

## **Public Diplomacy: The East Asian Dimension**

**Sharko Sergey Vladimirovich**

C.Sc., Associate Professor

National Research University Higher School of Economics

School of Asian Studies

Department of Civilizational Development of the East

Russia

The modern world is in a deep crisis as evidenced by recent events at the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly the 2008 Great Recession and the 2010-2011 Arab Spring. All efforts to solve difficult international problems by “hard power” are not successfully completed – use of military force provokes a counter response. Despite the fact that the world’s financial and economic crises dispelled the myth of universality of the Western liberal-economic model, USA still continues to impose her ideology – “the new rules of the world ” – on the world.

In the light of this, Russia and China are facing the challenge -consolidating their positions in the areas of economics and politics. Nowadays, without doubts, both Russia and China are interested in the integration approach. Working out the paradigm of political and diplomatic cooperation between the two countries has become a priority. As a result, the role of public diplomacy and foreign-policy propaganda is increasing.

The following factors explain why East Asia brings more attention to public diplomacy in recent years:

In the first place, the competition in information space has highly increased. Internet and new technologies, which have changed information transfer methods, enhanced the role of cross-cultural communication in the modern world.

Secondly, influence of non-governmental organizations (NGO) has mounted. At all levels of international relations we can observe rising influence of all subjects besides a government. This influence specifically shows up in enhancing the role of NGOs, thus increasing the importance of public opinion and other forms.

In the third place, understanding of power had shifted – from “hard power” to “soft power”. Different countries have different points of view about which power to use. Russia, China and the others from the BRICS share the same views about which force to use; particularly the afore-mentioned Nations opposed the use of force in Libya at The BRICS summit in Sanya on the island of Hainan (China) on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2011. As a final result, the unanimous agreement of Russian-drafted resolution 2016 dated 28th October, 2011 by The United Nations Security Council, that canceled no-fly zone in the most eastern nation of The Maghreb was reached. The Prime Minister Russian Federation Vladimir Putin expressed his opinion on the use of “hard” force to resolve conflicts: “I would like to see to it that those nations which have accumulated weapons, would use them as a deterrent element, and not use them anywhere they want, because use of force, military force, does not lead to final reconciliation, it needs political processes”.<sup>1</sup>

Dialogue of civilizations, based not on conflict of cultures, values, but on movement to mutual understanding, collaboration and even to the process of harmonization of civilization, is becoming a major requirement of our time. The present world order that restricts the possibilities of individual civilizations causes reaction from East-Asian and other developing countries. China in particular, is taking the lead among developing countries, disputing regional and recently global positions. China’s influence in economics as well as in politics is increasing. Her swift emergence causes concern and mistrust in the world. In accordance with this, China pays considerable attention to public diplomacy.

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<sup>1</sup>Vedomosti. Putin: the Libya crisis needs in political decision.

[http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/1330812/putin\\_livijskij\\_krizis\\_nuzhdaetsya\\_v\\_politicheskom](http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/1330812/putin_livijskij_krizis_nuzhdaetsya_v_politicheskom).

The President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao noted, "it is necessary to strengthen public diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy, develop all forms of cultural exchanges with the great Chinese culture propaganda machinery".<sup>2</sup>

China's leader lays emphasis on the necessity of the development of external propaganda and public diplomacy. At the 11<sup>th</sup> China's Ambassadors and Diplomats Conference in July, 2009 he emphasized "public diplomacy is directly connected with China's image, it is diplomacy component, that in turn "enhances its competitiveness in economy and moral attractiveness of its decisions".<sup>3</sup>

In 2004, in connection with the strategy of increasing the number of English learners from 25 million to 100 million, the State Council of the People's Republic of China developed "The China's Bridge" programme, and to see its implementation through, organized Department of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban). "Institute of Confucius" is under the authority of Hanban, who is in charge of propagating Chinese Language abroad. "Institute of Confucius" headquarters is located in Beijing. The first "Institute of Confucius" was opened in November 21, 2004 in Seoul, South Korea. In 2005, Confucius classes were opened in Japan's institutes. Some of the "Institutes of Confucius" have specializations, for example: "Business Institute of Confucius" in Athens, "London Institute of Confucius" for Traditional Chinese Medicine. By the year of 2010, there were 322 "Institutes of Confucius"; and 369 Confucius Courses in 96 countries and regions. Only Russia numbers more than 20 "Institute of Confucius", including three institutes in Moscow. According to Hanban, 40 million people overseas have been learning Chinese. The Ministry of Education estimates that 100 million people overseas may be learning Chinese by 2010. HanBan is planning to establish 1,000 Confucius Institutes by 2020.<sup>4</sup>

Even though Confucius Institute is a non-governmental organization, it is connected with about 12 Government departments, Department of Foreign Affairs, The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Culture, The Ministry of Education. This organization, undoubtedly, is one of the important organ of public diplomacy.

In 1999, the former President of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zemin brought up the question of improving China's international image. There was reconsideration of the last mistakes in external propaganda. Precisely: to simply consider, that only at the cost of strengthening, the country may be respected; to pay more attention to international image- the nation's prestige, to neglect international image - reputation; to neglect propaganda; mistakenly to think, that the historical attractiveness automatically will convert China into modern attractiveness and so on. In the light of this, the Chinese Government has developed strategic goals: to enhance propaganda in Internet; to integrate external propaganda and international cultural exchange; to adjust Chinese Media; actively respond to foreign Media; to raise external competitiveness and influence in culture industry.

Conducting major cultural events abroad is the new basis for expansion of external propaganda. "Chinese culture and art festivals" in USA, Italy, Netherlands, Russia, India, and Arab Nations could be a great example.

In 2011 Chinese Government decided to set up press services at all levels of organizations of The Communist Party of China (CPC) and opened press secretary positions. This initiative began in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued in The Ministry of Defence, and now has spread to the organizations of CPC. Especially This work was enhanced alongside with the regular Congress of the Communist Party of China in order to point to the fact that the party was open to everyone and served all and sundry.

International channel in English CCTV-9, China Daily, International channel in Russian, International Radio of China, Xinhua agency and other Mass Media organs, that represent Chinese Government, are responsible for external propaganda, and they are tools of public diplomacy. Beginning with Xinhua agency, China has been setting up new international media for enhancing its influence all over the world. It needs to be noted that In China the expression "public diplomacy" includes the notion of internal propaganda as well.

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<sup>2</sup>Hu Jintao at the 11<sup>th</sup> Ambassadors and Diplomats Conference, 20.07.2009 r. [http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/200907/20/content\\_1370171.htm](http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/200907/20/content_1370171.htm).

<sup>3</sup>Nulikai tuozhongguotesegonggongwaijiaoxinjunian (Diligently develop the China model of public diplomacy). [http://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2011-02/16/content\\_1804457.htm](http://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2011-02/16/content_1804457.htm).

<sup>4</sup>Confucius Institute. [http://www.hanban.edu.cn/confuciusinstitutes/node\\_10961.htm](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/confuciusinstitutes/node_10961.htm).

Russia also has begun paying attention to public diplomacy. The Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov at the Forum of "Role of People's Diplomacy in Development of International Human Cooperation" that was held in Moscow, on December 16th, 2010 emphasized in his speech, "in the modern environment, when the number of players in international activity is tremendously increasing, public diplomacy becomes an important foreign policy resource. Meanwhile, international human cooperation is an important instrument to build international dialogue, agreement and mutual understanding between people".<sup>5</sup> Mr. Lavrov said, "new Russia" is necessary for the whole world, including the potentials of development, that can be recourse for overcoming the consequences of the global financial crisis in Europe, Asian-Pacific region and other regions, including Commonwealth of Independent States, where "integration processes are proving to be stronger".<sup>6</sup>

There already were organizations similar to public diplomacy in the USSR: Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. VOKS (Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) was an organization, created by the USSR in 1925 and officially tasked with cultural exchanges with other countries, to strengthen friendship and common understanding in the USSR and other countries. But its work was criticized by western government officials and tagged as a propaganda organization. The organization was disbanded in 1958 and replaced with another "friendship organization" called the "Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries". VOKS had branches under various names in different countries including the "America Society for Cultural Relations with Russia" founded around 1926 [1] and the Society for Polish-Soviet Friendship (TPPR) created in 1944.<sup>7</sup> It had its seat in Moscow.

The new world order demands dialogue between civilizations, moving to common understanding and even civilization approach. While China assumes responsibility as a regional leader, Russia has interests in her age-old region - Commonwealth of Independent States. Consequently, Russia built up The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation.

The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) is a federal executive body that provides government services and manages state property in the sphere of facilitating and developing international relations between the Russian Federation and member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other nations, as well as in the sphere of international humanitarian cooperation.

The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation: The agency was set up by a Presidential decree, signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on 6 September, 2008 with the aim of maintaining Russia's influence in the Commonwealth of Independent States and to foster friendly ties for the advancement of Russia's political and economic interests abroad. It unites more than the 70 friendship societies with associations and societies of foreign countries.<sup>8</sup>

In June 2007 the former Russia President Putin signed a decree establishing "the Russkiy Mir Foundation" ("Russian World Foundation"), based in Moscow. The key task of this non-governmental organization is to propagate Russian Language and literature abroad. The Foundation is a joint project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science. "In my view, we need to support the initiative put forward by the Russian linguists to create a National Russian Language Foundation, the main aim of which will be to develop the Russian Language at home, support Russian Language study programmes abroad and generally promote Russian Language and literature around the world"<sup>9</sup>, – Vladimir Putin.

Russia has been building up its public diplomacy structures in recent years. One of that has become the Russian Council for International Affairs and the other created by the current President Dmitry Medvedev's Decree in February, 2010 metamorphosed into The Gorchakov Fund.

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<sup>5</sup>New heights of public diplomacy. 17.12.2010. <http://rs.gov.ru/node/21810>.

<sup>6</sup> The speech of The Foreign Minister of Russia Lavrov at the Forum "Role of People's Diplomacy in Development of International Human Cooperation". <http://www.embrus-az.com/vneshnaya-politika/925-vystuplenie-ministra-inostrannyx-del-rossii.html>.

<sup>7</sup>Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union\\_of\\_Soviet\\_Societies\\_for\\_Friendship\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Relations\\_with\\_Foreign\\_Countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_of_Soviet_Societies_for_Friendship_and_Cultural_Relations_with_Foreign_Countries).

<sup>8</sup>Rossotrudnichestvo. <http://rs.gov.ru>.

<sup>9</sup>THE RUSSKIY MIR FOUNDATION. <http://www.ruskiymir.ru/ruskiymir/en/fund/about>.

The president's aide, Sergei Prikhodko said, "The council's main aims will be to contribute to international research in Russia, improve training for diplomats and regional specialists and to organize cooperation between Russian science organizations and foreign experts and analysis centers on international affairs". The public diplomacy fund is intended to be "an instrument for carrying out the objectives of the council". The presidential aide added, "the aim of the fund is to support public diplomacy, to contribute to the involvement of Russian non-governmental organizations in international cooperation, and to get civil society institutions more actively involved in foreign policy processes and in defending Russia's interests".

The Centre for Eastern Studies of Polish (OSW) thinks "these new bodies be tasked with supporting the activities of the official state structures in the areas of international, social and research/expert co-operation. The creation of these new institutions to promote Moscow's position abroad is a sign that the Russian authorities are increasingly resorting to soft-power measures to implement their foreign policy objectives".

Russia and China must consolidate their efforts in public diplomacy sphere, which is a novelty for both of them. China began earlier to develop this sphere, and Russia can use positive experience of East-Asian in public diplomacy.