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## **CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND THE COLD WAR PERIOD**

In addition to the massive arms race, the Cold War was psychological in winning over and attracting foreign individuals, groups, and governments. This study analyzes the very important role of cultural diplomacy in the Cold War, a period marked by intense geopolitical tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Taking into account the catastrophic consequences of a possible direct military conflict between the two superpowers, cultural diplomacy and the concept of projecting soft power to achieve national interests was of crucial importance. Focusing on the interplay between the two superpowers, this study analyzes the mechanisms and influence of cultural diplomacy on international relations during the Cold War. Moreover, it analyzes the approach of the United States and the Soviet Union to this concept and provides insight into the key strategic differences in the use of cultural diplomacy in foreign policy of the period.

**Keywords:** cultural diplomacy; Cold War; United States; Soviet Union

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Cold War era witnessed a complex interplay of geopolitical tensions, ideological clashes, and military competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result of this intense rivalry, cultural diplomacy has emerged as a key tool for both superpowers in exerting influence, changing perceptions, and advancing their national interests. Rooted in the theoretical framework of soft power, cultural diplomacy has become a means of projecting national attractiveness and legitimacy without

the use of coercion and military power. This article analyzes the value and position of cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, exploring the theoretical background, mechanisms, and role in international politics of the period.

Taking into account the catastrophic consequences of a possible direct military conflict between the two superpowers, cultural diplomacy and the concept of projecting soft power in order to achieve national interests was of crucial importance. In that regard, this study attempts to answer the question of what was the importance of cultural diplomacy during the Cold War and how did the United States and the Soviet Union use this concept to pursue their political interests? Also, in what ways did cultural diplomacy serve as a tool for overcoming ideological differences, breaking stereotypes by forcing international educational and cultural cooperation? In addition to that, in what ways did cultural diplomacy facilitate communication and relations between nations, especially in situations where diplomatic relations were threatened or did not exist at all? Finally, this study provides an insight into the similarities and differences between the cultural diplomacy strategies of the United States and the Soviet Union, including the main aspects and elements used. The answers to these research questions contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the Cold War and the knowledge related to this historical period, focusing on the importance of cultural diplomacy and international educational and cultural cooperation. Hence, this study aims to shed light on the international politics of this period, public perception, and strategic objectives of the United States and the Soviet Union. Historical analysis especially of the period of the first decades of the Cold War, including exchanges of high-profile artists and the utilization of cultural diplomacy in response to the spread of communism, will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the soft power dynamics that characterized this period in international relations.

This research begins with the theoretical framework of cultural diplomacy and the significance of an analytical approach to the topic. This is followed by a section on the concept of psychological warfare during the Cold War, which played a pivotal role in the ideological confrontation between the two superpowers. After that, this study focuses on Soviet cultural diplomacy, its main features and an approach that had significant differences from the American one. In that regard, following section relates to the American institutional and legal framework for cultural diplomacy and an analysis of foreign aid as a tool in the foreign policy of the United States. The analysis also includes exchange programs and their significance for cultural diplomacy during the Cold War.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

The concepts of cultural diplomacy, soft power, and public diplomacy have entered the lexicon of international relations over time and have become standard concepts in foreign policy thinking (Ien Ang & Mar 2015). Considering the focus of this research and the insufficient unexplored nature of the concept of cultural diplomacy, in the following lines we will try to provide an insight into the definition, historical development, as well as the main determinants. In a historical sense, cultural diplomacy is linked to cross-cultural interactions that had an important impact on societies through the encounters of ordinary people, merchants, ritualists, missionaries, with other cultural customs and traditions, which resulted in the spread of languages across geographical areas, bringing new cultural products, etc. (Grincheva 2023). However, with the development of the system of modern states during the 19th century, the concept of cultural diplomacy gained importance as a tool that newly formed states used to create, communicate, and share their national identities in the global arena (Grincheva 2023). At the beginning of the 20th century, or more precisely from 1910, the institutionalization of cultural diplomacy took place, when the first dedicated cultural agencies, such as Alliance Francais or British Council, were founded to coordinate cultural activities abroad (Grincheva 2023). The majority of large countries in the 20th century implemented forms of global external cultural projection that can be called “external cultural action” (Chaubet & Martin 2011). This involves both public actors and private actors with very variable political and cultural roles, from major film companies to various transnational organizations such as philanthropic foundations (Chaubet & Martin 2011). In the second half of the 20th century, in the initial period of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the concept of cultural diplomacy gained wider employment (Grincheva 2023). The semantic field of the term cultural diplomacy has expanded significantly over the years and now refers to almost any practice related to purposeful cultural cooperation between nations or groups of nations (Ien Ang & Mar 2015). In this regard, the once separate terms of cultural relations, which meant a natural and organic rapprochement without governmental interventions, and cultural diplomacy, which exclusively referred to formal diplomats and their diplomatic practices in the direction of serving national interests, became intertwined over time (Ien Ang & Mar 2015).

The first definition of cultural diplomacy appeared only in 1959 by the US State Department as: the direct and enduring contact between people of different nations... to help create a better climate of international trust and understanding in which official

relations can operate (Grincheva 2023). Cultural diplomacy in the literature is also defined as ‘a significant element of a country’s foreign policy, promotion of its culture, education and arts, and a significant element in shaping a positive image of a country abroad (Kiełdanowicz 2009). The goal of cultural diplomacy is to foster a common understanding between nations (Uminska-Woroniecka 2016). It includes the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding (Uminska-Woroniecka 2016). Some cultural diplomacy activities include tourist visits, study exchange process, books and media circulation, transfer of ideas by any means, initiated by state or private organizations (Kiełdanowicz 2009).

Cultural diplomacy springs from two premises: first, that good relations can take root in the fertile ground of understanding and respect; second, cultural diplomacy rests on the assumption that art, language, and education are among the most significant entry points into a culture (Cooper et al. 2013). Culture and education can draw people closer and accentuate commonalities whereas official policy can appear adversarial or accentuate differences (Cooper et al. 2013). The basic task of cultural diplomacy is to build mutual understanding between nations and overcome differences. Cultural diplomacy can present a different picture than what official policy may imply – to possibly correct wrong or superficial understandings of certain policies. In this way, it can break down stereotypes and negative or simplified impressions that arise from policy choices or hostile portrayals (Cooper et al. 2013). Some of the most important tools of cultural diplomacy include art, exhibitions, exchanges (educational programs), literature, language teaching, broadcasting and promotion of ideas (Lenczowski 2009).

Cultural diplomacy can explain certain components of a nation’s culture that are seemingly difficult to comprehend for a foreign population. Student educational exchanges provide an excellent opportunity to gain deeper knowledge about why a particular society favors certain practices or beliefs. Also, cultural diplomacy can reach certain constituencies of society that could not be reached by traditional diplomacy. In certain situations of the non-existence of official relations between countries, artists, for instance, can communicate with each other and build connections. The United States and Cuba have been involved in many high-profile artist exchanges, including the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet, and the Jazz at Lincoln Center musicians, despite the strained relationship between the two governments (Cooper et al. 2013). Such exchanges undoubtedly preserve ties in periods of crisis between governments, provide fertile ground for traditional diplomacy, and remind

citizens of both countries that they have things in common despite the official positions of the governments (Cooper et al. 2013). Also, cultural diplomacy can open additional lines of communication between countries and influence a change in perspectives about the other party. One of the examples from the Cold War period is the visit of American jazz musicians to the Soviet Union, which proved that the Soviets had a reductionist view of the United States. Meeting musicians who spoke openly about the racist history of the United States while at the same time celebrating the American musical form and emphasizing their pride as Americans further complicated the Soviet image of the United States (Cooper et al. 2013).

Cultural diplomacy involving the exchange of ideas and values became very important during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Finn notes the following: History is a useful reminder of how seriously the United States once took the promotion of mutual understanding through cultural exchange. Policymakers understood the link between engagement with foreign audiences and the victory over ideological enemies and considered cultural diplomacy vital to U.S. national security (Lenczowski 2009). After World War II, the United States faced a fear of the Soviet threat of spreading communism as the world's dominant ideology. Believing in its value system as an alternative to the world, the US government organized a program of cultural relations with other countries at the beginning of the Cold War following its national security interests. George F. Kennan, the architect of the Containment Policy, was an early advocate of cultural programs urging the American political establishment to maximize cultural contacts by all means that would break down the very present negative stereotypes about America in the world (Bu 1999). The US government has organized its cultural policies in line with Cold War concerns and has relied heavily on private resources to conduct cultural diplomacy (e.g., through educational exchanges) (Bu 1999). Private institutions such as philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, and universities, due to their expertise and cultural interactions with foreign countries, played a new role in the conduct of American cultural diplomacy at the beginning of the Cold War. One of the reasons why the role of philanthropic foundations in American cultural diplomacy was so pronounced in this period is the fact that the institutionalization of cultural diplomacy by the American government was in its infancy. The strengthening of cultural diplomacy agencies required a certain period, which led to the joint performance of American state and non-state agencies in this field. The role of non-state actors was particularly prominent in sensitive areas, such as communist-organized systems in Eastern Europe. The role of philanthropic foundations in such environments was to

reach out to society, creating conditions for the cultural promotion of American values.

Due to its geographical position and political and economic importance, the European continent was the epicenter of the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The scheme of European spheres of influence then spilled over into the international system so that the countries of Asia and the Middle East were divided between the influence of Moscow and Washington. The Soviet Union was the successor to the Russian Empire. Hence, the state based its role on a sense of geopolitical power in the Eurasian region and its historical geopolitical tendencies to dominate the political circumstances of its region. After the Second World War, the nature of the international system was based on a bipolar structure based on a system of spheres of influence and diminished sovereignty of subordinate states by two great powers (Lewkowicz 2018). In this way, the United States and the Soviet Union institutionalized the international order by establishing social norms that enabled them to maintain their hegemonic position (Lewkowicz 2018).

## **SOVIET CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

Cultural relations between the Soviet Union and the United States existed before the Second World War. It is recorded that during the 1920s and 1930s, several thousand American tourists visited the Soviet Union while Soviet technical delegations and performers traveled around the United States (Gould-Davies 2003). However, cultural relations were official only on the Soviet side in the organization of the All-Union Society for Cultural Ties (VOKS), while the State Department showed a lack of interest and cultural activities were mostly based on private or non-governmental initiatives (Gould-Davies 2003). However, the establishment of a grand military coalition during the Second World War based on common military interests also influenced the increase of cultural exchanges between the two countries in fields such as art, culture, and sports (Gould-Davies 2003).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviets significantly expanded their cultural offensive by promoting their attitudes, values, and ideas among intellectual, business, and industrial groups in the Western and Eastern blocs. In this context, a large number of friendly associations and cultural relations societies were established, and the number of exchanges of cultural delegations between the Soviet Union and other countries increased greatly, as well as the number of exchanges of students and intellectuals. Soviet-sponsored cultural delegations have been growing steadily since 1954. In that

year, for example, 84 exchanges with Western European countries were organized under the category of culture, peace, and friendship (CIA 1958). During 1955, the number of exchanges of Soviet cultural delegations with Western European countries increased to 114 (CIA 1958). During 1956, a total of 475 delegations from Western European countries visited the Soviet Union, including delegations described as cultural, labor, government, sports, economic, scientific, technical, professional, tourist, Communist party, and Communist front groups (CIA 1958). On the other hand, during the same year, 469 different Soviet delegations visited Western European countries (CIA 1958). A total of 1,327 Soviet delegations visited Eastern European communist countries during 1956, of which 225 were cultural delegations (CIA 1958). The total number of Eastern European delegations that stayed in the Soviet Union during 1956 is not known, but it is very likely that it was a significant number of delegations. Due to the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956, a significant number of foreign delegations to Moscow were canceled, which negatively affected the country's image in the world.

Soviet authorities invested considerable resources in cultural diplomacy, but however, this process of the power of attraction was greatly limited by the brutality of Stalin's regime. Studying Soviet soft power in Poland, Babiracki cites the observations of a Hungarian writer regarding the brutality of the Red Army: "... for many, this young Russian (a member of the Red Army) brought a kind of liberation... yet this soldier could not bring freedom because neither he didn't have... that also applied to many bureaucrats, writers, intellectuals. They simply had no freedom. They wanted to project soft power abroad, but they were unsuccessful because there was nothing soft about Stalinism in the Soviet Union" (Babiracki 2015). Nevertheless, the Soviet cultural influence on entire Eastern Europe was undeniable. In Eastern Europe, the communists managed to deeply influence languages, fashions, landscapes, identities, and values; the impact of Soviet-sponsored political, economic and cultural integration was enormous (Babiracki 2015). Still, several Eastern European regimes, which were more liberal and economically open to the West, became attractive for Soviet citizens from all social spheres. One of those countries is Poland, which culturally and intellectually leaned towards the West, which generated a process of reversed soft power. In his book, Babiracki cited the example of the Russian writer Viktor Erofeev, who liked to spend summers with his wife in Poland, a country that became their only window to the West in the 1970s (Babiracki 2015). The brutality and absolute control of social life of Stalin's regime harmed the exercise of soft power in the countries of the Eastern Bloc.

In the satellite states of the Soviet Union, the relaxation of the atmosphere on the cultural and artistic level came after Stalin's death in 1953. Until then, many artists in the communist world were also propagandists who were forced to work within the realistic framework of the then government, describing scenes that glorify communist ideals. Artists were also labeled depending on their political views. In 1955, in Czechoslovakia, there was an uprising of artists against the centralized administration of the Art Union in the country as well as against the lack of artistic pluralism (Maruška 1997). As a result of the uprising, communist magazines in Czechoslovakia began publishing articles in which some of the critical art historians openly attacked Stalin's rigid realistic views (Maruška 1997). There was also rehabilitation of Czech art history in the country, which some saw as the first sign of the awakening of Czech national identity. The change of government in the Soviet Union also meant open space for other communist satellites to revolt against the Stalinist regimes, as was the case with the protests in Hungary in 1956. Protests and revolts against dictatorial regimes in communist satellites have resulted in more artistic freedom, contact with the West through the education sector, and some liberalization of society. In the case of Yugoslavia, there was a relaxation of relations with Moscow, which was chaired by Nikita Khrushchev after Stalin's death.

After Stalin's death, cultural relations became very important in consolidating Soviet control over Eastern Europe (Gould-Davies 2003). Also, cultural influence became one of the most significant instruments in the post-Stalin opening to the Third World, where the Soviet Union began to actively gather support from nationalist – but non-communist – regimes (Gould-Davies 2003). These efforts were particularly directed towards India and the Middle East, where the Soviet exhibitions in Cairo and Damascus were particularly successful (Gould-Davies 2003). A sign that cultural propaganda was gaining in importance during the Cold War was the establishment in 1957 of the Soviet State Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries (Maruška 1997). Among other things, this agency had the task of reactivating and intensifying the exchange processes that lasted between 1955 and 1956. In addition, Soviet friendship and cultural relations societies, which were very active in areas such as Latin America and the Far East, played a significant role in the cultural offensive.

Such societies significantly influenced the non-communist population by gathering sympathy for attitudes towards the Soviet Union and influencing the concrete development of relations with Moscow by increasing trade, establishing or re-establishing diplomatic relations, accepting a neutral stance on various international issues, etc.



Through such and similar associations, Soviet propaganda promoted the emphasis on better workers' rights and resistance against American imperialism. Due to the open invasion of Nazi Germany into the Soviet Union during World War II, many states and organizations nurtured sympathy and openly supported Soviet resistance, which also had a positive effect on Soviet propaganda during the Cold War. In short, the main goals of Soviet propaganda in the world were:

- 1) to promote political, military, and economic programs in non-Orbit areas that are beneficial to the bloc of communist countries;
- 2) to promote the establishment or continuation of trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union;
- 3) to promote understanding and appreciation for Soviet culture;
- 4) to support any action that will limit the military strength or military expansion of the West. (Maruška 1997)

The Soviets, similar to the Americans, had their information centers, libraries, and reading rooms in many countries where communist books and publications were available for a better understanding of the Soviet people. Many studies have been written on various aspects of Soviet culture. Their cultural societies around the world have organized social gatherings, exhibitions, and many other activities such as performances by musicians, artists, writers, and even athletes. According to an American report from the late 1950s, the Soviet definition of culture included almost everything, including athletics (Maruška 1997).

Soviet friendship and cultural relations societies have been a great opportunity for exploitation by the Soviet intelligence service. Among the leaders of such societies was usually a well-trusted communist who had access to the facilities and members of the society, and who at the same time cooperated with the Soviet intelligence service in carrying out any assigned tasks (CIA 1958). Facilities of cultural societies, such as information centers, libraries, reading rooms, have been often used as a meeting place for agents from associations with state intelligence officers (CIA 1958). For that reason, the exchange of cultural delegations served not only for understanding the culture and people of the Soviet Union but also for Soviet espionage and recruiting potential candidates. The task of the intelligence service when foreign delegations arrived in Moscow was to find out who could potentially be selected for recruitment into active espionage or as an informant and to find out whether a potential agent of foreign intelligence services was potentially in those delegations (CIA 1958).

An Australian delegation, after attending a conference in Vienna in 1952 on the ‘International Conference for the Protection of Children’, was invited to visit the Soviet Union at Soviet expense for the May Day holiday (CIA 1958). The delegation included Miss Marry Ellen C. Lewis, a member of the Australian-Soviet Friendly Society, and Mr. and Mrs. The Flood (CIA 1958). They were all members of the Australian Communist Party. Concerning that, members of the Soviet Security Service sent the following message to their legal resident in Canberra:

“As Enclosure No.1 we send you particulars concerning two members of the Australian delegation which was in Russia for the first of May festivities – Flood and Lewis. Both of them, in our opinion, could be used for the fulfillment of tasks that are provided for in the plan of work of the Australian M.V.D. section. Instruct Antonov to make the acquaintance of Flood and Lewis for the purpose of studying them and using them along our lines. Inform us concerning the results.” (CIA 1958)

Cultural activities in the political circumstances of the time were subject to abuse. In general, the Soviets, like the Americans, had very developed channels of cultural diplomacy that were of great importance during the Cold War.

## US CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

### Psychological Warfare

In addition to the massive arms race, the Cold War was psychological war in winning over and attracting foreign individuals, groups, and governments. Therefore, the American government, at the very beginning, following the saying ‘in the battle for people’s minds, ideas are weapons’, launched an operation to form a massive establishment for psychological warfare to influence the minds and attitudes of people abroad. Every aspect of American life and every activity of the American government could not be deprived of psychological significance to foreign audiences. For example, America’s high standard of living was a constant factor in the minds of people abroad, and because of its importance, it could not be concealed but highlighted in any way possible. Par excellent example of this is how the Soviet Union and the US turned their support for East Berlin vs. West Berlin into a type of cultural warfare. By 1961 some 2.7 million East Germans had fled through the open border to West Berlin and then on to West Germany, so the overall population of the German Democratic Republic had declined, since 1949, from 19 million to 17 million (Gaddis

2006). Addressing the problem of East Berliners fleeing to West Berlin, Soviet Vice-Premier Anastas Mikoyan warned the East Germans “Our Marxist-Leninist theory must prove itself in the GDR (the German Democratic Republic). It must be demonstrated ... that what the capitalists and the renegades say is wrong; After all, Marxism was born in Germany ... if socialism does not win in the GDR, if communism does not prove itself as superior and vital here, then we have not won. The issue is this fundamental to us” (Gaddis 2006: 117). However, thanks to the Marshall Plan and generous subsidies from the West German government as well as support for universities, cultural centers, libraries, and broadcasting facilities from the United States, some of which were secretly financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, the western-occupied parts of Berlin became a permanent advertisement for the virtues of capitalism and democracy in the middle of communist East Germany (Gaddis 2006).

The US government’s efforts to influence the hearts and minds of people abroad had become an established part of the State Department’s operations during the administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In 1934, President Roosevelt established the *United States Information Service (USIS)* within the National Security Council (Konta 2020). In a practical example, the very beginning took place in 1936 when the Roosevelt administration encouraged Washington’s first, modest exchange of scholars between the United States and the South American republics (Graham 2015). The exchange process was an integral part of the so-called cultural relations under Roosevelt’s ‘Good Neighbor Policy’, in which the United States sought to expand its influence. Hart noted that with these educational exchanges, the State Department intended to use Latin America as a laboratory for perfecting the approach that will eventually be deployed around the world (Hart 2020).

The US leading agency for cultural diplomacy during World War II and in the period after was the State Department’s ‘Office of Cultural Relations’ established in 1938 (Graham 2015). Due to geopolitical changes on the international level caused by the large-scale war atrocities, the concept of propaganda and culture gained more and more importance. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the German declaration of war on the United States, the State Department inaugurated the *Voice of America (VOA)* broadcast in 1942 (Graham 2015). In the same year, the Office of War Information was established (Graham 2015) At the end of World War II, the State Department formally institutionalized propaganda and culture as foreign policy tools (Hart 2020). In 1945, President Truman transferred overseas propaganda operations that were an integral part of the Office of War Information to the State Department, emphasizing: the nature of present-day foreign relations makes it essential for the

United States to maintain informational activities abroad as an integral part of the conduct of our foreign affairs (Hart 2020). By combining the Office of War Information resources with the State Department's existing programs in cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges and public information, US officials formed the matrix of what is today known as public diplomacy (Hart 2020). In its efforts, the State Department attached a strong role to radio broadcasting, as well as to a wide spectrum of educational, scientific, and cultural projects. Cultural diplomacy included the exchange of persons in the cultural and educational fields, of which the Fulbright program was one of the most well-known. Although support for cultural diplomacy was more than obvious, Ellen noted the significant financial budget cuts introduced by Congress for the period 1946-1947, intended for this sector (Graham 2015). In this way, private initiatives led by the Rockefeller and Ford foundations were at the forefront of American cultural diplomacy in the years after World War II.

At the global level, the period of the 1950s was primarily marked by the invention of nuclear weapons, which led to increased tensions between the two powers. Since nuclear war would have catastrophic consequences, the United States and the Soviet Union never clashed directly but waged proxy wars to pursue their interests. On the other hand, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the world met with positive economic and social changes; the growth of literacy and education spread, and new ways of communication were introduced. Access to radio, publications, and television in underdeveloped areas also meant new rules of the game in the Cold War. Access to information was made much easier for ordinary citizens, which ultimately led to wider political awareness. Considering changes at the global level, decision-makers in both fronts focused on a fundamental question: How to improve performance in reaching out and influencing opinion abroad, including officials, leadership groups, and the general public?

## **US INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

The United States found itself in a very favorable position after World War II. Although a participant in the war, the US military had numerically fewer human and material losses than other forces. The battleground was also far away from American soil, which helped American cities remain intact. In economic terms, it was the world's leading power. These factors as well as cultural transformation in thinking

of the American elites during WWII have led to the American abandonment of the policy of isolationism and taking responsibility on the world stage (Wertheim 2020). In the first years after the war, the United States played a crucial role in founding various international organizations to maintain peace and prevent possible global crises. From the American perspective, the Soviet Union was a potentially disruptive element and a threat to the free world with its strengthened role after the war.

Learning lessons from its post-WWI role and renouncement of any claim to global leadership, the US chose to lead and pursue global dominance after WWII (Wertheim 2020). The hegemonic aspirations of the United States have led to the formation of numerous alliances starting with NATO, the development of foreign aid systems, and the launch of international educational and cultural activities. The focus on cultural diplomacy at the beginning of the Cold War was because a specific American political establishment believed that the set American goals in the conflict with the Soviet Union precluded the army's use as a means to achieve them (Barišić 2001). Even if maximalist military goals happened in direct conflict with the Soviets, it was difficult to expect a change in the attitudes of the communists (Barišić 2001).

With the onset of Cold War tensions, many doubted whether a democratic country such as the United States should continue a robust propaganda project after World War II (Konta 2020). Liberals feared that the US government could direct propaganda against American citizens, while others argued that the postwar status of the United States would automatically lead people to reject communism, without the need to spend tax money (Konta 2020). In January 1948, the US Congress approved the controversial US Information and Education Exchange Act, known as the *Smith-Mundt Act*, which legalized peacetime propaganda. The law was intended to promote a better understanding of the United States among the people of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations (Konta 2020). In the years that followed, the State Department used available government and private resources to combat communism in the field of propaganda. By the decision of President Eisenhower, Reorganization Plan No. 8 and Executive Order 10477, The *United States Information Agency (USIA)* was established on August 1, 1953, to consolidate all foreign information activities of the US government into one program (National Archives 1953). All previous activities carried out by the Department of *State's International Information Administration (IIA)*, *Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA)*, and *Mutual Security Agency (MSA)* have become an integral part of the new agency (National Archives 1953). With this decision, existing *United States Information Service (USIS)* posts overseas became field operations offices of the new agency *USIA*.

## FOREIGN AID AS A TOOL OF THE US FOREIGN POLICY

In his inaugural address in 1949, United States President Harry S. Truman proclaimed a new direction in foreign policy (Macekura 2013). Truman's *Point Four* program, which was also the fourth point of his speech, addressed the beginning of the United States organized technical assistance to the economic development of underdeveloped nations to address their economic backwardness and political instability (Macekura 2013). In the Soviet-American confrontation after World War II, foreign aid became a diplomatic card and a weapon (Paterson 1972). This was especially true of America, which, unscathed by the horrors of World War II, became the global leader of the economic world. With the help of British colleagues, US bureaucrats perfected the liberal trade regime during and after World War II (Zeiler 1998).

In their economic offensive, the US authorities launched various financial assistance processes including the Marshall Plan, huge contributions to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, a financial loan to the United Kingdom in 1946, and Export-Import Bank loans to various nations, as well as Truman's doctrine of assistance to Greece and Turkey (Zeiler 1998). Truman's *Point Four* program, labeled 'bold' and 'unique', was launched as America's human intention as a global power to share its knowledge and skills with developing nations to improve their well-being. The program united forces of government and private agencies that acted in a coordinated manner for the goals of America's grand strategy at the beginning of the Cold War. For that reason Truman's administration is designated as the government that transformed the role of foreign aid in American foreign policy (Geselbracht 2015). Strong, liberal, open economies, according to the *Point Four* theorists, could provide markets for recovering European producers while also persuading citizens of developing nations – especially those in newly independent nations – that market capitalism and liberal democracy could better protect their interests and create abundance than could the autarchic, centralized command-economy model offered by the Communist world (Geselbracht 2015).

Many NGOs and institutions were part of the *Point Four* program through a partnership with or coordination with the Federal Government. Nevertheless, the sharing of American technical knowledge and skills began years before the official *Point Four* program with the work of medical and educational missionaries around the world. One of the forerunners of these activities in the 20th century was the Rockefeller Foundation, with its activities around the world. That is why the American gov-

ernment tried to use the experience, capacities, and knowledge of the foundations in leading such a project. The main goal of the *Point Four* program was to allow private capital and private institutions to have the main responsibility in assisting other countries in the field of economic, social, and industrial progress (State Department Archive 1951). This program has systematically coordinated the activities of non-governmental agencies and groups with government policy to coherently act in the international field. In 1952, the Council of Voluntary Foreign Agencies, under a grant from the Ford Foundation, launched a study on the effective integration of government and private operations abroad (State Department Archive 1951). Although philanthropic foundations such as Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie were already involved in State Department operations internationally through the *External Research Staff* department, President Truman's Point 4 program brought all foundations, private institutions, and organizations together under one umbrella to strengthen the foreign policy.

Intellectuals and policymakers believed that foreign aid given in the right amount, led by good organization, and focused on important sectors of the economy and crucial infrastructure projects in strategically important countries, could trigger a revolution around the world. Truman's program sought to replace old imperialism, which focused on the exploitation of foreign profits, with constructive projects in local communities around the world that would contribute to economic growth and a higher standard of living. For this reason, Truman suggested that experts from the United States share their 'technical knowledge' with underdeveloped countries, which will eventually lead to a way out of hunger and misery (Macekura 2013)

One concrete example of the Point Four program was the *Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA)* program of rural electrification, dam construction, and community development that provided a concrete example of how to improve living standards in impoverished areas (Macekura 2015). *TVA* officials taught farmers how to increase sowing, develop new types of fertilizers, build power lines, and build hydroelectric plants that used available water resources to provide electricity in the region (Macekura 2015). Also, one of the important projects known as 'Servicio' was implemented in Latin America under the auspices of the *Institute for Inter-American Affairs (IIAA)* (Macekura 2015). This program acted as an exchange program in which American agricultural, health, and other scientific experts traveled to Latin America to meet the basic needs of the local population. Experts in this program taught local farmers how to use new agricultural machinery and equipment, delivered new types of seeds, introduced new tillage techniques, built new roads, etc. In return, the United

States retained access to raw materials from potentially unstable areas, as was the case with the supply of rubber from Brazil (Macekura 2015).

The U.S. government has rarely directly led development projects around the world because the process has been left to private investors and academics who have used government funds. Although the *Point Four* program was part of America's grand strategy during the Cold War, it is important to emphasize that it was extremely successful because of its human dimension. As Henry Bennett, former president of Oklahoma State University, and one of the officials of the *Point Four* Program, with direct experience in contributing to community development in Chile pointed out:

“A community in Chile recently celebrated the completion of a sewage system, built with the help of a young American sanitary engineer... They (the American technical advisers) are helping to set up clinics among people deep in the jungle who have never known medical care. They are training nurses and midwives, who, in turn, are teaching women how to bear and raise healthy children... They are showing the advantages of improved seed, contour plugging, crop rotation, and growing legumes to enrich their soil. They are helping the people to organize farm extension services and 4-H Clubs” (Macekura: 2015 85).

With its enormous financial capacity, the American government wisely used economic aid grants for people and institutions in underdeveloped areas, which greatly influenced the ideological dimension of confrontation with the Soviet Union.

## EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Before World War II, the U.S. government was involved in international educational and cultural activities on a limited basis. Philanthropic organizations led by the Rockefeller Foundation and other religious organizations sponsored numerous educational projects in different parts of the world during the 1920s and 1930s. However, due to the circumstances and nature of relations in the post-war world, the U.S. Congress passed the *Fulbright Act* (1946) and the *Smith-Mundt Act* (1948), which indicated the reorientation of the U.S. government toward educational and cultural exchanges with the rest of the world. In a confrontation with Soviet propaganda, educational exchanges were an essential instrument in projecting a favored image of the United States based on political democracy, technological progress, material wealth, consumer culture, and individual freedom (Bu 1999).

After World War II, there was a coordinated approach to exporting American culture, values, and technology, so the public and private sectors worked together to



build American cultural power in the world (Bu 1999). Exchange projects between the United States and communist countries such as Yugoslavia had a propaganda component and an espionage component (Barghoorn 1967).

In the educational exchange project, international students in the United States were encouraged to learn about American values and democratic ideals. In contrast, Americans abroad were urged to spread American concepts and lifestyles among the societies they found themselves (Barghoorn 1967). Numerous government departments such as the State, Justice, Labor, Defense, Health, Agriculture, Education and Welfare, Justice, Commerce, Interior, the Mutual Security Agency, and the Technical Cooperation Administration have been involved in exchange programs. Private institutions such as foundations, universities, religious organizations, and civic groups were mobilized by the U.S. government for this purpose. The massive involvement of the government and its numerous departments in educational and cultural exchange projects has meant the broad integration of these programs into political goals and foreign policy intentions (Barghoorn 1967). Former U.S. administration official Philip Coombs, in his 1960s study, believed that educational exchange programs had become an integral part of U.S. foreign policy, calling them the ‘fourth dimension of foreign policy’ (Coombs 1964).

It was vital for the decision-makers in the American foreign policy establishment to understand the minds and thoughts of people in other societies. For this purpose, educational and cultural exchange programs were an ideal strategy because they provided close contact with foreigners for a certain period. On the other hand, these programs were a perfect opportunity for people from different societies to learn more about American aspirations, ways of working, and lifestyles. Educational and cultural exchange projects have had strong support from American presidents from Roosevelt and Truman to Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower was particularly interested in cultural exchange projects with other nations, believing that such processes contribute to building peace. In addition to his significant role in the emergence of the *United States Information Agency (USIA)*, President Eisenhower also launched the People-to-People program, which we mentioned earlier, which focused on building friendly relations with different nations worldwide.

The U.S. government looked warmly at exchange projects during the Cold War. Liping Bu, in her research on the Cold War-educated exchange project, cited a statement from the then-assistant secretary of state George Allen, which states: “Most of these students will return to positions of responsible leadership in their own countries and the impressions of the United States which they take back are considered more

significant than the technical knowledge and skills which they acquire” (Bu 1999). For this reason, the U.S. government has paid particular attention to the successful implementation of these programs, believing that the experiences of international students in America will influence future developments internationally.

Since 1948, the State Department has allocated funds for psychological warfare against Moscow, investing in short-range media such as radio and the press, investing in human exchanges, and viewing such programs as long-range instruments in the ideological struggle with the Soviet Union. Between 1948 and 1953, a total of 15,722 students, professors, and others were involved in the State Department-sponsored exchange program, with 11,866 coming to the United States and 3,856 going abroad. Many State Department officials were delighted with the effect of the exchange of people, including Dr. Robert L. Johnson’s reaction to continuing support of such programs: “The more I have learned about it, the more I feel that the exchange program is a really hard core of our entire information program and that the movies, our press, our publications, and our voice are supplementary” (Bu 1999).

The International Educational Exchange Program, run by the State Department and reputable private organizations such as foundations, represented a belief in the democratic system and the American way of life. From an American perspective, he expressed the belief that direct contact with people from different parts of the world and sharing ideas is the basis for understanding and respecting the people of the so-called free world. Due to its good reputation and receptive climate of public opinion abroad, the educational exchange program was an integral part of American foreign policy, as confirmed by a 1954 State Department report: “Through the conduct of this program the Department can carry out its leadership role, as desired by the Congress, in coordinating the exchange efforts of other U.S. government and private agencies to further foreign policy objectives” (CIA 1954).

The experiences of individuals who participated in educational programs have been very positive and have contributed greatly to the image of the United States. After the experience in America, the Japanese legislator stated: “I realized from this trip that the essential difference and disagreement between Communist Russia and the United States is that the former represents a way of life by compulsion and the latter a way of life which is based on and derives its strength from voluntary processes. The American way is just and proper for human society” (CIA 1954). One European specialist also stated: “I had always been afraid of Russian imperialism. Not however until I visited your country did I learn to believe in the United States as a supporter of all the good and culture-supporting ideas. If you invite people from

other countries to visit the United States of America, you can make your passive friend your active ally” (CIA 1954).

From the American perspective, foreign citizens who traveled to the United States under the auspices of such programs had the opportunity to break stereotypes about the American way of life, obtain more favorable positions on American foreign policy motives, and actively report to their compatriots on the American experience. On the other hand, Americans who have traveled to other countries under these programs have had the opportunity to broaden their views on the political, economic, and cultural life of other countries, learn more about the international problems facing their country, and gain extensive professional benefits for their careers. Between July 1953 and March 1954, the State Department organized the arrival of 3,783 Europeans in the United States and assisted private groups in bringing in an additional 466 people (CIA 1954).

## CONCLUSION

During the Cold War, cultural diplomacy emerged as a key tool for both superpowers in exerting influence, changing perceptions, and advancing their national interests. Rooted in the theoretical framework of soft power, cultural diplomacy has become a means of projecting national attractiveness and legitimacy without the use of coercion and military power. Taking into account the catastrophic consequences of a possible direct military conflict between the two superpowers, cultural diplomacy and the concept of projecting soft power in order to achieve national interests was of crucial importance. Given that Europe was demolished after World War II and its intellectual elite was going through a hard period, many observers in the United States worried that communism and marxism might become a refuge for Europeans. The political ideology of communism was actually very popular in many European circles and various political parties and organizations. For this reason, cultural diplomacy that included cultural support, exchanges, and projects have gained importance for the government of the United States in the process of rapprochement with Europe. In this regard, the American government used all available capacities, including non-governmental organizations and foundations, in order to spread American literature in Europe and support projects that were focused on suppressing the spread of communism.

On the other hand, the cultural diplomacy utilized by the Soviet Union was under the full control of the state, which, due to the political arrangement itself, left no room

for the action of some other actors in this field. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviets significantly expanded their cultural offensive by promoting their attitudes, values, and ideas among intellectual, business, and industrial groups in the Western and Eastern blocs. In this context, a large number of friendly associations and cultural relations societies were established, and the number of exchanges of cultural delegations between the Soviet Union and other countries increased greatly, as well as the number of exchanges of students and intellectuals. Key aspects of Soviet propaganda included promoting political, military, and economic programs in non-Orbit areas that are beneficial to the bloc of communist countries, promoting the establishment or continuation of trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, promoting understanding and appreciation for Soviet culture, and to support any action that will limit the military strength or military expansion of the West.

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## KULTURNA DIPLOMACIJA I RAZDOBLJE HLADNOG RATA

### Sažetak:

Pored velike trke u naoružanju, Hladni rat je imao dimenziju psihološkog sukoba u cilju pridobijanja i privlačenja stranih pojedinaca, grupa i vlada. Ova studija analizira vrlo važnu ulogu kulturne diplomatije u Hladnom ratu, periodu obilježenom intenzivnim geopolitičkim tenzijama između Sjedinjenih Država i Sovjetskog Saveza. Uzimajući u obzir katastrofalne posljedice mogućeg direktnog vojnog sukoba dvije supersile, kulturna diplomatija i koncept projektovanja meke moći u cilju ostvarivanja nacionalnih interesa bili su od presudne važnosti. Fokusirajući se na uzajamna dejstva dvije supersile ova studija analizira mehanizme i uticaj kulturne diplomatije na međunarodne odnose tokom Hladnog rata. Također, studija analizira pristup Sjedinjenih Država i Sovjetskog Saveza ovom konceptu te daje uvid u ključne strateške razlike u korištenju kulturne diplomatije u vanjskoj politici tog perioda.

**Ključne riječi:** kulturna diplomatija; Hladni rat; Sjedinjene države; Sovjetski savez

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