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The Communication Factor in Greek Foreign Policy: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks into the communication factor in Greek foreign policy. It aims at identifying communication patterns and models used to convey Greek foreign policy positions abroad. It examines critically the efficacy of the applied practice and argues that the communication factor has been disregarded by foreign policy-makers, making successful promotion of Greek foreign policy problematic and hurting the image of the country internationally. The paper suggests that Greece should invest in public diplomacy, especially relationship building, in order to communicate its foreign policy more effectively.

Keywords: communication, foreign policy, public diplomacy, Greece, Turkey, FYROM.

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1. Introduction

The scope of this paper is to examine Greek foreign policy from a communication point of view. There is an underlying difficulty in analysing this aspect of foreign policy, which lies in the combined use of concepts, methodological and analytical tools from different realms, namely International Relations and Political Science on the one hand and Communication and Media on the other. Despite the association between these disciplines, certain aspects of this relationship have been inadequately explored. Gilboa points out that '*scholars studying foreign policy making often ignore the roles and effects of the media and public opinion, and their colleagues in communication often ignore foreign policy in studies of roles and effects*' (2002: 732). Similarly, Robinson observes that '*the discipline of International Relations tends to pay little attention to public opinion and media*' (2008: 138).

Moreover, diplomacy and foreign policy, though closely intertwined, are not synonymous. As Kamath notes '*foreign policy is the totality of a nation's relations with another state or other states in the International Political System. Diplomacy does not make policy. Diplomacy is one of the several instrumentalities available to a nation to secure their foreign policy objectives*' (1990: 16). The interest of this paper is not to analyse

foreign policy positions – i.e., what they are, how they are formed or why - but to see how they are communicated to specific audiences. Since diplomacy is concerned with the implementation of foreign policy, this paper will focus on diplomacy put forward to promote foreign policy positions. It becomes evident that diplomacy and communication are thoroughly interlinked since diplomacy is unthinkable without communication. '*Whenever communication ceases, the body of international politics, the process of diplomacy, is dead*' (Van Dinh 1987: 8). All the same, there is considerable dearth of literature specifically linking communication and foreign policy in the way it is developed here, i.e., on communicating foreign policy. This relationship is only partially treated in the literature and almost entirely through the lens of the influence of the media on foreign policy formation.

Public diplomacy is one result of this transformation. The concept of public diplomacy is a theoretical and analytical challenge in itself, and there is much controversy around its definition and meaning (Roberts 2007), or how it is related to traditional diplomacy or foreign policy. As the communication face of foreign policy, public diplomacy is the central concept in this paper so it is necessary to explore it in depth.

2. The Concept of Public Diplomacy

The concept of public diplomacy has been quite controversial and many definitions have been put forward. They share, however, some common elements: (a) the aim to exert influence on foreign public audiences; (b) the interaction with non-governmental actors; (c) the distinction

between old/traditional and new/public diplomacy. The idea of public diplomacy is not new, although it has re-emerged dynamically after the end of the Cold War and more countries are consciously and actively concerned about public diplomacy than was previously the case.

For the US Defence Science Board (2004) '*public diplomacy seeks through the exchange of people and ideas to build lasting relationships and receptivity to a nation's culture, values and policies. It seeks also to influence attitudes and mobilise publics in ways that support policies and interests*' (in Waller 2007: 33). Roberts defines public diplomacy as '*a governmental or governmentally funded foreign policy activity. Its objective is to create, for a given country, as positive a climate as possible among foreign publics in order to facilitate the explanation and hopefully acceptance of its foreign policy*' (2007: 45). It is important to note that public diplomacy unfolds in the course of time and that public diplomacy is a foreign policy activity primarily orchestrated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] Public diplomacy is principally occupied with managing information on a country and its foreign policy, using widely information and communication technologies. As the flow of information has increased and reaching different audiences has been immensely facilitated by the new technologies, the magnitude of public diplomacy has increased.

Mark Leonard identifies three dimensions of public diplomacy: reactive, proactive and relationship building (2002: 10). Time is the core element in this categorisation. These dimensions work jointly with three different

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[1] Many actors outside the MFA and often not controlled by it (NGOs, think tanks etc.) conduct activities which can have a 'public diplomacy effect'. However, the interest of this paper is public diplomacy funded and conducted by governmental authorities.

'spheres': political/military, economic and societal/cultural (ibid: 10), describing the type of activities in place.

Reactive public diplomacy usually responds to a special event or important piece of news. Leonard describes this first dimension of public diplomacy as 'news management' (2002: 12-13). When faced with negative press coverage, a country and its embassies should be ready to respond. In some cases such a response presupposes an agreed planned course of action, taking the form of communication crisis response plans. In terms of public diplomacy this could be achieved through interventions in the media or even campaigns already designed to be implemented when particular issues emerge. Positive coverage does not pose a problem of course, but it could definitely be taken further. Also, the frequency with which some news appears provides a good opportunity to promote foreign policy positions to foreign audience. For instance, the annual report of the European Commission on the candidate countries for accession provide an excellent opportunity to talk about Greek positions on the issues of FYROM or Turkey to European publics. The second dimension of public diplomacy - proactive public - diplomacy, unfolds in weeks or months. It takes public diplomacy a step further not only in terms of timeframe, but in terms of objectives and means. While reactive public diplomacy deals with news management, proactive public diplomacy deals with perception management. In other words, it is concerned with the image and perception of a country. Successful management of this perception is important if messages are to be communicated effectively. The image that foreign publics hold of a country can influence their reception of

messages. Unlike the first dimension of public diplomacy where action is mostly driven by events proactive public diplomacy allows all three spheres of public diplomacy to be smoothly developed. The idea here is to put down a number of messages (in the military, economic or cultural field) and play them out. Surely enough this requires coordination and forward planning, because the planned activities usually fall under the mandate and responsibility of different institutions or public services. So, cooperation in the areas of culture, tourism and trade, for example, might be needed. At this stage, public diplomacy has more lasting goals than in the first stage. While in the latter case the aim of public diplomacy is mostly to reverse any negative coverage caused by running events, in this case the aim is to disseminate specific messages reflecting the perception a country wishes to promote for itself. Leonard names this dimension of public diplomacy 'strategic communication' (ibid: 14). For example, a series of seminars on Greek and Balkan history, co-organised by the embassies in association with local institutions, could offer the opportunity to present to a large, foreign and young audience the Greek view on the Macedonian question.

Deciding on the message(s) which would support to create a desired perception of a country is of course a huge task. Powell suggests that very few, preferably one message, should capture what is wished to be promoted, since peoples' constant daily exposure to loads of information diminishes the possibility of them recalling most of the messages they receive (in Leonard 2002:15-16). The message should give the country an identity and create connotations. Therefore, it should be imaginative and repetitive. The advertising campaign of the Greek

Tourist Organisation is a case in point: the slogan changes far too often, if not every year, every two years, from 'Live your myth in Greece' (2008) to 'Kalimera' (2009) to 'You in Greece' (2010) '.

Relationship-building is the third dimension of public diplomacy (Leonard 2002: 18-21) and the most lasting one. Relationship building develops over years and aims at building contacts and creating networks of communication among peers: media, non-governmental actors, academia and so on. The purpose of relationship-building is to exchange ideas and experiences and ultimately develop a deep understanding of the country and its culture. By enhancing knowledge of a country and its people, one gets a profound insight on the mentality and behaviour of people, on their beliefs and values, and can therefore better understand their views and positions in matter of politics, economy and culture. So, even if one becomes critical about what they experience, what matters really is the exposure and involvement in a different cultural environment. Joseph Nye eloquently describes this 'learning' and intermingling procedure as 'complexifing the thinking' [of people] (in Leonard 2002: 19).

Building relationships is different from disseminating messages, which is central in proactive public diplomacy, since a relationship is a two-way process. This dimension of public diplomacy allows the three spheres to be fully developed and provides the space and time to explore and utilise several aspects of mutual and common features between the parties. Relationships are not static and it takes time and effort to maintain and cultivate them. Sharing common visions in politics, cultural and educational exchange programmes, seminars and conferences or

joint projects are means of creating bonds between states and their people.

Although the three dimensions might exist separately, they are well connected. Relationship building establishes the basis of creating any kind of connection between two parties. When the relationship has been created and has been stabilised, it has prepared the ground for receiving messages and managing individual issues. So, when the time comes to discuss matters, the background work that has been done facilitates the process.

Ultimately, public diplomacy could increase people's knowledge, familiarity and appreciation for a given country and hence increase the possibility to influence the public to develop a favourable view concerning matters in the country's interests. Public diplomacy constitutes an excellent instrument of a state's soft power (Nye 2008: 95). Nonetheless, this does not mean that public diplomacy is a 'soft' instrument, for it pursues a variety of objectives ranging from cultural and political dialogue to alliance management and conflict prevention (Melissen 2005: 14).

3. Public diplomacy and target audiences

When a country wishes to promote its foreign policy priorities, it needs to address different groups of people. One major group is foreign policy makers. The second important group is the media and the third is the general public. The last two are the focus of public diplomacy.

The general public is perhaps the most difficult audience to handle under any circumstances. It is heterogeneous, unpredictable, indifferent, opinionated, passive, active, informed, misinformed, multifaceted, diverse, mutable and, needless to say, numerous. It does remain, however, the primary target of any communication policy of a large scale. Given its inherent complexity but also the imperative need to manage it, it is necessary to learn about it. Quantitative and qualitative categories as well as second and third dimension public diplomacy activities can contribute in acquiring profound knowledge of any concerned public.

It is also essential to mention that influencing the public on foreign policy is a great challenge, because it is often burdened with fixed views and stereotypes, it is '*ill-informed […] and hence has no good judgement when it comes to foreign policy*' (Lippmann in Kamath 1990:240). As a result, the public is less susceptible to change views than knowledgeable audiences. The public is generally indifferent when on foreign policy except for landmark events, such as 9/11 or the 1999 Kardak/Imia crisis.

The media is the second major group public diplomacy aims at. Public diplomacy aims at including the media in as many activities as possible both as a target group and as means of reaching to and enhancing the knowledge of the public.

It is important to have profound knowledge of a country's media culture, namely the legal framework, possible restrictions in the freedom of the press, leading media opinion makers and so on. Undoubtedly, the Internet has affected the way the media works and the game of

information is played under new rules. News webpages, blogs and online forums create space for expression and dissemination of information and form public opinion. At the same time, the influence of traditional media remains strong in shaping public opinion. So, the media offer great opportunities to present views and opinions, engage in dialogue, give interviews, etc., as a part of a public diplomacy strategy to promote a country's views.

Moreover, the media is itself a target group; therefore public diplomacy officials need to develop personal relationship with selective, influential media representatives and journalists. Journalists covering foreign policy are a knowledgeable and experienced group, in contrast to the public. Consequently, they can be quite influential when conveying views on foreign policy. This relationship can be further supportive to public diplomacy goals, since it a) provides an immediate channel of information about the public; b) it can feed the public with targeted messages.[2]

4. Communication and foreign policy in Greece

The relation between communication and foreign policy has not been a good one in the case of Greece. As Kapopoulos eloquently puts it "*communication of foreign policy in Greece has stayed in the 1970-80s*".[3] In fact, with very few exceptions, communication has virtually never

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[2] Public diplomacy officials pursue contacts with other groups as well, such as think tanks, civil society organisations, the diaspora etc. Although they can assist considerably to the goals of public diplomacy – especially diaspora – the main focus of this paper is the public and the media, because they are a sine qua non for public diplomacy.

[3] Interview with G. Kapopoulos on 5 November 2010.

been taken into account when promotion of foreign policy was the matter[4] so even claiming that communication is to foreign policy '*incidental to the larger process*' (Nimmo and Sanders 1981: 391) could be an understatement. Quite surprisingly, the need to communicate foreign policy to foreign publics has been recognised by policy makers.

The 'no relations' between communication and foreign policy should be attributed to a number of reasons that reflect the structure, means and content of foreign policy in Greece.

As mentioned in the first part, communication policy is an instrument, a means to promote foreign policy to foreign publics. In Greece, communication has not been viewed as such, so no structures have been created to support a system of promotion of foreign policy positions through public diplomacy channels. There is no 'organisational system', as Snyder puts it (1962: 95), no system of relationships, allocation of responsibilities, scenario planning or problem solving that could build a short and long term communication policy. From a theoretical point of view, communication policy has not been acknowledged as a foreign policy instrument and therefore no attention has been paid on how to develop its possibilities. Actually, foreign policy goals have been pursued mostly, if not exclusively, through traditional diplomacy paths, i.e. government to government relations. Such approach has limited the available audience leaving out the public. It barely triggered debate and dialogue between different publics to develop a different view of foreign policy, even concerning publics of immediate interest, such as the

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[4] All nine interviewees admitted to the importance and need of communicating foreign policy to different audiences, although equally admitting that this has never been the case, with very few exceptions.

Turkish one or the one in FYROM. Any efforts are usually initiated by NGOs or think tanks, but are generally not government funded, so they cannot account for government policy. For instance, ELIAMEP (Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy), in its long history, has organised many seminars, conferences and round tables concerning Greek-Turkish relations or FYROM. But ELIAMEP has its own agenda in research and activities and does not follow the agenda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Secondly, foreign policy functions in an environment of deficient structures. Weak structures in turn support weak mechanisms. More often than not, there are no mechanisms at all. Although the broad infrastructure is there (e.g. there *is* a Ministry of Foreign Affairs), bureaucracy, which is supposed to link the different parts, is dysfunctional and ineffective. For example, there is no joint platform of cooperation between different ministries to form a common strategy for public diplomacy, each one contributing its own ideas, means and resources. The reality instead is overlapping responsibilities and individual action, without central planning.

In terms of lack or insufficiency of institutions, public diplomacy makes no exception. In most European countries and the United States the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes a division of public diplomacy and public affairs or information. In Greece, this division is called the Information and Public Diplomacy Department (Υπηρεσία Ενημέρωσης και Δημόσιας Διπλωματίας). It is headed by the Ministry's Spokesperson and its primary task is to inform the media covering diplomatic issues of the activities and progress in foreign policy issues.

The Public Diplomacy branch, to our knowledge, stays insofar inactive in terms of public diplomacy, at least as having defined and analysed in this paper. It is not engaged in any sort of research and planning of short or long term activities that would fall under any of the three dimensions of public diplomacy as elaborated earlier, though the Ministry's Spokesman suggest that there is a wish to activate the public diplomacy branch to this direction.[5] According to the head of the Department (the Ministry's Spokesperson), since 2010 the Ministry has been going through a period of restructuring and of redefining the means of foreign policy conduct, shifting the emphasis onto society, i.e. passing information directly to the people. This new 'framework of strategic communication for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' aims at making both the Ministry and the embassies more extroverted in order to better communicate the messages of the Ministry - and the Greek government as a whole – to foreign publics (Delavekouras 2010). As Delavekouras himself admits, *'this requires a change of culture in the Ministry, the embassies and the press offices. The personnel should become more open and extroverted and reach even more to the public'* (ibid).

In practice, in the Greek Embassies public diplomacy is conducted by the press officers, whose main preoccupations are a) contact with the press, and b) enhancing relations with the public. Press offices follow local and international press, create and maintain relations with the media and initiate public relations activities, such as seminars, conferences, educational programmes, promotional events and so on. Their aim is to identify features that could be cultivated to eventually bind the people

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[5] Interview with Delavekouras on 4 December 2010.

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of the countries bilaterally and enhance their understanding of each other. This is a huge task, in itself requiring resources and communication management skills that go beyond mere diplomatic training. This is hardly the training a career diplomat receives. It is, however, the training that press officers undergo.

The Secretariat General of Information and Communication is a pertinent public body designed to deal with communication policy. The Secretariat is staffed by press officers and journalists. As a highly qualified body of public officials (an exception, rather than the rule, in the civil service)[6], the press officers receive their training on communication, marketing and public diplomacy techniques at the National School of Public Administration. Abroad, they are the public face of the embassy. In Greece, they support the work of foreign media in Greece, supply other government institutions with incoming information from the press offices and produce reports based on international media coverage on issues related to Greek foreign policy matters. They do not participate, however, in any kind of communication policy planning administered either by the Secretariat, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and contrary to standard practice abroad, the press officers are not staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Cooperation between the Secretariat and the Ministry is at times close and fruitful, but there is a smouldering rivalry concerning respective

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[6] According to the 2010 census, out of the 768.009 civil servants only 10% has a master's degree ('A rabbit for IMF' [Enas lagos gia to DNT], Eleftherotypia, 19/09/2010, p.41, at http://enet.s3.amazonaws.com/2010/09/190910/index.html. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of press officers have a master's degree, while 5.6% hold a PhD as well. A 39% speaks three foreign languages (that is other than Greek) and almost 50% speak an uncommon foreign language (e.g. Finnish, Jewish, Japanese, Arab, Portuguese, etc).

competences fuelled partly by an overlap of responsibilities – at times unclearly defined – in which communication diplomacy is divided between the two institutions, hence hindering the actual implementation of any communication policy.[7] Press officers claim the realm of public diplomacy for themselves, as the sole and only body in Greek public administration trained to conduct public diplomacy, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has 'institutionalised' this with a Department. It is true that the Secretariat does have the resources (human and financial) and the means (works directly with foreign and Greek press, foreign correspondents and the Greek Press Offices located in selected Greek embassies) to build a public diplomacy strategy. Nevertheless, the present structure of the Secretariat does not permit the least the deployment of its potentials.

The Secretariat is one big paradox of the Greek administration and reflects quite powerfully the absence of vision and strategy in foreign policy and communication policy. For once, the press officers are not staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the Secretariat does not seem to be finding its place in any Greek governmental scheme. Known until 2004 as the Ministry of Press, it has shifted 'host institutions' ever since. Under the first Karamanlis administration (2004-2007), the Ministry of Press was abolished and replaced by the Secretariat General of Communication and the Secretariat General of Information.[8] From 2004 to 2009 the Secretariats fell directly under the

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[7] See the law N. 2594/2008 article 2 on the function and role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and law N. 3166/2003, article 4, on the role and function of the Press Offices of the Secretariat General of Information and Communication.

[8] N. 3242/2004 (in Greek), at http://www.et.gr/idocs-nph/search/pdfViewerForm.html?args=5C7QrtC22wGQ_kZuUB4NxXdtvSoClrL8sN_CI5tJ5zV5

authority of the Prime Minister. From January 2009, following a governmental shuffle, until October 2009 (when early national elections took place), the Secretariats moved to the Ministry of Interior. After PASOK took office in October 2009, the two Secretariats were merged into one (only one Secretary General was appointed) and restored to their former status under the Prime Minister, with the Government Spokesperson as their political head. The government reshuffle of September 2010 moved the Secretariats back to the Ministry of Interior. The reshuffle of June 2011 has placed them back under the direct authority of the Prime Minister. Moreover, in July 2011 a presidential decree has recreated two Secretariats: the Secretariat General of Information and Communication; and the Secretariat General of Mass Media. The press officers fall under the former.

When no government can decide what to do with a public body, two things are possible: a) it has no policy or plan whatsoever; b) the public institution is redundant. In this case, both are true. If there was an actual communication policy to serve foreign policy, the Secretariat General of Information and Communication would have been abolished and had its personnel reassigned.

Thirdly, as anywhere else in Greek politics, communication policy is a highly personalised state of affairs, as a result of the absence of structures and functional institutions. Clientelism often prevails over standardised processes, jeopardising continuity and consistency in the public sector. Key positions (such as the General and Special Secretary),

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instead of being occupied by career civil servants are subject to political bargaining, serving personal political ambitions rather than the public interest. The Secretary General should have profound knowledge of the Ministry and the personnel serve a vision and set goals. Unfortunately, Secretaries General change far too often to allow a Ministry to set and implement any action plan. Moreover, there is poor, if any, participation of career civil servants in the actual planning or decision making of the Ministries. When it comes to high policy levels, Ministers invite independent advisors, often with no relation or knowledge whatsoever with the work of the Ministry, leaving experienced qualified personnel misused and squandered.

Fourth, Greece has only belatedly recognised the potential benefits of communication policy. Opening up foreign policy to the public has long been a reality for countries such as the US and the UK (Cohen 1986, Roberts 2007) but has not been embedded in Greek foreign policy, despite having recognised its importance.[9] Communication policy provides an excellent opportunity for small or medium sized countries to increase their visibility in the international political arena. As Ellis recognises, *the need for communication policy in Greece is disproportional to its size. Everybody is going to listen to the US, no matter the subject, but not a small country*.[10] Greece does have foreign policy goals that would eventually need the support of even 'remote' countries, such as China. Communication policy, especially long term, can create willing listeners for the Greek views.

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[9] See footnote 6.
[10] Interview with A. Ellis on 5 November 2010.

What was underlined and heavily emphasised by all interviewees is that there is no standardised process of communicating foreign policy positions. Communication has never been on the discussion agenda of the Council of Foreign Policy, a consultative body to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[11] Communication of foreign policy, either government to government or government to public, is a matter of individuals who replace the absent institutions of the Greek state. There are no supportive mechanisms, no strategic planning and this does not change under different governments.

Having examined the link between communication and foreign policy in Greece, we will shift the focus now on specific foreign policy cases to see how communication has been played out.

5. Communication policy in foreign policy

Greek-Turkish relations and FYROM's name issue have long dominated the Greek foreign policy agenda. According to Greece, Turkey is a revisionist state whose long-term goal is to change the status quo of the Aegean Sea in its favour. FYROM's goal is irredentism against the Greek part of Macedonia, more eloquently indicated by its constitutional name ('Macedonia'), which is like red rag to a bull for Greece. In both cases, the issues between the two countries have remained essentially unresolved since their appearance. There is still no agreement on FYROM's name, nor has there been any substantial progress in the issues dividing Greece and Turkey over the Aegean (constitutional shelf,

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[11] Interview with M. Koppa on 1 November 2010.

territorial waters, airspace, demilitarisation of the Aegean islands, FIR[12]).

Supposing that Greece's long-term goal is to preserve the Aegean status quo and prevent the recognition of FYROM as Macedonia, Greek foreign policy has failed. The status quo has indeed not changed but the cost of preserving it has been high.[13] FYROM has been recognised with its constitutional name by 133 countries,[14] including many European Union member states. The United Nations has 193 members so that makes almost 70% (including all of the permanent members of the Security Council except France) of the world's nations.

Over the years Greece has gained less understanding and sympathy over its positions. This should be largely attributed to the rigid, introverted and ethnocentric approach to foreign policy. This means that Greece has been concerned with its own problems and has stayed behind in following the European and international agenda.[15] What is more, Greece has failed to make its counterparts interested in its issues because it has failed to associate these issues to the international agenda and to listen to the problems of the others.[16]

Moreover, Greece has tried to convey its position mostly, if not exclusively, through traditional diplomacy channels. Reaching out to the public opinion of the concerned countries has not been on the agenda.

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[12] Flight Information Region.

[13] Dogfights between Greek and Turkish aircrafts are almost everyday practice. This is extremely costly not only in terms of resources and money but also of lives, as many Greek soldiers have lost their lives in such fights or similar military exercises (at least three during the last decade). From 2000 to 2009 the Greek-Turkish dogfights cost 450 million Euros (http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=359294, last visited on 03/10/2010).

[14] As of December 2011, (http://www.mfa.gov.mk/?q=node/452&language=en-gb, last visited on 02/02/2012).

[15] Interview with E. Antonaros on 4 November 2010.

[16] Ibid and interview with L. Tsoukalis 19 November 2010.

The existent and on-going mistrust and cautiousness towards the respective people proves the case. The rigid, introverted and ethnocentric approach to foreign policy was reflected to the communication of it as well. Both at the government to government level and at government to public conveying foreign policy has been problematic. Presenting a case on a "good" versus a "bad guy" basis or "right" versus "wrong" has not been proven productive. Greece presents its positions disregarding the European political context and it barely listens to other countries. While sticking to its own problems, it stays aside of the contemporary debates resulting in European policies, ultimately working against its own interests: diplomacy is a multilevel give and take game where empathy is vital; what might not be interesting to you could be crucial for someone else, so listening and comprehending others is important if you want your case to be heard.[17]

For many years, Greece has been promoting its positions to its counterparts by insisting on their rightness and by reporting Turkish activities against Greece (e.g. violation of the airspace). This monotonous repetition of 'victimisation' of Greece and Turkey's aggressive activities has brought fatigue to many of Greece's counterparts, turning even the most open listeners to indifferent audience. As Antonaros puts it "*how would Greece feel if Spain talked and talked continuously about its differences with Morocco?*"[18] Moreover, despite the repetition, international public opinion has no true knowledge of Greece's differences with Turkey, or what Greek

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Interview with E. Antonaros on 4 November 2010.

positions are.[19] The absence of any kind of organised plan or activity for the promotion of Greek foreign policy positions is, as Koppa adds, the reason why "*our positions are not easily understood*".[20]

Apart from Cyprus's accession to the European Union in 2004, no major development took place in Greek-Turkish relations during the last ten years. There has been no tension and relations have remained calm. Yet, the issues still remain open. In case of a settlement, the great challenge for Greek foreign policy would not be as much how to communicate this to the international public opinion, but to the Greek one, as it will be explained later on.

Relations with FYROM are at a standstill, at times in deterioration, following nationalist outbursts from FYROM.[21] Since 1991, when nationalist sentiment in Greece over the name of the new state was extremely high, Greece has actually moved back from its original position, according to which 'Macedonia' or its derivatives would not be accepted. Now, composite names such as 'Democracy of New Macedonia' or 'North Macedonia' are the names suggested by Greece.[22]

Managing the name issue was, from a communication point of view, a disaster. Greece has had sever difficulty in conveying its position on FYROM: '*nobody is really interested when talking about Alexander the Great. This means nothing to Europeans. Instead, we could have talked*

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[19] Interview with G. Kapopoulos on 5 November 2010.
[20] Interview with M. Koppa on 1 November 2010.
[21] For example, renaming Skopje's airport to Alexander the Great airport (2006), presenting the former Greek Prime Minster, Costas Caramanlis in an SS costume in posters around Skopje (2008) or placing a twelve-meter statue of Alexander the Great in the central square in Skopje (2011).
[22] Let it be noted that such were the names that FYROM was too eager to accept in 1991.

about stability in the Balkans and helping a country with internal problems potentially precarious for the whole region".[23] The Greek position on FYROM was not easy to communicate, as it challenged the right of the country to self-determination, which of course was completely incomprehensible to foreign audiences, not to mention a breach of human rights. Perception of messages is quite delicate in communication per se, let alone when foreign policy is involved. So, it is debateable whether Greek positions became clear to foreign audiences when arguing that "Macedonia is Greek". It sounds more like irredentism towards FYROM, rather than expressing an identity, as the Greeks wanted to illustrate. It was when Greece accepted the composite name, around 2007, that she actually started having listeners to its views.[24]

From a communication's point of view, managing FYROM's bid for NATO membership in NATO's Summit in Bucharest in April 2008 is viewed as a success.[25] Foreign policy decision on de facto vetoing FYROM's membership, unless an agreement on the name was achieved, had already been announced at the official statements of the newly elected (2007) Karamanlis government. Messages from abroad pointed to FYROM becoming accepted as a member. So, Greece needed to implement a campaign that would a) inform international public opinion on its positions and b) try to influence to its favour ambivalent countries. Press offices (including the Bucharest press office), embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were successfully coordinated to provide

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[23] Interview with G. Kapopoulos 5 November 2010.
[24] Interview with A. Ellis on 5 November 2010.
[25] Almost all of the interviewees referred to it as such.

international public opinion through foreign correspondents and interviews with Greek views. Antonaros notes that one-page articles appeared in major international newspapers in Bucharest presenting Greek arguments in a clear coherent way. *"This way proved successful and won the support of Greek position by our NATO counterparts"*.[26]

The mobilisation and cooperation of all competent bodies proved that there is a mechanism in place. However, there are no institutional bonds between the bodies that would be automatically put in place when needed. Managing FYROM's bid for NATO membership was a successful, but ad hoc communication campaign.

In the course of these years, Greece has done very little to reach public opinion in other countries. And when it did, foreign audiences had no way of associating themselves to Greece's concerns. In order to support a cause one has first to understand it, associate with it, find a common ground by sharing similar concerns, needs and values. Only then it is possible to be receptive and supportive. Greece, has adopted a rather rigid, one-sided approach leaving little room for success.

6. Communicating Greek foreign policy to the Greek public

This paper is concerned with how foreign policy positions are communicated to foreign publics. However, it is worth referring to how Greek foreign policy positions are communicated to the Greek public as well. Communicating foreign policy to the Greek public is in many ways

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[26] Interview with E. Antonaros on 4 November 2010.

connected to communication abroad and thus can be an indication of why Greece has invested so little in communication abroad.

Informing national publics on foreign policy is not a matter of public diplomacy but of public affairs. In Greece, informing domestic public opinion on international matters concerning the country is a competence of the Secretariat General of Information and Communication.[27]

The rhetoric of right and wrong has been reproduced in Greece as much as it has been promoted abroad. The Greek public, especially in the case of Turkey, has been embedded with hostile images of the "Other", which remain still very strong (Millas 2001). Moreover, to the Greek public 'compromise' is a word with very negative connotations. So the public is very hostile to the idea of compromise. What is considered as a desired outcome in international affairs, in Greece it equals national treason.[28] For instance, an agreement with Turkey on the territorial waters, e.g. with selective expansion from 6 (present status) to 8 and 12 miles depending on the area, would be received by the public as a sell-out. Therefore, negotiated agreements at the highest level cannot be communicated to the Greek public.[29] Similar is the situation concerning FYROM's name. A composed name was unthinkable in Greece at the beginning of the 1990s, but it is the official position nowadays.

Foreign policy in Greece is heavily emotionalised. It suffices to say that foreign policy issues are called "national issues". The term itself is

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[27] See article 1, of Presidential Decree 258/1993.
[28] Interviews with E. Antonaros on 4 November 2010, L. Tsoukalis on 19 November 2010, T. Skylakakis on 3 November 2010.
[29] Interview with G. Kapopoulos on 5 November 2010.

problematic in communication. Popularism is deeply implanted in Greek public opinion or as Tsoukalis puts it "*in Greece, both communication and politics, is dominated by the "inland", i.e. a deeply ethnocentric part of society, read patriotic, which has poor understanding of the international environment*".[30] As a result, compromise in foreign policy is difficult to achieve and equally difficult to convey to public opinion, without significant political cost.

Both domestically and internationally, Greece has followed a rigid path in communicating its foreign policy: the ethnocentric rhetoric juxtaposed with limited outreach to international public opinion has led to ignorance and confusion about Greek foreign policy positions.

7. Suggestions for a foreign policy communication plan

This paper has tried to identify and describe the relation between communication and foreign policy in Greece. It has been shown that communicating foreign policy positions abroad has not paid much attention to international public as a target audience and communication has been largely limited to ad hoc reactions to specific events. There is no long-term communication policy, which could be realised through a three-level public diplomacy strategy. However, there are steps to be made towards enforcing communication of foreign policy abroad.

The research showed that there are no patterns or models of communicating foreign policy abroad. This does not change under

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[30] Interview with L. Tsoukalis on 19 November 2010.

different governments. It is explained by the absence of structures and functioning mechanisms that would coordinate implicated actors. What research has actually shown is that communicating foreign policy is purely a matter of luck, for it is almost exclusively depended on individuals. So it is a matter of the right person in the right place at the right time.

Communicating foreign policy more effectively means a fundamental change in the way foreign policy works today, in terms of structure, operation and content. In other words, it needs a communication strategy, i.e. an organised set of activities that would allocate responsibilities to and coordinate relevant state bodies, decide on the message of communication and the context in which foreign policy would be promoted and suggest means of action. Predominant should be the role of public diplomacy.

8. Structures

It has become evident from the analysis that Greece is in short of the required structures to effectively communicate its foreign policy.

There is immediate need for evaluation of the existing structures, resources and personnel the state has at its disposal and wishes to commit to this cause. Two are the major state bodies engaging in communication and foreign policy; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Information and Public Diplomacy Department and the Secretariat General of Information & Communication with the Press Offices located in selected European countries, the US, China, Australia and the Middle

East, which have long practiced public diplomacy[31] and at times they are better equipped and manned than the Embassies.[32]

These two bodies need to merge. Press Officers and Press Offices should move under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Department of Information and Public Diplomacy. The Secretariat General of Information and Communication will be then abolished.[33] In turn, this merge would solve practical but substantial problems such as a) overlapping of responsibilities and b) lack of central planning. Although within the competences of the Press Offices is the "*information of the international public opinion and the media on national issues and the political, economic, cultural and social developments in the country, the promotion of the positions of the country abroad and the contacts with media representatives*",[34] the Greek Embassies should, among other things, "*inform the governments of other countries and the public opinion makers and initiate actions for the promotion and support of matters of Greek interest*".[35] Moving the Secretariat under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would improve cooperation, but it is necessary to

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[31] In 2007 the Union of Press Officers created an International Communication Policy Forum with the aim to sensitise all the implicated actors and the academic community in Greece in matters of communication policy, the image of Greece and public diplomacy. It also runs a webpage for debate and reflection on public diplomacy issues and it organises relevant events and activities. See http://icp-forum.gr/wp/, last visited on 25/09/2011. The Department of Press Officers was established at the National School of Public Administration in 1993 (the School operates since 1983). Before the Press Officers started occupying the relevant posts at the Press Offices abroad, these positions were largely – if not exclusively – covered either by journalists or by politically appointed personnel, often having no training whatsoever to perform the tasks required.

[32] Interview with G. Kapopoulos on 5 November 2010.

[33] There is a large number of journalists employed by the Secretariat General of Information and Communication and the Secretariat General of Mass Media. Many of them are also employed by privately owned media. In the case of abolishing the Secretariats, they should be dismissed.

[34]See art. 4, N. 3166/2003.

[35] See art.32.1, N. 2594/1998.

establish a mechanism charged with communication policy planning. That would also allow better coordination with other relevant institutions (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Development etc.). This mechanism would develop communication policy based on the three-level dimension of public diplomacy and provide guidelines on implementation. Having identified the growing need for global outreach, establishing a mechanism for public diplomacy in the form of a committee has been put forward by the Union of Press Officers (ENAT) already in 2008.[36] ENAT recommends the creation of a Greek Strategic Committee for Public Diplomacy with executive and operating competences, saving special role for the Secretariat of Information and Communication and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Provided that the Secretariat is merged with the Ministry this body would be administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with central role of the Department of Information and Public Diplomacy. It would have a decisive rather than a mere consultative role and would be the government's advisor on public diplomacy issues.

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Information and Public Diplomacy Department, although charged with informing foreign publics on issues of foreign policy, in practice it supports the work of the Spokesperson of the Ministry (Papakonstantinou 2005: 82). The Directorate of Services Abroad and the Directorate of Public Relations of the Secretariat General of Information and Communication aim at covering this discontinuity (ibid). In a future merge of the Secretariat with the Ministry, the Department of Information and Public Diplomacy

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[36] Available (in Greek) at http://icp-forum.gr/wp/?p=284, last visited on 28/09/2011.

will be responsible for promoting Greek foreign policy to both international and domestic audience. It would be organised on two axes, one addressing the Greek public (i.e. charged with public affairs) and the second having global outreach (public diplomacy). Since informing foreign and domestic publics is the major role performed by the Secretariat General of Information and Communication[37], transferring these competences in the Department of Information and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would not pose serious problems.

Finally, the range of initiative within the Embassies should be increased. The current practice does not leave to the Embassies much room for manoeuvre, although they should be playing an important role in the promotion of foreign policy positions, because they have a much better picture of the social, economic and political being of the country of duty, as well as of the human attributes and living patterns which mould the society. Inevitably, the role of Press Officers and diplomats becomes more demanding, since they would need to engage in more initiatives, craft policy plans and become more exposed to the public. An evaluation system should be also put in place, delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to measure the utility of the practices used, identify gaps and address possible issues.

Last but not least, there is the question of funding public diplomacy activities. This should be done by cutting on the defence budget. Greece should be a 'soft power' rather than a 'hard power' state. Greece has

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[37] See article 1of PD (258/1993).

one of the highest military expenditures among NATO countries. In 2009, Greece came only second to the US, followed by Turkey.[38] Greece should reallocate these resources to public diplomacy training, cultural and business activities abroad and promotion of a positive image of the country.

9. Operation

Operation refers to *how* foreign policy will be communicated. Foreign policy is communicated both by diplomats and by press officers but to different audiences and with different means. Informing the Greek public on foreign policy is equally important.

Media outreach is central to the activities of both domestically and internationally oriented communication policies. The way foreign policy is reported in the media has immediate impact on the perception of the public about foreign policy. So it is important, especially with regards to the third level of public diplomacy (relationship building) to establish long-lasting relations with the media, both printed and electronic. Besides, certain type of media can serve as excellent means for public diplomacy: '*public diplomacy is most easily conveyed on TV and is most instantaneously seen*' (O'Heffernan 1991: 55). In the era of globalised networks, special emphasis should be put on the Internet too. When media is concerned, all three dimensions of public diplomacy become relevant and equal attention should be paid to explaining foreign policy

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[38] According to SIPRI, Greece's military expenditure in 2009, as a percentage of GDP was 3,2; the percentage for the US was 4,7 and 2,7 for Turkey (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, available at http://milexdata.sipri.org/files/?file=SIPRI+milex+data+1988-2010.xls, accessed on 25/09/11.

both to domestic and foreign media (Nye 2008: 101). Also, the media is a continuous source of information about social, economic and political reality of foreign countries that can assist public diplomacy development. Finally, face to face contact and in depth information on foreign policy positions is important in public diplomacy. It creates credibility between the parties and develops trust.

Secondly, knowing the audience is important. Exchange of information between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassies is vital. The Embassies should provide information on the culture, values and ideas of the society in question and make sincere efforts to understand it. One of the major mistakes of US public diplomacy after 9/11 was that the Bush administration did not care about learning the societies it affected with its policies (in Rashid 2009: LVI). Also, the Embassies would provide the Ministry with feedback on the image the country holds for Greece and thus identify areas where attention should be paid in order to change a possible negative view to a positive one. In addition, it should identify the views of public opinion with regards to Greek foreign policy goals.

Third, public diplomacy should target countries within Greece's interest, namely countries with which either it shares interests or it is competitive and hence it needs to know better. Leonard makes a clear distinction between 'co-operative' and 'competitive' public diplomacy and how they should be developed (2002: 22-30). Therefore, Greece is interested in what Turkey does in its own areas of foreign policy, but also in the area of culture or tourism. As Melissen put it: *'the "power of the better argument" should be considered integral to the concept of public*

diplomacy…diplomatic argumentation should be a matter of conviction, resulting from and resulting in the transference of genuine belief grounded in understanding of the issues and knowledge of the facts' (2005: 71).

Fourth, public relations activities have enormous potential as means of public diplomacy. Indeed, with regards to the second and third dimension of public diplomacy, namely the proactive public diplomacy and long-term relationship building, public relations are crucial in communicating messages, promoting agendas and reaching audiences. Fifth, public diplomacy should engage all possible actors that could contribute to promoting the positions of the country's foreign policy. Apart from the ones mentioned already (the media and the public), there is a variety of other actors that could be engaged: the academia and think tanks, selected communication experts and the Greek diaspora could all play a part, with one way or another and depending on their competences, to serve public diplomacy's goals.

10. Content

Greece has been quite 'rigid' in how it has chosen to pursue its foreign policy goals. This means that it has shown short-sightedness and has not tried to accommodate concerns of others, and thus, it often offered problems rather than solutions. This is the case both concerning relations with Turkey and the name of FYROM. Greece is also a small country and its foreign policy interests may not concern others except Greece. This is why Greece should try to accommodate its foreign policy

concerns within a larger agenda and be more flexible in its approach. Differently put, it should try to enlarge the pie rather than divide the pieces. The example of clandestine migration coming from Turkey is a case in point. It took far too long for the European Union through FRONTEX to become involved in what is in essence an EU security policy matter, but that of course was not solely EU's fault. It was also a problem of Greek foreign policy in failing to create channels of communication of the problem to European audiences.

This narrow-mindedness in foreign policy has been costly for its goals. The need to enlarge Greek foreign policy agenda and include 'low politics' issues have been long acknowledged,[39] as has the need to reach to the public. Tsoukalis describes this openness as "getting out of our shell".[40] Adopting an expanded view in certain issues of foreign policy does not mean a change in the goals of foreign policy per se. It simply means a change of approach in pursuing them; and such basically includes embracing the needs and addressing the concerns of others. It also means to actively participate in European political and economic developments. As Leonard names it, Greece should '*prove its relevance*' (2002: 52) for others to listen to what it has to say.

Finally, foreign policy messages should be conveyed in a way that is understandable to others; "*it does not matter what you say, but what the others understand*".[41] Labels such as 'national issues', when referring

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[39] For example, interview with G. Kapopoulos on 5 November 2010; interview with L. Tsoukalis on 19 November 2010 and Tsoukalis interview to International Communication Policy Forum on 19 July 2009.

[40] International communication Policy Forum interview with L. Tsoukalis on 19 July 2009. A book with the title "What if we came out of our shell?" was published in 2009.

[41] Interview with T. Skylakakis on 3 November 2010.

to foreign policy matters obstruct communication and relationship building rather than creating willing audiences. The message should be clear, consistent domestically and abroad, repetitive and put in context for people to comprehend it.

11. Conclusion

It has been the point of this paper that Greek foreign policy is in need of a communication policy in the form of public diplomacy. By engaging international audience to promote foreign policy Greece enlarges its perspectives and participates more dynamically in political and economic developments. Public diplomacy, especially through its third dimension – relationship building – can create or enhance a certain image of a country in the long term. The image and perception others have of a country play a vital role on its standing internationally. To that, the people of the country influence dramatically the country's image. As Anholt very bluntly but realistically puts it '*the people are the brand' […] the people and their education, abilities and aspirations […] ultimately make the place what it is*' (2007: 75).

Furthermore, the image of a country is subject to change; nevertheless, it is associated with certain values and ideas, which traditionally fuel its image. Greece's image since 2011 has suffered severe damage due to the financial crisis. However, its ancient history and culture, which have formed its identity and have exerted influence worldwide, will continue to be a source of invigorating the country's image.

Public diplomacy is closely bound to a country's image, policies and reputation, or as Anholt defines it (2007), its '*competitive identity*'. The use of public diplomacy lies in the power it has to affect the background reputation of a country, especially through communication campaigns and relationship building. Greece should decide on the image it wishes to promote, taking into account the image it has created - before the financial crisis – as well as the image it wishes to renounce, combined with its foreign policy priorities and objectives. At the end of the day, communication can hardly be separated from foreign policy, '*public diplomacy is as much a communication phenomenon as a political one*' (L'Etang 2009: 613). One follows the other. The problem in Greece has been that communication has not been following or in any way linked to foreign policy, therefore promoting foreign policy goals has been difficult. Building a new image for the country, for which is in great need because of the financial crisis, will eventually support its foreign policy goals. However, in order to do that strong political will and wide social acceptance is required, which are impossible to achieve without a change of culture.

Appendix

Public diplomacy and common misperceptions

Public diplomacy and public affairs: Public affairs have lately been called 'domestic public diplomacy' (Melissen 2005: 8). Public diplomacy addresses foreign audiences, while public affairs deal with informing and promoting a country's policies – of either domestic or international character – to the national public. The audience of public affairs is national rather than international. Public affairs activities are also managed by the ministry of foreign affairs.

Public diplomacy and propaganda: Propaganda is one-way communication, while public diplomacy is a two-way communication process. In public diplomacy, the target audience consciously participates in the process of communication. The third dimension of public diplomacy illustrates its difference from propaganda, since propaganda leaves no space for dialogue or relationship building on equal terms. It aims at penetrating and influencing the audience's sub-conscious level of perception, leaving no room for active thinking.

Nation branding and public diplomacy: These two concepts are better distinguished by their aim. The purpose of nation branding is to (re)shape and (re)structures the whole identity of a state (Dinnie 2008), while public diplomacy is an instrument of foreign policy aiming at gaining support of foreign policy positions by building long-term bonds between respective countries. Nation branding aims at defining a country and associating it with certain recognisable connotations (for example identifying Greece with environmental protection or peace

keeping instead of ancient history and culture). Public diplomacy and nation branding often get mixed up. If a nation manages to brand itself well and preserve this image in time, it might aid public diplomacy goals, but under no circumstances does it guarantee any success. Even if a nation remains a good brand but its foreign policy choices are viewed with mistrust, the brand will not suffice to influence the publics. It may assist in other areas, where nation branding is strong, such as tourism, trade, investment etc. but its effect on foreign policy is questionable.

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