

**THE US CULTURAL DIPLOMACY
ON THE POST-SOVIET SPACE
(THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA CASE-STUDY)**

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The article, elaborated on the base of Master degree paper in American Studies, focuses on the US Cultural Promotion on the post-soviet space. The challenges of the US Cultural Diplomacy are described. The official and unofficial mechanisms of Cultural Diplomacy are mentioned in the article. The results of the Public Affairs Section activity of the American Embassy in Moldova are analyzed on the 2015 information. The suggestions of Moldovan national image improvement are discussed.

Culture becomes increasingly prominent factor of influence on international order. Each culture is different from the other; each has its own advantage and criteria of values. It means that culture penetrates in all levels of society: from individual to international.

American Cultural Diplomacy gained huge popularity in many States all over the world. Cultural diplomacy stands out from the other two concepts – public diplomacy and nation branding – in that it is not a fairly new concept like the others, but it is just as old as traditional diplomacy itself. When relations were maintained between states there would always have been an exchange of ideas, language, art and religion taking place to mention but a few [1]. After the dissolution of the USSR, the US Government offered financial aid and various types of technical assistance to former USSR States. In July 1992 Congress passed “The Freedom Support Act” that guaranteed Public Diplomacy Projects financing on the territories of former USSR States.

The US Assistance programs helped to create NGOs, new parties, election systems as steps towards the democratization. From 1995-1996 Public Diplomacy Programs were actively carried out in

Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova. Annually, about 1500 people were selected by the US Federal Government representatives to study in American Local Organizations. Georgia and Ukraine had received the most valuable grants- 35-90 million Dollars annually from 1996 to 2006 in order to carry out democratic and elections reforms. Congressional materials, State Department Reports and other governmental sources demonstrate that the US Public Diplomacy on the Post-Soviet Space was implemented based on statements that former USSR Governments were corrupted, undemocratic and required changes, the US elites via the US International Development Agency continue to finance elections in these States, the priority in financing is given to the Court System reforms, Mass-Media freedom among others. In order to follow the stream of money from the US state budget to the implementation of elections campaigns, the necessity of understanding the USIDA partner's activity is required: the Carnegie Corporation, Eurasia, Soros, McArthur Foundations, the International Republican Institute, and National Democratic Institute [2].

During the Cold War, cultural difference could be put in frames of seconded product of the competition between two very different economic, political, and philosophical systems. U.S. culture could set and keep its superiority and value because it stood as a brand for the open, free-market society from which it emerged. Today the challenge is different; culture itself sometimes seems to be at the most important position in global world. Therefore, there is a growing cultural gap between the United States culture and its acceptance by other people. Another source of tension is that Hollywood movies, television, advertising, business practices and fast-food chains from the United States are provoking a backlash from some who feel that their culture is being overrun [3]. The most challenging issue for the US Cultural Diplomacy on the Post-Soviet Space is the clash of interests with Russia in the region. The competition between Russia and the United States in the public diplomacy sphere is on the level of rivals: the outcome is unclear, which makes the process all the more interesting.

Despite the obvious hints, the potential of America's soft power has not yet revealed itself: this is a long process which might take years or even decades of relative stability and consistent attention [4].

The U.S. Government sponsors a number of academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs in Moldova. The goals of these programs are to achieve mutual understanding between the United States and Moldova through exchange and training programs, and to establish democratic and economic reforms in Moldova through participants bringing the experience and knowledge they obtain in the U.S. The past year has been transformational for the U.S. mission in Moldova due to a sharp increase in both funding and attention from Congress, and due to events in neighboring Ukraine. Funding for post's public diplomacy programming had not been approached strategically for a very long time. It was the fifth least funded Public Affairs Section in the region. In the last year alone, however, it has seen five congressional delegations and four staff delegations and was the beneficiary of an additional \$8 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) in Fiscal Year 2014.

Of this money, \$1 million was given to the Public Affairs Section to support independent news media development. The additional funding has been impactful for the embassy's partners, yet it was a one-time grant. According to 2015 US Public Diplomacy Comprehensive Report, Moldova is seen as a Spotlight country for American Public Diplomacy in the near perspective.

In 2015, the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau helped to facilitate 18 long- and short-term programs with 131 Moldovan and 60 American participants. There were seven short-term programs: International Visitor Leadership Program (23 participants), Library of Congress's Open World (25), Professional Legislative Fellows (6), and Study of the U.S. Institute (2 participants), English Language Teaching Assistants (2 participants), American Senior English Language Fellow (1 participant), and American Fulbright Specialist (1 participant). There were also 11 long-term programs: Moldovan Fulbright Visiting Scholars (3 participants), Moldovan Fulbright Faculty Development (1 participant), Moldovan Fulbright Masters' Students (3 participants), Humphrey Fellows (2 participants), FLEX (60 participants), Global UGRAD (4 participants), American Fulbright Visiting Scholars (3 participants), American Fulbright Students (1 participant), American Fulbright Teaching Assistants (3 participants), American English Language Fellow (1 participant), and American National Security Language Initiative for youth (50 participants) [5]. Since 2001, the

U.S. Government has awarded cultural preservation grants to different projects in Moldova through the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. These grants helped to restore such places as Orheiul Vechi Museum Complex, the cave monastery Tipova, Adormirea Maicii Domnului church in Causeni and the 16th century medieval fortress Soroca. It also contributed to conservation and documentation of traditional Moldovan music and dance [6].

The Republic of Moldova remains one of the countries that underestimate its Cultural Potential. There are several recommendations to change this situation and make our voice more audible on the International Arena. It can be recommended to improve its national image abroad by paying particular attention to its Cultural Potential and Nation Brands; to enlarge national language teaching for the Moldovan Diaspora abroad; to promote Moldovan traditional and contemporary Culture abroad; to establish scientific International relations; to develop bilateral and multilateral relations in the field of education; to develop national tourism as an important part of Cultural Diplomacy.

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Recomandat

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