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At a time of ambitious, almost frightening plans for public diplomacy initiatives—consider, for example, the Chinese target for 1,000 overseas Confucius Institutes by the year 2020—it is easy to get caught up in a feeling of change without precedent in the pursuit of national interests overseas. In the spirit of debate and panel discussion, it is timely to look back as well as anticipate the future, not merely as an academic exercise to explore the historical roots of public diplomacy, but in a way that makes for better decision-making in where to go next. This is the case for a possible 'superpower', India, whose emergence in international relations is accompanied by significant ventures in what is referred to as 'new' public diplomacy. The 'new' refers both to the broadening of agents at work—public diplomacy now embracing relationships between civil society actors overseas, and encouraging constant contact between non-government actors—and it sometimes also refers to the greater use of social media and instant communications in messages sent and received.
While thinking about the new, I suggest there are good reasons for recalling the old. There are three main strands of historical lineage that I think inform the idea of public diplomacy (referred to as PD hereafter). Furthermore, they are not merely remote origins from which the phenomenon has grown but they remain close to the surface of current policy formulation and implementation in relation to PD, and therefore warrant remembering. These three strands are: nineteenth-century adventures between state and non-state actors; the rise of twentieth-century state-promoted propaganda; and the emergence of internationalism as one of the most enduring bedrocks upon which new forms of diplomacy can be launched. In addition to these three strands of lineage, there are two further historical dimensions to the phenomenon that are only half-appreciated. The first of the half-appreciated is the role of history as a guide for decision-makers choosing between what works and what does not; the other is the need for what I would call a historical sensibility to accompany modern thinking about the slippery concept of national reputation.

In putting this case, I take a generous view of PD as addressing a broad audience as a means of persuading others to want the same outcomes as you want. American commentator Bruce Gregory’s elaboration seems about right. He reminds us of the action and agency in public diplomacy—the key verbs at work for state actors, he argues, are understanding cultures, attitudes and behaviour; building and managing relationships; and influencing opinions and actions to advance interests and values.$^1$ I would add two further qualities. The first is that the means of persuasion needs to be either originating from government or at least acknowledged, and somehow endorsed, by government; the second is that PD logically involves listening, in order to understand others, and respond accordingly. My perspective is that of an international historian, and my argument below is international as much as Indian in focus, but with at least suggestive attention to Indian circumstances.

There are three strands of historical lineage logically informing PD. The first is one that prevailed for most of the nineteenth century, and featured shifting and loose relationships between nation states and non-state agencies shepherding national interests in cultural
transmissions overseas. It has been suggested that the 21st-century multi-dimensional mix of state and non-state forces involved in PD is something of a return to earlier times, after an unusually state-centralised phase generated by the Second World War and then the Cold War. European examples of engagement with the United States are especially instructive. In France, the Alliance Française, founded in 1883, promoted French language and culture, and prize-winning French artists found themselves on sponsored tours to the United States at a time when popular opinion there was mostly hostile to the French. Similarly, German composers were at the forefront of the Germans' successful efforts around the turn of the century to educate overseas and especially US audiences in classical music. It was notable that, as was the case with Alliance Française, the state—the Reich government in Germany's case—stayed at arms length from these cultural missions. The same was the case with stirring academic exchange programs (the Rhodes scholarships, for example) and European business groups setting up co-operative societies with like-minded groups in trading nations. Colourful individuals could transcend colonial circumstances, as was the case with Bengali seer Swami Vivekananda, who turned up uninvited to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 and became the de facto Indian representative. An inspiring speaker, he brought Hinduism into popular consciousness, at the same time sketching its international reach in a way that captured diasporas and smoothed over divisions, and also harnessing it to the cause of Indian nationalists. As a conference gate-crasher, he did much to awaken the West to a Hindu spirituality that also harboured a morally superior form of nationalism. 2

Whether or not the state liked these developments—and they were sometimes regarded with suspicion or disdain by foreign offices and embassies—does not detract from their significance and success. In all cases mentioned, the state eventually caught up with these private initiatives, conferring acknowledgement or endorsement. In short, those who see the end of the Cold War as unlocking features of the international environment that were kept in tight check for longer than anticipated might be able to draw on the recent resurgence of a less state-dominated idea of PD in evidence of their ideas. Stretching the
argument, we might say that private agents and public—private part­nerships in nation branding or PD have their historical antecedents as much in the nineteenth as in the late twentieth or early 21st century.3

The second strand of lineage is the story of propaganda and the bureaucracy supporting it during the first 60-odd years of the twentieth century, a period in which war-inspired ideals and modern bureaucracies added a new sense of propaganda grown by and harnessed to a burgeoning national security state. While the term 'propaganda' carries some negative connotations, it also has a close relationship with PD, especially when we recall firstly that Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School at Tufts, widely regarded as the father of public diplomacy, said that he would have been comfortable with the term propaganda as something that covered his interest, but, due to propaganda's pejorative implications, was forced to search for a more neutral umbrella term.4 Others took a little longer to make the shift and it was only in the 1970s that the US government's information activities made the terminological shift to PD and left behind the previously well-used umbrella term of propaganda.5 The pejorative feel of other terms, such as information warfare, psychological operations, information campaigns—terms that have become common since the Second World War—can obscure a basic aim shared with PD. They are dimensions of a nation's attempt to cultivate public opinion to achieve that nation's aims, or put in a way that the advocates of 'soft power' would like, they are one form of persuasion orchestrated in national interests.

There are, in fact, some strong roots to the state-centred propaganda generation that pre-date the Second World War. Towards the end of the First World War a mix of revulsion at the horrors of war and excitement about communications advances in radio, telegraph and the press fed also into US President Woodrow Wilson's liberal ideas about the rule of international law and self-determination for a better, more morally based world order. From the non-state world, new and very active educational and philanthropic foundations (such as the Rockefeller and the Guggenheim) forced the Americans to adapt and to try to manage the new overseas initiatives that stemmed from sources other than Washington. From such developments come the
first exercises in what commentators call ‘cultural diplomacy’ and from this era come the stirrings of liberal internationalism, which is a theme warranting separate attention. But Woodrow Wilson’s new Committee on Public Information, 1917–19, was also an extraordinarily successful propaganda campaign towards public support for US participation in the war, involving close to 150,000 workers in various message-making and disseminating activities.6

Just as international affairs during the first half of the twentieth century were dominated by two world wars, it was war-generated bureaucracy that enabled the growth of large propaganda machines, especially during the Second World War. In simple terms, the war called for concerted efforts in the production of politically strong messages closely linked to the aims of key combatants, and these settings changed only slowly in the post-war years, partly because a new war, the Cold War, quickly replaced the last one, and partly because it would take time for new modalities and greater subtlety to grow.7 In 1959, for example, William Benton, former US Assistant Secretary of State, reflected on the recent reciprocating art exhibitions held in Moscow and New York under a US–USSR cultural exchange agreement. The US State Department, he wrote, was ‘in the propaganda business … The State Department will always be in the propaganda business and will never be in the art business. “Art” judged from the standpoint of the US Government and its Congressional appropriations, applied to overseas activities, must always be judged from its impact as propaganda—and never from its impact as art.’8 Such comments do little to divest propaganda of its pejorative connotations. Benton was, of course, a Cold War Warrior. His view exemplifies the state’s heavy-handed and manipulative information campaigns of the Cold War.

Before the Cold War, the Second World War stirred all of the bigger states into action, and the appallingly successful work of Joseph Goebbels in Nazi Germany is particularly well remembered. But, when stripped of its pejorative connotation, the links between state-directed propaganda and recent state efforts in PD are significant. Information generated by the state for consumption by those whose interests the state wishes to help shape can be imaginative and nuanced but it is seldom innocent. According to our definitions, the main difference
lies in the two-way nature of PD, the *listening* aspect implicit in Bruce Gregory’s definition and more explicit in others’ thinking. If we were always certain that PD initiatives carried with them an unwavering commitment to listen, to be very responsive to feedback, then perhaps they could escape the vestiges of propaganda; but as it is very hard to claim this for all actions that go under the heading of PD, and as assessing the effectiveness of PD according to responses is patchy and a work in progress, I think the connection with propaganda is hard to shake completely—even if there is a general aversion to the use of the term.

The third historical strand to current-day PD is the growth of internationalism, both at state and non-state levels, during the last century and early years of this one. At the supranational level, the growth of the United Nations membership and UN auxiliary bodies from the late 1940s through to the 1960s presented big, well-structured opportunities for PD. The timing of this blossoming, of course, coincided with India’s emergence as an independent state. Early ventures in post-Independence Indian PD, I suggest, were less bilateral than in the supranational context of the UN. Through the principles and ideals they championed, nations of the Non-Aligned Movement stirring in the mid-1950s, with Nehru as one of the founding fathers, reinforced the Charter of the United Nation’s aims and promoted the further development of an international community. As is well known, Indian hopes for the UN were closely entwined with hopes for post-colonial India itself, and for humanity more generally. Gandhi’s Quit India Declaration in Bombay in 1942 stressed that India’s nationalism spelt internationalism, foreseeing the need for independent India to join a world federation of free nations that would ensure disarmament, general peace and security, address the problems of injustice and inequalities, and prevent aggression and exploitation of others. Jawaharlal Nehru’s subsequent declarations and writings extended these ideas, especially during the first decade of the UN, to 1956. Other Indians helped, including the impossible-to-forget Krishna Menon, but in addition, Nehru’s sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, who headed the Indian delegation to the United Nations, and who was the first woman to be elected President of the General Assembly in 1953;
and also India’s Representative to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Hansa Mehta, who was at the time a member of India’s Constituent Assembly. This is not the place to re-examine the detail of Nehruvian hopes for ‘one worldism’, for world government collectivism to eventually replace nation-states, and for the UN to become the ‘conscience of the world’. My main purpose is to recall that this was very public, broad-based diplomacy aimed at mobilising public opinion in a number of nations. One recent reappraisal of this period suggests that we see it as one of the ‘co-mingling or intermingling’ of ideas about post-colonial India and about the post-colonial world order, terminology that is less loaded with morality and identity, and which is useful for building bridges within current debates.  

The General Assembly debates quickly took on a public affairs dimension, especially as the Non-Aligned Movement grew more organised and bold from the mid-1950s through to the 1960s. The famous Resolution 1514 in 1960, requiring the granting of immediate independence to colonial countries and peoples, was notable for more than its sweeping aside previous Assembly’s acquiescence in colonial powers waiting for social, economic and educational preparedness before conferring independence. It was also a moment of huge Non-Alignment and (then) Third World solidarity. The issue of decolonisation stayed to the fore of the General Assembly debates, and the resolution was revisited throughout the 1960s. Significantly, too, there was, in the wake of Resolution 1514 a successful mobilisation of the UN’s information bureaucracy—the UN Department of Public Information. This department became a focal point for the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 seized on the nexus between information and power, who were keen to direct messages of incomplete development and social and economic injustices at the ‘North’. Similarly, the growth in UNESCO activity provided for publicly known reform agendas that mapped easily on to Nehru’s humanism and optimism.  

Even without Nehru and without supranationalism, when we read the history of international relations by measures other than military power, strategy, alliances and mobilising for war, it enables the cultural, educational, social and other networks informing relationships
to come to the fore. This is what is sometimes referred to as ‘cultural internationalism’, and it offers a means of understanding international relations that we have sometimes overlooked. As another example, in which India also has a strong presence, it is worth recalling the post-war Colombo Plan for aid to South and South East Asia, a Commonwealth and then broader-based exercise in aid and education exchange. The Colombo Plan was a very worthy umbrella scheme under which a series of bilateral aid arrangements operated. As with many other aid initiatives, its impact was sometimes countered by fluctuations in commodity prices and by trade protection, but it generated a lot of human-interest stories.

In fact, the Colombo Plan became dependent on the generation of information for its success, and it is instructive to tease out a little of the PD detail that emerged. In practice, information generation was in the hands of a small but highly industrious group of officials. They included Indians who served as information officers, R. K. Chatterjee and B. L. Sharma, and India’s Government Registrar of Newspapers M. L. Bhardwaj, who took every opportunity to spread messages of aid, endeavour, growth and identity. A small Colombo Plan Information Unit was created in 1953–54, and by 1958 it had merged with the Bureau for Technical Co-operation, that side of the plan focusing on education, training and technical expertise. In gathering stories and photos for use in journals and pamphlets, the bureau more than made up for the lack of a permanent secretariat. In 1957, the regular meeting of members of the Colombo Plan’s Consultative Committee confirmed something of a new era in information activity. The meeting featured strong consensus that members should do more to disseminate information about the plan through established information media—the press, radio and, where possible, television. Delegates at the conference agreed that new economic development and training efforts should be accompanied by bold new measures to carry the good word about the plan’s projects further, both at home and overseas. Information was reified by members, and it became crucial to a broader-based acceptance among peoples of both donor and recipient nations, of the transformation of the Colombo Plan from post-war experiment to longer-term partnerships between the
so-called ‘old Commonwealth’ nations, Japan and the United States, on the one hand, and developing nations of South and South East Asia (noting that some countries were both donors and beneficiaries of aid).

One immediate outcome was the mobilisation of a new multinational group of cultural ambassadors, the national information officers of participating countries. Like India, Australia was prominent in occupying offices central to the information drive. Australia’s successful involvement in the Colombo Plan in an era before the end of ‘White Australia’ required its inscription in the memories of most Australians as a ‘worthy cause’, however tinged with patronising views of change in Asia. This process, in turn, owed much to the growth of an information bureaucracy born in the Second World War, and transformed in the 1950s and 1960s into one partly preoccupied with the Cold War but also one tasked with generating positive images about immigration as a vital stage of Australia’s post-war development, and images designed to build bridges of cautious engagement with the elites of post-colonial Asia. Again, it was not an innocent medium for messages about Asia—the work of Australia’s post-war Australian News and Information Bureau still bore traces of propaganda efforts inspired by wars hot and cold—but it was an important one.  

Thus, the phenomenon of wielding a new information bureaucracy was most important to those newly independent nations, including India, looking to project messages. Newly independent nations might not have inherited a war-bred propaganda bureaucracy but they quickly realised the importance of generating messages for broad audiences. Building arguments around the growth of bureaucracies may not always be exciting as new PD in the age of Twitter, but as most forms of diplomacy are fundamentally about the management of change, so do our arguments about what is new and distinctive about PD need to embrace the growth and changes in bureaucracies supporting diplomacy.

There are two further uses of history in whatever happens today: one instrumental and the other more poetic. As a historian, what I am now suggesting will sound like special pleading, but I do think historical grounding of PD is valuable. In part, such grounding serves to anchor a concept that can be over-used and can be over-burdened
with expectations. We are today experiencing a rise in diplomatic activity that coincides with a strong sense of transition in the global system (or systems) wrought by financial crises of unpredictable timing and duration, acts and recurring threats of terrorism, significant power shifts, especially in Asia and the Pacific, and implied levels of policy co-ordination on unprecedented scale across and within nations in tackling the challenges of climate change. Not surprisingly, in this context, PD, as a concept, is bound to be over-used and carry too many hopes at times.

Thus, the first, more pragmatic use of history, is as a provider of lessons. Others have begun this task. Historian–PD expert Nick Cull has started to compile historical case studies in PD, lessons of what worked and what didn't, and he calls for more, so that we end up with a 'public diplomacy playbook' as a next-phase capacity builder.\(^1\) For example, the US Shared Values campaign of 2001–02 in the wake of 9/11 addressed the wrong problem. Millions of dollars were spent on showing to the Arab world that Arab–Americans lived well in a land that was tolerant and strong on family values. The trouble was, the Arab world saw the US more according to actions in the Middle East than according to domestic conditions, and therefore did not change their views. This was after initial market testing yielded understandably positive feedback for the message in the campaign.\(^2\)

It is especially easy for political leaders to convey messages, based on a sense of history, that can enhance or detract from their nation's standing among others. History has a tendency to appear in politicians' speech in crisis-like moments. There is now considerable literature on the power of historical metaphors to influence policy-makers under stress, or lessons that we supposedly learn from previous episodes. Wars tend to be remembered, at least in their early stages, according to memories of the last wars that people were involved in.

You do not have to be particularly beholden to psychological explanations in order to assume that people who either lived through the times or who were growing up 'learning the lessons' and being exposed to this form of popular history were likely to be affected. The Second World War has a particularly strong hold on the American imagination, as was shown by the repeated references to Pearl Harbor
after the 9/11 attack in 2001. Later, in August 2007, in a less crisis-like moment, President Bush even attempted to draw a historical line between US involvement in the post-war reconstruction of Japan after 1945, and the ongoing war in Iraq. Bush likened Al-Qaeda’s attacks on the US and its allies to those of Japan in the Second World War and then reminded listeners of opposition to US-led rebuilding of the Japanese economy (successfully) after the war, inviting them to view the US occupation of Iraq in the same terms. Bush omitted the Cold War context in which Japan was restored as bulwark against the Soviet Union and China. His selective and mangled efforts were rightly criticised by historians of post-war Japan such as John Dower. 18

And the other reason for historical perspective is the value of history as compelling narrative with the longer view, and power to evoke. Effective story-telling that is linked to felt and demonstrated truths is, after all, one of the most powerful means of persuasion or reinforcing a message. Well-known stories or histories tend to shape national reputation, and the best-known stories leave lasting impressions. The motto of one of the biggest and best-known information services, the US Information Agency, was ‘Telling America’s Story to the World’. I agree with Dutch commentator Jan Melissen that PD, when practised effectively, runs at different speeds from the more traditional forms of diplomacy and often has the medium- to longer-term view in sight. Interestingly, Melissen is an authority on so-called ‘new public diplomacy’, emphasising greater real time and greater horizontality in communications by state and non-state actors and the blurring of domestic and international news domains. 19 He suggests that PD should ideally be in tune with a country’s medium-term foreign policy objectives and long-term aims. It builds on trust and credibility and often works best with the long-term horizon. In the nearer term, he suggests, it is ‘realistic to aspire to influencing the milieu factors that constitute the psychological and political environment in which attitudes and policies towards other countries are debated’. 20

In broad terms, political leaders have shown a preparedness to engage with audiences through a dialogue informed by history. The nature of political speech is itself profoundly influenced, explicitly and otherwise, by the competing meanings to be drawn from history. In the
appeal to 'thresholds', 'turning points' and 'unique opportunities' a sense of history is inevitably invoked.

Underpinning all such debates is a sense that history can frame and provide authority to politicians' efforts to mobilise public support. This has been recognised in Australia. Five years ago, the participants in the August 2006 Australian History Summit investigating the teaching of history in secondary schools agreed that knowledge of Australian history was vital for young Australians, and concluded: 'Nearly all of the crucial public debates embody and appeal to history.' Here is acknowledgement that history has had persuasive, mobilising appeal in Australian politics.

This, in turn, begs important questions: Is this what people vote for? Do they respond to certain persuasive ideals, ideas and feelings in ways that go well beyond carefully calculating self-interest? Are they interested in a nation's standing in international affairs? Are they concerned with more than who will give them a better deal according to taxation and opportunity, and security at home and abroad?

American linguist George Lakoff, in his wonderfully titled little book, *Don't Think of an Elephant*, answers with cautious 'yes' to these questions. In the US an academic cottage industry has grown up around the tendency for voters to behave outside the norms of rational, self-interested behaviour. An example that Lakoff uses is the 2003 race for Governor of California. Focus groups monitoring the campaigns kept finding that voters would respond to a series of questions by identifying that Democrat Gray Davis's policies were most closely aligned to what they described as their interests—but then added that they would vote for Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger. They were, concludes Lakoff, voting for identity and values more than self-interest. And this trend was observed at the national level in the United States. It prompted a new wave of writing about how to frame the debate—how conservatives had largely won the struggle for language in many ways. According to Lakoff, prior to Obama's victory, conservatives had effectively wielded the old 'nation as family' metaphorical toolkit (the world is a dangerous place and families need protection; in a difficult world, children need help to tell right from wrong). The family metaphor came with all the expectations that stern, paternal discipline should guide children; that
father's authority should not be challenged (i.e. strong support must be
given to presidents in relation to foreign policy etc); and that welfare
is dangerously akin to maternal indulgence, which leads to wayward
behaviour etc. Underpinning these suggestions is the idea that sound,
strict morality is what leads to prosperity and security.22 While history
wasn't always at the forefront of this type of analysis, the authority from
this kind of language is buttressed by the effective wielding of historical
examples. In the US context, such work follows other commentators
who have highlighted the effective wielding of rhetoric by former US
President Ronald Reagan, the 'great communicator'. Richard Reeves's
2006 study of President Reagan argues that his charisma resulted from
his disregard of the nitty-gritty, his strong sense of the world historical
in his actions and in his belief that 'the speech' was the real work.23
There is strong logic, therefore, to set aside prime ministers or presi­
dents or party leaders as a category for special attention in any analysis
of their impact on PD.

Margaret Thatcher, on the rise in 1979, made a speech to her
Conservative Party in which she invoked Britain's proud history as
the world leader, in order to reignite conservative pride. A couple of
snippets serve here as examples:

The world has never offered us an easy living. There is no reason
why it should. We have always had to go out and earn our living—
the hard way. In the past we did not hesitate. We had great technical
skill, quality, reliability. We built well, sold well. We delivered on
time. The world bought British and British was best. Not German.
Not Japanese. British. It
was more than that. We knew that to keep
ahead we had to change. People looked to us as the front runner
for the future.24

'Oour success', she said, 'was not based on Government hand-outs,
on protecting yesterday's jobs'. And she used this description of the
British work ethic as a basis for sweeping industrial reform after she
came to power. Ten years later she spoke of Britain's special contribu­
tions to Europe at war and, without any imperial misgivings, about
Europeans' 'civilisation' of much of the world as 'an extraordinary tale
of talent, skill and courage'.25 Today, the legacy of the Second World
War, especially in Europe, is formidable in its capacity to remind people that there is plenty of unfinished business; and we can find many other examples of European leaders having to tread carefully and deliberately around some of the many residual wounds and grievances that continue to resonate strongly.

Politicians have been adept in using history in very public ways that have a more reconciliatory purpose, which again, carries a more international message easily digested. For example, in Germany in 2005, Chancellor Schröder knew how important it was to reject a particularly victim-laden interpretation of Germany's recent past. On the 60th anniversary of the horrific Allied fire-bombing of Dresden, he engaged in a very public repudiation of neo-Nazi historical revision. This was part of Schröder's ongoing rejection of the calls made by an increasingly popular neo-Nazi political party for historical revisionism, in which Germans were to be recast as the victims of the Second World War. The National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) had announced plans to stage a 'funeral march' (Trauermarsch) through the middle of Dresden on 13 February 2005 to hijack the 60th anniversary of the bombing. NPD members of the Saxony state parliament called the Dresden raid a 'bombing holocaust' (Bombenholocaust) and accused the Western Allied 'imperialist air-gangsters' who conducted the raid of being war criminals. The key phrase from Schröder's statement widely quoted in the (inter)national media was his vow 'not to allow cause and effect to be reversed', a reference to the NPD's version of history in which Germans were cast in the role of victims. Chancellor Schröder was an advocate of the idea that German nationalism always must be viewed through the prism of Auschwitz. In arguing this way, Schröder successfully restored a sense of what was cause and what was effect in German history, and thereby framed a sense of nation in a modern context.26

As another powerful example of a leader's attempt at reconciliation that drew on a sense of history, we could also consider US President Barack Obama's speech to the Muslim world in Cairo in June 2009. This was a prime example of inviting listeners to feel that a new beginning towards better times was dawning. He achieved this through a combination of confession for sins past (for example, the
previous US tendency to categorise Muslim-majority states as defined according to the communist or democratic camps during the Cold War); recognition of the interconnectedness of American prosperity and Muslim contributions; declarations about the universality of fundamental human rights, wants and needs; and intellectual and emotional generosity in drawing inspiration, at the end of his speech, equally from the Koran, the Talmud and the Holy Bible.  

In Australia, too, James Curran (in his book, *The Power of Speech*) has written on prime ministers and the ways in which they have derived authority through compelling articulations of Australian nationalism. Curran argues that since the 1970s it has been very important for Australian prime ministers to speak to Australian values and national ideals, not only to win the electorate's support, but in order to maintain their positions of authority within their respective parties, who have come to expect this of them. It did not have to be heavily fact-laden history, but it did need to be sentient history, 'felt' history about who we imagined we were. Those who did it best, argues Curran, were those who were able to establish continuity with the present, so that listeners felt that they were living out the legacy of what had come before. This conclusion, I suggest, applies generally rather than purely to Australian circumstances.

In exploring the significance of history for leaders projecting messages that have PD-type qualities, I do not want to deny new social media an important role in reaching broad audiences quickly and in providing a means for popular levels of engagement with a nation's projections and standing in the world. There is something special about the way in which Indian authorities blend India's trajectory in world affairs with India's embrace of communications technology. As others have said, including Shashi Tharoor, it is most fitting that India, an IT powerhouse, makes maximum use of social media to inform the Indian public of India's interests and activities in the world. The official sites for Indian PD also emphasise India's booming technology sector and the country's largest English-speaking population in the world as jumping points for venturing into this mode of diplomacy and as scene-setting for India's rising international standing. More traditional publications, such as the annual collection of documents,
India's Foreign Relations, build further the feeling of international take-off by detailing India's spectacular economic growth, its technological and communications successes, and its ongoing efforts to address problems of global dimensions, including the developmental needs of other nations and attempts to mitigate climate change and policy around the use of energy resources.30

Amidst what is an admirable air of excitement there is a slightly elusive quality about the scope of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' involvement in it. In saying that 'public diplomacy activities often present many differing views as represented by private individuals and organizations in addition to official Government views and positions' 31 there is a suggestion of ministerial facilitation of things that then run independently, or even ministerial noting of other goings on if and when the department learns of them. There is not much history in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' PD messages, which are arguably directed internally, at Indians, as much as externally, and are set to expand with a new, and very logical, focus on Indian diasporas overseas. I should add, too, that amidst the social media, the PD Division of MEA has a robust set of publications, seminars and conferences, distinguished lecture series and visitors programs. For historical content, to my mind, there's an unfortunate gap in the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, the programs and activities of which are fascinating, but at some remove from the excitement of the new wave of PD.

In significant ways the diplomatic game has changed; but in making the case for continued engagement with history I am thinking about those publicly aimed messages that will survive when specific foreign policies strike trouble. India's early forays in PD in the 1940s and 1950s involved an 'intermingling' of Indian challenges and visions with those of the international order, and however unreachable some of the ideals of one world were, some core ideals survived immediate gains and losses in foreign policy stakes. If we do not ask too much of PD today, if we are content with an 'intermingling' of state and non-state agencies, or the 'milieu factors' making up the environment that Melissen speaks of, then there are some compelling reasons for persisting with it, and with a historical sensibility attached.
Finally, modern-day India is well placed again, not perhaps to resume Nehru's mission, but to occupy a role in world affairs that speaks to both universal and specific concerns: the role of man, if you like, in the Greek schema of cosmos, standing between macrocosm and microcosm. I'm not sure that India summarises the cosmos in the way that man was supposed to, but India's concerns still speak very readily to world concerns, and that is a strong basis from which to engage in popularly directed acts of understanding cultures, attitudes and behaviour; building and managing relationships; and influencing opinions and actions to advance interests and values.

NOTES

10. Seth Centre, 'Supranational public diplomacy: The evolution of the UN Department of Public Information and the rise of third world advocacy', in Osgood and Etheridge (eds), *The United States and Public Diplomacy*, pp. 135–63.

13. Press Communiqué, Secretariat of Consultative Committee, New Delhi, 17 October 1953, and undated Indian paper, 'A scheme for setting up an Information Organisation of the Colombo Plan to be considered at the next meeting of the Consultative Committee', EA1 W2619, item 118/8/11, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.


17. Ibid, p. 43.


