



The press as A diplomatic actor: Media's impact on state foreign policy agendas

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Abstract

The press has emerged as a significant non-state actor in shaping the conduct and direction of foreign policy. Through agenda-setting, framing, and the dissemination of narratives, media outlets influence public perception, political discourse, and ultimately the strategic decisions of states in the international arena. This paper examines the press as a diplomatic actor, exploring how media coverage not only reflects but actively molds foreign policy agendas. Drawing on case studies from diverse geopolitical contexts, it investigates the mechanisms through which journalists, editors, and news organizations interact with policymakers, diplomats, and the public. The study highlights both the constructive and disruptive roles of the press in international relations—ranging from fostering diplomatic understanding to exacerbating tensions. By situating the press within the broader framework of media diplomacy, the paper underscores its capacity to act as both an instrument and an independent influencer in global politics.

Keywords: Press, media diplomacy, foreign policy, agenda-setting, framing, and global politics

Introduction

Media diplomacy has played a critical role in international relations, influencing ways in which countries interact with one another through the dissemination of information and public messaging. During early beginnings, ancient and medieval times, there were messenger systems: in ancient civilizations like Greece, Rome and China, government used messengers to deliver official communications, a primitive form of media diplomacy. However, religious texts and decrees were used: Religious institutions often played a diplomatic role spreading messages across borders through religious texts and decrees.

By the 19th century, telegraphs and print media technology had come up. First, the inventor of the telegraph revolutionized communication, allowing for near instantaneous transmission of information across long distance. Print media or newspapers rose which provided a platform for governments to shape public opinion and communication with foreign audiences. However, the 20th century saw the radio emerge as a powerful tool for propaganda with governments using it to broadcast their narratives and counter enemy propaganda. The interwar period saw the establishment of state-controlled radio stations, such as the BBC in the UK, which aimed to project national values and influence international opinion.

However, media role was even more enhanced during World War II when strategic communication became propaganda war – both the allies and Axis powers invested heavily in propaganda, using radio broadcasts, films and posters to influence both domestic and international audiences. The Voice of America (V.O.A) was established in the US in 1942 to broadcast pro-allied news and propaganda abroad. Media developments was heightened during the cold war era when television was fully involved in ideological battles. The advent of TV added a new dimension to media diplomacy, with visual content becoming a key tool for influencing international opinion. This was the period when Soviet versus western media waged the cold war – marked by a media battle between the

eastern bloc led by the then Soviet Union and Western Communist Capitalist countries, each side using media to promote its ideology and undermine the other. The United States public diplomacy strategies, exemplified by the United States Information Agency (USIA), to counter Soviet influence and promote American values.

By late 20th century, Satellite television and globalization became key. The launch of CNN in 1980 introduced the concept of real-time global news coverage, affecting how governments responded to international crisis. Al-Jazeera was later established in 1996, it broke the monopoly of Western Media in the Arab World, providing a different perspective on global events. (Seib 2008)^[21].

The 21st century brought about the internet and social media technologies. Digital diplomacy: The rise of the internet and social media has transformed media diplomacy, allowing for direct communication between governments and global audiences. Social media played a crucial in the Arab spring, demonstrating the power of digital platforms in shaping political movements and diplomatic responses. However, fake news and cyber diplomacy has risen – The proliferation of misinformation and cyber threats has introduced new challenges for media diplomacy, with governments needing to address the spread of fake news and protect against cyber-attacks.

Notably, there are recent developments whereby hybrid media systems are witnessed. Modern media diplomacy involves a hybrid approach, integrating traditional media (Television, Radio, and Print) with digital platforms (social media, websites, Blogs). Governments increasingly focus on crafting strategic narrative to influence international public opinion, employing sophisticated media strategies to project power. However, there has also been a rise in state sponsored influenced operations, where governments use media to interfere in other countries' political operations, as seen in allegations of foreign interference in elections.

Finally, it can be observed that media diplomacy has evolved significantly from ancient messenger systems to modern digital platforms, reflecting changes in technology

and global politics. Its role in shaping international relations as it continues to grow, requiring ongoing adaptation to new communication tools and strategies.

Evolution of Media Diplomacy

The evolution of media diplomacy can be explained partly by changes in the international system over the last hundred years. First, European diplomacy, in which discussions between governments took place in an atmosphere of confidentiality within the formal channels of ambassadorial contacts with statesmen, evolved into democratic diplomacy, with a greater use of propaganda in diplomacy and a need for democratic governments to consult their electorates. Secondly, many new actors, both state as well as non-state ones including revolutionary groups, foreign interest groups, international organizations, and multinational companies, also use propaganda. These changes have been reflected in the structure of the Foreign Office, which departments responsible for information and cultural work.

Historically, in part, the evolution of media diplomacy may be explained by Britain's political and educational system (Cohen, 1986)^[18]. Popular enfranchisement, beginning with the 1832 Reform Act, created a greater public interest in foreign affairs. By 1851, over two thirds of men and over half of the women were able to read, and the 1870 Education Act made education available to all. The first world war, with its heavy loss of life added to this interest and politics saw a need and gain public for foreign policy and to present complex ideas about international relations in terms meaningful to the public.

However, it is obvious the evolution of media diplomacy came about through the growth of mass communications. Although William Caxton set up the first printing press in England in 1476, it was nearly a century and a half before the country had a genuine newspaper in 1621 – produced by mechanical means. The first Daily Courant appeared in 1702. Foreign news became an important area of news in the 1850s. The advent of news agencies like Reuters foreign news service and the rise of the Telegraph is when distribution of foreign news – maintaining correspondents throughout the world – French and German agencies, Havas and Wolff respectively agreed exchange news with one another.

By 1914, the Daily Telegraph had correspondents in Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg and New York. The times competed, but Reuter's emphasized speed on their reports through their own journalists who not only reported, but wrote commentaries and background articles identified with their local government especially during WWII – reporting which tended to be based on reports which had appeared in foreign newspapers or which were sent from the battlefield. Characteristically, they were highly selective, written by soldiers and then correspondents in what was constituted as "news".

The press, however, was an important source of intelligence for government officials. For example, Sir Edward Grey, as foreign secretary received a daily chippings file containing key foreign news reports which had appeared in the press. Occasionally, the press was more informative than the reports received from diplomats. When British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was established in 1922, it became a source of foreign news till 1939 when it became an "observer" in covering war news for only six hours

programme. At the end of WWII and after the 1950s, the media station turned to current affairs programmes: Interviews, investigative journalism and editing processes grew technically. By 1970s, electronic news gathering video, satellites and television became an important source of international news influencing on foreign policy.

Public Opinion

The media had started to have great influence on foreign policy especially in the period towards the outbreak of the First World War. When Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, advocated for the strengthening of the Anglo-Russian Agreement into an alliance, the foreign secretary, Grey, overruled him arguing that public opinion would not accept it. At the same time – during the pre-war years, he again overruled a proposal to strengthen relations with France on the same, sighting public opinion would oppose it. These were cases when the media influenced the policy makers regarding the future policy options.

The media however had contributed to changing an existing decision. A proposal by the British Government to participate with Germany in the financing of the Baghdad Railway had to be abandoned because cooperation with Germany was unpopular amongst backbenchers at Westminster and with public opinion. When the British foreign secretary, Lord John Russell, returned from negotiations in Vienna terminating the Crimean war, the terms had leaked out and in the face of considerable parliamentary disapproval, he resigned and the Prime-Minister abandoned the proposed treaty. That was how public reaction created pressure on the political leadership class and state officials – politicians were led by the public and the media.

However, the said communications were being followed up by the press in London like Daily Mail and Daily Express, analyzing issues on the eve of the Second World War. The British media had achieved great penetration not only in the country, but also abroad. Foreign office, however, viewed this public pressure and intervention on politicians as an interference in the diplomatic process which was then conducted in secret.

Arguably, the public did not understand the complexities of external relations, whether there was a common ground between the public values and the national interest of strengthening the state's power and influence. The press advocated for open diplomacy and that the public had a right to be informed about government policy including foreign policy.

International Negotiations

The public had started to be interested and involved in international negotiations – meaning that domestic pressure wanted to follow the process up until when the final agreements are signed. Practically, greater interest by the media was key in so far as the public opinion in diplomatic operations – use of the media as the channel during the negotiations. At the same time, use of the media to leak sensitive information to the public in order to hinder or advance a particular goal

The media, however, was frequently used in inter-government communications. For example, (Cohen, 1986)^[18] during the British negotiations with Newfoundland in the winter of 1900-01, the foreign office intentionally leaked

information to the media. During negotiations with China in 1902, reports in the British press indicated that the Chinese had yielded too much. The Times was approached to help create the impression that the chances of the British government accepting the particular Chinese proposals had gone down. The use of media on either side to play to play the same game generally discouraged its use until the Second World War when journalists frequented foreign office events and news departments were officially created to coordinate affairs.

Elsewhere, as in the Greek City-States, governments had made appeals to people particularly in wartime. At the end of the 19th century, governments began to organize information programmes on a regular basis. The British governments did so after others like the French who used media advertising techniques to foreign trade. The first World War made clear the need to explain

During World War I in 1918 several countries including Britain established ministries of information. But when war ended, they were disbanded on grounds that propaganda had been a war time expedient-atrocity and conflicting promises had been the tools of the trade. However, the ministry was established during World War II with the functions of centralizing government information policy-providing news related to home publicity and allied and neutral countries. However, the ministries need for credibility, responsibility for covert propaganda among the enemy rested with political welfare organization within the foreign office.

Arguably, peace publicity became necessary among nations at the end of World War II information structure where overseas publicity information policy was determined when a central office of information where technical services as producing press material, photograph, films, magazine and books became reality. But the various tasks carried out by MFA, FCO and the nature of its relationships with BBC external service and British Council not identical today.

By the middle of the 20th Century, media diplomacy had come to its own. That the increase in foreign coverage has led to an increase in public interest in foreign policy. The increased public interest has in turn led to a felt need to build support. Various channels have emerged for this purpose, notably such media channels have the diplomatic correspondents (Cohen 1996)^[18].

Today, media is the key source of information and has become political, therefore it has a potential influence global structure and it may bring a change in structure. Although, the role of the media in international politics is positive, sometimes it is influenced and used by major actors as a source of propaganda to promote their interest and being desired changes in the prevailing systems. Like the famous term “CNN” factor during the cold war, now the international media and other information sources are being used to promote the date agenda e.g. the war against tribalism.

Ideally, media should be important and free from propaganda mechanisms (Muchangi, 2020)^[19]. It should provide balanced accounts to the people. Media educates and keeps public informed about the information about the nation and international political and other human realities taking place in daily life. International security then is a process in which international actors has shared interest in cooperating with one another in order to solve a common problem which threaten their security, possibly their very existence. The world is now more connected as media

technology is a means of communication have highly deployed these new technological developments are rapidly changing in the media landscape and driving a media revolution through communication tools such as internet and mobile media devices – creating greater access to more common media such as radio or television, especially in developing countries.

The arrival of this media revolution is also symbolized by the arrival of social media, which encourages users to interact and not just passively watch or lessen to news. To understand the issue, this guide covers the role countries have in shaping the way media behaves internationally, the use of civil society, and also the role of media when reporting to citizens on international issues and conflicts.

However, a common way of conceptualizing the role of media in international affairs is to mention the “CNN Effect”. The CNN effect as was defined (Livingstone 1997) viewed the media as:

1. A policy agenda-setting agenda.
2. An accelerant to the policy decision-making.
3. An independent to the achievement of the desired policy goals.

In other words, the term tries to capture the idea that media, because it reports directly to citizen, has an influence on government policy-making. On the other hand, one can also argue that the international news channels play a role in favour of the states (Muchangi 2020)^[19] as they contribute to the expansion of their cultural influence. For example, France 24 is an initiative of the French government and its website states that, “its mission is to cover international current events from a French perspective and to cover French values throughout the world”. Other examples of such channels in the Qatari Al-Jazeera. It demonstrates how much influence such media tools can generate-expanding culture influence in Arab-world and western countries and insert great impacts on regional diplomacy (Seib 2008)^[21].

Finally, WikiLeaks has demonstrated how much the role of media and information in international society has changed. WikiLeaks is relying on anonymous information sources around the world for the purpose of promoting transparency. However, one of its purposes, is to broadcast “Secret” files and information including diplomatic cables, is to end diplomatic secrecy for the citizens of the world. Some nation views it as dangerous to diplomatic relationships and even national security.

Research Methodology

In addition to published sources, the study is based on 25 interviews in Kenya with government officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Politicians, editors, journalists and interest group leaders, including the youth-university students and their lecturers but for reasons of confidentiality, the identity of many interviewees quoted cannot be given in this research paper. However, elite interviews have to be used in qualitative rather than quantitative terms, and extracts from interviews have been used to illustrate analytical points to validate proof of the relationship of the media and diplomacy to merge.

Through interviews and published sources, the research article is able to access key individuals and institutions which remains a challenge for us to investigate into Kenyan civil service but from observation, the examination – an

inside observer must come from State House Department of Defense or Ministry of Foreign Affairs have to have access to staff meetings and internal documents. Moving between reporters and officials is not free – each “spy” as media is viewed as suspect instead of giving their time to share thoughts and opinions. However, many of those who agreed to be interviewed gave useful advice and helpful comments that led to successfully study – indeed an encouragement inside and supportive data, otherwise it would not have been undertaken.

Media diplomacy refers to the use of media by governments, international organizations, and nongovernmental actors to influence foreign audiences and shape international relations. It integrates the tools and platforms of media with the strategic objectives of diplomacy to communicate policy goals, negotiate agreements, or influence global perception. Below is a comprehensive outline of the methodology of media diplomacy:

Strategic Communication

Defining Objectives: The first step in media diplomacy is to define clear, measurable goals. These could include promoting national interests, reshaping perceptions, or fostering international cooperation.

Target Audience Analysis: Identify the audience(s) that need to be addressed (e.g., foreign governments, international publics, specific regional groups, or global citizens). Understanding their media consumption habits and cultural context is critical for the effective crafting of messages.

Tailored Messaging: Diplomatic messages must be tailored to resonate with the target audience’s values, beliefs, and political climates. For example, addressing climate change to European audiences may differ from addressing it to Asian or American publics.

Utilizing Different Media Platforms

Traditional Media: Television, newspapers, and radio still play significant roles in international communication. Governments often use press releases, interviews, and news conferences to spread their messages.

Digital Media: Social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) and blogs offer direct access to global audiences, making them pivotal tools for media diplomacy. They are also highly interactive, enabling real-time communication and engagement.

New Media Formats: Podcasts, web videos, and online documentaries can serve as long-form content for in-depth diplomatic communication, allowing detailed explanations of policies or international agreements.

Public Diplomacy Channels: Governments often use dedicated channels, such as their official Twitter accounts, YouTube channels, or embassies' websites, to communicate with foreign publics in a structured

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Message Framing and Persuasion Techniques

Agenda Setting: Media diplomacy aims to influence the public agenda by highlighting certain issues. Governments or international organizations can direct the focus of global or regional media on specific concerns, whether they are security-related, economic, environmental, or human rights topics.

Framing: The framing of messages is crucial in shaping how an issue is perceived. The choice of language, imagery, and narratives can influence the interpretation of events. For example, presenting a conflict as a "humanitarian crisis" rather than a "political dispute" can alter the international response.

Emotional Appeals: Diplomacy via media often uses emotional appeals to garner empathy or mobilize public support for an issue. Images, stories, or soundbites that evoke emotional responses can make diplomatic communication more compelling and memorable.

Crisis Communication

Rapid Response: In times of crisis or conflict, media diplomacy helps manage the narrative quickly and effectively. Governments and organizations must respond to emerging situations with coherent, fact-based messages to avoid the spread of misinformation or negative perceptions.

Controlling the Narrative: Effective media diplomacy can help a state or actor maintain control over how a crisis is perceived by the international community. This includes counteracting misinformation, offering timely updates, and managing the flow of information.

Diplomatic Interventions: In cases of global or regional conflicts, media diplomacy can act as a platform for diplomacy itself, with spokespeople or official statements directly addressing international audiences, seeking support for peace, or condemning aggression.

Public Diplomacy and Soft Power

Cultural Diplomacy: Using media to promote a country's culture, values, and traditions, thereby fostering mutual understanding and goodwill. Public diplomacy efforts might include broadcasting cultural programs or featuring international collaborations.

Educational Diplomacy: Engaging international audiences with educational content that demonstrates a country's commitment to global cooperation, democracy, or development. This includes university partnerships, scholarships, and academic exchanges.

Sports Diplomacy: Leveraging media coverage of international sports events to strengthen bilateral ties or improve a nation's image abroad.

Engagement with International Institutions

Media Diplomacy with NGOs and IOs: Diplomatic efforts are often channeled through international organizations (like the UN, NATO, or the World Health Organization) to address global issues. Media diplomacy includes direct communication with these bodies and collaboration with NGOs, leveraging media platforms to amplify messages.

Global Summits and Conferences: Coverage of international summits and diplomatic talks is vital to media diplomacy. Media strategies are used to broadcast key moments, build international pressure, or draw attention to resolutions or agreements made during such events.

Feedback and Evaluation

Monitoring and Analytics: Measuring the effectiveness of media diplomacy efforts involves tracking media coverage, audience reactions, and public opinion. Media monitoring tools can assess the reach, tone, and impact of diplomatic messages.

Adjusting Strategies: Based on feedback, diplomatic communication strategies may need to be adjusted. If a message is misinterpreted or fails to reach the intended audience, media strategies can be tweaked, new platforms can be leveraged, or alternative framing techniques can be employed.

Building Long-Term Relations

Sustained Media Engagement: Media diplomacy is not limited to specific moments or crises but can be an ongoing effort to foster long-term international relationships. This might involve continuous media engagement through cultural exchanges, regular updates on foreign policies, and maintaining diplomatic presence in key media outlets.

Influence through Information: Beyond short-term objectives, media diplomacy helps build a lasting reputation, trust, and influence globally. Over time, this becomes a key tool for shaping geopolitical landscapes and international norms.

Key Tools in Media Diplomacy: Official Statements (Press releases, speeches), Media Briefings (Government spokespersons and diplomats), Interviews (Radio, TV, online platforms), Public Relations Campaigns, social media and Online Platforms (Twitter diplomacy, Instagram storytelling, YouTube channels), Media Collaborations (Co-productions with international media).

Media Influence on Kenyan Foreign Policy

The media has in the recent history especially towards the end of the cold war has been a key factor in the formation and exercise of foreign policy by states. The media can

influence decision making as well as set the environmental conditions that states as actors consider while making foreign policies (Adan 2017) ^[5, 24]. The complex interdependence in modern day international system and the rise of non-state actors in international politics has brought forth powerful actors such as the media which influence primary interests of states in one way or another (Robinson 1999) ^[8, 26]. The media has provided an arena for contestations of political, economic and social cultural issues by states. Its coverage has surpassed the territorial limits of states and specific aspects such as the internet have revolutionized how information is collected, framed and distributed in regions and internationally (Srivastava, 2009) ^[23].

According to O'Heffeman (1991), the globalization of the media has come with domestic pressure for foreign policy action. He further opines that once the camera is present, then the pressure is there. The media globalizes issues and minority issues become heavy majority or plurality matters. Through media, more people can exert pressure which will influence foreign policy officials to swing into action to not only execute favorably but rational measures.

Initially, media role to influence matters international affairs – in influencing state action in the recent global history is evidenced by humanitarian interventions in Ethiopia (1984), Somalia (1992), Afghanistan (2021), Bosnia (1995), Libya (2019), the ongoing crisis in Sudan (2025), Gaza (2024), Ukraine (2022) conflicts that are still on. DR Congo (2025). The media has always raised questions – driving political responses and foreign policy remains a considerate academic endeavour especially having in mind the developing and developed states dichotomy (Robinson, 2002) ^[8, 26].

As earlier stated, Britain's media has been able to influence foreign policy on several occasions. For example, in 1988 bombing of a Pan American aircraft over Lockerbie, Scotland shifted Britain's foreign policy. Another media attention was the Afghanistan war where over 10,000 Britons were involved and the central focus by the media made this war a serious national affair (Harris, 2011) ^[27].

In the US, the pressure from the people has cemented not only democracy but the presence of the media – through the old and the new media, the American citizenry has influenced foreign policy as constituencies turned universal and the whole country influences concrete policy change. Notable humanitarian cases in foreign countries highlighted by the media have turned to domestic problems in the US. They have influenced relief aid – domestic pressure is highly related to the coverage time and nature of the issues. The main issues with high propensity to generate domestic pressure (O'Hefferman, 1999) ^[25] include the environment and human rights.

In Kenya, the media has been keen in addressing the policies made by the government. During the International Criminal Court cases at The Hague in the Netherlands, it saw the International and Local media focus on the country's politics and to a large extent these events have somehow shaped the country's foreign policy (Aluanga, 2013) ^[9]. According to Soroka, Mass media can, and often play a critical role in policy making – can help set agenda, which is then adopted and dealt with by politicians, policy makers, and other actors. They can change the discourse around a policy debate by framing or defining an issue using dialogue or rhetoric to persuade or dissuade the public.

However, media can establish the nature, sources and consequences of policy issues in ways that fundamentally change not just the attention paid to those issues, but the different types of policy solutions sought. Media can draw attention to the players involved in the policy process. Further to this, it can aid, abet or hinder their cause by highlighting their role in policy making. Media can also act as a conduit between governments and policies, and helping to convey public attitudes to government officials (Soroka, 2002)^[22]. The media may be an influenced player stemming from the fact that due to the vastness of the populace, it acts as the populace's lens while at the same time crediting or discrediting a given foreign policy objective (Adan, 2017)^[5, 24].

According to Omolo (2009)^[17], foreign policy begins where domestic policy ends, and both aim at preserving national security, which is a vital national interest. "Kenya foreign policy comprises the contracts, interactions, pro-actions, actions and in action that government decides to take discretely, or not to take, in order to promote, project, protect, preserve, propagate or promulgate and defend the national interests of the country concerned as well as the image and prestige of the nation on the international stage."

A state's foreign policy takes account of the relevant attitudes, actions and reactions of others whereas its domestic policy is not. In general, burdened with such considerations, it should be clear that the more the resources and instruments at the disposal of a state, the greater its potential to influence the development of the International System in a direction favourable to itself. In common parlance, the more powerful a state is, the greater its capacity to meet the objectives of its foreign policy. Foreign policy is a combination of aims and interests persuaded and defended by a given state and its rulers in relation with other states and the methods and means used by it for the achievement and defense purposes and interests. The aim and interest of a state is international relations and realized by various methods and means (Gelb, 2001)^[10].

According to kurgat (2014:2)^[11], foreign policy consists of a set of actions taken by the varying sections of the government of a state. The actions are taken with reference to other bodies acting on the international stage, of which usually the most important as other states, but which include among other actors at the international stage, supranational, and transnational groups, and occasionally individuals. It is a term that refers to a state's international goals, its strategies and means to achieve those goals.

(Maumo, 2009)^[12] writes that Kenya's foreign policy can only be discussed in the context of its post – independence period when the country was free from colonial rule. The country's foreign policy at the time was guided by principles that include vigilant safeguarding of national interests, maintenance of independence, collaboration to foster and promote African unity, work for international peace and peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states and good neighborliness.

However, after independence, the need for political and economic development as well as national security over her foreign policy especially in the early years following the path she took. Owing to the control of capital in foreign hands, Kenya could not pursue a radical foreign policy say as Tanzania during that period. This was because in the assessment government then, Kenya could not sustain such

an "irresponsible" foreign policy if she was to maintain and attract foreign capital (Krishna, 2010)^[15]. It is said that this made Kenya to hold relatively moderate views on international events. Professor Howell in his 1969 analysis of Kenya's foreign policy points out sub-regional, regional and international political concerns which were domestic concerns but heavily influenced the way Kenya behaved internationally (Elias, 2012)^[6, 14].

Still, we as scholars have to perform multi-disciplinary research on diplomatic studies and media diplomacy knowledge – what the subject entails in general. Media and diplomacy are two different types of communication that run along different paths because diplomacy involves confidential talks between countries through formal channels, announcements and attitudes, while the media informs the general public about worldwide developments. Media diplomacy refers to the role of the media in international relations and international communications. Media diplomacy addresses how the media connects policymakers to foreign governments and people. This includes the media as a channel for transmitting the diplomatic narrative from one state actor to another and for audiences to achieve particular goals.

Media diplomacy, however can also be defined as the political use of the media to communicate messages and attitude to international state and non-state actors to forge an agreement. The role of the media in diplomacy has grown to be a significant tool of foreign policy, and that is why journalists are participating in diplomatic activities and procedures worldwide more regularly and intensely. So, media diplomacy is the use of the media by government representatives to interact with both state and non-state actors. However, the media can influence diplomacy in many different ways. It serves as a tool for journalists and policy makers as independent actors because with the necessary information, media diplomacy is the role of media in diplomacy.

Naveh (2002)^[13] constructed a theoretical framework for describing the role of media in foreign policy by the fact that it is part of the environment in which foreign policy is made. His description of the complex process suggests that when an international event occurs, leaders become aware through the media (input process), information is then processed via various image components, which sets the formulating process in motion, media personnel and other professionals are involved in the process as officials consult for advice. When policy is being formulated (output phase) leaders consider the media environment (both national and international) in the decision itself.

However, the media has put politicians under more pressure than ever before to respond quickly to news report that by the immediacy are frequently inaccurate, fragmenting, and devoid of context. While quick diplomatic communication can lead to policy blunders, it can also help decision-makers handle a crisis. Global television coverage at times serves as a real-time information source on situations that can call for swift action, which could significantly impact the result.

An example was when the August 1991 Russian coup attempt was being covered live on CNN, Bush believed that the government of Gorbachev had the potential to survive. When he spoke out in favour of the democratic forces in Moscow at the news conference, his words would spread much more quickly than by any diplomatic channel. It therefore energized the resistance by motivating the resistors

inside and outside the parliament building of Russia. So, the role of the media in diplomacy is vast, it connects foreign audiences, governments and heads of state. When a political figure talks about an issue, it should be remembered that they are speaking for a very diverse audience.

Hulme (2001) argued that on the surface, there seemed to be some possibility of media influence on either the population or the government. He also asserted that influence or pressure on the government could be achieved either directly by affecting policy makers to act as been advocated in the press or by affecting public opinion which could pressure governments to face action.

US Media Influence By the 20th Century

The 20th century experienced an information communication revolution that fundamentally changed the conduct of diplomacy especially in the formulation of foreign policy. The media can now be able to influence and achieve deserted results in international affairs. This is conceptualized as soft power which uses attraction rather than coercion. This attraction is currently effective in using communication to shift believe and affect changes acceptable to the general public. The diplomatic world has also experienced a revolution driven by persistent media which has changed diplomacy significantly. The inventions in communication and technology have enabled media outlets and especially global news channels such as CNN, BBC and sky to shape events and determine foreign policy of states in response (Eban, 1998).

However, policy makers recognize the place of media in foreign policy formulation. The global television network has immensely affected foreign policy both in general and particular humanitarian interventions. James Baker III, former U.S. Secretary of State, acknowledged that this new phenomenon was being experienced where the global communications revolution was able to drive foreign policies of states. He further acknowledged that in Iraq, Somalia, Chechnya and Rwanda, live coverage by electronic media created an imperative that influenced actions of several states. Madeleine Albright, also a former secretary of state argues that televisions have the ability to bring graphic images into the living room which heightens the pressure for engagement in international crisis with possibilities of instant disengagement when plans failed (Neuman, 1996)^[7].

The pentagon papers which, however, were published in the New York Times, the Washing Post and other papers revealed numbers that were far higher than the American casualties reported by the government. Also, far less successful battles were exposed than the officially released figures indicated. These documents were top-secret historical studies, and their exposure were expected to have future policy implications (Labor Law Talk, 2005)^[3].

However, the end of the Cold War marked the globalization of communication which changed the way mass media influenced foreign policy processes of states. These improvements displaced the old diplomatic methods due to the increase in influence of nontraditional actors, for instance the media (Ammon, 2001). The debate over which mass media serves the elite's interest or on the other hand shapes political outcomes has been avoided. Some scholars attribute enormous power to news media while another group claims the media manufactures consent for elite policy preference. Chanan (2001)^[2] argues that the media is

in the stages of foreign policy formation and political leaders consider the media's national and international aspects in policy formulation.

(Hulme, 2001) writes that the advent of the new media altered virtually every facet of society and foreign policy was not left behind. News and commentary are received from new sources in the virtual space in the form of tweets, Facebook updates and blogs among others. The new media unlike the traditional mass media experiences less control in the flow and source of information. The mass media affects foreign policy in that it achieves when it keeps the pressure on policy officials (Cohen, 1994)^[4]. These arguments assume that the more the media consistently pursues a policy idea, the more likely it would influence policy makers. In the same theory examining the quantity of editorial commentaries in national daily papers is needful in measuring mass media policy demands (Kelly, 1994).

Conclusion

This study concluded that the success of the media influence is dependent on the policies it attempts to pressure. Success is limited to the level of development of a state as developed nations media record higher rates of policy change where many issues of concern are ably to be influenced. On the other hand, developing states' media have recorded little success and, in most cases, there are not substantial reports showing policy shifts. The media may act as either a complementing or opposing force to the other influences that affect decision-making. However, in essence, the media influence depends highly on the effect it is trying to achieve.

The study, however, also found the stage of policy development determines the degree of responsiveness of a government's foreign policy issues. Public officials make the most positive initiation stage. The policy implementation stage has in the recent times witnessed an upsurge of official responses meaning public officials are more inclined to defend their policies despite the upsurge it demands for shift in policy by the media.

Therefore, media diplomacy involves different uses of media to encourage discussion and dispute settlement by officials in the international system. This concept aids in positioning diplomatic procedures based on communication and occurrences, like media events, in the appropriate context. Media events are planned jointly by two or more former rivals to persuade domestic and international public opinion in favour of mending relations or reaching accords. So, rather than defining them as public diplomacy, it would be more suitable to identify them as media diplomacy conducted in the context of conflict resolution.

Recommendation

The media has some influence on foreign policy, it affects the general public and decisionmakers to be precise. However, the difficulty remains quantifying the amount of influence of the media. IT is safer and more accurate to argue that news may serve as an impediment than an accelerant. For instance, in Somalia where the media influence on foreign policy was negative. The impact of the media especially for the military operation was immense. The media relies on information from government police and military in times of conflict. This at times ignores the directly affected victims. This study thus recommends the empowering of the public and more so media institutions on information sharing especially on issues of conflict

management as this will improve public confidence in information channeled by the media.

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