democracies pursue peaceful foreign policies.”⁷⁰ However, the authors note that even Immanuel Kant, to whom the theory is attributed, never believed that democracies could avoid war altogether, but instead that “both institutional and cultural factors would contribute to a sense of mutual security and the gradual growth of a unique zone of peace among liberal states.”⁷¹ The idea that democracy can promote international security and protect against wars, which is the thinking behind democratic peace theory, makes democracy promotion an attractive policy for the U.S.

Democratic peace theory, born from Kant’s ideas, is now highly important as the increased complexity of international relations causes governments to rethink the use of force. According to democratic peace theory, “states need both an opportunity and willingness to go to war with each other. Noncontiguous democracies, unless one or both

⁷⁰ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Phaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, (New York: Longman, 2001), 314-5.

⁷¹ Ibid. Bruce Russett identified two models of democratic peace theory. The first is the cultural/normative model, whereby states that use conflict resolution to tackle disputes at home will use these tactics abroad. The second is the structural/institutional model, whereby democratic values will become infused in the institutions of the state, influencing their policies abroad. For more on these models, see Bruce Russett, “Why Democratic Peace?” in *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton University Press, 1993), 24-42.

were great powers, had little opportunities to fight each other.”⁷² However, today, as globalization has created a dynamic whereby states confront a declining utility to the use of force, the balance is now tipped in the favor of diplomatic solutions and public diplomacy is an increasingly valuable tool. Therefore, the hope is that by promoting an international democratic framework, states will be less likely to have the willingness for war, based on the demands of the people.

However, studies have shown that democratic states are not more peaceful in general. Instead, “democracies are less likely to use lethal violence towards other democracies than toward autocratically governed states or than autocratically governed states are toward each other.”⁷³ Therefore it follows that, if more states become democracies, than international security will be improved for all. However, perhaps there are other influences that can explain a lack of force amongst democracies. Even Kant himself found that democracy in itself was not a universal solvent. Instead he paired concepts of democracy with “cosmopolitan law,” which “embodies the ties of international commerce and free trade, and a ‘pacific’ union established by treaty in international law and among republics.”⁷⁴

Other explanations for democratic peace, offered by Bruce Russett, include the notion that certain institutions, common in democracies, are helpful in slowing down a rush to war. Also, Russett notes that “democracies foster, and are fostered by, the pluralism arising from many independent centers of power and influence; autocracies do

⁷² Before WWII, democracies rarely bordered each other, and therefore there was little opportunity for war between democratic states. After WWII, the situation changed, and more states adopted democratic practices without fully entering the “association of nations,” as Woodrow Wilson would explain it. Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 9 & 4.

⁷³ Ibid, 11.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 4.

not. Democracies are open to many private and governmental transnational linkages; autocracies rarely are.”⁷⁵ Also, Russett notes that democracies frequently engage in alliances, and alliances make peace, and that democracies are frequently wealthy because of their free market based economy, which also further encourages peace. Because of their myriad resources, democracies find other ways to resolve conflict, making war not necessarily the answer.

But because autocratic states do exist in the world, even democracies will find themselves in conflict, according to democratic peace theory. “Authoritarian states are expected to aggress against others if given the power and opportunity. By this reasoning, democracies must be eternally vigilant and may even need to engage in defensively motivated war or preemptive action anticipating an immediate attack.”⁷⁶ Therefore, according to Russett, the mere fact that autocracies exist makes the world a more dangerous place.

This is the case for Iran, an autocratic state, aiming to acquire nuclear weapons and threatening the security of its neighbors with both actions (funding terrorist activity and insurgents in Iraq) and words (threatening the existence of Israel). But even in Azerbaijan, an ally teetering towards democracy, the lack of developed institutions are, “perceived by other states as unstable, so they may not be able to practice the norms of democratic conflict resolution internationally.”⁷⁷ Therefore, fully promoting what Kant termed the ‘institutional constraints’ of democracy, which is a division of power that

⁷⁵ Ibid, 26.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 32.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 34.

places much of the control over the use of force in the hands of the people, will arguably make the world a safer place.

But the road to democracy is often rocky: “Academic research... suggests that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other – but also that transitions to democracy may lead initially to more rather than less conflict.”⁷⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising that the role of democracy promotion in American foreign policy continues to be debated in academic literature. On the one hand, some academics and policymakers support the long-term, perceived effects of remaking the global order democratically, while others are skeptical about the process and the near-term effects.

Gideon Rose explains that this debate is between “exemplars” and “crusaders”:
“‘Exemplars’ are wary of the costs associated with a messianic foreign policy and skeptical about U.S. ability to effect true political change in other countries. They prefer to cheer history along from the sidelines. ‘Crusaders’ are more optimistic about the possibility of shaping political development elsewhere and more willing to bear costs in the attempt.”⁷⁹ This description provides a useful framework for understanding the various strategies of democracy promotion, and can be applied to the study of the American international broadcasters, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter.

Typically on the ‘crusader’ side of the debate is Thomas Carothers, who has remained a supporter of active democracy promotion. He has noted the decreased momentum of democratic change across the globe, and has written an account encouraging further work. Initially a ‘third wave’ of democratic change demonstrated a

⁷⁸ Gideon Rose, “Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy: A Review Essay,” *International Security*, 25, No. 3. (Winter, 2000-2001), 188.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 187.

rise in democratic transitions, which supported and affirmed the work of ‘crusader’ democracy promotion.⁸⁰ But this wave of democracy peaked, and in its aftermath authoritarian rulers gripped tighter to power while democratic elections brought questionable parties to power.⁸¹ Yet despite these trends, Carothers argues that a policy focused on spreading the idea of democracy, supporting civil society and opening the political landscape can strategically “move non-democratic countries to the starting point of what democracy promoters hope will be a subsequent sequence of democratization.”⁸² Allison and Beschel agree: “Not only is it possible for the United States to promote democracy, but we believe that the evidence suggests that in fact the United States has promoted democracy and is promoting democracy.”⁸³ Therefore these authors are enthusiastic about the prospects of democracy promotion, which places them in the “crusader” camp, as defined by Rose.

Carothers explains that while the effects of democracy promotion efforts are often unclear, the process is what matters: “...the value of democracy programs is often not in their specific effects on institutions but the way they reshape the attitudes or ideas of

⁸⁰ Samuel Huntington describes the years between 1974 and 1990 as the “third wave” of democratic change, when “about thirty countries shifted from authoritarianism to democracy, and at least a score of other countries were affected by the democratic wave.” Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 5. This trend led to increased interest in democracy promotion: “The democratic revolutions of 1989, coupled with the retreat of authoritarian regimes in Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa, have prompted a resurgence of interest throughout the U.S. government and society at large in promoting democracy.” For more information, see: Graham T. Allison, Jr. and Robert P. Beschel, Jr., “Can the United States Promote Democracy?” *Political Science Quarterly*, 107, no. 1, (Spring, 1992), 81.

⁸¹ Allison and Beschel have identified “cycles in the development of democracy” which may explain for increases and decreases in democratic consolidation across the globe. See: Graham T. Allison, Jr. and Robert P. Beschel, Jr., “Can the United States Promote Democracy?” *Political Science Quarterly*, 107, no. 1, (Spring, 1992), 83. The successful elections of Hamas in the Palestinian territories and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt are examples of terrorist organizations gaining ‘legitimate’ power in their states through elections.

⁸² Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, (Washington: Carnegie, 1999), 95.

⁸³ Graham T. Allison, Jr. and Robert P. Beschel, Jr., 82.

individuals.”⁸⁴ Carothers also notes the possibilities for information technology in democracy promotion work: “The revolution in information and communication technologies has further spurred the growth of democracy aid by speeding the flow of ideas and knowledge across borders.”⁸⁵ However, as will be noted in the section below (“the democratizing effect of the media”), the relationship between information technology and democracy continues to be debated.

If Carothers best articulates “crusader” democracy promotion, Fareed Zakaria, who has written about the failure of democratic values to permeate democratic regimes, has been a proponent of “exemplar” democracy promotion. His central thesis is that “democracy is flourishing; liberty is not.”⁸⁶ He worries that democracy programs may not be successful in articulating a vision of *liberty*. Zakaria defines liberty as “first and foremost the freedom of the individual from arbitrary authority, which has meant, for most of history, brute power of the state. It implies certain basic human rights: freedom of expression, of association, and of worship, and rights of due process.”⁸⁷ Throughout the world elected governments are failing to offer their publics the basic elements of liberty. Zakaria refers to these regimes as “illiberal democracies” and believes that by setting an example, the U.S. can offer foreign publics the motivations to demand change within their own societies, changes in support of liberty.

Other scholars have also argued that the main challenge for democracy promoters is the consolidation of liberty: “If popular sovereignty is relatively easy to establish, the

⁸⁴ Thomas Carothers, 283.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 331.

⁸⁶ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 17.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 31-2.

other component of democracy, liberty, is far more difficult to secure. This accounts for both the delay in democracy's spread around the world in the twentieth century and the continuing difficulties in establishing it in the twenty-first."⁸⁸ The global decline of liberty is particularly concerning in the Caspian region and the former Soviet states of Central Asia, where "elections have paved the way for dictatorships."⁸⁹ The same is true across the Arab world, where Zakaria believes elections would "bring to power regimes that are more intolerant, reactionary, anti-Western, and anti-Semitic than the dictatorships currently in place."⁹⁰ If democracy does not necessarily lead to democratic values, Zakaria argues in favor of a message of 'constitutional liberalism' for democracy promoters. He explains that, "constitutional liberalism... is not about the procedures for selecting government, but rather, government's goals."⁹¹

Zakaria's strategy of choice for supporting constitutional liberalism is by example. Other scholars agree, arguing that liberty cannot be imposed from the outside: "Not only does the apparatus of liberty take time to develop, it must be developed independently and domestically; it cannot be sent from elsewhere and implanted, ready-made. The requisite skills and values can be neither imported nor outsourced."⁹² The hope is not to create democracy from the outside, but rather from the bottom up, from inside.

This debate is particularly relevant as it sets a context for the various democracy promotion strategies of public diplomacy. My research will rest upon these definitions – of 'crusader' and 'exemplar' – and attempt to note how these differing strategies play out

⁸⁸ Michael Mandelbaum, "Democracy Without America," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007.

⁸⁹ Fareed Zakaria, 18.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 18.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 19.

⁹² Michael Mandelbaum.

in public diplomacy campaigns. That being said, I will continue to use the term “crusader” for my research – which is a term borrowed from Gideon Rose’s work, just as I will borrow his term “exemplar” – with a full knowledge of the political and cultural sensitivities of the word “crusade” vis-à-vis the Muslim world. In doing so, I do not mean to evoke images of the Crusades (the Catholic campaign to free the Holy Land from Muslims and other non-Christians, including Jews, from 1095-1291), but instead to show the varying levels of involvement in political change abroad. Therefore, the term “crusade” is a metaphor for a more active level of involvement, which becomes relevant to the broadcasters, especially when they are involved in a political event that becomes violent. These terms, and their application to the work of public diplomacy, will continue to be flushed out throughout my research.

The democratizing effect of the media

In order to gain a better understanding of RFE/RL and VOA I will consider their role in promoting democracy abroad in key transitioning or authoritarian states (specifically Azerbaijan as a transitioning state, and Iran as a theocratic state). The potential for media to affect political change is huge: global media has created a possibility whereby citizens can further engage in governance based on the possibilities of inclusion provided by information technology, and particularly the Internet. Many authors have started to acknowledge these possibilities and analyze the effect of technology on democracy, which is a another literature that guides my thinking about the public diplomacy work of RFE/RL and VOA.

Pippa Norris argues that there are both pessimists and optimists about the possibilities of the Internet – and that they both may be right. She argues that, in fact, political institutions are conservative and stave off the potential for radical change offered by digital technologies. But, on the other hand, digital technology shifts the balance of resources, offering new opportunities for inclusion, while simultaneously reducing the cost of communicating. Norris warns, however, of a “democratic divide,” related to the concept of the digital divide, whereby those countries who allow for digital resources will have citizens who participate actively in public life, whereas those states who close off to digital technology will be failing to provide this type of engagement for their citizens.⁹³ It is for this reason – to stave off a democratic divide - that the American international broadcasters are eager to provide information technology, and new possibilities through the Internet, to the people of Eurasia and beyond.

⁹³ Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Turning to television, Marc Lynch writes that supporting cable networks across the globe can actually have a democratizing effect: “Americans are beginning to realize the potentially positive role which the Arab media can play in bringing democratic reform to the region.”⁹⁴ Therefore it is not surprising that Voice of America launched its own Persian News Network (PNN), which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Lynch’s research focuses on talk shows, demonstrating that pluralism can be fostered through open discussion, which is exactly the thinking behind talk shows on PNN. Lynch argues that Al Jazeera, the Qatar-based news network, has had the effect of “legitimizing dissent and exposing the regimes.”⁹⁵ While his work does not expand beyond the Middle East, the general theme of promoting conversation and exposing problematic regimes transcends to public diplomacy work in Azerbaijan and Iran and beyond, and perhaps legitimizes the decisions of VOA to move in this direction vis-à-vis television.

Christopher Kedzie studied the role of interconnectivity in the former Soviet Union.⁹⁶ His dissertation articulates a “positive correlation between democracy and communications.”⁹⁷ Kedzie believes that information technology is the answer to the dictator’s dilemma, which was best articulated by George Shultz: “Totalitarian societies face a dilemma: either they try to stifle these technologies and thereby fall further behind in the new industrial revolution, or else they permit these technologies and see their

⁹⁴ Marc Lynch, “Assessing the Democratizing Power of Arab Satellite TV,” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies: Satellite Broadcasting in the Arab and Islamic Worlds*, 1, (2005), The Adham Center for Television Journalism, The American University of Cairo, Egypt, 150.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 151.

⁹⁶ Kedzie defines interconnectivity to be predominantly email, as he argued that it crosses borders faster. He also referred to a study conducted by *Freedom House*, suggesting a correlation between interconnectivity and democracy.

⁹⁷ Christopher Kedzie, “Communication and Democracy: Coincident Revolutions and the Emergent Dictators Dilemma,” *RAND Corporation Doctoral Dissertation*, 1997, (accessed November 24, 2008), www.rand.org/publications/RGSD/RGSD127/.

totalitarian control inevitably eroded. In fact, they do not have a choice, because they will never be able entirely to block the tide of technological advance.”⁹⁸ Ultimately, the results of Kedzie’s dissertation demonstrate that the correlation between information technology and democratic change was strongest in the Baltic States, while “none of the republics in the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) or Central Asia... developed enough network capacity to be able to test any effect relative to democracy.”⁹⁹ More research needs to be done to understand the role of information technology in the South Caucasus, and while this research cannot be applied to the case of Azerbaijan directly, the concept that interconnectivity may in fact have a positive effect on democratic change is both interesting and supports the work of the international broadcasters.

While exploring the correlation between information technology and democratic change, Kedzie does point out an interesting counterexample to that correlation - the use of audiocassettes by Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iranian Revolution of 1979. He looks to Khomeini’s use of the audiotape as an example of fostering a repressive revolution rather than democratic change through technology. However, if we apply definitions of propaganda noted above, Khomeini’s tapes were one-way information flows aimed at creating total action by the people – placing these tapes in line with the propagandistic purpose for which they were created. Nevertheless, Kedzie supports the general use of his model – arguing that there is a correlation between interconnectivity and democracy. But, one is left to wonder, could democratic transitions lead to more interconnectivity? Which comes first? Clearly the correlation needs to be explored further, and the democratizing role of open media continues to be debated.

⁹⁸ Ibid. George P. Shultz served as Secretary of State under President Ronald Reagan, from 1982-1989.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas' book adds greatly to the literature, as these authors demonstrate how authoritarian regimes work around the inherent freedoms of information technology to secure their governmental grasp. In case studies from China to Cuba to the United Arab Emirates, Kalathil and Boas demonstrate the use of technological advances – intranets and governmental services – by authoritarian governments to gain legitimacy, while simultaneously censoring sites and information challenging to the regime.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps the Iranian Revolution of 1979 is not the sole counterexample of how media can be utilized in favor of authoritarian control. Ultimately, Kalathil and Boas demonstrate that regimes are able to harness the Internet for economic growth while simultaneously controlling for political effects, such as democratic change, either through threats or through encouraged self-censorship.

Therefore, the above authors show the full spectrum of thinking about the linkage between the information technology and democratization. But this literature does not necessarily prove that open media will support democratic change, only that democratic change expands with free and open media. It is important to note how authoritarian regimes have found ways to work around the free flow of information. Further, Mark Alleyne explains that, “the information age did not automatically result in less harassment and fewer murders of journalists, not increased optimism by human rights and press freedom groups about the future prospects of protecting the physical safety of journalists.”¹⁰¹ Global media remains a target of the autocratic regime. It is within this complicated media landscape that the American international broadcasters work – there is

¹⁰⁰ Shanthi Kalathil and Taylor C. Boas, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*, (Washington: Carnegie, 2003).

¹⁰¹ Mark D. Alleyne, *News Revolution: Political and Economic Decisions About Global Information*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 35.

a sense of great potential when they adopt new media, from Internet to blogs to video streaming, but there is also a sense that the effects of such media are yet to be discovered.

The Broadcasting Democracy Promotion Spectrum

The work of RFE/RL and VOA fits within the above democracy promotion debate, as these organizations utilize the tactics of promoting an example of open media (exemplar) and support democratic change through persuasive broadcasts (crusader). These differing strategic viewpoints are what account for the different broadcasting tactics of RFE/RL and VOA, as I will demonstrate throughout my research. Both RFE/RL and VOA act as an example of open media, and therefore are exemplar democracy promotion organizations. But, as my research will demonstrate, RFE/RL takes its role of democracy promoter a step further, calling for direct change inside of autocratic states. Therefore, I will argue that RFE/RL is closer to the “crusader” category than VOA.

But such categorizations do not tell the whole story – for in certain instances broadcasters will move outside of these boxes, demonstrating a nuanced approach to democracy promotion. Therefore, for my research, I have developed the notion of a broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum, relevant to the work of the American international broadcasters. Exemplar-style democracy promotion is on one end of the spectrum, while crusader-style democracy promotion is on the other. To account for the middle ground, I use the term “champion,” indicating that there is a possibility for broadcasters to function as a champion of the cause of democracy, but would not be associated with the more overt democracy promotion necessary to be termed “crusader.” Therefore, the spectrum is a means for understanding the work of the broadcasters, for plotting their various functions, but not for rigidly grouping them into one category.

This spectrum, drawn below, indicates that a broadcaster merely functioning as an open media outlet is an example of the pillars of democracy. On the other end of the spectrum would be a broadcaster inciting local populations to rise up in favor of democracy in their country. Therefore, as a broadcaster moves along the spectrum, they are moving from in-ward looking assumptions of democracy to outward-looking calls for change:



What is unique about my research is that it takes a view of applying public diplomacy, specifically the work of the broadcasters, within the framework and debate of democracy promotion. In the final chapter of my research I will place my findings onto this spectrum. As such I do not enter the debate as to whether democracy promotion is right or possible but, rather, generate a discussion of the various strategies that encourage democracy. As such, the above spectrum is positive in nature in that it articulates the range of strategy for democracy promotion – from an arms-length approach on a global scale, to active involvement in the local political scene of a state. Broadcasting tactics may shift along the spectrum depending on the political context and strategic guidelines

of the organization. Therefore, I believe that this spectrum will help not only further an understanding of the broadcasters, and the various tools available to them in promoting democracy, but will also account for the nuances of reporting in various political contexts and during various historical events. The spectrum represents the dynamic nature of democracy promotion – i.e. that organizations can shift in strategy from “exemplar” towards “crusader” – and noting this nuanced landscape of possibilities for broadcasters is a significant contribution to the existing democracy promotion literature.

Challenges to democracy

While some supporters of American democracy promotion may in fact be optimistic about the prospects for democratic change abroad, there are various constraints that limit the likelihood that either democracy will take hold in Eurasia or that democratic practices will yield their typically peaceful result. These challenges must be considered by the international broadcasters, as they will not only limit the likelihood that democratic change will occur, but will explain why audiences may have difficulty understanding and adopting a democratic message. It is within this cultural, economic and political context that the broadcasters communicate to the peoples of Azerbaijan and Iran.

The first challenge to democracy promotion is ethnic nationalism. Nationalism is a part of the political landscape in the former Soviet Union and, therefore, Azerbaijan. According to Russett: “Nationalism, with its combination of inclusion and exclusion, readily conflicts with the quasi-universalistic ethos of ‘democracies don’t fight each other.’”¹⁰² Case in point, ethnic nationalism was a component for the war fought between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 1993 over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and a decade’s worth of elections have not completely cooled the tensions between these neighboring states. And, I have found that Azerbaijani state-run media publishes a news story, almost daily, entitled, “Armenians break ceasefire,” indicating the role of the Azerbaijani government in highlighting tensions. See below for a recent example from http://www.azertag.com/index_en.html (this example accessed February 26, 2010):

¹⁰² Bruce Russett, “Why Democratic Peace?” in *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton University Press, 1993), 133.

ARMENIA BREAKS CEASEFIRE WITH AZERBAIJAN

[26 February, 2010 12:46:04]

Subunits of the Armenian Armed Forces, on February 25 at different hours, subjected to machine gunfire the opposite positions of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, press service of Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan reported...

Therefore, while nationalism and even tribalism remain the innate power sources in states such as Azerbaijan, the American international broadcasters need to contend with such challenges to democratic values.

The second relevant challenge to the principles of democracy, though perhaps not to the practice of elections, is Muslim fundamentalism, which is a central cornerstone of the Iranian regime, and a growing force in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. While a fundamentalist government may achieve power through an election, it will often fail to bring liberty to the people. From the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to Hamas in the Palestinian territories, increasingly, Muslim fundamentalists are being voted into office. Zakaria believes that the tendency of Islamic groups to gain legitimacy through elections is merely another example of illiberal democratic practices. He explains that, "...although they speak the language of elections, many of the Islamic parties have been withering in their contempt for democracy, which they see as a Western form of government. They would happily come to power through an election, but then would set up their own theocratic rule."¹⁰³ Zakaria notes here an important dynamic – a feeling amongst Islamic leaders that democracy is a foreign, or even Western, form of government, which is particularly relevant when considering the likelihood of whether democracy will flourish in Iran and Azerbaijan. And, he also notes the ability to manipulate democratic practices in order to gain international legitimacy, though only temporarily.

¹⁰³ Fareed Zakaria, 120-121.

Zakaria also explores this concept in his chapter entitled, “The Islamic Exception,” where he argues that the Koranic model of government is authoritarian in nature. This observation has been disputed in the literature of governance in the Muslim world, as some authors do not agree that Islam and democracy are incompatible, citing examples of Muslim democracies. Some of these examples, and in particular the example of Turkey, have used government’s power (and even military force) to secularize the state for the good of democratic practices.¹⁰⁴ Tackling this debate head-on, Zakaria argues that the problem is not “the Muslim world but in the Middle East,” citing a *Freedom House* study which demonstrated that the majority of the world’s Muslims live in electoral democracies, including large states such as India.¹⁰⁵ When considering the lack of democratic practices in the Arab world of the Middle East, Zakaria includes Iran, since, although it is not an Arab state, it’s revolution gave “an enormous fillip to the broader fundamentalist movement.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, Islamic fundamentalist practices – in the Arab world, in Iran, and beyond – must be noted as a challenge to the work of the international broadcasters specifically and democracy promoters in general.

The third challenge to democracy in the literature is the conflict between energy resources and democracy. Paul Collier argues, “Until recently, an oil democracy seemed almost an oxymoron,” because “oil rents have substantially reduced the likelihood that a society is democratic.”¹⁰⁷ Collier’s “political science” explanation for this is that

¹⁰⁴ For more information on Turkey, see Fareed Zakaria, 80.

¹⁰⁵ Fareed Zakaria, 127.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 42.

“resource rents are likely to induce autocracy.”¹⁰⁸ And, resource riches are not only bad for democracy but also bad for “restraints,” which Collier defines as a “public good that is in nobody’s particular interest to supply.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, when states are surviving on oil and gas rents, there is no need to turn to the people for revenue, and therefore there is no need to include the people in the process of governing or provide the people with services. And when this happens, freedoms and liberty are left by the wayside, and the state becomes a classic rentier state.

Fareed Zakaria agrees, noting that “unearned riches” are a curse. This is because they “impede the development of modern political institutions, laws, and bureaucracies.”¹¹⁰ As oil-rich states fail to develop along capitalist lines, which Zakaria notes is the best path for ensuring liberal democratic practices, governments basically follow “... the inverse slogan of the American Revolution – no taxation, but no representation either.”¹¹¹ When states do not develop along capitalist lines, resource rents are used to buy modern innovations, which means that when the oil is gone, so is innovation.

Coming at this relationship another way, Thomas Friedman notes a relationship between energy depletion and democratic practices:

As I followed events in the Persian Gulf during the past few years, I noticed that the first Arab Gulf State to hold a free and fair election, in which women could run and vote, and the first Arab Gulf state to undertake a total overhaul of its labor laws to make its own people more employable and less dependent on imported labor, was Bahrain. Bahrain happened to be the first Arab Gulf state expected to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Fareed Zakaria, 75.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 76.

run out of oil. It was also the first in the region to sign a free trade agreement with the United States.¹¹²

The idea that the depletion of oil will lead to democracy is very interesting. In this *Foreign Policy* article, Friedman examines the relationship between the price of oil and democracy. He notes that when the price of oil increases, democratic practices diminish. He illustrates this relationship by examining statistics of crude oil prices and democratic practices as determined by *Freedom House*. In doing so, he identifies what he calls “the first law of petropolitics:”

The price of oil and the pace of freedom always move in opposite directions in oil-rich petrolist states... the higher average global crude oil price rises, the more free speech, free press, free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, and independent political parties are eroded. And these negative trends are reinforced by the fact that the higher the price goes, the less petrolist leaders are sensitive to what the world thinks or says about them.¹¹³

This concept is particularly relevant to the study of Azerbaijan and Iran, two states that Friedman argues fit precisely into the “petrolist” camp – states that are “both dependent on oil production for the bulk of their exports or gross domestic product and have weak state institutions or outright authoritarian governments. High on... [this] list...would be Azerbaijan, Angola, Chad, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Uzbekistan and Venezuela.”¹¹⁴

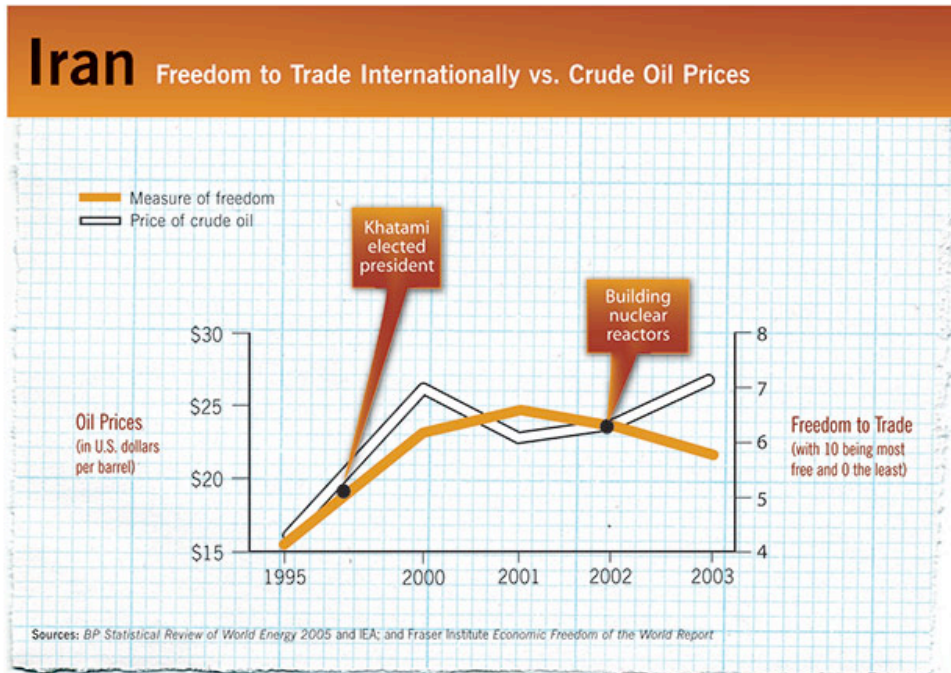
In the case of Iran, Friedman uses a graph to illustrate how rising crude oil prices have corresponded with the deterioration of democratic practices. While this graph demonstrates a correlation, not causation, it is still valuable to consider this relationship,

¹¹² Thomas L. Friedman, “The First Law of Petropolitics,” *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2006 (accessed October 1, 2008), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3426.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

as it continues to challenge the work of American foreign policy in the Caspian region – particularly democracy promotion:



While noting that more research needs to be done on the exact relationship between crude oil price and democracy, Friedman argues that, “the reason this connection between the price of oil and the pace of freedom is worth focusing on today is that we appear to be at the onset of a structural rise in global crude oil prices.”¹¹⁵ And the rising price of oil effects not only the internal organization of the country but also the external influences of global players competing for access and power resources in the Caspian. With more money behind their petrolist regimes, states such as Russia are further empowered by competition on a global scale.¹¹⁶ Therefore, Friedman argues that “any American democracy promotion strategy that does not also include a credible and sustainable strategy for finding alternatives to oil and bringing down the price of crude is utterly meaningless and doomed to fail.”¹¹⁷

But some scholars, like Paul Collier, ultimately do not view energy wealth and democracy as a zero-sum game: “Democracy is spreading to the oil economies, and oil is spreading to the low-income democracies.”¹¹⁸ Perhaps the future will show that democratic, oil-rich states are not oxymorons, however, the constraint of oil on democratic change must act as a guide to the broadcasters, allowing them to understand the political context in states such as Azerbaijan and Iran, in order to help ensure that their message resonates abroad.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Friedman argues that the Vladimir Putin of \$20-40 per barrel was quite different of the Putin of \$60 per barrel, as the latter had “used his oil windfall to swallow (nationalize) the huge Russian oil company, Gazprom, various newspapers and television stations, and all sorts of other Russian businesses and once independent institutions.” Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Paul Collier, p. 42

The application of organization theory to RFE/RL and VOA

While both VOA and RFE/RL are under the umbrella of the Broadcast Board of Governors (BBG), they are unique organizations based on their different histories, cultures, locations (VOA operates from Washington, D.C. while RFE/RL is headquartered in D.C. but operates from studios and offices in Prague, Czech Republic), missions and charters. As I discussed in chapter 1, internal differences may explain for differences in outputs.

The study of organizations is important for understanding how people coordinate work on certain goals, and how an organization accomplishes its critical task. To start, it is important to note the difference between goals and tasks. Defining goals is a challenge for many organizations: "...government agencies, much more than business firms, are likely to have general, vague, or inconsistent goals about which clarity and agreement can only occasionally be obtained."¹¹⁹ According to James Q. Wilson, not only is it difficult to gain consensus on goals, which will guide tasks, but it is also difficult to get leaders in organizations to agree on what should be sacrificed in the attainment of these goals. Wilson defines clear goals as "operational goals."¹²⁰ But even clear goals do not always lead to clear tasks: "Even when goals are relatively clear, the situation can define the tasks if one way of doing the job seems easier or more attractive."¹²¹ Understanding the interplay between goals and tasks is one important element of organization theory. "Organization theory is centrally concerned with identifying and studying those limits to

¹¹⁹ James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: what government agencies do and why they do it*, (Basic Books, Inc., 1989), 26.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 34.

¹²¹ Ibid, 42.

the achievement of goals that are, in fact, limits on the flexibility and adaptability of the goal-striving individuals and groups of individuals themselves.”¹²²

Linda Smircich identifies five distinct characteristics of organizations: organizations are social instruments brought together for task accomplishment, they adapt to changes in the environment, they are systems of knowledge, they are systems of shared language, meanings and realities, and they create organizational forms and practices that are manifest from unconscious processes.¹²³ To ensure survival, organizations such as RFE/RL and VOA hold tight to their values, spreading these values throughout the organization in the form of organizational culture. Culture is what holds an organization together - expressing the goals of that organization along with its values, which are manifested in myths, rituals, stories, legends, and specialized language. According to Smircich, “Culture is usually defined as social or normative glue that holds an organization together. It expresses the values or social ideals and the beliefs that organization members come to share.”¹²⁴ Managers can influence the direction of their organization through a culture that conveys a sense of identity to members, facilitates a wide commitment to something larger than self-interest, and ultimately shapes behavior and decision-making.¹²⁵

As I will evaluate the missions of RFE/RL and VOA in the upcoming chapters, exploring the organizational culture of both organizations will be an important part of my research. According to Wilson, when “culture is a source of pride and commitment, the

¹²² Herbert A. Simon, “Comments on the Theory of Organizations,” *The American Political Science Review*, 46, no. 4. (Dec., 1952): 1134.

¹²³ Linda Smircich, "Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, no 3, (1983): 342.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 344.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 345-6.

agency has acquired a sense of mission.”¹²⁶ RFE/RL and VOA have the distinct characteristics of organizations guided by missions: “... sometimes organizations are endowed with a sense of mission despite ambiguous goals, personal predispositions, group pressures, and situation imperatives. This usually occurs during the formative experience of the organization...”¹²⁷ Both RFE/RL and VOA hold firm to the legacy and legend that they influenced the end of the Cold War. Both organizations also function in an insular world, influenced by their unique functions and roles. Therefore, organizational culture is undoubtedly a large part of the glue that holds together both RFE/RL and VOA. The ideas of free and open media, the practice of principled journalism – these are the ideas that have been coded into the work of the international broadcasters.

Ideas can, therefore, be infused into organizations, shaping their work and structures. Realists see the connection between ideas and the material world in the concepts of interest and power.¹²⁸ Keohane argues that ideas can act as “road maps... becoming embedded in durable institutions.”¹²⁹ Goldstein and Keohane distinguish between three types of ideas: worldviews, principled beliefs and causal beliefs. While world views “have the broadest impact on human action” and are “entwined with people’s conceptions of their identities, evoking deep emotions and loyalties,” principled beliefs “consist of normative ideas that specify criteria for distinguishing right from

¹²⁶ James Q. Wilson, 27.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 96.

¹²⁸ Robert O. Keohane, “Ideas part-way down,” *Review of International Studies*, 26, (2000): 127.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 128.

wrong and just from unjust.”¹³⁰ These principled beliefs, one of which is arguably the notion that making a democratic world will lead to peace, “translate fundamental doctrines into guidance for contemporary human action.”¹³¹ Therefore, ideas have a profound impact in policymaking as “ideas order the world. By ordering the world, ideas may shape agendas, which can profoundly shape outcomes.”¹³²

It is important to note, however, that as ideas become embedded in organizations, they constrain the options for new and innovative policies, as they “specify policy in the absence of innovation.”¹³³ Certain organizations, like VOA, which is guided by its charter, are missionary in nature and have the “structural insulation from the influence of other organizations” and are therefore “more likely to survive in a manner consistent with their founding ideas.”¹³⁴ However, Daniel Drezner argues that, “the development of a unifying organizational culture can increase an insulated agency’s chances for survival while decreasing its chances of thriving.”¹³⁵ Survival must not be confused with success: “Political organizations, because they arise out of public authority, are designed in part to fail.”¹³⁶ Insulated, idea-infused organizations, like RFE/RL and VOA, which are both guided by missions, rarely have opportunities for sharing ideas and best practices and are less innovative and adaptive to change when the exterior environment produces new challenges. Noting this disconnect between mission and innovation in a changing policy

¹³⁰ Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 8-9.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 9.

¹³² *Ibid*, 12.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 13.

¹³⁴ Daniel W. Drezner, “Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, no. 4., (October 2000): 733.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 737.

¹³⁶ Terry M. Moe, “Politics and the Theory of Organization,” *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, Vol. 7, Special Issue: [Papers from the Conference on the New Science of Organization, January 1991], 121.

environment, I will evaluate how the missions of the international broadcasters play out in the complex political arena of Caspian geopolitics.

As such, when studying these organizations it is important to consider both the internal environment and the external influences, articulated in the literature as statics and dynamics.¹³⁷ In statics, organizations are evaluated independently from their environment, but “no organization is either completely static or dynamic. First you need to understand the statics of an organization before you can understand the dynamics.”¹³⁸ For example, the static nature of VOA is its charter, which continues to guide the work of employees. But as the political environment changes, and the pace of global media quickens due to new technologies and the 24-hour news cycle, the environment in which VOA operates will influence how the charter is applied.

Terry Moe explains that the early organization theorists did not consider the role of external politics. But then came the realization that organizations are “under constant pressure from politicians and interest groups, subject to political control of their programs, budgets, and personnel, and compelled to become strategic political actors in order to survive and prosper.”¹³⁹ Because governmental organizations are constrained by public budgets and resources, “opposing interests regularly go to battle over them, and there is a contentious ‘politics of structural choice’ that determines who gets to exercise

¹³⁷ Organizations that interact with their environment are open systems. See Donde P. Ashmos and George P. Huber, “The Systems Paradigm in Organization Theory: Correcting the Record and Suggesting the Future,” *The Academy of Management Review*, 12, no. 4. (Oct., 1987): 607-621.

¹³⁸ James Feibleman and Julius W. Friend, “The Structure and Function of Organization,” *The Philosophical Review*, 54, no. 1. (Jan., 1945): 19.

¹³⁹ Terry M. Moe, 107-108.

that public authority and how.”¹⁴⁰ Understanding these constraints will provide a wider and deeper perspective of the goals, tasks, missions, and shared vision of organizations.

Moe notes that although “organization theory is not prominent in political science,” the recent trend towards the study of “new institutionalism has refocused political scientists back to thinking about organizations.”¹⁴¹ The institutionalist approach brings to the table a “focus on rationale for and justification of a policy rather than on the impact of that policy on any particular group.”¹⁴² The goal of institutionalism is to focus research on the “conceptual thinking about institutions, their structure, and their proper role.”¹⁴³

Institutionalism has been “rediscovered” by new institutionalists.¹⁴⁴ According to Selznick, new institutionalists “rightly give great weight to ‘structured cognition.’ This very useful idea reminds us that the interaction of culture and organization is mediated by the socially constructed mind, that is, by patterns of perception and evaluation.”¹⁴⁵ For my research, evaluating actual broadcasts will in turn shed light on the goals of the organization, as many goals are “too vague and abstract to be effective in determining policy choices, we must infer operative goals from actual practice.”¹⁴⁶ Therefore, from evaluating broadcasting tactics, strategies will become more transparent.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 121.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 110 & 116.

¹⁴² James F. Blumenstein, “The Resurgence of Institutionalism,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 1, no. 1, (Autumn, 1981), 131.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 132.

¹⁴⁴ The “old” institutionalism is centered on studies of “administrative, legal, and political structures” with the goal of comparing different institutional configurations rather than furthering comparative studies. Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁴⁵ Philip Selznick, “Institutionalism ‘Old’ and ‘New,’” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41 (1996): 274.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 275.

One aspect of new institutionalism, historical institutionalism, is particularly important for my research. Historical institutionalists believe policy is rooted in the institutional setting and “focus on intermediate institutions” to “explain systemic differences.”¹⁴⁷ While rational choice institutionalists share an interest in how institutions shape strategies and outcomes, their focus is instead on the constraints on self-interested behavior, which is not as directly useful for research. As such, “historical institutionalists want to go further and argue that institutions play a much greater role in shaping politics... than suggested by a narrow rational choice model.”¹⁴⁸ The key concept of historical institutionalism is the idea that “institutional factors can shape both the objectives of political actors and the distribution of power among them in a given polity.”¹⁴⁹

The organization theories outlined above will be useful as I turn the lens inside broadcasting institutions to explain how internal factors influence external outputs. Historical institutionalists believe that not just strategies, but also goals pursued by actors, are shaped by the institutional context. Guided by organization theory and new institutionalism, I will consider the missions, charters and goals of RFE/RL and VOA in order to shed light on their important work – the actual broadcasts.

¹⁴⁷ Sven Steinmo and Kathleen Thelen, p. 6

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 6.

Research methodology

To create a wider lens for understanding the missions and intentions of VOA and RFE/RL, I will use a qualitative methodology, including interviews.¹⁵⁰ Through interviews, “observation” will test theory. Van Evera defines observation as inferring predictions from a theory: The “investigator passively observes the data without imposing an external stimulus on the situation and asks if observations are congruent with predictions.”¹⁵¹ The interviews for my research will aim to understand the internal organization, history and missions of both RFE/RL and VOA, and the findings from these conversations will shed light on the broadcasting tactics of both organizations, which is an element of the methodology described below.

My research is therefore a “policy-evaluative” study based on two with-in case comparisons.¹⁵² With-in case comparisons are used to “establish the causal powers of a particular variable by comparing how it performs in different cases.”¹⁵³ Rather than studying the strategy and broadcasting of VOA and RFE/RL in one state, and comparing missions and strategic outputs through only one lens, my research will compare broadcasting work inside two Caspian states in order to confirm findings and illustrate differences across the cases. This study will therefore evaluate the relationship between the independent variable of internal missions, organizations and work cultures at RFE/RL and VOA and the dependent variable of broadcasts, in order to understand how organizations impact tactics. The primary goal of interviewing at both organizations,

¹⁵⁰ For a full list of interviews, see Appendix 1.

¹⁵¹ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods For Students of Political Science*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 28.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 91.

¹⁵³ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 179.

therefore, will be to determine missions, employee perceptions of these missions, and the effect of missions on the dependent variable.¹⁵⁴

According to Van Evera, selecting cases is an important aspect of building a research framework. Following the selection criteria defined by John Stuart Mill as the ‘method of difference,’ I will evaluate case countries with similar general characteristics. Iran and Azerbaijan are both oil-rich, Caspian states with a Shi’a Muslim majority. Both states continue to use the media to create and solidify a public understanding of their different national identities.¹⁵⁵ Both countries are also ruled by varying degrees of authoritarianism, meaning democratic change would be a favorable outcome in both states from a U.S. perspective. In addition, both countries have histories of, or continue to show opportunities for, democratic opening. Broadcasting to Iran and Azerbaijan is challenging because of competition from internal, state-run media and state censorship, along with competing external voices, such as Russia, who hope to gain greater influence in the Caspian region. In addition, the constraints to democracy outlined above – nationalism, tribalism, religious fundamentalism, energy wealth, and illiberal democratic practices – are all particularly relevant to these states.

However, despite these similarities, Azerbaijan and Iran demonstrate variance, an aspect also encouraged by Van Evera. The different political nature of the Islamic Revolution, as compared to a post-communist country, is the main element of variance,

¹⁵⁴ The independent variable in my study, the missions of RFE/RL and VOA, refers to the internal culture influencing the work of service directors, managers, and journalists. If the organization is guided by the goal of creating change inside the regime they are broadcasting to, then the independent variable would be stronger as opposed to an organization focused on a goal of broadcasting information about that state, or even providing the dominant news story as determined by private news organizations. The dependent variable will be broadcasts.

¹⁵⁵ Iran uses the media to demonstrate the values of the Islamic Revolution, while Azerbaijan uses media to consolidate the power of the Ilham Aliyev Presidency, and the memory of the late Heydar Aliyev as the country’s ‘national leader.’

which will influence RFE/RL and VOA as broadcasts are tailored for each country. These audiences have been exposed to a very different relationships with and opinions of the U.S.: Azerbaijanis, for the most part, continue to have strong pro-American feeling at a time when polls show decreased opinions of America across the Muslim world. Azerbaijan and America continue to cultivate growing diplomatic and business relationships based, mostly on, U.S. interest in Caspian energy resources. Also, democratic openings inside Azerbaijan show that certain populations within the domestic political community are interested in the possibility of more democratic values influencing governance, and look to the United States for guidance and support in their transition. On the other hand, relations between Iran and the U.S. continue to sour over Iran's nuclear program, which does affect opinions of a large majority of the Iranian audience.¹⁵⁶ Usually, America and American ideals are painted in a negative light by the Iranian regime and their state-run media. Further, diplomatic relations were cut between the two states over thirty years ago.

This variance between Azerbaijan and Iran will be important to observe, as it demonstrates fully the wide range of target audience that the American broadcasting services must attempt to influence as they communicate in the Caspian region. Within this audience will be both staunch support of the American engagement in the Caspian region, and passionate Anti-Americanism. Despite this wide array of opinion, the populations of Iran and Azerbaijan are not only geographic neighbors, sharing the same sect of Islam, but they are also ethnically linked, as the following map demonstrates:

¹⁵⁶ RFE/RL published a story via Radio Farda that expressed public concern in Iran over U.S. sanctions, demonstrating that this concern covers the political spectrum. See "Radio Farda Listeners React To New U.S. Sanctions," (Accessed November 24, 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/10/4B62FB7E-9CB6-4EEC-8164-3B2A6875ABD4.html>.

Azeris are the second largest population inside Iran, comprising 24% of the population, while 51% of the population is Persian.



Observing these neighbor countries simultaneously through the design of my research program will not only shed light on the challenges for American foreign policy in the Caspian, but will also demonstrate the different strategies that the international broadcasters create for each state, based on both organizational differences and case country variance.

Therefore, at the outset I will be looking to further define the organizational differences between RFE/RL and VOA and observe how these differences impact broadcasts. According to George and Bennett, this method can be described as congruence. These authors describe two types of with-in case methodologies: process-tracing and congruence. The latter approach best suits my research: “The essential characteristic of the congruence method is that the investigator begins with a theory and then attempts to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case. The theory posits a relation between variance in the independent variable and variance in the dependent variable...”¹⁵⁷ In other words, using the congruence method will explain the relationship between mission and broadcasting at RFE/RL and VOA.

Through interviews with employees at both organizations, I will be able to gain an understanding of the relationship between strategy and tactics. Therefore, the first goal of interviews will be to understand the independent variable of RFE/RL and VOA’s internal mission, to “ascertain the value of the independent variable... and then ask what prediction or expectation about the outcome of the dependent variable should follow from

¹⁵⁷ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, 181.

the theory.”¹⁵⁸ As George and Bennett explain, “if the outcome of the case is consistent with the theories prediction, the analyst can entertain the possibility that a causal relationship may exist.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore, if I predict that the organizational differences of RFE/RL and VOA will impact tactics, I can infer from noting broadcasting differences that such organizational difference exist.

Through my interviews I will confirm or refute the causal significance of the internal missions in crafting broadcasts. Interview questions will be guided by a desire to understand whether “the independent variable (is) a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable” and whether it has “predictive power.”¹⁶⁰ The second goal of interviewing will be to understand how the international broadcasters evaluate the effectiveness of their broadcasts to both Iran and Azerbaijan. However, my research first aims to understand the prioritization of democratic values within reporting in order to assess the strategy of broadcasting, and I fully expect that further research will be necessary to employ these findings in order to assess actual influence of reports. Instead, I will be considering how the broadcasters measure their effectiveness, not how effective broadcasts are.¹⁶¹ Influence is the ultimate goal of the practice of public diplomacy. However, the message must first be understood before assessing its value. In other words, first scholarship must understand goals, then it can evaluate if these goals are being met.

In sum, my research will employ two with-in case studies, and will therefore evaluate the function of the independent variable when approaching two sets of events

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 181.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 185.

¹⁶¹ Both international broadcasters employ yearly audience research studies to guide their on-going strategies, which will be described in more detail below. Therefore, my research will consider how the broadcasters evaluate their own performance, mainly to observe whether perceptions of effectiveness influence future strategy and how effectiveness is defined.

and information, allowing findings to be confirmed.¹⁶² Interviews aiming to assess the relationship between mission and message will be guided by the congruence method with an eye for identifying something other than the internal mission as the main factor influencing broadcasts to and about Azerbaijan and Iran. Therefore, my first goal will be to understand the political/media situations in Azerbaijan and Iran, and the broadcasting strategies of RFE/RL and VOA, as articulated by their missions and histories (the independent variable), and through interviews and historic texts/mission statements I demonstrate this variable. Then, in order to observe the tactical outputs of RFE/RL and VOA (the dependent variable of actual broadcasts) I will rely on interviews and conduct a content analysis.¹⁶³

Content analysis is a method that allows for closer study of the dependent variable while subsequently making a statement about the independent variable. By using content analysis, broadcasting trends will be uncovered. Content analysis is a method used when “questions are defined in such a way that the answers to it can be counted.”¹⁶⁴ By counting elements of broadcasts, it is possible for researchers to note trends, and to describe “various facets of communication content in summary fashion.”¹⁶⁵ As the

¹⁶² To that end, George and Bennett argue that, “a single congruence test is not strong enough to provide confirmation or falsification of theories” (p. 185). With two cases, I will be better equipped to make this type of evaluation.

¹⁶³ My research is not the first to use content analysis to study international broadcasting and in the past it has been used to explore the role of Voice of America broadcasts in Communist countries. Even at the dawn of the Cold War, “content analysis was used to identify references of VOA in Soviet media. Voice of America has also been analyzed to understand its content, and this research experience has facilitated evaluation not only of the Voice, but the analytic procedures themselves, and of the role which analysis of ‘what is said’ can play in the total evaluation picture.” “Content Analysis for the Voice of America: A Symposium,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Special Issue on International Communications Research, 16, No. 4, 606.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas F. Carney, *Content Analysis: A Technique for Systematic Inference From Communications*, (Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press, 1972), 23.

¹⁶⁵ Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communications Research*, (Glencoe, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 13.

method looks at frequency, it assumes that the “occurrence of various characteristics of the content is itself an important factor in the communication process.”¹⁶⁶ Therefore, content analysis is about noting frequency of certain elements within the communication, in order to make a larger statement about the nature of these communications.

Content analysis is a method for understanding the relationship between data collected and the original hypotheses: “In principle, content analysis implies the standard procedures of scientific investigation: the formulation of specific propositions, the development of categories of analysis, and the collection of standardized bits of information in order to assess the adequacy of the initial formulations.”¹⁶⁷ Hypotheses can be strengthened or weakened depending on “the extent to which the analytic categories appear in the content, that is, the relative emphases and omissions.”¹⁶⁸ According to Bernard Berelson, quantifying the content does not require value judgments, but instead one may observe the mere presence of the content in question.

Content analysis allows researchers to look closely at content, and then step back to see the larger body of communication from a distance. Therefore, “content analysis can provide the over-all picture of the product which otherwise might be lost from view.”¹⁶⁹ From this distance, the researcher gains a broader perspective of the communications available for public consumption and, as Berelson puts it, content analysis is also “an analysis of what comes to people’s attention.”¹⁷⁰ But perhaps more accurately, it is a “systematic picture of the communication content which is available for

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 20.

¹⁶⁷ Morris Janowitz, “Harold D. Lasswell’s Contribution to Content Analysis,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*: Vol. 32, No. 4, 647.

¹⁶⁸ Bernard Berelson, 17.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 45.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 99.

public attention, whatever the actual exposure.”¹⁷¹ In observing content available to the public, researchers gain insight into both “the social organization and the value system of the society or group interest involved.”¹⁷² Therefore, two goals of content analysis exist – first, to make “inferences from content back to the communicator” and second “to make inferences from the content to the audience, in which case the analyst is concerned with audience response and reaction.”¹⁷³

However, it should be noted that elements of the definition of content analysis have been debated in the literature. One such element is whether the goal of this method is understanding latent or manifest content. For Berelson, content analysis focuses on manifest content. Manifest content is what is actually written. Manifest content is about noting trends in what is actually said in communications, without making value judgments or looking for implications. However, other texts in the literature point to a broader purpose for content analysis, that of identifying latent content. Janowitz writes that political scientist and communications theorist Harold Lasswell believed content analysis includes an understanding of both manifest and latent content: “Latent content includes tacit meanings and associations as well as the more readily verbalized expressions, and for Lasswell, content analysis involved the application of historical, cultural, psychological, and legal frames of reference, with various levels of meaning, subtleties, and efforts at explication of ambiguities. In the broadest sense, content

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 105.

¹⁷² Morris Janowitz, 648.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 648.

analysis is a system for objectifying the process of inference, since the meaning of the symbolic environment can be derived only by a process of inference.”¹⁷⁴

For the purpose of this study, both goals will be noted. Manifest content is in fact what will be found through the study, however the political context of the content will shed light on meaning, and therefore a broader picture will emerge. But, it should be noted that findings from content analysis are not an evaluation of the value of content. Instead, Berelson explains, “It is important to emphasize that the analysis of content alone is not sufficient for the purposes of evaluation... A value judgment must be made in setting up the standard, analysis can then measure performance against the standard.”¹⁷⁵ Therefore, while actual content (manifest) and implications (latent) will be discussed in my research, the value or effectiveness of this content is an assessment I will not make. However, while the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum is positive in nature, it is clear that broadcasting stories demonstrating values of democracy is normative, in that more democratic values in reporting is an attractive attribute in terms of U.S. foreign policy goals. However, while democratic values in reporting may in fact be normative, the presence of democratic values does not necessarily mean that the content is influential.

The goal of content analysis for this dissertation is noting frequency – noting the presence of democratic themes and story topics. “The frequency of occurrence of various characteristics of the content is itself an important factor in the communication process.”¹⁷⁶ My research, therefore, will be based on a content analysis that looks for the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 647.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard Berelson, 46.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 21.

frequency of democratic values over time, in order to see if the “sleeper effect” could take place: “People tend, in time, to forget the specific details of an important but complicated message... But an awareness of its overall implications slowly crystallizes with time.”¹⁷⁷ The idea here is that this content analysis will not make a statement about influence, but instead will note the frequency of manifest content, and also latent content, in order to present patterns in broadcasting. These findings will also assess whether the goals and missions of RFE/RL and VOA, as far as outputs are concerned, are achieved.

Simply because content is found does not imply that the reader or audience of that content understands or digests this content in a manner intended by the organization creating it. According to Berelson, “manifest content” only exists on the page, on television, or the radio, the medium is not important, and “there is no guarantee that the meanings in the ‘manifest content’ are the same as the meanings actually understood by the different readers...”¹⁷⁸ Therefore, just because democratic values appear in the reporting of RFE/RL or VOA as understood from a Western point of view, it cannot be assumed that these values and themes will evoke a certain effect on a foreign audience, particularly because this audience’s world view is affected by some of the political constraints considered above. An audience must connect with the material and internalize it for the process of influence to begin, and content analysis cannot speak to this process unless guided by other criteria.

Ultimately, “content analysis is more than research technique. It embodies a theoretical perspective which seeks to assign a major role to communications in the

¹⁷⁷ Thomas F. Carney, 109. The sleeper effect will be discussed further in Chapter 8 as a proposed method of testing influence.

¹⁷⁸ Bernard Berelson, 19.

analysis of social organization and political change.”¹⁷⁹ RFE/RL and VOA aim to be players in social and political change, though their strategies differ, and therefore this methodology is a particularly good match for my research question.

In creating a content analysis design, a sample needs to be identified: “A ‘sample’ consists of one or more measurements or observations taken (‘drawn’) from a selection of persons, objects etc... The sample is the body of documents which is actually analyzed in the study.”¹⁸⁰ Ensuring that the sample is random is important. “Randomness does not mean arbitrary selection by whim, for whim is not random: it is psychologically (not logically determined)...”¹⁸¹ When conducting a content analysis, selecting a sample to analyze is a very important component of the research design:

Since there is so much communication content and since content analysis is so time-consuming, sampling procedures are particularly appropriate. In the large majority of cases it is possible to devise a representative and adequate sample, which is economical of administration. For most purposes, analysis of a small, carefully chosen sample of the relevant content will produce just as valid results as the analysis of a great deal more – and with the expenditure of much less time and effort. In short, whatever can be said about the value of sampling in other areas of social research applies with equal force to sampling of content analysis.¹⁸²

Berelson’s book does not mandate the size of a sample, or aim to prove that one sample size is favorable to another, because, in his words, “studies provide very little data on the adequacy of different sample sizes or on the conformity of the sample to the universe. Most studies simply report, for example, that the sample included specified sections of certain newspapers, and let the matter rest there.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Morris Janowitz, 649.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas F. Carney, 134.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 139.

¹⁸² Bernard Berelson, 174-175.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 175.

Frequency is important when considering this study. “‘Dates’ involve interval sampling. Each weekday tends to have a distinctive character about it, as far as concerns the type of news materials, which its newspapers carry... Some combinations of times can be atypical: a group of days might happen to be chosen all of which saw major news items ‘break’ or, alternatively, which fell in times of unusual quietude. To deal with this type of problem, a ‘constructed time period’ has been evolved. This is an artificial week (or month or years). The analyst can then check back on the representatives of the time units involved.”¹⁸⁴

In addition, when looking at content, there are many layers to be observed: headlines, paragraphs, words, etc. Berelson breaks down these layers by making a distinction between the recording unit and the context unit, whereby the recording unit is “the smallest content in which the appearance of a reference is counted” and a context unit is “the largest body of content that may be explained in characterizing a recording unit.”¹⁸⁵ Of course the smallest unit generally speaking is a word. Then the “next larger unit of content analysis is the theme. In its most compact form, the theme is a simple sentence...a theme is an assertion about a subject-matter.”¹⁸⁶ Berelson argues that the theme is the most important layer of content analysis, particularly “for the study of the effect of communications upon public opinion, because it takes the form in which issues and attitudes are usually discussed.”¹⁸⁷ This is a particularly important point when considering the influence of democratic values in broadcasting, as a theme of free and

¹⁸⁴ Thomas F. Carney, 140. For the purpose of my research, I will evaluate ‘crisis’ events separately from more typical reporting. I will also observe the spread of weekdays and months in order to get a general sense of content offered by VOA and RFE/RL.

¹⁸⁵ Bernard Berelson, 135.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 138.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 139.

fair elections is probably more likely to be discussed than the larger topic of democratic values, or even democracy in general. Therefore, my research will focus on the theme level rather than the level of the word.

When observing words, it is important to note that, “words, then, are ‘slippery’ things. They shift, sometimes almost imperceptibly, sometimes more dramatically, in the course of time.”¹⁸⁸ Especially relevant for this design, Carney points out the difficulty in a content analysis for the word “democracy”: “It has a nuclear core of a meaning, something to do with ‘power for and in the hands of the people.’ It also has a varying mixture of other, more peripheral, connotations. At the moment, and in the West, these are: representational government, regular free elections, due process, majoritarianism, etc., etc. Also, it has an overall ‘feel’ about it that is sometimes good, sometimes bad.”¹⁸⁹ Therefore, searching for the word “democracy” may lead to a distorted result, as public diplomats are more likely to make arguments against corruption, against ballot-stuffing, rather than for general democracy. Therefore, the content analysis I will conduct will focus on the theme level, as suggested by Carney, and to identify the themes of democracy I will remain close to Fareed Zakaria’s discussion of liberty, as these are the themes I believe would promote democracy.¹⁹⁰

Using headlines as a recording unit for my study is particularly relevant in that headlines can easily be counted – as there will be one headline per story – and will allow for categorization of stories covering either democratic themes or not. As such, each story

¹⁸⁸ Thomas F. Carney, 85.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 85.

¹⁹⁰ As noted above, Zakaria defines liberty as “first and foremost the freedom of the individual from arbitrary authority, which has meant, for most of history, brute power of the state. It implies certain basic human rights: freedom of expression, of association, and of worship, and rights of due process.” Zakaria, 31-32. In addition, I will include themes of human rights, women’s rights, and government corruption and/or distortion as categories that promote democracy in the content.

will yield a positive or negative result, indicating either a democracy-related story or not. This method will be useful in answering the research questions of my dissertation: *Is promoting democratic values a strategic priority for RFE/RL and VOA in their reporting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan? And, do RFE/RL and VOA prioritize stories with democratic values in order to support a general strategic goal of democracy promotion?*

Other studies have similarly used headlines as units of analysis for research that requires counting. For example, in a study of the *New York Times* reporting on the recession in the late 1980s, Stevenson “searched the headlines and leads.” He explained that the decision to focus on headlines and leads was “pragmatic” as, “the search of headlines and leads produced virtually identical results to a full-text search and eliminated a few stories in which the word ‘recession’ appeared as a minor element deep in the story.”¹⁹¹ This study is similar to my own, where the word democracy deep in a story would be less likely to assist the broadcasters in their goal of building a media agenda of democratic themes, as compared to a headline that calls out an abuse to democracy or details an election.

Other studies have relied on key word searches or indexes to detail the number of stories on a certain subject. Adelman and Verbrugge relied on Lexus-Nexus searches of keywords to locate stories in the past. They explain: “For a given search, an article with any instance of keywords counts as 1; we do not ascertain multiple mentions of keywords in an article.”¹⁹² Similarly, my research will count each individual democratically-themed

¹⁹¹ Robert L. Stevenson, “In Praise of Dumb Clerks: Computer Assisted Content Analysis,” in *Theory, Method, and Practice in Computer Content Analysis*, Ed. Mark D. West, (Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing, 2001), 7-8.

¹⁹² Richard C. Adelman and Lois M. Verbrugge, “Death Makes News: The Social Impact of Disease on Newspaper Coverage,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 2000, Vol. 41, 351.

story as one, but was conducted in real time, allowing for context to help in my assessment of democratic themes, eliminating the need for a key word search.

Relying on headlines to code content is, therefore, a common method in content analysis: “Even scholars who ultimately code full-text often rely on indirect indicators of news content, such as subject headings in printed indexes and key-words in news databases, to locate that text. Thus, at some level, virtually all content analysis relies on surrogates for full-text content in one form or another.”¹⁹³ Althaus, Edy and Phalen evaluate *New York Times* reporting of the Libya crisis in 1986 and found that their comparison of “index entries, lead paragraphs, and the full text” of reporting “suggests that these proxies can adequately represent original content when researchers are working at a high level of aggregation.”¹⁹⁴ As my study will be depending on headlines as a unit of measurement for the theme of democracy inside a story, the existing literature supports the compatibility of a headline as a proxy for full-text analysis.

Moving beyond units of measurement, Berelson explains that an “item” is the medium of communication - magazine, newspaper, television, etc – being analyzed in a content analysis.¹⁹⁵ Selecting items to analyze is perhaps the first step in content analysis. Once items have been selected, findings of content analysis can be divided into subcategories, and for this research, what Berelson calls the “what-is-said” category most appropriately describes intended findings. “What is the communication about? This is the basic question in analyses primarily concerned with determining the relative emphases

¹⁹³ Scott L. Althaus, Jill A. Edy and Patricia F. Phalen, “Using Substitutes for Full-Text News Stories in Content Analysis: Which Text Is Best?” *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, No. 3, 707.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 721.

¹⁹⁵ Bernard Berelson, 141.

given to different topics in a body of communications content.”¹⁹⁶ As such, the latent meaning of content analyzed will ultimately evaluate whether democratic themes are articulated.

There are three categories of content analysis: “characteristics of communication content, the causes of content, and the consequences of content.”¹⁹⁷ This study will not evaluate the consequences of content. Instead it aims to demonstrate both characteristics and analyze causes of content. Berelson further breaks down the process of content analysis into two subdivisions – content analysis that focuses on substance as compared to studies focusing on form.¹⁹⁸ This study will focus on substance. When studying characteristics of content, focus is given to trends and changes in content. By observing characteristics of content, the relationship between intentions and actual broadcasting reports will become apparent: “Every communication outlet has an objective or a set of objectives, whether implicit or explicit. One measure of the quality of the content is the extent to which it faithfully expresses such objectives.”¹⁹⁹ Therefore, checking content against the objectives of the communicator will demonstrate if missions in fact influence and predict the nature of broadcasts.

--

Therefore, the structure of my research can be understood visually through the table below:

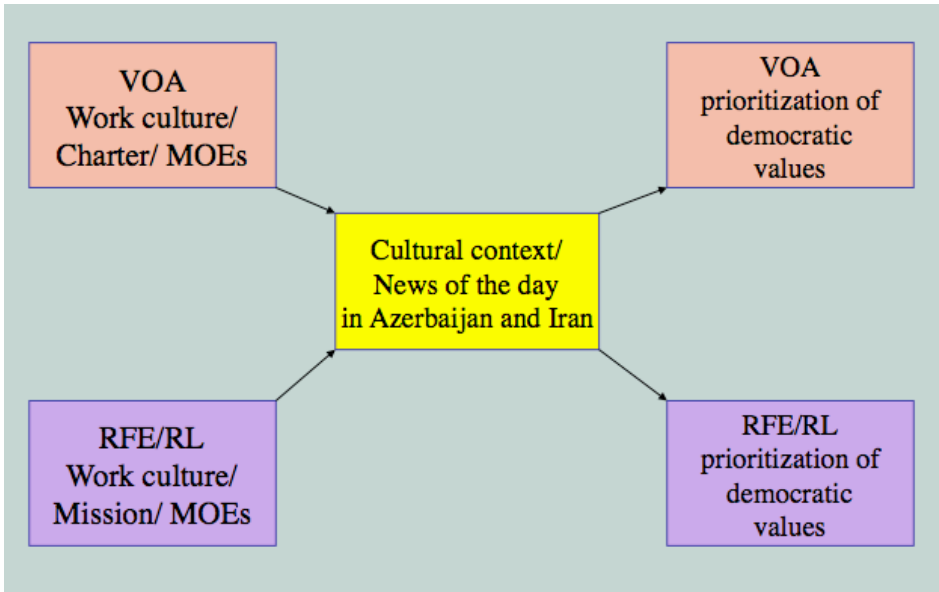
How strategy impacts tactics at VOA and RFE/RL:

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 149.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 26.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 27.

¹⁹⁹ Bernard Berelson, 43.



While chapters 4 and 5 will evaluate the work culture, missions and MOEs of RFE/RL and VOA, the content analyses and results of interviews, analyzed in chapters 6 and 7, will demonstrate the prioritization of democratic themed stories. Guided by the literature above, my content analysis will be structured as demonstrated in the table below:

Structure of Content Analysis:

ITEM	Web broadcasts in English ²⁰⁰
SAMPLE	Over the course of weeks, to observe theme development Over three years – 2007, 2008 and 2009 ²⁰¹
UNIT	Sentence/Theme – headline Looking for theme of democracy – or liberty – as defined by Zakaria and Carney above: -Freedom of press/speech -Freedom of religion -Due process/human rights ²⁰² -Government corruption/distortions -Women’s rights -Free and fair elections

²⁰⁰ Letitia King of VOA has confirmed that stories from VOA’s English website are typically the top stories abroad, and that these stories are often either created by the English language writers for broader VOA consumption, or have been written directly for the 45 other language broadcasts and have remained in radio story format. Therefore, according to King, it is safe to assume that content on the VOA site is in fact the very content that is being presented abroad. Letitia King, Director, Media Relations, Voice of America, Conference Call Interview, January 10 and 16, 2008. In addition, Elez Biberaj, VOA’s Eurasia Director, explained in a phone interview on January 16, 2008, that, “the services do not write the news. 45 services cannot write news – [it] comes from the central news division.”

²⁰¹ I consider the content analysis of 2007 to set the trend and demonstrate how strategic differences can account for tactical differences in broadcasting. The non-crisis content analyses in 2008 and 2009 were confirming, according to the notion of theoretical saturation, which explains that, “The sequential process of hypothesis, data collection, and testing must have an end point. Specifically, the process stops when further hypothesizing, revising, and data collection are judged unlikely to lead to additional understanding – in other words, additional data would produce minimal learning.” Thomas W. Lee, *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, (London: Sage, 1999), 49-50.

²⁰² Based on an understanding that due process is an American concept, which has to do with how laws are enforced, it is reasonable to assume that authoritarian states do not protect due process. By the very nature that it is an American concept, I will group stories on due process with those on issues as human rights, as there is overlap between these themes. (Though the next chapter notes that the UN has adopted the term “due process” as a goal vis-à-vis Iran, indicating a broader reach for this concept). For more information, see: Constitutional topic: Due process, (Accessed April 5, 2010), http://www.usconstitution.net/consttop_duep.html.

In sum, my research will analyze democratic themes - the priority given to these themes and story topics, as demonstrated in headlines as a form of latent meaning describing the substance of the article. Lastly, through visual examples, in the chapters and appendices, I will demonstrate visually how democratic themes permeated VOA and RFE/RL broadcasting.

In addition, I will consider the role of a past example in promoting democracy abroad to give context to the work of the broadcasters today. As both broadcasting services are rooted in post-World War II/Cold War thinking about international radio influence, and there is a general sense at both services that Cold War radio influence was a success, evaluating an episode during this time in history will add to the understanding of international broadcasting. As such, the case of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 will act as a window into the Cold War experience of RFE.²⁰³ This mini-case has been chosen because it will allow for a thorough evaluation of RFE's efforts to foster public dissent. The Hungarian Revolution is an example of a crisis circumstance under which broadcasters must work – i.e. it was a moment in the history of the Cold War when the public mounted protests, unfortunately leading to violence.²⁰⁴ Therefore, this case is not an actual “day in the life” of RFE, as it was an extreme situation, but rather a moment when many in the policy world turned their attention to RFE's work (and therefore there is a handful of data on the strategy and effectiveness of broadcasts).

²⁰³ Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty had not yet merged during the early days of the Cold War. In the 1950s, Radio Free Europe specifically targeted satellite audiences in Eastern Europe outside of the Soviet Union – Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary - while Radio Liberty's focus was on the Russian audience.

²⁰⁴ The other crisis circumstance that I will consider in my research is the Iranian election and subsequent protests in June of 2009. This will comprise a substantial component of chapter 6.

The Open Society Archives recently made available new interview data from 1956. These archives provide examples not only of the interview questions by those measuring RFE's performance, but also of the responses of interviewed refugees. After the Hungarian revolt, audiences who left the country were interviewed, creating one of the first direct audience research opportunities for RFE. This data provides not only a window into the Hungarian revolt, but also demonstrates an early, Cold War example of RFE measurement. As such I will consider writings from those who have sifted through hundreds of interviews now available through the Open Society Archives. And, I will rely on an understanding of RFE's role in these events gained through a conversation with the Director of the Open Society Archives, Istvan Rev.

When exploring this historical case, it is important to note the different media landscape in communist Hungary as compared to the global media today. At that time, the state-fed, communist message inside Hungary was completely dominant. Governments had a greater ability to close the population off from outside events and perspectives than is now possible due to the Internet and computers. For this reason, the message of RFE, while subject to short-wave radio jams, was a complete challenge to the grasp on national identity held by Hungarian radio.²⁰⁵ And with less competition from external sources, there was a sense among RFE staff that the impact of the radios could be quite strong.

²⁰⁵ Jamming is described by Monroe Price as "the blocking of programming through co-channeling on the same frequencies." He also notes that Whitton and Larson define jamming as the "deliberate use of interfering radio signals sent from one or more transmitters to garble emissions from other transmitters in order to make them unintelligible at reception." See Monroe E. Price, "Public Diplomacy and Transformation of International Broadcasting," *Comparative Media Law Journal*, 1, January-June 2003, 76, and John B. Whitton and Arthur D. Larson, *Propaganda Towards Disarmament in the War of Words*, World Rule of Law Center, (NY: Duke University, 1964), 210.

Not only was the media situation strikingly different at the time of the Hungarian Revolution, but also the organizational nature of RFE contrasts starkly with RFE/RL today. In 1956, money for RFE/RL trickled in from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and there was a sense that the radios were an important arm of foreign policy and defense. This is an element of RFE/RL's history that has remained controversial. Further, historical accounts of RFE's performance in 1956 demonstrate questionable tactics and potentially disappointing results. RFE has been accused of instigating revolt, rather than calling for calm, quiet dissent. Therefore, this event did reset American thinking of Cold War strategy, as well as RFE's message. And, subsequently, many within the policy world began to engage in a debate on the role of the international broadcasters. This debate continues today. Therefore the findings from this historical case will likely create policy recommendations applicable to a broad range of countries beyond those evaluated specifically in this research.

--

As the above literature demonstrates, more research is needed to shed light on the work of American international broadcasters. I argue that public diplomacy can be better understood by applying the literature of democracy promotion. Therefore, I have devised the above methodology to fill important gaps in both literatures – public diplomacy and democracy promotion. As such, my research will place the work of American international broadcasting right inside the democracy promotion debate – by considering whether VOA and RFE/RL fall more towards “exemplars” or “crusaders” on the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum, or can be best described in the middle

ground category of “champion.” Therefore, my research will assess the goals and missions of RFE/RL and VOA, and through interviewing members of these organizations I will gain a better sense of how missions impact their daily tasks, which translate into broadcasts for the Iranian and Azerbaijani audiences.

CHAPTER 3

Media Opportunities and Constraints: Governance in Iran and Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan and Iran are neighboring countries with distinct political landscapes. What makes these states similar – their Shia Muslim religious influence, their Caspian location and their ethnic nature (20 million Azeris live in the north of Iran, while Azerbaijan has only 8 million citizens) – has ultimately not bridged what makes them different – the contrasting political flavor of a secular state transitioning from Soviet-style socialism to the religious nature of the Islamic Republic. These divisions grow deeper due to competition over power in the Caspian region and varying visions of relations with the West, and the United States in particular. As such, Azerbaijan and Iran fulfill the method of difference articulated by John Stuart Mills, discussed in the previous chapter – covering a breadth of audience that the U.S. international media message must engage, while examining an ethnically and religiously cohesive sample.

These states provide an important lens through which to view the American media message of democratic change, as neither state is a fully functioning liberal democracy by any standard, and both are crucial in the game of Caspian geopolitics. Azerbaijan is an energy resource and American ally. On the other hand, Iran as a growing regional power, hostile to the U.S., and predicted to be a nuclear power as soon as 2010. Iran is also a potential spoiler for Middle East stability, both as a sponsor of terrorist activities (via organizations like Hezbollah) and as a security threat to Arab neighbors (including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, among others). In Azerbaijan, a democratic message from the U.S. is meant to foster cultural and political connections and support a sidelined opposition movement. In other words, democracy is the stick coupled by the carrot of economic

investment in the growing Azerbaijani petroleum industry. However, the message of democratic reform takes on a different tone in Iran, meant instead to weaken an unfriendly regime and support what is believed to be a large underground opposition movement, particularly strong in the student community. Therefore, as Azerbaijan and the U.S. have open and friendly diplomatic relations, a message of democracy broadcasted by the U.S. must fit within the context of these growing ties – in other words the message must be used to support and foster the relationship between the states, rather than detract. On the other hand, as Iran and the U.S. have cut diplomatic ties, American democracy promotion is ultimately a method for changing the regime. These are the contextual differences that public diplomats should consider when preparing broadcasts in this region.

This chapter will examine the political landscapes in Azerbaijan and Iran, outlining local perceptions of nationhood while also considering the role of media (both state run and independent) in creating forms of national identity. This chapter will also consider whether media outlets are free and open in each state, who owns the media outlets, and to what extent the media is used to foster national identity. Assessing this political/media landscape will help to articulate the challenges to and opportunities for American international broadcasting to influence the market for loyalties, and notions of national identity and self-determination, in Azerbaijan and Iran. There are many challenging aspects of communicating to Azerbaijani and Iranian audiences, some posed from the outside, such as broadcasting restrictions, and others that can limit the credibility of the American message, such as the use of the anti-Muslim stereotype, both of which will be examined below. But communicating a message of democracy remains a

universal goal across the region for the broadcasters, during both the Bush and Obama presidencies (thus far), despite the very different political atmospheres of the two states examined below.

U.S. foreign policy and Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, U.S. governmental agencies view spreading democracy as a strategy to foster American interests in Central Eurasia and to build ties with Central Eurasian states. But despite this strategic point of view, American democracy promoters are generally quite limited, tactically speaking, due to the Foreign Assistance Act. As the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) describes it:

Section 907 of the Foreign Assistance Act restricts direct assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan, preventing the U.S. government from working with Azeri officials on a range of issues critical to establishing a market-oriented democracy. Assistance has been directed to non-governmental areas. As a result of new exemptions to Section 907 granted by Congress in annual appropriations legislation, program activities have been and continue to be expanded in humanitarian assistance and democracy-building.²⁰⁶

Despite this apparent limitation, the Azerbaijani Consulate General to Los Angeles, Elin Suleymanov, argues that section 907 of the Freedom Support Act “was waived by President Bush after 9/11 on national security grounds because the U.S. needed Azerbaijan's cooperation on counter-terrorism.” Suleymanov notes that:

Azerbaijan offered full and comprehensive support after 9/11 before 907 was waived and regardless of it. It is being waived every year by the President. Otherwise, it remains on the books, as it has not been repealed by Congress. It is not really relevant, especially given Azerbaijan's minimal dependence on foreign aid. Even before the waiver it was gradually eroded by caveats introduced by various administrations. The problem is, of course, that 907 remains a symbolic, counterproductive and irrelevant insult for Azerbaijan and, therefore, there is a desire to see it repealed altogether.²⁰⁷

The Section 907 restriction, which was placed on funding to Azerbaijan, is a political result of domestic American concern over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Further, while Azerbaijan may not need U.S. financial

²⁰⁶ “USAID backgrounder on Azerbaijan/ The Freedom Support Act,” (accessed June 1, 2009), <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp2000/eni/azerbaij.html>.

²⁰⁷ Elin Suleymanov, Consulate General of Azerbaijan to Los Angeles, Email interview, November 15, 2008.

support, as indicated by Suleymanov, the act does in part limit the ability if the U.S. to fund the democratic movement within Azerbaijan.

Despite these political limitations, U.S. governmental organizations, such as USAID, continue to articulate that Azerbaijan is a priority for American assistance: “The emergence of Azerbaijan as a prosperous free-market democracy will advance U.S. national security as well as political, commercial and humanitarian interests. Azerbaijan is a potential alternative source of oil to meet Western energy needs. At the same time, a government committed to the rule of law and upholding human rights and other norms characteristic of democratic states would serve as a force for stability in the strategically important and historically volatile Caspian region.”²⁰⁸ Therefore, the USAID statement confirms that Azerbaijan is a strategic value to the U.S., and that the relationship with Azerbaijan should be fostered through the ideals and institutions of democracy.

As such, democracy promotion continues to be a necessary strategy for Azerbaijan: “Azerbaijan has made only limited progress in the transition to a market-based economy and democratic polity.”²⁰⁹ USAID articulates a three-pronged strategy in Azerbaijan – first to alleviate human suffering, second to “support more responsive, transparent, and accountable democratic-governance through increased participation of informed citizens in the country’s economic and political life,” and third to stimulate the economy and private sector.²¹⁰ The wording of the second point illustrates that the focus

²⁰⁸ “USAID backgrounder on Azerbaijan/ The Freedom Support Act,” (accessed June 1, 2009), <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp2000/eni/azerbaij.html>.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid. In support of “Increased, Better-Informed Citizens’ Participation in Political and Economic Decision Making,” USAID spent \$5,350,000 in 2000. The effort is continuous and focuses on three results: “(1) increased public confidence in the political process; (2) better independent news coverage; and (3) citizens and NGOs successfully advocating on behalf of citizen’s rights.” The second goal particularly lines

of democratization is on the citizenry – which may be influenced by restrictions caused by section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, but also lines up with the philosophy behind public diplomacy – that through influencing a public audience, political change will trickle up to the governmental level as expectations are changed.

The State Department has also articulated democracy promotion as a cornerstone of its policy in Azerbaijan. In the summer of 2007, the U.S. and Azerbaijan conducted a third round of discussions on democracy and human rights. A State Department press release explained that:

The dialogue, which seeks to strengthen Azerbaijan's democratic development and respect for human rights, was initiated by the U.S. in December 2006 in Baku. This round of the dialogue focused on media freedom, electoral processes, and human rights concerns, as well as the rule of law and the role of civil society. The democracy and human rights dialogue is an inseparable component of our bilateral relationship with Azerbaijan, together with cooperation on energy, economic, and security issues.²¹¹

Along with an ongoing dialogue on security concerns, democracy and human rights are paramount goals of the State Department vis-à-vis Azerbaijan. RFE/RL and VOA, as the media arms of U.S. foreign policy, have a large role to play in supporting the goals of U.S. foreign policy in Azerbaijan, articulated by the administration of President Bush and the relevant organizations - USAID and the State Department.

Though Elin Suleymanov has argued that Azerbaijan is slipping off the U.S. agenda, Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, states Azerbaijan's relevance to the new administration: "Azerbaijan is an important partner of the United States on regional security (especially counterterrorism)

up with the effort to improve local broadcasting that is particularly central to the goals of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

²¹¹ "Third Round of the U.S.–Azerbaijan Democracy and Human Rights Dialogue," August 6, 2007, (Accessed December 20, 2008), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/aug/90331.htm>.

and on helping our European allies diversify their supplies of natural gas. Azerbaijan also exports nearly one million barrels of oil per day to global markets via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, free from geographic chokepoints (such as the Turkish Straits and the Straits of Hormuz) and from monopolistic pressures.”²¹²

Democracy promotion is still on the agenda for U.S. relations with Azerbaijan:

United States Government (USG) assistance promotes regional security through the increase of Azerbaijan’s capabilities to combat domestic and transnational criminal activities; the development of key democratic institutions of government and civil society to promote public participation, combat corruption and strengthen the rule of law; and far-reaching economic reforms which promote stability and sustainable growth in the non-oil sectors of the economy.²¹³

In regards to democracy promotion activities, the State Department specifically aims to “increase judicial independence and strengthen the rule of law, improve transparency in legislative and Parliamentary procedures, support the development of independent media and civil society, and promote conditions conducive to free and fair elections.”²¹⁴

Therefore it is clear that many of the democracy promotion goals for Azerbaijan transcend U.S. administrations and continue to influence the agenda of the international broadcasters, particularly the development of independent media.

²¹² Philip H. Gordon, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, “Strengthening the Transatlantic Alliance: An Overview of the Obama Administration’s Policies in Europe,” Statement before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C., June 16, 2009, (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/124870.htm>. Elin Suleymanov made the point about Azerbaijan on the U.S. agenda during a Southwest Asia Luncheon Lecture, April 13, 2010. And, it should be noted that the post of U.S. Ambassador remains vacant and the State Department website reads: “American Ambassador Anne E. Derse departed Azerbaijan on July 4, 2009. Embassy is awaiting an appointment of a new Ambassador by the US President,” (Accessed May 25, 2010), <http://azerbaijan.usembassy.gov/ambassador.html>.

²¹³ Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Foreign Operations Appropriated Assistance: Azerbaijan,” (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/106462.htm>. The State Department site notes that the appropriations to Azerbaijan in fiscal year 2007 were \$39.37 million and in fiscal year 2008 \$26.84 million, noting the decreasing level of foreign assistance, most likely due to increased profits from Azerbaijani oil wealth. A hefty portion of this assistance was in fact focused on democratization efforts (\$12.69 for fiscal year 2007 and \$9.84 for fiscal year 2008), making it the top financial priority, only receiving less aid than security priorities and counter-terrorism operations.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

U.S. foreign policy and Iran

U.S. foreign policy goals for Iran also focus on democracy promotion, though the general relationship with the Iranian regime is quite different, as compared to the U.S.-Azerbaijani connection. The U.S. cut official diplomatic ties with the revolutionary regime in 1979 after the seizure of the U.S. embassy in November of that year. The nuclear issue is also very high on the U.S. agenda vis-à-vis Iran. And unlike the Azerbaijani case, democracy promotion efforts are not stifled by U.S. domestic political constraints, and Congressional support for direct democracy promotion to Iran remains strong.

Perhaps the best legislative example of U.S. policy towards Iran is the Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005. This act of Congress, which appropriated \$10 million for funds used to support Iranian opposition groups, passed in the House by a vote of 397 to 21, articulating a strong majority in favor of strengthening democratic forces in Iran.²¹⁵ The act outlines a vision for American foreign policy to Iran: “In general – Congress declares that it should be the policy of the United States – (1) to support efforts by the people of Iran to exercise self-determination over the form of government of their country; and (2) to support independent human rights and peaceful pro-democracy forces in Iran.”²¹⁶ One of these forces, according to the Iran Freedom and Support Act, is to give assistance to “eligible independent pro-democracy radio and television organizations that

²¹⁵ Many of those opposed to the original bill were concerned about building tensions between the U.S. and Iran, and specifically saw this type of action as a potential impetus for conflict, although the Act explicitly states, “Nothing in this Act shall be construed as authorizing the use of force against Iran.”

²¹⁶ U.S. Congress, Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005, H.R. 6198, 109th Congress, 2D Session, (Accessed September 29, 2009), Available at www.govtrack.us.

broadcast into Iran.”²¹⁷ This bill articulates not only an agenda for U.S. foreign policy to Iran, but also a linkage between that policy and the use of media influence.

Although a majority of bills before Congress appear to be concerned with the nuclear issue and containing Iran’s military advancement, human rights has also been set as an agenda of American foreign policy to Iran. In 2007 the House of Representatives passed the Act “Condemning human rights abuses by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and expressing solidarity with the Iranian people.”²¹⁸ Given that over 100 bills regarding Iran came before the 109th and 110th Congress in 2005-2008, which is the bulk of the timeframe of focus for this study, it is interesting to note that all bills either show solidarity with the Iranian people in their struggle for human rights and freedom or condemn the Iranian regime’s nuclear ambition through calls for sanctions. The figure below demonstrates a subset of such bills, demonstrating a portion of the list of bills of the 110th Congress:²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ For more information, see <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=hr109-976>, (Accessed April 1, 2009).

²¹⁹ For more information, see:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billsearch.xpd?PostFormID=billsearch&AutoPostBackField=&AutoPostBackValue=&AutoPostBackState=&q=iran&session=110&chamber=&status=>

Bill	Status	Last Action
S. 3227: Iran Sanctions Act of 2008	Reported by Committee	Jul 7, 2008
H.R. 770: Iran Nuclear Nonproliferation Act	Introduced	Jan 31, 2007
H.R. 1400: Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007	Passed House	Sep 25, 2007 11:42 AM
S. 1534: Iran Human Rights Act of 2007	Introduced	May 25, 2007
H.R. 3653: Iran Human Rights Act of 2007	Introduced	Sep 25, 2007
S. 970: Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007	Introduced	Mar 22, 2007
H.R. 3390: Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007	Introduced	Aug 3, 2007
H.R. 2880: Iran Sanctions Enhancement Act of 2007	Introduced	Jun 27, 2007
S. 387: Stop Arming Iran Act	Introduced	Jan 25, 2007
H.R. 2347: Iran Sanctions Enabling Act of 2007	Passed House	Jul 31, 2007 12:12 PM
H.R. 5056: Iran Diplomatic Accountability Act of 2008	Introduced	Jan 17, 2008
S. 1430: Iran Sanctions Enabling Act	Introduced	May 17, 2007
H.R. 6827: Enable Divestment from Sudan and Iran Act of 2008	Introduced	Aug 1, 2008
S. 527: Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Enforcement Act of 2007	Introduced	Feb 8, 2007
H.R. 1441: Stop Arming Iran Act	Passed House	Jun 11, 2007 4:00 PM
S. 3445: Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2008	Reported by Committee	Aug 1, 2008
H.R. 6951: TACT in Iran Act	Introduced	Sep 18, 2008
H.Res. 1008: Condemning the persecution of Baha'is in Iran.	Passed House	Aug 1, 2008 10:58 AM

The U.S. foreign policy agenda for Iran has two guiding principles – supporting democracy and avoiding a nuclear Iran. It appears that this two-pronged approach, linking human rights with human security, is somewhat global in context, and even connects to the UN adoption of the principle of human security as a way to think about development issues.

Iran is also a focus for the U.S. Department of State, whose policy can be understood visually on the Iran country profile webpage, written by the Near East desk.

The example below was accessed on December 22, 2008:

The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of State website. The top navigation bar includes the U.S. Department of State logo and the text "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE". To the right of the logo is a search bar labeled "KEYWORD SEARCH" with a "GO" button. Below the search bar is a "Subject Index" link and a "BOOKMARK" button. The main navigation bar includes links for "Joint Statement of Merida Initiative High-Level Consultative Group", "Meeting of the Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy", and "Western". Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Home", "Issues & Press", "Travel & Business", "Countries", "Youth & Education", "Careers", and "About State". A "Video" button is also present. The main content area is titled "Iran" and contains three news items: "UN General Assembly Calls on Iran to Meet Human Rights Obligations (12/19/08)", "Treasury Designation of Two Iranian Entities tied to Proliferation Activities (12/17/08)", and "Remarks Following Meeting Concerning Iran". The right sidebar contains "Highlights" with sections for "Non-Governmental Organizations", "Terrorism", "Human Rights Reports", and "Fiscal Year 2008 Iran Democracy Program Announcement".

Human rights trumps the agenda on this page, noting that the UN General Assembly Resolution 63/91 calls, “upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully respect its human rights obligations, and to abolish, in particular, torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and juvenile and public executions, including stonings, carried out in disregard of due process and other safeguards.”

The issue of human rights in Iran has been especially relevant during the Obama administration, mostly because of the political reverberations throughout the Gulf states following the June 2009 presidential elections in Iran, which will be discussed in more detail below. The updated State Department website published for the Obama administration outlined U.S.-Iran relations:

The U.S. Government defines its areas of objectionable Iranian behavior as the following: Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; Its support for and involvement in international terrorism; Its support for violent opposition to the Middle East peace process, as well as its harmful activities particularly in Lebanon, as well as in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the region; and Its dismal human rights record and lack of respect for its own people.²²⁰

Further, the Obama administration appears committed to continuing the Bush administration's priority of democracy promotion in Iran, noting the importance of free press, human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law:

...The U.S. State Department is supporting efforts to further the cause of democracy in Iran. In fiscal year (FY) 2006, the U.S. Congress allocated approximately \$66 million to promote free media, personal freedom, and a better understanding of western values and culture. As part of these efforts, the Department supports efforts to develop civil society in Iran and exchange programs that bring Iranian students, athletes, professionals and others to the United States. In 2007, the Iranian Government charged and in some cases imprisoned four innocent Iranian-American scholars, civil society actors, and journalists, accused by the regime of jeopardizing the security of the state. The international community, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private citizens joined the U.S. Government in calling for the release of the detained dual nationals. They were later freed.²²¹

²²⁰ Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Iran," (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm#relations>.

²²¹ Ibid. This report also notes that the State Department continues "to press Iran to cooperate more fully in the investigation into the case of private investigator and retired FBI agent Robert Levinson, missing since visiting Kish Island, Iran, March 8-9, 2007." This case has been reported throughout the timeframe of this dissertation primarily by RFE/RL, further illustrating one of my main points, to be made later in this dissertation, that RFE/RL is more likely to report specific human rights violations than VOA.

Therefore promoting democracy in Iran is a priority for the Obama administration, even as the nuclear issue continues to be contested. In addition, the focus of democratic values for my content analysis appears to match the agenda of the U.S. government.

Political strategists continue to debate the best course of action in dealing with Iran as it seeks nuclear weapons. “Since the high-profile inclusion of Iran in President George W. Bush's ‘axis of evil,’ proposals to deal with that ‘rogue’ state have run the gamut from a preemptive military strike to the pursuit of diplomatic engagement. Between these two extremes, suggestions have included covert action to destabilize the ruling regime, assistance to internal and external opposition groups, financial aid for foreign-based Iranian media, and a call for international condemnation of the ayatollahs.”²²² My research focuses on that middle group – the indirect engagement offered through media public diplomacy – based on the notion that in the current complex political environment, use of force remains unlikely. However, the debate on how best to deal with the Iranian regime is ongoing, especially given the September 2009 planned missile tests in Iran.²²³

The question of Iran - how to deal with this rising, potentially nuclear, power - has dominated political science debates from the Bush administration to Obama’s first term. Some argue that containment will be the only way of dealing with a nuclear Iran: “If Iran emerges as a nuclear state, one country in the world will be providentially equipped with decades of applicable experience and a proven strategic template. The country is the United States, the experience is the Cold War, and the template is

²²² Jahangir Amuzegar, “Iran's Crumbling Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2003, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030101faessay10221/jahangir-amuzegar/iran-s-crumbling-revolution.html>.

²²³ For more information, see: Reuters, “U.S. Calls Missile Test Provocative,” September 28, 2009, (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsMaps/idUSTRE58R4A120090928>.

containment.”²²⁴ While it is unclear at the outset whether Iran is “containable” like the Soviet Union was proven to be, some factors reveal the potential of this strategy: “Iran is, if anything, more vulnerable to long-term pressure than the USSR was. It is smaller and weaker in every dimension. Its economy is a mess. Its oil weapon fires backward as well as forward, because oil sales keep Iran’s economy afloat. And, unlike the Soviet Union, Iran has no conceivable hope of disarming or crippling America with a first strike; America’s deterrent against Iran is massive, credible, and impregnable.”²²⁵

Under the strategy of containment, the United States would be engaged for the long term. The end game would be regime change. So in actuality, the goal of democracy promotion efforts, and the political-military strategy of containment, are the same – a liberal democracy in Iran, or at least a less-threatening regime.

Perhaps the strategy of containment is already underway:

Washington has been building up the U.S. Navy's presence in the Persian Gulf and using harsh rhetoric, raising the specter of war. At the same time, it funds a \$75 million democracy-promotion program supporting regime change in Tehran. In recent months, Washington has rallied support for a series of United Nations resolutions against Iran's nuclear program and successfully pushed through tough informal financial sanctions that have all but cut Iran out of international financial markets. It has officially designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guards as a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction and the IRG's elite al Quds Army as a supporter of terrorism, allowing the Treasury Department to target the groups' assets and the U.S. military to harass and apprehend their personnel in Iraq. Washington is also working to garner support from what it now views as moderate governments in the Middle East -- mostly authoritarian Arab regimes it once blamed for the region's myriad problems.²²⁶

²²⁴ Jonathan Rauch, “Containing Iran,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2006, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200607/rauch>.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Vali Nasr and Ray Takeyh, “The Costs of Containing Iran: Washington's Misguided New Middle East Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2008, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080101faessay87106/vali-nasr-ray-takeyh/the-costs-of-containing-iran.html>.

Despite this reality, some scholars, including Nasr and Takeyh, quoted above, believe that the containment strategy is misguided. They argue that ultimately the Arab states will not be able to support the U.S. policy of containment, and by pursuing it, the U.S. may only further enflame the volatile Middle East. They argue that:

A containment policy will only help erect Sunni extremism as an ideological barrier to Shiite Iran, much as Saudi Arabia's rivalry with Iran in the 1980s played out in South Asia and much as radical Salafis mobilized to offset Hezbollah's soaring popularity after the Israeli-Lebanese war in 2006. During the Cold War, confronting communism meant promoting capitalism and democracy. Containing Iran today would mean promoting Sunni extremism -- a self-defeating proposition for Washington.²²⁷

These authors instead suggest direct engagement with Iran. They argue, “Engaging Iran while regulating its rising power within an inclusive regional security arrangement is the best way of stabilizing Iraq, placating the United States' Arab allies, helping along the Arab-Israeli peace process, and even giving a new direction to negotiations over Iran's nuclear program.”²²⁸

Takeyh is in favor of another Cold War relic – détente, rather than containment. As such, he argues that the U.S. “should offer pragmatists in Tehran a chance to resume diplomatic and economic relations. Thus armed with the prospect of a new relationship with the United States, the pragmatists would be in a position to sideline the radicals in Tehran and try to tip the balance of power in their own favor. The sooner Washington recognizes these truths and finally normalizes relations with its most enduring Middle Eastern foe, the better.”²²⁹ But as I will explore below, sidelining the radicals or conservatives in Iran is a difficult business. This doesn't mean that the U.S. should not

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ray Takeyh, “Time for Détente With Iran,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070301faessay86202/ray-takeyh/time-for-detente-with-iran.html>.

try. While the broadcasters in effect cannot offer the type of normalization suggested in this détente strategy, they can in fact prop up and support the ideas of the pragmatists, the opposition, and the reformers. So whether Washington ultimately chooses containment (which the Bush administration favored) or shifts to détente (a possibility of the Obama administration), democracy promotion efforts, the role of influence and supporting the ideas of the pragmatists, will remain central missions for U.S. international broadcasters.

--

As the above organizations and legislative acts articulate, the American foreign policy objectives for both Iran and Azerbaijan are concerned primarily with democracy promotion and improving human rights. In addition, security concerns top the agenda, in particular the fight against terrorism and Iranian nuclear proliferation. While democracy promotion is central to American foreign policy in both states, the nature of democracy as a message faces different political constraints and objectives in Iran and Azerbaijan. These constraints and opportunities will be examined below.

Azerbaijani independence and governance

Azerbaijan gained independence in 1993, as the Soviet Union continued to lose not only its imperial presence in Eurasia, but also control of the Caspian:

With the Soviet Union's collapse in late 1991, Azerbaijan became an independent republic. The nation of seven million almost immediately slipped into chaos. Several governments ousted each other in a succession of coup d'états, and a totally demoralized Azeri army lost the bloody war with Armenia over the predominantly Armenian-populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1993, Azerbaijan, bereft of 15 percent of its territory, was on the verge of falling back under Moscow's control. That was when Heydar Aliyev stepped back into the political spotlight. A distinguished KGB general and member of the Politburo, the Azeri had for decades been one of the most powerful communist leaders of the Soviet Union. Nicknamed "the fox" by his friends and enemies, Aliyev saw that in nearly all post-Soviet republics, former high-ranking communist officials were back in power. So it came as no surprise when the sublime tactician was elected president of his home country in October 1993.²³⁰

The fall of the Soviet Union brought independence for Azerbaijan, but also a strong, authoritarian leader. Self-determination, democracy, and constitutional liberalism were not the winners of the 1993 dissolution, according many scholars. However, the section below, which examines opportunities for democracy in Azerbaijan, indicates an alternative narrative, explaining that while American standards of democracy were not met in 1993, Azerbaijan did begin the process of building a new national identity, with room for a democratic future.

Regardless, Azerbaijan is not a liberal democracy, mostly because the power structure of the state has continued to be ruled by a "family-parochial clan" or FPC.²³¹

²³⁰ Lutz Klevevan, *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*, (New York: Grove Press, 2003), 21.

²³¹ Rustam Seyidov argues that the head of the presidential administration, widely known as the "power broker," Ramiz Mehtiev, and Kamaladdin Heidarov, one of the richest Azerbaijanis, who also controls the states' main financial flows, are at the helm of this power structure. Rustam Seyidov, "The Post-Election Situation: Who Rules Azerbaijan?" in *International Election Observers in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Geopolitical Pawns or Agents of Change?*, ed. Stina Torjesen and Indra Overland, (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007), 163.

Heydar Aliyev, who built a power system based on managers with local and family ties, orchestrated the powerful Azeri clan. “Most state officials – from the prime minister to the head of the president’s administration, to the police chiefs in remote areas of the country – come from either the Nakhichevan enclave within Azerbaijan or from Armenia, where, until the recent notorious events, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis lived.”²³² The leadership was chosen based on loyalty to the President, and is managed under a system that “permitted and privately encouraged corruption.”²³³

With the death of Heydar Aliyev in 2003, the “FPC” needed Ilham, his son, to ensure the continuation of the power system. While in office, Heydar made Ilham the second Vice President of Socar, the state’s petroleum company, which demonstrates the entanglement of power and oil in Azerbaijan. Naturally, the 2003 Presidential election that gave Ilham Aliyev the presidency was a predictable turn of events. In addition, Seyidov argues that “there was (and still is) no real opposition to the FPC rule” and post-election silence appeared to be an indicator that “the USA (and, eventually, the whole Western community) was in fact satisfied with FPC rule.”²³⁴ During the 2003 election, “the FPC practically decided that it had been given a *carte blanche* for total falsification of the elections and shameless violation of laws.”²³⁵ With Western congratulations, Ilham Aliyev took to the presidency despite corrupt elections, demonstrating to many scholars, Seyidov included, a higher concern for stability over democracy on the part of the West.

Seyidov’s argument that there is no real opposition in Azerbaijan indicates, if nothing else, that the forces of democracy within the state and society are weak:

²³² Ibid, 142.

²³³ Ibid, 143

²³⁴ Ibid, 146.

²³⁵ Ibid, 146.

The opposition in Azerbaijan does not correspond to its purpose, but has a very important and serious mission defined for it by Heydar Aliyev. This includes channeling moods of protest; expressing economic, social and political demands in a marginal form, which in turn causes rejection by much of society; and, finally, dissipating the desire for the reforms during futile meetings which are suppressed with awesome brutality from time to time. For this reason, confidence in these parties is steadily decreasing...²³⁶

If Seyidov is correct that the opposition is in fact a political pawn, then the only competing political forces are independent parliamentary candidates and the growing forces of Islamic fundamentalism, each gaining strength amongst the Azerbaijani youth. In 2007, RFE/RL reported on the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism in Baku mosques:

The Salafi mosque, perched high on a hill overlooking half-finished hulks of buildings and a labyrinth of streets in old Baku, has been called a ‘den of extremism’ by some local officials concerned about an apparent rise in Islamic fundamentalism in a traditionally moderate Muslim nation of the South Caucasus. Those concerns were highlighted on October 29, when Azerbaijani officials said they had thwarted an Islamic terror plot to attack key facilities in Baku, including the embassies of the United States and Britain. News of the foiled plot comes amid a wider crackdown against what officials call ‘Wahhabism’ -- a catchall word they use to describe all militants, and not just those inspired by the radical brand of Sunni Islam imported from Saudi Arabia.²³⁷

Islamic fundamentalism is believed to be on the rise across the Muslim world. In addition, as the opposition is tarnished and limited in their ability to actually behave independently, it is not surprising that many young, idealistic candidates for parliament in the 2005 election were in fact independents.²³⁸

²³⁶ Ibid, 149.

²³⁷ Luke Allnutt, “Azerbaijan: The Struggle To Shape Islam,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 1, 2007, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1079051.html>. While the Salafi mosque indicates it is a sect of Sunni fundamentalism, and Azerbaijan is predominantly a Shia state, this report obviously indicates a fringe movement, but one that, I would argue, is growing in numbers and creating growing concern on the part of the Azerbaijani government and proponents of democratic change within Azerbaijan.

²³⁸ For more information, see: Lauren Brodsky, “Sowing seeds of democracy in post-Soviet granite,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2005, (Accessed December 28, 2005),

The current parliament is composed of 57 candidates who ran under the ruling party and 40 candidates who positioned themselves as opposition or independent. But, “there is no doubt about these 40 individuals: all are promoted by the FPC and have received their mandates with FPC consent.”²³⁹ Therefore Seyidov makes the case that independents are really only a minor political force in Azerbaijan, and that the FPC approved the majority of independent candidates successful in Parliament.

Azerbaijan is not the only former Soviet state with a strong FPC ruling over seemingly democratic practices, as this the entire region faces myriad challenges to democracy. According to a Freedom House report published in January 2008, *Freedom in the World 2008: Global Freedom in Retreat*, neighbor states Russia and Georgia exhibit democratic setbacks. The report explains, “Democracy in Georgia, a key ‘color revolution’ country, was sullied by the imposition of a state of emergency and a violent police crackdown on demonstrators” and “in Russia, parliamentary elections were held under patently unfair conditions.”²⁴⁰ The recent virtual handover of power from Vladimir Putin to the new Russian Prime Minister Medvedev is yet another example of this regional trend.

While now independent, Azerbaijani politics continue to be influenced by the illiberal democratic practices of its neighbors: “Russia exerts influence in the former Soviet Union by using its abundant oil and gas resources to reward politically friendly,

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1031/p09s01-coop.html>. The 2005 elections will be discussed in more detail below.

²³⁹ Rustam Seyidov, 155.

²⁴⁰ Freedom House, “Freedom in Retreat: Is the tide turning? Findings of Freedom in the World 2008,” page 1, available at www.freedomhouse.org. As the report explains further on p. 7: “As numerous independent monitoring organizations testified, the elections were an illusory spectacle, as parties and candidates who challenged the policies of President Vladimir Putin were eliminated through bureaucratic manipulation. The press—largely controlled by the state or supporters of the president—devoted overwhelming coverage to Putin and his allies, and measures were implemented to keep the opposition impotent, fragmented, or tame.”

autocratic countries and pressure states that are not willing to bow to the Kremlin.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, “Russia provides diplomatic and political support to a number of brutal dictatorships and autocratic regimes on its borders, including Belarus and states in Central Asia, and puts pressure on nearby governments, such as Estonia and Georgia, whose policies or leaders it disapproves of.”²⁴² Russia remains a strong political influence in the Caspian region, and a voice in the Azerbaijani market for loyalties. Therefore, for American international broadcasters to successfully communicate to an Azerbaijani audience, they must understand the political influence that Russia continues to exert.

Another impediment to democracy for states such as Azerbaijan is corrupt governance practices. *Transparency International’s* most recent country report noted that a problematic court system is weakening the rule of law in Azerbaijan:

Even the country’s political leadership admits that the judicial system does not adhere to the rule of law. On 11 February 2005, President Ilham Aliyev pointed out that courts work too slowly and produces unfair judgments, especially in disputes between private companies.... According to Fuad Mustafayev, deputy chairman of the opposition Popular Front Party, judges in Azerbaijan pass judgments based on two principles: for political reasons, or, in a judicial equivalent to the construction ‘tender,’ they rule in favor of the highest bidder.²⁴³

This report exposes a judicial system that is an extension of presidential power, where in the end the president, or members of the FPC, have final word, despite even the current president’s complaints about the system. Under this system, court officials have the power to decide whether or not to hear a case without referring to legal guidelines or issuing explanations. Further, Azerbaijani judges, of whom there is a national shortage,

²⁴¹ Ibid, 7.

²⁴² Ibid, 2.

²⁴³ Transparency International, “Azerbaijan’s yawning gap between reforms on paper and in practice,” (Berlin: Transparency International, 2007), 175

pass judgments that do not reflect the laws of the nation.²⁴⁴ This deteriorating legal situation, coupled with decreased press freedoms, which will be considered below, poses a serious challenge for democracy promotion efforts by the U.S. Therefore, as American international broadcasters tailor a message for an Azerbaijani audience, they must consider these constraints on political freedoms, and the illiberal democratic practices that have become the post-Soviet norm.

In promoting democracy in Azerbaijan, sticking to the values of what Fareed Zakaria has called constitutional liberalism may in fact be more influential and meaningful than vague calls for democracy that have fallen short in Azerbaijan.²⁴⁵ Competing in the so-called market for loyalties in Azerbaijan will be limited, however, by the tight governmental grasp on state media – which not only limits voices but also perspectives on the Azerbaijani airwaves, and poses a challenge to the American broadcasters.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 177. The report also points to the problem of a lack of qualified judges and lawyers in general. Naturally it is difficult to raise the standards without a growth in development in the legal practice.

²⁴⁵ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, (New York: Norton Publishers, 2004). These themes of constitutional liberalism are explored more fully in Chapters 4 and 5, with a content analysis of themes of broadcasts by RFE/RL and VOA.

The Azerbaijani media landscape

Press freedoms and diversity are not only a catalyst, but also a necessary ingredient for democratic change in transitioning states. However, in Azerbaijan, the state has maintained a firm grip over the media, and as the 2006 annual report by *Reporters Without Borders* explains, “the country has no broadcast media diversity and the written press is fiercely divided between opposition and government mouthpieces.”²⁴⁶ This tight grip on public perceptions and political affiliations illustrates the necessity for RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts, both to promote democracy and to act as an imported free news source in a closed media market.

The role of the Azerbaijani reporter is a difficult one. These reporters operate under the shadow of steep prison sentences for “defamation” – meaning journalists often face up to three years in prison for this charge, and up to six for what *Reporters Without Borders* describes as insulting the reputation of the president. Therefore, media control is used as a tool to promote and secure the presidential grip on national identity and government policy, limiting the impact of competing voices on the market for loyalties, through tactics of fear. Journalists risk their own personal safety when aligning with the opposition, even though the opposition’s political horizon is limited to begin with. According to *Reporters Without Borders*, police physically attacked 26 journalists in the run-up to parliamentary elections in November 2005. Two particularly disturbing cases included that of Elmar Husseynov, editor of the opposition weekly, *Monitor*, who was shot on his way home from work, and the beating and subsequent death of

²⁴⁶ Reporters Without Borders, “Azerbaijan – 2006 Annual report,” (Paris: Reporters Without Borders, 2007). It should be noted that various Azerbaijani scholars dispute the legitimacy of this report, which will be discussed below.

photojournalist, Alim Kazimli, of the main opposition daily *Yenu Musavat*.²⁴⁷ These cases reflect a sampling of the grim picture for journalists in Azerbaijan.

The deteriorating situation for journalists intensified on November 24, 2006 with the closure of the Azerbaijani News Service (ANS), the first independent television station in the Former Soviet Union. According to one former reporter, ANS “kept an unbiased and balanced position regarding the election and was not part of the terrible campaign against the opposition parties, which another pro-government channel conducted” and for this stance was silenced during a year of “continuous pressure on the channel since the 2005 parliamentary elections.”²⁴⁸ Unfortunately, many Azerbaijanis believed that energy interests muted the response from the West to the closure of ANS. A former ANS journalist explains: “The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations, the U.S. embassy in Azerbaijan, our artists and famous people have called for restarting television activity (of ANS). I don’t believe that all their ‘calls for’ will give a positive result, because of these countries’ oil interests in Azerbaijan.”²⁴⁹ American efforts to foster relations with the Aliyev regime, and propping up the “FPC” for energy and trade interests, has limited the ability of the U.S. to call for independent press in Azerbaijan, thereby limiting the democratic possibilities in this state.

The U.S. Department of State, however, is not completely silent in Azerbaijan. For example, the State Department issued a press release in the fall of 2007, when

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Zaur Hasanov, “Azerbaijan News Service shuts down leaving many without reliable source,” *The Spartan Daily*, December 6, 2006.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

Eynulla Fatullayev, the editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper *Realny Azerbaijan*, was sentenced on terrorism charges. The press release stated:

Mr. Fatullayev's newspapers routinely criticized government officials and publicized accusations of corruption. This sentence of eight and a half years in prison on charges of terrorism appears to be an attempt to silence criticism and stifle free speech. A free press and active civil society are fundamental elements of any democracy and are essential to the protection of citizens' basic rights. Prosecuting Mr. Fatullayev under anti-terrorism laws indicates a fear of the fundamental freedom of speech that is sharply at odds with the Government of Azerbaijan's professed desire to develop democratic institutions. We call on the Government of Azerbaijan to respect fully the rights of a free press and to support the development of an independent media in Azerbaijan.²⁵⁰

While such State Department statements do articulate the American commitment to democracy in Azerbaijan, statements alone will not satisfy the defenders of Azerbaijani free press, like the ANS reporter who no longer sees a future for free press at home.

Opposition or independent journalists continue to believe that Western powers are ultimately not behind the mission of free press, as energy or stability will ultimately be a higher goal. This is a perception that both RFE/RL and VOA will have to overcome when communicating to an Azerbaijani audience.

²⁵⁰ Tom Casey, Deputy Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, "Independent Azerbaijani Newspaper Editor Sentenced," November 1, 2007, (Accessed December 22, 2008), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/nov/94499.htm>.

The 2005 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan

The parliamentary election of 2005 was an opportunity for the Azerbaijani public to cast votes for not only incumbent parliamentarians, but also opposition and independent candidates. The story of the 2005 elections was embodied by the hopes of young, independent and opposition candidates, eager to move their country into the Western fold via democracy. Media attention pointed the spotlight of international public opinion on the Aliyev regime, which promised to improve democratic practices. One indication of this willingness for change was the acceptance of election monitors. According to Leila Alieva, there were 1586 foreign observers, 301 journalists and 17,014 local observers.²⁵¹ But ultimately these improvements were overshadowed by corruption in many districts.

The Western powers appeared to be watching the elections with keen interest. “The year 2005 was marked by several visits by high-ranking members of the U.S. government, the U.S. Congress, European organizations, as well as visits of leaders of the Azerbaijani opposition to the European states and the U.S.A.”²⁵² Visitors to Azerbaijan from the U.S. included Madeleine Albright, George Soros, Under-Secretary Paula Dobriansky, U.S. Senators Richard Lugar and Barack Obama. But the limitations of the democratic message were apparent:

Lugar made it clear that the practice of repeated voting had to be eliminated, and that the Electoral Code had to be improved and properly applied. He also referred to the issue of a ‘velvet revolution’ in Azerbaijan. Although his image is connected with revolutions, Lugar stressed that he did not expect a revolution in Azerbaijan. He also thanked Ilham Aliyev for the support that the high level of

²⁵¹ Leila Alieva, “International Observation Missions: Assessments of the 2005 Parliamentary Elections,” in *International Election Observers in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Geopolitical Pawns or Agents of Change?* eds. Stina Torjesen and Indra Overland, (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007), 21.

²⁵² Ibid, 21.

the relationship between the two countries had created, and praised Azerbaijan for its involvement in international anti-terrorism coalitions and for providing an air corridor to enable the conduct of anti-terrorism operations.²⁵³

While many in Azerbaijan agreed with Lugar's sentiment that democratic transition, rather than revolution, was preferable, there was a sense amongst many in the opposition that this figurehead for political change was not pushing hard enough in Azerbaijan.

Despite this heightened interest in the Azerbaijani elections, many viewed the U.S. as sending conflicting messages. On the one hand, Congress adopted a resolution on July 20, 2005, that was passed in late October, calling on the Azerbaijani government to hold fair parliamentary elections. "This was an unprecedented resolution by the U.S. Congress in relation to Azerbaijan, and indicated the high level of importance that the USA attached to the then-upcoming elections there."²⁵⁴ However, in the aftermath of the elections, the U.S. was found struggling between its value-based foreign policy of democracy promotion, and the necessity to continue positive, energy-based relations with a stable Azerbaijan. Therefore, "in the case of the U.S.A.... their multiple agendas and diverse interests, along with their fear of losing out in security and energy dialogues with Azerbaijan, served to limit their levers of influence on Azerbaijan's government, and the way it organized the parliamentary elections of 2005."²⁵⁵

The weak American message was a disappointment for supporters of the opposition movements in Azerbaijan, who believed that the U.S. would be a beacon of democracy promotion during the elections. In other words, "the West is perceived as consisting of democratic states: these are expected to promote, and stand for, democratic

²⁵³ Ibid, 25.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 26.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 17.

changes and values in states currently in transition, such as Azerbaijan.”²⁵⁶ In 2003, when Azerbaijani hopes were high during the Presidential election, over 71% of the population came out for the vote, but disappointed by the failure of legitimate democracy to take hold, and a belief that “Western states now seemed to prefer a situation involving a transfer of power to the heir of the president,” only 46% of the population voted in the 2005 Parliamentary elections.²⁵⁷ And, the election results of 2005 were seen as a failure to build a “publicly controlled, democratic institution before the major inflow of oil revenues” (which began in 2008).²⁵⁸

President Aliyev maintained a consistent message during the 2005 election season – that of a reformer, “struggling against a group of conservatives within government, and facing the resistance of local-level executives. This aimed to prove that there was a strong political will to conduct free and fair elections, but obstructed by resistance from ‘below.’”²⁵⁹ Ultimately, Aliyev did not take responsibility for ensuring a transparent and corruption-free election, though he did allow the free reign of international election observers and exit pollsters.

But democratic checks and balances were problematic as well. The Community of Independent States (CIS) and Russian missions were quick to praise the elections of 2005 as “democratic” but the message from U.S.-based monitors was not as emphatic.²⁶⁰ The U.S. observers shared the view of the OSCE observation mission that, despite

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 17.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 18.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 19.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 22.

²⁶⁰ Russia has continued to support the FPC rule as a way to ensure their influence and positive relationship with their former territory. The observation of the election monitors can be viewed as an extension of overall Russian policy towards Azerbaijan, which has not been nearly as aggressive as towards neighboring Georgia, despite complaints by many Azerbaijanis that the Russians supported the Armenians in the 1993.

improvements, the elections had “failed to meet several international standards.”²⁶¹ The discovery of fraud and irregularities influenced this assessment. From the perspective of the opposition, the elections demonstrated serious weaknesses of the democratic process in Azerbaijan: “The head of the election headquarters of the Azadlyc bloc, Panah Huseyn, reported that there had been a total of 21,104 violations in 113 election districts. He noted that, after the completion of the voting process at 7pm, the police started to arrest observers and steal boxes from the election points.”²⁶²

Results from exit polls were also inconsistent. Three exit polls were used – Edison/Mitofksy, a private American company, PA Consulting, which is financed by USAID, and SAAR poll, owned privately by Alexander Saar of Estonia. However, there were complaints after the election that exit polls were stationed in districts where incumbents had an expected lead. Not surprisingly, the public had lost confidence in the exit polls before election day. Plus, there are obvious limitations of exit polls: “exit polls can test violations only on election day, but not the effect of violations during the pre-election campaign – which in the Azerbaijan case included the intimidation of voters, vote buying, and excessive use of administrative resources.”²⁶³

There were clear discrepancies between the exit polling data and the official results. “Contrary to the announced winner from the ruling party (or its loyal independents), it confirmed the victory of the Azadlyc bloc in seven districts, the YeS bloc in one district, and an independent in another one.”²⁶⁴ But despite more than 500 complaints submitted to the Azerbaijani government by opposition and independent

²⁶¹ Leila Alieva, 27.

²⁶² Ibid, 41.

²⁶³ Ibid, 47.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

candidates, “on 1 December, the Constitutional Court approved the overall results of Azerbaijan’s 6 November parliamentary elections. The court invalidated results in six constituencies... The decision of the Constitutional Court only confirmed the official results of the parliamentary elections.”²⁶⁵ This came after the opposition had already spoken out about the elections: “In the evening of 6 November, the head of the election headquarters of the Azadlyc bloc, Panah Huseyn... recommended that the results in the majority of districts should be invalidated. Human rights activists and members of Azadlyc called for the creation of a national resistance movement.”²⁶⁶ For obvious reasons, invalidating only six election results did not satisfy those in the opposition.

The U.S. Department of State spokesman supported the ruling of the Constitutional Court as a positive step, while noting that more needed to be done, especially since it was clear that this change “would hardly be enough to affect the nature of the country’s new parliament.”²⁶⁷ The belief of many within the opposition was that the official word from Washington was not consistent with democracy:

The position of the U.S.A., which was seen as crucial to the outcome of the struggle of the democratic and non-democratic forces in other former Soviet states (as was expressed in a series of statements), came as a disappointment... The U.S. Embassy statement... urged government to ‘press ahead with the prosecution of those who were engaged in fraud,’ and called on police to ‘respect the rights of peaceful, free assembly.’ The statement also reminded the authorities about the need to hold fresh elections in the ten constituencies, in accordance with international standards.²⁶⁸

But these calls for change were seen as weak and ineffective.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 51.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 53.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 29.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 54.

Alieva also warns that the U.S.'s failure to ultimately place democracy above regional goals has harmed the image of the U.S. amongst the general Azerbaijani public. The opposition media voiced these concerns: "Rauf Arifoglu, editor of *Yeni Musavat*, bluntly stated that the U.S.A. bears special responsibility for the defeat of democracy in Azerbaijan: 'We were expecting serious steps from the U.S.A. However, the U.S.A. took the opposite stance: it gave priority to its oil and other interests. This action will have a high price for both the U.S.A. and democracy in Azerbaijan.'"²⁶⁹ Arifoglu went on to suggest that the U.S. has different standards for democratic practices in Christian and Muslim states, feeding into perceptions of an incompatibility between democracy and Islam. He said, "it is clear that the U.S.A. considers us as being alien and does not include us in the world community of democrats."²⁷⁰ Alieva argues as well that interests in the region motivate the U.S. over the interest of spreading democracy: "It was (and is still) clear that the situation in Azerbaijan was complicated by the security agenda (anti-terrorist co-operation) and the country's hydrocarbon resources."²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 56.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 24.

The 2008 presidential election in Azerbaijan

On October 15, 2008, the Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev, won the country's Presidential race with 88% of the vote. The international press quickly deemed the election illegitimate, noting that members of the opposition had avoided the polls and claiming that the Aliyev regime had "twisted the rules so much that fair competition was impossible."²⁷² However, on the whole, the Western response was familiar to many Azerbaijanis: "'The election marks considerable progress towards meeting OSCE and Council of Europe commitments,' said Boris Frlec, head of the OSCE's observing mission, 'but doesn't meet all commitments.'"²⁷³ Again, Western voices pushed for progress, but did not criticize the Aliyev regime.

While some Azerbaijanis are concerned that the West has not remained firm in the face of illiberal democratic trends in Azerbaijan, others worry that the West is more critical of the Azerbaijani transition to democracy than that of neighbor and rival Armenia. Armenia held a contested presidential election earlier in 2008, an election that resulted in the deaths of a number of demonstrators. Some Azerbaijanis were offended by the harsher response to their Presidential elections in 2008: "Azerbaijan feels it got the short end of the stick in a small but brutal conflict with Armenians in the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, then part of Azerbaijan, rose up as the Soviet Union disintegrated, demanding unification with Armenia... The Europeans' initial evaluation [of the 2008

²⁷² Sabrina Tavernise, "European observer denounces Azeri presidential election," *The New York Times*, October 16, 2008.

²⁷³ Ibid.

Presidential election in Armenia] was largely positive, which fueled suspicions...that a double standard was being applied.”²⁷⁴

This concern over a double standard in dealings between Western countries and Azerbaijan has influenced political relations since the end of the Cold War, and in part may be caused by resentment in Azerbaijan over what is seen as a political influence of the Armenian community in America. For example, The Freedom Support Act of 1992, which was created to encourage economic development and political stability in the Former Soviet Union, excluded the Azerbaijani government from the initiative. Section 907 of the bill strikes Azerbaijan from the equation: “United States assistance under this or any other Act (other than assistance under title V of this Act) may not be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President determines, and so reports to the Congress, that the Government of Azerbaijan is taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.”²⁷⁵

Despite international critiques, members of the Azerbaijani government viewed the 2008 elections as routine and successful, including the Azerbaijani Consulate General to Los Angeles, Elin Suleymanov. He explained, “The [Presidential] elections on October 15, [2008] went very well. Mostly described as major progress, especially in terms of actual conduct on the election day. It wasn't too competitive given the President's high numbers and the traditional opposition's boycott. Well, with Aliyev highly praised for his calm position during the Georgia crisis and since the opposition figures are still the same

²⁷⁴ Ibid. Armenia and Azerbaijan have failed to enter a peace settlement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and continue to risk a resumption of violence. For more information about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, see: International Crisis Group, “Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War,” November 14, 2007, (Accessed September 30, 2008), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5157>.

²⁷⁵ Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (Public Law 102-511) Washington D.C., October 24, 1992.

from 1992, I am not surprised.”²⁷⁶ Whether high approval numbers for Aliyev or security concerns influenced the election, it is clear that the opposition boycott played a major role in the outcome. Now, going forward, with two contested elections in the background, the question remains: Is there a place for liberal democracy in Azerbaijan?

²⁷⁶ Elin Suleymanov, Consulate General to Los Angeles, Email Interview, November 5, 2008.

Is there a place for democracy in Azerbaijan?

According to Samad Seyidov, the Head of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, democracy promotion from the U.S. towards the former Soviet states has become more intense since the fall of the Soviet Union:

... The development and dissemination of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law along with other values of the West can be divided into two stages. The first stage is the development and dissemination of democracy as a consistent part of the domestic and foreign policy of the West after World War II. During this period, democracy and human rights as the main values of the West started to be used in the struggle against the communist ideology of the USSR. The second stage emerged right after the collapse of the Soviet Union as the development and dissemination of democracy as the main element of Western policy.²⁷⁷

Seyidov argues that the emergence of democracy as the tallest pillar of American foreign policy, which happens to directly correspond with the formation of Azerbaijani modern, post-Soviet state, has placed more pressure on Azerbaijan than was felt by the budding, petroleum-based relations between the U.S. and post-WWII era new allies, such as Saudi Arabia. Seyidov argues that with the collapse of the Soviet Union, came what was articulated by Samuel Huntington as the “third wave of democratization,” which basically removed “all impediments for the spread of democratic ideas around the world.”²⁷⁸

Adding to the intensity of the post-Soviet “third wave” spread of democracy, in the eyes of Western analysts, was both the speed and volume of the globalized democratic message. Putting this all together, Seyidov argues that “the Western world, having accumulated colossal experience for the democratization of society, after having turned the three pillars of state order (democracy, human rights, the rule of law) into firm

²⁷⁷ Samad Seyidov, “Democracy, Human Rights and Foreign Policy: From Winston Churchill to Heydar Aliyev,” in *Azerbaijan in Global Politics: Crafting Foreign Policy*, (Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 2009), 303

²⁷⁸ Ibid, 304.

elements of the foreign policy of their states, evolved the global expansion and assertion of human rights and the rule of law all over the world.”²⁷⁹

Where does Azerbaijan fit in this picture? Seyidov argues that the values symbolized by democracy – “human rights, freedom of speech, independent legal proceedings, have certainly become priorities for Azerbaijan.”²⁸⁰ Seyidov argues that democracy can be found in Azerbaijan:

... Azerbaijan started to move from totalitarianism to democracy, from the rights of the state to human rights, from chaos, which unfortunately began right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to the rule of law. This movement from totalitarianism to democracy has been a very natural process supported by the majority of the population of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani people who have suffered all the horrors of a communist, totalitarian regime have made efforts to embrace democracy.²⁸¹

For many Azerbaijani’s, the transition to democracy, though not smooth, was the only vision of governance that was believed to create an independent national identity, separate from the Soviet past and an aggressive Russian neighbor.

As such, perceptions of national identity and collective memory merged together in favor of independence. For many Azerbaijanis, a feeling of injustice, rooted in the Soviet past, and intensified by the attacks of Soviet tanks in Baku on January 20, 1990, grew only stronger with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.²⁸² It is impossible to walk the streets of Azerbaijan without noticing the estimated one million displaced Azerbaijani

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 307

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² The Azerbaijani government has instituted a day of mourning on January 20, commemorating, the day in 1990 “when Soviet tanks and soldiers stormed Baku. In an offensive referred by Azerbaijanis around the world as ‘Black January,’ the Soviet leadership ordered 26,000 Soviet troops into the city.” For more information, see: Newsletter of the Embassy of Azerbaijan, “Azerbaijan to mark ‘Black January,’” January 16, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://www.azembassy.com/new/nl/2009/nl01.html>.

people. The result of conflict continues to influence perceptions of state formation and national identity in Azerbaijan.

To ensure state survival, Azerbaijan has, according to Seyidov, tilted West. “Thus, after experiencing the deficit of democracy, human rights, law and order, the Azerbaijani people turned their eyes to the West, choosing to integrate into Europe and establish close links with the West.”²⁸³ There was a predominant belief, among Azerbaijanis, in the 1990s, that “unlawfulness, arbitrariness, and the high level of criminality almost destroyed the country’s independence...”²⁸⁴ However, these vices continue to threaten sound democracy in the state today. But Seyidov believes the desire for democracy is an important first step – and is required for a state to transition from the “declaration” stage to “concrete” change.

Seyidov notes that Heydar Aliyev, who had the choice to return Azerbaijan to the totalitarian throws of the past, instead chose to listen to the people and adopt democratic practices. He also opted against force. These decisions should not be taken for granted, as they help to solidify the “declarative” stage of democracy in Azerbaijan, whereby the state began to articulate its transformation. “...Since 1993 Azerbaijan has implemented a planned, well-thought out, successive movement towards the establishment of democratic principles for state management, with the guarantee of rights for all citizens, including refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons) and the formation of a legal state.”²⁸⁵ Although democratic transitions are never smooth, setting the compass of the state in

²⁸³ Samad Seyidov, 308

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 310.

favor of democracy has signaled to the West both openness for change and the potential for diplomatic closeness not possible in Soviet times.

Undeniably, the values of democracy and human rights have, at times, been trumpeted by the Aliyev regime. In 1998 President Heydar Aliyev appealed to the Azerbaijani parliament (Milli Mejlis) to abolish the death penalty. “He did so just prior to joining the Council of Europe, when ‘Azerbaijan took a historical step which did not only bring Azerbaijan nearer to the values of Europe, but also demonstrated the desire of the Azerbaijani people towards the high ideals of justice and philanthropy.’”²⁸⁶ This example gives weight to the argument that international organizations often incentivize states toward democracy.

As a member of the Council of Europe, Seyidov argues that Azerbaijan is in its final stage of transition – “implementation.” He notes that, “unlike the adaption stage, this stage turned out to be considerably more complicated.”²⁸⁷ This stage required not only the transformation of institutions, but also the transition to the new legal code. As part of implementation, Azerbaijan guaranteed the rule of law and human rights in a special obligation to the Council of Europe.²⁸⁸ Seyidov outlines these obligations in his article, but one of particular importance for this dissertation relates to freedom of speech and press.²⁸⁹ This led to the creation of a national public television channel.²⁹⁰ Seyidov

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 313. Azerbaijan became a full member of the Council of Europe on June 28, 2000.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 315.

²⁸⁸ Seyidov writes that, “The implementation state, which started in 2000, and has been continuing up to now has been accompanied by rapid developments of all aspects of life in Azerbaijan. Democratic rights and freedoms have become indivisible elements of both domestic and foreign policy of the country.” Ibid, 319.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 315-7. These obligations, in opinion No. 22 of the Council of Europe, include the adoption of international conventions, finding a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the strengthening of domestic law, and finally the protection of human rights. Of this final obligation, freedom of speech was given particular attention.

views this document as a road map to Azerbaijani democracy, and also as a solidification of Azerbaijan as a European-minded state.

Political analyst Vugar Seyidov agrees with Samad Seyidov that the implementation stage of transition has posed many challenges for Azerbaijan. He outlines four main challenges to democratic transition. First, he argues that, “the single greatest impediment the government had to deal with in its attempts to streamline and facilitate Azerbaijan’s democratic transition is probably the occupation of Azerbaijani territory by the Republic of Armenia.”²⁹¹ Seyidov explains that the occupation of one sixth of Azerbaijan’s territory led to the displacement of at least 600,000 Azerbaijani citizens, coupled with the expulsion of 300,000 Azerbaijanis from the Republic of Armenia. The strain of accommodating internally displaced persons (transitioning them from tent cities to permanent housing) is what Vugar Seyidov considered to be a large distraction in democratic transformation, which is not surprising, as loss of territory, forced migration and military defeat pose a serious challenge to state legitimacy.

The other main impediments come from the lack of a foundation among the people for democratic change. The idea of a market-based economy was not natural to the Azerbaijani public. As Seyidov puts it, “impoverished masses with no tradition of democratic debate could not be entrusted immediately with decision-making on strategic development issues... Azerbaijan needed to focus on gradualism in spreading European

²⁹⁰ Despite the restrictions of press freedom noted in this chapter, Azerbaijani political analyst, Vugar Seyidov argues that, “In 1998, President Aliyev fully abolished the official censorship introduced by his short-lived predecessor. Later, the procedure for newspaper registration simplified, allowing hundreds of new print outlets to emerge in just a few years. Seven national and countless local television channels and cable television networks, as well as FM radio stations, represent just part of the government’s commitment to provide the people with a permanent, accurate, pluralistic, and free flow of information.” Vugar Seyidov, “How Gradualism Meets Commitment: Azerbaijan’s Transition to Democracy,” in *Azerbaijan in Global Politics: Crafting Foreign Policy*, (Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 2009), 341.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 324.

values across the nation. Much like the other parts of the Soviet bloc, the country had missed the intellectual origins of the value-based transformation that took place in Europe after World War II.”²⁹² Therefore, the Azerbaijani national identity is facing a crisis – it had not found a place for individualism, as did its European neighbors, while at the same time, the communist glue that held this multi-ethnic, multi-religious country together is now torn apart. Apparently, the confusion over identity “became evident during the 1995 debate over naming the language of the Azerbaijani people in the Constitution – Turkish, Azeri Turkish, Azerbaijani, or something else.”²⁹³

Nationalism has only been reinforced in Central Asia and the Caucasus since the fall of the Soviet Union. Some scholars believe that Azerbaijani nationalism is the link to the days before communism and that it “initially manifested itself as a cultural movement beginning in the second half of the 19th century” when Azerbaijan was part of Tsarist Russia, which “executed a policy of open Russification, discrimination and oppression of national minorities.”²⁹⁴ This was the foundation for the Azerbaijani struggle for cultural and political independence. Nationalistic activities abounded – from opening national schools, to reforming the language, to creating national libraries, and supporting local newspapers – all of which helped create a national consciousness of a common cultural and ethnic bond among the population.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Ibid, 326.

²⁹³ Ibid, 328.

²⁹⁴ Etibar Najafov, “Evolution of Azerbaijani Nationalism: Enlightenment, ADR, and Azerbaijanism,” *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008, 102.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. It is interesting to note that Najafov writes on p. 103 that, “during this period, Pan-Islamism was viewed by representatives of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia as a major obstacle in the way of their national liberation movement.” The leadership did not think that Pan-Islamism would allow the people to be independent, and that instead national identity was the real cause of progress.

Many Azerbaijani scholars look to the democratic past of Azerbaijan for inspiration, guidance or legitimacy. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), which was declared as an independent state from 1918-1920, was the first-ever democratic republic in the Muslim world, and is celebrated in Azerbaijan today. And, “Although the ADR lasted only two years, its actions, especially in the diplomatic area, were so impressive that 71 years later they provided instruction to the leaders of the Republic of Azerbaijan on how to best proceed in what is still a dangerous and uncertain world.”²⁹⁶

On the other hand, Seyidov notes that the 71 year gap has led to a lack of “generational continuity” and a “knowledge gap.”²⁹⁷ He explains:

The Soviet past combined with the interrupted transition of Azerbaijani society from provincial feudalism to oil-driven industrialization put Azerbaijan in a particularly special situation where the country had to choose its strategy for independent development. Generations of peoples acquired personality traits and work habits that could not be changed in a short period of time. Some of these features were typical for all socialist countries, but some peculiar only to Azerbaijan. For example, citizens avoided taking initiative, worked slowly without ‘undue’ exertion, preferred quantity over quality, expected promotions based on party or clan loyalty, etc.²⁹⁸

A cultural gap left from 71 years of socialism is a challenge to democratic transition, Seyidov notes:

²⁹⁶ Sevinche Yusifzade, “A Not So Distant Model: The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic of 1918-1920 and Baku’s Post-Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008, 80. Yusifzade writes, on pages 76 and 79, about the leaders of the ADR, “They expected that the United States and the other great powers would quickly recognize them because most of those behind the declaration had been inspired to take this step by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s 14 Points speech... Moreover, they believed that the secular, democratic political system their country was creating would be especially attractive to the European and American governments... But such recognition did not come as the ADR leaders expected...” Yusifzade explains Wilson’s thinking as “committed to self-determination but he did not want to see a world consisting of a large number of small states. His own utopianism led him to push for a Transcaucasian Confederation or even a ‘neutral zone’ there under an American ‘governor general,’ even though the U.S. was not prepared to send the number of troops needed to make that happen.”

²⁹⁷ Vugar Seyidov, 329.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 339. In addition, he writes, “In many consecutive elections, the mere idea that a husband cannot exercise the vote of his wife was received with hostility, while international observers often classified this cultural expectation from the political system as a deliberate attempt to corrupt the electoral practice by the authorities.”

Azerbaijan cannot simply copy Western practices of the relationship between the state and citizen prior to changing the nature of the relationships within the society. New cultural habits had to reflect new social strata that emerged as a result of privatization, wealth distribution, and mass migration. Only when those habits settled, could the authorities proceed with instituting the governance standards that matched capitalist economic and social reality.²⁹⁹

Seyidov is therefore making a case for exemplar-style democracy promotion, as described in Chapter 2, on the part of the West. He is arguing for an Azerbaijani-driven brand of democracy, motivated by modernization and the globalization of this transitioning state. This brand of democracy will be dependent upon promoting a culture that accepts the transition to democracy, and American influence can help this cultural transition.

But the legacy of the ADR remains strong. Azerbaijani commentators note with pride that Azerbaijan was the first country in the history of Islamic nations to enfranchise women.³⁰⁰ The other remaining legacy of the ADR was a cohesive cultural identity for Azerbaijan – based on Turkism, Islamism, and modernism, mixed in with a European heritage.³⁰¹ Seyidov argues that pride in this cultural identity can itself be an impediment to democratization: “The relatively slower speed of democratic reforms was implemented because of the risk of unforeseen negative outcomes rather than by fear of democratic process as such.”³⁰² This fear of a negative outcome is based on the failed legacy of the past.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 344-5.

³⁰⁰ Murad Ismayilov, “Azerbaijani National Identity and Baku’s Foreign Policy: The Current Debate,” *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008, 69.

³⁰¹ Ibid, 70.

³⁰² Vugar Seyidov, “How Gradualism Meets Commitment: Azerbaijan’s Transition to Democracy,” in *Azerbaijan in Global Politics: Crafting Foreign Policy*, (Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 2009), 330. Seyidov also argues that the “implementation phase” of Azerbaijani transition, to use Samad Seyidov’s term, happened to correspond with the post-September 11 international order: “Democratic

Seyidov explains instead that “the will of the country’s leadership to integrate its people into the family of civilized nations” has driven Azerbaijan toward democracy.³⁰³ If this is in fact the driving force, it might be the decided difference between the case countries of this dissertation, as the Iranian leadership appears completely willing to isolate it’s population, despite the global forces that continue to push an awareness of the Iranian people into the global forefront. Given this different approach, the Azerbaijani leadership has been cautious of political spillover to Northern Iran, where a large population of ethnic Azerbaijanis live. This led to further caution by the Azerbaijani leadership: “Excessive political opening could result in a response from Iran that could ruin the process of democratization.”³⁰⁴ For Azerbaijan, what is most important, is that it “avoided non-transition.”³⁰⁵

nations across the globe became preoccupied with the treat of terror and compromised their own democratic standards. Azerbaijan was no exception to this spirit of the times.” He also notes the geopolitical rifts as impediments to democratic transition: “The competition between NATO and Russia for dominance in the South Caucasus also intensified, further undermining the democratic aspirations of the Azerbaijani leadership.”

³⁰³ Ibid, 329. In support of this view, Seyidov writes on page 344, “ Traditional Western influence and pressure were not necessarily conducive to the liberalization process. Similarly, not every agenda put forward by the other large player – Russia – had a negative impact. This observation reinforces the view that the will and resolution of the Azerbaijani leadership to see the country among the civilized nations of the world was the primary source of democratic change.” This argument can help explain the Azerbaijani leadership’s drive to create business partners across regions, including Israel, a state that has outperformed its size in regards to information technology.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 334.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 345.

Reform and revolution in Iran

While Islam is merely increasing as a factor in Azerbaijani politics, it has been the cornerstone of Iranian political life since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. But despite the nature of the revolutionary regime, opportunities continue to present themselves for the spread of a democratic political culture in Iran. In fact, long before the revolution, constitutional liberalism appeared as a path for governance, as it did with the ADR in Azerbaijan. Constitutional liberalism came to Iran in the form of a revolution in August of 1906. This revolution was led by merchants, clergymen and guild elders. The Constituent Assembly gathered in Tehran and the main struggle between the shah and National Assembly evolved the future of the government. What emerged was a “bill of rights,” which guaranteed “each citizen equality before the law, protection of life, property, and honor, safeguards from arbitrary arrests, and freedom to publish newspapers and to organize associations.” In addition, the Assembly “concentrated power in the legislative branch at the expense of the executive.”³⁰⁶ These historic democratic roots in Iran and the 2009 uprisings in the wake of the Presidential elections indicate that democracy is a factor in the political landscape of Iran, despite the nature of the theocratic Islamic regime.

But the 1979 Revolution in Iran greatly impeded the democratic trajectory in that state. At the time of the revolution, the future of Iran remained in question. “The promise of the revolution for...many Iranian political activists, as well as for younger generations in Iran and throughout the Muslim world, was that genuine political participation would

³⁰⁶ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, (Princeton University Press, 1982), 89.

replace the indifference and apathy characteristic of many modern societies.”³⁰⁷ As the years have passed and the theocratic nature of the revolution became more discernable, it became the role of the reform movements to “reinvigorate the revolution’s ideals of justice, freedom and spirituality.”³⁰⁸ Therefore, the early revolutionary nature of Iran was not opposed to freedoms, but instead was against the corruption of the ideals in other, often non-Muslim, regimes.

In fact, the Revolution of 1979 is often understood in terms of the previous revolutions in Iran:

The Iranian Revolution began in early 1978. Following the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 to 1911 and the Nationalist Movement of 1951 to 1953, it was Iran’s third popular uprising against absolute monarchy and foreign intervention. Coalescing around the charismatic personality of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the secular descendants of the Constitutionalist and the National Front joined the masses of peasants and laborers inspired to political action by religious leaders who altered the lower classes’ most basic notions about themselves and their roles as citizens of Iran. Together the secularists and the pious drove Muhammad Reza Shah from the throne in January 1979... that revolution reordered Iran’s social hierarchy and renounced the alien presence of the West... But another revolution followed. Bridging mid-1979 to mid-1981, Iran’s revolution within a revolution pitted group against group in a violent struggle for the right to define the culture of the Iranian state. From that struggle, Iran emerged as the Islamic Republic committed to the preservation of traditional Shia culture, governed by a new elite composed of the Shia clergy, and ultimately ruled by a Shia authority figure – Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.³⁰⁹

Therefore, it is clear that originally there were two elements of the revolution, and one voice was later sidelined.

Throughout the thirty years that followed, reformers have continued to voice an alternative track for Iran. However, the work of the reform movements are constantly challenged by the non-democratic authorities in Iran: “... neither the reformists

³⁰⁷ Ali Rezaei, “Last Efforts of Iran’s Reformists,” *Middle East Report*, 226, Spring 2003, 40.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 41.

³⁰⁹ Sandra Mackey, *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation*, (New York: Plume, 1996), 272.

parliamentary majority nor their control of the executive branch (with the election of President Khatami) has enabled them to bring about significant changes in major areas of government. With few exceptions, the reformists' efforts to increase transparency in state practices and strengthen the rule of law have been blocked by organs of the state that remain beyond the supervision of democratically elected bodies."³¹⁰ Therefore, even when reformists make their way into government, their agendas – dominated by issues such as women's rights, the prevention of torture and the guarantee of press freedoms – are sidelined. These are the exact items Fareed Zakaria promotes as constitutional liberalism, and the basis for my research methodology.

The large media apparatus in Iran is where the market for loyalties plays out – reformers, conservatives, and international voices mingle: “The conflict between the conservatives in Iran has been nowhere more in evidence or more intensely fought than in the press arena. In the absence of established political parties, the flag bearers of the reform movement had become the liberal newspapers which had gradually been unshackled a couple of years before the election of President Mohammad Khatami in May 1997.”³¹¹ After Khatami's election, the number of independent papers increased exponentially. But this change was short-lived. In April 2000, Ayatollah Khamenei made a speech “castigating the liberal press, describing it as bases of the enemies (presumably the U.S. and Israel).” Shortly after this speech, the regime began closing down papers and arresting journalists and editors.³¹²

³¹⁰ Ali Rezaei, 41.

³¹¹ Adam Tarock, “The Muzzling of the Liberal Press in Iran,” *Third World Quarterly*, 22, No. 4, 2001, 585.

³¹² *Ibid*, 586.

It is no wonder that the agenda of reformers has produced limited successes, since the authoritarian nature of the state limits their political aspirations.

... Since 1991, the Council of Guardians (a 12 person council with particular influence) has interpreted article 99 of the constitution as giving them the authority to bar candidates from political office on the basis of their ‘competency and merit’ in religious and political matters. Critics within the reform movement and various independent observers claim that this... has created a ‘closed loop’ in Iran’s power structure, whereby the Leader appoints the members of the Council, the Council approves candidates for the Assembly of Experts which is supposed to supervise the Leader’s conduct in power.³¹³

While this “closed loop” is a different model than what was described about the FPC in Azerbaijan above, the same notion of closed governmental influences is a parallel with Azerbaijan.

And, like the Azerbaijani case detailed above, outspoken members of the reform movement in Iran face considerable safety risks. “In December 2000 and March 2001, 15 reform-minded activists whose views were published in the monthly *Iran-e Farda* (banned since 2000) were arrested on charges of plotting to overthrow the regime and having links to the Mujahidin-e Khalq armed opposition group based in Iraq.”³¹⁴ Like in Azerbaijan, limiting reformers from entering government, and maintaining a tight grasp on public opinion, is part of the infrastructure of regime control.

The Iranian regime continues to do all that it can to maintain control in the market for loyalties, manufactured by the government and connected state-run media. “During October and November 2002, three social researchers... were arrested on charges of manufacturing fake polls and selling classified information to foreigners. Media and human rights organizations account of the pollsters’ case have said that conservative

³¹³ Ali Rezaei, 42.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

circles were concerned about press leaks of poll results that showed that close to 75 percent of Iranian respondents favoring a start to official negotiations with the U.S.”³¹⁵ But cases such as these not only demonstrate just how far the Iranian regime is willing to go to silence dissent, but according to Rezaei, also reveal a key missing ingredient of reform: “... the saddest reality is that for many Iranians this behavior is not considered extraordinary. Perhaps the most fundamental defect of the reform movement is that it’s main weapon – massive, if unorganized, popular support – has not been effective in bringing about meaningful change in the practices in the real sources of power in Iran.”³¹⁶ Perhaps the most extreme example of a massive popular movement in Iran was the Presidential elections of 2009, which ultimately failed to bring regime change to Iran.

The role of the American international broadcasters in this market for loyalties is tenuous at best. The American voice is, at least partially, limited by the historic memories of meddling and failure to promote democracy in Iran. Most scholars reflect gravely upon the U.S. covert interference in Iranian politics in 1953: “The coup d’état engineered by the U.S. and Britain against the liberal government of Mohammad Mossadeq in August 1953 set aside all hopes for democratic political order in Iran for 25 years.”³¹⁷ The 1953 coup continues to cast a shadow over the American engagement in Iran, and give fodder to the conservative voices in Iran that abhor American influence or involvement in internal politics. Tarock argues that the 1953 is used to support the idea of press controls, as members of the conservative establishment argue that the U.S. and British, “taking control of the political division within the ruling elite, engineered a military coup and

³¹⁵ Ibid, 43.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 44.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 45.

brought down the nationalist government...” Tarock notes that this argument may sound like paranoia to outsiders, but the 1953 coup remains fresh in the minds of conservative leaders grasping firmly to power.³¹⁸ But, in the age of globalization, Iran cannot simply cut itself off from other influences, especially given the size and scope of its online presence, which will be discussed more below. Therefore, America must walk a fine line between evoking memories of the past, and spreading its message to the Iranian public.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Adam Tarock, 588.

³¹⁹ President Obama found this balance difficult in the wake of the 2009 Presidential elections in Iran, when Senator McCain and others criticized him for speaking “weakly” about the corrupt June election, and the protests that followed, in which President Obama said he did not want to meddle. For more information, see: “Obama refuses to ‘meddle’ in Iran,” June 19, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8104362.stm> and Stephen F. Hayes, “Obama’s Iran Formula: Speak timidly and don’t carry a stick,” *The Weekly Standard*, , 15, Issue 03, October 5, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009). <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/017/007wxlum.asp?pg=1>.

The Iranian leadership

Iran's controversial President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sought reelection in the summer of 2009, amidst an economy performing poorly, despite record oil revenues.³²⁰ Most analysts believed that even if Ahmadinejad lost in 2009, which was generally not predicted, a major change of course would not occur in Iranian politics. For example, one pre-election article noted: "Iran's political class, faced with a dire economy and increasing international isolation, may opt for a change of style in 2009. But all of the contending factions see Iran's nuclear program as a point of national pride. The United States and the European nations that have been attempting to negotiate an end to Tehran's nuclear programs should not delude themselves that the election will trigger a change in course."³²¹ Unfortunately from the American perspective, the nuclear issue is on the table, with or without Ahmadinejad.

But perhaps what makes President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad most controversial is his inflammatory statements. Since gaining the Presidency in 2005, Ahmadinejad has been a figure of concern from Washington to Europe to the Middle East: "The ascendancy of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gives particular cause for alarm, not least because he has called the Holocaust a myth, renewed Iran's commitment to eliminate Israel, and declared that anyone who objects to Iran's achieving nuclear

³²⁰ For more information, see: <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-03/2008-03-13-voa1.cfm> Ahmadinejad originally assumed the office of the presidency on August 3rd, 2005, covering the span of my research.

³²¹ Alireza Nader, "Is Ahmadinejad in Trouble?" The Rand Corporation, Published by *United Press International*, December 17, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rand.org/commentary/2008/12/17/UPI.html>.

capability should ‘be angry and die of this anger.’”³²² Ahmadinejad is undisputably a controversial figure, and the relationship between the U.S. and Iran remains difficult.

However, most scholars on Iran argue that the Iranian presidency in fact has limited power. The Islamic nature of the state has guaranteed an important role to the religious elite, and without the support of Ayatollah Khamenei, President Ahmadinejad’s power is limited. Therefore, it is not just Ahmadinejad singlehandedly ruling the Iranian state, but instead a larger governmental infrastructure limiting the possibility of freedom in Iran.

But despite the clutch of the Ayatollahs, there are various forces – conservative, religious, and pragmatic - vying for power in the complex government of this state. For example, in December of 2006, former President Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani won a victory that challenged Ahmadinejad’s role as a hard line leader: “Rafsanjani's victory in the Assembly of Experts - the powerful body that oversees the work of Iran's supreme leader - is regarded as a setback for hard-line President Mahmud Ahmadinejad. Partial results from the municipal councils elections also show that Ahmadinejad's allies losing badly to reformers and moderate conservatives in city councils all over the country.”³²³ Therefore, diversity of political voices does exist inside Iran, showing opportunity for change in elections, and demonstrating the limited power of the presidency in light of religious authority.

³²² Jonathan Rauch, “Containing Iran,” *The Atlantic*, July/August 2006, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200607/rauch>.

³²³ Golnaz Esfandiari, “Iran: Election Results Show Anti-Ahmadinejad Vote,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 19, 2006, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1073557.html>.

In the build up to the 2009 presidential elections in Iran, a Voice of America article examined the political realities of the Iranian populace, left with little decision or sense of choice in the parliamentary elections of the preceding year:

A telephone survey of Iranian voters by a U.S.-based bi-partisan group called *Terror Free Tomorrow*, which has been polling inside Iran since 2004, shows widespread voter apathy about these elections. Ken Ballen, the group's president, says voters are unhappy about their choices. 'What it tells us about the elections is that the Iranian people are not inspired by the choices that they have been offered to vote for,' says Ballen. 'We asked people whom they intended to vote for. A third said they would vote for neither reformists nor conservatives. And only eight percent said they would vote for conservatives, 22 percent for reformers.'³²⁴

The Iranian parliament (majlis) is constrained by authoritarian politics, indicating grim prospects for free and fair elections on both the presidential and parliamentary level, as is the case in Azerbaijan. In the March 2008 parliamentary elections, candidates were screened for loyalties to the revolution: "A hard-line body of clerics called the Guardian Council reviews the candidate lists, and in an initial review it barred many reform-minded politicians from running, accusing them of not being loyal to the revolution."³²⁵ And, according to VOA, "The Guardian Council rejected some 1,700 candidates, including some of the better-known leaders of Iran's reformist movement."³²⁶

Those disqualified in the parliamentary elections included a grandson of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In response, Muhammad Khatami, "a relatively liberal reformer who was president from 1997 to 2005, called the mass disqualification a 'catastrophe' that could 'endanger the system and society.'"³²⁷ To some, the

³²⁴ Gary Thomas, "Iran Elections: A Litmus Test for Ahmadinejad?" *Voice of America*, March 12, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-03/2008-03-13-voa1.cfm>.

³²⁵ Nazila Fathi, "Candidates in Iran are screened for loyalty," *International Herald Tribune*, March 5, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2008/03/05/europe/iran.php>.

³²⁶ Gary Thomas.

³²⁷ "New parliament, new policies?" *The Economist*, February 1, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=10740664.

parliamentary elections have signaled a change in the fundamental dynamics of Iranian politics. The *Economist* has explained that, “its no longer reformists against conservatives in Iran but pragmatic conservatives against the hardliners.”³²⁸ Despite that fact that Iranian political views spread across the spectrum from conservative to reform, when reformers and pragmatists achieve an electoral victory, their voices will still be limited by the constraints imposed by the Islamic regime.

Returning to the 2009 Presidential elections, the massive uprising throughout Tehran and beyond has continued to strike at the legitimacy of Ahmadinejad and grab the attention of the world. Chapter 6 will give more details on this election, particularly through the lens of RFE/RL and VOA reporting. But for now, from a macro level, it is important to consider what a potentially “stolen” election means for the leadership in Iran and the possibility for democratic change. Juan Cole wrote in his blog, following the Iranian elections, that the election was most definitely stolen for the following reasons:

It is claimed that Ahmadinejad won the city of Tabriz with 57%. His main opponent, Mir Hossein Mousavi, is an Azeri from Azerbaijan province, of which Tabriz is the capital. So for an Azeri urban center to go so heavily for Ahmadinejad just makes no sense.

Ahmadinejad is claimed to have taken Tehran by over 50%. Again, he is not popular in the cities, even, as he claims, in the poor neighborhoods, in part because his policies have produced high inflation and high unemployment.

It is claimed that cleric Mehdi Karoubi, the other reformist candidate, received 320,000 votes, and that he did poorly in Iran's western provinces, even losing in Luristan. He is a Lur and is popular in the west, including in Kurdistan.³²⁹

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Juan Cole, “Stealing the Iranian Election,” *Informed Comment*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://www.juancole.com/2009/06/stealing-iranian-election.html>.

And beyond the list of irregularities in voting, election day was met with media censorship. Cell phone communications were interrupted in Tehran on election day, and the BBC experienced jamming of their broadcasts. Also, in the lead up to the elections, the Iranian government blocked access to Facebook.³³⁰ And in the wake of the elections, unprecedented demonstrations swept across Tehran, in what Al Jazeera English called the “biggest unrest since the 1979 revolution.”³³¹ These demonstrations were ongoing weeks after the June election, making them far bigger and more heated than the 1999 student uprisings, and leading many scholars and policymakers to ask: Is this there now a chance for democracy in Iran?³³²

³³⁰ For more information, see: “Ahmadinejad: Anyone who strikes Iran will regret it,” *Ha’aretz*, June 14, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1092669.html> and “Government supporters rally in Iran,” *Al Jazeera*, June 16, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/06/2009616135112133473.html>, both accessed June 20, 2009.

³³¹ “Poll results prompt Iran protests,” *Al Jazeera English*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/06/2009613172130303995.html>.

³³² For more information, see “Election Battles Turn Into Street Fights in Iran,” *ABC News*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009), <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=7830630>.

Is there a future for democracy in Iran?

For over a century, the Iranian people have struggled to reconcile notions of Islamic identity with modernization and political liberalization. And with the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the politics of Islamic fundamentalism won favor and gained strength among the public, solidifying the grip of the Ayatollahs in Iranian politics. Yet, the idea of democracy in Iran has not been forgotten inside or outside the borders of that state:

The idea of democracy in Iran was originally conceptualized and articulated at the time of the Constitutional Revolution. In subsequent decades, it was occluded by other considerations that captured Iranian political imagination. Democracy, however, never ceased to inspire Iranian political aspirations, even if it had to share the limelight with other ideals. Throughout, democracy interacted with and evolved in response to other forces that shaped society and politics. The demand for democracy that has surfaced in Iran today is deeply informed by all the other ideological and political struggles that have shaped Iran's history since 1905.³³³

Therefore, while democracy is not the current form of government in Iran, it's ideals and values have continued to influence Iranian politics for generations. As such, outside observers are correct to identify democratic roots and possibilities in Iran. Therefore, the case of Iranian democracy is interesting because democratic ideals "predated the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism and its assault on Muslim states."³³⁴

Reform movements in Iran have deep roots. Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr argue that, "the case of Iran shows that democracy must permeate citizen's political mind-sets before it can change their political system. However, this is not a process of cultural

³³³ Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10.

³³⁴ Ibid, 16.

change or an Islamic Revolution. Rather, it is one in which democracy supersedes other ideals, solutions, and priorities in determining the rules of politics, be they cultural, religious or secular.”³³⁵ Therefore, for democracy to take hold it must become the dominant ideal of governance by the people.

However, despite the link to a more liberal past, by the late 1990s Iran had slipped into isolation. The U.S. government had created the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act to limit international trade, and security forces continued to intimidate the voices of change – especially writers.³³⁶ But some scholars saw the Presidential election of 1997 as a moment of democratic opening. “Khatami’s campaign speeches made ample references to ‘democracy,’ ‘civil society,’ ‘women’s status,’ ‘rule of law,’ and ‘dialogue among civilizations.’”³³⁷ Therefore, Khatami’s presidency is often associated with a change in political discourse, mostly because the grip on media control was loosened ever so slightly, and the possibility for democracy was present: “Allowing greater freedoms of expression to the press changed the face of the media in Iran... By relaxing governmental control of newspapers, arts, and cinema, the Khatami years brought a flowering of intellectual and political discourse in Iran that rapidly reshaped the style and content of Iranian politics.”³³⁸

The spill-over effect of this opening was widespread – not only was there an increase in the number of papers in circulation, but there was also increased enthusiasm for reform and reformists won many municipal elections in 1998. However, a conservative backlash soon followed: “The conservative forces had miscalculated the

³³⁵ Ibid, 14.

³³⁶ Ibid, 127-8.

³³⁷ Ibid, 133.

³³⁸ Ibid, 134.

potential for the reformist movement, and they construed the outcome of the 1997 election as a serious challenge to their control of power in Iran. Although on the defensive immediately after the election, the conservatives quickly rallied behind the Supreme Leader to mitigate reform effects.”³³⁹ For example, the leadership of the Revolutionary Guard changed, and grew greatly in power during the Khatami years. The conservatives worked to strengthen the ideological fabric of Iranian society.

As Samuel Huntington would predict, if democracy takes two steps forward, it will often then take at least one step back. This was the case in Iran: “Khatami, however, shied away from openly breaking with the theocratic core of the Islamic Republic, and he always discouraged confrontational politics. He would not endorse fundamental constitutional changes, and he proved unwilling to openly oppose Khamenei’s [the Supreme Leader] authority by encouraging a popular movement. Rather than leading the student protests of 1999, Khatami admonished the student leaders for precipitating clashes with security forces.”³⁴⁰ Rather than choosing to govern based on reform, Khatami moved toward the direction of the revolutionary ideals to ensure his power.

This is not to say that the voice of reform was inaudible during the Khatami years: “During the Khatami years, Iranian society was more engaged in debates on democracy than at any other time in the country’s history, but the quest for democracy was eclipsed by the fact that power remained in the hands of increasingly authoritarian clerical leadership...”³⁴¹ However, Gheissari and Nasr believe opportunities still exist for change:

The context for the democratic debate in Iran and the drive for democracy’s realization have been strengthened by demographic changes; decentralization of

³³⁹ Ibid, 136.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 139.

³⁴¹ Ibid, 142.

authority in the form of increased importance of municipal and provincial constituencies; and the decade-long experience with civil society activism, voting, and mobilization of the population during electoral campaigns. However, it is also clear that Iranian politics has not as yet removed the main obstacles to democratization and that state-building and the quest for social and individual freedoms have not converged in a linear process of political change.³⁴²

A century after the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, Iran is still unable to achieve democracy from within. But perhaps foreign influence, sending a message of democratic ideals, will resonate with the Iranian people.

³⁴² Ibid, 148.

The Iranian media landscape and blogosphere

In 2007, *Reporters Without Borders* ranked Iran nearly last (#166 out of 169) on its “World Press Freedom Index.”³⁴³ Depending on the medium, press freedom varies in Iran, but generally speaking the media landscape is bleak: “Among the mainstream media, newspapers are a more trusted source of news than radio or TV by Iranians, but radio and in particular TV are highly regulated and part of the state apparatus.”³⁴⁴ Reformist papers have been forced to shut down by the conservatives in the judiciary. In particular, the struggle over the press during Khatami’s presidency demonstrated “the push and pull between dual sources of authority in the Iranian government.”³⁴⁵ Therefore, to broadly state that the Iranian press is censored is perhaps an overstatement, but it is clear that reformist papers will meet censorship, or even closure.

Censorship, naturally, depends on the medium: “In Iran, satellite TV, Internet based radio stations, cell phones and other Internet based tools are difficult if not impossible for the regime to control.”³⁴⁶ And while the Iranian media, especially television, may be run by the regime, there is a world of mass media written for and by the Iranian people. Globalization and the changing nature of new media has provided opportunities for Iranians to use the Internet as a resource and stage upon which to discuss the political, cultural, economic and spiritual realities of life in Iran. This now

³⁴³ Reporters Without Borders, “Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2007,” (Accessed November 25, 2008), http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025.

³⁴⁴ John Kelly and Bruce Etling, “Mapping Iran’s Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere,” The Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, Research Publication No. 2008-01, (Accessed November 26, 2008), <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications>, 41.

³⁴⁵ Ibid, 42.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, 46.

famous “blogosphere” is well known as a staging ground for reformer ideals.³⁴⁷ John Kelly and Bruce Etling of the Berkman Center at Harvard University have conducted an in-depth study of the Iranian blogosphere, which is quite useful for my research.

In their report they note from the outset that, “in contrast to the conventional wisdom that Iranian bloggers are mainly young democrats critical to the regime, we found a wide range of opinions representing religious conservative points of view as well as secular and reform-minded ones, and topics ranging from politics and human rights to poetry, religion, and pop-culture.”³⁴⁸ In their research findings, Kelly and Etling identify four poles to the blogosphere: the “secular/reformist” pole, the “conservative/religious” pole, the “Persian poetry and literature” pole, and “mixed networks” (i.e. those that did not fit distinctly in one of the former three poles). A closer evaluation of the conservative/religious pole illustrated criticisms of particular policies and politicians, to the surprise of Kelly and Etling. They explain, “While some of its members support the current government absolutely, criticism of government institutions and political leaders, including Ahmadinejad, is common.”³⁴⁹ The topics of interest to the secular/religious bloggers were international news, the economy and even women’s issues: “Topics found in the secular/reformist pole included journalism, the crackdown on university students, and political prisoners.”³⁵⁰ Interestingly, the conservative bloggers also discuss women’s issues, but obviously from a conservative point of view.³⁵¹ This dichotomy demonstrates the richness of the Iranian online debate. And it is important to note that the authors view

³⁴⁷ Kelly and Etling identified approximately 60,000 routinely updated blogs, making it “perhaps the fourth largest ‘blogosphere’ in the world.” Ibid, 2, 6.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, 2.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, 21.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, 26. The authors note that it is the conservative bloggers who focus their writings on gas prices and the nuclear issue.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 23.

the “discourse in *conPol* [conservative bloggers]... [is] like ‘democratic’ discourse, full of invective, opinion, and critique of friends and foes alike, rather than parroting of a party line.”³⁵² There is room for political debate on the conservative side of the blogosphere as well, showing the depth of opportunity for American international broadcasters to enter the vibrant debate.

While on the one hand the state is marred by prison sentences for students and free-speaking journalists, on the other there is an active and open public political debate on the web. This is the media environment in which the American international broadcasters are competing for a voice in the Iranian market for loyalties. The authors of the Berkman report explain the dichotomy of open/closed debate in terms of Keshavarzian’s “factionalized authoritarianism,” which is the system of “Islamic Governance that has emerged in Iran [that] includes elements of democracy such as elections for representative institutions for the Parliament and the Presidency. However, those elements of democracy and mass participation are subsumed under the rule of clerics who determine who is permitted to run for office and otherwise limit the level of political debate.”³⁵³ The idea of factionalized authoritarianism, perhaps an expansion of illiberal democracy, depicts the hybrid nature of governance in Iran.

Adding to this dichotomy, Kelly and Etling were surprised to find the low level of anonymous bloggers, despite the crackdowns on press and freedom of speech throughout

³⁵² Ibid, 28.

³⁵³ Ibid, 40. As Kelly and Etling explain on p. 42, “For Keshavarzian, this political contestation among elites is unique to Iran’s brand of authoritarianism, and is created by the highly fragmented state that generates and nourishes elite factionalism and public contestation, but allows hard-liners to monitor and manage those debates to ensure that conflict exist but do not go so far as to lead to the break down of the system of transition to democracy.” Therefore, the brand of Iranian authoritarianism can be distinguished from the Azerbaijani brand described above. For more information, see: Arang Keshavarzian, “Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation in Iran,” in *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, eds. Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 64.

Iran. They note that, “surprisingly, a minority of bloggers in the secular/reformist pole appear to blog anonymously, even in the more politically-oriented part of it; instead, it is more common for bloggers in the religious/conservative pole to blog anonymously. Blocking of blogs by the government is less pervasive than we had assumed.”³⁵⁴ In fact, 65% of those bloggers in the reformer pole use their names, while only 20% in the conservative religious pole offer their identification.³⁵⁵

Kelly and Etling’s report is also helpful for my research as it identifies the popular outlinks connecting Iranian bloggers to the Internet. The links are different, as the conservative bloggers “feature news and online information sites within Iran, while [the secular/reform] bloggers link to a different bundle of news and online information sites popular with expatriates, and which includes popular Western resources like YouTube and Wikipedia.”³⁵⁶ The idea of linking to secular/reform bloggers is one that should be pursued by both RFE/RL and VOA as a way of increasing traffic. Especially since the report indicates that both reform and conservative bloggers link to “major Iranian news sources like ISNA, and farsnews.com, but also BBC Online.”³⁵⁷

Therefore, a real opportunity exists on the Iranian blogosphere for discussion about the themes of liberal democracy, which is relevant to my research for two reasons. First, the blogosphere represents an active culture of communication about reform that has not been destroyed by government control. (Kelly and Etling note that, “it is fundamental to democracy that there exist *public* trading zones of ideas and opinions that are available to any member of the polity on a more or less equal basis, whether they

³⁵⁴ Ibid, 2.

³⁵⁵ Ibid, 15.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, 34.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, 34.

choose to participate or not.”)³⁵⁸ Second, this active blogosphere represents a missed opportunity for RFE/RL and VOA to communicate with like-minded Iranian bloggers, and those less-like-minded bloggers who may be linked in, in the public trading zone. This missed opportunity will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

In sum, the range of voices on the Iranian blogosphere is perhaps what makes it interesting: “Iranian bloggers include members of Hezbollah, teenagers in Tehran, retirees in Los Angeles, religious students in Qom, dissident journalists who left Iran a few years ago, exiles who left thirty years ago, current members of the Majlis (parliament), reformist politicians, a multitude of poets, and quite famously, the President of Iran, among others.”³⁵⁹ Globalization has most definitely hit Iran. And unlike the case of Azerbaijan, the voice of reform, though often silenced, is real and not fabricated from within the family-clan, as noted above.

But despite the diverse nature of the blogosphere, government censorship does exist: “Aside from arresting bloggers whose writings offends them, the government forces ISPs to block access to a large number of websites, including many blogs.”³⁶⁰ Naturally, the Iranian government blocks the blogs in the secular/reform pole more broadly than conservative blogs. Kelly and Etling demonstrate that 21% of secular blogs are blocked, 11% of reform blogs are blocked, and only 2% of conservative blogs are blocked. But on the flip side, this means that 79% of secular blogs are visible – which is

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 47. The authors further illustrate this point on page 17: “In most autocratic countries, struggles over particular state policies and decisions normally happen far from public view. By contrast, in most democratic countries arguments and evidence in support of multiple positions on all sorts of issues compete for public attention... In a democratic society, advocates abound. The Iranian blogosphere is full of advocates, on all sides.”

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 9.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, 9.

650 blogs – and 89% of reform blogs are visible – which is 663 blogs.³⁶¹ Therefore, there is a wide array of resources for the secular or reform-minded Internet reader. Further, the blogs that were blocked, across the spectrum, appear to contain feminist themes, erotic themes, or obscene language.³⁶² Therefore, “the Iranian blogosphere remains a viable arena of political contestation and forum for viewpoints challenging the ruling ideology of the Islamic Republic. In this sense, it remains a robust platform for democratic discourse for a society with severely curtailed modes of practical political participation.”³⁶³

³⁶¹ Ibid, 38.

³⁶² Ibid, 38-9.

³⁶³ Ibid, 40.

Parallels across the case studies

While broadcasting to Iran and Azerbaijan offers distinct challenges for the American international broadcasters, there are overwhelming parallels, as discussed in the previous chapters, that increase our understanding of the challenges and opportunities for broadcasting a message of democratic change in Eurasia.

The above discussion outlines that both the Iranian and Azerbaijani regimes have managed to keep a firm grip on independent candidates in parliamentary elections – either by eliminating their freedom to run in entirety or by limiting their voice or controlling them when elected. The regimes are successful in this endeavor because of a continuation of what can be called “clan politics.” In the case of Azerbaijan this clan mentality is associated with the Aliyev family and kinship loyalties, which date back beyond the war with Armenia and independence. In Iran, the clan is religious in nature, creating a situation with the conservative religious elite are able to minimize the impact of political elections.

In addition, both states have been able to curtail revolutionary behavior to maintain power in their states. Azerbaijan is aware of the post-Soviet revolutionary phenomenon. In tune to this, the regime allows for independent and reform movements, opens up the press slightly, only to give a sense that change is possible before limiting the impact of any revolution. The Iranian regime works hard to ensure that the revolutionary nature of the state is the Islamic Revolution, constantly developing and changing. Funneling energies towards this revolution has limited the impact of any democratic revolution. In each state, the grip on press freedom limits the ability for alternative opinions and perspectives to challenge the political trajectory.

Further, both states have early twentieth century democratic roots – roots that were laid before the spread of communist Russia and the fall of the Iranian Shah. But while this history gives some hope that ultimately liberty will come to Azerbaijan and Iran, it is clear that the cultural and chronologic gap from the early 20th century to the early 21st century has limited the impact of these histories on creating internal change.

However, there are major differences that limit the opportunities for promoting democracy in Iran that do not impact Azerbaijan. The most glaring is of course the history of the 1953 coup in Iran, and the unfortunate legacy of American interference. But from a regime perspective, the limitations in Iran are steeper as well. First, the centrality of Islam and the Islamic fundamental nature of the state conflicts greater with the values of liberty and freedoms than that of the Azerbaijani brand of nationalism prevalent since the fall of the Soviet Union. In addition, the external looking nature of the Azerbaijani regime and people – made possible through the independence of the nations oil and gas reserves – has created more opportunities for cultural, political and economic collaborations with the West. This as opposed to the internal looking nature of the Iranian state, which has been further isolated by sanctions, growing tensions over nuclear weapons, and a closed relationship with the U.S. since the hostage crisis in Tehran over 20 years ago.

In addition, while both societies are in fact ethnically and religiously diverse, Azerbaijan embraces and commends its diversity, whereas Iran does not. Azerbaijan proudly considers itself a society where three great religious faiths can live side by side, and it was in remembrance of the Russian attack of January 20, 1993 that brought Christian and Jewish leaders out in solidarity with Muslim leaders, in favor of

Azerbaijani independence. A statement to the Jewish community on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is indicative of this attitude in favor of plurality and religious freedom:

We consider ethnic and religious diversity a historical achievement of the modern Azerbaijani society, in which traditional friendship, brotherhood and tolerance among different nations have always reigned. Guaranteeing human rights and freedoms for everybody – irrespective of their language, religion and ethnicity – is one of the key priorities of our policy aimed at ensuring stability, peace and civil solidarity. The independent State of Azerbaijan have always attached a particular emphasis to this issue and necessary democratic and legal basis had been created in the country to ensure that all national minorities, including the Jewish community, safeguard their national and cultural originality and traditions and develop their language and culture. It is with great pleasure that I would like to note that our Jewish citizens are actively involved in the socio-political life of our country and the process of building democratic statehood.³⁶⁴

It would be very surprising to hear Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speaking such words of tolerance and plurality, especially given his distinctly public anti-Semitic comments.³⁶⁵

These key differences can either demonstrate the higher need for American public diplomacy and broadcasting in Iran, or perhaps the higher likelihood of some measure of success or change possible in Azerbaijan. These similarities and differences outline the different strategic goals or horizon for the American international broadcasters in Azerbaijan and Iran.

³⁶⁴ Rob Eshman, “Muslim President: ‘Shana Tova,’” *The Jewish Journal*, September 21, 2009, (Accessed September 25, 2009), http://www.jewishjournal.com/bloggish/item/muslim_president_shana_tova_20090921/.

³⁶⁵ It is important to note that there are at least 25,000 Jews in Iran, which is a greatly decreased number since 1948, when Israel was founded. Approximately 75,000 Persian Jews have emigrated from Iran to either Israel, the U.S. or beyond. While Azerbaijan has also seen a large portion of its Jewish population immigrate to Israel, that state has used this wave of immigration to advantage – creating linkages with Israel based on both cultural and economic ties. This relationship has even led to the visit of Israeli President Shimon Peres to Baku.

The American role in the market for loyalties

John Dewey believed that democracy was more than a form of government, but also a type of discovery and national identification. To Dewey, “the most pressing problem of the public was how to identify itself to itself, and the answer lay in large part with modes of public communication, principally newspapers and emerging electronic mass media.”³⁶⁶ In both Azerbaijan and Iran, globalization is reframing the internal quest to identify one’s national identity. Not only do the state run media and reform voices have a role in this conversation, the global media is a growing force in the market for loyalties. The role of American international broadcasting is to be a democratic voice in this mix.

New media is increasingly part of this cyclical relationship between the public and the state in the market for loyalties: “Recent trends in Internet technologies and associated cultural practices are shaping a qualitatively different sort of mediated public sphere in which users contribute to as well as consume public discourse.”³⁶⁷ Therefore the market for loyalties can go both ways – it can be shaped by state and foreign media sources, but in the Internet age it also increasingly incorporates the voice of the public. “The benefit of a networked communications model is that it changes the architecture by allowing multi-dimensional informational flows, and reduces the costs of becoming a speaker.”³⁶⁸

Despite the complicated history of U.S. engagement in Iran, and despite the growing trade and energy relations brewing between the U.S. and Azerbaijan,

³⁶⁶ John Kelly and Bruce Etling, 43.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 44.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, 45.

communicating a message of democratic values is a priority for both RFE/RL and VOA in both countries. In doing so, these organizations attempt to engage the public in a new conversation, challenging state-fed conceptions of national identity, governance and statehood. While guided by a similar end-goal, RFE/RL and VOA pursue their work in slightly different ways, guided by their individual organizational missions. These missions, and their impact on the democracy promotion possibilities via broadcasting, will be discussed further in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

America's Voice Abroad: The history and charter of Voice of America

This chapter will evaluate the organizational structure and mission of Voice of America (VOA), in order to explain its strategic vision and historical role. As such, findings from this chapter will be contrasted with insights from the following chapter, which will evaluate Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and will provide a foundation for understanding the relevancy of democracy promotion in the strategies of both organizations. Considering the history, missions, culture and myths of both VOA and RFE/RL will shed light on my main research question: *Is promoting democratic values a strategic priority for VOA and RFE/RL in their reporting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan?*

As described in chapter 2, both VOA and RFE/RL are idea-infused organizations. This means that ideas are embedded into the organizational missions and therefore influence work culture. These ideas survive and are massaged through historical myth. And while ideas help ensure organizational survival, idea-infused organizations are limited in their ability to innovate and change with an evolving external policy environment.³⁶⁹ The concept of idea-infused organizations can act as a guide to understanding how the history, legacy, myths, and employees weave together inside VOA, and RFE/RL, to create a specific culture and passion behind the mission of the organization. For that reason, this and the following chapter will consider all of the

³⁶⁹ However, an exception to this rule is that an organization will innovate if it is attempting to gain independence. In this Chapter, I will demonstrate that VOA falls into line with this exception, as gaining independence has been a constant struggle for VOA.

ingredients that have come together to form the mission, and ideas, behind these international broadcasters.

As such, this chapter considers the organization of VOA - from structure, to location, to mission, to personalities of leadership. It chronicles the quest of Voice of America to define its mission, and to secure its place in the American governmental and global media landscape. The findings in this chapter come from varied sources – interviews with employees of VOA, interviews with members of VOA's parent organization - the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), and books written by former employees of VOA which give a window into the historic past and give the reader a sense of historic myths. These books include:

- *Voice of America: A History*, written by Alan L. Heil, Jr., a VOA employee from 1962 to 1998. Heil was a foreign correspondent, Chief of News and Current Affairs, and Deputy Director of Programs.
- *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, by Michael Nelson, who spent most of his career working for Reuters.

This chapter will begin with a look at the BBG, which is particularly relevant in VOA's organizational structure, not only because it is the parent organization, but also because of VOA's lifelong struggle for organizational independence, which will be detailed below. Then, I will consider the history, mission and myths of VOA, the perspectives of its employees and measures of effectiveness used (which in turn offer a reflection back onto VOA, either affirming the organization's strategic vision or providing evidence of the Voice getting off track). Therefore, this chapter will provide a complete view to the motivations and strategic viewpoint of America's Voice.

Considering the Link: The parental role of the BBG

When considering the differences of the missions of RFE/RL and VOA, it is important to note that despite any differences, both organizations are managed by the oversight of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). But, perhaps because of geographic location – VOA is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and RFE/RL broadcasts from Prague – or because of the historic connection between VOA and the U.S. government, VOA continues to be more aware of the role of its parent, which is why I have included a discussion of the BBG in this chapter.

As of October 1, 1999, the United States Information Agency (USIA) merged with the U.S. Department of State, and the BBG took official control of American international broadcasting.³⁷⁰ From the BBG standpoint, this was a momentous day: “The landmark reorganization... reaffirms the journalistic integrity of U.S. international broadcasting and sets us on a clear course to pursue excellence in new programming and public service information in an increasingly unpredictable world.”³⁷¹ The transition to BBG management marked the new, post-Cold War age for both RFE/RL and VOA.

The BBG is “responsible for US Government-sponsored international broadcasting,” according to Ambassador William Rugh.³⁷² However, the function and value of the Broadcast Board of Governors is debated:

³⁷⁰ USIA was created in 1953, after the creation of the Voice, but quickly became its parent organization. In other words, VOA was founded without a parent, but quickly became dependent. For more information, see *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, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, 11.

³⁷¹ BBG statement on reorganization, Quoted in Alan L. Heil, Jr., *Voice of America: A History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 349.

³⁷² William A. Rugh, “Broadcasting and American Diplomacy,” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*, No. 14, (Spring/Summer 2005), June 29, 2005, (Accessed February 17, 2009), www.tbsjournal.com/rugh.html.

Members of the U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors have addressed short-term foreign communication needs in spite of the makeshift structure of overlapping proprietary and surrogate broadcasting operations inherited from Congress and the Clinton Administration's half-hearted attempt to reinvent government. Despite tactical success, their efforts lack long-term strategy and planning. The eight members of the BBG function like a hydra-headed chief executive with authority to meddle in daily operations and control individual pet projects like Radio Free Asia and the Middle Eastern Radio and Television Networks.³⁷³

“Meddling” in the operations of RFE/RL and VOA can be understood as either interference or strategic advantage. For example, the launch of Radio Sawa and the Middle Eastern Radio Network (MERN), two Arabic language radio stations, occurred only six months after September 11, 2001, indicating a speedy response made possible by the low-level bureaucracy of the BBG. Radio Sawa was founded in order to replace that teetering Arabic service at VOA, according to Rugh.³⁷⁴ The BBG also launched Radio Farda, the Farsi-language broadcasting network, in 2003, to bring objective news to Iran.³⁷⁵ These initiatives were relatively quick to surface (though kinks continue to be worked out - such as the structure of Radio Farda, which in its original state was a shared venture between VOA and RFE/RL and then streamlined to a RFE/RL project in 2008). If these actions can be critiqued as meddling, they are certainly also swift responses to the direction of American foreign policy in general and an argument for the small organizational structure of the BBG. Therefore, it is fair to say that strategy is the strength of the BBG, and this strategy impacts the nature of VOA and RFE/RL broadcasts and budgets.

³⁷³ Stephen Johnson, Helle C. Dale, and Patrick Cronin, Ph.D., “Strengthening U.S. Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy,” *The Heritage Foundation*, August 5, 2005, (Accessed February 15, 2009), <http://author.heritage.org/Research/PublicDiplomacy/bg1875.cfm>.

³⁷⁴ Though Rugh argues that one of the shortcomings of Radio Sawa, as opposed to VOA Arabic, is that it targets only a young audience, rather than a broad audience. However, targeting the growing youth was one of the strategic decisions BBG initiated.

³⁷⁵ Stephen Johnson, Helle C. Dale, and Patrick Cronin, Ph.D.

Therefore, when applying organization theory to RFE/RL and VOA, it is important to remember that the organizations are guided by their own missions, but also by the policy directives of Washington and the governors of the BBG. And when these governors delay in guidance, or have conflicting agendas, it limits the functionality and direction of the broadcasters. In fact, in a conversation with Stephanie Schmidt, RFE/RL's Project/Administrative Manager, it became clear that the view of the governors can be limited, mostly because they are political appointees – half will be Democrats, and half Republicans.³⁷⁶ At times, a member will have a pet project that the other governors do not support. And it is because of these conflicts of interest that Schmidt believes the broadcasters take their budgetary cues, rather than strategic cues, from the BBG, despite the possibility that BBG would direct policy. Therefore, it is probably best to articulate the role of the BBG in the following way: The BBG can quickly create innovation, but often suffers from conflicting strategic visions within the organization, which forces the broadcasters to return to their fallback position or mission.

Despite my observation that the strategic viewpoints of VOA and RFE/RL are distinct, which will be developed in this and the following chapter, Bruce Sherman, the Strategic Director of the BBG, claims that all of the broadcasters are guided by slightly different variations of the same mission. He said in an interview:

All [of the broadcasters are] under the board by statute and they must adhere to same journalistic standards. There's nothing about the principles that differ. The mission is a free press to support freedom. We put 700 million dollars and 440 employees [to that task]. Everyone is doing the same thing – they are mandated by Congress to cover policies, but not to be an advocate of these policies. In other

³⁷⁶ Stephanie Schmidt, Project/Administrative Manager, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Boston, MA, May 16, 2009.

words, the mission is the same – each organization takes a slice of the journalistic beat is that is different.³⁷⁷

My impression was that Sherman was toting the line of VOA – that the broadcasters report politics, but are not involved in politics. I believe that the next chapter will illustrate that this vision does not accurately fit the work of RFE/RL. Perhaps Sherman’s point of view comes from the fact that the BBG, headquartered in Washington like VOA, is more physically connected to America’s Voice.

Ultimately, Sherman supports the idea of exemplar style democracy promotion: “By being an example of free press, you are signaling to people who are well accustomed to propaganda what a different type of media can be. You are exemplifying.” Sherman also argued that democracy is the central guiding principle for all broadcasters, especially when considering where broadcasts can be heard: “We broadcast where democracy is weak or trying to take shape – we are more of an instrument of foreign policy...[we] help support freedom where it doesn’t exist.” This is not entirely the case – RFE/RL broadcasts specifically in states that are weak on democracy, whereas VOA has global reach.

Regardless of Sherman’s interpretation of the missions of American international broadcasting, it is clear that he has articulated the crucial importance of this work, and BBG projects in particular. In fact, the BBG’s broadcasting initiatives have received praise by the U.S. General Accounting Office: “Radio Sawa is reaching 51 percent of targeted listeners on FM, according to the U.S. General Accounting (now Government

³⁷⁷ Bruce Sherman, Director, Strategic Planning, Broadcast Board of Governors, Phone Interview, April 28, 2008.

Accountability) Office, compared to VOA's single digits."³⁷⁸ (Note that praise for a broadcaster is correlated with audience numbers, a theme that will be explored further throughout this and the next chapter.) However, according to William A. Rugh, Radio Sawa offers young Arabs "the programs they want, namely pop music, but the station does little to advance public diplomacy objectives, which include improving understanding and appreciation of American society and foreign policies."³⁷⁹ Therefore, placing a station on air does not necessarily lead to effective public diplomacy, or strategic policies. My research is focused on gaining a better understanding of strategy, not audience satisfaction, because I believe that by understanding RFE/RL and VOA strategy, a more thorough evaluation of tactics – from music to news briefs – can be evaluated.

Today, the BBG continues to develop after many changes in its leadership in 2007. These organizational changes demonstrated weakness at the top of BBG: "On January 9, (2007) Board chairman Kenneth Y. Tomlinson wrote a letter to President Bush offering to step aside when his successor is named – this, after a year of turmoil in the BBG and a State Department inspector general's report claiming that Tomlinson had run horse race breeding and racing operations from his office and placed a personal friend on the Board's payroll under questionable circumstances."³⁸⁰

Heil argues that the problem with the Board is more than it's leadership:

Just about a year ago, the Board advocated the virtual elimination of VOA's worldwide English service, closure of the Croatian, Georgian, Greek, Thai and Turkish services, and cessation of radio (but not TV) broadcasts in the Russian,

³⁷⁸ Stephen Johnson, Helle C. Dale, and Patrick Cronin, Ph.D.

³⁷⁹ William A. Rugh.

³⁸⁰ Alan L. Heil, Jr., "2007: A Fateful Year for America's Voices?" *Arab Media & Society*, The American University of Cairo, 1, 2007, (Accessed March 17, 2010), <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=33>.

Albanian, Serbian, Bosnian, Hindi and Macedonian services. It also advocated reducing Radio Liberty Russian from 24 to 18 hours a day. The cuts, according to the Board's own records, would cost VOA about 15.7 million listeners and TV viewers a week.³⁸¹

The critique of the Board appears to be that it is focused on the current policy issue – winning hearts and minds of young Arabs – rather than noting that American public diplomacy must support a broader spectrum of policy goals, including U.S.-Russia relations. In addition, many within the public diplomacy community are wary of scaling back radio broadcasting, as there continues to be 300 million shortwave listeners around the world.³⁸²

After the 2007 changes, and a new administration, the Board has new faces, including Hilary Rodham Clinton, though she serves *ex-officio*, linking the Department of State with international broadcasting.³⁸³ But presently, an Executive Director, Jeffrey Trimble, manages the board while the job position of Board Chairman sits vacant. In addition, only four out of eight seats on the board are occupied. However, according to members of the current board, it is functioning fine as is: “By the governors’ own accounting, the broadcasters are doing just fine with four people instead of eight. ‘Have the broadcast entities or the day-to-day functioning of all our entities been adversely impacted [by the vacancies]? The answer is no,’ says Jeff Hirschberg, the consultant. ‘What has the impact of less than a full complement been on the remaining board members? The answer is, we’ve had to work harder.’”³⁸⁴ Given the organizational

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ For more information on the other four board members – Joaquin F. Blaya, Blanquita Walsh Cullum, D. Jeffrey Hirschberg, and Steven J. Simmons – see the BBG fact sheet, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/documents/BBGFactSheet11-09.pdf>.

³⁸⁴ Lydia DePillis, “Board to Death,” *The New Republic*, November 10, 2009, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-plank/board-death>.

breakdown of the BBG, it is not surprising that “some in the public diplomacy world are at a loss to even describe why the board is there at all. ‘I really wonder what the utility of this board is,’ says Nancy Snow, an associate professor of public diplomacy at Syracuse University. ‘A lot of people who are on this board, what are they doing?’”³⁸⁵

Despite this leadership gap, the BBG boasts improvements in key metrics – namely audience reach. Today the BBG reaches “over 171 million people weekly – an increase of 71% since 2003.”³⁸⁶ In addition, the BBG boasts that Iran is one of the largest weekly audiences and Iraq is one of the highest percentage reach, noting that success rates are focused on audience size and reach, a trend that will be explored more below.³⁸⁷

An organizational mission guides the BBG, like VOA and RFE/RL. And despite Sherman’s observation, noted above, that the BBG is closely linked to exemplar democracy promotion, the actual mission statement of the organization appears to be more of a hybrid of RFE/RL and VOA’s missions (both of which will be explored below): “To promote freedom and democracy and enhance understanding through multimedia communication of accurate, objective, and balanced news, information and other programming about America and the world to audiences overseas.”³⁸⁸ The “promote democracy” part comes from RFE/RL and the “accurate, objective” programming about America comes from VOA. While these missions do not conflict, and piece together here under the BBG, it is important to note the operational division, which will be explored

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ BBG fact sheet, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/documents/BBGFactSheet11-09.pdf>.

³⁸⁷ The highest audience reach is Nigeria (more than 22 million per week), Indonesia (more than 16 million per week) and then Iran (14,513,543 per week). The highest percentage reach is Qatar at 86% followed by Iraq at 72%. BBG fact sheet, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/documents/BBGFactSheet11-09.pdf>.

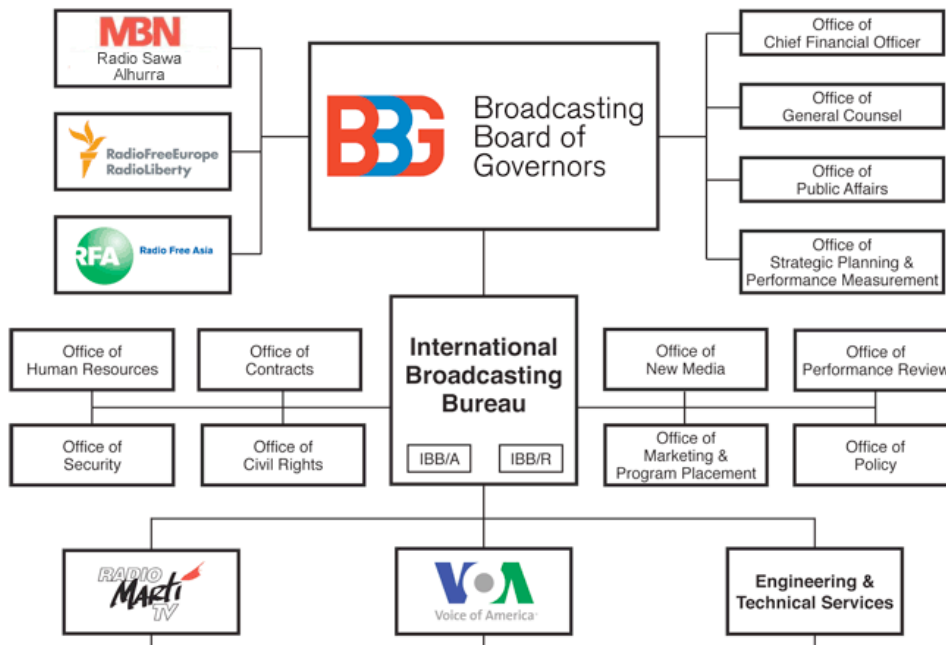
³⁸⁸ Ibid.

further in this and the following chapter.

This broad BBG mission allows for ease in management of the various broadcasters, and also explains why Stephanie Schmidt noted that the broadcasters take few daily cues from the BBG - because the BBG is seen as vague. And in our interview, she noted the empty seats on the board as a weakness in their ability to manage RFE/RL.

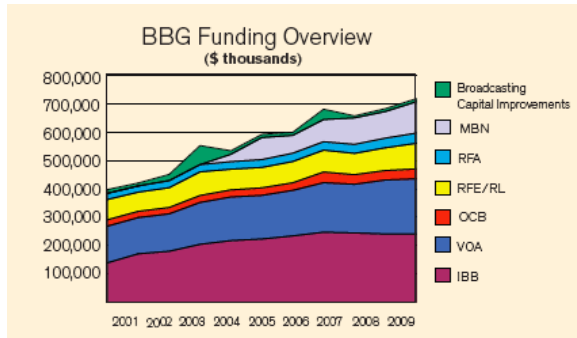
However, the following organizational chart is a descriptive view at the broad reach of the BBG³⁸⁹:

Organizational Chart



This chart indicates the various outlets receiving budgets from the estimated \$717.4 million in FY 2008. This budget has steadily been rising since 2001, as evidenced by the following chart of BBG Funding:

³⁸⁹ BBG Organizational Chart, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/orgchart.html>. The International Broadcasting Bureau is an independent agency that supports, technically, the work of the BBG.

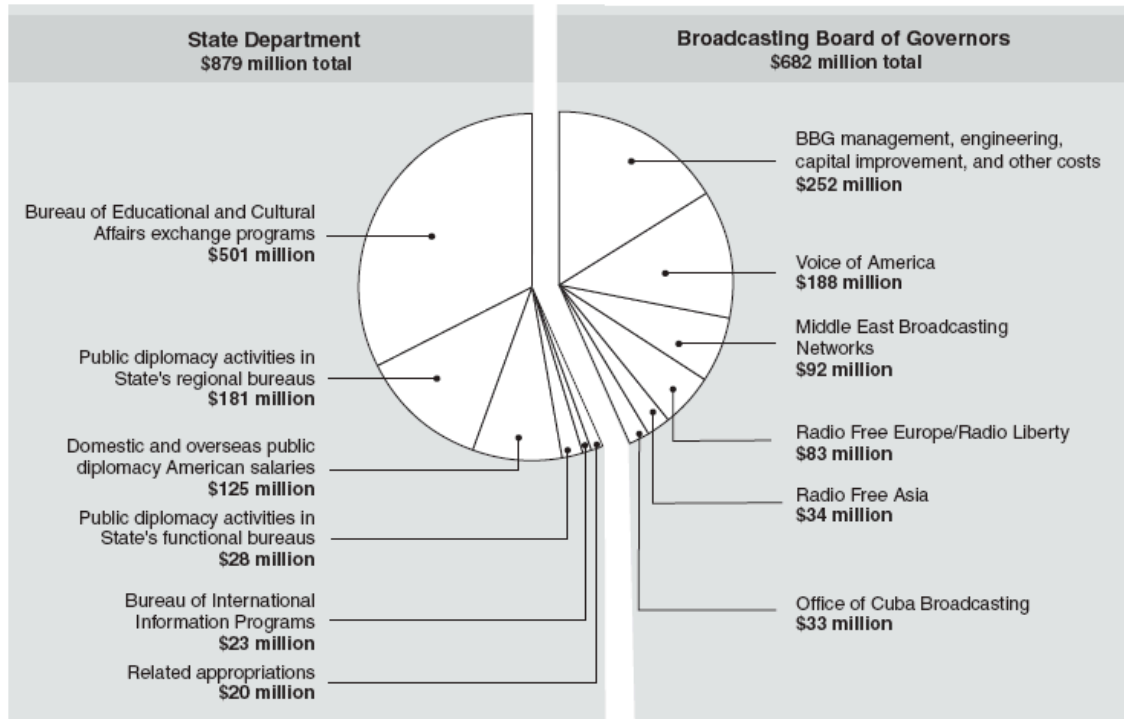


According to the most recent GAO report on public diplomacy, “State and the BBG shared a total strategic communication budget of about \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2008.”³⁹⁰ However, more than simply providing funding, the BBG “serves as a ‘firewall’ against political interference in the journalistic product.”³⁹¹ This relationship between integrity in journalistic practice, organizational mission and parental guidance will be explored more in this chapter. To understand the budgetary allotments for the various broadcasters, the 2009 GAO report published the following useful graphic:

³⁹⁰ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, United States Government Accountability Office, “U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight,” May 2009, GAO-09-679SP, 7.

³⁹¹ BBG fact sheet, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/documents/BBGFactSheet11-09.pdf>.

Figure 1: Key Uses of U.S. Strategic Communication Budget Resources for the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors, Fiscal Year 2008



Source: State Department and BBG.
 Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

VOA: History and Mission

The early history of VOA can best be defined as a struggle to articulate the mission and purpose of this organization, a struggle that culminated in the creation of the Voice of America Charter in 1960. The charter was written after years of struggling to define VOA's purpose and relationship to American foreign policy, generally, and the U.S. Department of State, specifically. VOA's history, therefore, embodies a struggle for independence, acceptance, access and recognition. This fight was an internal fight about American politics – not a fight to change the nature of external or foreign politics. In other words the fight was inward, not outward, looking.

The goal of VOA continues to be growing a global audience and staying relevant and trustworthy in terms of journalism practices. VOA was born as a product of World War II - Voice of America went on the air less than a year after Pearl Harbor.³⁹² In the beginning, VOA did not have direction, or a parent organization, for good or bad, but instead an urge to communicate, to tell America's story, and to tell the truth. And despite the fact that the radio was used during the Cold War, it was born a decade earlier, and therefore was influenced perhaps more by countering German misinformation and propaganda than Soviet communism. As such, the quest for truth and information trumped the desire to bring down communist regimes and promote democracy and capitalism as VOA entered the 1950s. This historic viewpoint might in fact explain the more exemplar style of VOA broadcasts throughout its history.

While visiting VOA headquarters in Washington, D.C., I read a hard-to-miss plaque in the foyer, which recalls the first words broadcasted by the Voice: "We bring

³⁹² VOA celebrates its birthday on February 24th, which is the day that the first 15-minute broadcast was prepared.

you Voices from America. Today, and daily from now on, we shall speak to you about America and the war. The news may be good for us. The news may be bad. But we shall tell you the truth.”³⁹³ These words get to the heart of the mission and historic myth of VOA: The broadcaster stands for the news, good or bad, over any type of media agenda tailored by the U.S. government. And the plaque reminds VOA employees of the mission of their organization as they enter work every day.

The agenda at VOA, therefore, is to bring credible news and information to audiences abroad, regardless of politics. As Alan Heil puts it, the central newsroom insisted on “telling it as it is,” as President Kennedy advised.³⁹⁴ But the agenda is more than truth – the Voice has always been *American*. The early leadership believed that the Voice should have its own logo, and signature music, in order to be recognizable, and they selected “Yankee Doodle,” to be broadcast internationally, indicating the truly American venture of VOA. By the second anniversary of VOA, hundreds of broadcast hours a week were beamed internationally in forty languages. Listeners abroad were hearing America’s Voice.

The early VOA studio was in New York City, but this distance did not foster independence from Washington. By 1943, the relationship between Washington policymakers and Voice reporters was called into question. The VOA staff “wanted to enhance the independence of policy setting in New York. VOA, according to control desk chief Edd Johnson, must be able to make quick policy decisions because important

³⁹³ William Harlan Hale, the first VOA broadcaster, spoke these words in 1942. In reflecting upon this statement, former VOA director John Houseman said, “Inevitably, the news that the Voice of America would carry to the world in the first half of 1942 was almost all bad. As Japanese invasions followed one after another with sickening regularity and the Nazi armies moved even deeper into Russia and the Near East, we would have to report our reverses without weaseling.” See John Houseman, “Excerpts from John Houseman’s Speech,” *USICA World*, April 1982, 6.

³⁹⁴ Alan L. Heil, Jr., *Voice of America: A History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 141.

news stories had to get on the air quickly if the Voice was to remain credible.”³⁹⁵ This early struggle for independence and credibility, would continue to be an organizational challenge for VOA during the Cold War, and is indicative of the slight divide between the goals of a free and credible press, and the greater policy goal of American democracy promotion via broadcasting. In other words, simply reporting truthful news, and providing a window into American culture and society, was mission enough for VOA.

The struggle for independence was mirrored by a struggle for survival, which would come to the surface when the political environment changed throughout the years. At the end of WWII, the State Department created a commission of private citizens chaired by a Columbia University professor to determine the future of VOA. “The commission advised that the United States, after World War II, could not be ‘indifferent to the ways in which our society is portrayed in other countries.’”³⁹⁶ But, Congress was concerned about appropriating funds to activities perceived as propaganda, especially in peacetime.³⁹⁷ In the end, it took William Benton, a successful advertising executive and businessman, who assumed the role of Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, to convince the State Department leadership to keep the Voice intact. He lobbied Congress to prevent a large budget reduction, and organized an advisory committee, including legendary CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow. It is the memory of giants like Benton that solidify the myth and purpose of VOA – to fight for the survival of America’s example of free press. And it was this rocky transition from war to peace that forced the

³⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 42

³⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 45.

³⁹⁷ Nelson argues “the American distaste for propaganda might have caused the closure of the Voice, had the Russians not started to blast the Americans with their propaganda weapons.” Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heaves: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 16.

Voice to consider its purpose, and perhaps even to build this purpose deeper into the organization to ensure survival.

With survival came increased calls for accountability. In 1948, the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee asked to sample VOA scripts picked at random, in order to assess their value.³⁹⁸ Therefore, early on, “measurement,” became a difficult issue at the Voice. Proving the worth of America’s Voice was not only a challenge, but also an imposition. This was especially burdensome during the McCarthy era, when VOA’s mission was reexamined. The McCarthy era had its effect on VOA’s mission, as Heil explains: “In a newsroom stylebook issued eleven years [after the founding of VOA] and just a week and a half before the McCarthy hearings began, the emphasis had changed: ‘We are not in the business to amuse, entertain or simply inform our listeners... The United States is in the midst of a serious struggle for the mind of mankind.’”³⁹⁹ Heil describes the creep of VOA’s mission away from open news and information, towards a more strategic and targeted fight for hearts and minds, to be inherently against what VOA ultimately stands for, which I believe indicates the true exemplar democracy promotion style of VOA. Heil does not see VOA as the champion of any other political cause.

When the Eisenhower administration moved the organization from under the State Department to management within the independent United States Information Agency (USIA), some were hopeful that finally VOA would experience real independence. But this excitement was shortsighted. Heil attempts to paint a rosy picture, however: “When

³⁹⁸ Heil describes how this was disastrous for VOA. Apparently the congressmen selected a program in Spanish, which was actually produced by NBC, where a visitor from Latin America came to Wyoming. The Latin American visitor asked his guide, “Do you still have Indians in Wyoming,” and the guide responded, “Yes... our Indian maidens run in races dressed in nothing but feathers.” This broadcast was translated on the floor of the House, and apparently the whole place erupted. Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 49.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 57.

VOA was separated from the State Department as part of the independent USIA, VOA insisted on appointing its own policy chief, who would report directly to the Voice director. This was a significant first step along the road to greater autonomy. Although most policy chiefs from the 1950s until the early 1980s were USIA Foreign Service officers, many fought for the journalistic integrity of the Voice.⁴⁰⁰

The VOA charter, which remains the central organizational principle at the Voice today, was created 15 years after the birth of VOA, and was inspired by VOA's quest for independence, despite the transition to USIA parenthood. The final draft, of what was then called VOA's directive, was approved by President Eisenhower shortly before he left office, though not signed into law until the Ford administration.⁴⁰¹ The charter, outlines the key points guiding the Voice, and also demonstrates the historical goals and struggles within VOA. Today, the charter is presented to the public on the VOA website:

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 63.

⁴⁰¹ President Eisenhower was a supporter of international broadcasting since his days as a General. In 1950 he called for a 'Marshall Plan of ideas,' and "he made the information program a major issue in the 1952 presidential election campaign. In his first State of the Union message in 1953 he promised to make more effective all activities related to international information because they were essential to the security of the United States." The charter was signed into law (Public Law 94-350) on July 12, 1976 by President Ford. Nelson, 60.



ABOUT VOA	VOA CHARTER
PRESS ROOM	
RADIO & TV PROGRAMS	
VOA HIGHLIGHTS	
PRONUNCIATION GUIDE	
JOBS & TRAINING	
VISIT VOA	
CONTACT US	

To protect the integrity of VOA programming and define the organization's mission, the VOA Charter was drafted in 1960 and later signed into law on July 12, 1976, by President Gerald Ford. It reads:

The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peoples of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will therefore govern Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts:

- 1. VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive.*
- 2. VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.*
- 3. VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies. (Public Law 94-350)*

For more information on the Charter, visit our VOA history page about [the 1960s and 1970s](#).

The Voice of America Charter, in my opinion, has two main points. The first is that VOA must be a credible and accurate source of news. This first mission statement has aided the cause of independence, based on a belief that editors and journalists will only be credible if given some freedom of choice in story selection, prioritization and tone. The second mission statement, to discuss all segments of America, and American foreign policy, openly, embodies the struggle between VOA and its parent organizations - State, USIA, and later the BBG. On the one hand, it is the job of VOA to present American policies. But on the other, VOA needs a certain amount of distance to be able to discuss these policies from all angles, as would be the case of an independent news organization. Therefore, while I have thus far described VOA as an example of free press, it is more accurate to suggest that VOA continues to struggle to be an example of free press. This struggle is the organizational goal of VOA.

A close look at the charter reveals little space for democracy promotion, outright, when credibility, openness, and thereby independence, are the organizational priorities for the Voice. The charter, however, is democratic in nature – as free press is a crucial pillar and value of democracy. But the Voice charter is by no means campaigning for democratic transition abroad. It is at best functioning as an example.

Heil credits the charter not only with guiding reporters who work at VOA, but also as giving VOA credibility: “VOA’s audience, estimated at approximately 45 million when the charter became law, increased to a peak of 130 million during the following decade. There were two possible reasons: the charter’s positive effect on VOA programming and the Voice’s construction of a worldwide technical delivery system at

the dawn of the satellite age.”⁴⁰² While it is difficult to separate these factors, my point instead is to illustrate how Heil places the charter on a pedestal – demonstrating the value and importance of the VOA mission and its relevance in giving VOA a sense of credibility.

As the charter was written in 1960, it was clearly influenced by recent world events, including crises in Hungary and Poland, which will be described in more detail in the next chapter, as these crises have particular importance on the broadcasting vision of RFE/RL. Following the boost from the charter, the 1961 election of John F. Kennedy was a shining moment for VOA. President Kennedy appointed the distinguished radio journalist and producer Edward R. Murrow as USIA director. Kennedy appeared to be a president that understood the difficult and sensitive task of the Voice. In a 1962 speech, he said:

It is your task, to tell the story of the American life around the world. This is an extremely difficult and sensitive task. On the one hand, you are an arm of the government and therefore an arm of the nation, and it is your task to bring our story around the world in a way which serves to represent democracy and the United States in its most favorable light. But on the other hand, you are obliged to tell our story in a truthful way, to tell it, as Oliver Cromwell said about his portrait, ‘Paint us with all our blemishes and warts, all those things about us which may not be immediately attractive.’⁴⁰³

Kennedy’s 1962 speech has remained almost a guiding principle at VOA. It represents the true mission of the organization – to tell America’s story, warts and all. And, more importantly for the purpose of this research, you can sense the clear exemplar democracy promotion strategy here, as according to Kennedy, the Voice must represent American democracy in a favorable light. However, Kennedy does not mention the regimes of any

⁴⁰² Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 176-177.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, 76.

other state, or American foreign policy goals. The differences between exemplar, champion and crusader style democracy promotion have not been lost on VOA employees over the years.

Edward R. Murrow was also very aware of VOA's mission, and his experience as director of USIA has become mythic in retrospect – especially from the standpoint of advocating for stronger American public diplomacy. The myth stems from Murrow's frustration during the U.S.-backed 1960 Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. Murrow was furious over the fact that the Kennedy administration had not warned him of the invasion, but expected him to calm the waters afterwards. After the invasion, there was a conflict of interest between the Voice and the CIA's broadcasting arm into Cuba – Radio Swan. Radio Swan was saying that the landing in Cuba was successful, while the Voice started broadcasting in Spanish, 24-hours a day, a very different story. In regards to this situation, Murrow made his famous statement: "They expect us [USIA] to be in on the crash landings... we had better be in on the takeoffs."

In the next administration, VOA broadcasts received less support than under Kennedy. Lyndon Johnson was said to have expressed his dismay over VOA broadcasts during the Vietnam War, when he was particularly frustrated with CBS, NBC, and ABC reporting. He said, "I know I can't affect the broadcasting companies, I know they won't listen to me, I know they won't help me. But God dammit, I have my own radio. I've got to make that do it right."⁴⁰⁴ Pressure from the White House is something that has historically plagued the Voice, and the idea that VOA would be "the president's radio,"

⁴⁰⁴ Heil indicates that his reference was to VOA. Ibid, 74.

was something that frightened VOA employees. The charter was supposed to be the antidote.

Independence was a key goal of VOA from an organizational perspective, and also became part of the mission of the Voice. This can be noted on the individual level: VOA correspondents had great difficulty getting accredited to correspondent associations in Washington because of the stigma of being a government journalist. VOA finally won this victory in 1983: “Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) entered a hearing room of the Senate Rules Committee, eyes blazing with anger, and inquired... why TASS and Izvestia correspondents had full access in the halls of Congress and those of America’s Voice did not. That did it.”⁴⁰⁵ Other members of Congress had been equally frustrated by the limitations put on the Voice. William Cohen, while he was serving in the House (he would later become a U.S. Senator and Secretary of Defense), wrote letters to Secretary of State Kissinger and the director of USIA in 1975 about USIA’s censorship. He wrote, “Reports that VOA correspondents in foreign capitals have had to clear their copy through American ambassadors certainly do not seem consistent with the avowed purpose of the Voice of America... Our free and open government, unlike those of authoritarian states, is secure enough to trust the truth. We do not need to stoop to the level of the propagandists of other nations.”⁴⁰⁶ I believe Cohen’s objections get to the heart of why the struggle for independence is a mirror into VOA’s mission – that to tell it straight, VOA needed to also be able to be free from the U.S. government. But as stated

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 88.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 174.

above, U.S. presidents, such as Lyndon Johnson, came to see the Voice as *their* voice, not the Voice of an American people, the voice of freedom.

Challenges to the Voice also came in the form of technology. There were three major technical difficulties that the Voice faced while attempting to build a global network: overcoming the deteriorating signals received by northern latitude listeners of short-wave radio, confronting the vast distances across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in order to reach listeners (in 1950 VOA began using a ship at sea for a relay station), and countering jamming, used heavily by the Soviet bloc, China and Cuba.⁴⁰⁷ Confronting Soviet jamming was a very active part of VOA's strategy starting in the 1950s. Nelson argues that, "jamming success was considerable. The American Embassy in Moscow reported in May 1949 that the VOA was getting through only for rare intervals of a few minutes."⁴⁰⁸

Jamming was not the only challenge to international broadcasting: "Totalitarian regimes had three ways of countering foreign broadcasts: jamming radio, restricting the receiving equipment, and intimidating the listeners."⁴⁰⁹ And communist regimes used all three tactics. As such, "the VOA looked at alternative means of sending news. They

⁴⁰⁷ According to Nelson, the Soviets started deliberately jamming VOA transmitters on February 3rd, 1948, meaning that the Voice had only one year of freedom in broadcasting to the Soviets. Western experts identified 250 skywave jammers working together with 3000 groundwave jammers during the height of the Cold War. See p. 20. But of course, jamming was limited, "because the jamming government needed to hear what was being broadcast. Monitoring was important for both sides. Propaganda could not be conducted without good intelligence..." Nelson, 21. Jamming became a de facto front of the Cold War. A statement by an Izvestia journalist in 1968 indicated that jamming and counterjamming measures constituted an intensification of the conflict in the airwaves, which indicates that the other side of broadcasting equally saw the airwaves as a front of the Cold War to be won. See Nelson, i.

⁴⁰⁸ Nelson, p. 22. Nelson also points out that the U.S. lodged a complaint about jamming to the secretary general of the International Telecommunications Union on April 29, 1949, noting specifically the Soviet violations. The Soviet Union did not reply to the charge. On December 14, 1950, just months after the founding of RFE/RL, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution condemning jamming by forty-nine votes to five. See Nelson, 25.

⁴⁰⁹ Nelson, 6.

considered but rejected the use of migratory birds or seals.”⁴¹⁰ Many of these issues still confront VOA today, and while the Internet has offered new opportunities, censorship on the web means radio has not become an antiquated medium of communication.⁴¹¹

The “war of the black heavens” which refers to the battle to control, or jam, the airwaves, created a higher value of English language broadcasting for VOA, as “the Soviet Union jammed only Russian and nationality languages, but left English in the clear throughout the Cold War.”⁴¹² In the 1960s English language broadcasting had more than doubled. (Today, English language broadcasting is seen primarily as a way of influencing foreign and domestic opinion leaders, but is also a growing component of the VOA listenership.) There were moments of quiet in the black heavens, and one particularly interesting incident was after President Kennedy gave a very celebrated talk at American University in 1963. He called for a new dialogue with the Soviet Union, and in the aftermath, “jamming ceased in Europe except in Bulgaria and East Germany... Overall, the airtime of all the international broadcasters doubled.” This moratorium on jamming would continue for six years, until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.⁴¹³

However, American international broadcasting decayed between the 1960s and 1980s. Technologically, VOA couldn’t keep up, and while its mission remained strong, its ability to innovate was not exemplary, as would be predicted for an idea-infused organization. For example, from 1973 to 1983, the number of high-powered shortwave transmitters in the entire world almost doubled from 276 to 470, but VOA had only six of

⁴¹⁰ Nelson, 24.

⁴¹¹ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 110-111, 127.

⁴¹² *Ibid*, 113.

⁴¹³ *Ibid*, 115, 159.

them.⁴¹⁴ It would take a connected individual – Charles Z. Wick, who was a close friend of President Reagan – to launch a \$1.3 billion modernization project as the head of USIA.⁴¹⁵

The seed for this project was President Reagan’s reaffirmation of the VOA mission. Reagan called on VOA to modernize. In 1984 he said:

The Voice of America has been a strong voice for the truth. Despite problems of antiquated equipment and Soviet jamming, the Voice of America has been able to extend its message of truth around the world. Were it not for many years of neglect, the Voice of America could be heard more clearly by many more people around the globe. And that’s why our administration has made the same kind of commitment to modernizing the Voice of America that President Kennedy brought to the space program.⁴¹⁶

A generation later, VOA, was better equipped to adapt to the Internet because of this modernization project, according to Heil. On January 31, 1994 its correspondents put texts of reports online and VOAnews.com was officially launched in November 1, 2000. The website originally featured audio and video in English, including the weekday “Talk to America” program. Soon after the launch, VOA was measuring about 3 million page views a month, and the average stay on the site was 13 minutes, which Heil described as a long visit.⁴¹⁷ Therefore, as Drezner argues, it is possible for an idea-infused organization to survive the changing external atmosphere.

⁴¹⁴ Heil argues that the continued use of shortwave radio sets VOA apart from commercial broadcasters on page 429: “Because of the portability of shortwave radios, as we’ve seen, VOA reaches listeners in war-ravaged villages in the Balkans, in rebel-held hideouts in Colombia, in mountainside monasteries in Tibet, and in columns of humanity in strife-torn regions of Central Africa. It will be light-years, if ever, before CNN considers it commercially feasible to broadcast in Tibetan or Kurdish or in Pasto and Dari to Afghanistan. And where technologies are more advanced or used by elites, Voice transmissions are available not only on radio, but on television, the Internet, and local FM stations on car radios.”

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 117. In addition, under Reagan, USIA launched the “Project for Truth” and a disinformation alert, designed to combat Soviet propaganda. During this time, there was great attention given to the “quality” of VOA news.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 347.

Further, Heil argues that because of practice, after September 11, 2001, VOA demonstrated its' ability to innovate and broadcast in times of crisis: "VOA reached into the heart of Afghanistan, then the epicenter of world terrorism, as no other U.S. institution could – via tiny shortwave radios. It broadcast in three languages widely understood in Afghanistan: Pashto, Dari and Farsi. Four out of five adult Afghan men tuned into VOA once a week, two-thirds of them daily."⁴¹⁸ But innovation, Heil argues, does not mean abandoning technologies that have the power to reach a wide audience: "As the communications digital divide sharpens... shortwave still reaches huge audiences in Africa and large areas of Asia. It is the most inexpensive technology for the consumer. There are 600 million to 1 billion radios in the world capable of pulling down a shortwave or medium wave signal but incapable of accessing satellites or digital radio."⁴¹⁹ And as Heil notes, replacing that large of an audience will be a difficult task.

The organization has more than reached its goal of being a credible, global news source. It has remained committed to the notion that it is possible to be a voice of America without being simply a voice of the American government. Indicative of this, today the VOA website separates news and editorials, which are written by members of the State Department. In my opinion, as the editorials are buried at the bottom of the site's left-hand navigation and fall below the fold, many VOA readers will miss the editorials all together, indicating a desire for VOA to be first a news source, and only second a voice of American policy.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 405. But in the aftermath of 9-11, VOA was subject to a range of critiques in the press about its coverage and strategy.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 437.

⁴²⁰ The left hand navigation of VOAnews.com includes, in the following order: USA, Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Middle East, American Life, Arts and Entertainment, More Topics, Special Reports, Going Green, Money in Motion, Now You Know, Off The Beaten Path, The Link, My VOA Community, You

Today, VOA boasts a weekly audience of 115 million people worldwide and broadcasts in 45 languages. The FY 2007 budget of VOA was \$172 million.⁴²¹ It has innovated to include new media and has created somewhat of a community and blog atmosphere in a feature called “my VOA,” illustrated below:

VOA 2.0:



Therefore, VOA has continued to evolve over the 65-year tenure of the organization, but very central to this evolution has been the quest to define the organization, perhaps best articulated in the charter, along with the quest for independence, a crucial element of being an example of free press.

Tube, Facebook, Twitter, [the fold], Podcasts, RSS, Mobile, Newsletter, Webcasts, About the U.S., Editorials, RFE/RL, RFA, Pronunciation Guide.

⁴²¹ Information from a VOA flyer given to visitors entitled, “Voice of America: A Trusted Source of News and Information Since 1942.”

The fight for independence

VOA felt the pressure of American foreign policy goals from the outset: “The start of jamming in February 1948 and the increased intensity of the cold war caused VOA gradually to take a more aggressive stance in its broadcasts. Congress encouraged the VOA and instructed it to refute Soviet misstatements and lies more quickly.”⁴²² This pressure from other arms of the American government increased when President Truman laid out his aims in the 1950 “Campaign for Truth” speech. He said, “We must make ourselves known as we really are – not as Communist propaganda pictures us. We must pool our efforts with those of other free peoples in a sustained, intensified program to promote the cause of freedom against the propaganda of slavery. We must make ourselves heard around the world in a great campaign of truth.”⁴²³ While the campaign was about freedom, it stretched VOA beyond the comfort zone of its budding mission. Heil makes his discomfort clear in his account.

The organizational fault lines at VOA were always with the parent organization, particularly apparent in the difficult relationship between VOA and USIA. Deputy Program Manager of the Voice, Cliff Groce, described this fault line in 1968 as caused by differences in “outlook.” He said that USIA, the parent agency, communicated face to face with individuals overseas, in the field. The Voice of America, as a mass medium, reached many people “out there,” elites as well as the general population. Therefore:

In times of ‘crisis,’ when normal ‘field’ access is cut off entirely, the Agency [USIA] regularly rediscovers the importance of VOA and grinds out volumes of

⁴²² Nelson, 36.

⁴²³ Address at a luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 20, 1950, Public Papers of President Harry S. Truman, quoted in Nelson, 38.

instructions for the Voice's dealing with the new 'tactical' situation... They fail to understand that this massive communication instrument cannot simply be turned on and off in terms of function, any more than it can in terms of broadcast hours in a given language in a particular area, without serious damage to its continuing function: providing accurate, up-to-date information about developments throughout the world and most particularly, the United States.⁴²⁴

This explanation can be used as a metaphor for public diplomacy in general – in times of crisis, public diplomacy is rediscovered. But it can also be used as a metaphor for the mission of VOA – not only to be a window into American society, and to be an accurate source of news, as stated in the charter, but also to be independent from the whims of the American government, in this case USIA, and the tides of policy.

The quest towards independence continued when in 1968 Senator Fulbright called for a high-level commission to study both the Department of State and USIA. This was particularly important for VOA because it led to, albeit a few years later, the Stanton Commission (1974-1975), which recommended that VOA become an independent organization, separate from USIA. In early 1978 another five-member panel studied the challenges for VOA. This group convened outside the government, and was led by leaders from the *Washington Post*, NBC and the *New York Times*. Heil explains that, “they concluded that the real problem was not the number of correspondents, but the restrictions placed on them because of their attachment to embassies abroad and their holding official passports and dependence on diplomatic missions for support.” This panel therefore recommended that VOA reporters no longer use official passports, that they now operate from outside of embassies, using commercial rather than official means of communications.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 142.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid*, 191.

But as time went on, the struggle for independence continued. In a National Security Decision Directive (NSDD 45) under President Reagan, VOA was asked to “take steps to strengthen existing mechanisms for relating program content to current U.S. foreign and national security policy objectives and to ensure that VOA commentary and analysis incorporated ‘vigorous advocacy of current policy positions of the U.S. government.’”⁴²⁶ This is coming from a President who advocated America’s Voice, though perhaps misunderstood its mission.⁴²⁷

According to Heil, the merger between USIA and State allowed for VOA to finally, in his opinion, become independent: “Just a dozen weeks before the year 2000, the Voice of America and the other publicly funded overseas civilian networks achieved organizational (or nominal) independence.”⁴²⁸ While VOA will probably never truly be independent, the new parent, the BBG, attempted to create more independence for the organization, and its initiatives during its first year were “accelerating the quest for independence of VOA and the other U.S. government civilian overseas networks.”⁴²⁹ In mid-October 1999 a “low-key ceremony was held in the VOA auditorium... to take note of the newly won independence.”⁴³⁰ Therefore, VOA employees had come to see independence as a battle to be won, and perhaps it gave them an organizational purpose. At this low-key ceremony, then-Senator Joe Biden, who had an influential role in the events of the day, spoke: “The result was not foreordained. In the spring of 1997, for

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 201.

⁴²⁷ Given Heil’s response to this NSDD, I would assume that there is no governmental objective in VOA broadcasts. But the content analysis I conducted for the following chapters, I believe, articulates something quite different. (Particularly in the case of Iran, there is a VOA message, which is in tandem with a national security message of the United States – the focus on the nuclear issue in Iran.) To view the NSDD, see: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-045.htm>, (Accessed November 19, 2009).

⁴²⁸ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 349.

⁴²⁹ Ibid, 359.

⁴³⁰ Ibid, 369.

example, many people in the State Department wanted broadcasting to be folded into State along with the rest of USIA. Senator Helms and I convinced our colleagues that placing broadcasting inside the State Department would be the equivalent of a death sentence, threatening both the budget and journalistic integrity of all the services.”⁴³¹ Therefore, broadcasting avoided a life-threatening blow to its independence in 1999.

But the fight continued on, not in terms of independence from State, but in terms of legitimacy for VOA, as articulated through the budget. According to Heil, “VOA director Evelyn S. Lieberman (1997-1999), a Clinton appointee, worked quietly behind the scenes to keep the Voice out of the State Department. She canvassed her predecessors for support.... She headed off additional efforts to trim VOA’s budget. This no-nonsense executive aided the independence quest and succeeded in persuading Congress to raise its appropriation for international broadcasting by \$10 million in 1998.”⁴³² Therefore, the fight for independence became linked with the fight against a trimmed budget for VOA in the post-Cold War era.

Heil argues that the need for funding for broadcasting increased after September 11, 2001: “The global struggle against terrorism dramatizes the dire need for increased investment in international broadcasting. This is essential to pay for expanded broadcasts to the Middle East and Islamic world and for multimedia modernization... Nearly all VOA employees terminated for budget reasons between 1995 and 2001 were on-air broadcasters or producers, most of them in language services.” Heil also argues that a truly independent VOA would decide which language services are cut and which are

⁴³¹ Ibid, 370.

⁴³² Ibid, 362.

increased, and he expresses frustration that the Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bulgarian, Georgian, Romanian, Slovak, Turkish and Uzbek services were reduced in early 2001.⁴³³

VOA's journalistic independence was not secured, and was challenged again in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. "Overnight, there was a renewed strategic need for an American voice to reflect the nation's suffering and its response during that long struggle. But it didn't take long for the 'war on terrorism' to generate ancien regime-like pressures from the U.S. government on VOA once again to curb its reporting."⁴³⁴ Therefore, independence might have been achieved from State, but not from the rest of the U.S. government.

One particularly relevant example was a controversial interview that VOA obtained with Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, on September 21, 2001. VOA acting director Myrna Whitworth came under enormous pressure from the State Department to kill the interview. At first Whitworth decided to hold off on the exclusive, perhaps influenced by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's objections. "The administration's reasoning was that a taxpayer-supported network should not become a 'platform' for broadcasting terrorist views back into Afghanistan."⁴³⁵ On September 24th, VOA News Director Andre DeNesnera circulated an email to VOA staff, saying, "We got muzzled, big time."⁴³⁶ On September 25th, Whitworth approved a watered down

⁴³³ Ibid, 444-445.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 410.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, 412.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 414.

version of the interview, with Omar's comments buried in a longer news story, as "consistent with the charter and the code."⁴³⁷

Therefore, while the charter continues to guide and insulate the Voice, and usually will win against governmental pressures, these pressures continue. The quest for independence continues to be a central organizing principle, and the call to action has been applied to not only journalistic principles and broadcasting, but also to the budgets that allow for such broadcasting.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 415, 417. Interestingly, in the interview, Mullah Omar asks, "Why are you interviewing me? You'll never use it?" And the VOA reporter responded to him: "Of course we'll use it. VOA believes in freedom of press, in giving all sides of the story."

Myth

The myth of VOA is connected to its central mission – to be an accurate, credible and reliable source of news. Therefore, as Heil reflects fondly on key moments at VOA, he describes examples of VOA “being there.” He recalls in August 1963, VOA had comprehensive coverage of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous “I have a dream” speech.⁴³⁸ Further, part of VOA’s enduring story, that has become almost mythic, is that VOA has grown since its early days from not only an example of free media, but a competitor, and able to get a scoop. One of the proudest moments for that type of scoop came in July 1976, when VOA was the first broadcaster to report of Israel’s Entebbe raid. And, years earlier, the Voice boasted the largest audience in radio history during the moon landing of 1969:

When Neil Armstrong planted his boot on the lunar soil, VOA had perhaps the largest audience in radio history. Its live broadcast was relayed at that moment by the BBC World Service, nearly all Japanese broadcasting outlets, Radio Australia, Austrian state radio, and many others. During the lunar mission, VOA news and programming was beamed via its own facilities and simulcast at various times by 3600 stations abroad. The total audience during the Apollo adventure was 615 million, according to VOA.⁴³⁹

In reading about and observing the myth of VOA, I would argue that it is two-fold. On the one hand, it focuses on being a competitor in the global media landscape, in reporting the truth, in being there, and in being honest and truthful. But the second element is laying claim to the myth, which incidentally is held dear by RFE/RL as well, that the broadcasters played a crucial role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Heil reflects fondly on this legacy:

⁴³⁸ Ibid, 71.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 238.

It was August 1991, nearly two years after the Berlin Wall tumbled and signaled the end of the Soviet Empire. VOA's Reuel Zinn, a tall, lanky ceaselessly energetic radio recording engineer whose belief in America's Voice was total, was on temporary duty in Moscow. It was shortly after the aborted coup against Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev. One day, Reuel told his taxi driver that he worked for VOA. The driver took him at once to a vast plaza in front of Parliament, known as the Russian White House. There, on the wall near the base of the building were hand-printed letters in Cyrillic that moved Reuel to tears: 'Thank you, Voice of America, for the correct information.'⁴⁴⁰

While VOA reflects on its mythic role during the Cold War, this role is remembered as one of providing accurate information. The legacy is no doubt exemplar. The sign that moved Reuel to tears was the perfect sign for the exemplar democracy promoter of U.S. international broadcasting.

The praise for VOA's role in the Cold War came from abroad and at home.

President George H.W. Bush praised the work of VOA during the Cold War in a speech to the National Association of Broadcasters in Atlanta, GA in 1989:

[Czechoslovakia's President] Vaclav Havel came to the White House and told me personally what this broadcasting of the truth had meant to those who were fighting for freedom. And then he visited the Voice of America and met the employees of its Czechoslovak Service. It was a very poignant encounter, for though Havel didn't recognize any of them by face, he knew them by name the instant he heard them speak. And it's moments like that that convince me of one sure thing: I am determined that America will continue to bear witness to the truth. America must never lose its voice.⁴⁴¹

President Bush here links America's Voice with truth. This is of course a value of democracy, and by example can influence democratic change abroad.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, 237.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, 250.

Broadcasting

While later chapters will evaluate current VOA broadcasting, in this section I briefly consider the VOA programs of the past, in order to observe glimmers of the mission of the Voice and its organizational purpose. In the early 1960s, VOA was innovative in its ability to put new shows on the air quickly and effectively. These programs reflected the directive of the charter. For example, the show “Panorama USA” was a magazine-format program and included reports and interviews throughout the U.S. This program was fulfilling VOA’s mission to articulate a view of American society. Another program, “Forum: A Meeting of the Minds,” was an interview show with Americans, and, “Issues in the News,” was a weekend public affairs discussion among American correspondents and columnists.⁴⁴² It is clear that the new shows, created in the era of the charter, reflected the very American message articulated by VOA, while also offering insights to news and an example of free debate and discussion.

And, the foreign language services beamed in to the USSR were glimmering examples of the American values of freedom: “During the Cold War, this [the Soviet region] was the most strategically important division, with services in Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijani and Uzbek. Many credited it with helping to create an appreciation of freedom and democratic institutions, which hastened the dissolution of the Soviet Union.”⁴⁴³ Here, Heil not only notes the success of VOA programming, but also describes the exemplar nature of VOA democracy promotion – that by example, by teaching the values of democracy, VOA would initiate change. In

⁴⁴² Ibid, 67-68.

⁴⁴³ Ibid, 141.

effect, VOA would be an example of free press, and if there was a spillover effect, that outcome would be welcomed.

Despite the legacy of broadcasting to the Soviet bloc, after the fall of the Soviet Union the newly independent states came under the management of the Eurasia division and broadcasting hours dropped. Heil demonstrates the cut in radio hours across key Eurasian states after 1989:

VOA weekly broadcasts	1985 Radio Broadcasts	2002 Radio Broadcasts
Armenian	8.75 hours	7.00 hours
Azerbaijani	7.00 hours	3.50 hours
Georgian	5.25 hours	3.50 hours
Hungarian	17.5 hours	1.25 hours
Polish	49.00 hours	1.25 hours
Romanian	12.25 hours	1.25 hours
Russian	119.00 hours	34.00 hours
Ukrainian	35.00 hours	14.00 hours
Uzbek	14.00 hours	7.00 hours

Source: Alan Heil, Jr., hours calculated on February 25, 2002.

Across the board, the Eurasian states saw a decrease in radio broadcast hours. In some cases, broadcasting hours were cut in half, or more. Despite strategic American foreign policy priorities, Eurasia does not appear to be a priority when considering broadcasting hours in the post-Cold World policy environment. (I believe evidence from the upcoming chapter on broadcasting in Azerbaijan will articulate this trend. The amount of actual stories on Iran is much larger, as compared to Azerbaijan, in 2007-2009.). This is particularly puzzling given the fact that many of these states were experiencing democratic transitions during this time, and democracy promotion continues to be a goal of the U.S. government. The cut in broadcasting hours across the region perhaps indicates an alternative policy goal of VOA.

The broadcasting cuts demonstrated above are more profound when compared to strategic language selections in 2002, at early stages of the U.S. led war on terrorism:

VOA weekly broadcasts	1985 Radio Broadcasts	2002 Radio Broadcasts
Dari to Afghanistan	14.00 hours	21.00 hours
Farsi to Iran	24.50 hours	45.50 hours
Kurdish to Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria	0 hours	7 hours
Pashto to Afghanistan	14.00 hours	21.00 hours
Urdu to Pakistan and India	10.50 hours	17.50 hours

Source: Alan Heil, Jr., hours calculated on February 25, 2002.⁴⁴⁴

The broadcasting trends in Southwest Asia demonstrate an increase in hours across the board. I believe this is indicative of VOA’s strategic outlook – to promote the American line of national security policy over democratic waves in Eurasia, a trend I will consider further in the upcoming chapter on broadcasting in Iran. That is not to say that democracy promotion work is not valuable in these South Asian states, but instead to say that VOA clearly moves with the strategy in Washington, with a focus on security, which I believe is reflected in my research.

But even though broadcasting to Iran is a priority for VOA, it has not been fluid throughout the years. Despite the troubled relationship between the U.S. and Iran since the 1953 coup, VOA had been forced to close down its Farsi service twice - in 1946, and more egregiously in 1960. The Islamic Revolution posed a new challenge for VOA, who once again was asked to rally during a crisis. On April 8, 1979 the Voice was able to assemble former Farsi-speaking producers to get back on the air. (The Shah’s regime

⁴⁴⁴ Particularly relevant to this table is a discussion I had with Stephanie Schmidt, Project/Administrative Manager, RFE/RL. She indicated in the summer of 2007 that RFE/RL was interested in broadcasting Azerbaijani to Iran, in order to target the 20 million or so ethnic Azerbaijanis living in the north of Iran. By the spring of 2009, in a follow up conversation, it appeared that this idea had been sidelined.

officially collapsed in February, and VOA managed to be back on the air before the November 4th hostage crisis at the U.S. embassy.) Ironically, technology was at the forefront of the revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran, after the Shah fled, to a public familiar with his message, as he “had used cassette tapes and frequent appearances on the BBC’s Persian Service to foment revolution back home.”⁴⁴⁵ VOA’s ability to resume broadcasting quickly indicates its ability to shift with the tides of governmental policy and adapt.

Despite examples of shifting to appease U.S. foreign policy directives, throughout the history of VOA, broadcasts have been criticized for lack of focus. William H. Jackson, a New York investment banker and former deputy director of Central Intelligence, mounted one such critique in 1953. In what was to become known as the “Jackson committee report,” which was commissioned by USIA, Jackson “bemoaned the fact that the national information program had suffered from a lack of effective central direction... ‘No single set of ideas has been registered abroad through effective repetition. This is in sharp contrast to the technique of the Soviets, who have consistently hammered home a few carefully selected themes: land reform, peace, anti-imperialism, youth.’”⁴⁴⁶

The Jackson critique of VOA broadcasting is interesting for two reasons. First, it is indicative of the type of broadcasting critiques that VOA would face throughout its history – questioning the direction, effectiveness and strategic viewpoint of America’s Voice. As my dissertation points to the distinction between VOA as an exemplar

⁴⁴⁵ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 194.

⁴⁴⁶ Jackson committee report (abridged), “Propaganda and information Activities in the Free World,” Declassified Documents RP no. 1163, 1988. Quoted in Nelson, 84.

democracy promoter, perhaps some of these critiques misunderstand the mission and purpose of VOA (though the Jackson committee occurs before the charter of VOA, which both affirmed and articulated VOA's mission). Second, the Jackson critique is interesting because it points to the effectiveness of repetition in broadcasting – in setting an agenda by repeating a certain theme or story (a concept similar to the sleeper effect, which will be considered further in the concluding chapter). This is reassuring in that it is one of the first times that effectiveness for VOA broadcasting is determined by a means other than numbers – number of broadcasts, number of listeners. It speaks to opinion formation in a way that other measures of effectiveness (MOEs) cited in the literature of VOA do not.

In addition, as indicated by the content analysis I conducted, which will be described in more detail in later chapters, I did observe repetition on the part of VOA. But the repetition is not focused on concepts of democracy, but instead on concepts of U.S. national security. Therefore, if broadcasting at the Voice was anything then like it is today, Jackson's critique is perhaps not about "effectiveness," but instead a critique of VOA's targeted strategy. Such critiques continue today.

The legacy of exemplar democracy promotion

A close look at VOA, reveals that democracy promotion is a central, though not always a vivid, element of their mission. VOA is not a champion of democratic causes abroad, but instead is an example of democratic values at home. Spreading these values is the legacy of VOA, but America's voice does not thrust these values abroad. VOA Chief Henry Loomis (July 1958- March 1965), distinctly spoke to VOA's exemplar mission in his farewell address to his employees: "I believe VOA serves the national interest well if it reflects responsibly, affirmatively, and without self-consciousness, that ours is a society of free men who practice what they preach. To do this effectively, we must do it at all times – freedom is not a part-time thing... We must show that the United States drives strength, not weakness, from its diversity."⁴⁴⁷ In these parting words, it is apparent that the goal of VOA is to inspire others to want freedom, in the vain of soft power.

Reflecting on the Cold War, Heil says, "By broadcasting straight and accurate news over the decades, VOA and other international broadcasters of the West had helped fuel democratic change in Asia, Africa, and most notably, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe."⁴⁴⁸ While Heil never argues that the strategic goal of VOA was change abroad, when that change occurs, Heil puts VOA front and center. That can be articulated as either a discomfort with democracy promotion, which was described in chapter 1, or a softer articulation of democracy promotion, illustrated by the concept of exemplar democracy promotion.

⁴⁴⁷ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 76.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 243.

A close look at past VOA reports also demonstrates this softer style of democracy promotion. For example, VOA reporter Elizabeth Arrott, reported from Russia in January 16, 1995, and gave a human face to the struggle for freedom in her radio report:

Arrott: In the railways of Nazran, the only cargo is human. Thousands of refugees from Russia's invasion of Chechnya have come to this barren place, their nights spent sleeping in train cars, their days, trying to find food. A little girl runs across the muddy railroad tracks. Her coat is dirty, her cap askew, a tattered cloth flower is fastened in her braid.

Girl: My name is Margaret.

Arrott: Margaret, seven years old, arrived with her parents from the besieged Chechen capital this morning. She stands next to her father, who before the war ran a cultural center in Grozny. He explains that Margaret was named for Margaret Thatcher.... He pulls out a faded newspaper clipping. It shows Margaret holding an autographed picture of the British politician. The photograph, he says, was a present from Margaret Thatcher.

Father: Let me show you Margaret's gift from our leader, Boris Yeltsin.

Arrott: He pulls out a fragment of a bomb.⁴⁴⁹

VOA exemplar democracy promotion story lines come from conflict abroad and the cultural landscape at home. Another example is a report by VOA correspondent Lawrence F. Freund, from New York, in 1997:

Freund: Diana Eck is a professor of religion at Harvard University. About a decade ago, she began to notice changes in her classroom as students reflected the changing ethnic mix of the United States. Religious life in the United States, she realized, was also changing, and she organized the Pluralism Project, an effort to detect those changes and answer some questions.

Eck: How many mosques were there in Houston, how many Hindu temples in Chicago, how many Buddhist temples in Denver? So we essentially set out to map the new religious landscape of America and to ask not only who is here, but how are these traditions changing as they come to the United States? How is America changing as we begin to create a much more pluralistic society?⁴⁵⁰

Perhaps what is most interesting about VOA, is that reporters not only show examples of open values that make America a beacon of hope for many, but a 1986 radio report also featured the continuing problem of the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina – demonstrating

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, 91.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, 96-97.

America's "warts," as per the advice of President Kennedy.⁴⁵¹ Examples of democratic values are amplified through VOA, whether the examples are American or global.

The leadership of VOA has historically connected the mission of America's Voice with this style of democracy promotion. Heil recalls in his book that in 1991 VOA director, Chase Untermeyer, said, "The primary post-Cold War role for the VOA has been to carry out the mandate of the charter as broadly and audibly as possible. In the process, it has served to encourage the growth of democracy, pluralism and free markets by an honest recounting of the experience (both good and bad) of the United States and other nations, including the nations in which the listeners reside."⁴⁵² Here, Untermeyer articulates that the charter comes first, but in following the charter, VOA encourages democracy – encourages, but does not impose.

A decade later VOA director Geoffrey Cowan mirrored this sentiment: "In such a period of history, it's in some ways more important than ever to have a voice of sanity in the world, and that's what the VOA tries to represent... It's probably the least expensive way that America has of helping to introduce models of freedom, democracy, and the diversity of cultures in a world in which people from different religious and ethnic and national backgrounds are at war."⁴⁵³ Again, VOA is to be a model – to be an example – and to function as an arm of American exemplar democracy promotion.

⁴⁵¹ For more information on the Ku Klux Klan story, see Heil, 97.

⁴⁵² Ibid, 447-448.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, 428.

Employees

In addition to the influential leaders noted above, it is the work of journalists, editors and managers to apply VOA's charter daily. But these employees all have their own opinions and objectives for working at VOA. Heil writes that employees at the Voice did not see themselves "as warriors. They saw themselves as reporters."⁴⁵⁴ They are certainly not "crusaders," they are models.

Heil gives much anecdotal details of the role of the VOA employee. He reflects upon a story told to him by the Director of the Office of Program Review, Frank Cummins, in 1997:

Cummins was passing by the door of the Farsi Service to Iran. He looked inside and spotted a member of the service, her head up against the wall. She was sobbing uncontrollably. Cummins rushed in, and asked what the matter was. [She explained,] "This morning, the authorities took my brother, who had been in Evin Prison in Tehran, out to the front wall of the place, and executed him... And you tell us to be accurate, comprehensive, and *objective!*"⁴⁵⁵

The charter is notably a part of the everyday functionality of working at VOA. The charter is the idea infused into VOA, articulated daily by employees guided by its framework. This was evident in the interviews I conducted with VOA employees.

Gary Thatcher, VOA's Associate Director for Program Support, believes democracy promotion is central to the organizational mission of VOA: "We are not shy at all about saying that we bring Western journalistic practice, both sides of the story, the traditions of fairness and openness to doing the tasks of journalism. For a number of years we've had a program for training Eurasian journalists – and for a couple of short

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 244.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 145.

residencies at U.S. journalism schools, and graduate school extensively.”⁴⁵⁶ Unlike my expectations, Thatcher gives the sense that VOA is more than an example, indicating perhaps the range of VOA work across the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum. But this more active description of VOA democracy promotion was not reflected in other interviews.

And, illustrating my point that this more active – or possibly champion - style of democracy promotion is not the typical line at VOA, immediately after Thatcher made that statement on our conference call interview, Letitia King, Director of Media Relations at VOA, said:

When it comes to editorial decisions, [editors] feel very strongly about the VOA charter signed into law in 1976. They believe broadcasts [should] be reliable, [should focus on] what is news, what is important to the audience. [We report] what is news, not what advances democracy. There is a clear division between editors of programs and people who sit on our board – they are a firewall between programming and foreign policy. News needs to be reliable and credible. We do not stay on message, we do not see ourselves as part of formal foreign policy.⁴⁵⁷

What is so interesting here is to see that there may in fact be tendencies to support democracy promotion practices abroad at VOA, but this desire seems to almost be tempered by the charter, tempered by the PR department. In fact it appears at the outset that the charter ensures that VOA does not stray too far into the realm of champion democracy promotion.

John Lennon, who is Associate Director for Language Programming at Voice of America, argues that persuading an audience is outside the scope of the mission of America’s Voice: “[Our work] is about enhancing understanding – not about persuading

⁴⁵⁶ Gary Thatcher, Associate Director for Program Support, Voice of America, Conference Call Interview, January 10, 2008.

⁴⁵⁷ Letitia King, Director, Media Relations, Voice of America, Conference Call Interview, January 10, 2008.

action. That is propaganda, in my opinion. Our job is to enhance understanding.”⁴⁵⁸ I believe this is a very interesting way of articulating the point that VOA is not a champion of the cause of democracy – it is instead for openness, as articulated by open media, but not for changing minds. The idea, he explains, is “if they understand the U.S. we will probably have better relations. Our job is... to make sure that people understand that there is a debate – it is open and frank.”

This range of opinion – from exemplar towards champion styles of democracy promotion – I believe illustrates the functionality of America’s Voice, and particularly the role of the charter in ensuring a tempered vision of democracy promotion.

⁴⁵⁸ John E. Lennon, Associated Director for Language Programming, Voice of America, Interview, Washington, D.C., August 4, 2008. Interestingly Lennon appears to define propaganda as evoking action, which in some instances would charge the work of RFE/RL as propaganda.

Measuring effectiveness

Measuring the effectiveness of broadcasts is an important way in which the broadcasters, both VOA and RFE/RL, are able to justify their survival, lobby for increased budgets, and retune their missions. My research illustrates three trends in measuring the effectiveness at VOA. The first is that broadcasting success has been, and continues to be, judged by audience saturation. This is ironic, given the fact that throughout the Cold War both VOA and RFE/RL were subjected to jamming which no doubt limited their listening audience. But despite this, measures of effectiveness (MOEs) were developed that focus on quantity, rather than quality, perhaps as a way of indicating success against the efforts of Soviet jammers.

The second trend, noted above, is that the U.S. government would probe into VOA broadcasts and look for sample broadcasts, in order to assess the content. Therefore, there was an assumption that if a story was to be truly central to the broadcasting of VOA, it would be repeated frequently enough to be presented in the sample. This style of measuring the effectiveness of VOA is a mirror onto my own content analysis, and suggests that by viewing samples of broadcasting, trends do in fact emerge, and had been used as a MOE at VOA.

The third trend I observe in measuring the effectiveness at America's Voice is that there is an overlap in those conducting measurement and those working in support of the VOA charter and mission. For example, John Lennon, while serving as Executive Editor, devised a framework to evaluate VOA broadcasts:

It was known as the ARC formula, focusing on the *audience* (listeners' interests and the competition in a particular region), *radio* (the latest contemporary production techniques), and the *charter* (the framework for all VOA programming). During reviews – live monitored spot checks and analyses held

initially at any hour of the day or night – the team tracked how quickly services picked up items from the central wire and evaluated, minute by minute, what was available and what the services used.⁴⁵⁹

Here Lennon explains the value of the audience in assessing MOEs and the importance of hitting the benchmark of the charter as an MOE in itself.

It is interesting to note that Lennon himself has been both a programmer and head of measurement. In fact, in our interview he explained, “I moved from evaluating to programming. [The current head of evaluation, Kelu Chao, and Lennon switched jobs.] Neither of us asked – the Director did that.” Now, in his role as Director of Programming, MOE’s still play an important role in his work: “I know evaluating my product is my job – we must be objective, point out our mistakes.” The overlap between programming and measurement is striking, and left me wondering whether those so closely connected to programming would not be defensive regarding their own product.

This is not to say that MOEs born from within VOA are not useful or widespread. According to Gary Thatcher, VOA’s Associate Director for Program Support, “audience research is a very wide – we consider who is listening, why, what do they get out of the program, what do they dislike and like?” According to Thatcher, MOEs are audience focused. Bruce Sherman at the BBG argues that the broadcasters “do vast amounts of research – audience preferences, media use, attitudes towards U.S. influences, our credibility. We try to keep our programming focused and on track.” Sherman’s assessment of research is again audience driven, but indicates that a focus on MOEs is widespread, even if internally driven.

⁴⁵⁹ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 214.

Lennon explains that MOEs are more and more central to the work of VOA: “In 2000-2001, we underwent a big change because BBG made two revisions – One is that every broadcast service should be reviewed one time a year. And two is that everyone should have field research.” Therefore, Lennon describes different elements of VOA measurements. He explained there are three:

1. Surveys: We have surveyed 8500 people to ask about who they are and their media habits. We keep our findings in a database. (In Iran you can’t do this – you have to call instead).
2. Focus groups: Here we learn about the quality and programs they (the audience) liked – there is skepticism about U.S. Foreign Policy and attitudes toward Islam. We would never take a focus group and call it representative – we take it for what it is.
3. Monitoring panel: This is unique-ish to VOA – we used 7-9 longtime VOA listeners or viewers – we find them. The panel will listen to a random program and are asked to explain likes and dislikes.

Lennon explains that the “intent of this process is to provide the management with the tools for making change” and ultimately content is evaluated to “determinate that we are adhering to the charter.”

Again, my impressions are that there is perhaps too close a relationship between those evaluating and creating programs, that there is a focus on audience saturation and likes and dislikes, rather than influence. Also, when it comes to focus groups and the monitoring panel, there is a chance that the responses may represent sampling bias - VOA listeners may tell VOA what they want to hear.

Like Lennon, Sherman described three elements of measurements that BBG is looking for:

1. Reach – [which is] expressed in terms of international broadcasting audience reach, meaning if someone tunes into one time to our regular audience members.
2. Reliability – we want to make sure that they perceive the information is reliable.

3. Does it increase understanding of U.S.?

Reach and reliability particularly are traditional measures for a traditional journalism. We are not measuring whether we change people's minds over something. In what is broadly called the war for hearts and minds – we are not in the business of changing people's minds.

This assessment by Sherman is really interesting because it not only separates the broadcasters from the war to win hearts and minds, but also reflects the core mission of VOA, rather than the core mission of RFE/RL, which will be evaluated in more detail below. He explains that the BBG, and this applies best to VOA, is to be a trusted media outlet, and is not to be involved in foreign opinion formation. Sherman's description of MOEs is close to Lennon's –with a focus on saturation and keeping close to the VOA charter. But there is very little assessment of influence in this view.

In addition, stories from inside the vaults of Voice history point to the heavy use of anecdotal evidence as a means of assessing and gathering MOEs. In 1953-4, VOA commissioned a study by Columbia University to assess VOA listeners. From this study, VOA learned that “respondents tended to emphasize that what they wanted was encouraging news... They expressed a desire for the truth, but the truth in their minds was only the hopeful news.”⁴⁶⁰ Here, it seems that effectiveness was judged by satisfying the audience, rather than changing the minds of the audience. The Columbia report also indicated that audience members could tolerate a stronger tone in broadcasts: “In comparison with that of the Communist stations, [VOA] is too soft and unconvincing. People who are used to the violent communist attacks on the West, to their tough and often rude language, have to make a great effort to believe... what is presented in a soft,

⁴⁶⁰ Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, “Listening to the Voice of America and Other Foreign Broadcasts,” in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, (New York: Columbia University, October 1953 and January 1954). Quoted in Nelson, 65-66.

quiet language.”⁴⁶¹ Therefore, an impediment to success was, and continues to be, cultural resonance – tone, language, word choice, emotion, etc.

In 1956, after the events in Hungary, which will be described in more detail in the next chapter, VOA had the opportunity to interview eight young Hungarians who had jumped their prison train on the way to the Soviet Union. Their comments were used internally and also broadcast by VOA’s Russian branch. Because of this, Russians were able to notice that the Soviet version of events came later than the American broadcasts, with different details.⁴⁶² Here, the intersection between MOEs and news content are evident – editors evaluated content, MOEs were repackaged into broadcasts.

John Lennon wrote a masters thesis in 1993, which asked: “Did VOA News in the 1980s become more of a supporter than a reporter during the Reagan administration?” This thesis gets at the heart of the VOA mission – regarding the question of whether VOA can be objective when tasked to report the foreign policy of the American government. This masters thesis also gets to a struggle relevant to commercial broadcasters as well – can reporters ever truly act as a watchdog when dependent on government spokespeople for information and perspectives? Lennon’s thesis articulated an interesting result: “... During the early Reagan years, there was an increase in VOA news stories dealing with the Cold War. The Voice... may have been ‘influenced to reflect standards and goals related to U.S. foreign policy rather than standards of journalism such as those in the VOA charter.’”⁴⁶³ In my opinion, this result could be likely mirrored in a study of the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*, as commercial

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 244.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, 221. Lennon sampled an estimated 4000 items in the VOA news file issued during the Carter and first Reagan administrations.

papers are likely to “rally around the president” in times of war, and the press may give a new president a honeymoon period. What is interesting, however, is to consider the fact that VOA is not immune from these tendencies, and perhaps more importantly, that a VOA employee can reflect so honestly about the tendency.

A Hoover Institution panel also noted the same tendency in VOA reporting historically: “During the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War, VOA’s journalistic independence suffered significant challenges.”⁴⁶⁴ Given the fact that reporting in support of American foreign policy goals is considered to be a stain on the record of VOA, the mission of VOA becomes apparent – objectivity over supporting U.S. foreign policy goals.

Today, MOEs are assessed by InterMedia Survey of Washington, D.C., which was commissioned nine years ago to coordinate about 400 new audience studies for VOA.⁴⁶⁵ According to Bruce Sherman, the BBG has a contract with InterMedia with a price tag of \$95 million. InterMedia is recruiting “local research institutes to do the field work. But this is hard where illiteracy is high – there is a 72% illiteracy rate in Afghanistan. What does this mean for our understanding? InterMedia and partners are working that through right now.”

While InterMedia is not inside of VOA, the connection to the organization is deep. In InterMedia’s own words, the organization “was founded as a 501C3 corporation in 1996, bringing together staff with unmatched media and opinion research expertise who had formerly worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America and

⁴⁶⁴ *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, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, 11.

⁴⁶⁵ Heil, *Voice of America: A History*, 446.

the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).”⁴⁶⁶ Again, it appears that those with a career in international broadcasting, who had worked for years for the missions of their organizations, and are well aware of the struggles (for independence, budgetary allotments, etc), are now assessing the value of broadcasts abroad. This is true for RFE/RL as well, who also employs InterMedia, and this issue of potential bias will be revisited in chapter 6.

⁴⁶⁶ For more information, see: http://www.InterMedia.org/about_firm_overview.php, (Accessed November 17, 2009).

--

The above assessment of VOA indicates that the organization has continued to define and evaluate itself since 1942. VOA attempts to tell America's story, and in doing so, it functions as an example of free press. The goal of telling America's story is far reaching: "[VOA] has over the years not only enlightened the world about America but also engaged in 'cross reporting,' that is, providing in-depth news and information about one region to another, as well as 'in country' reporting to specific audiences, particularly in times of crisis."⁴⁶⁷

Assessing the value of this work on democracy promotion efforts abroad is a complicated task, especially given the fact that other goals trump VOA's mission (credibility, truth, "being there," representing "all" of America). However, few leaders or employees of VOA, or personal accounts found during my research, ever attempt to separate VOA from the goal of promoting democracy abroad all together (the interview with Letitia King is a noted exception, though a particularly relevant one, as she speaks externally for the organization). VOA, as understood through its history, charter, myths, broadcasting, and organizational structure can best be described as an exemplar democracy promoter – it is a model, a beacon of free press, and a window into American society. It is a focused introvert, concerned about world politics, but careful not to meddle. This finding is quite different than the story of RFE/RL, which will be detailed in the next chapter.

⁴⁶⁷ *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, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, 11.

CHAPTER 5

Promoting Liberty: The mission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

In the last chapter I described the predominantly exemplar style of Voice of America. This style is apparent in its history, mission and the perspectives of its employees. In this chapter, similar sources will illustrate Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) quest to promote democracy abroad. As such, I will be arguing that RFE/RL is further along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum than VOA: Depending on the historical context, RFE/RL may be functioning closer towards "crusader" than "exemplar." I believe that in the story of RFE/RL's foundation, history and legacy, it is evident that this organization was not founded to cheer history on from the sidelines. By virtue of being a surrogate station, RFE/RL attempts to implant its media message in the market for loyalties abroad, and targets specifically states struggling towards democratic change and states where authoritarian leaders suppress information.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore, unlike VOA, RFE/RL does not attempt to be global in reach or to be a competitor of other global media outlets, whether governmental, like the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), or commercial, like CNN. Instead, RFE/RL has continued to carve out a very targeted niche on the airwaves, attempting to influence change abroad and to focus resources in the direction of democracy – first in Europe and the Soviet Union and now in the former Soviet states and South Asia.

Therefore, the finding of this chapter is that inherent in the mission, myth, history and employee perspective of RFE/RL, both during the Cold War and today, is a

⁴⁶⁸ Surrogate media is a foreign media outlet broadcasting into a state with only state-run media. The objective of the surrogate is to function as an independent media outlet in this state, despite the authoritarian nature of the government. The nature of surrogacy will be discussed throughout this chapter.

champion of democracy promotion. This is not to say that RFE/RL, in broadcasting surrogate stations abroad, does not aim to be an example of free press to closed societies. I am arguing, instead, that RFE/RL hopes to go beyond the strategy of setting examples. The organization is actively monitoring the political situation in certain key states – and actively makes editorial decisions based on the U.S. foreign policy agenda of promoting democracy abroad. Therefore, the idea-infused into this organization is that democracy is central to their cause – and that the perspectives of employees, the history, legacy, myth and memory of this organization weave together with a mission of promoting democracy to cement strong ideas into the foundation at RFE/RL.

To illustrate this perspective, I will rely on information gathered from interviews, including observations from my visit to RFE/RL headquarters in Prague in the summer of 2007. In addition, books and articles written by employees who can offer first hand details into the work and history of RFE/RL during the Cold War are particularly helpful, including:

- *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy*, by George R. Urban, Emeritas Director of Radio Free Europe.
- *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, by Arch Puddington, Deputy Director of RFE/RL from 1985 to 1993.
- *Discovering the Hidden Listener: An assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR during the Cold War*, by R. Eugene Parta, former director of Audience Research and Program Evaluation for RFE/RL.⁴⁶⁹

In addition, I will consider the historical case of RFE's broadcasting role during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. While the Hungarian case is a European example and therefore contextually different from the Azerbaijani and Iranian cases explored in my upcoming chapters, this case provides context for understanding RFE/RL, in that this

⁴⁶⁹ These books are in addition to those considered in previous chapter on Voice of America.

historic example had a large impact on determining the evolving mission and perspective of this organization. Therefore this case will be considered in this chapter as part of the recipe that comprises the organizational nature of RFE/RL. To illustrate the impact of events in Hungary, my conversation with Istvan Rev, director of the Open Society Archives in Budapest, Hungary, was particularly useful.⁴⁷⁰ Rev introduced me not only to the Open Society Archives, but also to the large amount of declassified information detailing the events of 1956, and RFE's role in those events.

This chapter will evaluate what makes RFE/RL unique – the perspective of its employees, the organizational mission, and its Cold War legacy. But, as both VOA and RFE/RL receive their budgets from the BBG, and both are arms of American international broadcasting, there are of course overlaps and commonalities when comparing RFE/RL to VOA. Perhaps what is most common about VOA and RFE/RL, besides their parent organization, is their Cold War legacy. RFE/RL remembers its Cold War success in the same mythic way as do its VOA peers:

Mikhail Gorbachev, a captive of Soviet hardliners and isolated in a Black Sea villa during the aborted coup of 1991, had his aides rig up a shortwave radio to find out what was going on. He later credited the BBC, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and VOA with keeping him abreast of events that led to his release after only three days. Less than five months after that, the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's leadership of it were history.⁴⁷¹

But despite this legacy, RFE/RL's future came into question immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to Heil, aides to President Clinton recommended that

⁴⁷⁰ The archives collection is one that Rev is quite proud of – it now gives researchers access to 75,000 pages of interviews. According to the OSA website, (Accessed November 19, 2009), <http://www.osaarchivum.org/>: “More than 600 interviews were conducted by specially trained, native Hungarian field-workers in European refugee camps and in the United States. Most of the interviews lasted two or three days, and the final English transcripts averaged 70 pages each.” These interviews were based on interview guidelines that had been predetermined by sociologists and public opinion experts.

⁴⁷¹ Alan L. Heil, Jr., *Voice of America: A History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 329.

RFE/RL be phased out by September 1995, and that their European operations and Research Institute in Munich, Germany be shut down. These aides were partly successful – the research institute no longer exists and the books from Munich lie in piles at the Open Society Archives in Budapest, still being sorted and filed as of my visit in 2007. But on June 15, 1993, “The White House issued a statement keeping RFE/RL alive” in the aftermath of an intensive lobbying campaign for the radios survival.⁴⁷² But this does not mean that RFE/RL was given free reign. Between 1994-1996, the overall international broadcasting budget declined from \$487 to \$350 million annually, accompanied with a reduction of about 1500 jobs.⁴⁷³ RFE/RL, whose mission had focused on promoting democracy inside the Iron Curtain, was struggling to find new footing. However democracy was not secure abroad, and therefore, the mission was still relevant. Therefore, this idea-infused organization survived a rocky political transition as the ideas remained relevant even when the political context and support for the organization changed. Therefore, as would be predicted, RFE/RL’s ideas helped the organization survive.

This chapter, therefore, considers a great deal of the history of RFE/RL, to explore which ideas became infused in the organization, and how actively promoting democracy was a guiding mission early in the story of RFE/RL, and continues to be relevant in the post Cold War context.

⁴⁷² Ibid, 353.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 359.

The history and mission of RFE/RL

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, founded originally as two separate organizations, had quite a different birth than VOA: “RFE and RL were founded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as surrogate domestic broadcasters, designed to be like local radio stations of the target countries, and to deliver lots of local news. The BBC and VOA did not pretend to be local radio stations. They were national broadcasters, speaking for their home countries but with strong international content.”⁴⁷⁴ RFE would focus on the satellite states, whereas RL would broadcast directly to the Soviet Union. The nature of the CIA relationship in the very beginning meant that RFE and RL were focused directly on the U.S. security interest of promoting democracy abroad: “During their formative years the radios had an indispensable asset in the person of CIA director Allen Dulles. Dulles had served as first chairman of the FEC (Free Europe Committee) and retained a powerful commitment to the mission of the freedom stations.”⁴⁷⁵ The fact

⁴⁷⁴ Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), xiv. While today the idea of government broadcasting raises many questions of credibility, Puddington argues on page 29 that the CIA relationship was a vague concern for RFE/RL listeners: “Radio Free Europe’s listeners assumed that, official disclaimers notwithstanding, the station was supported by the American government.” Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000).

⁴⁷⁵ Puddington, 25. It is interesting to note that RFE and the CIA did not seem to have the same tense relationship as discussed in the last chapter between VOA and its parent organizations. Puddington explains on page 28: “Paul Henze, a member of the policy staff in Munich, recalls an environment of collegial cooperation between RFE and CIA analysts. Agency personnel visited the Munich headquarters regularly; they often attended the morning policy briefings – as did visiting journalists, scholars, and political dignitaries. Henze claims that the notion that there might be anything suspicious or unsavory in the CIA-RFE relationship never occurred to the station’s staff. The intelligence agency and the radio station were on the same side, pursued similar goals, and were in agreement over RFE’s role and policies.” In fact, Puddington argues on page 30-31 that if given the choice between State Department or CIA management, RFE would have “clearly preferred the administrative control of the intelligence agency.” This may be because the “CIA seldom interfered in matters of broadcasting content,” which is something VOA could never claim about the State Department or other broadcasting managers. In fact, it appears to me that RFE/RL and CIA were more in line in terms of Cold War mission than were the State Department and VOA, which may explain for the better relationship in the former case.

that RFE and RL were called the “freedom stations” since the 1950s illustrates exactly their mission and strategic goals.

RFE and RL were founded in addition to the broadcasting work of VOA. Nelson explains that there was an impression in Washington that the Voice was not enough to achieve the strategic aims of American foreign policy:

Why did the U.S. government decide that VOA was inadequate and that they had to establish another international radio network? General Lucius Clay, former commanding general of the U.S. occupation forces in Europe, tried to explain: ‘When I left Germany, I came home with a very firm conviction that we needed in addition to the Voice of America a different, broader voice – a voice of free people – a radio which would speak to each country behind the Iron Curtain in its own language, and from the throats of its own leaders who fled for their lives because of their beliefs in freedom.’⁴⁷⁶

The very fact that RFE and RL were founded as additional radio sources may have added to VOA’s quest to secure its survival, and its concern that it must prove its effectiveness. It is interesting that General Clay argued for an additional radio broadcaster, indicating that VOA’s mission was already protected from surrogate broadcasting just years after its birth and decades before the VOA charter. The differences in the VOA and RFE/RL missions were apparent from the very beginning of American international broadcasting. Urban, speaking on behalf of VOA, explains the crucial difference between VOA and RFE: “The Voice of America spoke for official America; we represented the conscience of all Western democratic nations as well as the interest of the Eastern nations we were addressing.”⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, RFE saw its focus to be narrower in scope – to communicate with non-democratic states and societies in Eastern Europe.

⁴⁷⁶ Nelson, 39.

⁴⁷⁷ George R. Urban, *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 114.

RFE and RL were born out of the idea that émigrés could be an influential tool of democracy promotion, which I believe indicates its champion style of democracy promotion: “As communist governments took over in Eastern Europe, the U.S. government realized that... émigrés represented a powerful force against their communist-controlled homelands and it recruited them as writers, speakers, and in other capacities to facilitate the return of democratic governments.”⁴⁷⁸ George Kennan, the architect of America’s containment policy, “asked Ambassador Joseph C. Grew to enlist prestigious civilians to lead an anticommunist organization dedicated to returning democracy to Eastern Europe.”⁴⁷⁹ Democracy promotion is at the root of RFE/RL.

As RFE and RL were founded after VOA, these stations were jammed by the Soviets since July 4, 1950.⁴⁸⁰ As such, these radios did not shy away from the concept of countering Soviet propaganda.⁴⁸¹ RFE executives recruited foreign nationals from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, and trained them in New York. The first broadcast was thirty minutes of news, information and political analysis for Czechoslovakia. Ultimately, “RFE wanted to transmit to each country for at least eighteen hours a day to become the surrogate media of the target countries, unlike the BBC and the VOA, which transmitted only for short periods and then mainly international news.”⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁸ Cissie Dore Hill, “Voices of Hope: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty,” *Hoover Digest*, The Hoover Institution, Accessed May 31, 2006, <http://www.hooverdigest.org/014/dorehill.html>.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Nelson, 24.

⁴⁸¹ The first history book of RFE states, “Radio Free Europe was established by a group of private citizens in December 1949, for the purpose of conducting a propaganda campaign against six Communist dominated satellites in central and Eastern Europe.” Quoted in Nelson, 40.

⁴⁸² Nelson, 47.

Why did RFE and RL set out to be a surrogate stations? The strategy is described on the RFE/RL website:

In what came to be called ‘surrogate’ broadcasting, RFE and RL provided an unbiased, professional substitute for the free media that countries behind the Iron Curtain lacked. Unlike other Western broadcasters, the programs focused on local news not covered in state-controlled domestic media as well as religion, science, sports, Western music and locally banned literature and music.⁴⁸³

The early mission of RFE/RL was about championing the cause of democracy: “The ‘radios’ provided news, features and music aimed at communist and non-communist elites as well as the general population. RFE and RL also gave a voice to dissidents and opposition movements that, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, would emerge as leaders of the new post-communist democracies.”⁴⁸⁴

The current President of RFE/RL, Jeffrey Gedmin, believes that the surrogate nature of the radios is what makes them effective: “Although the technology has changed, the mission of surrogate broadcasting is still the same. It remains one of the most effective and cost-efficient programs the United States can support in order to promote democracy and advance U.S. national security interests.”⁴⁸⁵ Here, democracy promotion is defined as a central goal of U.S. foreign policy, and of RFE/RL.

From an organizational perspective, the surrogate nature of RFE and RL historically separated it from Washington, and VOA’s intense struggle for independence. In our interview, John Lennon at VOA explained, “Because surrogate broadcasters get money in the form of grants – they can operate free from constraints of the civil service.

⁴⁸³ A Brief History of RFE/RL, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>. It is interesting that the site claims RFE/RL is ‘unbiased,’ as I argue in this chapter that RFE/RL has a definite agenda, and a complicated past, indicating that the station is far more ‘targeted’ in broadcasting than this explanation.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Jeffrey Gedmin, “Boom Box U.S.A: Surrogate Broadcasting as a Tool of U.S. Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, Accessed October 8, 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com>.

They can recruit and terminate for cause at RFE/RL.”⁴⁸⁶ The implication is that VOA functions with its hands tied behind its back, as compared to RFE/RL. Urban echoes this sentiment, “The ‘two Radios’... began broadcasting in 1951-1952 from Munich, with U.S. government funding but without editorial supervision by any central department, despite their connection with the Central Intelligence Agency up until 1971.”⁴⁸⁷ RFE and RL, unlike VOA, have continued to operate far from the influence of the U.S. Department of State.

The early organization of RFE and RL centered on the National Committee for a Free Europe in New York and did not shy away from direct, overt challenges to the Soviet governmental structure. The early three objectives were:

1. To find suitable occupations for those democratic exiles who had come from Eastern Europe.
2. To put the voices of the exiled leaders on the air, addressed to their own peoples back in Europe, ‘in their own languages, in the familiar tones.’
3. To enable the exiled leaders to see democracy at work and to experience democracy in action so that they could, ‘testify to what the trial of freedom and democracy in the United States has brought.’⁴⁸⁸

But Nelson points out that, “the paradox of RFE was that an organization dedicated to truth was founded on a lie” because early on the U.S. government concealed the relationship between RFE and the CIA.⁴⁸⁹ Funding came directly from the CIA.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁶ John Lennon, Associate Director for Language Programming, Voice of America, Interview, Washington, D.C., August 4, 2008.

⁴⁸⁷ Urban, x. Urban also states on page 118, “The U.S. government welcomed the distance that existed between it and Radio Free Europe... It made it possible for the State Department, especially under the Reagan presidency, to encourage and benefit from certain types of message to the East without being identified with the messenger. We were deniable.”

⁴⁸⁸ Nelson, 41.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, 43.

⁴⁹⁰ According to Urban, who writes on page 81, “The ‘stain’ of the original CIA connection left members of the Radios’ management and intellectual leadership with fundamental inhibitions and an unadmitted but abiding sense of guilt.”

To create a façade of independence for RFE, the leadership looked to the American public for support: “Inspired by Madison Avenue and the leadership of General Clay, the Free Europe Committee launched the “Crusade for Freedom” to finance and support its activities.”⁴⁹¹ General Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom I noted in the last chapter was a great supporter of American international broadcasting, inaugurated the campaign on Labor Day of 1950. He said: “The Crusade for Freedom will provide for the expansion of RFE into a network of stations. They will give the simplest, clearest charter in the world: ‘Tell the Truth.’”⁴⁹² However, this “Crusade for Freedom” was not fully truthful to the American people, though more than 16 million of them signed “freedom scrolls” and contributed “truth dollars.” Celebrities even joined the crusade – Ronald Reagan and Henry Fonda made films and Frank Sinatra and Rock Hudson made radio broadcasts. But “the Crusade for Freedom was financially not that successful. From 1951 to 1976 receipts totaled about \$50 million, costs about \$20 million, and the net about \$30 million.”⁴⁹³ But the Crusade was good for publicity, and framed the future endeavors of RFE around the concept of a crusade for democracy, one that appears in line with the thesis of my research – that RFE/RL is a champion of democracy promotion, and at times leans closer towards the “crusade” category on the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum than does VOA.

The “Crusade for Freedom” dropped some three hundred million leaflets over Eastern Europe from balloons.⁴⁹⁴ Broadcasting was also to target the Soviet Union; and the American Committee for the Freedom of the Peoples of the USSR, Inc., which was

⁴⁹¹ Nelson, 47.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, 48.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, 49.

founded in 1951, established Radio Liberation, later to become Radio Liberty. RL was different from RFE in that there was no public fund raising activities and little publicity, though the relationship with the CIA was the same.⁴⁹⁵ RL started its broadcasts on March 1, 1953 – the very same day Soviet leader Joseph Stalin suffered his fatal stroke – and almost a decade after the founding of VOA. From the outset, RL’s mission was complicated, “Radio Liberty had an almost impossible task to accomplish: How could it humor the nationalist spirit of the Russian people while trying at the same time to wean it away from Bolshevism, to which most Russians felt they owed their status as a superpower?”⁴⁹⁶ Therefore, RFE and RL were logically separated because of the different contexts in which they broadcast.

RL’s answer to the challenge noted above was communicating directly and honestly to this audience:

During the initial broadcast, RL announced that it represented the free voice of Soviet compatriots abroad, with its objectives being freedom of choice for Soviet nationalities, freedom of conscience and religion, elimination of the system of terror and forced labor, freedom for Soviet agriculture, an end to Party control of the arts and sciences, and finally, the end of the aggressive Soviet foreign policy by the overthrow of the regime. Yet RL broadcasters stressed that they could not provide the peoples of the USSR with the ‘recipe’ to achieve this ambitious agenda.⁴⁹⁷

In addition, RL had a particular sensitive call to arms in communicating to the Russian people, who were knowingly proud of their country and victory over the Germans: “RL needed to speak candidly about the difficulties of daily life in the Soviet Union while articulating hope for a better future. RL broadcasters sought to bridge the

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, 56.

⁴⁹⁶ Urban, 113.

⁴⁹⁷ “Cold War Broadcasting Impact,” A Report on a Conference organized by the Hoover Institution and the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, 8.

gap with the listener by identifying themselves with their audience, using ‘our country’ or ‘our homeland.’”⁴⁹⁸ In other words, both RFE and RL attempted to bridge the cultural gap by relating directly to the listener, and were aware of the different political and cultural circumstances for the various elements of their audience.⁴⁹⁹

As mentioned above, RFE and RL confronted jamming from day one. In addition, there were other forms of censorship: “In the first half of the 1950s in East and Central Europe, governments and local party bosses aimed at preventing private, solitary listening, and organized instead communal, compulsory listening events at work-places, before, after, and even during working hours, in order to prevent even half-overheard critical remarks, to provide opportunities for trained expert agitators to interpret the official voice of the regime.”⁵⁰⁰ This is Soviet-style propaganda – the total package – in action.

But Istvan Rev points out that while the regime attempted to make radio a public activity, it is in fact really a private activity, best suited for the home, and that is where the Soviet people found the surrogate broadcaster. And because listening was happening in private, RFE and RL listeners were frustrated with loud announcements once every hour: “‘This is Radio Free Europe on the 16th, 19th, 25th, 31st, 41st, and 49th short-wave bands.’ This was the moment when the listener, in horror, was almost convinced that he had been uncovered: the eavesdropping co-tenant in the shared bathroom of the communal apartment had certainly overheard the call-sign of the enemy radio station

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ However, it is important to note that rarely in this literature on the history of RL is there a discussion of different ethnicities and language groups inside of the Soviet Union. There is no discussion of targeting certain groups – i.e. Tajiks, Tatars, etc.

⁵⁰⁰ Istvan Rev, “Just Noise?” Open Society Archives, Accessed September 10, 2007, www.osaarchivum.org/files/2004/justnoise/Just_Noise_by_Istvan_Rev.pdf.

from the adjacent room.”⁵⁰¹ This fear would cause many to turn the dial. Therefore, like VOA, RFE/RL suffered impediments to their broadcasts, but they continued on in their effort to champion the cause of democracy across the airwaves.

In time, the RFE and RL audiences grew, and Puddington writes that:

RFE soon found itself with a growing and loyal audience. Reports from inside the Iron Curtain indicated that RFE was most appreciated for its hard brand of anticommunism; at the top of the list of favorite programs were the Messages broadcasts, in which RFE announcers denounced by names Communist spies and informers... According to an internal survey conducted in 1953, the Voice of Free Hungary aired items about the free world an average forty-four hours earlier than Communist media, and thirteen hours earlier on items about Communist countries. In some cases, the differences were astonishing. Thus RFE aired reports about the East Berlin uprising a full twenty-seven hours earlier than Hungarian radio in 1934.⁵⁰²

Puddington therefore identifies the two pronged approach of RFE and RL – to be a substitute for corrupt and government controlled media, getting information to the people while also laying a stake in the political landscape, arguing for change, and championing democracy.

This continued to be the case when the two radios merged, in 1975-1976. This organizational transition occurred because, “the distinctions between the Soviet aggressor – addressed by Radio Liberty, and the victims of aggression – addressed by Radio Free Europe, were being blurred. For congressional consumption it was, of course, more convenient and cheaper, to put the two under a common roof as networks ‘addressing communist nations.’”⁵⁰³ The organizational change did not signal a change of mission.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Puddington, 47. Puddington also explains the unusual nature of RFE listeners, given RFE’s mission: “Radio Free Europe was unusual in that while its message was intensely political, its principal appeal was to a popular audience, rather than to the elites who ordinarily make up the core supporters of political journalism. Workers and peasants – the very classes exalted in Communist scripture – were the prime targets of RFE’s message, not intellectuals.”

⁵⁰³ Urban, 76.

What did impact the organization was the external political landscape – détente and its subsequent relaxing of international affairs in the Cold War context: “There was a growing doubt within senior management whether the conflict with the Soviet system could be won and whether winning it unconditionally was desirable.”⁵⁰⁴ However, the leadership of RFE/RL continued to view the struggle with the Soviet system as their guiding light. Therefore, as the two organizations come together, there is notably a change in organizational structure, but the ideas infused into the organization remain strong.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

Myth

As discussed above, RFE/RL and VOA share the same myth of their essential role during the Cold War. But perhaps this myth is even more important to the organizational cohesiveness of RFE/RL, given it's central mission of promoting democracy abroad. Through anecdotal evidence, RFE/RL holds strong to its historic importance. For example Czech President Vaclav Havel said, "If my fellow citizens knew me before I became president, they did so because of these stations."⁵⁰⁵ Such quotes are plastered in the memory of RFE/RL employees. And such memories explain the historic role of RFE/RL - to connect people and a political opposition, people and ideas of democracy. Nelson explains that dissidents were "isolated figures who knew of each other's existence mainly from listening to the BBC and Radio Free Europe; they seldom met to discuss ideas face to face."⁵⁰⁶ The Radios in fact acted as a substitute for the domestic opposition. Nelson recalls, "As Tamas Palos, the director-general of MTI, the Hungarian News Agency, said: 'It was RFE that was the opposition in Hungary for many years.'"⁵⁰⁷ In this role, RFE/RL was an active participant in the political landscape of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

As the Soviet Union began to crumble, even Boris Yeltsin noted the importance of the Radios. "He had commented that Russians received more correct information about the work of the Russian Supreme Soviet, its leadership, and the Russian government from Radio Liberty than from the Soviet media. 'This radio station reports

⁵⁰⁵ Nelson, 188.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid, 189.

objectively and fully, and we are generally quite thankful to them,' he said."⁵⁰⁸ There perhaps was no better endorsement for RL. And studies looking back at Radio Liberty find that the station was "accepted as a legitimate participant on the Russian media scene by the authorities."⁵⁰⁹ RL had made it on the Soviet market for loyalties.

On RFE/RL's website, this legacy is not forgotten: "Many East European and Russian leaders, including Vaclav Havel and Boris Yeltsin, have testified to the importance of RFE and RL broadcasts in helping end the Cold War. Former Estonian President Lennart Meri nominated RFE/RL for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991."⁵¹⁰

RFE/RL claims its success was not only in its long-term impact, but also in the comfort it brought people in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who were struggling in the communist system: "RL often invited famous Americans such as Eleanor Roosevelt, leading congressman, and labor leaders to speak directly to the Soviet populace to assure them that the West cared about their plight."⁵¹¹

At the end of the Cold War, RFE/RL was both proud of its historic role but also aware of the need to keep fighting the fight:

The end of the Cold War brought a brief period of recognition and acclaim to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. On returning to their native lands, the exiled editors and commentators were hailed as comrades-in-arms of the freedom struggle... Practically every RFE/RL personality claims to have been recognized by taxi drivers who refused to accept payment from a hero of the revolution. [But] the euphoria was short-lived. Eastern Europe was impoverished and politically unstable.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, 193.

⁵⁰⁹ R. Eugene Parta, *Discovering the Hidden Listener: An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War*, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2007), xvii.

⁵¹⁰ A Brief History of RFE/RL, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>.

⁵¹¹ "Cold War Broadcasting Impact," A Report on a Conference organized by the Hoover Institution and the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004, 9.

⁵¹² Puddington, 307.

Therefore, the mission and work of RFE/RL continued to be relevant in the age of democratic transition.

RFE and RL with one mission

RFE/RL came together as one organization in the 1970s: “In 1971, all CIA involvement ended and thereafter RFE and RL were funded by Congressional appropriation through the Board for International Broadcasting (BIB) and after 1995 the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG). The two corporations were merged into RFE/RL, Inc. in 1976.”⁵¹³ This transition was quite easy due to the common missions – and goals of promoting democracy – of RFE and RL. And interestingly, the two broadcasters came together to extend their reach during the 1970s information revolution.

Today, RFE/RL broadcasts 28 languages in 20 countries on the radio, Internet and television. The organization has a staff of 500 employees combining the Prague headquarters and Washington D.C. office, with an additional 750 stringer reporters working in country. The FY 2008 budget of RFE/RL was \$83 million. RFE/RL’s website explains that the organization: “Serves as a ‘surrogate’ free press in 20 countries where the free flow of information is either banned by government authorities or not fully developed. Our journalists provide what many people in those countries cannot get locally: uncensored news, responsible discussion, and open debate.” The RFE/RL website also notes that the independence so desired by VOA has also benefited RFE/RL: “The U.S. government is not involved in RFE/RL’s operational or editorial decisions. Our governing board, the BBG, serves by law as a firewall to protect our editorial independence.”⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ A Brief History of RFE/RL, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>.

⁵¹⁴ RFE/RL Frequently Asked Questions, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/section/FAQ/777.html>. Of course today it is relevant to ask if the way in which the BBG serves as a firewall is by having a low level impact on both the U.S. government and the broadcasters, as half of the board positions are unfilled.

On the “Frequently Asked Questions” page of the RFE/RL website, the organization addressed not only its mission and purpose, but its transition out of the Cold War framework:

Our mission remains more relevant than ever, though our name might be somewhat of an anachronism.

While RFE/RL ended broadcasts to most Central and Eastern European countries as they successfully developed professional local media throughout the 1990s and 2000s, there have also been severe setbacks.

Many countries in the former Soviet sphere have recently seen a dramatic reversal of democratic progress. Journalists there are increasingly under threat, and RFE/RL remains a crucial source of accurate information beyond the reach of autocratic governments.

RFE/RL has also taken up programming to new countries over the years:

1994: During the breakup of Yugoslavia, RFE/RL began broadcasting in Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, and Serbian to the successor states.

1998: RFE/RL began broadcasting in Arabic to Iraq and in Persian to Iran.

2002: RFE/RL resumed broadcasts to Afghanistan in both Dari and Pashto.⁵¹⁵

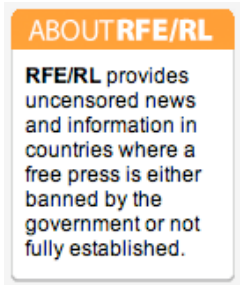
Here, we see that guided by its mission to champion the cause of democracy abroad, RFE/RL independently selects language and country priorities. But that is not to say that the RFE/RL mission was unchallenged at the end of the Cold War:

With the collapse of Communism, some thought RFE/RL had fulfilled its mission and could be disbanded. But officials throughout Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, many of them former dissidents, saw a continuing need for precisely the kind of objective broadcasts that RFE/RL provided, especially during democratic transition. Czech President Vaclav Havel spoke for many when he said, “we need your professionalism and your ability to see events from a broad perspective.”⁵¹⁶

The historic mission continues to guide RFE/RL in the post-Soviet age, as stated directly on its website:

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ A Brief History of RFE/RL, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>.



Further, the RFE/RL mission is larger than this, and is wrapped up with notions of democracy promotion:

The image is a graphic titled "RFE/RL Mission Statement". It contains the following text:

RFE/RL's mission is to promote democratic values and institutions by reporting the news in countries where a free press is banned by the government or not fully established. Our journalists provide what many people cannot get locally: uncensored news, responsible discussion, and open debate.

Based on the conviction that the first requirement of democracy is a well informed citizenry, and building on over a half-century of surrogate broadcasting:

1. RFE/RL provides objective news, analysis, and discussion of domestic and regional issues crucial to successful democratic and free-market transformations.
2. RFE/RL strengthens civil societies by projecting democratic values.
3. RFE/RL combats ethnic and religious intolerance and promotes mutual understanding among peoples.
4. RFE/RL provides a model for local media, assists in training to enhance media professionalism and independence, and develops partnerships with local media outlets.
5. RFE/RL fosters closer ties between the countries of the region and the world's established democracies.

While on the surface it may appear that RFE/RL is an exemplary in the democracy promotion debate – because the organization attempts to be a “model” of democracy – it is clear that it is more than an example. By becoming more involved in the politics of authoritarian countries, by forging relationships between them and democracies, by

strengthening civil society, RFE/RL is not only a player on the market for loyalties abroad, but is also a political entity on its own. RFE/RL makes no apologies for trying to bring about democratic change. There is no doubt that RFE/RL is a champion for democracy abroad.

In fact, Puddington notes RFE/RL's historic tendency towards "crusader" democracy promotion: "Radio Free Europe's leadership never concealed the hard-hitting content of the early broadcasts. In fact, RFE bragged about the personal attacks directed at Communist officials and published examples of extraordinarily harsh polemics as part of its public relations campaign."⁵¹⁷ That is not to say that RFE was considered guilty of incitement. Puddington explains, "by the ideologically charged standards of the day, RFE represented a voice of Cold War moderation. It steered clear of calls for liberation armies and disavowals of the Yalta accords, a favorite theme of conservative anti-Communists at the time."⁵¹⁸ This policy was called "gradualism" – "promoting liberalization rather than liberation" and it was the overarching reporting theme of RFE broadcasts.⁵¹⁹

But how the collapse of the communist system would be achieved, was not made clear to RFE staff. "There could be little doubt that the Eastern European regimes were on shaky ground. Radio Free Europe hardly needed to exaggerate the difficulties facing Eastern European communism. Reports of food shortages, plan failures, police state terror, and internal party division... represented powerful testimony to the inherent instability of East European communism."⁵²⁰ In the upcoming chapters, I will argue that

⁵¹⁷ Puddington, 10.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid, 17.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid, 93.

⁵²⁰ Ibid, 55.

the same tactics are employed today, especially in the case of Iran. While the tools have changed with the advent of the Internet, the mission at RFE/RL has not.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956

If there is an episode in the history that illustrates the potential “crusader” tendencies of RFE/RL, it is the reporting during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. This episode, just six years after the establishment of RFE, is particularly relevant in illustrating the difficulty of reporting in a crisis situation. In addition, it is important to note that the 1956 Hungarian case was just three years after the coup displacing Mossadig in Iran. The close time frame of these events indicates, I believe, a sense in the American governmental establishment that intervention against communism was quite possible. In addition, there is an undeniable link between the CIA head at the establishment of RFE, Allen Dulles, and his brother John, who was directly involved in the 1953 coup in Iran. Therefore, direct political engagement in foreign states – from Iran to Hungary – in the 1950s, I believe, illustrates the “crusader” tendencies of both the CIA and its connection to RFE. This was the political context of the day.

Today, RFE/RL is upfront about the charges of incitement during 1956 in Hungary, and the controversy that ensued. The following image is taken from the RFE/RL website: (For more photographs of the Hungarian Revolution, see Appendix 2: “The Flight From Hungary.”)



RFE was embroiled in controversy following the 1956 Hungarian revolt when it was accused of inciting people to violence.

But the history of 1956 demonstrates the complexity of broadcasting in a crisis environment. In 1956, the Hungarian people, inspired by changes in Poland, rose up against the communist party. They believed that the West would see their struggle and support it. They were disappointed when no Western aid – troops specifically – came to their rescue. And, RFE/RL is not shy today about posting a picture from these events and noting the claim of incitement on their website.

The crisis for RFE actually began in Poland, when a colonel in the Polish secret police, Josef Swiatlo, defected to the CIA while on a shopping trip in West Berlin. Swiatlo had had access to all of the private files of leading communists in Poland. “From September to December 1954 RFE broadcast more than one hundred taped interviews

with Swiatlo in which he revealed detailed and accurate information on the corruption and personal rivalries of the leadership of the Polish Communist Party. The State Department believed the broadcasts were the single most effective political warfare operation since 1945.”⁵²¹ The RFE strategy of direct involvement was fostered through the tactic of reporting back to the Polish people the confessions of a former leader in the Communist Party. The events in Poland, and the subsequent softening of the Communist Party grasp, was encouraging not only for the people of Eastern Europe, but was also used as an enabling example for RFE, vis-à-vis Hungary.

Nelson explains that three news events, which received prominent exposure via RFE, caused the Hungarian people to gain hope for democratic change:

In the mid-fifties RFE emphasized throughout Eastern Europe three stories that set the scene for the uprisings of 1956. The first was the Swiatlo exposures. The second was the agreement between Khrushchev and Bulganin and Tito in May 1955 that there could be different roads to socialism. The third was Khrushchev’s attack on Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956. The CIA secured a copy, which it passed to RFE, which broadcast it extensively.⁵²²

These three incidents signaled to the RFE audience a crack in the foundations of the communist network in Europe, and indicated back to RFE that turning up the heat in broadcasting could have a direct impact on audience perceptions of the grasp of their communist governments.

But when Polish workers rioted in the streets on Poznan, RFE did not incite further action. Instead, “RFE showed great responsibility and restraint and avoided encouraging its listeners to engage in bloody but useless sacrifices.”⁵²³ In the aftermath, the more moderate Gomulka regime was elected in the fall of 1956. Two days after the

⁵²¹ Nelson, 69.

⁵²² Ibid, 70.

⁵²³ Ibid, 70.

election of Gomulka, Hungarian students and writers marched at the statue of General Bem in Budapest. Bem was a Polish officer who had commanded Hungarian troops against the Russians in Hungary's War of Liberty in 1849.⁵²⁴ The march was symbolic. This was "the beginning of the Hungarian revolution. From Western Radios the Hungarians had learned of the Poznan riots and the thaw in conditions in Poland that had followed them. And they marched to General Bem's statue to express their admiration for the Poles and their determination to achieve the same freedom."⁵²⁵

The initial U.S. response was to fuel the situation in Hungary: "Hard Polish news [would] be furnished to Hungary, but Hungarian news [would] be withheld from Poland for the time being."⁵²⁶ Apparently, under the guidance of the Special Committee on Soviet and Related Problems, there was a consensus that the situation in Poland had cooled in the favor of the U.S., and that perhaps the same outcome could be achieved for Hungary. Undeniably, the tactics would be turned up in Hungary.

But, as Nelson points out, "the outcome in Hungary was very different from that in Poland. Russian tanks crushed the uprising, with many dead. Imre Nagy, the Hungarian reformer, was removed from power and eventually was executed."⁵²⁷ In the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution, many charges were laid against RFE. The first was that the radio attacked Imre Nagy. This is because "careless reading of a Radio Budapest broadcast caused RFE to broadcast that Nagy had called in the Russian troops. Nagy later made clear that he had not. This was confirmed in documents that President

⁵²⁴ Ibid, 71.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Ibid, 72.

Yeltsin gave the Hungarians when he visited Budapest in November 1992.”⁵²⁸ Here is an incident when reporting an inaccuracy had a large and negative impact on political events, especially in the context of a larger media environment that lacks transparency. Therefore, the first charge against RFE is carelessness.

The second charge against RFE was that it incited the rebellion. “The widespread charge was that RFE had promised the Hungarians armed aid or intervention by the United States and the Western powers after the revolution had begun. The accusation was that this caused the fighting to be prolonged and many died who would have given up were not for these promises.”⁵²⁹ A Special Committee on the Problem of Hungary, set up by the UN General Assembly, reported that, “it would appear that certain broadcasts by Radio Free Europe helped to create an impression that support might be forthcoming for the Hungarians.”⁵³⁰ RFE conceded in their own report that their tone “was more exuberant and optimistic” than the situation in Hungary warranted.⁵³¹ And in a secret memo on November 20, 1956, the CIA drew the following conclusion: “RFE broadcasts went somewhat beyond specific guidelines in identifying itself with Hungarian patriot aims, and in offering certain tactical advice to the patriots.” But the “uprising resulted from ten years of Soviet repression and was finally sparked by the shooting on 23 October of peaceful demonstrators, and did not result from any external influence, such as RFE broadcasts or Free Europe leaflets.”⁵³²

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid, 73.

⁵³⁰ Report of a U.N. Special Committee, 51, WAC E35/45/1. Quoted in Nelson, 74.

⁵³¹ Cord Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 129.

⁵³² “Radio Free Europe,” Eisenhower Library NLE MR case no. 80-502, doc. No. 4, declassified January 22, 1982. Quoted in Nelson, 74.

The CIA report indicates the fine line between surrogate broadcasting and actively fighting for democracy abroad. But what really did happen? Nelson says that a look into RFE organizational structure points to the weakness, as he believes that “for much of the time neither the American management of RFE nor the head of the Hungarian service was in control of what was transmitted.”⁵³³ Who, then, was in control? Nelson argues that there was a weakness in the power structure:

Each morning during the revolution, Andor Gellert, the head of the Voice of Free Hungary (VFH), or Laszlo Bery, his deputy, together with other senior members of the desk, met Griffith [the political advisor of RFE Munich] at a policy meeting. They told Griffith what they were planning to broadcast, and he gave them instructions. Frequently, their account of what they were planning to broadcast was misleading, policy directives were not conveyed to the commentators, and on at least one occasion Griffith’s instructions were not carried out. The situation was aggravated by the fact that Gellert was ill much of the time... Moreover, he had failed to implement Griffith’s advice of two years earlier to replace inadequate members of his staff.⁵³⁴

According to Nelson, Griffith was highly frustrated by the organizational break in command. He said, “The tone of the broadcasts was over-excited. There was too much rhetoric, too much emotionalism, too much generalization.”⁵³⁵

Adding to the organizational mismanagement in 1956 was Griffith’s lack of guidance from Washington:

The Hungarian void was deepened, Griffith later recalled, by the fact that for reasons he could never discover, the American Embassy had dismantled its transmitter some time before the uprising. We now know that the United States had agreed to shut down its transmitter in exchange for the Hungarians agreeing not to install one in Washington when they opened a legation there. Griffith received almost no guidance from RFE’s office in New York, the State Department in Washington, or the CIA.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ Nelson, 75.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, 79.

RFE was functioning alone, as a surrogate station, caught up it in the fight of the Hungarian patriots. If VOA's greatest struggle was fighting for independence, RFE/RL's darkest moment may have been caused by too much independence.

In the aftermath, an internal inquiry analyzed 308 scripts broadcast by the Voice of Free Hungary from October 23 to November 23, which covered 70 percent of all programming, excluding news. "Of the 308 programs analyzed RFE found that four programs were in violation of RFE's standing policies or daily guidances on the Hungarian revolt and a further sixteen programs involved some distortion of policies or failure to implement constructive techniques of policy application."⁵³⁷

Ultimately, A. Ross Johnson, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and the former director of RFE, writes that there were six accounts of blame placed on RFE:

1. RFE incited the Hungarian Revolution
2. RFE both urged Hungarians to fight the Soviet army and promised the insurgents Western assistance that was never in prospect, raising false hopes among Hungarians, encouraging them to continue the uprising, and contributing to a bloodbath when the Soviet Union cracked down.
3. RFE broadcasts were a significant factor in the Soviet decision to crush the Revolution.
4. RFE undermined, through both personal invective and amplifications of radical indigenous political demands, the position of Imre Nagy. This weakened the only Hungarian politician who might have consolidated a government cohesive and popular enough to enforce internal and external policy limitations sufficient for the Kremlin to tolerate a less repressive but still Communist "Nagyism."⁵³⁸
5. RFE broadcasts were highly emotional, included tactical advice, and otherwise fell short of normal standards of journalism.
6. RFE was out of control, pursuing a policy divergent from that of the U.S. Government.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ Ibid, 75.

⁵³⁸ This is an interesting additional parallel to the 1953 coup in Iran, whereby the U.S. government forcefully removed Mossadig, who was perhaps the best case for Iranian democracy at the time.

⁵³⁹ A. Ross Johnson, "Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956," Accessed June 1, 2008, <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/>.

Johnson addresses these claims, and attempts to “set the record straight.” But blame was widespread. Johnson looks specifically at a broadcast from Sunday November 4th, when RFE carried a program called “A Short World Press Review.” In that program, there was a discussion of an article in the British *Observer*, and the article claimed, “If the Soviet troops really attack Hungary, if our expectations should hold true and Hungarians hold out for three or four days, then the pressure upon the government of the United States to send military help to the freedom fighters will become irresistible.”⁵⁴⁰ In addition to reading the article, Hungarian Service editor Zoltan Thury made the following editorial conclusion, “The reports from London, Paris, the U.S. and other Western reports show that the world’s reaction to Hungarian events surpasses every imagination. In the Western capitals, a practical manifestation of Western sympathy is expected at any hour.”⁵⁴¹ Thury’s comments, and the reading of the *Observer* article, are the reason that RFE was accused of incitement, according to Griffith.⁵⁴²

RFE looked deeply into the situation of Hungarian broadcasts. In December 1956 and January 1957, RFE conducted self-administered questionnaires to 800 Hungarian refugees. “Eighty five percent denied that any outside influences had been responsible for the uprising.”⁵⁴³ But, Nelson points out, these “generally favorable replies for RFE and other broadcasters were not evident in interviews with 1007 Hungarian refugees in a USIA sponsored survey in early December 1956. Ninety-six percent said they expected

⁵⁴⁰ A. A. Michie, *Voices Through the Iron Curtain: The Radio Free Europe Story*, (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), 257-260.

⁵⁴¹ Special Short World Press No. 1-2, November 4, 1956, by Zoltan Thury, translation on microfilm reel 189, quoted in: A. Ross Johnson, “Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956,” Accessed June 1, 2008, <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/>.

⁵⁴² Nelson, 77.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid*, 78.

aid from the West, and 77 percent said they expected military aid.”⁵⁴⁴ And, comparing these studies demonstrates the problem of internal measurements, which continue to be a concern at both RFE/RL and VOA.

The USIA survey also found that 40 percent of respondents said that the example of Poland was the most probable reason for the uprising, and while RFE did funnel information into Hungary regarding Poland, it is difficult to use that as a link for blame on the part of RFE. And, despite the closed media environment, “the newspaper, Szabad Nep, started publishing reports of what was happening from October 19” – indicating that RFE is not solely to blame for broadcasting information about Poland. But “given that 93 percent of the respondents in the RFE survey said foreign radio was their most important source of news... Western broadcasters could feel justly proud for their importance.”⁵⁴⁵

In addition, Johnson found that while some RFE broadcasts were sound, many were faulty: “By all accounts, both contemporaneous reviews and current sampling, the quality of many – but certainly not most – RFE Hungarian broadcasts was poor. The December 1956 internal RFE policy review found many good programs; 171 of 308 programs were rated excellent or good. But the remainder were rated mediocre or worse, and Griffith concluded that the bad and mediocre programs overshadowed the many outstandingly good ones.”⁵⁴⁶ The emotional response to the revolution, apparent in broadcasts in October, was tempered by November.

Looking back, scholars and policymakers reflect on the culpability of RFE and often search for alternative explanations of 1956. Istvan Rev writes: “The disappearance

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, 79. The feeling of ‘pride’ is one way of viewing this listenership, but also points to the idea that information about Poland was mostly funneled to the Hungarian audience via RFE.

⁵⁴⁶ A. Ross Johnson, “Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956,” Accessed June 1, 2008, <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/>.

of the noise of jamming was probably one of the most reassuring radio propaganda tools: there was no real need for other promises to convince the inhabitants of the country that help was on the way; the audible voice was already in the living rooms, and through the open windows, in the streets as well. It was difficult to imagine that western soldiers would not soon follow. But they did not.”⁵⁴⁷ This was an unfortunate coincidence for RFE.

Johnson argues that in order to understand RFE’s role during the revolution, observers must understand the organization’s mission of the 1950s, which continues to be relevant today:

The RFE Hungarian Service... began broadcasting in the early 1950s to counter the Communist information monopoly, as part of the U.S. effort to constrain Soviet power (without provoking suicidal revolt), keep alive hope of a better future, limit tyranny, and broaden the boundaries of internal debate, all in order to make the Soviet empire a less formidable adversary. RFE covered the declarations of the first Eisenhower presidency on liberation of Eastern Europe (always seen as a political and not military goal.)⁵⁴⁸

But was the Hungarian revolution “suicidal”? And did RFE provoke it? RFE was aware of the danger, and a September 2, 1952 report – “Special Guidance on Liberation” – cautioned that “not one word in these [campaign] statements (on liberation) can be used to encourage militant anti-Communist to go over from passive to active resistance in the expectation that such resistance will be supported by Western elements.”⁵⁴⁹ But RFE did

⁵⁴⁷ Istvan Rev, “Just Noise?” Open Society Archives, Accessed September 10, 2007, www.osaarchivum.org/files/2004/justnoise/Just_Noise_by_Istvan_Rev.pdf.

⁵⁴⁸ A. Ross Johnson, “Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956,” Accessed June 1, 2008, <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/>. Johnson also points out that the Hungarian Service did in fact provide a service to the people: “After the Revolution was crushed, RFE began a daily series of special programs devoted to personal messages from refugees to relatives back in Hungary reporting (with first names or pseudonyms) their safe arrival in the West. Some 200,000 messages of this kind were broadcast to relatives back in Hungary, a major public service.”

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

move from passive to active, and that is the reason I would place this historical case closer to the “crusader” end of the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum.

But it is important to remember that 1956 was “a year of ferment through the Communist world,” RFE issued another “special guidance” – Number 26 – on March 27th, cautioning, “there is no likelihood of military action by the West to liberate [the Eastern European] peoples.”⁵⁵⁰ The writing was on the wall. Instead, RFE would, according to Griffith, assist and prolong the “extending thaw” and promote liberalization even under conditions of continued Communist rule. Therefore, Johnson argues that there is no validity behind the claim that RFE incited the revolution:

There were no broadcasts prior to the outbreak of the Revolution calling for insurrection, urging violent confrontation of the Communist authorities, or advocating a maximalist anti-Communist platform. The assertion that RFE incited the Hungarian Revolution is on its face absurd; uprisings and revolutions have internal causes and dynamics and have never been sparked by external media. In any case, RFE Hungarian broadcasts in the months leading up to mid-October 1956 were generally dispassionate and espoused gradual reform – no ‘liberation’ but what would later commonly be labeled ‘liberalization.’⁵⁵¹

In addition, Johnson notes that during the revolution, RFE broadcasts were careful not to incite: “A November 1 commentary called on Hungarians to keep their weapons as guarantee of the freedoms and independence that had been won. ‘To be clear, we only said... do not give up your weapons. We did not say use them when there is no purpose and no sense in it.’”⁵⁵²

Johnson argues that the issue of broadcasting the *Observer* article was definitely a mistake, but did not incite revolution: “The November 4 *Observer* item should not have been broadcast. But it was one program in a critical month of nearly round-the-clock RFE

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

Hungarian broadcasting of over 500 programs and was not a significant programming theme... Hungarian listeners may have drawn encouragement from RFE broadcasts both to keep fighting and to expect Western aid – but these were actions the programs themselves neither advocated nor promised.”⁵⁵³

So what ultimately happened during 1956? Johnson places the Hungarian crisis in the context of organization theory:

The breakdown of control within RFE had many causes: a new FEC (Free Europe Committee) Chair, retired General Crittenberger, who assumed office on the eve of the Revolution; longstanding bureaucratic conflict between FEC and RFE New York, on one hand, and RFE Munich on the other; divided responsibilities between the policy and program departments in Munich (the program department hired and fired the Hungarian and all other broadcasters); insufficient discussion between the American policy staff and the Hungarian broadcasting management of key programs prior to broadcast; and poor internal organization of the Hungarian Service. The breakdown of control also involved personnel failures, specifically a Hungarian Service director, Andor Gellert, who performed poorly (a problem exacerbated by his illness) and a Hungarian broadcast staff that was on balance more ‘rightist’ than opinion in Hungary, demoralized to some extent by recent history (Hungary was truncated after World War I and an Axis-allied power in World War II), and lacking the discipline engendered by past military resistance.⁵⁵⁴

Johnson himself argues that this all explains the poor broadcasts, but does not excuse it. He notes that RFE’s tone was far too emotional: “RFE Munich leadership acknowledged problems with the Hungarian Service later in November, noting that while the Hungarian revolution was generally ‘leftist,’ RFE Hungarian broadcasters were generally ‘rightist’ in political orientation and they tended over the years to become more and more shrill,

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

emotional and over general in tone, to an extent where we have for some time felt that rather drastic measures are needed to de-emotionalize their scripts.”⁵⁵⁵

The RFE legacy of 1956 continued to influence perceptions of this organization. Nelson writes, “It took RFE years to live down the Hungary story.”⁵⁵⁶ And, when President Kennedy took office, some of his key advisors were initially hostile to RFE and RL because they believed that RFE had irresponsibly caused the Hungarian revolt and had innocent blood on its hands.⁵⁵⁷ In addition, VOA was also charged with inciting riots, but Nelson writes, “there seems to be no evidence of this.”⁵⁵⁸

The 1956 Revolution in Hungary is important as context for my research because it demonstrates that the mission of RFE (and RL), historically speaking, was to champion democracy, and in this case, the tactics of the organization pushed them further along the spectrum, perhaps outside the comfort zone of the organization as a whole. After Hungary, RFE’s mission remained unchanged, but its tactics were evaluated, and while regulation did not come from Washington, the internal leadership held the example of Hungary close, as a reminder of how quickly involvement in local politics can slide down a slippery slope towards culpability, whether proven or not.

Why did RFE push past the intended message of “gradualism” while VOA stayed closer to its mission of exemplar democracy promotion? My belief is that this distinction stems from the mission and strategic differences of the organization, but also can be

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. RL did not fall into these traps: “Radio Liberty Russian broadcasts during this period (some directed specifically to Soviet forces in Hungary) were much more tightly controlled and restrained. RL President Howland Sargeant, based on New York, directed early in the crisis that the RL broadcasts limit themselves to news reporting and abstain from rebroadcasting both opinion pieces from international media and especially original commentary. RL broadcasters and American management in Munich strongly resented these limitations...”

⁵⁵⁶ Nelson, 81

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

explained by RFE's physical separation from Washington, which allowed individuals to make choices that greatly impacted the broadcasting tactics at RFE. But the events of Hungary arguably had an impact on VOA as well, and were notably a precursor to the firm establishment of the VOA mission in the 1960 charter draft.

What is learned from the Hungary example is perhaps the mismanagement of the RFE mission, which is in fact a window into the mission overall. It also teaches the broadcasters that evaluating their tactics is worthwhile, to ensure that strategy matches tactics. In addition, as RFE retreated back to a position of promoting liberalization, rather than liberation, the Hungary debacle in effect strengthened the RFE mission. Therefore, it must be viewed as a moment in history where the mission of the organization was recast to survive political crises in the future. While the tactical errors of Hungary may be aberrations, what is learned from evaluating this historical case is the durability of the RFE mission, even in the face of scrutiny. This is the strength of an idea-infused organization – to survive, even when failing to thrive.

Measuring effectiveness

Very early in RFE history, assessing the value and effectiveness of broadcasts was an important task. A Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) was created in April of 1951 to coordinate government policy, and its first task was to consider: “Is it necessary to continue RFE? Is this the best method of accomplishing the particular aim and objectives and how do we develop a comparison of its effectiveness with that of other media?” The preliminary conclusions of this study, according to the report by Mallory Browne, the assistant director of Evaluation and Review of PSB, was that “by and large there was an overwhelming consensus that RFE is one of the most effective elements of the free world’s Cold War strategy today.”⁵⁵⁹ This was based on evidence from escapees from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which convinced Browne that a substantial majority of both Czech and Hungarian populations had heard RFE, or had heard the news from friends and neighbors. Therefore, not only were the early MOEs at RFE based on anecdotal evidence, like VOA it appeared that size of audience was a measure of effectiveness. In addition, RFE depended more highly on escapees and political figures in Eastern Europe, which were no doubt biased towards the values promoted by RFE.

Research indicated that, “RFE was the dominant broadcaster in Eastern Europe in 1989, followed by the VOA and the BBC... Two factors that favored RFE, as always, were that its hours of transmission were much greater than those of the other broadcasters and that it was a surrogate domestic radio station that was strong in domestic news of the target country.”⁵⁶⁰ Therefore, Nelson links broadcast hours and local news as an indicator

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, 190.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. Also, in 1976 audience research determined that 59% of the adult population listened to RFE once a week in Eastern Europe, and 23% listened to VOA. For more information see, “Research on the Audience

for audience size, a statistic that the broadcasters have universally linked with effectiveness. Nelson points out the problem with internal measurement: “The Western broadcasters’ research had overestimated the audience because travelers were usually educated and, therefore, more likely to listen to foreign Radios than were the masses of the population.”⁵⁶¹

R. Eugene Parta has led an interesting study for the Hoover Institution assessing the listening practices and audience saturation of Radio Liberty during the Cold War. What is most interesting is that this study, which compares sources from Cold War era studies both inside and outside the Soviet Union, confirms the assessments made by the radios in attempting to understand listening patterns when the Iron Curtain was secure.⁵⁶² The study revealed that, “from 1972 to 1988, Voice of America (VOA) had the largest audience (with weekly reach of around 15% of the adult population). Weekly audiences to BBC and Radio Liberty fluctuated between 5 and 10% of the adult population.”⁵⁶³ And, when jamming ended on Radio Liberty in November of 1988, “its audience immediately spiked, and in 1989-1990 its weekly reach – 15-16% - was the highest of all Western Broadcasters to the USSR,” indicating that the surrogate station was perhaps the

to VOA and Other International Broadcasters in Eastern Europe,” VOA paper, September 1976, NARA, Declassified February 11, 1993. Quoted in Nelson, 191.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, 192.

⁵⁶² The study evaluates 50,000 interviews conducted with Soviet citizens traveling outside the USSR during the period of 1972-1990, under the auspices of the Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research United (SAAOR) of RFE/RL. Then projections of audience estimates were done through the mass media computer simulation methodology developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and then adapted to the requirements of RFE/RL. In other words, the MIT methodology was projecting the information provided by the travelers onto the larger Soviet population. In addition, it “examines correlations between SAAOR studies on media use and internal Soviet studies on the topic and finds a strong congruence.” And, adding to the value of the SAAOR study, it was also compared to a study of interviews conducted among 25,000 Jewish emigrants from the USSR. Parta, xix, xxi, 5.

⁵⁶³ Ibid, xix.

preference of the Soviet audience.⁵⁶⁴ The study indicates that Western broadcasting “drew surprisingly large audiences in the USSR during the Cold War,” indicating again that success is defined by audience size.⁵⁶⁵ RFE/RL’s role as a champion of democracy was also confirmed by this study: “Information from Western broadcasts played a crucial role in helping to form or reinforce democratic attitudes in the USSR.”⁵⁶⁶

Ultimately, the study indicates that Western broadcasts reached about “29% of the adult population of the USSR,” and “in 1989-1990, Western radio was reaching 25 million people on an average day and over 50 million in the course of a week.”⁵⁶⁷

Therefore, the study indicates a strong role of RL in the Cold War: “It is apparent from these two different data sources – East and West – that Western broadcasts played an important, and at times, critical role in the path of the Soviet Union toward a freer society.”⁵⁶⁸

This study therefore is typical of other international broadcasting studies, given the involvement of RFE/RL. Parta points out that the interviews were conducted by “independent research institutes in a neutral manner that did not prejudice results in favor of a single broadcaster.”⁵⁶⁹ However, I would argue that if the respondents were aware of the source of the study, it might be biased. Therefore, this study is important because it

⁵⁶⁴ Parta, xix-xx. Parta points out on p. 9: “Radio Liberty was jammed without interruption from its first day on the air in March 1953 until November 22, 1988, and it was the number one target of the Soviet jamming network.” In addition, he explains on p. 14 that after 1988, new listeners expanded the reach of RL: “There were more women among the new listeners and more younger people (under 30 years of age).”

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid, 63. Parta also says on p. 64: “There are few examples of external information sources managing to reach into a modern, industrialized society in such a broad and consistent fashion.”

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid, 64.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, 24.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid, xxii.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, 2.

compares figures with the Soviet internal findings, but it also may suffer from shortcomings seen in other internal studies.⁵⁷⁰

The difficulty for measuring the effectiveness of the radios is about influence – i.e. were broadcasts in fact influential? The study seems to indicate that RL was influential beyond its audience: “Western radio listening had a high correlation with ‘word-of-mouth’ communication, which meant that Western information was ‘amplified’ to a far larger part of Soviet society than just the listening audience.”⁵⁷¹

The study also indicates the attitudinal types and their likelihood for listening to Western broadcasting. Not surprisingly, “‘Liberals’ used word-of-mouth as an information source at higher rates than any other group, suggesting that information gathered from Western radio sources received an amplifier effect... ‘Hardliners’ tended to rely on domestic TV as their main information source and made little use of Western radio broadcasts.”⁵⁷² This can likely be explained by a 1985 study, which found that 77% of listeners to Western radio were motivated by the “latest news,” whereas only 8% wanted to “know the adversary.” In addition, it is clear why RL would slightly outperform, as compared to VOA, since 70% of the audience was looking for “unavailable information” and 62% wanted to “learn about the outside world.”⁵⁷³

Parta’s study also points to the differences between RL and VOA:

⁵⁷⁰ To this point, Parta writes, “No claim is made that that the research approach used by SAAOR during the Cold War produced results that would have been as accurate as surveys freely conducted within the USSR using state-of-the-art methodology. All research findings in this study have to be understood within the limits of that caveat... The data, however, do provide a rather remarkable body of internally consistent findings with high face validity, and we feel confident that they offer valuable insights into the role played by Western radio during the Cold War period... When the Cold War ended and research could be conducted within the USSR, and later in the successor states to the Soviet Union, it became clear that our earlier measurements and understanding of audience behavior were firmly grounded and no major reassessments were required.” Ibid, 3.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid, xxi.

⁵⁷² Ibid, 31.

⁵⁷³ Ibid, 33.

The audience of VOA was relatively young, about three-quarters urban, and about evenly split between men and women. Radio Liberty, on the other hand, had a somewhat older audience, less urban, slightly better educated and strongly represented in the Union Republics. This was consistent with the program offer of each station. Although both stations had a strong news orientation, VOA carried considerably more entertainment and U.S.-oriented programming, while Radio Liberty, as a ‘surrogate’ broadcaster, focused on political and cultural aspects of its broadcast area, the USSR, and was on the air in more regional languages.⁵⁷⁴

While I would argue that today RFE/RL is perhaps more concerned with capturing, or amplifying, the youth audience, as demonstrated by its influx of blogs and digital media, the strategic focus during the Cold War remains relevant today, not only in terms of missions, but also in terms of broadcasting material. During this time, RL was more actively involved in the political landscape of the Soviet Union, it was involved more on the local level in promoting change, while VOA was broadcasting an American-oriented message.

A. Ross Johnson outlines the give-and-take relationship of MOEs at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. He explains that there are three ways to explain the “success” of RFE/RL in the past. In these measures, the clear nature of RFE/RL mission stands out:

What explains the success? I think there were a number of reasons. First, a clear sense of purpose congruent with the aspirations and possibilities of the audience. We knew what we wanted – to keep alive the Communist-controlled countries hope of a better future, to limit tyranny, to broaden the boundaries of the internal debate, all in order to promote not suicidal revolt but gradual democratic transformation and in the process make the Soviet empire a less formidable adversary. Second, a capability for sophisticated appraisal of the adversary. Significant radio resources were devoted – especially at RFE and RL – to detailed analyses of national Communist regimes and the societies they ruled... Third, differentiated and tailored programs for multiple audiences... Programs for Communist elites covered conflicts within and among Communist parties and reports on social democracy in Europe. Programs for non-communist elites

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, 6.

covered Western culture and intellectual life and, as internal dissent developed, amplified that dissent.⁵⁷⁵

Johnson's strategic view and assessment of RFE/RL's broadcasts indicate that MOEs were used in support of RFE/RL's goals of championing the cause of democracy. Here, it is evident that RFE/RL had no intention of cheering from the sideline, but instead chose to amplify issues that would lead to democratic transition.

Amplification was both the goal and MOE of RFE/RL: "RFE and RL were the vehicles through which those and many other dissidents and opposition figures spoke to their own countrymen. We were a megaphone for critical internal thought, and by many accounts this communications channel played an important role in bringing down the Soviet empire."⁵⁷⁶

Looking forward, A. Ross Johnson argues that MOEs should not be based on audience size – which I believe is the trend at both broadcasters – but instead based on strategic goals. For RFE/RL, he argues: "We need to define our objectives – which I suggest are not to attract audiences per se or simply to fight terrorism as such but rather to contain and overcome radical Islamism."⁵⁷⁷ Here, Johnson places RFE/RL's mission, in terms of how he defines America's strategic interest, not image.

Istvan Rev also critiques the RFE/RL style of measurement. The issue with quantity, explains Rev, is that the MOEs were "biased for home consumption, for convincing State, BBG, to continue and increase the funding because of effectiveness."⁵⁷⁸

According to Rev, bias is a huge problem for MOEs at RFE/RL and VOA. These

⁵⁷⁵ A. Ross Johnson, "Cold War Broadcasting: What worked and why?" McCormick Tribune Foundation – Hudson Institute Conference on International Broadcasting/Strategic Communications, 2.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁷⁷ A. Ross Johnson, "Cold War Broadcasting: What worked and why?" McCormick Tribune Foundation – Hudson Institute Conference on International Broadcasting/Strategic Communications, 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Istvan Rev, Open Society Archives, Director, Interview, Budapest, Hungary, July 26, 2007.

measures of effectiveness are “based on studies of tourists, refugees. They wanted to please interviewers. The answers were very heavily biased answers. And these answers were used as hard data.”⁵⁷⁹ These are issues that continue to plague the ability of RFE/RL to use internal MOEs as an indicator of success, and is fodder for the creation of new standards that are not internally focused or internally evaluated.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

Employees

For the most part, RFE/RL employees appear to be aware and supportive of the mission of their organization, and the idea of championing the cause of democracy abroad. Kenan Aliyev of the Azerbaijani Service at RFE/RL argues that the radios are there to “promote human rights, democracy and free press – we are a mission oriented organization.”⁵⁸⁰

However, this is not universal. For Liz Fuller, who writes about the South Caucasus for RFE/RL, the goal is exposure and accuracy. While she does support the goals of RFE/RL, she takes a somewhat softer approach to democracy promotion: “For me, from the policy guidelines, I believe the most important thing is accuracy. Newline (her department) is not out specifically to promote democracy, but I will point out when the Georgian prime minister says something pro-democracy but contradicts himself with a crackdown.”⁵⁸¹ I would argue, from observing Fullers’ work, that her stories often do promote democracy and speak to abuses of human rights and basic freedoms, and for that reason her work fits inside of the general RFE/RL strategy, while she may not actively articulate this trend. In my interview with Fuller I could sense a slight discomfort with the notion of democracy promotion, which I believe is common in democracy promotion organizations based on the study by Fitzpatrick, considered in Chapter 1.⁵⁸²

The take-away of my interviews in Prague at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was that this organization was much more actively involved in the political landscape of

⁵⁸⁰ Kenan Aliyev, Senior Multi-Media Producer, Azerbaijani Service, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007.

⁵⁸¹ Liz Fuller, Regional Analyst, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007.

⁵⁸² Kathy R. Fitzpatrick, “The Collapse of American Public Diplomacy: What Diplomatic Experts Say About Rebuilding America’s Image in the World – a View from the Trenches,” paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco, California, March 2008.

Eurasia than VOA, and for that reason it would be a misnomer to categorize RFE/RL as an exemplar on the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum. I also believe that their actual broadcasts, which I will examine further in the two upcoming chapters, demonstrate how these employees are influenced by the mission of their organization. However, it is interesting to note that even within an idea-infused organization, employees do show variance in attitudes along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum.

A champion of democracy

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were born to influence change abroad, to be champions of democracy:

The two ‘freedom radios’ ... had a much different purpose [than VOA]. They were, to begin with, pure Cold War institutions. Their goal was not simply to inform their listeners but also to bring about the peaceful demise of the Communist system and the liberation of what were known as satellite nations. The radios pursued these goals not by promoting the American way of life, but by serving as surrogate home radio services, alternatives to the controlled, party-dominated, domestic press.⁵⁸³

The deep rooted nature of the Cold War system was essential to the birth of RFE and RL, which, unlike VOA, were direct products of the Cold War tension. Therefore, democracy promotion was at the core of surrogate broadcasting, and RFE/RL’s founders were not shy about their ambitions. Puddington admits, “there is something daring, even arrogant, in the notion of a country establishing a network of more than twenty radio stations with the ultimate goal of bringing down an entire system of government.”⁵⁸⁴ In fact, the leaders were outspoken. C.D. Jackson, the president of the National Committee for a Free Europe, carefully chose his words about the eventual liberation of Eastern Europe, “emphasizing the thoroughly non-polemical idea that world peace required self-determination for Eastern Europe.”⁵⁸⁵ Democratic peace theory drove the early RFE/RL leadership, who believed that with the developing tool of information technology, the U.S. could bring down a governmental system.

Therefore, the difference in mission between VOA and RFE/RL was clear from the early days of the Cold War: “While the BBC was appreciated for its professionalism

⁵⁸³ Puddington, ix

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, x.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, 3.

and the Voice of America valued for its programs on American culture, only RFE was given the status of honorary member of the democratic opposition.”⁵⁸⁶ In fact, the parental role of the U.S. Department of State for VOA, and the management role of the CIA at RFE and RL, further illustrates this point, historically.

A. Ross Johnson also identifies this key difference between RFE/RL’s typically champion strategy and VOA’s exemplar strategy. He explains that at RFE/RL, “programming – and this is a key point – was not focused on the United States, on ‘us.’ It was focused on our audiences, it was about ‘them.’”⁵⁸⁷ This is the difference – as Bruce Sherman explains – between image and interest. In addition, Johnson explains that RFE/RL was born with a different strategic viewpoint than VOA: “Early RL directives stated that ‘all material was to be presented from the viewpoint of the peoples of the Soviet Union... the broadcasts... are to be Russian broadcasts, not American broadcasts. They are to serve the interest of the Russian liberation movement, not the ‘official’ interests of the United States. There will be no duplication of or competition with the broadcasts of VOA.”⁵⁸⁸ RFE/RL was to be a surrogate station through-and-through, and this meant speaking not America’s voice, but a Russian, or Eastern European, voice that was silenced by the regime. By amplifying this voice, bottom-up-change was believed to be possible.

And because of these varying strategic viewpoints of RFE/RL and VOA, A. Ross Johnson argues that “VOA was an instrument of public diplomacy, RFE and RL were

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, 5.

⁵⁸⁷ A. Ross Johnson, “Cold War Broadcasting: What worked and why?” McCormick Tribune Foundation – Hudson Institute Conference on International Broadcasting/Strategic Communications, 3.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

instruments of system change.”⁵⁸⁹ One set an example of information and cultural openness, the other fought for the cause of democracy inside the Iron Curtain. To call only VOA public diplomacy is an interesting categorization. Johnson argues that RFE/RL was fighting for America’s interest abroad, the cause of democracy, whereas VOA was attempting to promote a positive image of America abroad. If the latter is public diplomacy, according to Johnson, then certainly VOA led that charge.

--

While the differences between RFE/RL and VOA are clear in examining their histories, myths and missions, it is also apparent in their physical locations. VOA is housed walking distance from Capital Hill in Washington, D.C., and entry into the organization requires a quick check through security, easier than any airport. Visitors are always offered a tour of the downstairs of the building, which is set up almost like a museum to VOA’s broadcasting history – demonstrating the goal of VOA to “get it straight” and to “be there.” The charter is engraved on the wall, visible to visitors and employees alike. A tour of the studios demonstrates both new technology and locations of historic broadcasts.

Entrance into RFE/RL is starkly different. Before the 2009 move, visitors would first wait far back from the building, where a police guard calls into the building that a visitor is arriving. The street surrounding the building was sectioned off, guarded by concrete slabs, appearing to defend against a bombing attack. (Which most likely was the

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, 5. Johnson argues that there are three elements of international communications: (a) information that is objective world news – BBC is the standard, (b) information about a country – VOA is America’s public diplomacy broadcaster and (c) information “promoting moderate and democratic individuals and trends in an authoritarian and especially Muslim countries and providing a megaphone for moderate voices shut out from state-run or extremist media.”

purpose, as the RFE headquarters in Munich were bombed in February of 1981.) Once a visitor was identified, they walked the block long distance into the building, where they were greeted again with police and security in similar fashion to VOA. But once through security, the building was cold and reminiscent of a time in the past. There were no glass windows demonstrating on-air broadcasts, no photos demonstrating the glory of the organization's past.

During my 2007 visit, I was shown architectural plans for the new home of RFE/RL, a modern, glass building. This move demonstrates the changes we are seeing across the organization at RFE/RL. On the web, RFE/RL is becoming sleeker with the use of blogs and new technology, and the new building seems also to represent a new direction for RFE/RL, moving out of a Cold War era facility into a new, modern building.

The RFE/RL website explains its new home in this way:

Facing massive funding cuts that precluded continued operations in Germany, RFE/RL accepted the invitation of Czech President Vaclav Havel and Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus and relocated its broadcasting center to the former Czechoslovak parliament building in Prague in 1995. For over 13 years, RFE/RL called this former communist headquarters its home, until 2009, when RFE/RL relocated to a custom built, state-of-the-art building just outside the city center.⁵⁹⁰

Communism is the political context of the past, and therefore RFE/RL is actively transitioning to a new physical and metaphorical environment. Perhaps with its new home, and new web 2.0 version of its website, RFE/RL has formally entered the post-Soviet age.

But the legacy of Cold War broadcasting still remains relevant. Consider Puddington's explanation of RFE's role during the Cold War:

⁵⁹⁰ A Brief History of RFE/RL, Accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html>.

To those who have come of age with the Internet, satellite dishes, and CNN, the very idea of promoting political liberty via propaganda balloons must seem odd, amusing, or even absurd, but it must be remembered that in 1954 the revolution in communications technology was decades away. At that time, Eastern Europeans lived in societies in which controls over information were almost total, save for the broadcasts of foreign radio services.⁵⁹¹

While we live in the age of global communications, the tendency for government to attempt controlled media continues. And while their control is not total, it is extreme. And therefore, RFE/RL's goal of promoting political liberty continues to be relevant. Propaganda balloons may have been swapped for blogs, but RFE/RL continues to influence political goals today. I believe that this typically champion style of democracy promotion will be apparent in the upcoming chapters considering current RFE/RL broadcasting.

⁵⁹¹ Puddington, 66.

CHAPTER 6

Broadcasting to Iran: 2007-2009

This chapter will explore VOA and RFE/RL broadcasts to and about Iran. In doing so, I will return to the research questions mapped out in chapter 1 to analyze whether broadcasters are influenced by organizational missions and the extent of broadcasting promotion activities. Therefore in this chapter I will discuss in detail the work of both broadcasters – both in the words of their own employees and through observed English-language content in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009.⁵⁹² This span of live content produced by both organizations demonstrates trends, and ultimately articulates the nature of broadcasting tactics for both organizations. Therefore, this evidence adds to the findings of the previous chapters, which examined VOA and RFE/RL history and mission statements (the independent variable of this research). As the previous chapters indicated, an “exemplar” democracy promotion style for VOA was distinct from the more “champion” or “crusader” democracy promotion style for RFE/RL. As this chapter will demonstrate, broadcasting promotion strategies permeate to broadcasting tactics.

This chapter will examine Iran, which has many commonalities with the Azerbaijani audience, but stands out as a state in extreme political turmoil, with forces of authoritarianism battling those calling for democratic change on the streets daily, especially since the 2009 Presidential election. This state is experiencing dynamic rates of change, both local and global in nature. The information revolution, the take-off of the Iranian blogosphere, and the dramatic rate of political change and violence have created a context ripe for the American international broadcasters. At the start of my research, Iran

⁵⁹² The years of conducted research cover the broadcasting in President George W. Bush’s second term and the transition to President Obama’s administration.

continued to be a security concern for the U.S., and democratic change was an overarching regional goal and solution proposed by the Bush administration. As my research progressed, the nature of Iranian politics changed with the disputed 2009 re-election of President Ahmadinejad. The content analysis below covers this span of Iranian politics.

The 2009 election, in particular, provided an unprecedented platform from which the American broadcasters could elevate the cause of democratic change in Iran - by simply covering events on the street and amplifying calls for change emanating from within Iranian society and the Iranian diaspora. Therefore, the 2009 election in Iran is not a typical event in reporting for RFE/RL and VOA. As such, I have separated content observed during the weeks prior to the election, evaluating that content in a separate section.⁵⁹³ Therefore, through the various elements of content analysis evaluated below, I am able to gain a sense of “typical” reporting for both RFE/RL and VOA, as compared to what I will call “crisis” reporting.⁵⁹⁴

Through interviews and a content analysis, my goal is to match the mission statements of RFE/RL and VOA with the sentiments of RFE/RL and VOA employees and observed broadcasts through a content analysis, in order to assess the relationship between broadcasts and strategy. Therefore, this chapter will describe employee attitudes about broadcasting, vis-à-vis Iran, and will examine the content of broadcasting to Iran.

⁵⁹³ As discussed in Chapter 2, content analysis is “an analysis of what comes to people’s attention.”⁵⁹³ Therefore, when RFE/RL and VOA are reporting during times of turmoil and crisis, setting the agenda is not necessary, as the issue – in this case that of the Iranian election – is already secured on the news and political agenda by the global political-media nexus. Therefore, I believe this timing must be separated from the rest of the content analysis in order to demonstrate the editorial choices made by RFE/RL and VOA at a time when Iran is the cover story on the *New York Times* as well.

⁵⁹⁴ By “crisis reporting,” I am referring to political crises, when regime change or democratic transitions are called into question. Political crises are distinct from environmental crises, for example.

To begin my analysis, it will be helpful to reflect on the original research questions posed in chapter 1:

(Q1) *Is promoting democratic values a strategic priority for RFE/RL and VOA in their reporting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan?* This chapter will provide evidence from which I will make the case that democratic values are in fact a strategic priority for both organizations, though their differing missions foster different broadcasting outputs.

(Q1A) *Are the employees of these organizations guided by mission statements that prioritize democracy promotion? Do employees view their work as an element of democracy promotion?* Through interviews with employees at both VOA and RFE/RL, I am able to get a sense of their actual work, and their strategic outlook. Therefore, I am able to understand how they consider their work in light of organizational missions.

(Q1B) *Do RFE/RL and VOA prioritize stories with democratic values in order to support a general strategic goal of democracy promotion?* To address this question, I will consider the priority of stories by both organizations, as each organization is functioning independently and can make editorial decisions in regards to the priority of stories. As such, I will evaluate the priority and frequency given to democracy-themed stories, as defined in chapter 2, for both organizations. In addition, I consider parallel content at VOA and RFE/RL – i.e. I observed content published on the same day, in the same political environment in order to make a clear comparison. By structuring my research in this way, I am able to observe and understand editorial decisions and deduce different strategic priorities. For a more detailed look at daily comparisons, see *Appendix 5*.

(Q2) How is the strategy of RFE/RL and VOA evaluated? What are the measures of effectiveness (MOEs)? My interviews with RFE/RL and VOA employees demonstrate that MOEs confirm, mold and revamp the strategic work of both organizations. Therefore, through interviews I have learned that MOEs at both organizations are not a measure of actual influence, but instead as a measure of consistency with strategic goals. This discovery explains the findings in the two previous chapters: MOEs focused on audience size and the number of language services rather than influence or political change. I believe the same trend continues in the post-Cold War political environment, as will be noted in the interviews below.

This chapter will be divided into three sections: employee perspectives of broadcasting and MOEs, content analysis of broadcasting to and from Iran, and an evaluation of the 2009 elections in Iran.

Employee perspectives

As both RFE/RL and VOA are managed by the same parent organization – the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) – I spoke with Bruce Sherman, the Director of Strategic Planning for the BBG, to gain perspective of the role of both organizations in broadcasting to Iran – a state high on the agenda of U.S. foreign policy objectives – both in terms of security and resources. In this interview, Sherman explained that the strategy for broadcasting to Iran is the same as the global strategy for the all radios: “What we do in Iran is the same thing we do everywhere else – to be a free press, to support freedom. The idea is that objective journalism done well, into societies where such information is lacking, will help open closed societies [and] promote freedom. This has been the mission since VOA was founded in 1942.”⁵⁹⁵ Therefore, according to Sherman, both organizations are supporting freedom, and Iran is treated no different than any other country.

While Sherman is right that both organizations promote freedom in closed societies, there is in fact a difference in practice that Sherman is not articulating. The context of Iran – a state not only high on the American agenda, but experiencing dynamic rates of change – is distinct from others states. Further, Iran is functionally separated from other states by the broadcasters, especially with the recent establishment of two stations - Radio Farda by RFE/RL and PNN by VOA – dedicated to the Farsi-speaking audience. Therefore, I believe Sherman’s categorization of the two broadcasters misses the mark: The broadcasters should not be artificially linked, in terms of strategy and tactics, and the context of regional, local, and state audiences must considered more

⁵⁹⁵ Phone interview with Bruce Sherman, Director, Strategic Planning, U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors, April 28, 2008

thoroughly in American public diplomacy. In other words, we should move away from thinking of American international broadcasting as “one size fits all.” Therefore, it is interesting that from the parent organization perspective Sherman groups the two organizations together. I believe this grouping weakens American strategic broadcasting, as it fails to acknowledge what is unique about VOA and RFE/RL and the ways in which their unique strategies can be useful in supporting U.S. foreign policy goals in various political contexts.

Sherman was very positive about the actual and potential role of both broadcasters in Iran. He believes that American broadcasting is “influential” in Iran and has “great reach.” He explained that the broadcasters are continually looking for new and innovative ways to reach the Iranian audience: “Satellite TV has been a growth area because Radio Farda is heavily jammed. You can’t jam satellite TV – you can only take away dishes.”⁵⁹⁶ Again, broadcasting measures tend to focus on numbers, and here Sherman looks to saturation and calls that “influence.” What I believe he is saying instead is that VOA and RFE/RL are in fact hitting their goals: they have found an audience and bring democratic values to that audience, albeit in different ways.

Ultimately, Sherman believes that the broadcasters must be both innovative and cautious when it comes to broadcasting in Iran. He explains that, “there are a lot of people advocating to promote change” and that the American international broadcasters could be “hyper critical of Ahmadinejad” because “obviously you can crank up the media message,” but “this is not our thing.” The content analysis I have conducted is in line with Sherman’s statement – while RFE/RL and VOA may report the news in Iran – the

⁵⁹⁶ Radio Farda is the radio broadcasting station originally managed by both VOA and RFE/RL and now managed solely by RFE/RL. VOA launched in 2007 the Persian News Network, which broadcasts television programming to Iran, and will be discussed further in this section.

focus is rarely Ahmadinejad himself, perhaps indicating an unwillingness to move too far along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum to a point of actually inciting an end to Ahmadinejad's rule.⁵⁹⁷

My conversation with Bruce Sherman indicated that he approaches the issue of reporting to Iran through the framework of exemplar democracy promotion. This is likely due to the fact that the BBG has traditionally and historically had a closer connection to VOA, and therefore missions of BBG and VOA are more in line. Also, Sherman sees RFE/RL reporting as "local noise," though I believe that RFE/RL is amplifying local news and themes of democracy – not "noise" – and therefore Sherman misses the mark that this broadcaster is aiming to give a voice to local democratic waves, including the political opposition.

Like Bruce Sherman, Gary Thatcher, VOA's Associate Director for Program Support, believes that, in particular, VOA's programming is influential in Iran, especially given the closed diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iran. He explained that, "despite the fact that we have no diplomatic relations with Iran, there is wide use of our broadcasts and there is an audience of 20% of the Iranian population of adults. That is without any relationship with the government."⁵⁹⁸ This lack of governmental relationship is problematic at times for VOA, because in an effort to be an example of unbiased news, VOA should articulate the view of both sides and "in a story, the government [of Iran] often declines to be interviewed." While this limits the ability of the broadcasters to provide broad sources for each story, Thatcher believes that their audience understands

⁵⁹⁷ Though I did observe such stories published by RFE/RL in 2009 during the election season, including some that mock Ahmadinejad's political style and family background.

⁵⁹⁸ Gary Thatcher, Associate Director for Program Support, International Broadcasting Bureau, Voice of America, Phone Interview, January 10, 2008.

that VOA is offering a distinct perspective from the typical government-run media, and that they also have limited interaction with the Iranian government. But given the diplomatic context, Thatcher is quite proud of VOA's in-roads into the Iranian market for loyalties.

While VOA is infusing stories with an American perspective or American broadcasting style, RFE/RL is instead functioning as a surrogate station – meaning it is a station produced to reflect what free media would look like inside Iran. Surrogate broadcasting has long been the goal of RFE/RL, as described in chapter 5, and remains one of the core strategic differences as compared to VOA. The nature of a surrogate radio is to not only to serve as an example of free press, but also to enter the market for loyalties inside a country such as Iran and become an active player in the political landscape and national identity formation. This active strategy moves RFE/RL from the sidelines onto the political playing field, and enhances its ability to champion the cause of democracy.

Jeffrey Gedmin, the President of RFE/RL, argued in a piece for *Foreign Affairs*, that surrogate broadcasting efforts are “especially valuable in countries where the United States faces a hostile and authoritarian government but a potentially friendly population, such as Iran.”⁵⁹⁹ He points to Radio Farda's ability to function in the Iranian media space while attempting to promote change:

Radio Farda... broadcasts news, talk shows, commentary and music around the clock. The Iranian government jams radio signals, blocks Radio Farda's website, and harasses Farda journalists who work at RFE/RL's headquarters in Prague (and their families back in Iran). The government has not permitted Farda to open a bureau inside Iran and has threatened those who feed information to the station

⁵⁹⁹ Jeffrey Gedmin, “Boom Box U.S.A.: Surrogate Broadcasting as a Tool of U.S. Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, September 27, 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65426/jeffrey-gedmin/boom-box-usa>, accessed 10/8/09

with severe penalties, including prison time. What does the current Iranian regime fear? In 2007, when a government fuel-rationing program led to social unrest, Radio Farda provided details and analysis otherwise unavailable in the country. In the wake of the contentious presidential elections this past June, Farda provided timely and reliable information about the Iranian opposition, disputes inside the government, and divisions among the clergy.⁶⁰⁰

This is the nature of surrogate broadcasting – RFE/RL broadcasts globally but fills an information void locally. Its agenda is global, while the stories are local. It aims to provide a missing piece of the national experience to the local population, in a hope to strategically change the local political and media landscapes. It is therefore a step beyond the exemplar strategy of VOA – it is active, it is a champion of a cause – and therefore further along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum.

Kambiz Tavana, Deputy Director of Radio Farda at RFE/RL, articulated these goals. Tavana, an Iranian, lives in Prague and works with a staff of 35 at RFE/RL headquarters, along with 12 employees in Washington, D.C. Tavana explains that, “The idea of surrogate news is – if we were an office inside Iran, what would we do? What are people not getting access to? We have a mandate to cover stories.”⁶⁰¹ Like VOA, the goals of a Radio Farda employee center on journalistic principles. But there is a strategic component as well – to show audiences what a local, free press would look like, in hopes that it will amplify the voice of the opposition, and subsequently lead to an indigenous free press.

But Radio Farda does not operate freely inside Iran, and instead is produced from Prague and dependant on a small network of stringers inside Iran. Radio Farda and RFE/RL have access to a worldwide network of Iranian scholars and experts, and

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid

⁶⁰¹ Kambiz Tavana, Deputy Director of Radio Farda, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview July 30, 2007, Prague, Czech Republic

therefore Tavana says that they can do their best to provide listeners and readers with a balanced viewpoint. Tavana explains that working with the stringers is a delicate situation: “We have to be very cautious. We have fake email to get in touch, since it’s risky to call them.” As such, when it comes to news stories, it is hard “to find people to talk – [hard to] conduct interviews – but we need the viewers point of view.” This point of view is critical for the surrogate station, because RFE/RL is trying to best function as a free broadcaster inside the state, unlike VOA where there is the perspective that a one-sided story is possible or even predictable given the American perspective and relationship with Iran.

Tavana understands the difficulties of reporting inside of Iran, as he was a journalist there prior to assuming his role at RFE/RL. “I was writing for three years on the nuclear [issue]. I visited sites and had good access. But I knew, you don’t point out anything related to a bomb in your writing. And last year [2006] the government [published] an annual budget, but I was not allowed to paraphrase it.” This grip on his journalistic freedom is what pushed Tavana to Prague to fight for press freedoms and democracy in Iran. Tavana, therefore, embodies the spirit of change. In that sense, many RFE/RL employees in Prague truly exemplify the cause of championing democracy promotion, as it has driven not only their career, but has also impacted their personal life.

Tavana understands his audience - he notes that the relationship between citizenry and media is different in Iran than in the West. “The mentality of trusting media in the East is not the same. There is a belief that the BBC is what the British are thinking, and Radio Farda is what the Americans are thinking.” This creates a difficulty for the legitimacy of the surrogate station – as the audience might be skeptical of the viewpoint

and agenda of the station. Therefore, RFE/RL works actively to separate itself from Washington, and hires mostly Iranians. In addition, the new blog section of the RFE/RL site is case in point of this goal: In 2008-2009 RFE/RL revamped their website to include a section on their blogs page, called “Persian Letters,” which aims to amplify the local voice calling for change.⁶⁰² A description of the site, in RFE/RL’s own words, is depicted below:

About This Blog

Persian Letters offers a window onto Iranian life by translating and showcasing the works of Persian-language bloggers. Through their voices – from clerics, to anarchists, feminists, or bus drivers – we hope to sample the electronic dialogue going on within a society that is tough to characterize and often contradictory, but always interesting. We are not responsible for their views, however. You can write the editor of the blog, Golnaz Esfandiari, at esfandiari@rferl.org

★ Guerrilla Translators

Seen anything in the Iranian blogosphere that you think Persian Letters should cover? Interested in being one of our guerrilla translators? If so, contact Golnaz Esfandiari at esfandiari@rferl.org

★ RFE/RL In Persian


radiofarda.com

[Listen](#)

👉 Iranian Bloggers (In English)

- [Persian Paradox](#)
- [Tehran Post](#)
- [Rotten Gods](#)
- [Faith Today](#)
- [I Am An Iranian Daughter](#)

⁶⁰² As this change was planned during the Bush administration and managed under the Obama administration, I do not think it is appropriate to link this change with the Obama presidency. Instead, I believe we are witnessing a general trend to “adopt” new technologies during the timeframe of my research, which corresponds with what is called web 2.0.

Here, on the RFE/RL website we see a tactical approach that clearly differs from that of VOA. Instead of giving a voice to America, RFE/RL aims to give a voice to Iranians, and to assist in their call for change. An example of the type of blog considered by Persian Letters is illustrated below. This example is from November 23, 2009, which was not the immediate aftermath of the Iranian elections, but shows how the demonstrations and unrest months after the elections continued to trump the RFE/RL media agenda:

PERSIAN LETTERS

'If You Want To Protest, Just Make Sure Your Mother Doesn't Find Out'



Hundreds of thousands of worried mothers?

November 23, 2009

Blogger [Baghe bi bargi](#) (A garden without leaves) writes that her mother is worried for her safety because of her participation in protests against President Mahmud Ahmadinejad:

This page goes on to detail elements of this blogger's experience protesting the 2009 election of President Ahmadinejad. In this RFE/RL section, bloggers are profiled daily. Therefore, it is actually the audience of RFE/RL that is a top story for the broadcaster. This is an interesting development towards a two-way flow of communications, which is increasingly relevant and possible in the age of globalization.

But to truly understand their audience, RFE/RL employs InterMedia.⁶⁰³ As the majority of InterMedia employees are former RFE/RL, VOA, and BBC employees, this staff carries on the organizational/cultural perspective of an international broadcasting

⁶⁰³ InterMedia is a leading international research and consulting organization, specializing in media and communication, according to its website, www.InterMedia.org. Their website explains, InterMedia was founded as a 501C3 corporation in 1996, bringing together staff with unmatched media and opinion research expertise who had formerly worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

organization. In my interview with Tavana, it was clear that he views InterMedia as an extension on his own organization, since he refers to InterMedia as “we.” And, from my conversations with various employees at both RFE/RL and VOA, including my conversation with Bruce Sherman, there is a general sense that InterMedia is an extension of the broadcasters, probably due to employee cross over. The effects of the relationship between InterMedia and the broadcasters is outside the scope of my research, but the question of bias and the agenda of InterMedia is interesting to consider. From my perspective, InterMedia must have a stake in creating favorable MOEs at RFE/RL and VOA, and therefore MOEs are likely geared towards articulating a level of achievement.

When it comes to assessing the Iranian audience, Tavana is very aware of the challenges for InterMedia: “We were doing random phone calls, from neighboring countries, but you can’t tell inside Iran where the call is coming from.” Therefore, Tavana explains that if you ask, “do you listen to Radio Farda?” the answer will be “no!” based on fear. And if you ask, “do you like the Islamic Republic?” the answer will be “yes!” Because of this, Tavana supports the idea of a surrogate station: “You have to have eyes and ears in Iran, you need to understand the young people, you need the whole package of things.” His perspective, that audience research is only moderately helpful, and that instead the radios must build a deep knowledge of the culture and informational needs of the Iranian audience, is extremely important. Therefore, on the employee level, I came to see that the political, cultural, religious, informational context in Iran was a consideration, hoping to ensure that stories remained salient.

Also, Tavana explains that the broadcasters must be aware of their technological challenges to broadcasting, such as filtering: “There is more filtering in Tehran than

outside – on YouTube, BBC, Farda. But there are still ways to break in –we don’t worry about filtering. People can find a way through. Elites are filtered less, so the strategy has been to make elites the target audience.” By making the elites the target audience of Radio Farda, the hope is that information is disseminated from the elites, to the general population, as the general population might in fact look to elites as opinion leaders.

The time I spent with Tavana demonstrated how strongly and personally he believes in the idea of Radio Farda as a surrogate station, and how closely he connected that functionality with a greater goal of information freedom and democracy in Iran. As such, interviewing Tavana demonstrated that the leadership of Radio Farda is in support of providing Iranians with an example of democracy, and they are doing so actively – their hope is not to watch by the sidelines but instead to champion free press inside of Iran. In my estimation, Tavana and his staff are champions of democracy.

My conversation with Tavana was particularly interesting when compared to a later interview I conducted with his counterpart at VOA - Sheila Gandji, the Director of the Persian News Network (PNN). Gandji is also Iranian, but lives in the U.S. and appears to be Americanized, if not raised in the U.S. This cultural difference is equally reflected in their different job functions and organizational missions. According to Gandji, PNN “tells America’s story” and depends on “good stories to show the audience – stories from country singers to bridges. These stories are a well received break from politics.”⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, while Gandji is in touch with the Iranian audience, her perspective, like those of her counterparts at VOA, is American.

⁶⁰⁴ Sheila Gandji, Director of the Persian News Network, Voice of America, Washington, D.C., Interview August 4, 2008

The division of broadcasting to Iran between VOA and RFE/RL has an interesting history, as originally there was a marriage of RFE/RL and VOA as parent organizations of Radio Farda. However, their distinct style and organizational perspective led to the natural division. Gandji explained: “It was cumbersome, so we split. It was a pilot project for four years.” After the creation of the Persian News Network (PNN) in 2007, RFE/RL and VOA went their own way in terms of broadcasting to Iran, leaving Radio Farda under the stewardship of RFE/RL. This development demonstrates the evolving nature of broadcasting to Iran during the timeframe of my research. Gandji believes that VOA compliments RFE/RL – “they are radio, we are TV. We even cross promote.” (Though RFE/RL does use video, and both use new media – blogs, YouTube, etc.) I believe the difference in perspective, mission and organizational structure is larger than the difference in mediums, as Gandji demonstrated to me in our interview.

With the creation of PNN in 2007, Gandji’s job became ever more dynamic and fast paced: “We expanded so fast that it made sense to spin us off,” she explained. PNN is the first network within a network at VOA and now has 200 employees, making it significantly larger than Radio Farda. The network now has 6 hours of original programming per day, plus a seventh hour, which is a refashioning of a *History Channel* biography. The PNN network is broadcast on Telestar for 24 hours, and has continual news breaks. “We have the ability to break in with breaking news at anytime,” Gandji explains. PNN is a news network with a strong human-interest bend. Its size outweighs that of Radio Farda, indicating perhaps that it is the priority in Washington, or at least more closely linked with the BBG.

PNN shows include “Today in Washington” which is a news brief and “Today’s Woman” which Gandji describes as similar to the ABC show “The View.” Gandji believes that watching women debate issues is “a lesson in democracy.” As such, she demonstrates a strong dedication to the idea of exemplar democracy promotion – not actively and aggressively promoting democratic themes, but rather demonstrating what a democratic and free debate looks like. She explains, “We have men come on the show (Today’s Woman), because women’s rights start at home with men. We also profile American women – like Nancy Pelosi and women in the military. And we talk about issues like inheritance (in Iran inheritance favors men) and we talk about things that are taboo.”

Gandji is also proud of “News and Views,” PNN’s flagship news program, which is a television call in show. Callers are sometimes even American officials. She also detailed PNN’s highest rated show, “Newstalk,” which covers “all of the issues.” The show is interactive – the producers post an Internet question of the week, to ensure an “interactive relationship with the audience.” And to target the 15-29 year old Iranian demographic, PNN broadcasts “Late Edition,” which Gandji describes as “edgy, sophisticated, cultured,” covering topics such as “unemployment, blogging, underground rock bands, film reviews and fashion.” She also says that the anchors of this show embody the young Iranian demographic.

To keep current with the growing Iranian blogosphere, which Gandji describes as over 100,000 blogs, PNN produces a segment on blogs. She explained, “We show bloggers, we have two bloggers hosted outside our site. We have bloggers covering the [American 2008] primaries. And the anchor of our show ‘Newstalk’ has a blog, which

has had a positive reaction.” This showcase of the Iranian blogosphere is an attempt to stay current, be part of the discussion, and communicate to a younger audience, which is quite different than the strategic viewpoint at Radio Farda – where blogs are rebroadcast based on their message – to amplify a call for change.

This media agenda is unlike the targeted broadcasting items of Radio Farda, including their blog called “TransMission,” which according to the RFE/RL site is “written by RFE/RL editors and correspondents [and] serves up news, comment, and the odd silly dictator story...The name recognizes RFE/RL's role as a surrogate broadcaster to places without free media.” Another RFE/RL blog, called “Watchdog,” is a “blog with a singular mission - to monitor the latest developments concerning human rights, civil society, and press freedom,” according to RFE/RL’s website. These blogs are very different in flavor than the shows detailed by Gandji.

The different organizational culture and missions of RFE/RL and VOA can explain the different tactical approaches outlined above. When it comes to the mission of PNN, Gandji stays close to the VOA line: “We have a charter – to provide straight news.” When asked if she promotes democracy, Gandji explains, “We cover the news. We are the same as CNN. We always get the State Department reaction on issues to Iran – but so does any other news agency. No one pushes us.” As such, she explains that critiques of the regime “are based on facts – about transparency, human rights abuses, etc.” This perspective is different than the goal of the surrogate station, described by Tavana. Gandji supports an open press, but will not go as far as to claim she is promoting democracy abroad. Therefore, she is promoting democracy solely by example and is not a champion of the cause.

Gandji sees her role as that of a standard news producer: “The bottom line is me. We have an editorial meeting everyday at 8:30. And we double source everything, and we consider how the story will be perceived in D.C. and to our audience.” Ultimately she sees her role as encouraging “intelligent debate – which is the best part of democracy. We want Democrats and Republicans on our show – we don’t want to be like Iranian television. This is what America is about.” Therefore, democracy is on Gandji’s agenda, but it is seen through the lens of the American example – to create through PNN an open news source and a platform for the discourse desired by the Iranian people.

Gandji boasts that PNN has captured 29.4% of the Iranian audience – a figure that combines Internet, radio and broadcasting. Saturation demonstrates success, according to Gandji. (Though I would argue that it doesn’t speak to influence). Gandji points out that even President Ahmadinejad watches PNN - “he tells our correspondents.” But despite this success, Gandji sees PNN as “a work in progress.” She explains that she is “trying to move away from spot news to investigative journalism and specials. This will take a while.” Ultimately this transition will happen, according to Gandji, as the creation of PNN was organic to begin with: “No one ever planned a network, it just happened. I created my own graphics unit. I did what I had to do to get it done. There is never a dull moment.” What I find interesting here is that PNN was not a strategic birth, it was not envisioned by the BBG or the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy at the State Department, but instead grew from inside VOA, gaining \$16 million of budgetary funds in 2008.⁶⁰⁵ This growth indicates something extraordinary about VOA as a governmental organization – that contrary to the literature on idea-infused governmental organizations,

⁶⁰⁵ Mary Beth Sheridan, “Persian News Network Finds New Life in Contested Iranian Election,” *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/17/AR2009061703853.html>, accessed March 19, 2010.

discussed in chapter 2, VOA is able to innovate. This is an optimistic sign for the survival of VOA and RFE/RL in the information age.

Ultimately, Gandji wants PNN to reflect the style and quality of “60 Minutes” on CBS. For example, on the 30th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution, PNN produced a piece on the historic roots of terrorism. “We have hired outside documentary writers and producers,” said Gandji. When it comes to these stories, Gandji has “the freedom to come up with ideas – I know I can go to my bosses with ideas.”

Although the tactical approach of PNN stories are very different than that of Radio Farda, there are many commonalities between the two organizations, including the staff – both of which are largely Iranian. In the case of PNN, the staff exclusively comes from Iran, except for the executive producer who is an American with network experience at ABC. But unlike RFE/RL, PNN has no staff in Iran. Gandji explains, “we can get in touch with credible sources, though we can’t pay anyone in Iran because of sanctions.” Therefore the nature of RFE/RL’s Prague location, and its network of stringers, supports its ability to function as a surrogate.

In addition, the above interviews indicate that numbers rather than influence guide MOEs for both organizations. Another example demonstrating this trend was posted on VOA’s Public Relations blog, indicating the “successful” nature of PNN, as reported in a State Department evaluation:

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009

VOA's Persian News Network

There have been a lot of stories out there about VOA's Persian News Network. Here's the REAL story: The State Department's Office of Inspector General has issued a report that, overall, praises the Voice of America's (VOA) Persian News Network (PNN). "VOA successfully built PNN into its first full-fledged network in an extraordinarily short period of time," said the report, which is posted on the State Department's website, <http://oig.state.gov/documents/organization/121748.pdf>. "Given the U.S. strategic interest in communicating with Iranians, PNN represents a major achievement in setting up a network that reaches approximately 29 percent of Iranians in Iran," the report said. Started in July 2007, PNN now reaches more than 13 million people weekly in a country with no press freedom. That's huge. Of course, there have been some hiccups in creating a network -- and the State Department report points those out. But, VOA has embraced the recommendations in the report and moved to make changes already.

And, if you want to see for yourself, just come visit VOA and take a Studio Tour where we watch Farsi broadcasting. You can also check it out at www.voanews.com/Persian.

After reading this posting, one is left to wonder whether the State Department is the best source for evaluating the usefulness of PNN. In addition, the focus on audience saturation tends to be an ending point, and audience opinions are not highlighted. This treatment of measurements can be seen across the organizations.

However, comparing the conversations with Sheila Gandji and Kambiz Tavana illustrates the organizational division that I believe is reflected in the mission of RFE/RL as compared to VOA's charter. While I believe that both Gandji and Tavana demonstrate a commitment to democratic transition in Iran, the degree to which their commitment is and can be implemented in their job varies. By the simple nature that RFE/RL aims to function as a surrogate, that the producers depend on stringers that dodge the Iranian regime, and that they publish blogs and stories aimed specifically at calling out the

challenges to democracy in Iran, is very different in nature than the PNN. As Gandji demonstrates, there is a strong commitment to building the PNN network, to providing a platform to discuss issues in Iran – from blogging to unemployment to culture. Gandji’s focus on story ideas and show styling was very different than the reflection of press restrictions in Iran offered by Tavana. Therefore, I would argue that Gandji is closer to the exemplar style of democracy promotion on the spectrum, while Tavana is closer to the champion style.

Content Analysis of RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts

In this section, I will evaluate the findings of my content analysis. As would be expected based on differences between the organizations, democratic themed stories were a higher priority for RFE/RL reporting than VOA reporting. And, in the case of Iran, an additional finding also became clear – VOA prioritized the story of Iran’s nuclear ambitions more frequently than RFE/RL. This finding adds to my understanding of these organizations – that as a surrogate station RFE/RL would champion democracy, and as an exemplar station VOA would function as a free press. Therefore, due to VOA’s charter, that station would focus on stories that the U.S. government is placing high on the policy agenda, including the story of Iran’s nuclear ambitions, which was particularly relevant during the Bush administration. In other words, as VOA sets its media agenda, it will take its cues from the administration in a way that is unlike the agenda-setting techniques of RFE/RL. RFE/RL, guided by its mission, will seek opportunities to amplify prospects for democratic change.

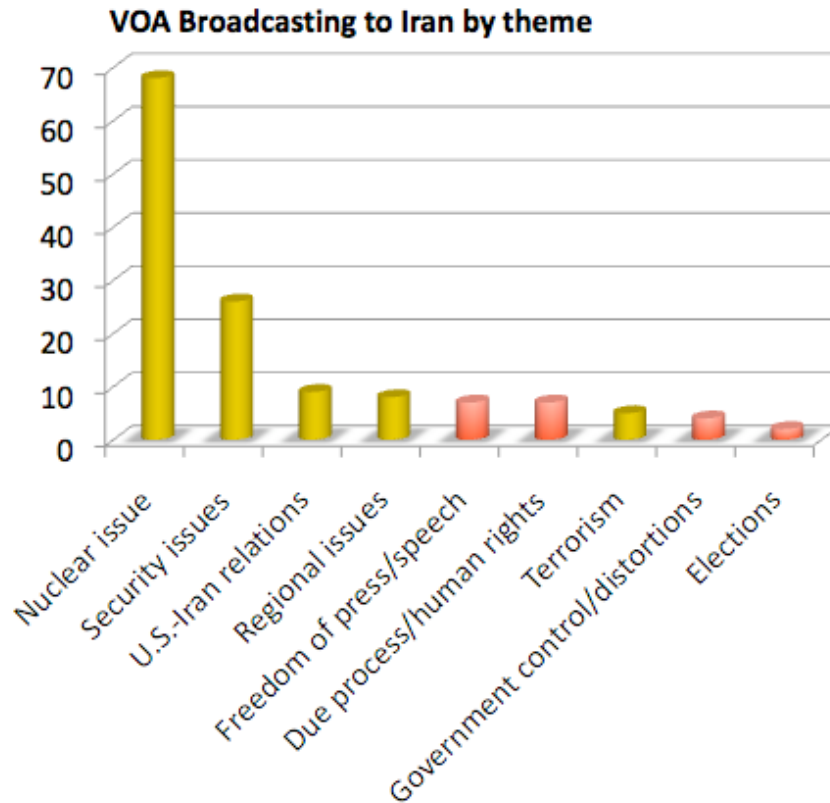
RFE/RL quite simply prioritizes the reporting of democracy themed stories in its broadcasting more than VOA. Both broadcasters have the ability to choose which stories to prioritize, and therefore I believe one explanation of this difference is distinct organizational missions, which distinguish VOA from RFE/RL. Guided by the methodology outlined in chapter 2, I observed articles published by both RFE/RL and VOA on their website, with an understanding that many of these stories had been or would be reformatted for both radio and television broadcasts. As my unit of analysis was the sentence level – or in this case the headline – I evaluated the theme of the headline.

As such, I evaluated whether the headline indicated a democratically themed story, as defined by the principles of liberty noted in Chapter 2, or if the story should be categorized in what appeared to be a non-democracy promoting theme – the Iranian nuclear issue, security threats to the region posed by Iran, the role of Iran in supporting terrorist organizations, or simply regional issues of the Middle East/Caspian or stories about the tensions between the U.S. and Iran. These stories were juxtaposed to those focusing on themes of liberty. I therefore used “liberty,” as defined by Zakaria and Carney above, as a method of evaluating democracy content in RFE/RL and VOA articles, which includes the categories of freedom of press, freedom of speech, due process, human rights, government control, freedom of religion, and women’s rights. For a complete list of broadcasts evaluated for my content analysis, including the categorization of each story, please see *Appendix 6*.

Through the categorization of articles, as described to the audience via headlines, I was able to first note the themes that RFE/RL and VOA place high on the media agenda, and then note the overall democracy themed content of each broadcaster. From the perspective of VOA, their charter clearly did impact broadcasting tactics, as the majority of VOA reports focused on non-democracy themed stories, and predominantly the nuclear issue. My content analysis from 2007-2008 yielded 68 stories published by VOA on the nuclear issue, 26 stories on issues of security, 9 stories on relations between U.S. and Iran and 8 stories on relevant regional issues. These were the priorities of VOA, as they only reported 7 articles on due process and human rights, 7 articles on freedom of speech and the press, 4 articles on government control and distortions and 1 article on

free and fair elections.⁶⁰⁶ It is interesting to note that VOA published no stories on women's rights and freedom of religion noted in my sample of content from 2007-2009.

VOA broadcasting to Iran, by theme, is represented in the chart below:



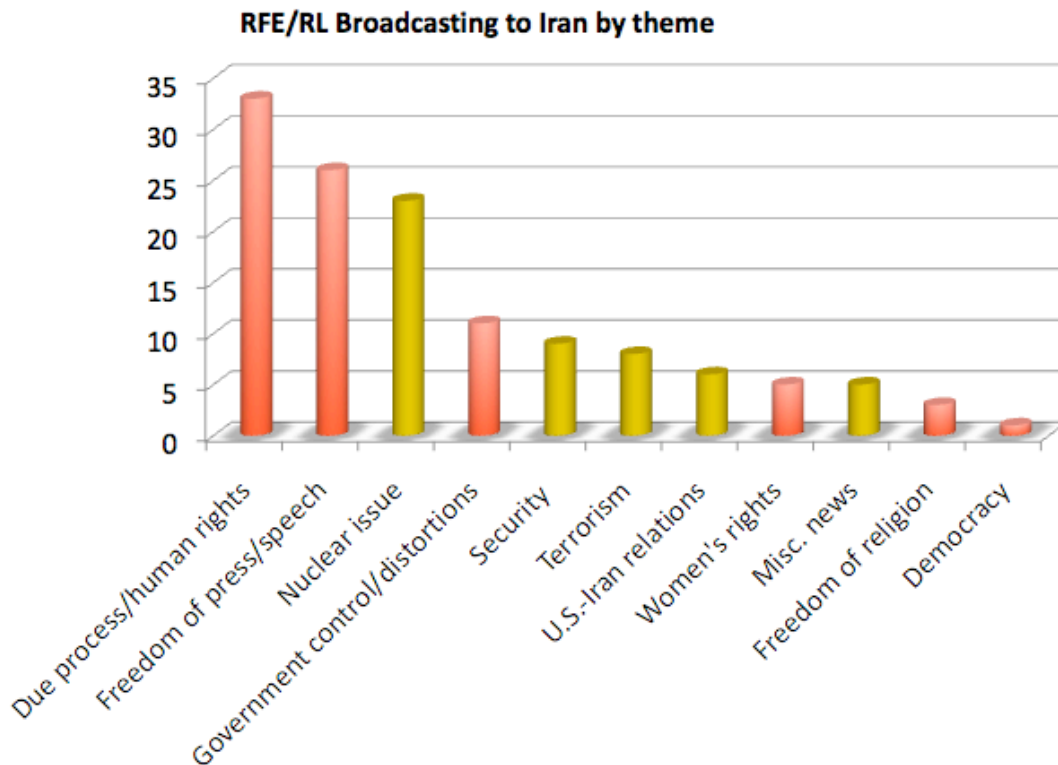
Therefore, it is clear that VOA is attempting to place the security threat posed by Iran on the media agenda. Themes of democracy are given a back seat to the concerns raised by the Bush administration over Iran as a growing regional power, particularly Iran's desire to gain nuclear capabilities.

RFE/RL, on the other hand, demonstrated a higher prioritization of themes of democracy in the 2007-2009 sample. RFE/RL published 33 stories on due process and

⁶⁰⁶ I have grouped together the categories of freedom of speech and press, as I did with due process and human rights, as these categories have overlapping themes and therefore allow for less subjectivity in the categorization.

human rights and 26 stories on freedom of speech and press, indicating that these issues are the broadcasting priority at RFE/RL. RFE/RL did also deal with security issues – particularly the issue of Iran’s nuclear ambitions – but to a lesser degree, publishing 23 articles on the nuclear issue as opposed to the 68 published by VOA. In addition, RFE/RL also covered the span of democracy related themes – including 11 stories on government control and distortions, 5 stories on women’s rights, 3 stories on freedom of religion and 1 story focusing on the challenges to democracy in the region.

The chart below reflects RFE/RL broadcasting to Iran, by theme:

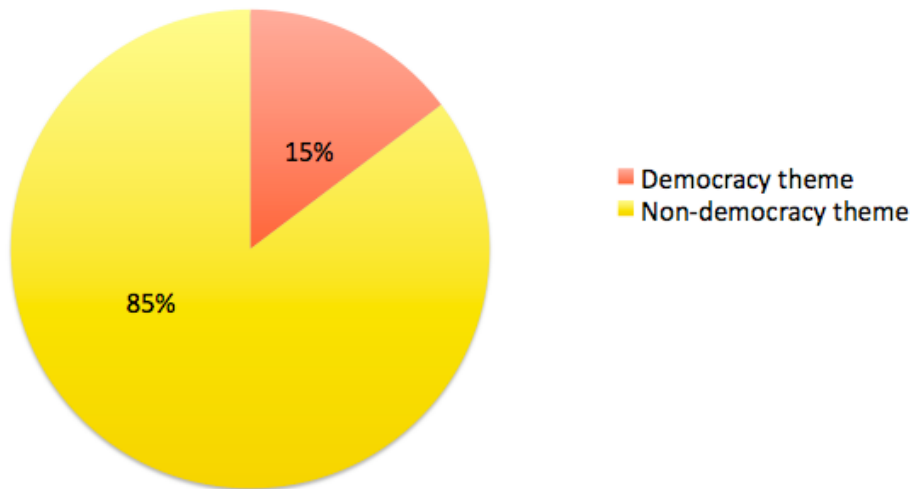


Ultimately, what my content analysis reveals is that while 15% of VOA broadcasting focused on themes of democracy, 61% of RFE/RL broadcasting focused on

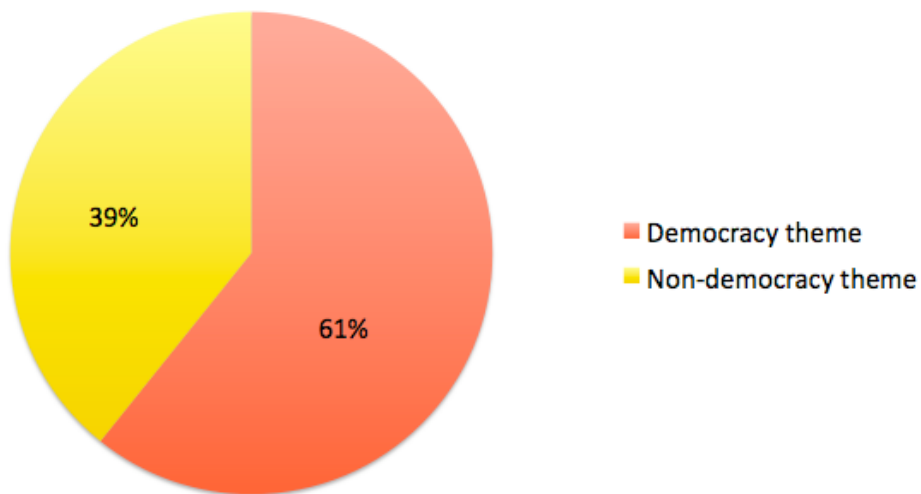
themes of democracy. This distinction not only indicates a clear tactical difference between the two broadcasters, but also, as indicated in the discussion of content analysis in chapter 2, can reflect the strategic differences between the two organizations. Therefore, missions and organizational differences, and thus different approaches to democracy promotion do have an impact the dependent variable of broadcasts, as observed through the above content analysis. This content analysis reveals, again, that RFE/RL would be placed further along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum – closer to champion or crusader – than VOA, which I would place closer to exemplar. In other words, the content analysis reflects the strategic differences outlined in VOA and RFE/RL history, missions and employee perspectives.

The pie charts below demonstrate percentages of democracy promotion stories in the 2007-2009 timeframe of my content analysis and provides an important comparison:

VOA Broadcasting to Iran



RFE/RL Broadcasting to Iran



As content analysis is a reflection back on the broadcaster – the difference in democracy promotion articles says a great deal about VOA and RFE/RL. In addition to the focus revealed in news articles, RFE/RL has continued to build its interactive platform on the web, and it has created new blogs, including “Persian Letters” detailed above, that amplify and support the cause of democracy in Iran, further amplifying the

media agenda of RFE/RL news stories. Stories from the RFE/RL blog build on prominent themes at RFE/RL, such as, “Calls for Iran’s ‘Blogfather’ to be Released From Prison,” published on October 29, 2009, which was highlighted on the “Watchdog” blog section of the RFE/RL site. However, some stories in the blogs are even more aggressive than the typical news item, including, “Not Only In Tehran, But All Iran Will Be Green,” from the “Persian Letters” section on November 2, 2009. Unlike VOA – where the tone of the editorial page is distinct from the home page – RFE/RL uses its new blog section to further amplify the message of its radio and news homepage, sometimes in a more aggressive tone. The message at RFE/RL is consistent across the board, demonstrating that this station is a champion of one cause – democratic change abroad. For a visual look at the stories of VOA and RFE/RL during the 2007-2009 research period of my dissertation, please see *Appendix 3*. And, for a day-by-day comparison of news stories selected by VOA and RFE/RL, indicating the tactical and therefore strategic differences between these organizations, please see *Appendix 5*.

Ultimately, this content analysis, which represents a higher demonstration of democracy-related stories on the part of RFE/RL, as compared to VOA, can be understood as a reflection back on the intention of the broadcasters. Therefore, according to the method of content analysis, content can reflect on strategy, and in this case indicates a stronger democracy promotion strategy at RFE/RL than VOA. As such, I conclude that the independent variables of mission and strategy at the broadcasters are distinct, which is in fact is an addition to the existing literature on public diplomacy, as no other studies articulate this key difference. In addition, noting the distinct strategies of the broadcasters, and the distinct tactical outputs in the Iran case, indicates that mission is

a likely indicator for tactical differences, and that a strong relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables of my study.

The 2009 Election in Iran: When Iran trumps the international news agenda

In the aftermath of the contested election of President Ahmadinejad on June 12, 2009, Iranian protesters took to the streets for weeks, placing Iran on the top of the global news agenda. (And while thinned out, protests are ongoing as I conclude my research). Iranian democracy became a cover story across the board – from the *New York Times*, to the *Washington Post*, and of course at VOA and RFE/RL. Therefore, I have separated this timeframe from the content analysis described above, as it was not a challenge or a strategic decision to cover the story of Iranian democracy for the international broadcasters, but rather a requirement for staying current in the global news environment.

But I believe it is important to observe how VOA and RFE/RL respond in a “crisis” situation – as it has been through such political crises (the Hungarian uprising being one example) that the broadcasters have been judged for effectiveness, strategy and implementation. In addition, if the distinctions in broadcasting tactics continue during a crisis time, it is safe to say that organizational differences are hard-wired into their daily tasks, crisis or no crisis.

Therefore, I observed stories reported by both VOA and RFE/RL in the first three weeks following the June 12, 2009 Iranian election. The main takeaway from this aspect of my content analysis was that both broadcasters prioritized the story throughout the three weeks (and beyond). And, what I found particularly interesting is that even when Iran was high on the international news agenda, the organizational distinctions outlined above continued during the “crisis” timeframe. RFE/RL functioned again as a surrogate station, with a distinctly Iranian viewpoint. Further, RFE/RL did not hide its support for the opposition (although the station did not travel along the broadcasting democracy

promotion spectrum towards incitement). VOA, on the other hand, while profiling the views of the opposition, approached these stories as news items, and often focused on the U.S. response and perspective, which can be explained by their mission to articulate the views of America and the exemplar nature inherent in their charter.

During the three weeks after the Iranian election, VOA actually reported more stories (in numbers) on the election aftermath than RFE/RL.⁶⁰⁷ This shift from the typical ratio is likely a result of the fact that the leading news story of the summer of 2009 was Iran, and VOA is a larger operation. VOA approached the Iran story as news, with a more objective and arms-length perspective. Examples of such stories include:

- “Iran’s Election Commission Proclaims Ahmadinejad Victor,” 6/13/09
- “Ahmadinejad Win Sparks Protest in Tehran,” 6/13/09
- “Iran Presidential Election Protests Reflect Wider Shift,” 6/15/09
- “Demonstrator Killed by Gunfire at Iranian Election Protests,” 6/15/09
- “Iran to Recount Some Votes in Disputed Election,” 6/16/09
- “Iran’s Upheaval Highlights Internal Political Fissures,” 6/17/09
- “Tech Savvy Protesters Battle Iranian Government in Cyberspace,” 6/18/09
- “Thousands of Protesters Clash with Police in Tehran,” 6/20/09
- “Iranians Use Internet, Phone to Share Protest News,” 6/20/09
- “Iran’s Top Electoral Body Refuses to Annul Disputed Election,” 6/21/09
- “Western Nations ‘Deny’ Meddling in Iran’s Post-Election Violence,” 6/21/09
- “Iranian Opposition Leader Musavi Calls for More Protests,” 6/22/09
- “Iranian Government Increases Pressure on Opposition,” 6/25/09
- “Iran Confirms Ahmadinejad Win After Partial Vote Recount,” 6/29/09

VOA takes the reader through the daily events in Iran in a detailed way that was not matched by RFE/RL, perhaps because RFE/RL’s role as a surrogate broadcaster did

⁶⁰⁷ This content analysis includes (most of the) stories reported by RFE/RL and VOA between 6/12/09 and 7/4/09. For a complete list of articles observed for the content analysis, see Appendix 3.

not require such a detailed description for the indigenous audience. However, after reading the RFE/RL reports, it was clear to me that RFE/RL was attempting to give a sense of urgency to the Iranian election story, not only to support the opposition but also to rally an American response. This is particularly interesting as a challenge to Smith-Mundt, described in chapter 1, which separates foreign audiences of public diplomacy from domestic audiences. Not only has the internet age made this distinction unlikely, it appears that the broadcasters are no longer attempting to satisfy these divisions. In addition, the shift in the audience, and an interest in not only reporting to Iran but also in impacting politics in the West, has fundamentally changed the nature of the “surrogate” station.

While RFE/RL continues to broadcast as a “surrogate,” there is a new and emerging role that now exists in an age when local and global politics collide. As such, emotionally charged stories from RFE/RL included:

- “Iran Jams Foreign Satellite News in Bid to Isolate Public,” 6/23/09
- “The Futility of Lawful Appeal in the Iranian Election,” 6/24/09
- “What Will Happen to Those Arrested in Iran? I Can Tell You,” 6/25/09
- “Iran Pursuing Doctor Who Helped Neda, But Interpol Denies Knowledge,” 7/3/09⁶⁰⁸

RFE/RL was also able to rely on the communications provided by those who submitted to the RFE/RL blog pages to raise awareness and amplify the struggle in Iran. This led to a different story tone than the typical VOA story.

In addition, in many RFE/RL stories, there was a sense that the surrogate station was directly challenging the Iranian government:

⁶⁰⁸ This article refers to the death of Neda Agha-Soltan during a rally in Iran following the 2009 elections. Her death was captured on video by bystanders and was broadcast online internationally, gaining a global response in favor of the opposition and demonstrators.

- “Ahmadinejad Asks ‘Where is Fraud?’ But Prevents Independent Scrutiny,”
6/15/09
- “Iran cancels Foreign Media Accreditation,” 6/16/09
- “Iran’s Khamenei on Crash Course,” 6/20/09
- “Crisis Response Hints At Early Stages of Iranian Power Struggle,” 7/2/09
- “Iranian Ultraconservatives May See Chance to Revive ‘Wilting’ Revolution,”
7/3/09

RFE/RL was also able to take the audience into the Iranian story, which further illustrates how their target audience is growing beyond the Iranian public and now also includes the American and Western reader.

- “Iran’s Cyber Warriors Stay Ahead of Government Censors,” 6/17/09
- “What Iranian Media Are Saying,” 6/18/09 and 6/23/09
- “Listener Comments to Radio Farda,” 6/23/09
- “Iranian Opposition Tarrer by Public Confessions From Arrested Protesters,”
6/24/09
- “RFE/RL’s Esfandiari Tells Sky News Iranians Remain Frustrated,” 6/25/09
- “Hard-line Iran Editor Calls For Musavi to Face Trial,” 7/4/09

Stories that describe the actions of the Iranian people, bloggers or media serve to amplify the opposition media message as well as educate and rouse an American response.

While I would have expected to see this type of story from RFE/RL, a station that tends to more overtly champion the cause of freedom of press and democracy, it was interesting to see similar stories from VOA amplifying local calls for change. Such stories included:

- “Iranians Flood VOA With Videos, Emails; Broadcaster Launches New Show:
Satellite television broadcasts reach almost 30% of Iranian adults weekly,”
6/15/09

- “Keeping Iranians Informed, VOA Covers the Latest Developments in Iran’s Elections,” 6/18/09
- “Human Rights Groups, Media Organizations Call for Internet Freedom in Iran,” 6/19/09
- “Special VOA Newscasts Keep Iranians Informed,” 6/21/09

In addition to stories on press freedom and the role of VOA in the election conversation, it is interesting to note that VOA published a large number of stories during the Iranian election season (VOA published 71 news articles in the three weeks following the election, and two editorials – “Elections in Iran” on June 17th and “Protests and Violence in Iran” on June 25th – whereas RFE/RL published 41 stories in that timeframe, not including blog discussions). I believe these findings are in line with the history of VOA – to get right to the scene of a crisis and report instantaneously on an important world event from both an American and global perspective.

In responding to the crisis in Iran, VOA remained close to its charter and demonstrated an American point of view. At times VOA seemingly inserting President Obama into the narrative about the Iranian election, such as in stories below:

- “U.S. Lawmakers Monitor Iran Situation,” 6/16/09
- “Obama: Demonstrators Reflect Growing Desire For Change in Iran,” 6/16/09
- “Obama ‘Troubled’ By Post-Election Turmoil in Iran,” 6/16/09
- “Obama Administration Denies Interfering in Iranian Affairs,” 6/17/09
- “U.S. Condemns Violence Against Demonstrators in Iran,” 6/19/09
- “White House Welcomes U.S. Congress Condemnation of Iran Violence,” 6/19/09
- “U.S. Political Debate Unfolds Over Iran Response,” 6/21/09
- “Obama: Iran Must Stop ‘Violent and Unjust’ Actions,” 6/21/09
- “Obama Calls Iran Violence ‘Outrageous,’” 6/26/09

- “U.S. Republicans Call for Stronger Position on Iran,” 7/4/09

In addition to demonstrating the U.S. response and perspective on the Iran elections, VOA mirrors the Obama administration’s political debate over the option of engaging directly with Iran (to resolve the nuclear issue), which had been the administrations previous position before the election turmoil. VOA charts the Obama administration’s shifts in policy in the aftermath of the election:

- “Obama Says Iran’s ‘Robust’ Election Debate Hopeful Sign for U.S.-Iran Engagement: Administration officials say plans to engage Tehran will go forward regardless of who wins election,” 6/12/09
- “U.S. Withholds Judgment on Iran Election Results,” 6/14/09
- “Iran Election Poses Dilemma for Obama Administration: Analysts say President Obama’s pledge to open dialogue with Tehran is now a touchy position,” 6/16/09
- “U.S. Rescinds Invitations to Iranian Diplomats,” 6/24/09
- “U.S. Says Door Remains Open For Nuclear Talks With Iran,” 6/28/09

These VOA stories represent the opinion formation of the Obama administration – still concerned over the nuclear ambition of Iran, still hoping to engage Tehran directly, but reacting to the illiberal nature by which President Ahmadinejad reclaimed his position.

In addition, an editorial printed by VOA just two days before the Iran elections calls for direct diplomacy between the two states, illustrating the fluctuation of the Obama administration after June 12.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁹ VOA had published a previous editorial on direct diplomacy on May 22nd, entitled, “Obama On Iran and Diplomacy.”

Benefits Of Direct Diplomacy

10 June 2009



Iran's nuclear power plant at Bushehr

In an interview on ABC TV, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said she is looking forward to seeing the results of President Barack Obama's new strategy of pursuing direct engagement with Iran:

"We have a team of people who we have tasked to work on this. I think there's an enormous amount of potential for change, if the Iranians are willing [to pursue that.]"

Secretary of State Clinton said the U.S. and Iran need better information about each other – not just "a one-way street of information":

"The idea that we could have a diplomatic process with Iran means that, for the first time, we would actually be sitting at a table across from Iranians authorized by the Supreme Leader [Ali Khamenei] to talk with us about a whole range of issues. That gives us information and insight that we don't have."

Therefore, the election was indeed a time of policy shift and uncertainty for the Obama administration, as demonstrated by VOA reporting. And, it is important to note, Obama's response was a relevant story topic for only VOA, whose strategic goals allow for broadcasts about the American point of view.

The content of both broadcasters in the aftermath of the 2009 election demonstrate that both VOA and RFE/RL were directly and openly involved in opinion formation after President Ahmadinejad's contested victory. Therefore, on this occasion, it is possible to argue that both broadcasters appeared to be champions of democracy. However, VOA's exemplar nature is still apparent – from stories considering the American response to the impartial news items that dominated VOA reporting.

Another difference between the broadcasters must be noted – RFE/RL continued to follow up on the story of the 2009 election throughout the fall in a more active way, including such stories as demonstrated below, one of which even challenges U.S. policy:

FEATURES

Necessary Gesture Or Bad Decision? U.S. Cuts Funds To Iran Rights Group



Election protesters in Tehran
October 09, 2009

TRANSMISSION

Who Killed Neda? (Revisited)



November 25, 2009

The commander of Iran's Basij has said that Neda Agha Soltan, who after her death became the symbol of Iran's Green movement, was killed by someone from the United States.

"Someone from America killed a young woman during the recent Tehran unrest and Western media shout that Iran's government is her killer," Mohammad Reza Baghid said on November 23, without providing any more details.

For more pictures of RFE/RL and VOA reporting from the summer of 2009, please see *Appendix 4*, which provides a sampling of the over 100 stories and features broadcast via the web during the aftermath of the election.

--

While the 2009 election can be viewed as a subcategory of typical content broadcast to and about Iran from the American international broadcasters, it is particularly interesting in that this episode confirms the nature of the broadcasters – that VOA will remain tactically close to its charter, and RFE/RL will attempt to gain access to the audience inside Iran by representing its political aspirations. And, as the content

analysis of 2007-2009 demonstrates, both broadcasters place Iran on top of their media agenda, though they prioritize and amplify different elements of the Iran story. These different tones, however, further reflect their different missions and approaches to democracy promotion. The above research shows a clear tactical divide, one that must be articulated in order to understand the nature of American international broadcasters, and their role in the larger puzzle of American public diplomacy.

CHAPTER 7:
Broadcasting to Azerbaijan: 2007-2009

The case of Azerbaijan, as opposed to Iran, illustrates the difficulties of broadcasting to a state when that state's grip on media freedom remains tight. Despite mostly positive diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Azerbaijan, placing the American message of democracy on the market for loyalties is a challenge in this state. And, as this chapter will demonstrate, there is also a question of just how far the U.S. government chooses – or has the opportunity to – support the values of liberty and democracy vis-à-vis Azerbaijan.

Complicating the role of VOA and RFE/RL during the timeframe of my research was the closure of radio 101.7 on Azerbaijani FM radio. On December 30, 2008, RFE/RL reported that on January 1, 2009 the government of Azerbaijan would terminate radio broadcasts by the BBC, VOA and RFE/RL's Radio Azadliq. According to the article, "The council has argued that the national FM and medium-wave radio frequencies are the property of the government and as such cannot be used by international broadcasters. Council Chairman Nushiravan Maharramli defended the move, saying it is meant to bring broadcasting norms in line with current legislation, and is 'in no way connected to politics.'"⁶¹⁰ For RFE/RL, though Radio Azadliq would remain on shortwave radio and satellite, the cut of FM radio meant a loss of approximately 95% of its audience. This cut in broadcasting came after fifty years of successful American international broadcasting in Azerbaijan.

⁶¹⁰ Daisy Sindelar, "Azerbaijan Bans RFE/RL, Other Foreign Radio From Airwaves," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 30, 2008, (Accessed April 7, 2010), http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Bans_RFERL_Other_Foreign_Radio/1364986.html

The U.S. Department of State responded to this media tightening, saying that if enacted, the decision “will represent a serious setback to freedom of speech, and retard democratic reform in Azerbaijan,” which are the strategic political goals of the U.S. in the former Soviet states.⁶¹¹ Further, in a statement released by the BBG, board governor D. Jeffrey Hirschberg explained that, “The decision appears to be part of a concerted official effort to limit access to unbiased information. We urge the Azerbaijani authorities to reverse this decision and to continue to work to resolve this situation, as they had indicated they would. Meanwhile, we will pursue all available alternatives for broadcasting the popular programs of RFE/RL and VOA to Azerbaijan.”⁶¹²

Innovative strategies were necessary to fill the gap of the broadcasting loss in Azerbaijan. According to Stephanie Schmidt at RFE/RL in Prague, Radio Azadliq “started a free weekly newspaper and we're now experiencing some Internet jamming. If we're stopped one way, we're always trying to figure out ways around.”⁶¹³ This weekly newspaper is similar to free newspapers handed out in subway stations in the U.S. Although this is an innovative way of reaching the audience, the technique is new and unevaluated. Below is a copy from a recent (April 2010) edition of the paper, which is funded by IREX, and provided by Schmidt:

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² “BBG Deplores Decision by Azerbaijan Authorities to Take VOA, RFE/RL and BBC Off FM and Television,” December 30, 2008, (Accessed April 7, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/pressroom/pressreleases-article.cfm?articleID=393>

⁶¹³ Stephanie Schmidt, Manager, Operational Initiatives and Support, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Email interview, March 8, 2010.



®

AzadliqRadiosu.az

**Тағи Əhmədov nə
qədər qazanır?**

səh.4

**Misir Mərdanov: «Mey-
danda tək qalmışam»**

səh.6

**Собственный
газовый путь
Азербайджана**

səh.9

«Предусмотрена рост заработной платы и пенс

1 апреля после открытия Центра Гейдара Алиева в Ширване президент Азербайджана Ильхам Алиев встретился с представителями обществственности города. «В нынешнем году также предусмотрена рост заработной платы и пенсии. И это будет», сказал в своем выступлении Ильхам Алиев.



Therefore, despite the roadblock of the FM ban, Radio Azadliq continues service, in new and innovative ways. Like predictions of idea-infused organizations discussed in chapter 2, RFE/RL indicates that when one door closes they are able to innovate by opening a window. In other words, this station is very able to survive as their ideas and missions remain relevant in the complex media environment of Azerbaijan. In fact, Radio Azadliq was honored and won a 2009 Association for International Broadcasting (AIB) Media Excellence Award for political coverage. This award came within the first year of the government ban. Radio Azadliq Director, Kenan Aliyev, said that, “This recognition is proof that, despite the road blocks being thrown up against us by the government, our journalists continue to do groundbreaking work.”⁶¹⁴ While audience saturation may be weakened, the commitment to quality surrogate broadcasting remains strong at RFE/RL.

In fact, the American international broadcasters were not the only media outlets facing government restrictions during the timeframe of my research. RFE/RL reported that the Azerbaijani government had also shut down a popular Russian-language site, *day.az*.⁶¹⁵ The article claims, “The reason for the closure is unclear, but the Azerbaijani government has recently boosted its control over independent media. The website had some 25,000 users per day. It was established by a pro-government group, but in recent years had appeared to become increasingly independent.”⁶¹⁶ Therefore, the media/political context in which RFE/RL and VOA must broadcast during the time of my research was both complex and limited. But despite these roadblocks, both organizations

⁶¹⁴ “RFE/RL’s Azerbaijani Service Wins Major Award fo Political Coverage,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 6, 2009, (Accessed November 7, 2009), http://www.rferl.org/content/rferl_press_release_Azerbaijan_AIB_award/1870952.html

⁶¹⁵ My conversation with Liz Fuller at RFE/RL, detailed below, indicated that this site was not only a source of regional news for the public of Azerbaijan but also for analysts at RFE/RL like Fuller.

⁶¹⁶ “Popular Azerbaijani Website Shuts Down,” (Accessed April 6, 2010), <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1496070.html>

have found ways to continue broadcasting their message. However, these restrictions can in part explain why the quantity of stories reported to and about Azerbaijan by RFE/RL and VOA are substantially less when compared to Iran.

Employee perspectives

My conversations with employees at VOA and RFE/RL focusing on the Caspian region, or Azerbaijan in particular, demonstrated, mostly, the same distinction in missions noted in previous chapters – VOA employees remained close to the charter, while RFE/RL employees were more outwardly supportive of democracy promotion. However, these interviews demonstrated more shifting in mission than was noted in the previous chapter regarding Iran, which I believe indicates a different political context vis-à-vis Azerbaijan.

At VOA, the charter was in clear view. Elez Biberaj, VOA's Eurasia Director, spoke to the three central principles of America's Voice, and put them in the context of a Eurasian example:

Almost every decision [we make] is guided by the charter. For example – [take the] Kosovo issue – at 3pm today the Security Council is holding a session. Now we have a central bureau in New York and they would assign an English speaking reporter to cover the story. The [reporter] would write a brief item – a couple of sentences – [and] this news item has to be as comprehensive as possible. The services then sometimes also send their own reporters – sometimes [we] are able to do interviews with representatives of Kosovo – but we must make sure that there is no bias. In the same report you have to balance any calls for independence with the Serbian view. You can compare [our reports] any news organizations in this country and I'm pretty comfortable that ours is of higher standards. The second part of our mission is we present America. The third part is we report on U.S. foreign policies – we represent a clear view. This is easiest thing because we have the office of policy – the only unit which is not under the direct supervision of the Director – they are more independent and their op-eds are cleared by State. We make a point of separating that from the news, [as] editorials are not news.⁶¹⁷

It is clear that Biberaj is following elements of the charter – balanced, credible news, representing America and American foreign policy. In addition, Biberaj, like many VOA employees, struggles with the reality of “independent” op-eds that are cleared by the U.S.

⁶¹⁷ Elez Biberaj, Eurasia Director, Voice of America, Phone Interview, January 16, 2008.

Department of State. Therefore, independence, as outlined in chapter 4, remains a complicated issue and goal at VOA. That being said, Biberaj explains that, “We have a lot of leverage in terms of trying to meet the needs of our audience.”

Biberaj is also in charge of assessing VOA’s Eurasia audience. He explains that measurements are part of understanding VOA’s role in the region: “We do research – every year every service has national focus groups. We use the same company as RFE/RL – InterMedia. They will know what we are looking for and we can play a role in asking questions.” Biberaj explains that measurements focus on “hits on a website.” Therefore, my interview with Biberaj further indicated that MOEs at the international broadcasters are limited by two factors: The first factor is that InterMedia is not an external consultant but rather connected to the broadcasters. This seems to provide a decent working relationship, but as InterMedia has similar motives as VOA and RFE/RL – to demonstrate their value to ensure continued funding – their objectivity can be challenged. The second factor is that measurements tend to focus on numbers and audience size, rather than influence, impact, and value.

My conversation with Biberaj was also interesting in that he understood and articulated the differences between VOA and RFE/RL. He explained:

I think there are significant differences in the missions of VOA and RFE and I don’t think that anyone can do as good of a job as we can on explaining America. RFE has gone native – they may have 10 or 15 people in the Moscow bureau who write about local government. We also report massive developments in Russia, but that is not the main thing we do. If you travel, as I have, and tune into RFE/RL, you can hardly tell the difference between them and a local station.

While articulating this difference, Biberaj seems surprised by the nature of surrogacy at RFE/RL, as if it is a new concept. According to Biberaj, VOA focuses on communicating a voice from America. However, he indicated that this voice must not appear to be the

voice of the American government: “[If] you mention it comes from the government, there [will be] red flags.” He supported the goals of VOA, and was less favorable towards the local flavor of RFE/RL.

VOA’s Director of the Near East and Central Asia Division, Ismail Dahiyat, echoed the role of the charter. He explained, “We are funded by the government. How do you do a credible job when you are funded by the government? People don’t trust government media. It’s a difficult issue. We stick to the charter and a journalistic code of ethnics.”⁶¹⁸ According to Dahiyat, the Charter has a direct impact on daily broadcasts – linking strategy to tactics. He explained, “The VOA charter is our mission. We interpret or translate that mission into daily broadcasting. How do we do that? We see ourselves as a bridge – trying to inform [our audience] about U.S. policies, system of government, culture. We do not avoid a newsworthy event to make America look good or bad. We would not tolerate that – it’s not journalistically sound.” Here Dahiyat argues that VOA’s mission and organizational flavor impacts daily broadcasts, and he points to the exemplar nature of VOA’s mission – to inform about America’s democratic form of government.

But when it comes to Azerbaijan, Dahiyat articulates an agenda that appears to be closer to championing the values of liberty and democracy than may be predicted by the VOA charter. This indicates that in the case of Azerbaijan, the strategic view of VOA may be closer to that of RFE/RL than in the Iranian case. He said that VOA covers “issues of human rights, freedom of press, issues of democracy, governance, an abuse of power – how [President] Aliyev is the only candidate, oil issues, and we cover the conflict [between Armenia and Azerbaijan] without being one sided.” This list of story

⁶¹⁸ Ismail M. Dahiyat, Director, Near East and Central Asia Division, Voice of America, Interview, Washington, D.C., August 4, 2008.

topics indicates an agenda of promoting democracy. Therefore, it appears that in the case of Azerbaijan, promoting democratic values is higher on the agenda than the charter would predict.

Perhaps this tilt towards championing democracy promotion comes from the working relationship VOA has with RFE/RL in Azerbaijan. Dahiyat points out, “On the radio, we stream with RFE/RL. On TV, we have a VOA Azerbaijan daily show. Then we also have English music. We seem to be reaching people ok – [we have] 8% of the adult population at least one time a week.” While this working relationship with RFE/RL on the radio was challenged by the 2008 radio ban, the fact that the two organizations could work together suggests an alignment in their missions.

But this closeness has been challenged. During the Georgian-Russian tensions and subsequent war of 2008, there was concern at VOA that their work was intersecting with RFE/RL’s. Dahiyat said, “[this is] one of the things the board is thinking about – is RFE/RL duplicating [our work]? But they are more like a surrogate, so [I believe] its not duplication.” It is interesting that Dahiyat sees the topics he outlined above as VOA’s work and not that of RFE/RL, considering mission statements demonstrate that these themes are closer to RFE/RL’s mission. However, the mere fact that this discussion is happening at VOA in regards to the South Caucasus indicates a sense that the missions of VOA and RFE/RL, surrogate or not, are in fact overlapping or at least share common goals – that of promoting the values of democracy.

But, when asked directly about the role of democracy in American public diplomacy, Dahiyat said: “We definitely cover developments or issues on the minds of our audience. Our business is not to tell our audience how to think and what to think

about – we do not propagate – we provide information. I don't think we are an extension of public diplomacy. Not directly. I have been here for 24 years and nobody has told me what to cover.” Dahiyat's reaction to this question reveals a discomfort for promoting democracy, similar to the discomfort of former USIA employees noted in chapter 1. However, in the same interview Dahiyat said that in Azerbaijan VOA covers “elections, freedom of press, demonstrations,” among other topics. Therefore, while democracy promotion is uncomfortable for Dahiyat, reporting about the values of democracy and liberty are not. As such, it appears that the Azerbaijani service at VOA is moving along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum towards “champion.”

Although we spoke before the government ban on FM radio in Azerbaijan, Dahiyat noted that VOA broadcasting is dependent on access, but also must be flexible. He explained, “We have a TV affiliate in Azerbaijan. [But] if the government decides to shut you out – where do you go? [You can] shift to the Internet or even short wave radio, which is still there. Or broadcast on satellite and hope it works?”

In addition to the challenge of access, Dahiyat says a primary goal is to make sure broadcasts are “culturally congruent.” He reviews content, feedback from focus groups, and program performance. It is through this assessment that VOA decides if they should maintain a certain language service, and that decision is based on “a number of factors, [from] audience share to lack of freedom of press.”⁶¹⁹ He also spoke of the role of VOA in the age of globalization, and what this means for broadcasting to Azerbaijan. He said that in Azerbaijan “the Internet is not expanding fast, [though] cell phone use is up in

⁶¹⁹ Dahiyat mentioned that in 2006 VOA decided to close down its Turkish language service, based on an assessment that the Turkish media is vibrant and that VOA Turkish was “strategically not important.” But this decision proved to be wrong and the service was brought back.

Azerbaijan.” Therefore, since web penetration is not high, the FM ban caused a near silencing of VOA.

The ban had a similar impact on RFE/RL. My visit to RFE/RL headquarters in 2007 was before the ban, but the head of the Azerbaijan service, Kenan Aliyev, was already articulating concern over access. He explained, “Our biggest challenge is [that the] government is repressive, authoritarian. They don’t like anyone to be critical. We can always be shut down.”⁶²⁰ But, Aliyev had much to be excited about regarding Radio Azadliq in 2007, which was six months into FM broadcasting: “[We have] 24 hours of operation on Baku FM 101.7. We run it together with VOA. There is ten hours of original [programming] – VOA music is the rest.” With this move to FM, Aliyev was also optimistic about audience saturation – as before the FM move his numbers were at 13% of radio listenership, and he was anticipating a post-FM rise at the time of our interview.

Aliyev’s enthusiasm for the FM station stems from his passion to bring change to Azerbaijan. He explains: “Georgia is building a state. We (Azerbaijan) are building a monarchy, a one party system. [In Azerbaijan] you can silence anyone you like. Journalists are killed, there are eight in prison. I worry about the safety of our journalists – one journalist was taken to court because she reported about AIDS. The minister of health took her to court!” Therefore, Aliyev sees his work as “mission oriented – promoting human rights, democracy, free press.” In addition, Aliyev argues that there is an “ideological vacuum” in Azerbaijan. He says that “Heydar Aliyev runs the country from the grave, and young people are turning to Islam and the Wahabbi movement. It is

⁶²⁰ Kenan Aliyev, Senior Multi-Media Producer, Azerbaijani Service, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007.

easier to be a member of an Islamic party now than a member of the opposition. The only way to prevent the move to radical Islam is democracy. You need rules.”

Aliyev is actively trying to spread this perspective to the web. He manages the web group in Baku and Prague, which is a 24-hour operation. In 2007, they received 20,000 unique visits per month. Aliyev said, “this may not sound like much, but it’s hard to get access.” In order to achieve the RFE/RL mission, Aliyev says that his service “targets the young and influential.” But this is difficult with low funding: “Our budget is not that big, a little over \$1 million. Most of that goes to salaries.” Aliyev explained that the Iranian service at RFE/RL has 15 times his budget. In order to cut costs, Aliyev shifted many of his resources to Baku, which decreased production costs.

As Azerbaijan’s oil wealth grows, Aliyev is further committed to the mission of RFE/RL. He argues that as democracy decreases in a state, the need and relevancy of RFE/RL increases: “[A decrease in democracy] makes us more relevant. There will be less and less freedoms (due to increased oil revenues in Azerbaijan) and more and more restrictions the richer they (the government) get.” In fact, Aliyev argues that promoting democracy is increasingly important from RFE/RL’s perspective not only because the rise of Azerbaijani oil wealth, but also because of a rise, region-wide, of Islamic fundamentalism: “The only way to prevent moving to radical Islam is democracy. You need rules. Look at Turkey. There is enough ground for anti-Americanism growing and it is increasingly difficult for us to operate. We have to build trust by being objective. [The audience] always knows propaganda.”

Aliyev, like his counterpart at Radio Farda, Kambiz Tavana, is willing to innovate in anyway possible to push his mission forward – the mission of promoting democracy.

But a second conversation at RFE/RL, with regional analyst Liz Fuller, revealed that this mission-driven work can have various levels of commitment among employees at RFE/RL. Fuller, who covers the North and South Caucasus for RFE/RL, writes up to 10 stories a day. Despite her title, she explained, “you can’t add a lot of analysis” to stories, mostly because of deadlines.⁶²¹ Also, it is interesting to note, that Fuller tends to find story ideas from the Russian-language site, day.az, rather than based on what she believes fits into the RFE/RL mission. In fact, Fuller said, “I don’t know who owns it – but it’s reliable. And you don’t have time to check.”⁶²² From these regional sources, Fuller will pick topics to cover, regardless of who sets the agenda at these sites.

For Fuller, her job is about the news. She explained: “For me, the most important [policy guideline] is accuracy. Newline (her service) is not out specifically to promote democracy. But I will point out when the Georgian Prime Minister says something pro-democracy but contradicts himself with a crackdown. If there is election rigging – which is hard to reconcile – I’ll play it up.” Therefore, it appears that Fuller is driven by a mission more similar to VOA, though tactically her broadcasts are in line with trends at RFE/RL. She explains that the tone of content is left to the discretion of the analyst covering the region. Therefore, while it appears that Fuller may not be comfortable with the idea of promoting democracy outright, she will pick story ideas or use a tone that in fact will call out those who impede democracy.

Ultimately, Fuller sees her job as “a filter.” She explained, “I am an editor, but I zero in on something if I think any statement is inaccurate, could reflect badly on

⁶²¹ Liz Fuller, Regional Analysts, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, August 1, 2007.

⁶²² This interview took place before the closure of day.AZ, which was actually an Azerbaijani site, though from my conversation with Fuller she seemed to think it was likely more a Russian site, since it spoke out against the government line.

someone.” But when it comes to choosing themes, Fuller explains that “it boils down to things I’m interested in – Georgia, NATO membership, the Karabakh conflict.” Fuller can therefore account for RFE/RL’s focus on regional issues – from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to energy deals to Russian influence in the South Caucasus – which the content analysis below will demonstrate is a dominant theme on the RFE/RL media agenda. Fuller’s role demonstrates just how large of an impact that an individual can have on broadcasting outputs at RFE/RL.

My conversations with employees at both VOA and RFE/RL tell two stories. The division between the VOA charter and RFE/RL’s mission can still be felt vis-à-vis reporting to Azerbaijan. But that being said, the issue of democratic transition in former Soviet states is high on the media agenda, generally speaking, across the organization. This is one reason why the content analysis below demonstrates closer media agendas at RFE/RL and VOA when it comes to reporting to Azerbaijan. In other words, while still guided by organizational missions and strategic outlooks, RFE/RL and VOA employees must function in the context of a transitioning state, and therefore they will report similarly on issues of democracy in Azerbaijan, and their broadcasting tactics come closer together, and their broadcasting tactics come closer together.

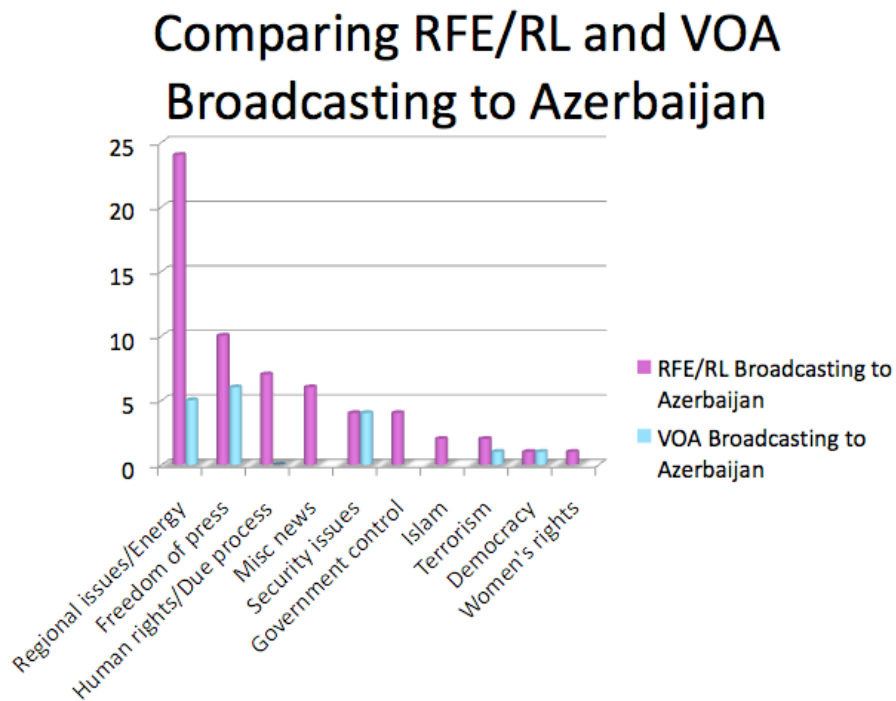
Content Analysis of RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts

The take-away from my content analysis of Azerbaijan, which covered the same time frame and dates as the content analysis of Iran in the previous chapter, is that Azerbaijan, as a country of focus, is a higher priority at RFE/RL than VOA. My content analysis yielded 61 stories about Azerbaijan by RFE/RL during the 2007-2009 time frame, whereas VOA only published 17. This difference can be explained by RFE/RL's Eurasian focus, and its smaller number of language services – giving Azerbaijan a larger piece of the pie. Also, as another explanation, the issues of transition facing Azerbaijan are closer to the mission statement of RFE/RL than to the charter of VOA. However, the solid diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Azerbaijan may weaken the need to show America “warts and all” to Azerbaijanis. In addition, as Azerbaijan is not on the American agenda vis-à-vis security issues in the same way as is Iran, it follows that VOA would report on this state much less. Further, chapter 4 demonstrated the decreasing hours of Eurasian language broadcasting since the Cold War transition.

But despite the lower number of total articles, VOA published 8 articles on themes of democracy, during my content analysis, which is nearly half of its focus on Azerbaijan. RFE/RL, on the other hand, had a much broader view of coverage on Azerbaijan, and though they in fact published more than three times the amount of stories on democracy related themes – 26 to be exact – their largest category of stories focused on regional themes: from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to energy issues, to European integration. The interview with Liz Fuller may have explained why this is – as these are hot topics in the South Caucasus. These regionally-themed stories accounted for 24 articles total by RFE/RL (and only 5 by VOA). Therefore, it is important to consider the

findings of the content analysis within the framework of knowledge about the broadcasters. While RFE/RL’s dominant story for Azerbaijan was the regional issues, it still published three times as many democracy stories as VOA. While VOA had a higher percentage of democracy related stories - 39% of RFE/RL stories focused on these of democracy, whereas 47% of stories at VOA focused on democracy – the low number of total stories must be taken into account.

The table below provides a direct comparison of VOA and RFE/RL reporting by theme and overall numbers:



RFE/RL demonstrates a wider range of themes – from human rights and due process, to issues of government control, women’s rights and Islam. The category of “Islam” included stories focusing on the rise of Wahhabi Islam in Azerbaijan as a threat to not only the government but also the democratic opposition. Therefore, these stories have been grouped with “democracy” themed stories. The data outlined above indicates

that while VOA may have a higher percentage of democracy stories, their overall coverage to and about Azerbaijan was weaker, and RFE/RL's number and breadth of democracy stories was much deeper.

Overall, the interviews and content analysis in regards to the Azerbaijan case yield a different result than the Iranian case. There appears to be more mission overlap vis-à-vis Azerbaijan than Iran at RFE/RL and VOA, which explains the successful partnership between the two organizations on Baku FM 101.7, as opposed to the broken partnership between the organizations when working on Radio Farda. But while missions are closer with regards to Azerbaijan, RFE/RL clearly focuses on Azerbaijan at a much higher rate. This is opposed to the Iran case, when in the time frame of the content analysis, the organizations published similar amounts of stories on Iran – 130 by RFE/RL and 136 by VOA.

Therefore, Azerbaijan was a larger part of the media pie at RFE/RL than it was at VOA – which can be explained by the regional focus of RFE/RL and the fact that Azerbaijan has not been as high on the political agenda of the U.S. government. In addition, the security issue of a nuclear Iran trumped the VOA agenda, and the security story vis-à-vis Azerbaijan, be it terrorism or a missile shield, received little coverage in comparison.⁶²³

In sum, the findings of my content analysis and employee interviews continue to paint a picture of the organizational differences between VOA and RFE/RL. However, individuals and the external political environment must be taken into account when

⁶²³ The issue of missile defense came onto the media agenda during the Bush administration when the U.S. proposed a missile defense shield in either the Czech Republic or Poland. Russia objected, offering instead to share a missile radar site in Azerbaijan. For an example of VOA news coverage on the subject, see: "Russian Diplomat: Washington, Moscow No Closer on Missile Shield," September 19, 2007, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-19-voa54-66787632.html>.

considering the relationship between mission and tactics. When placing VOA and RFE/RL reporting on the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum, as I do in the next chapter, it was challenging to call either broadcaster truly a “champion,” as their low-level of focus on Azerbaijan from a web perspective did not indicate such a result – i.e. it would be expected that a “champion” of democracy would simply broadcast the story more frequently. However, the commitment of RFE/RL’s Azerbaijani service head, and the innovative newspaper’s distributed by Radio Azadliq in Azerbaijan, indicates that championing democracy promotion is still at the core of RFE/RL.

Therefore, the findings from the Azerbaijan content analysis again can reflect back on the missions of RFE/RL and VOA – indicating that these missions may come closer together in certain political contexts. While there are noted strategic and tactical distinctions between VOA and RFE/RL, discussed in the above chapters, the results of the content analysis in this chapter and conversation with Liz Fuller demonstrates that the distinctions in mission between the two organizations are not black and white, and in certain contexts the organizations will function along the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum in an overlapping manner. As such, missions are not rigid, according to the findings of the Azerbaijan case, even when embedded in the history and guiding principles of an international broadcaster. Therefore, while there is a strong relationship between missions and tactics at both organizations, this relationship is not rigid and the external environment can impact tactical realities.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: What can be learned by mapping the broadcasters?

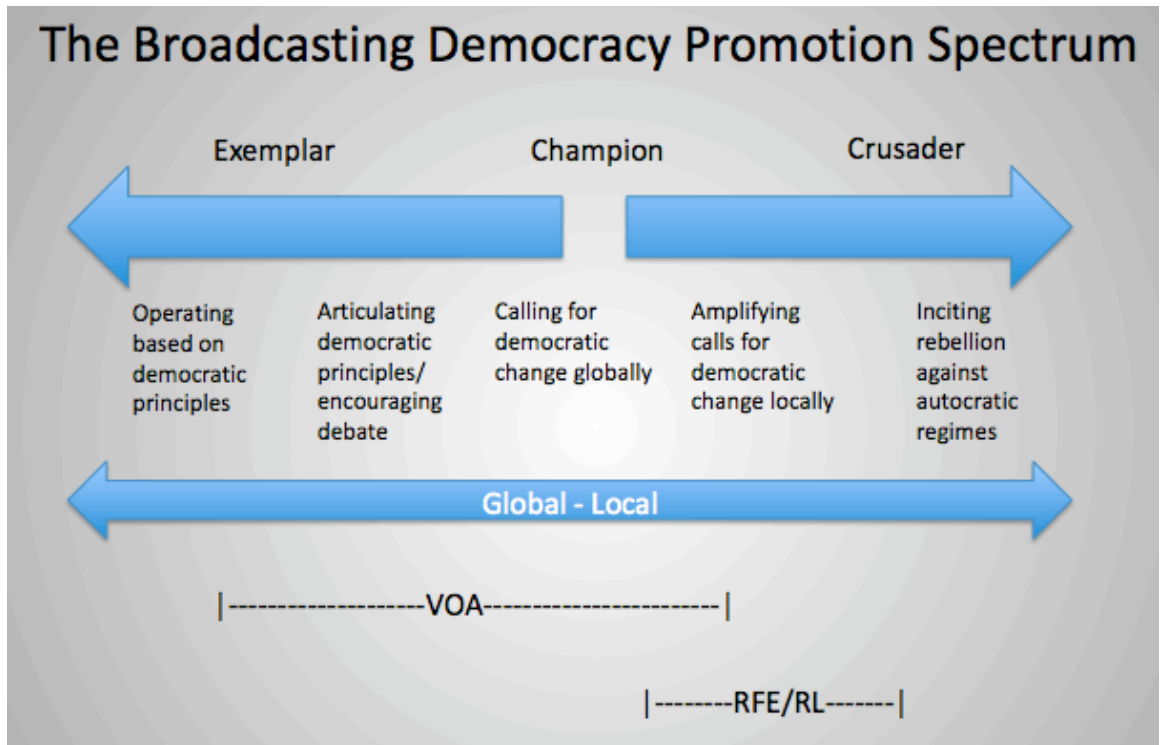
The goal of my research was to study two prominent American international broadcasters in order to understand their histories, missions, employee perspectives and broadcasting tactics. Through this broad view, I was able to consider my primary research question - *Is promoting democratic values a strategic priority for RFE/RL and VOA in their reporting to and about Iran and Azerbaijan?* To understand strategic priorities, I have also examined tactics – i.e. the actual broadcasts. Through these various avenues, I have found, almost consistently, that RFE/RL places the values of democracy higher on their media agenda than VOA. One likely explanation for this trend is the direct commitment to promoting democracy inherent in the RFE/RL mission statement. However, it also can be explained by RFE/RL’s Cold War birth, its historic CIA connection, its Eurasian target audiences, and its attempt to remain relevant at the end of the Cold War by shifting focus to transitioning states, from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. On the other hand, a charter that prioritizes credibility in news reporting and an open view of America as higher priorities than direct democracy promotion, has guided VOA for 50 years. The strong relationship between mission and tactics is clear from my research.

Although my research reflects the inherent differences between RFE/RL and VOA, it also demonstrates nuances in various case studies. The cases of my dissertation – from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 to current broadcasting to Azerbaijan and Iran – indicate that the reporting of VOA and RFE/RL cannot fit perfectly into a box of “exemplar” or “crusader” democracy promotion. While RFE/RL exhibits a stronger

aptitude and drive for promoting democratic values, this station, like VOA, shifts in focus and intensity in reflection of external political realities. For that reason I have developed the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum, upon which I have mapped the various case studies considered in my research in order to demonstrate a wider range of strategic viewpoints and tactical realities at RFE/RL and VOA.

As the graph below indicates, RFE/RL is further along the spectrum towards “crusader” democracy promotion than VOA. Inching towards “crusader” on the map is a contested notion – as the culpability of RFE in inciting violence in 1956 continues to be debated. However, rather than focusing on actual incitement, I have found it helpful to consider the connection between the broadcaster and *local* politics as a means of assessing “crusader” democracy promotion style – i.e. RFE/RL continues to be more closely involved in the local political scene through surrogacy and therefore is able to more actively amplify local calls for change. Therefore, RFE/RL will move further along the spectrum, regardless of the Hungary example. VOA, on the other hand, retains a *global* point of view, projecting an image of free press even when covering local events. For example, as the 2009 elections in Iran demonstrate, VOA reported on President Ahmadinejad’s contested election through the eyes of the Obama administration, articulating a broader, global perspective on a local story.

Therefore, the case studies of my research can be mapped onto the broadcasting democracy spectrum, as demonstrated below:



As the spectrum indicates, RFE/RL is generally closer to champion/crusader, than VOA, which tends towards exemplar/champion styles of democracy promotion. The range of VOA broadcasting spans from operating based on democratic principles, generally speaking, towards amplifying calls for democratic change locally, which was evident during the 2009 election when more amplification of Iranian perspectives was broadcast than during the 2007-2009 content analysis. Articulating the cause of democracy in Iran in 2009 was very much the priority of VOA and illustrated the ability for this organization to shift tactics, despite its solid mission, coded in its charter. However, the cases evaluated in my research indicates no example where VOA comes close to the “crusader” category of democracy promotion, as amplifying stories locally was even an anomaly for VOA.

On the other hand, the range of RFE/RL is smaller than VOA. This is because the mission of the radios calls for direct and local promotion of democratic values, as would be expected for a surrogate station. And while the level of amplification may vary across the cases – Azerbaijan and Iran demonstrate the differences of intensity at RFE/RL – the goal to speak directly with the local audience, rather than broadcasting an example of democratic values globally, remains uniform. And while the case of Hungary may illustrate an aberration, and a tactical push towards “crusader” democracy promotion, I have plotted RFE/RL as only budding the “crusader” category, as their normal functionality tends to place them in a range along the “champion” category.

Evaluating the cases of my research – from Hungary to Iran and Azerbaijan – demonstrate a solid footing and strategic difference for these broadcasters, and noting these differences, and the dynamic tactical options available to both broadcasters, is the goal of the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum, which is dynamic rather than rigid.

Therefore, the spectrum above is a useful visual representation for understanding the differences between RFE/RL and VOA. As RFE/RL is further along the democracy promotion spectrum, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between mission and broadcasting tactics. VOA was beholden to its Charter, where democratic principles and promotion do not permeate to the same extent as in RFE/RL’s mission statement. This is the fundamental finding of my research – the missions of RFE/RL and VOA are a likely cause of tactical broadcasting distinctions.

This observation will be important as American policymakers and scholars move forward in the ongoing debate over how to improve public diplomacy. A greater

understanding of the actual purpose and possibilities of the broadcasters will be a useful tool for those lobbying on their behalf and for those attempting to reconfigure public diplomacy to be a more vital tool in our current political environment.

I did not observe an articulation of the distinctions between RFE/RL and VOA in BBG literature or in my conversation with Bruce Sherman at the BBG, which I believe demonstrates a weakness in the BBG's ability to lobby on behalf of its broadcasters. In other words, when there is a push for democracy promotion in Iran among members of Congress, as demonstrated in chapter 3, the BBG should use this political tide as an opportunity to lobby for funding and involvement of RFE/RL, and Radio Farda in particular. On the other hand, when concern over America's image dominates the policy debate, the BBG should lobby for funding and increased involvement of VOA. A clearer view of this distinction would help make American international broadcasting a sharp policy tool. Those advocating for American public diplomacy must refrain from grouping the organizations together as a catch-all category. What can be learned from the broadcasting democracy promotion spectrum is that the broadcasters are not only impacted by their missions and histories, but also by the external political environment and that they are best understood as dynamic tools of policy. An understanding of each broadcaster's possibilities and organizational constraints could elevate the status of international broadcasting to a more effective policy tool.

Findings and recommendations

The primary finding of my research, as stated above, is that there is a strong relationship between organizational missions and reporting tactics at VOA and RFE/RL. And from this conclusion stems three additional findings, which will be discussed further in this section. First, while the missions of RFE/RL and VOA are solidified in the organizations, they are also evolving in the post-Cold War political landscape – in other words, broadcasting organizations are both static and dynamic. A related second finding is that the organizations have been able to survive post-Cold War transitions, but their ability to thrive in this environment remains insecure. Lastly, the measures of effectiveness (MOEs) used at both organizations miss the mark, and a general overhaul of MOEs (imposed by the BBG or by a proposed head of public diplomacy, which will be addressed in the recommendations section below) will be needed to better articulate and improve the value of the American international broadcasters, and American public diplomacy, generally speaking.⁶²⁴

The World War II birth of VOA and the Cold War birth of RFE and RL are implanted in the collective memory at both organizations. Myth and history are valued at both organizations. Quotes, historic documents, and photos adorn not only the organizational headquarters, but also the virtual space that both organizations have carved out on the web. But at the same time, both organizations have been tasked with survival – VOA throughout its lifespan has struggled to survive in the space between a government organization and a free, credible broadcaster. This struggle proved to be good practice, and at the end of the Cold War, VOA was well versed in defending its independent value.

⁶²⁴ This last finding addresses Q2 of my research: *How is the strategy of RFE/RL and VOA evaluated? What are the measures of effectiveness (MOEs)?*

RFE/RL also has experience in survival, though in a different way – the organization retooled after the 1956 debacle, and also reconfigured itself in the 1970s with the merger of the Cold War radios. It is safe to say that both broadcasters are experienced at survival and have managed to stay relevant in the post-Cold War political landscape.

Idea-infused organizations, like VOA and RFE/RL, are built to survive. When challenged in Washington in the 1990s, both organizations held close to their missions – RFE/RL reaffirmed the values of democracy and VOA reaffirmed the value of a free and open press example. But what is interesting is that while missions have helped ensure survival at both broadcasters, these missions have also begun evolving in new political climates, which is contrary to the literature described in chapter 2. For example, while Radio Farda was built as a shared venture between RFE/RL and VOA, the organizational marriage failed. Radio Farda naturally went the way of RFE/RL, and VOA built a television news network, PNN, to reflect the principles of the charter. In other words, missions stuck. But in the Azerbaijan case, the two organizations were able to come together and broadcast on FM radio until the Azerbaijani government imposed a ban. The overlapping political missions of the two broadcasters in the Azerbaijani political context can explain the success in Azerbaijan. Therefore, the political landscape cannot be ignored and does have an impact on the flexibility of organizational missions. While the missions are the static nature of the broadcasters, these organizations are dynamic and can shift based on changes in the political environment.

In addition, as the broadcasters have emerged beyond the Cold War, both organizations have started to chip away at historic constraints. One such constraint, the Smith-Mundt Act, discussed in chapter 1, separated domestic audiences from foreign

target audiences. The logic behind this act was that broadcasting to domestic audiences could be misconstrued as propaganda. Therefore, when VOA broadcast the moon landing in 1969, reaching the largest radio audience to date – 615 million people – this was a purely foreign audience. However, with the advent of the Internet, this distinction is no longer possible.⁶²⁵ Further, my interviews and content analysis demonstrated that both broadcasters were eager to grow their English language and domestic audiences. VOA seeks this change as a demonstration of its far reach, while RFE/RL has found that rallying calls for change at home can only help efforts to promote democratic change abroad. Both cases demonstrate an evolving audience, which changes the nature of organizational missions. VOA will now show America, “warts and all,” back to Americans, and RFE/RL, noted as a surrogate station, will not only amplify local politics but will also bring this message to global and American audiences. Both mission statements appear flexible enough to withstand these changes.

Therefore, I have observed two broadcasters, rooted in history and organizational missions, which are evolving and responding to various political realities. RFE/RL and VOA are noting what works, what doesn't, and what makes sense today. For example, Kambiz Tavana explained in our interview that the focus of Radio Sawa, the Arabic-language broadcaster, was targeting a growing youth audience. But this venture was deemed a failure. Noting this failure, Radio Farda's strategy is now to amplify calls for change coming from the youth and targeting this message back to elites who can further disseminate the message or activate change. (Tavana said that Iranian elites face less

⁶²⁵ For a current VOA reprint of the broadcast, see: <http://www1.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/a-23-2009-07-14-voa1-83142367.html> (Accessed May 2, 2010).

filtering online.) In other words, RFE/RL is able to evolve and innovate based on the political realities outside of the organization.

This observation runs contrary to the discussion of idea-infused organizations in chapter 2 – which deems government organizations as unable to innovate. However, I observed innovations during the time of my research – from web redesigns, to engagement in the web 2.0 media atmosphere, to retooling and re-strategizing after an FM ban in Azerbaijan. But do these innovations mean that RFE/RL and VOA are thriving? As noted in chapter 2, Daniel Drezner explains that idea-infused organizations tend to survive, but find it challenging to thrive.⁶²⁶ While the American international broadcasters are able to innovate on some level, I believe that my research reveals key potential changes that could be made at both RFE/RL and VOA that would allow the organizations to not only survive and innovate, but to actually thrive.

For example, I believe that the American international broadcasters are not using technology to its full capacity. When it comes to web 2.0, the broadcasters need to do more than adapt, a recommendation also noted in the GAO report:

... The rise of social networking, namely through Internet sites such as Facebook and Twitter, has transformed the nature of communications globally. State's prior Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs recently endorsed a new public diplomacy approach, referred to as Public Diplomacy 2.0, that could more fully engage these new and evolving communications trends... current information suggests a failure to adapt in this dynamic communications environment could significantly raise the risk that U.S. public diplomacy efforts could become increasingly irrelevant...⁶²⁷

Noting the new web environment, and proposing a new approach – public diplomacy 2.0 – is not enough. This approach must be well defined and active for public diplomacy to

⁶²⁶ For more information, see: Daniel W. Drezner, "Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy," *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, no. 4., (October 2000).

⁶²⁷ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, United States Government Accountability Office, "U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight," May 2009, GAO-09-679SP, 31.

thrive in the new media environment. Concrete steps toward utilizing web 2.0 technology must be articulated, such as employing more public diplomats to converse on blogs and web forums, which will be discussed more below, and other actionable policy guidelines.

Furthermore, in both country cases – Iran and Azerbaijan – there are ways in which noting the new media environment would increase the reach of VOA and RFE/RL. In Azerbaijan, where FM radio is now banned to foreign broadcasters, a move to the Internet is not necessarily the best strategy, given the low quality of Internet access among the general public. This reality may reflect the low number of web-based stories noted in the content analysis of the previous chapter. (Though the low number of stories may also be explained by a weaker push for democracy promotion in Azerbaijan in general, and a decreased tendency for Azerbaijan to be placed on the American media agenda.) In Azerbaijan, cell phone saturation has greatly increased over the previous decade and therefore the failure to utilize SMS or texting to send a media message is a key missed opportunity, especially for RFE/RL.⁶²⁸ Instead, RFE/RL has repackaged radio stories for a hard-copy newspaper passed out on the streets. Shifting to mobile phone technology would be an innovation with a larger audience reach – and it would be an example of thriving within the context of the Azerbaijani state and new media environment.

In Iran, there is a similar missed media opportunity that could be rectified by noting the new media environment in that state. Harvard’s Berkman Center report on the Iranian Blogosphere, noted in chapter 3, demonstrates the vast Internet landscape,

⁶²⁸ My 2005 visit to Azerbaijan demonstrated the inefficiencies of web service and the preferred usage of cell phones. In addition, the CIA Azerbaijan report notes, “teledensity of 15 fixed lines per 100 persons is low; mobile-cellular teledensity has increased rapidly and is currently about 80 telephones per 100 persons.” See the CIA’s World Factbook, (Accessed April 29, 2010), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>.

specifically the blogosphere, and explains that outlinks are how the Iranian blogosphere is connected.⁶²⁹ Therefore, a missed opportunity in Iran is making in-roads through links, particularly by encouraging local bloggers to link back to the Radio Farda site. This would not only increase the level of amplification of the local blogs beyond the “Persian Letters” section of the RFE/RL site, but would also increase reader saturation at RFE/RL. Increasing saturation is an important issue in the face of recent Iranian filtering of satellite and Internet communications. (VOA joined in a statement with the BBC and Deutsche Welle condemning Iran’s actions and has even brought in Silicon Valley companies and executives into the fold to assist the American effort to counter jamming.⁶³⁰) If Iranian jamming continues to increase, finding new roads into the Iranian blogosphere and new linkages will be important for RFE/RL and VOA.

Therefore, to thrive in the web 2.0 environment, the broadcasters should hire media analysts to study the media environment in target states to ensure that strategy matches media realities on the ground. Noting not only the cultural differences in states, but also media differences, would increase the chances for RFE/RL and VOA to thrive.

Also, to thrive, the broadcasters must attain a better sense of how influence is gained and how audience saturation is increased, and must link strategy to tactical implementation. As A. Ross Johnson notes in chapter 5, MOEs should match strategic goals rather than charting audience size. In this way, I agree with Johnson that current MOEs miss the mark at both VOA and RFE/RL. Counting – whether on-air hours,

⁶²⁹ For more information, see: John Kelly and Bruce Etling, “Mapping Iran’s Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere,” The Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, Research Publication No. 2008-01, (Accessed November 26, 2008), <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications>.

⁶³⁰ Josh Rogin, “Iranian jamming jams up the BBG,” *Foreign Policy*, February 18, 2010, (Accessed March 23, 2010), http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/02/18/iranian_jamming_jams_up_the_bbg.

numbers of shows, or audience size – is important to demonstrate the reach and work of the broadcasters, but it does not demonstrate influence. Influence, unfortunately, is difficult to quantify. When it comes to influence, past MOEs have examined repetition of stories. Such studies date as far back as the Jackson Committee Report of 1953, noted in chapter 4, where repetition was considered a virtue in international broadcasting. Repetition is believed to lead to opinion change if the “sleeper effect” occurs. This is when “an individual or group of individuals exhibit an opinion change over time in the direction advocated by the communication.”⁶³¹ To assess this change, there needs to be a demonstrated “pre-measure” and “an early post-measure as the basis for calculation of opinion change.”⁶³² Therefore, the sleeper effect, “implies that a single individual can manifest the effect; that a positive opinion change is required; and the measures must be taken at three points in time: before, immediately after, and a long time after the communication.”⁶³³ The theory of the sleeper effect could be used as guidance for testing broadcasts and could be a useful expansion of counting repetition as a broadcasting MOE.

In addition, it is important to consider the role of InterMedia in conducting studies for the broadcasters. A natural objection is the close personal and organizational ties between this organization and the broadcasters being evaluated. One is left to wonder whether objectivity will be sacrificed in this arrangement. Instead, a private-sector media consulting firm with little international broadcasting ties could act as an independent third party, working with InterMedia and the broadcasters to ensure that bias does not

⁶³¹ Noel Capon and James Hulbert, "The Sleeper Effect — An Awakening," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37 (3), (Autumn 1973), 334.

⁶³² *Ibid.*

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 335-336.

influence studies, and most importantly, that the right questions are being asked in support of U.S. foreign policy goals. Ultimately, MOEs must contend with the general critique of the GAO study: “U.S. agencies have not fully demonstrated the effect of their strategic communications efforts on the national communications goals, such as countering ideological support for violent extremism.”⁶³⁴

--

The end of the Cold War brought the near abolishment of international broadcasting under President Clinton.⁶³⁵ In fact, “The Radios and the VOA were, together, considered gold-plated Cold War relics, with high salaries and an obsolete mission.”⁶³⁶ But American international broadcasting has experienced a rebirth in the wake of 9/11:

As the Cold War ended and with it the established basis for this ethereal penetration of sovereign borders, fundamental geopolitical change has required the reconfiguration of international broadcasting as new targets, new justifications, and new purposes were explored. Until resurrected by the war on terrorism, international broadcasting underwent a deep crisis of purpose and credibility in the mid-1990s. Budget considerations, new technologies and new industrial modes of distributing information were influential in the reassessment process.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ GAO Report to Congressional Committees, 15.

⁶³⁵ Monroe Price notes, “President Clinton called for the consolidation of all U.S. international broadcasting. This was the low point in the prospects for international radio.” Monroe E. Price, “Public Diplomacy and Transformation of International Broadcasting,” *Comparative Media Law Journal*, 1, January-June 2003, 81.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 77-78. Price notes that the invention of CNN caused difficulties for American international broadcasting: “the invention and growth of CNN caused some to raise monetary objections to the continued existence of such entities as the Voice of America and the so-called surrogate radios.” I believe this critique is mired in a lack of understanding the broadcasting missions of these organizations – sending a message of democracy and free press, funded by the U.S. government, to publics abroad.

But has this reassessment process ended? It is clear that the broadcasters have survived the shock of the post-Cold war political realities, and then the new target of the war on terrorism. But have they adapted to the new web 2.0 media environment and to further complexities in the international arena? Should there be another resurrection?

Both organizations, despite being idea-infused, have not been rigid in their missions. They have been able to rebrand and redesign their focus, while also remaining true to their original purpose. For example, RFE/RL “created a new role for themselves: facilitating transitions. The Radios’ missions, they claimed, have evolved from the purely surrogate task of providing news and analysis on international events where no such media were available, to compensating for the limitations of domestic media and setting a standard by which emerging free media could judge themselves.”⁶³⁸ Therefore, RFE/RL was able to stay true to its mission while retooling to fit the political realities. This demonstrates great flexibility for a governmental, idea-infused organization. The broadcasters have adapted to new technologies on the Internet, and they have expanded to reach a growing English-language and Western audience. Surrogacy has changed, as perhaps RFE/RL has invented surrogacy 2.0.

Therefore, my research demonstrates the increased complexities in the political landscape and their impact on public diplomacy. The table below demonstrates the political environment today – from the media/political landscape, to audience structure, to strategic goals – and its impact on public diplomacy:

⁶³⁸ Ibid, 82. Price notes on page 83 that Congress supports RFE/RL broadcasting to Central Europe, Eurasia, and the Persian Gulf until “(1) a particular nation has clearly demonstrated the successful establishment and consolidation of democratic rule, and (2) its domestic media which provide balanced, accurate and comprehensive news and information, is firmly established and widely accessible to the national audience, thus making redundant the broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.” In other words, RFE/RL has a designated end-point.

Public diplomacy in the age of complexity

	Cold War	Post-Cold War
Political/Media Landscape	Bipolar World	-Information Revolution/ Globalization -Diverse political agendas/ complex interdependence
Audience	Smith-Mundt era: split between “us” (domestic) and “them” (foreign)	-Domestic/foreign audiences merge online -Broadcasting missions evolve
Foe	Communism	-Non-democracies/Autocracies -Corruption -Human rights abusers -Islamic fundamentalism
Media Flows	One-way radio flows	-One-way radio, television and Internet flows -Two-way radio, television and Internet flows

This table illustrates key differences between the Cold War era and today – the political landscape has changed from a simple split between the worlds of democracy and communism to a far more complex world, with multiple agendas and avenues for communications.

However, do public diplomacy programs mirror the complexity of the current political/media environment? Quite simply, my research indicates that public diplomacy, as seen through the lens of the American international broadcasters, is *surviving* in this environment, but it must make additional adaptations to *thrive*. Therefore, a public diplomacy redesign, a concept further developed in the following section, must take into account the current atmosphere.

In conclusion, through my research I have found a strong relationship between missions and broadcasting at RFE/RL and VOA. I have also noted the trend for RFE/RL

to prioritize promoting democratic values to a greater extent than at VOA. I have found that missions, while strong, are also evolving, and perhaps must evolve more to ensure that the broadcasters thrive in the current political environment. In addition, MOEs at VOA and RFE/RL are rustic and will have limited impact on rallying support in Washington, D.C. until these organizations find robust ways to first link measurements with overall strategic goals of the U.S. and then demonstrate some level of influence or impact on audiences.

A public diplomacy redesign

The above chart, *Public Diplomacy in the Age of Complexity*, demonstrates that despite the strength of missions at the broadcasters, the external political environment is growing in complexity. This leads me to conclude that the broader public diplomacy structure must also shift to mirror this complexity. RFE/RL and VOA cannot do it alone, they require the support of the larger public diplomacy apparatus to shift strategic viewpoints and create tactical changes centering on new realities. For example, while in some cases broadcasting should remain low-tech in order to reach audiences, there are also new opportunities to reach out to the growing social networking audiences that should not be missed by the broadcasters.⁶³⁹ Therefore, I will conclude by proposing a redesign of public diplomacy, which will be detailed in this section. Such a redesign could link the broadcasters to a renewed public diplomacy structure that could achieve the goals articulated in the GAO report, particularly that of merging public diplomacy strategies with national interests.

To start, an international communications strategy for the U.S. should actually take into account the difference between public diplomacy and strategic communications, conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD). The GAO report, in my opinion, inappropriately combines these distinct tools.⁶⁴⁰ While related, public diplomacy is conducted on the diplomatic side of the table, whereas strategic communications are

⁶³⁹ Price notes on pages 87-88: “There are innovations, but one could also conclude that external broadcasting remains a primarily low-tech enterprise and that radio, and short wave radio at that, is its most effective tool. In the post-war review of how to build up Afghan media, one approach was to sponsor a series of low power transmitters that would reach local areas rather than seek a national audience.”

⁶⁴⁰ On page 1 of the GAO report, a footnote reads: “We use the terms ‘public diplomacy,’ ‘outreach,’ and ‘strategic communication’ interchangeably in this report.” GAO Report to Congressional Committees, United States Government Accountability Office, “U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight,” May 2009, GAO-09-679SP.

communications to support military actions. Public diplomacy and agenda setting are vital tools when complex interdependence prevails, and these tools can be coordinated with the work of DOD in support of military strategies, during both peace and war time. Therefore, I propose a head of public diplomacy, reporting to the President, who could liaise with the Department of Defense to coordinate strategic viewpoints and share tactics and findings. This proposed head of public diplomacy should be housed outside of the State Department, as public diplomacy activities are wider than State Department activities. Therefore, State's Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs should coordinate with a proposed head of public diplomacy, rather than be a de-facto head of public diplomacy.⁶⁴¹ This would also loosen the ties between the diplomat and those advocating on behalf of the diplomat, a concept lost with the disappearance of the United States Information Agency (USIA). In addition, this head of public diplomacy could also coordinate tasks and goals with the BBG, an organization floundering and providing minimal leadership to the broadcasters.

Therefore, a public diplomacy redesign would offer new opportunities for coordination between the various agencies and organizations involved in public diplomacy. The GAO report noted this need:

When agencies conduct communications programs in a fragmented, uncoordinated way, it can result in a patchwork of programs that can waste funds, lead to inconsistent messaging, and limit the overall effectiveness of the effort. Interagency coordination of U.S. strategic communications efforts is limited by several challenges, including unclear agency roles and responsibilities, a lack of

⁶⁴¹ The GAO report notes that, "within the U.S. government, State's Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has the lead for U.S. strategic communications efforts." However, based on my research it appears that the broadcasters do not take any strategic lead from this position at State. Therefore, to ensure coordinated action, it appears that the lead must be outside of State. Ibid, 6.

sustained leadership to direct agencies' efforts, minimal interagency sharing of research, and the lack of a strategy to engage the private sector.⁶⁴²

A proposed head of public diplomacy would need to coordinate efforts to promote America's interests and image abroad across various agencies. And by considering tasks in terms of interests and image allows a clearer view of the work at hand, and the increased need for coordination in a complex political environment.

The table below notes the myriad public diplomacy tasks to be managed by a head of public diplomacy:

Public diplomacy and the image and interests of the U.S.	
Image 1: Defend America abroad, monitor public opinion	New media operation
Image 2: Explain America (warts and all)	VOA, State
Image 3/Interest 1: Credible example of free press, open dialogue	VOA
Interest 2: Promote democratic transitions and democratic values	RFE/RL, State, New media operation
Interest 3: Support U.S. National security issues	VOA, State, New media operation, coordinate with Department of Defense

This table notes the various public diplomacy efforts cultivated across several organizations. And this table is by no means complete, as it does not include private sector efforts or efforts by USAID. What it does indicate, however, is that in the complex political environment there are various tasks for public diplomacy, and some tasks are

⁶⁴² Ibid, 20. The GAO report noted that this suggestion for increased coordination was also prominent in their 2005 report, as “a lack of leadership has contributed to agencies independently defining and coordinating strategic communications programs.” Ibid, 21.

spread across organizations. Therefore, coordination is key. Coordination is unlikely by an Under Secretary at State, who has little structural involvement with the other organizations. Instead, there needs to be a public diplomacy head who can assess the big picture, and ensure that functionality takes into account the changing political environment and media opportunities.

In addition, some agencies are not best suited to handle tasks that they have been assigned, and some of these tasks should be the focus of a new media organization. This media organization should lead the call for two-way flows of communication in the age of web 2.0 – and, in fact, this agency should take the lead for public diplomacy 2.0. This proposed new agency would solely focus on promoting and *defending* America abroad. This task, noted above, is beyond the VOA charter (VOA explains America, but in no way acts as a public relations tool promoting America) and is not touched by the surrogate nature and somewhat distant perspective of RFE/RL. In addition, as a separate organization from the State Department, this new agency could function like a PR firm, advocating not only for American foreign policy but also for the role of America in the global political environment. This organization could also become involved in a discussion promoting the American national interest of democracy promotion and various American security objectives, and could coordinate the effort with DOD and other strategic communications operations outside the diplomatic circle.

Furthermore, this new organization could assure that VOA's independent credibility is protected. Perhaps the State department would remove its editorials from the VOA site if an organization were to be established to spearhead a conversation confronting challenges to American interests. This would enable VOA to be free from the

constraints placed on it by the State Department (though it should be noted that VOA currently hides State editorials below the fold). Perhaps the State Department would be comfortable moving its editorials to the America.gov site if it felt that a new organization was engaging in a two-way discussion of American interests and images.

The proposal of a new organization does not mean to exclude the Department of State from web 2.0 activities, but instead notes that there should be another organization leading this effort. The State Department has been wary to become more fully engaged in two-way communications flows, as this real-time advocacy leaves little room for error. Operating public diplomacy 2.0 from outside the State Department might allow it to take off. However, much can be learned from State's ventures into two-way communications. Currently, there is a small effort to communicate in target states – particularly Iran.

I interviewed Navideh Wise of the State Department's Digital Outreach Team, who said that she is communicating on Farsi blogs and web forums "to engage with Iranians on the inside."⁶⁴³ She explained that democracy promotion is "a big part of my work," and she does exactly that in the Iranian blogosphere: "There was one kid (on a forum) saying Iran is the most democratic country – he said the Koran is very democratic. Then I stepped in and defined democracy – and explained how the religion and the state is separated. Gradually you step in and describe things – the kids read it and thank me." But her message is not only democracy: "Right now we want to say what the President has said – we stand by the Iranians."

Navideh does not use her first name on the blogs, she has a nickname, but she never conceals her identity: "They know we are in the U.S. – we use the logo of the State

⁶⁴³ Navideh Wise, Senior Policy Analyst, Digital Outreach Team, U.S. Department of State, Phone Interview, April 24, 2008.

Department – and we have a U.S. email to verify and we give it out. They are receptive - when they see I’m calm, they have toned it down.” Navideh’s job is to consider the “200,000 - 500,000 Iranian blogs” and measure traffic, find new blogs and means of communication. With such a difficult task at hand, it is surprising how small State’s Digital Outreach Team is: “There are only two of us – and our boss. We write in English and he approves our content. I would love to see thousands of us. The more you engage, the better you can reach the audience. But the little that we do, we have an impact.”

Perhaps to have more engagement, a digital outreach department of a new, web 2.0 agency could work with the State Department to reach Navideh’s goal. Perhaps by shifting 2.0-type work to a new organization, it would gain momentum and political support and breath life in a public diplomacy redesign. In addition, this new agency could work with the head of public diplomacy to identify media opportunities and constraints in various target countries, which could impact broadcasting strategies across the public diplomacy infrastructure.

It should be noted that RFE and RL were founded in addition to VOA in the dawn of the Cold War when it appeared to many in Washington that the current public diplomacy apparatus could not reach all of America’s policy goals. In other words, there is a precedent for establishing a new organization when the political landscape changes. If this was to occur, and tasks were appropriately laid across organizations, a head of public diplomacy could coordinate strategy and designate appropriate tactics. This head could also be in charge of coordinating measures of effectiveness that are without bias, and that seek to understand whether public diplomacy supports national interests. This

redesign would allow organizations to have a more positive trajectory for success, for thriving, in the new political environment.

When it comes to public diplomacy, the U.S. does not need to choose one message, or one objective. Instead, it must consider messages as part of an overarching, umbrella public diplomacy strategy, managed by one central leader who could finally increase the status of American public diplomacy.

Democracy promotion and the future of American public diplomacy

As democracy promotion remains a relevant task of RFE/RL and VOA, it is valuable to view American democracy promotion efforts through the lens of the broadcasters. As such, there are a few democracy promotion-related recommendations that stem from my research. In the wake of the Bush administration, there has been much focus on the nature of democracy promotion in American foreign policy and whether such tactics are relevant and wise in the current political climate. Some argue for a “realist corrective,” which would mean “backing-down” on democracy promotion, while others call for simply “rebranding” democracy promotion in the Obama age. Currently, the debate is ongoing.

Thomas Carothers, democracy promotion’s best advocate, has noted the calls for a pull-back on democracy promotion. He explains that the “pressure on Obama for a broad realist corrective... comes from the view that not just in the Middle East but generally around the world Bush overdid it on democracy, recklessly pursuing a global freedom agenda that diverted the United States from its core interests.”⁶⁴⁴ But Carothers does not support such a corrective: “Despite all the problems of recent years, it remains both possible and advisable for the United States to be an active, influential supporter of democracy abroad.”⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁴ Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Promotion Under Obama: Finding a Way Forward,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Policy Brief 77, February 2009, 4. However, Carothers notes on page 4 that “underneath his lofty prodemocracy rhetoric and mild prodding of Arab counterparts, business as usual continued for the most part, that is, close U.S. security and economic ties with autocratic Arab allies like Saudi Arabia, the smaller Gulf states, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.”

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2. In fact, on page 4 Carothers notes that the push for democracy abroad does not originate in the hands of Americans, but rather “when authoritarian regimes weaken or collapse, citizens usually press for the chance to have a political say, through elections.”

Noting that a general pull back could be shortsighted, many argue instead for rebranding. The argument for rebranding centers on the pillars of democracy - the values that were noted in chapter 2 - rather than an outright push for democratic regimes. James Traub of the *New York Times* supports this point of view over a realist corrective:

Realist noninterventionism has become broadly unpalatable, but the argument for less-than-democracy or other-than-democracy has gained many adherents as a result of the failures of (President Bush's) Freedom Agenda. It offers a kind of fallback position for those who are uncomfortable with the language of democracy as well as the stark calculus of traditional realism. Autocratic regimes themselves are far more receptive to the message of 'good governance,' 'the rule of law,' and 'modernization'... Why not, then, seek to spread the free market, the rule of law, human rights – instead of democracy, a word that has been almost fatally tainted?⁶⁴⁶

As my content analysis above reveals, the values of democracy are exactly what the broadcasters are promoting. In fact, very few articles on democracy, outright, were noted in my 2007-2009 content analysis. Therefore, I conclude that the broadcasters can and should be actively involved in any rebranding of American democracy promotion, most notably because a change in strategy may impact their tactics and because the broadcasters have experience supporting the values noted in the rebranding effort.

Carothers articulates a rebranding effort focusing on three goals: promote the values of democracy, disassociate democracy promotion from regime change, and disassociate democracy promotion from the war on terrorism. To the first point, Carothers notes that values have permeated the democracy promotion efforts and in fact “less than 20 percent of U.S. democracy assistance goes to electoral programs. Most democracy aid goes to precisely the sorts of putatively foundational areas that electoral skeptics call for, such as developing the rule of law, building governance, promoting civil

⁶⁴⁶ James Traub, *The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)*, (New York: Picador, 2009), 225.

society, enhancing civic education, and strengthening parliamentary bodies.”⁶⁴⁷ American public diplomacy has been and can continually be a part of this effort.

Carothers also argues that, “in reformulating U.S. democracy promotion, the new (Obama) administration should continue efforts to dissociate the subject from regime change, counterterrorism excess, and general hubris.”⁶⁴⁸ The various functionalities of public diplomacy, noted above, demonstrates a natural split between national security issues and promoting the values of democracy, and therefore I believe that the public diplomacy community can and must be a part of this ongoing dialogue on rebranding and reformulating democracy promotion efforts. In other words, for public diplomacy to have what Edward R. Murrow described as a “seat at the table,” these organizations must claim their seat, become part of the conversation on democracy promotion, and not shy away based on historic discomforts with democracy promotion or old grievances over inclusion. The broadcasters in fact have experience in promoting these values, and partnerships could be formed with the wider democracy promotion community.

Therefore, rebranding is preferable to a general pull-back, especially since American credibility will rest on consistency of message. Discussed earlier, the Azerbaijani opposition believed that the U.S. had not fully supported Azerbaijani democratic transition in 2005. In other words, America must be aware of the critique that the U.S. is only half-heartedly interested in democracy. Carothers also notes this reality: “Toward America’s two principle challengers, China and Russia, as well as in the many other areas of U.S. strategic or economic engagement with nondemocratic states, such as with Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, the Gulf states, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan, the Bush

⁶⁴⁷ Thomas Carothers, “Democracy Promotion Under Obama: Finding a Way Forward,” 3-4.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid, 6.

administration downplayed democracy for the sake of other interests.”⁶⁴⁹ In other words, realism already exists. However, a multi-pronged approach for public diplomacy leaves room for supporting myriad interests. And in the age of the complex interdependence, the broader framework of American foreign policy must become adept at setting multiple issues on the agenda – democracy, human rights, security issues, and a conversation about America. A public diplomacy head could be responsible for coordinating this multi-faceted conversation.

--

In sum, democracy has been and will continue to be a mission and interest of America. Calling for a rebranding effort in the face of changing political realities make sense. Public diplomacy organizations, and particularly those with experience through the Cold War – RFE/RL and VOA - can and should be a part of this rebranding effort. And in fact, the rebranding must also happen within the broader public diplomacy community. The greater complexity of the political and media landscapes, coupled with complex adversaries, create new challenges and opportunities for the broadcasters. Surviving, and even innovating, is not enough. To thrive, these organizations must take a front seat in the on-going debate over public diplomacy and democracy promotion – they must not shy away. These organizations are proud of their histories and missions, and they should bring their pride to the debate. But they cannot act alone – a redesign of public diplomacy must be broad-based, including the State Department and other new and old functionalities of public diplomacy. Through my research – which demonstrated that the

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid, 4-5.

broadcasters are true to their missions – I have found great consistency and value in American international broadcasting. This legacy must not only be preserved, it must be expanded upon - it must be retooled and reenergized for the web 2.0 media environment. Understanding organizational distinctions and various broadcasting tactics, as demonstrated in my research, is an important first step.

Appendix 1: Interviews:

- Kenan Aliyev, Senior Multi-Media Producer, Azerbaijani Service, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007.
- Elez Biberaj, Eurasia Director, Voice of America, Phone Interview, January 16, 2008.
- Ismail M. Dahiyat, Director, Near East and Central Asia Division, Voice of America, Interview, Washington, D.C., August 4, 2008.
- Liz Fuller, Regional Analyst, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007.
- Letitia King, Director, Media Relations, Voice of America, Conference Call Interview, January 10, 2008.
- John E. Lennon, Associated Director for Language Programming, Voice of America, Interview, Washington, D.C., August 4, 2008.
- Istvan Rev, Open Society Archives, Director, Interview, Budapest, Hungary, July 26, 2007.
- Stephanie Schmidt, Project/Administrative Manager, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interviews, Prague, Czech Republic, July 31, 2007 and Boston, MA, May 16, 2009, Email interview, March 8, 2010.
- Bruce Sherman, Director, Strategic Planning, Broadcast Board of Governors, Phone Interview, April 28, 2008.
- Elin Suleymanov, Consulate General of Azerbaijan to Los Angeles, Email interview, November 5 and 15, 2008.
- Kambiz Tavana, Deputy Director, Radio Farda, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Interview, Prague, Czech Republic, July 30, 2007.
- Gary Thatcher, Associate Director for Program Support, Voice of America, Conference Call Interview, January 10, 2008.
- Navideh Wise, Senior Policy Analyst, Digital Outreach Team, U.S. Department of State, Phone Interview, April 24, 2008.

Appendix 2: The Flight From Hungary:

The Open Society Archives features prominently on its website a news film, entitled, “The Flight From Hungary.”⁶⁵⁰ This film chronicles the movement of refugees out of Hungary, and details both the violence of 1956, which led an estimated 25,000 dead. The film also features footage of refugees crossing the border out of Hungary, heading to one of 63 refugee camps across Europe, from Austria and Switzerland to Holland. In addition, the film chronicles the historic air-sea mercy mission bringing 21,000 refugees to the U.S. – the largest refugee mission by the U.S. at that time. By in large, the film highlights the role of the U.S. as a beacon of democracy and freedom during the dark days of the Hungarian Revolution. Below are still photographs taken from the film:



⁶⁵⁰ “The Flight From Hungary,” *The News Magazine of the Screen*, Warner-Pathe News, Vol. 7, Issue 5, 1957, Accessed March 31, 2010, <http://www.osaarchivum.org/beta/digitalarchive/>.



The film features the ravaged streets and buildings in Budapest.



The film also captures Soviet tanks roaming the streets of Budapest.



Here, Hungarian refugees cross the border into Austria.



Lastly the film demonstrates a flight landing in New Jersey from Europe with Hungarian Refugees.

APPENDIX 3: RFE/RL and VOA Web Images, 2007-2009:

CAUCASUS REPORT

**Azerbaijan Rejects Call For Probe Of
Journalist's Death**



October 01, 2009

A Baku district court rejected on September 29 a demand by the widow of Talysh newspaper editor Novruzali Mamedov to open a criminal investigation into the circumstances of his death in prison last month.

Mamedov died on August 17. He was 68 and in poor health. His widow claims that prison authorities repeatedly denied him medical treatment.

RFE/RL – October 1, 2009

News

News

USA

Africa

Americas

Asia

Europe

Middle East

American Life

Arts and
Entertainment

More Topics ▶

Web Features

Special Reports

Going Green

Money In Motion

Now You Know

Off the Beaten Path

The Link

Interactive

▶ My VOA
Community

News



Photo: AP

Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani speaks during a joint press conference (File)

Iran Plans to Build 10 New Uranium Enrichment Plants

Iran's state-run media say the government plans to build 10 new uranium enrichment plants similar to the facility in Natanz

More Top News

- UAE to Back Banks as Dubai Debt Problems Loom
- Obama Prepares for Afghan Speech, Senators Offer Advice
- Swiss Voters Approve Ban on Minarets
- Afghan Officials: 26 Militants Killed Near Pakistan Border
- Saudi Health Minister: Five Swine Flu Deaths During Hajj
- Report Blames US Military Leaders for Missing Bin Laden in 2001
- Nigerian President's Health Fueling Political Tensions
- Hondurans Vote in Post-Coup Presidential Election
- Largest Ever Yellow Fever Immunization Program Wraps up in West Africa
- Uruguay Presidential Runoff Sunday
- Water Cooler at Indian Nuclear Plant Contaminated

VOA main page November 30, 2009

COMMENTARY

The Apocalypse, Messianism Define Ahmadinejad's Policies



Mahmud Ahmadinejad: "A divine hand will come soon to root out the tyranny in the world."

December 09, 2009

By Abbas Djavadi

It's both crazy and dangerous.

RFE/RL December 9, 2009

NEWS

Fresh Opposition Protests, Clashes Persist In Iran



Protesters and Iranian students face off against riot police in Tehran on December 8.

December 08, 2009

(RFE/RL) – Reports from Iran say protesters have clashed with supporters of the regime on university campuses for a second straight day.

RFE/RL's Radio Farda reports that the protests started at a Tehran engineering school, where members of the hard-line Basij militia attacked students with tear gas.

According to the student website "Khabarnameh Amir Kabir," militia members were transported to the university on buses.

New clashes were also reported between students and militia at Shahid Behshti University, just outside the Iranian capital.

A number of photos and video footage of protests said to be from the capital and other sites across Iran on December 8 have been posted on the Internet. One carried the sound of protesters chanting: "Death to the regime that lies to people! Dictator! Dictator! This is our last warning! The Green Movement is ready to rise up!"

WATCH: Youtube video purporting to show a student protest at Kerman University in south-central Iran on December 8. The authenticity of the video could not be confirmed.



RFE/RL December 8, 2009



Latest Posts



Informing People In Their Homes About Swine Flu

Blogger "Baran Banoo" (Lady Rain) says she's been assigned the job of informing people in her neighborhood about swine flu. [More](#)



Iranian Women's Rights Activists Win Courage Award

A group of women who are risking imprisonment to collect 1 million signatures on a petition demanding greater women's rights in Iran were presented on October with the Anna Politkovskaya award for courage. [More](#)



Face-Off

Blogger "Ghulam Faranse" (French Pen) says he's looking forward to seeing how his classmates and other students might have changed their appearances in the new academic year. [More](#)

Most Commented On

1. The Fragile Balkans
2. Interview With Historian Tony Judt: 'Dreaming About Washington Is One Of East Europe's Great Mistakes'
3. Bosnia's Serb Republic Challenges OHR
4. What Lessons Should Georgians Draw From War Probe Findings?
5. EU Report On 2008 War Tilts Against Georgia

Transmission



Ahmadinejad's 'Jewish Family' Part II

More evidence to suggest, or confirm, Ahmadinejad's Jewish ancestry. [More](#)

- [The Language Of Pigs](#)

Watchdog



Iranian Women's Rights Activists Win Courage Award

A group of women who are risking imprisonment to collect 1 million signatures on a petition demanding greater women's rights in Iran were presented on October with the Anna Politkovskaya award for courage. [More](#)

Persian Letters



Informing People In Their Homes About Swine Flu

Blogger "Baran Banoo" (Lady Rain) says she's been assigned the job of informing people in her neighborhood about swine flu. [More](#)

Regions & Topics

- [Africa](#)
- [Americas](#)
- [Asia](#)
- [Crime](#)
- [Democracy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Ideals](#)
- [Iran](#)
- [Iraq](#)
- [Middle East](#)
- [Terrorism](#)
- [Trade](#)
- Services**
- [E-mails](#)
- [XML](#) [RSS](#) [Feeds](#)
- About Us**
- [Editorials](#)

EDITORIALS

The Following Is An Editorial Reflecting The Views Of The US Government

Death Sentences Announced In Iran

27 October 2009



Scene in Tehran court room where trials are taking place

The United States remains concerned about Iran's continued failure to adhere to its international obligations to secure the basic freedoms and human rights of its people – freedoms guaranteed in its own constitution, as well as in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party.

The most recent example is an Iranian court's decision to sentence to death 5 Iranians who were listed in the public indictments issued in the wake of the post-election unrest. Over 100 Iranians listed in the public indictments are currently standing trial before a Tehran Revolutionary Court after being accused of fomenting unrest after Iran's June 12 presidential election.

- [Download](#) Death Sentences Announced In Iran (MP3)
- [Listen to](#) Death Sentences Announced In Iran (MP3)
- [E-mail This Article](#)
- [Print Version](#)

Related Editorials

- [U.N. Reports On Human Rights In Iran](#)

RFE/RL blogs and VOA editorial

COMMUNICATIONS / PRESS RELEASES

Azerbaijan Shuts Down RFE/RL, VOA, BBC



Radio Azadliq broadcasts in Azerbaijan on 101.7 FM (RFE/RL)

December 30, 2008

(PRAGUE, Czech Republic) Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) President Jeffrey Gedmin called today's decision by the government of Azerbaijan to [take foreign broadcasters off the air](#) "a sad day for the Azeri people, who will now find themselves without access to free and independent media." The OSCE calls the move a ["serious step backwards"](#) for Azerbaijan and the US State Department says the decision ["retards democratic reform in Azerbaijan."](#)

In Baku today, the Azeri National TV-Radio Council formally ruled to ban all international broadcasters, including RFE/RL, VOA, and BBC, from the airwaves effective January 1. The move

essentially guarantees a monopoly for state-controlled media and prevents any independent news broadcasts from reaching the Azeri people.

Gedmin rejected Azerbaijan's suggestion that RFE/RL can broadcast effectively on alternatives to FM frequencies such as Internet radio or shortwave. "Losing our FM frequency means losing 90% of our audience," he said. "Nevertheless, we will find ways to reach our listeners. Our mission of bringing uncensored news and information to the Azeri people is now more important than ever."

Since the announcement two months ago that authorities were considering this move, Azeri advocates of press freedom have joined the US, EU, OSCE, and international media watchdog groups in condemnation of the regime's efforts at stopping the free exchange of information in Azerbaijan.

About RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service

For more than 50 years, RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service, Radio Azadliq has operated within a challenging media environment as a dependable source of professional, independent, and up-to-the minute information and news. Broadcasting for 10 hours each day on 101.7 FM, Radio Azadliq puts the values of democracy and independence firmly at the center of its mission, and is the country's most popular international broadcaster.

RFE/RL December 30, 2008

NEWS

Azerbaijan Bans RFE/RL, Other Foreign Radio From Airwaves



The administration of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has kept up the pressure on independent media in the country.

Last updated (GMT/UTC): 30.12.2008 16:20

RFE/RL December 30, 2008

BY COUNTRY / IRAN

Iran: Wrapping Up For Winter, And The Morality Police

December 13, 2007

By Farangis Najibullah



Bracing for the clampdown? (epa)

To 23-year-old Tehran resident Setareh, the onset of winter and an accompanying crackdown to enforce the dress code mean one thing: Beware the bare ankles.

RFE/RL December 13, 2007

FEATURES

Women At Forefront Of Iranian Protests



A female supporter of opposition candidate Mir Hossein Musavi attended a campaign rally in late May in Tehran. Her hands read: Women = Men.

June 22, 2009

By Golnaz Esfandiari

RFE/RL June 22, 2009

NEWS

Iran's Opposition Vows To Go On Challenging Poll



For now, opposition protests against the election results seem to have been driven from the streets.

June 25, 2009

TEHRAN (Reuters) – Iran's reformist opposition leaders have vowed to press on with legal challenges to an election they say was rigged, even as the hard-line government appeared to have largely crushed mass street protests.

RFE/RL June 25, 2009

EDITORIALS

The Following Is An Editorial Reflecting The Views Of The US Government

Elections In Iran

17 June 2009



Supporters of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad react as he speaks at a rally in Tehran.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was running for a second term, was declared the winner of Iran's June 12th election by a substantial margin. His chief rival, Mir Hossein Mousavi, has charged voter fraud. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has directed the Guardian Council to investigate the claims of fraud.

Meanwhile thousands of Mousavi and Ahmadinejad supporters have taken to the streets in peaceful demonstrations. Some peaceful demonstrations have been met with force by police and other security officials.

President Barack Obama noted that the election results in Iran are difficult to assess because no international election monitors were present during the election. He said Iran needs to take seriously the accusations of fraud and examine them thoroughly:

VOA editorial June 17, 2009

US Congress Condemns Violence Against Demonstrators in Iran

19 June 2009

Washington

The U.S. Congress has condemned the Iranian government's crackdown on demonstrators protesting the result of the recent election. The U.S. Senate acted Friday after an earlier nearly unanimous vote by the U.S. House of Representatives.


The 405 to 1 vote was the strongest expression of support yet from the U.S. Congress for demonstrators who have been protesting the result of Iran's disputed election that left President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in power.

It was also the culmination of a week of political maneuvering during which minority Republicans in Congress criticized President Barack Obama for not taking a stronger public stand on events in Iran.

Share This

 [Digg](#)

 [Facebook](#)

 [StumbleUpon](#)

 [Yahoo! Buzz](#)

 [del.icio.us](#)

VOA June 19, 2009

APPENDIX 5: Examples of daily comparisons of VOA and RFE/RL broadcasting, 2007-2009

Date	RFE/RL democracy story	RFE/RL non-democracy story	VOA democracy story	VOA non-democracy story
9/7/07	“Iran: Motive In Release Of Iranian-Americans Remains Unclear” (1 of 1 such story)	None	“RFE/RL Welcomes Iran's Return of Passport to Reporter” (1 of 1 such story)	“U.S. Republican Presidential Hopefuls Debate Iran's Nuclear Capability” (1 of 1 such story)
9/17/07	“Iran Overturns Death Sentence For MKO Member” ⁶⁵¹ (1 of 1)	“France Warns Of Possible War With Iran” (1 of 2)	None	“Iran's Interior Minister Says China Against New Nuclear Sanctions” (1 of 3)
9/24/07	“Iran Closes Website Critical Of Ahmadinejad” (1 of 2)	“Iran: Expert Doubts Impact Of New Sanctions On Nuclear Program” (1 of 3)	None	“Ahmadinejad Says in US TV Interview Iran Does Not Need Nuclear Weapons” (1 of 5)
10/9/07	“Iran: Warnings Hint At Greater Role By Revolutionary Guard In Muzzling Critics” (1 of 1)	None	None	None

⁶⁵¹ MKO refers to a party in Iran: Mujahedin Khalq Organization.

Date	RFE/RL democracy story	RFE/RL non-democracy story	VOA democracy story	VOA non-democracy story
10/16/07	“Iran: Students Grab Spotlight With Challenge To President” (1 of 2)	“Russia And Iran: Odd Couple In Tehran?” (1 of 1)	“Media Rights Group Says Iran Among 4 Worst Nations for Press Freedom” (1 of 1)	“U.S. Defense Secretary Calls for Focused Pressure on Iran” (1 of 2)
10/30/07	“Pakistan/Iran: The Baluchi Minority's 'Forgotten Conflict’” (1 of 2)	“Iran: Diplomat's Removal Highlights Battle At The Top” (1 of 3)	None	“El Baradei Urges Iran to Open its Nuclear Records” (1 of 1)
11/5/07	“Iranian Labor Activists' Prison Sentences Upheld” (1 of 1)	None	None	“U.S. Disappointed With Chinese, Russian Stance on New Iran Sanctions” (1 of 2)
11/19/07	“Iran: Ahmadinejad's Threat To 'Traitors' Points To Widening Rift” (1 of 1)	“Iran: Ahmadinejad's Bahrain Visit New Piece In Complex Pattern” (1 of 1)	None	“U.S. Supports Diversification in Caspian Oil Market” (1 of 2)
11/26/07	“Iran: Female Doctor's Prison Death Causes Public Outcry” (1 of 2)	None	None	“Iran Produces Its First Nuclear Fuel Pellets” (1 of 2)

Date	RFE/RL democracy story	RFE/RL non-democracy story	VOA democracy story	VOA non-democracy story
12/6/07	“Iran: Women Reject The ‘Little Miseries’” (1 of 1)	None	None	“Iran Nuclear Assessment Based on Iranian Conversations” (1 of 1)
12/18/07	“Iran: Internet Cafes Shut Down In Drive Against Un-Islamic Behavior” (1 of 1)	None	None	“Bush: Iran Has No Need to Enrich Uranium” (1 of 2)

Date	RFE/RL democracy story	RFE/RL non-democracy story	VOA democracy story	VOA non-democracy story
5/12/08	"Iran: From Germany, Rap Group Challenges Male-Dominated Society" (1 of 1)	None	None	None
9/15/08	None	"Iran Warns UN Nuclear Body Not To Bend To U.S. Pressure" (1 of 2)	None	None
11/4/08	"Iran Holds Student Living In U.S. On Security Charges" (1 of 2)	None	None	None
12/29/08	"Iranian-Canadian Blogger Has Been Detained, Judiciary Confirms" (1 of 2)	None	None	None

APPENDIX 6: Content Analysis Data (including theme selection):

Articles from RFE/RL on Iran:

1. “No Decision On Detained Iranian-Americans After Inquiry,” August 13, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078132.html>.
2. “Iranian President Kicks Off Regional Tour With First Afghan Visit,” August 14, Regional issues, 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078138.html>.
3. “RSF Asks UN To Support Jailed Iranian Journalists,” August 14, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078144.html>.
4. “Reports Say U.S. May Declare Iran's Revolutionary Guards 'Terrorist' Group,” August 15, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078157.html>.
5. “Iran: Radio Farda -- Wife Of Jailed Union Leader Hopes International Support Will Secure His Release,” August 15, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078150.html>.
6. “Iran: Ministers' Exits Could Hint At Further Changes,” August 14, 2007, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078152.html>.
7. “Iran: Internet Video Tells Leaders To ‘Leave The Youth Alone,’” August 16, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078182.html>.
8. “Iran: Mideast Expert Talks About Possible U.S. Blacklisting Of Revolutionary Guards,” August 16, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078190.html>.
9. “Iran Says 12 Hostages Freed In Pakistan,” August 20, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1078238.html>.
10. “Iranian Doctor Who Helped Activist Sentenced To Prison,” August 20, 2007, Due process.
11. “Afghan General Says Iranian Engineers Helping Taliban,” August 20, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078245.html>.
12. “Iran: Iranian Ambassador To Azerbaijan Discusses Ahmadinejad's Baku Trip,” August 20, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078253.html>.
13. “U.S.: ‘We Have Time For Diplomacy’ With Iran,” August 20, 2007, U.S. –Iran relations, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078254.html>.
14. Tehran Says Plutonium Issues With IAEA ‘Resolved,’” August 20, 2007, Nuclear issue.
15. “Iran: Radio Farda -- On Journalists' Day, Little To Celebrate,” August 22, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://shabnameha.wordpress.com/2007/08/12/18/>.
16. “Iranian-American Scholar Welcomes Release On Bail,” August 22, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078279.html>.
17. “U.S. Envoy Says Iran-IAEA Deal Has ‘Real Limitations,’” August 22, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078276.html>.
18. “Ahmadinejad, Aliyev Underscore Cooperation In Talks,” August 22, 2007, Regional issues.
19. “Concern In Iran Over Condemned, Hunger-Striking Journalists,” August 22, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078283.html>.
20. “Iranian President Wraps Up Visit To Azerbaijan,” August 23, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143939.html>.
21. “Iranian Rights Activists, Intellectuals Decry Arrests,” August 24, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078325.html>.
22. “Radio Farda Broadcaster Faces New Security Charge,” August 27, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://payvand.com/news/07/aug/1189.html>.

23. "Iran: Radio Farda Journalist Describes Life 'In Limbo,'" August 27, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078376.html>.
24. "Iran: Lawyer Rejects Charges Against RFE/RL Journalist," August 28, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1216.html>.
25. "France: Sarkozy Strikes Tough Tone Toward Iran, Russia," August 28, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078396.html>.
26. "Iran: Radio Farda -- Writer On Trial Over Fictional Events," August 28, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078395.html>.
27. "Iran: Campaign Against Discriminatory Laws Marks First Year," August 29, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078414.html>.
28. "Iran Accused Of Expelling Baha'i Students," August 30, 2007, Freedom of religion, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1234.html>.
29. "IAEA Says Some Iranian Nuclear Issues Resolved," August 30, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078427.html>.
30. "IAEA Notes 'Significant Step' On Iran Nuclear Crisis," August 31, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078442.html>.
31. "Tehran 'Vehemently Denies' Shelling Northern Iraq," September 3, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/backgroundereembedded/1078495.html>.
32. "Radio Farda Broadcaster Allowed To Leave Iran," September 4, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://payvand.com/news/07/sep/1032.html>.
33. "UN Rights Chief Meets With Activists In Tehran," September 4, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078506.html>.
34. "Iranian-U.S. Scholar Esfandiari Leaves Iran," September 4, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078478.html>.
35. "Ahmadinejad Claims Iran Has 3,000 Centrifuges," September 4, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078476.html>.
36. "El-Baradei Says Iran Agreement Could Be 'Last Chance,'" September 4, 2007, Nuclear issue.
37. "Radio Farda Broadcaster Says Her Case Still Open," September 5, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078525.html>.
38. "Iran: New Commander Takes Over Revolutionary Guards," September 5, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078520.html>.
39. "Iran: Radio Farda -- Journalist Urges World To Prioritize Human Rights In Dealing With Tehran," September 5, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078509.html>.
40. "RFE/RL Welcomes Iran's Repeal Of Travel Ban On Broadcaster Azima," September 6, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078541.html>.
41. "Iran: Motive In Release Of Iranian-Americans Remains Unclear," September 6, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078555.html>.
42. "IAEA Governors Meeting To Discuss Iran's Nuclear Program," September 10, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078602.html>.
43. "Detained Iranian-American Expects To Be Freed Soon," September 11, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078619.html>.
44. "Afghanistan: U.S. Worried Iran Sending Chinese Weapons To Taliban," September 14, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078675.html>.
45. "Iran: Tehran Officials Begin Crackdown On Pet Dogs," September 14, 2007,

- Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078672.html>.⁶⁵²
46. "Iran Overturns Death Sentence For MKO Member," September 15, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078677.html>.
 47. "France Warns Of Possible War With Iran," September 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078685.html>.
 48. "Gates Says U.S. To Continue Iran Diplomacy, Stay In Iraq," September 16, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078683.html>.
 49. "RFE/RL Journalist Azima Leaves Iran," September 18, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://payvand.com/news/07/sep/1212.html>.
 50. "Wife Of Missing American Hopes To Meet Iran's President," September 18, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgroundEmbedded/1078710.html>.
 51. "Iraq: Minister Calls On Iran To Focus On Supporting Government," September 17, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/backgroundereembedded/1078693.html>.
 52. "RFE/RL Journalist Azima Arrives In United States," September 19, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078698.html>.
 53. "Iran: Three Americans Still Held Or Missing, Their Fates Uncertain," September 19, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078714.html>.
 54. "Iran: Mixture Of Defiance, Speculation At Prospect Of Tougher Sanctions," Nuclear issue, September 20, 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078735.html>.
 55. "Interview: RFE/RL Journalist Reflects On Ordeal," September 21, 2007, Freedom of press.
 56. "Iran Warns Israel Against Possible Attack," September 21, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078727.html>.
 57. "Iran: Expert Doubts Impact Of New Sanctions On Nuclear Program," September 21, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078748.html>.
 58. "Official Says Iran Keeping Eye On U.S. Troops In Iraq," September 24, 2007, Security issues.
 59. "Iran Closes Website Critical Of Ahmadinejad," September 24, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078766.html>.
 60. "Three Iranian Students On Trial In Tehran," September 24, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078759.html>.
 61. "East: Democracy Survey Faults Russia, Tajikistan, Iran," September 26, 2007, Democracy, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078793.html>.
 62. "Iran: Bloggers Criticize President's New York Visit," September 27, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078802.html>.
 63. "Iran: Former Inmates Shed Light On Secret Prison Ward," September 27, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078808.html>.
 64. "Iran: As Tensions Rise, So Does Rhetoric," September 28, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078822.html>.
 65. "Iraq: U.S. Building Military Base Near Iranian Border," September 28, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078817.html>.
 66. "Disbanding Militias 'Key To Cutting Iran's Influence In Iraq,'" October 5, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2007/10/iraq-071005-rferl01.htm>.
 67. "Iran: Warnings Hint At Greater Role By Revolutionary Guard In Muzzling Critics,"

⁶⁵² While a story on animal rights may not appear to be a 'government control' story at the outset, this story is aiming to show the extent of control that the Iranian government has over freedoms, including pet ownership, since the time of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

- October 5, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078871.html>.
68. "Iran: Spill, Dolphin Deaths Spark Alarm At Persian Gulf Pollution," October 5, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078857.html>.
 69. "Ahmadinejad Wants 'All Palestine Liberated,'" October 5, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078872.html>.
 70. "Iranian Students Protest During Ahmadinejad Speech," October 8, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078891.html>.
 71. "Azerbaijan: Islamist Trial Sets Stage For Confrontation With Tehran," October 9, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078899.html>.
 72. "Iran: Ebadi Says Military Attack 'Would Worsen Our Situation,'" October 10, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078908.html>.
 73. "Iran: Students Grab Spotlight With Challenge To President," October 12, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078938.html>.
 74. "Iran: Government's Jobless Figures Questioned," October 12, 2007, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078936.html>.
 75. "Iran: Politicians Stake Out Territory Ahead Of Caspian Summit," October 15, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078953.html>.
 76. "Russia And Iran: Odd Couple In Tehran?" October 16, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078969.html>.
 77. "Caspian: Summit Fails To Resolve Key Question," October 16, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078963.html>.
 78. "Iran: Top U.S. Official Says Financial Clampdown Is Working," October 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078972.html>.
 79. "Iran: International Unions Condemn Treatment Of Jailed Activist," October 19, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078985.html>.
 80. "Iran: Top Nuclear Negotiator Resigns," October 20, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078989.html>.
 81. "Iran: New Crackdown On Dissidents 'Seeks To Create Despair,'" October 22, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078996.html>.
 82. "Iran: Military Flaunts New Capabilities As Tensions Rise," October 22, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078999.html>.
 83. "Energy Relations To Dominate Ahmadinejad's Armenia Visit," October 22, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078997.html>.
 84. "Iranian Students Protest Jail Sentences For Classmates," October 22, 2007, Due process.
 85. "Iran: Public-Transport Bill Offers Window On Political Divide," October 24, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079006.html>.
 86. "Why Did Iran's Ahmadinejad Cut Short Armenia Visit?" October 24, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1347668.html>.
 87. "Pakistan/Iran: The Baluchi Minority's 'Forgotten Conflict,'" October 25, 2007, Freedom of religion, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079022.html>.
 88. "Civil Society Activist Detained In Iran," October 25, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgroundEmbedded/1079023.html>.
 89. "U.S. Sanctions Sharpen Confrontation With Iran," October 27, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://iranfederal.org/en/?p=168>.
 90. "Radio Farda Listeners React To New U.S. Sanctions," October 27, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079033.html>.
 91. "Iran: Diplomat's Removal Highlights Battle At The Top," October 29, 2007, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079046.html>.

92. "Prominent Iranian Cleric Released From Jail," October 29, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079045.html>.
93. "Iranian Labor Activists' Prison Sentences Upheld," October 30, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079049.html>.
94. "Iran: Tehran Bookshop-Cafes Closed In New Move Against Dissent," October 31, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079048.html>.
95. "Iran: Tehran's Proposal For Iraq Finds Few Takers At Conference," November 6, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079086.html>.
96. "Filmmaker Held In Iran After Stumbling Upon Mass Grave," November 7, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079090.html>.
97. "Speaker For Pro-Reform Student Group Detained In Iran," November 8, 2007, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/backgroundunderembedded/1079099.html>.
98. "Iran: Ahmadinejad's Threat To 'Traitors' Points To Widening Rift," November 14, 2007, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079131.html>.
99. "Iran: Ahmadinejad's Bahrain Visit New Piece In Complex Pattern," November 15, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079134.html>.
100. "Iran: As One Door Closes In Nuclear Dispute, Others Open," November 19, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079160.html>.
101. "Women's Rights Activist And Journalist Jailed In Tehran," November 19, 2007, Women's rights/due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079154.html>.
102. "Iranian Lawyer Representing Dervishes Is Detained," November 21, 2007, Freedom of religion, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1204.html>.
103. "Iran: Book Censorship The Rule, Not The Exception," November 26, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079193.html>.
104. "Questioning Iran's 'Urgent Need' For Nuclear Energy," November 29, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079208.html>.
105. "Iranian Blogger Held After Revealing Canine Security Details," November 28, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1264.html>.
106. "Iranian Racing Authorities Stall Woman's Fast-Track Career," December 1, 2007, Women's rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079220.html>.
107. "Iran Seizes On U.S. Nuclear Turnaround," December 4, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079230.html>.
108. "Iran: Women Reject The 'Little Miseries,'" December 5, 2007, Women's rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079235.html>.
109. "Iran: Terrorist Freed In Germany Is Welcomed By Tehran," December 12, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079258.html>.
110. "Iran: Wrapping Up For Winter, And The Morality Police," December 13, 2007, Government control/women's rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079262.html>.
111. "Iran: Internet Cafes Shut Down In Drive Against Un-Islamic Behavior," December 18, 2007, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079274.html>.
112. "Iran: Protests Lend Momentum To Students' Struggle," December 19, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079246.html>.
113. "Iran/Azerbaijan: Faith, Oil, And Power Threaten Historic 'Brotherhood,'" December 20, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079284.html>.
114. "Iran Named As Top State Sponsor Of Terrorism," May 1, 2008, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1109662.html>.

115. "Iran: Tehran Set To Reject Nuclear Incentives Offer By World Powers," May 5, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgrounderEmbedded/1109679.html>.
116. "Afghanistan: Two Iranian Men Detained On Suspicions Of Spying," May 9, 2008, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1347799.html>
117. "Lebanon: Increasing Violence Raising U.S. Concerns Over Iran," May 9, 2008, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1117454.html>.
118. "Iran: From Germany, Rap Group Challenges Male-Dominated Society," May 11, 2008, Women's rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1117465.html>.
119. "Middle East: Are Iran, Syria Playing Any Roles In Lebanon Fighting?" May 13, 2008, Regional issues.
120. "Iran: Slow Internet Speeds Hinder Web Access," May 26, 2008, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1144496.html>.⁶⁵³
121. "IAEA Says Iran Stalling Probe Into Alleged Atom Bomb Research," September 15, 2008, Nuclear issue.
122. "Iran Warns UN Nuclear Body Not To Bend To U.S. Pressure," September 15, 2008, Nuclear issue, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Tells_UN_Nuclear_Body_Not_To_Bend_To_US_Pressure/1200002.html
123. "Iran Holds War Games To Test Defenses," September 15, 2008, Security issues, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Holds_War_Games_To_Test_Defenses/1200118.html
124. "Five Former U.S. State Secretaries Urge Iran Talks," September 16, 2008, U.S.-Iran relations, http://www.rferl.org/content/Former_US_State_Secretaries_Urge_Iran_Talks/1200333.html
125. "China Urges Iran's Cooperation With Nuclear Agency," September 16, 2008, Nuclear issue, http://www.rferl.org/content/China_Urges_Irans_Cooperation_With_Nuclear_Agency/1200295.html
126. "Magnitude 5 Earthquake Shakes Southern Iran," September 17, 2008, Misc. news, http://www.rferl.org/content/Earthquake_Shakes_South_Iran/1200893.html
127. "Iran Marks Anniversary Of U.S. Embassy Seizure," November 3, 2008, Government control, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Marks_Anniversary_Of_US_Embassy_Seizure/1337668.html
128. "Iranian Minister Fired Over Fake Oxford Degree," November 4, 2008, Misc. news, http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans_Parliament_Sacks_Interior_Minister_In_Blow_To_President/1338170.html.
129. "Iran Holds Student Living In U.S. On Security Charges," November 4, 2008, Due process, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Holds_Student_Living_In_US_On_Security_Charges/1338092.html
130. "Iran Sets Up Court To Try Israelis Over Gaza," December 30, 2008, Government distortions/Terrorism,

⁶⁵³ This article is grouped with "freedom of press," in that access is key to information. As noted in Chapter 2, some states, such as Cuba and China, hinder web access to their citizens, denying them information about both their government and the world around them. This is the way in which a state can control their market for loyalties.

- <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Sets Up Court To Try Israelis Over Gaza/1365161.html>.
131. "Iranian-Canadian Blogger Has Been Detained, Judiciary Confirms," December 29, 2008, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/IranianCanadian Blogger Has Been Detained Judiciary Confirms/1365130.html>.
132. "Iranian Security Officers Raid Shirin Ebadi's Private Office," December 29, 2008, Government control, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iranian Security Officers Raid Shirin Ebadis Private Office/1365011.html>.
133. "U.S. Condemns Harassment Of Iranian Nobel Laureate," January 3, 2009, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/US Condemns Harassment Of Iranian Nobel Laureate/1365986.html>.
134. "Iran's Nobel Laureate Dismisses Official Motives For Raids," January 3, 2009, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Ebadi Dismisses Official Motives Raids/1365474.html>.
135. "Closure Of Nobel Winner's Office A Legal Issue, Iran Says," January 7, 2009, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Closure Of Nobel Winners Office A Legal Issue Iran Says/1366532.html>.
136. "U.S. Reportedly Spurned Israeli Plan To Attack Iranian Reactor," January 11, 2009, Nuclear issue, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Report US Spurned Israeli Plan To Attack Iranian Reactor/1368738.html>.
137. "Iran Stones Two Men For Adultery, While Third Escapes," January 13, 2009, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Stones Two Men For Adultery While Third Escapes/1369539.html>.
138. "Iran Bans Iranian-American Student From Leaving," January 13, 2009, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Bans IranianAmerican Student From Leaving/1369460.html>.
139. "U.S. Senator Believes Missing American Being Held In Secret Iranian Prison," January 14, 2009, Due process, <http://www.rferl.org/content/US Senator Believes Missing American In Secret Prison in Iran/1369971.html>.
140. "Iran Tells U.S. To Change, Backs Oil Embargo Over Gaza," January 15, 2009, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Tells US To Change Backs Oil Embargo Over Gaza/1370578.html>.
141. "Iran Wants Increased Stake In Azerbaijani Gas Field," January 15, 2009, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Wants Increased Stake In Azerbaijani Gas Field/1370586.html>.
- 142.
143. "Iranian Exiles Say Relatives Arrested In Tehran," January 18, 2009, Due process,

http://www.rferl.org/content/Iranian_Exiles_Say_Relatives_Arrested_In_Tehran/1371554.html.

144. "Iran Names Two Brothers In U.S.-Backed 'Plot,'" January 19, 2009, Government distortions, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Names_Two_Brothers_In_USBacked_Plot/1371881.html.

2009 Election in Iran – RFE/RL:

1. "Ahmadinejad Asks 'Where Is Fraud?' But Prevents Independent Scrutiny," June 15, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Ahmadinejad_Asked_Where_Is_Fraud_But_Prevents_Independent_Scrutiny/1754670.html
2. "Seven Reported Killed In Iran Clashes," June 16, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Musavi_Supporters_Rally_As_Supreme_Leader_Backs_Vote_Review/1754908.html
3. "What Do the Iranians Want? Op-Ed in Washington Post by Jeffrey Gedmin," June 16, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/content/pressrelease/1755095.html>.
4. "Iran Cancels Foreign Media Accreditation," June 16, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Cancels_Foreign_Media_Accreditation/1755492.html.
5. "Iran's Cyberwarriors Stay Ahead Of Government Censors," June 17, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans_Cyberwarriors_Stay_Ahead_Of_Government_Censors/1756442.html
6. "What Iranian Media Are Saying," June 18, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/What_The_Iranian_Media_Is_Saying_/1757520.html
7. "RFE/RL's Esfandiari discusses Iranian protests on FOX News," June 20, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Esfandiari_on_FOX/1758969.html.
8. "Iran's Khamenei On Crash Course," June 20, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans_Khamenei_On_Crash_Course/1758706.html
9. "Women At Forefront Of Iranian Protests," June 22, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Women_At_Forefront_Of_Iranian_Protests/1760110.html.
10. "Iran Jams Foreign Satellite News In Bid To Isolate Public," June 23, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Jams_Foreign_Satellite_News_In_Bid_To_Isolate_Public/1761064.html
11. "Obama Condemns Iran Crackdown On Protests," June 23, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Obama_Condemns_Iran_Crackdown_On_Protests/1761119.html.
12. "Listener Comments To Radio Farda," June 23, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Listener_Comments_To_Radio_Farda/1761080.html
13. "What Iranian Media Are Saying," June 23, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/What_Iranian_Media_Are_Saying/1760940.html
14. "With Latest Remarks, Obama Seeks to Silence Critics on Iran," June 24, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/With_Latest_Remarks_Obama_Seeks_To_Silence_His_Critics_On_Iran/1761554.html.

15. "Iranian Opposition Tarded By Public Confessions From Arrested Protesters," June 24, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iranian_Opposition_Tarded_By_Public_Confessions_From_Arrested_Protesters/1761585.html.
16. "The Futility Of Lawful Appeal In The Iranian Election Crisis," June 24, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/The_Futility_Of_Lawful_Appeal_In_The_Iranian_Election_Crisis/1761716.html.
17. "Swedish PM Cautions Against EU Sanctions For Iran," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Swedish_PM_Cautions_Against_EU_Sanctions_For_Iran/1762878.html.
18. "Ahmadinejad Tells Obama Not To Interfere In Iran," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Ahmadinejad_Tells_Obama_Not_To_Interfere_In_Iran/1762537.html.
19. "What Will Happen To Those Arrested In Iran? I Can Tell You," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/What_Will_Happen_To_Those_Arrested_In_Iran_I_Can_Tell_You/1762681.html.
20. "Iranian Government Intensifies Countrywide Crackdown," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iranian_Government_Launches_Harsh_Countrywide_Crackdown/1762430.html.
21. "Iran's Opposition Vows To Go On Challenging Poll," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans_Opposition_Vows_To_Go_On_Challenging_Poll/1762189.html.
22. "RFE/RL's Esfandiari Tells Sky News Iranians Remain Frustrated," June 25, 2009,
<http://www.rferl.org/content/pressrelease/1762846.html>.
23. "Iran Jams Foreign Satellite News In Bid To Isolate Public," June 25, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Jams_Foreign_Satellite_News_In_Bid_To_Isolate_Public/1761064.html
24. "Iran Says Official Was Denied U.S. Visa For UN Meeting," June 27, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Says_Official_Was_Denied_US_Visa_For_UN_Meeting/1763915.html
25. "Obama, Merkel Speak With 'One Voice' On Iran," June 27, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Obama_Merkel_Speak_With_One_Voice_On_Iran/1763783.html.
26. "Iran Leader Accuses West Of 'Absurd' Statements," June 28, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_leader_Accuses_West_Of_Absurd_Statements/1764506.html.
27. "Iran Sparks New Row With Britain Over Election," June 28, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Sparks_New_Row_With_Britain_Over_Election/1764669.html.
28. "Rafsanjani Wants 'Fair' Review Of Iran Vote," June 28, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Rafsanjani_Calls_For_Fair_Review_Of_Iran_Vote_Complaints/1764576.html.
29. "Iran Leader Accuses West Of 'Absurd' Statements," June 28, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_leader_Accuses_West_Of_Absurd_Statements/1764506.html.
30. "Iran Says Five Local British Embassy Staff Freed," June 29, 2009,
http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Says_Five_Local_British_Embassy_Staff_Freed/1764902.html.

31. "Ahmadinejad Wants Probe Of 'Suspicious' Neda Death," June 29, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Ahmadinejad Wants Probe Of Suspicious Neda Death/1765032.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Ahmadinejad+Wants+Probe+Of+Suspicious+Neda+Death/1765032.html)
32. "Iran Recalls Baku Envoy For Talks After Peres Visit," June 29, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Recalls Baku Envoy For Talks After Peres Visit/1765309.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran+Recalls+Baku+Envoy+For+Talks+After+Peres+Visit/1765309.html)
33. "Iran's Guardians Council Confirms Ahmadinejad Win," June 30, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Officials Begin Partial Recount/1764846.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran+Officials+Begin+Partial+Recount/1764846.html)
34. "Crisis Response Hints At Early Stages Of Iranian Power Struggle," July 2, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Crisis Response Hints At Early Stages Of Iranian Power Struggle/1768100.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Crisis+Response+Hints+At+Early+Stages+Of+Iranian+Power+Struggle/1768100.html)
35. "Iran Pursuing Doctor Who Helped Neda, But Interpol Denies Knowledge," July 3, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Pursuing Doctor Who Helped Neda But Interpol Denies Knowledge/1768567.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran+Pursuing+Doctor+Who+Helped+Neda+But+Interpol+Denies+Knowledge/1768567.html).
36. "Iran's Ultraconservatives May See Chance To Revive 'Wilting' Revolution," July 3, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans Ultraconservatives May See Chance To Revive Wilting Revolution/1768776.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans+Ultraconservatives+May+See+Chance+To+Revive+Wilting+Revolution/1768776.html)
37. "Hard-Line Iran Editor Calls For Musavi To Face Trial," July 4, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/HardLine_Iran_Editor_Calls_For_Musavi_To_Face_Trial/1769184.html
38. "How Could Iran's Hard-Liners Choose The Next Supreme Leader?" July 4, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/How Could HardLiners Choose The Next Supreme Leader/1769299.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/How+Could+HardLiners+Choose+The+Next+Supreme+Leader/1769299.html)
39. "U.K. Says Iran To Free One Embassy Employee," July 5, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Britain Says Iran To Free One Embassy Employee/1769616.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Britain+Says+Iran+To+Free+One+Embassy+Employee/1769616.html)
40. "Iran Signals Fresh Media Clampdown," July 5, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Signals Fresh Media Clampdown/1769702.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran+Signals+Fresh+Media+Clampdown/1769702.html)
41. "Iran Clerical Group Calls Vote Result 'Invalid,'" July 5, 2009, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Clerical Group Calls Vote Result Invalid/1769818.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran+Clerical+Group+Calls+Vote+Result+Invalid/1769818.html)

Articles from VOA on Iran:

1. "Iranian President Rejects US Allegations About Weapons in Afghanistan," August 14, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.voafanti.com/gate/big5/author.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-08/2007-08-14-voa28.cfm?CFID=25115166&CFTOKEN=87139822&jsessionid=7e30f42668525c3d0dd321831ea1635512a7>.
2. "US Considering Terrorist Label for Iran's Revolutionary Guards," August 15, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.voafanti.com/gate/big5/author.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-08/2007-08-15-voa5.cfm?CFID=25115166&CFTOKEN=87139822&jsessionid=7e30f42668525c3d0dd321831ea1635512a7>.
3. "Iran's Ahmadinejad Says US Missile Defense Plan Threatens Asia," August 16, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1121.html>.
4. "Iran Shells Iraq's Kurdish Region," August 20, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-20-voa14-66784577.html?rss=war>.
5. "US Says It Is Countering Iranian Influence in Iraq," August 17, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1128.html>.
6. "Iran, Iraq Sign Border Security Agreement," August 17, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-17-voa37-66721452.html>.
7. "Top Iranian Cleric Warns US Not to Designate Guards as Terrorists," August 17, 2007, Terrorism, <http://209.157.64.201/focus/f-news/1882927/posts>.
8. "US Warns of Iran's Involvement in Iraq," August 19, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.voanews.com/burmese/archive/2007-08/2007-08-19-voa8.cfm?moddate=2007-08-19>.
9. "IRNA: Iranian President Calls Israel 'Flag of Satan'" August 19, 2007, Government distortions, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-19-voa1-66721597.html?textmode=0>.
10. "Wife of Missing Former FBI Agent Interviewed on VOA Persian," August 20, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1159.html>.
11. "Iranian Official Warns UN About Adopting New Sanctions Resolution," August 20, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-20-voa73-66722927.html?rss=politics>.
12. "US Official Criticizes Iran, IAEA Deal on Nuclear Program," August 22, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1165.html>.
13. "Iran Releases Iranian-American Academic in Jail Since May," August 22, 2007, Due process, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-21-voa23.html>.
14. "US Ponders Next Steps Toward Iran," August 22, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-22-voa23.html>.
15. "Kurdish Residents Allege Iranian Shelling of 2 Villages in Northeastern Iraq," August 24, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-24-voa27.html>.
16. "US Rejects Austria's Criticism of Missile Defense Plan," August 23, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-23-voa67.html>.
17. "Iranian-American Journalist Faces New Charge in Iran," August 27, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-27-voa30.html>.

18. "Athletic Diplomacy Between Iran, US," August 27, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-27-voa31.html>.
19. "Ahmadinejad Says Iran Ready to Fill Emerging 'Power Vacuum' in Iraq," August 28, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-CN-AHMADINEJAD.html>
20. "Ahmadinejad: Iranian Nuclear Program Not Slowed," August 28, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-28-voa55.html>.
21. "Bush Says Iran Must Stop Arming Iraqi Militants," August 28, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-28-voa66.html>.
22. "Tehran, Washington Heighten Rhetoric Over Iraq," August 30, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.payvand.com/news/07/aug/1233.html>.
23. "Iran Protests US Military's Detention of 8 Iranians in Iraq," August 29, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-29-voa19.html>.
24. "Journalists Say Iran Poses A Threat in Several Spheres," August 30, 2007, Freedom of press.
25. "US Troops in Iraq Detain Suspected Smugglers of Iranian Weapons," September 4, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-04-voa30.html>.
26. "Iranian Official: US-Iranian Academic Tajbakhsh Will Get Bail," September 4, 2007, Due process.
27. "Iraqi Foreign Minister Urges Iran to Stop Alleged Cross-Border Shelling," September 4, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-04-voa31.html>.
28. "Iran Says 3,000 Centrifuges Are Operational," September 4, 2007, Nuclear issue.
29. "UN Nuclear Watchdog Says Iran Cooperation Agreement May Be 'Last Chance,'" September 4, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1329664011.html>.
30. "US Republican Presidential Hopefuls Debate Iran's Nuclear Capability," September 7, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-06-voa80-66788112.html>.
31. "Iran Hangs 21 People in One Day," September 6, 2007, Due process, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-05-voa29-66787042.html>.
32. "Family of Missing American in Iran Says Search is Blocked by Iranians," September 5, 2007, Government control, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-05-voa27-66786627.html>.
33. "RFE/RL Welcomes Iran's Return of Passport to Reporter," September 7, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-06-voa36-66728112.html?textmode=1>.
34. "US Spars With IAEA Chief ElBaradei Over Iran," September 7, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-07-voa64.html>.
35. "Report: US to Build Base Near Iran-Iraq Border," September 10, 2007, Security issues.
36. "US-Iranian Academic Expects to be Released from Tehran Prison," September 11, 2007, Due process, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-11-voa19-66787667.html?rss=middle>.
37. "Esfandiari Back at Work After Three Months in Iranian Prison," September 11, 2007, Due process, <http://payvand.com/news/07/sep/1122.html>.
38. "Petraeus Says Iran Wants Iraqi 'Hezbollah' Force," September 12, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-12-voa38-66727547.html?rss=iraq>.
39. "US General Says Iranian-Supplied Rocket Used in Attack on Base," September 13, 2007, Security issues.

40. "Washington Says Effort to Strengthen Iran Sanctions Remains On Track," September 13, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-12-voa52.html>.
41. "Iranian Leader Lashes Out at Bush, US," September 14, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations.
42. "Iran Blasts France after Foreign Minister Kouchner Warns of Possibility of War," September 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voanews.com/lao/archive/2007-09/2007-09-17-voa2.cfm?moddate=2007-09-17>.
43. "French FM Says World Should Prepare for Possible War With Iran," September 16, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-16-voa21.html>.
44. "Iran's Interior Minister Says China Against New Nuclear Sanctions," September 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1336235081.html>.
45. "French Statement on Possible Iran War Raises Diplomatic Concern," September 18, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-18-voa14-66726722.html?textmode=0>.
46. "Iran, Egypt to Hold Talks on Restoring Relations," September 18, 2007, Regional issues.
47. "Iranian-American Journalist Allowed to Leave Iran," September 18, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-18-voa20-66726982.html>.
48. "UN Chief Urges Dialogue for Resolution of Iranian Nuclear Issue," September 19, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2007/iran-070918-voa02.htm>.
49. "Iranian-American Scholar Freed from Tehran Jail," September 20, 2007, Due process, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1339276201.html>.
50. "Bush Hopeful for Peaceful Resolution of Iran Dispute," September 20, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-20-voa42-66726257.html>.
51. "Western Frustration with Iran Fuels War Talk," September 21, 2007, Nuclear issue, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_14081.html.
52. "US Diplomat Calls for New Sanctions Against Iran," September 19, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2007/iran-070919-voa02.htm>.
53. "Iranian President Defends Government, Denies Repression," September 24, 2007, Government control, http://www.targetednews.com/pr_disp.php?pr_id=1169143.
54. "Columbia University's President Says Ahmadinejad Exhibits Signs of a 'Petty and Cruel Dictator,'" September 24, 2007, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1341068281.html>.
55. "Ahmadinejad Says in US TV Interview Iran Does Not Need Nuclear Weapons," September 23, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-23-voa9-66588717.html>.
56. "Analysts Say Relations Between Moscow and Tehran Are Cooling," September 25, 2007, Regional issues, <http://payvand.com/news/07/sep/1278.html>.
57. "Iranian Opposition Group Claims Iran Building Secret Underground Nuclear Facility," September 27, 2007, Nuclear issue/opposition, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-27-voa49-66787362.html>.
58. "World Powers Delay Iran Sanctions Resolution Until November," September 28, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-28-voa23.html>.

59. "Iran Denies Opposition Group's Nuclear Allegations," September 28, 2007, Nuclear issue/opposition, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-28-voa37-66588647.html?textmode=1>.
60. "Iranian President Launches New Tirade Against Israel," October 5, 2007, Government distortions, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1360120701.html>.
61. "US Forces Detain 3 Iran-Linked Suspects in British Kidnappings," October 8, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-07-voa25-66520207.html?textmode=1>.
62. "Iran to Hold Talks With IAEA Tuesday," October 7, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voanews.com/bangla/archive/2007-10/2007-10-07-voa1.cfm?renderforprint=1&textonly=1&&TEXTMODE=1&CFID=384533334&CFTOKEN=44920176&jsessionid=00303a0aa6a9b6eafe94304ef1043301c71d>.
63. "Bush Dismisses Suggestions US is Preparing to Attack Iran," October 6, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/oct/1051.html>.
64. "Russia Calls for Transparent Iranian Nuclear Program," October 10, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-10-voa7.html>.
65. "Iran, IAEA Hold Second Day of Talks on Centrifuges," October 10, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-10-voa31-66696112.html>.
66. "Rice Accuses Tehran of Lying About Nuclear Program," October 12, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voafanti.com/gate/big5/author.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-12-voa25.cfm?CFID=25115166&CFTOKEN=87139822&jsessionid=7e30f42668525c3d0dd321831ea1635512a7>.
67. "Iran's Supreme Leader Urges Boycott of US-Backed Peace Conference," October 15, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-13-voa7.html>.
68. "Iran, UN Nuclear Agency Wrap Up Three Days of Talks on Centrifuges," October 15, 2007, Nuclear issue.
69. "Putin Warns Against Use of Force on Landmark Visit to Iran," October 16, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-16-voa8.html>.
70. "Media Rights Group Says Iran Among 4 Worst Nations for Press Freedom," October 17, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://payvand.com/news/07/oct/1161.html>.
71. "US Defense Secretary Calls for Focused Pressure on Iran," October 16, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voafanti.com/gate/big5/author.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-16-voa4.cfm?CFID=25115166&CFTOKEN=87139822&jsessionid=7e30f42668525c3d0dd321831ea1635512a7>.
72. "Bush Says Iran Must Be Prevented From Getting Nukes To Avoid WW III," October 18, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-18-voa2-66799542.html>.
73. "Bush and Putin Disagree on Iran," October 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voafanti.com/gate/big5/author.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-17-voa55.cfm?CFID=25115166&CFTOKEN=87139822&jsessionid=7e30f42668525c3d0dd321831ea1635512a7>.

74. "US Military: Intercepted Afghan Weapons Came From Iran," October 18, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/10/mil-071018-voa03.htm>.
75. "Iran Criticizes France for Pushing for EU Sanctions Against Tehran," October 22, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-22-voa25-66696322.html?textmode=1>.
76. "Iranian President in Armenia Seeking to Boost Ties," October 22, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-22-voa20.html>.
77. "Bush Highlights Need for Missile Defense in Europe," October 23, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-23-voa47-66520612.html>.
78. "British PM Says Britain to Seek More Sanctions Against Iran," October 23, 2007, Nuclear issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-23-voa28.html>.
79. "Iran Nuclear Negotiators to Hold Talks With EU's Solana in Rome," October 23, 2007, Nuclear issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-23-voa16.html>.
80. "EU, Iran Hold Nuclear Talks," October 24, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/oct/1237.html>.
81. "US Announces New Sanctions Against Iranian Military, Banks," October 24, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/oct/1250.html>.
82. "Iran: New US Sanctions 'Doomed to Fail,'" October 26, 2007, Nuclear issue.
83. "Rice Defends New US Sanctions on Iran," October 26, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-26-voa20-66695842.html>.
84. "El Baradei: There is Time to Solve Iranian Nuke Crisis," October 28, 2007, Nuclear issue, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_14812.html.
85. "Israel to Press China for Tougher Sanctions on Iran," October 29, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-28-voa12.html>.
86. "ElBaradei Urges Iran to Open its Nuclear Records," October 29, 2007, Nuclear issue, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_14836.html.
87. "US Disappointed With Chinese, Russian Stance on New Iran Sanctions," November 2, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-02-voa57-66524477.html>.
88. "World Powers Push For Further Sanctions on Iran," November 2, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2007/iran-071102-voa02.htm>.
89. "US Defense Secretary Warns China of Threat from Iran," November 6, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1042.html>.
90. "U.S. Military in Iraq to Release 9 Iranians," November 6, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-06-voa13-66802972.html?moddate=2007-11-06>.
91. "Israeli Officials Express Alarm Over Iran's Nuclear Program," November 8, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2007/iran-071108-voa02.htm>.
92. "Bush, Sarkozy Agree on Iran," November 8, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1061.html>.

93. "Bush Warns of Increased Pressure Against Iran If Controversial Nuclear Work Continues," November 16, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-16-voa53-66698652.html?textmode=0>.
94. "US Supports Diversification in Caspian Oil Market," November 19, 2007, Regional issues, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1156.html>.
95. "Iran Agrees to New Talks With US on Improving Iraq's Security," November 20, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2007/11/iraq-071120-voa02.htm>.
96. "European Officials Say Iran Postpones European Nuclear Meeting," November 20, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-20-voa52.html>.
97. "Iran Produces Its First Nuclear Fuel Pellets," November 24, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-24-voa39.html>.
98. "US Military Blames Iranian-Backed Shi'ite Extremists of Baghdad Bombing," November 24, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-24-voa15.html>.
99. "Iran Unveils New Submarine," November 28, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-11-28-voa60-66698792.html?textmode=1>.
100. "Ahmadinejad: IAEA Report Great Victory for Iran," November 29, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2007/iran-071129-voa01.htm>.
101. "Iran's Nuclear Negotiator to Visit Moscow," December 2, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-02-voa18-66813337.html?textmode=1>.
102. "French Diplomat: World Powers to Work on New Iran Resolution," December 1, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-01-voa35-66534357.html>.
103. "UN Nuclear Chief: US Nuclear Assessment Offers Opportunity for Iran," December 5, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/a-23-2007-12-07-voa2-83134562.html?moddate=2007-12-07>.
104. "Bush Calls for Continued Pressure on Iran," December 4, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-04-voa50-66702407.html>.
105. "Newspaper: US Iran Nuclear Assessment Based on Iranian Conversations," December 6, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-06-voa51-66813057.html?moddate=2007-12-06>.
106. "Russia to Resume Iranian Nuclear Plant Construction," December 13, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-13-voa16-66700692.html?rss=middle>.
107. "US Lawmakers Urge Caution on Intelligence Report on Iran," December 13, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-13-voa1-66534557.html>.
108. "US Tells Russia Iran Still Is a Threat," December 13, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-13-voa76-66534582.html?rss=topstories>.

109. "Russia Begins Delivering Fuel to Iranian Nuclear Power Plant," December 17, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www.voanews.com/lao/archive/2007-12/2007-12-17-voa1.cfm>.
110. "Iran Protests to Azerbaijan Over Spy Trial," December 17, 2007, Regional issues, <http://payvand.com/news/07/dec/1157.html>.
111. "Bush: Iran Has No Need to Enrich Uranium," December 18, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/dec/1173.html>.
112. "Year-End Surprise on Iran's Nuclear Program Alters Political Dynamic," December 18, 2007, Nuclear issue, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_15754.html.
113. "Rice Says Differences Remain on Iran Sanctions Resolution," December 20, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-20-voa67.html>.
114. "Iranian Nuclear Plant May Be Ready By Late 2008," December 20, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://payvand.com/news/07/dec/1199.html>.
115. "US Deplores Iran's Repression of Academic Freedom," December 24, 2007, Freedom of speech, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-22-voa18.html>.
116. "VOA's Persian News Network Praised in Internet Article," December 27, 2007, Freedom of press.
117. "Iran Says First Nuclear Plant to Start in Mid-2008," December 31, 2007, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-30-voa14.html>.
118. "Media Rights Group Concerned About Health of Jailed Iranian Activist," December 31, 2007, Human rights, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-28-voa52.html>.
119. "Rice Doubts Iran Incentives Will Work," May 1, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-01-voa75.html>
120. "Major Powers Make New Incentives Offer to Iran," May 2, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-02-voa48.html>.
121. "Iran Again Rules Out Halting Nuclear Enrichment," May 5, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-05-voa14-66648242.html>.
122. "Iran: Talks With US on Security in Iraq Useless," May 5, 2008, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-05-voa48.html>.
123. "US Accuses Iran of Interfering in Afghanistan," May 6, 2008, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-06-voa51.html>.
124. "Russia Joins New UN Sanctions on Iran," May 8, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-08-voa42.html>.
125. "Saudi Arabia Blames Iran for Lebanon Violence," May 13, 2008, Terrorism, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-13-voa22.html>.
126. "IAEA Expresses 'Serious Concern' About Alleged Iranian Nuclear Studies," May 26, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-26-voa54.html>.
127. "Iran's FM Criticizes 'Mistaken Policies' of US-Led Coalition in Iraq," May 28, 2008, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-29-voa17-66750537.html>.
128. "US Says Iran's Nuke Program Could Produce Disaster," May 28, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-28-voa59.html>.

129. "New Iranian Parliament Speaker Threatens to Limit IAEA Cooperation," May 28, 2008, Nuclear issue, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-28-voa17-66646557.html>.
130. "US Raises Question of Iran Missile Modification," September 16, 2008, Security issues.
131. "CIA Director Says al-Qaida Remains Top Threat," September 17, 2008, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-09-17-voa2-66688787.html?textmode=1>.
132. "Iran Warns US Against Airspace Violation," November 7, 2008, U.S.-Iran relations, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2008/iran-081105-voa01.htm>.
133. "UN Condemns Harassment of Iranian Rights Activist," January 4, 2009, Human rights, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-04-voa2-68795547.html?rss=topstories>.
134. "Controversy Arises Over Alleged Hamas-Iran Ties," January 6, 2009, Terrorism, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-06-voa47-68761922.html>.
135. "Iran Accuses 4 of US-Backed Coup Plot," January 13, 2009, Government distortions, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-13-voa28-68667242.html?moddate=2009-01-13>.
136. "US: Iran a Major Threat to Iraq's Stability," January 14, 2009, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-14-voa35-68666947.html?rss=middle>.
137. "Petraeus Cites US-Iran 'Common Interests' on Afghanistan, Iraq," January 19, 2009, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-09-voa16-68711097.html>.

2009 Election in Iran – VOA:

1. "Ahmadinejad Win Sparks Protests in Tehran," June 13, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-13-voa16-68646807.html>
2. "Iran Detains Reformists as Election Protests Continue," June 13, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-13-voa16-68646807.html>
3. "World Reacts to Ahmadinejad Victory," June 13, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-13-voa15-68646707.html?rss=topstories>
4. "US Eyeing Reports of Voting Irregularities in Iran," June 13, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-13-voa21-68826582.html>
5. "Israel Says Iran Election Results Raise Nuclear Threat," June 13, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-13-voa17-68736902.html>
6. "US Withholds Judgment on Iran Elections," June 14, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-14-voa15-68818202.html>
7. "Iranians Take to the Streets To Protest Elections," June 15, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-15-voa60-68739407.html>.
8. "Iran Presidential Election Protests Reflect Wider Splits," June 15, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-15-voa60-68739407.html>.

9. "Iran to Recount Some Votes in Dispute Election," June 16, 2009.
10. "Iran's Council of Guardians Poised for Vote Recount," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa3-68818232.html?rss=middle>.
11. "Obama 'Troubled' by Post-Election Turmoil in Iran," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa2-68818047.html>.
12. "Iran Election Poses Dilemma for Obama Administration," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa55-68647362.html>.
13. "Obama: Demonstrators Reflect Growing Desire for Change in Iran," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa37-68739587.html?rss=politics>.
14. "Iranian Activists Rally on Twitter," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa36-68739082.html>
15. "Iranian Reformist Movements Planning More Protests," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa59-68826597.html>
16. "US Lawmakers Monitor Iran Situation," June 16, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-16-voa57-68826302.html>
17. Editorial: "Elections in Iran," June 17, 2009, www1.voanews.com/1-41-2009-06-17-voa3-84653767.htm
18. "Obama Administration Denies Interfering in Iranian Affairs," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-17-voa70-68788127.html>
19. "Tens of Thousands Join Iran Opposition Rally," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-17-voa62-68690627.html>
20. "Analysts Expect Crisis in Tehran in Iran to Continue," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-17-voa61-68647472.html>
21. "UN Nuclear Chief: Iran Wants Nuclear Weapons Technology," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-17-voa34-68691227.html>
22. "Iran Upheaval Highlights Internal Political Fissure," June 17, 2009
23. "Citizens Journalists Take on Iran's Censors," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa17-68826427.html>.
24. "Iranian Reformist Calls for Mass Rally Thursday," June 17, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-17-voa9-68694052.html>.
25. "Human Rights Groups, Media Organizations Call for Internet Freedom in Iran," June 18, 2009, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa67-68691307.html>
26. "Timeline of Events in Iran," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa59-68818207.html>.
27. "Iran Opposition Stages Massive Rally," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa38-68646742.html>
28. "Analysts See Demonstrations Bringing Fundamental Changes to Iran," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa57-68817897.html>.
29. "Keeping Iranians Informed," June 18, 2009.
30. "Demonstrators Question Iran Election Results on World's Streets," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa9-68803322.html>
31. "Day of Mourning in Tehran for Victims of Election Unrest," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa5-68788702.html>
32. "Tech-Savvy Protesters Battle Iranian Government in Cyberspace," June 18, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-18-voa44-68692372.html>.

33. "EU Leaders, US Lawmakers Raise Concerns Over Iranian Crackdown," June 19, 2009.
34. "Battle of Wills Firms Up in Iran," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa49-68826357.html>
35. "Iranian Election Results in Dispute: Long-Term Picture Clouded," June 19, 2009.
36. "Iran's Supreme Leader Warns Protesters," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa6-68788432.html>.
37. "US Congress Condemns Violence Against Demonstrators in Iran," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa53-68789227.html>
38. "White House Welcomes US Congress Condemnation of Iran Violence," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa52-68803392.html>
39. "UNHCR Concerned About Arbitrary Arrests in Iran," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa47-68818757.html>
40. "US Congress Condemns Violence Against Demonstrators in Iran," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa53-68789227.html>
41. "Iran's Supreme Leader Warns Protesters," June 19, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-19-voa6-68788432.html>
42. "Thousands of Protesters Clash with Police in Tehran," June 20, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-20-voa3-68647652.html>
43. "Iranians Use Internet, Phones to Share Protest News," June 20, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-20-voa15-68818672.html>
44. "Thousands Rally Across Globe for Iranian Protesters," June 20, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-20-voa18-68691182.html?rss=topstories>.
45. "Iranian Opposition Planning New Rally Saturday," June 20, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-20-voa2-68694012.html>
46. "Tehran Tense, Quiet After Week of Sometimes Violent Protests," June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa5-68646392.html>
47. "Reports: Iran's Larijani Calls for Opposition's Opinion to be Respected," June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa4-68646302.html>
48. "US Political Debate Unfolds Over Iran Response," June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa22-68803137.html>
49. "Obama: Iran Must Stop 'Violent and Unjust Actions,'" June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa11-68647152.html>
50. "Western Nations Deny 'Meddling' in Iran's Post-Election Violence," June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa8-68646847.html?rss=war+and+conflict>
51. "Iran TV: At Least 10 Killed in Clashes with Police," June 21, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-21-voa6-68647397.html>
52. "Special VOA Newscasts Keep Iranians Informed," June 22, 2009.
53. "Western Nations Deny Iranian Claims of Inciting Violence," June 22, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-22-voa43-68788707.html>
54. "Iranian Authorities Break Up Protests in Tehran," June 22, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-22-voa8-68645907.html>.
55. "Iranian Opposition Leader Mousavi Calls for More Protests," June 22, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-22-voa1-68803402.html>
56. "Iran's Top Electoral Body Refuses to Annul Disputed Election," June 23, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-23-voa8-68738792.html>
57. "Obama: 'Appalled, Outraged' by Iran Violence," June 23, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-23-voa10-68739842.html>

58. "Obama Condemns 'Unjust Actions' in Iran," June 23, 2009,
<http://www.payvand.com/news/09/jun/1260.html>
59. "Obama Administration Defends Response to Iranian Crisis," June 23, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-22-voa64-68646872.html>
60. "Iran Will Not Annul Election Results," June 23, 2009
61. "US Rescinds Invitations to Iranian Diplomats," June 24, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-24-voa58-68802897.html>
62. "Iran's Supreme Leader: Nation Will Not Yield to Pressure," June 24, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-24-voa4-68741277.html>.
63. Editorial: "Protests and Violence in Iran," June 25, 2009, www1.voanews.com/a-41-2009-06-25-voa1-846556267.html
64. "Iranian Government Increases Pressure on Opposition," June 25, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-25-voa6-68826507.html>
65. "US Senators Push Bill to Help Iranians Avoid Government Online," June 25, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-25-voa26-68692547.html>
66. "Amnesty Says Dozens of Journalists in Jail in Iran," June 26, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-26-voa66-68691627.html>.
67. "Obama Calls Iran Violence 'Outrageous,'" June 26, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-26-voa64-68690877.html>.
68. "Amnesty Says Dozens of Journalists in Jail in Iran," June 26, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-26-voa66-68691627.html>.
69. "Ahmadinejad Again Criticizes Obama Over Election Remarks," June 27, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-27-voa2-68788107.html>.
70. "US Says Door Remains Open for Nuclear Talks With Iran," June 28, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-28-voa24-68818617.html>.
71. "Iran Confirms Ahmadinejad Win After Partial Vote Recount," June 29, 2009,
<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-29-voa6-68692667.html>.

Articles from RFE/RL on Azerbaijan:

1. "Why Is 'Alternative' Islam Gaining Strength?" August 13, 2007, Islam, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078075.html>.⁶⁵⁴
2. "Tajik, Azerbaijani Presidents Meet In Baku," August 13, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078125.html>.
3. "U.S., Azerbaijan To Study Trans-Caspian Pipelines," August 17, 2007, Energy, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078194.html>.
4. "Iran: Iranian Ambassador To Azerbaijan Discusses Ahmadinejad's Baku Trip," August 20, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078253.html>.
5. "Baku School Board Bans Pants For Female Teachers," August 20, 2007, Women's rights.
6. "Ahmadinejad, Aliyev Underscore Cooperation In Talks," August 22, 2007, Regional issues, http://www.caucas.com/home_eng/depeches.php?idp=1796.
7. "Iranian President Wraps Up Visit To Azerbaijan," August 22, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078275.html>.
8. "EU Officials Criticize Azerbaijan's Rights Record," August 28, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078379.html>.
9. "EU: Neighborhood Policy Focuses On Economics, Not Membership," September 3, 2007, European neighborhood, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078483.html>.
10. "Top European Rights Official Starts Azerbaijan Visit," September 3, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078482.html>.
11. "EU Announces Plans To Strengthen Neighborly Relations," September 4, 2007, European neighborhood, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078472.html>.
12. "Azerbaijan Says Five Killed In Fighting Near Karabakh," September 6, 2007, Regional conflict, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078538.html>.
13. "Bush, Putin Focus On Missile Defense In Talks," September 7, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078565.html>.
14. "Azerbaijan: Showing Little Commitment To WTO," September 7, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078566.html>.
15. "Council Of Europe Raises Rights Concerns In Azerbaijan," September 10, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078575.html>.
16. "Azerbaijan: Sumgayit Becomes One Of World's Most-Polluted Cities," September 18, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078699.html>.
17. "Azerbaijan: U.S. 7 Experts Visit Qabala Radar," September 18, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078709.html>.
18. "CIS: Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan Cities Among World's Dirtiest," September 18, 2007, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078702.html>.
19. "Baku Says Use Of Radar Station Raises Security Concerns," September 21, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgroundEmbedded/1078724.html>.
20. "Baku Says Radar Issue Should Be Decided By Experts," September 21, 2007, Security issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078738.html>.
21. "Azerbaijan Urged To Release Imprisoned Journalist," September 27, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078800.html>.
22. "Russia Influence 'Bad For Corruption' In Ex-Soviet Area," September 26, 2007,

⁶⁵⁴ In the context of Azerbaijan, stories that focus on the rise of Islam are in a sense analyzing the grip of government on religious practices and other political influences.

- Government corruption, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078799.html>.
23. "THE STRUGGLE TO SHAPE ISLAM," October 1, 2007, Islam, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079051.html>.
 24. "Azerbaijan: Teachers, Doctors In Naxcivan Tend The Fields To Keep Their Jobs," October 4, 2007, Government corruption, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078862.html>.
 25. "Azerbaijan: Islamist Trial Sets Stage For Confrontation With Tehran," October 9, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078899.html>.
 26. "CIS, CSTO, GUAM ... Making Sense Of Post-Soviet Alphabet Soup," October 10, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1347660.html>.
 27. "Azerbaijan Launches Manhunt For Terror Suspect," October 15, 2007, Terrorism.
 28. "Caspian: Summit Fails To Resolve Key Question," October 16, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078963.html>.
 29. "Media Watchdog Paints Grim Picture Of CIS Press Freedoms," October 16, 2007, Freedom of Press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078970.html>.
 30. "Despite Restrictions, Foreign Investment Grows in CIS," October 17, 2007, Energy, <http://www.rferl.org/content/BackgroundEmbedded/1078974.html>.
 31. "Baku 'Prevents Major Attack' On Western Embassies," October 29, 2007, Terrorism, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079044.html>.
 32. "Armenia: Azerbaijani Politicians Mull Implications Of Ter-Petrossian Comeback," October 29, 2007, Regional conflict, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079035.html>
 33. "Central Asia Looks To Build New 'Silk Roads,'" November 3, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079073.html>.
 34. "Editor's Detention Raises Azerbaijan Media Fears," November 13, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079120.html>.
 35. "Azerbaijan: Activist Becomes First Female Political Prisoner To Die In Detention," November 29, 2007, Human rights, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079210.html>.
 36. "Azerbaijan: RFE/RL Journalist Jailed For Slandering Police," December 5, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079239.html>.
 37. "Azerbaijan: RFE/RL Journalist Freed But Faces New Charges," December 14, 2007, Freedom of Press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079249.html>.
 38. "Iran/Azerbaijan: Faith, Oil, And Power Threaten Historic 'Brotherhood,'" December 20, 2007, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1079284.html>.
 39. "Democracy Setbacks, Energy Gains, Take Toll On Press Freedom," April 29, 2008, Freedom of press, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1109654.html>.
 40. "Azerbaijan: Nuclear Cargo For Iran Remains Stuck At Border," April 30, 2008, Regional issues, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1109660.html>.
 41. "Azerbaijan: Newfound Wealth Hardens Baku's Bargaining Position On Karabakh," May 27, 2008, Regional conflict, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1144498.html>.
 42. "Azerbaijani-Russian Relations Hostage To Pragmatism," September 17, 2008, Regional issues, http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani-Russian_Relations_Hostage_To_Pragmatism/1200803.html.
 43. "Opposition Boycott, Media Restrictions In Place As Azerbaijani Election Campaign Begins," September 17, 2008, Freedom of press/opposition, http://www.rferl.org/content/Opposition_Boycott_Media_Restrictions_In_Place_As_Azerbaijani_Election_Campaign_Begins/1200699.html.

44. "Azerbaijani Presidential Election Campaign Opens," September 17, 2008, Democracy, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani Election Campaign Opens/1200756.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Election_Campaign_Opens/1200756.html).
45. "Azerbaijan Spending Less Than Others In Cleaning Oil Pollution," November 4, 2008, Misc. news, <http://www.rferl.org/archive/Azerbaijan/20081118/652/656.html>.
46. "Karabakh Peace Agreement Impossible Without U.S. Involvement," November 4, 2008, Regional conflict, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Karabakh Peace Agreement Impossible Without US Involvement/1338083.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Karabakh_Peace_Agreement_Impossible_Without_US_Involvement/1338083.html).
47. "Four Ethnic Azeris On Hunger Strike In Iranian Prison," November 5, 2008, Human rights, [http://www.rferl.org/Content/Four Ethnic Azerbaijanis On Hunger Strike In Iranian Prison/1338623.html](http://www.rferl.org/Content/Four_Ethnic_Azerbaijanis_On_Hunger_Strike_In_Iranian_Prison/1338623.html).
48. "Azerbaijan's Radio Silence," December 29, 2008, Freedom of press.
49. "Azerbaijan Bans RFE/RL, Other Foreign Radio From Airwaves," January 3, 2009, Freedom of press, http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Bans_RFERL_Other_Foreign_Radio/1364986.html.
50. "Azerbaijani Parliament Approves Referendum On Presidential Term Limit," January 3, 2009, Government control, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani Parliament Approves Referendum On Presidential Term Limit/1364057.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Parliament_Approves_Referendum_On_Presidential_Term_Limit/1364057.html).
51. "Former Soviet States Weigh Israel Ties Vs. Popular Anger," January 7, 2009, Regional issues.
52. "Iran Wants Increased Stake In Azerbaijani Gas Field," January 19, 2009, Regional issues, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Wants Increased Stake In Azerbaijani Gas Field/1370586.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Wants_Increased_Stake_In_Azerbaijani_Gas_Field/1370586.html).
53. "Azerbaijan Concerned By Russian Arms Delivery To Armenia," January 19, 2009, Regional conflict, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Former Soviet States Weigh Israel Ties Vs Popular Anger/1367402.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Former_Soviet_States_Weigh_Israel_Ties_Vs_Popular_Anger/1367402.html).
54. "Azerbaijani Family Disappears After Protesting Police Actions," January 19, 2009, Due process, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani Family Disappears After Protesting Police Actions/1370359.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Family_Disappears_After_Protesting_Police_Actions/1370359.html).
55. "Azeri Police Official Arrested For Involvement In Drugs," January 19, 2009, Misc. news, [http://www.rferl.org/Content/Azerbaijani Police Official Arrested For Involvement In Drug Trade/1369924.html](http://www.rferl.org/Content/Azerbaijani_Police_Official_Arrested_For_Involvement_In_Drug_Trade/1369924.html).
56. "Report Says Decline In Freedom Accelerates Across Former Soviet Union," January 19, 2009, Democracy, [http://www.rferl.org/Content/Decline In Freedom Accelerates Across Former Soviet Union/1369190.html](http://www.rferl.org/Content/Decline_In_Freedom_Accelerates_Across_Former_Soviet_Union/1369190.html).
57. "Azerbaijani Police Commit Elderly Protester To Psychiatric Hospital," January 19, 2009, Due Process, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani Police Commit Elderly Protester To Psychiatric Hospital/1368193.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Police_Commit_Elderly_Protester_To_Psychiatric_Hospital/1368193.html).
58. "U.S. Diplomat Seeks Progress On U.S. Broadcasts In Azerbaijan," June 12, 2009,

- Freedom of press,
[http://www.rferl.org/Content/US Diplomat Seeks Progress On US Broadcasts In Azerbaijan/1753019.html](http://www.rferl.org/Content/US_Diplomat_Seeks_Progress_On_US_Broadcasts_In_Azerbaijan/1753019.html).⁶⁵⁵
59. "Azerbaijani Students Picket Over Test Results," June 22, 2009, Misc. news, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani Students Picket Over Test Results/1760028.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Students_Picket_Over_Test_Results/1760028.html).
 60. "Russia Obtains Azerbaijani Gas In Tug-Of-War With Europe," June 29, 2009, Regional issues, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia Obtains Azerbaijani Gas In TugOfWar With Europe/1765377.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Obtains_Azerbaijani_Gas_In_TugOfWar_With_Europe/1765377.html).
 61. "Iran Recalls Baku Envoy For Talks After Peres Visit," June 29, 2009, Regional issues, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran Recalls Baku Envoy For Talks After Peres Visit/1765309.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Iran_Recalls_Baku_Envoy_For_Talks_After_Peres_Visit/1765309.html)

⁶⁵⁵ While conducting a content analysis of Iran during the 2009 elections, I also observed stories about Azerbaijan.

Articles from VOA on Azerbaijan:

1. "US Rejects Austria's Criticism of Missile Defense Plan," August 23, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-08-23-voa67.html>.
2. "US Offers New Proposal to Russia on European Missile Defense," September 12, 2007, Security issues.
3. "Russian Diplomat: Washington, Moscow No Closer on Missile Shield," September 19, 2007, Security issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-09-19-voa54-66787632.html>.
4. "Azerbaijani Authorities Say They Prevented Terrorist Attack in Baku," October 30, 2007, Terrorism.
5. "Opposition Journalist in Azerbaijan Given Extra 8 Year Prison Term," October 30, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-10-30-voa49-66800982.html?CFTOKEN=60399615&CFID=232239055>.
6. "OSCE Blasts Azerbaijan for Jailing Prominent Journalist," November 5, 2007, Freedom of press.
7. "US Supports Diversification in Caspian Oil Market," November 19, 2007, Regional issues, <http://payvand.com/news/07/nov/1156.html>.
8. "Azerbaijan Arrests Journalist for Interrogation," December 14, 2007, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2007-12-07-voa49-66812932.html?rss=politics>.
9. "Iran Protests to Azerbaijan Over Spy Trial," December 17, 2007, Regional issues, <http://payvand.com/news/07/dec/1157.html>.
10. "Experts Warn Russia Seeks Influence Over Vast Caspian Oil Reserves," Regional issues, December 25, 2007, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_15886.html.
11. "Muslims in Oil-Rich Azerbaijan Grow Increasingly Restive," December 25, 2007, Islam, http://www.51voa.com/voa_standard_english/VOA_Standard_15890.html.
12. "New Report Finds Exercise of Freedom in Former USSR Can Be Risky," May 28, 2008, Democracy, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-05-28-voa28-66647812.html>.
13. "Russia's 'Privileged' Sphere of Influence Meets Resistance," September 16, 2008, Regional issues, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2008-09-15-voa28-66760922.html?textmode=0>.
14. "Armenian, Azerbaijani Leaders Agree to Intensify Peace Talks," November 3, 2008, Regional conflict, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2008/11/mil-081102-voa01.htm>.
15. "US Regrets Azerbaijan Plan to Ban Foreign Radio Stations," December 29, 2008, Freedom of press.
16. "EU Warns Azerbaijan on International Radio Ban," January 3, 2009, Freedom of press.
17. "Azerbaijani Police Detain Opposition Activists for Radio Protest," January 19, 2009, Freedom of press, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-01-09-voa70-68794957.html?rss=politics>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Abrahamian, Ervand. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*. Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Alleyne, Mark D. *News Revolution: Political and Economic Decisions About Global Information*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Berelson, Bernard. *Content Analysis in Communications Research*. Glencoe, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1952.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Carney, Thomas F. *Content Analysis: A Technique for Systematic Inference From Communications*. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press, 1972.
- Carothers, Thomas. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington: Carnegie, 1999.
- Castells, Manuel. *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Clark IV, Asa A., Thomas F. Lynch III, and Rich Waddell, eds. *Understanding International Relations: The Value of Alternative Lenses*. McGraw-Hill, 1993.
- Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Phaltzgraff, Jr. *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. New York: Longman, 2001.
- Ellul, Jacques. *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.
- Gheissari, Ali and Vali Nasr. *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Goldstein, Judith and Robert O. Keohane. *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Heil, Jr., Alan L. *Voice of America: A History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

- Kalathil, Shanthi and Taylor C. Boas. *Open Networks, Closed Regimes: The Impact of the Internet on Authoritarian Rule*. Washington: Carnegie, 2003.
- Keohane, Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Scott, Foresman and Company, 2001.
- Kleveman, Lutz. *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*. New York: Grove Press, 2003.
- Lee, Thomas W. *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. London: Sage, 1999.
- Mackey, Sandra. *The Iranians: Persia, Islam, and the Soul of a Nation*. New York: Plume, 1996.
- Manheim, Jarol B. *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Meyer, Cord. *Facing Reality: From World Federalism to the CIA*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Michie, A. A. *Voices Through the Iron Curtain: The Radio Free Europe Story*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963.
- Nelson, Michael. *War of the Black Heaves: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- Norris, Pippa. *Digital Divide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Nye, Jr., Joseph S. *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Nye, Jr., Joseph S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
- Parta, R. Eugene. *Discovering the Hidden Listener: An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR During the Cold War*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2007.
- Price, Monroe E. *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- Puddington, Arch. *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2000.
- Rosenau, James N. *Distant Proximities: Dynamics beyond Globalization*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Russett, Bruce. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*. Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Snow, Nancy. *Information War: American Propaganda, Free Speech and Opinion Control Since 9-11*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.

- Steinmo, Sven and Kathleen Thelen. *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Traub, James. *The Freedom Agenda: Why America Must Spread Democracy (Just Not the Way George Bush Did)*. New York: Picador, 2009.
- Urban, George R. *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods For Students of Political Science*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- Wilson, James Q. *Bureaucracy: what government agencies do and why they do it*. Basic Books, Inc., 1989.
- Zakaria, Fareed. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

ARTICLES

- Richard C. Adelman and Lois M. Verbrugge, "Death Makes News: The Social Impact of Disease on Newspaper Coverage," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 2000, Vol. 41, 351.
- "Ahmadinejad: Anyone who strikes Iran will regret it," *Ha'aretz*, June 14, 2009, (Accessed June 20, 2009), <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1092669.html>.
- Allison Jr., Graham T. and Robert P. Beschel, Jr. "Can the United States Promote Democracy?" *Political Science Quarterly*, 107, no. 1, (Spring, 1992).
- Allnutt, Luke. "Azerbaijan: The Struggle To Shape Islam." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 1, 2007, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1079051.html>.
- Scott L. Althaus, Jill A. Edy and Patricia F. Phalen, "Using Substitutes for Full-Text News Stories in Content Analysis: Which Text Is Best?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 45, No. 3, 707.
- Amuzegar, Jahangir. "Iran's Crumbling Revolution." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2003, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20030101faessay10221/jahangir-amuzegar/iran-s-crumbling-revolution.html>.
- Ashmos, Donde P. and George P. Huber. "The Systems Paradigm in Organization Theory:

- Correcting the Record and Suggesting the Future.” *The Academy of Management Review*, 12, no. 4, October 1987.
- Blumenstein, James F. “The Resurgence of Institutionalism.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 1., no. 1., Autumn, 1981.
- Brodsky, Lauren. “Sowing seeds of democracy in post-Soviet granite.” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 31, 2005, (Accessed December 28, 2005), <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1031/p09s01-coop.html>.
- Capon, Noel and James Hulbert. "The Sleeper Effect — An Awakening." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37 (3), Autumn 1973.
- Cole, Juan. “Stealing the Iranian Election.” *Informed Comment*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://www.juancole.com/2009/06/stealing-iranian-election.html>.
- “Content Analysis for the Voice of America: A Symposium.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Special Issue on International Communications Research, 16, No. 4.
- DePillis, Lydia. “Board to Death.” *The New Republic*, November 10, 2009, (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.tnr.com/blog/the-plank/board-death>.
- Drezner, Daniel W. “Ideas, Bureaucratic Politics, and the Crafting of Foreign Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 44, no. 4., (October 2000).
- Edelstein, David M. and Ronald R. Krebs. “Washington’s Troubling Obsession with Public Diplomacy.” *Survival* 47, no. 1, (2005).
- "Election Battles Turn Into Street Fights in Iran." *ABC News*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009), <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=7830630>.
- Esfandiari, Golnaz. “Iran: Election Results Show Anti-Ahmadinejad Vote.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 19, 2006, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1073557.html>.
- Eshman, Rob. “Muslim President: ‘Shana Tova.’” *The Jewish Journal*, September 21, 2009, (Accessed September 25, 2009), http://www.jewishjournal.com/bloggish/item/muslim_president_shana_tova_20090921/.
- Fathi, Nazila. “Candidates in Iran are screened for loyalty.” *International Herald Tribune*, March 5, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/03/05/europe/iran.php>.
- Feibleman, James and Julius W. Friend. “The Structure and Function of Organizations.” *The Philosophical Review*, 54, no. 1. (January 1945).
- Fenton, Anthony. “Bush, Obama, and the ‘Freedom Agenda.’” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, January 27, 2009, (Accessed April 15, 2010), http://www.fpif.org/articles/bush_obama_and_the_freedom_agenda.
- Finn, Helena K. “The Case for Cultural Diplomacy: Engaging Foreign Audiences.” *Foreign*

- Affairs*, November/December 2003.
- Friedman, Thomas L. "The First Law of Petropolitics." *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2006 (accessed October 1, 2008), available from:
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3426.
- Friedman, Thomas L. "Space Rangers." *The New York Times*, February 13, 2001, (Accessed April 15, 2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/13/opinion/13FRIE.html>.
- Gedmin, Jeffrey. "Boom Box U.S.A: Surrogate Broadcasting as a Tool of U.S. Soft Power." *Foreign Affairs*, Accessed October 8, 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com>.
- Gingrich, Newt. "Rogue State Department." *Foreign Policy*, July 2003, (accessed November 24, 2008), available from:
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2003/07/01/rogue_state_department.
- "Government supporters rally in Iran." *Al Jazeera*. June 16, 2009, (Accessed June 20, 2009),
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/06/2009616135112133473.html>.
- Hasanov, Zaur. "Azerbaijan News Service shuts down leaving many without reliable source." *The Spartan Daily*, December 6, 2006, Accessed April 29, 2010),
<http://media.www.thespartandaily.com/media/storage/paper852/news/2006/12/06/Opinion/Azerbaijan.News.Service.Shuts.Down.Leaving.Many.Without.Reliable.Source-2524619-page2.shtml>.
- Hayes, Stephen F. "Obama's Iran Formula: Speak timidly and don't carry a stick." *The Weekly Standard*, 15, Issue 03, October 5, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009).
<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/017/007wxlum.asp?pg=1>.
- Heil, Jr., Alan L. "2007: A Fateful Year for America's Voices?" *Arab Media & Society*, The American University of Cairo, 1, 2007, (Accessed March 17, 2010),
<http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=33>.
- Hill, Cissie Dore. "Voices of Hope: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty." *Hoover Digest*, The Hoover Institution, Accessed May 31, 2006,
<http://www.hooverdigest.org/014/dorehill.html>.
- Hoffman, David . "Beyond Public Diplomacy." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2003.
- Ismayilov, Murad. "Azerbaijani National Identity and Baku's Foreign Policy: The Current Debate." *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008.
- Janowitz, Morris. "Harold D. Lasswell's Contribution to Content Analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly*: Vol. 32, No. 4.
- Joffe, Joseph. "America the Inescapable." *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, June 8, 1997.
- Johnson, A. Ross. "Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956." (Accessed June 1, 2008), <http://www.osa.ceu.hu/>.

- Keohane, Robert O. "Ideas part-way down." *Review of International Studies*, 26, (2000).
- Mandelbaum, Michael. "Democracy Without America." *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2007.
- Moe, Terry M. "Politics and the Theory of Organization." *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, Vol. 7, Special Issue: [Papers from the Conference on the New Science of Organization, January 1991].
- Nader, Alireza. "Is Ahmadinejad in Trouble?" *The Rand Corporation*, Published by United Press International, December 17, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.rand.org/commentary/2008/12/17/UPI.html>.
- Najafov, Etibar. "Evolution of Azerbaijani Nationalism: Enlightenment, ADR, and Azerbaijanism." *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008.
- Nasr, Vali and Ray Takeyh. "The Costs of Containing Iran: Washington's Misguided New Middle East Policy." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2008, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080101faessay87106/vali-nasr-ray-takeyh/the-costs-of-containing-iran.html>.
- "New parliament, new policies?" *The Economist*, February 1, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=10740664.
- "Obama refuses to 'meddle' in Iran," June 19, 2009, (Accessed October 1, 2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8104362.stm>.
- "Poll results prompt Iran protests." *Al Jazeera English*, June 13, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/06/2009613172130303995.html>.
- "Popular Azerbaijani Website Shuts Down," (Accessed April 6, 2010), <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1496070.html>.
- Price, Monroe E. "The Market for Loyalties: Electronic media and the global competition for allegiances." *Yale Law Journal* (1994).
- Price, Monroe E. "Public Diplomacy and Transformation of International Broadcasting." *Comparative Media Law Journal*, 1, January-June 2003, (Accessed April 30, 2010), <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/409/Price.pdf>.
- Rauch, Jonathan. "Containing Iran." *The Atlantic*, July/August 2006, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200607/rauch>.
- Rev, Istvan. "Just Noise?" *Open Society Archives*, (Accessed September 10, 2007), [www.osaarchivum.org/files/2004/justnoise/Just Noise by Istvan Rev.pdf](http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/2004/justnoise/Just%20Noise%20by%20Istvan%20Rev.pdf).
- Rezaei, Ali. "Last Efforts of Iran's Reformists." *Middle East Report*, 226, Spring 2003.
- "RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service Wins Major Award for Political Coverage." Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, November 6, 2009, (Accessed November 7, 2009), http://www.rferl.org/content/rferl_press_release_Azerbaijan_AIB_award/1870952.html

- Rogin, Josh. "Iranian jamming jams up the BBG." *Foreign Policy*, February 18, 2010, (Accessed March 23, 2010), http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/02/18/iranian_jamming_jams_up_the_bbg.
- Rose, Gideon. "Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy: A Review Essay," *International Security*, 25, No. 3. (Winter, 2000-2001).
- Rugh, William A. "Broadcasting and American Diplomacy." *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal*, No. 14, (Spring/Summer 2005), June 29, 2005, (Accessed February 17, 2009), www.tbsjournal.com/rugh.html.
- Selznick, Philip. "Institutionalism 'Old' and 'New.'" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41 (1996).
- Simon, Herbert A. "Comments on the Theory of Organizations." *The American Political Science Review*, 46, no. 4. (Dec., 1952).
- Sindelar, Daisy. "Azerbaijan Bans RFE/RL, Other Foreign Radio From Airwaves." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, December 30, 2008, (Accessed April 7, 2010), http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijan_Bans_RFERL_Other_Foreign_Radio/1364986.html.
- Smircich, Linda. "Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, no 3, (1983).
- Takeyh, Ray. "Time for Détente With Iran." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007, (Accessed January 5, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070301faessay86202/ray-takeyh/time-for-detente-with-iran.html>.
- Tarock, Adam. "The Muzzling of the Liberal Press in Iran." *Third World Quarterly*, 22, No. 4, 2001.
- Tavernise, Sabrina. "European observer denounces Azeri presidential election." *The New York Times*, October 16, 2008.
- Thomas, Gary. "Iran Elections: A Litmus Test for Ahmadinejad?" *Voice of America*, March 12, 2008, (Accessed December 28, 2008), <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-03/2008-03-13-voal.cfm>.
- Traub, James. "Persuading Them." *New York Times Magazine*, November 25, 2007, accessed March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/magazine/25WWLN-lede-t.html?_r=1.
- "U.S. Calls Missile Test Provocative," *Reuters*, September 28, 2009, (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsMaps/idUSTRE58R4AI20090928>.
- Van Ham, Peter. "War, Lies and Videotape: Public Diplomacy and the USA's War on Terrorism." *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 4, (2003).
- Yusifzade, Sevinge. "A Not So Distant Model: The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic of 1918-

1920 and Baku's Post-Soviet Foreign Policy." *Azerbaijan in the World*, Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 1, 2008/

BOOK CHAPTERS

- Alieva, Leila. "International Observation Missions: Assessments of the 2005 Parliamentary Elections." In *International Election Observers in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Geopolitical Pawns or Agents of Change?*, eds. Stina Torjesen and Indra Overland. Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007.
- Arsenault, Amelia. "Public Diplomacy 2.0." In *Toward a New Public Diplomacy: Redirecting U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Philip Seib. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Blitz, Mark. "Public Diplomacy and The Private Sector." In *Public Diplomacy: USA vs. USSR*, ed. Richard F. Staar. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986.
- Keshavarzian, Arang. "Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation in Iran." In *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*, eds. Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Michele Penner Angrist. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005.
- Lynch, Marc. "Assessing the Democratizing Power of Arab Satellite TV." In *Transnational Broadcasting Studies: Satellite Broadcasting in the Arab and Islamic Worlds*, 1, (2005), The Adham Center for Television Journalism, The American University of Cairo, Egypt.
- Seyidov, Rustam. "The Post-Election Situation: Who Rules Azerbaijan?" In *International Election Observers in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Geopolitical Pawns or Agents of Change?* ed. Stina Torjesen and Indra Overland. Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007.
- Seyidov, Samad. "Democracy, Human Rights and Foreign Policy: From Winston Churchill to Heydar Aliyev." In *Azerbaijan in Global Politics: Crafting Foreign Policy*. Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 2009.
- Seyidov, Vugar. "How Gradualism Meets Commitment: Azerbaijan's Transition to Democracy." In *Azerbaijan in Global Politics: Crafting Foreign Policy*. Baku: Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, 2009.
- Robert L. Stevenson, "In Praise of Dumb Clerks: Computer Assisted Content Analysis," in *Theory, Method, and Practice in Computer Content Analysis*, ed. Mark D. West, (Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing, 2001).

WEB PUBLICATIONS

- “Azerbaijan Embassy News,” U.S. Department of State, (Accessed May 25, 2010), <http://azerbaijan.usembassy.gov/ambassador.html>.
- “Broadcasting Board of Governors fact sheet.” (Accessed March 23, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/about/documents/BBGFactSheet11-09.pdf>.
- Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Iran.” (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm#relations>.
- Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Foreign Operations Appropriated Assistance: Azerbaijan.” (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/106462.htm>.
- CIA World Factbook, Azerbaijan Country Profile. (Accessed April 29, 2010), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>.
- “Constitutional topic: Due process.” (Accessed April 5, 2010), http://www.usconstitution.net/constop_duep.html.
- InterMedia Website. (Accessed November 17, 2009), http://www.InterMedia.org/about_firm_overview.php,
- Open Society Archives website. (Accessed November 19, 2009), <http://www.osaarchivum.org/>.
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty website. “A Brief History of RFE/RL,” (Accessed November 12, 2009), <http://www.rferl.org/info/history/133.html> and “RFE/RL Frequently Asked Questions.” (Accessed November 12, 2009), <http://www.rferl.org/section/FAQ/777.html>.
- 2009 Smith-Mundt Symposium. (Accessed April 16, 2010), <http://mountainrunner.us/symposium/>.
- “USAID backgrounder on Azerbaijan/ The Freedom Support Act.” (Accessed June 1, 2009), <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp2000/eni/azerbaij.html>.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS, CONFERENCE PAPERS, STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

- “BBG Deplores Decision by Azerbaijan Authorities to Take VOA, RFE/RL and BBC Off FM and Television.” December 30, 2008, (Accessed April 7, 2010), <http://www.bbg.gov/pressroom/pressreleases-article.cfm?articleID=393>.
- Carothers, Thomas. “Democracy Promotion Under Obama: Finding a Way Forward.” *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Policy Brief 77, February 2009.

- Casey, Tom. Deputy Spokesman, U.S. Department of State. "Independent Azerbaijani Newspaper Editor Sentenced." November 1, 2007, (Accessed December 22, 2008), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/nov/94499.htm>.
- "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, Stanford University, October 13-16, 2004.
- Fitzpatrick, Kathy R. "The Collapse of American Public Diplomacy: What Diplomatic Experts Say About Rebuilding America's Image in the World – a View from the Trenches." Paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention. San Francisco, California, March 2008.
- Freedom House. "Freedom in Retreat: Is the tide turning? Findings of Freedom in the World 2008." Available at www.freedomhouse.org.
- GAO Report to Congressional Committees. United States Government Accountability Office/ "U.S. Public Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight." May 2009, GAO-09-679SP.
- "Global Unease with Major World Powers." Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007, (Accessed March 31, 2010), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256>.
- Gordon, Philip H. Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. "Strengthening the Transatlantic Alliance: An Overview of the Obama Administration's Policies in Europe." Statement before the Subcommittee on Europe of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C., June 16, 2009, (Accessed September 29, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/124870.htm>.
- Houseman, John. "Excerpts from John Houseman's Speech." *USICA World*, April 1982, 6.
- International Crisis Group. "Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War." November 14, 2007, (Accessed September 30, 2008), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5157>.
- Johnson, A. Ross. "Cold War Broadcasting: What worked and why?" McCormick Tribune Foundation – Hudson Institute Conference on International Broadcasting/Strategic Communications, 2.
- Johnson, Stephen, Helle C. Dale, and Patrick Cronin, Ph.D. "Strengthening U.S. Public Diplomacy Requires Organization, Coordination, and Strategy." *The Heritage Foundation*, August 5, 2005, (Accessed February 15, 2009), <http://author.heritage.org/Research/PublicDiplomacy/bg1875.cfm>.
- Kelly, John and Bruce Etling. "Mapping Iran's Online Public: Politics and Culture in the Persian Blogosphere." The Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, Research Publication No. 2008-01, (Accessed November 26, 2008), <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications>.
- Lord, Kristin. "The USA-World Trust: Bringing the Power of Networks to U.S. Public

- Diplomacy.” *The Brookings Institution*, Winter 2009, (Accessed March 19, 2010), http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/winter_public_diplomacy_lord.aspx.
- The National Security Strategy of the United States. (Accessed June 1, 2008), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss1.html>.
- Newsletter of the Embassy of Azerbaijan. “Azerbaijan to mark ‘Black January.’” January 16, 2009, (Accessed September 30, 2009), <http://www.azembassy.com/new/nl/2009/nl01.html>.
- NSDD 45, (Accessed November 19, 2009), <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-045.htm>.
- Reporters Without Borders. “Azerbaijan – 2006 Annual report.” Paris: Reporters Without Borders, 2007.
- Reporters Without Borders. “Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2007.” (Accessed November 25, 2008), http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025.
- Rice, Condoleezza. “Transformational Democracy.” Speech given at Georgetown University, January 18, 2006, (Accessed June 1, 2008), www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59339/htm.
- “Third Round of the U.S.–Azerbaijan Democracy and Human Rights Dialogue.” August 6, 2007, (Accessed December 20, 2008), <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/aug/90331.htm>.
- Transparency International. “Azerbaijan’s yawning gap between reforms on paper and in practice.” Berlin: Transparency International, 2007.
- U.S. Congress. Iran Freedom and Support Act of 2005. H.R. 6198, 109th Congress, 2D Session. (Accessed September 29, 2009), Available at www.govtrack.us.
- “World Public Opinion 2007.” Chicago: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2007.

FILMS

- “The Flight From Hungary.” *The News Magazine of the Screen*. Warner-Pathe News, Vol. 7, Issue 5, 1957, Accessed March 31, 2010, <http://www.osaarchivum.org/beta/digitalarchive/>.

DISSERTATIONS

- Kedzie, Christopher. “Communication and Democracy: Coincident Revolutions and the Emergent Dictators Dilemma.” *RAND Corporation Doctoral Dissertation*, 1997. (Accessed November 24, 2008), available from: www.rand.org/publications/RGSD/RGSD127/.