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## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: JUST INFOTAINMENT OR A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE?**

### **Abstract:**

□We live in a world of the post-truth politics filled with alternative facts. To cope with the situation, public sectors need stronger ties and cooperation with private sectors. It is thus pressing that government agencies need to tackle how they can use both Soft Power, such as culture, political values, and foreign policies, and Hard Power, such as military power and economic power.

□After the U.S. Embassy Tokyo put the video of Ambassador Caroline Kennedy dancing from the TV program “We Married as a Job” [a translation of the original title: Those who fight and run away, live to fight another day] on YouTube in December 2016, it went viral and has since been viewed more than 6.5 million times. Major media, including the New York Times and the Tokyo Broadcasting System, considered it as one of the most successful examples of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is “the process by which an international actor conducts foreign policy by engaging a foreign public” (USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism).

□It is the purpose of this essay to explore why public diplomacy is increasingly important in the 21st Century, compared with the 20th Century. Specifically, how did the relationship between legacy media and new media change? What kinds of news possess greater news value? What are directions for public diplomacy if we hope to use social media, such as YouTube or Facebook, for sending messages?

This essay argues that the turning point was the inauguration of President Barack Obama in 2009. It will analyze so called the “Obama boom” among the Japanese in 2009. For example, his CD speech book has sold more than half a million copies over the years. In conclusion, it is argued that public diplomacy should play a greater role since technology has rendered distance practically irrelevant, business is increasingly challenged to develop global strategies, and that a greater focus on transnational and intercultural communication is needed.

### **Keywords:**

public diplomacy, new media, transnational and intercultural communication

**JEL Classification:** A00