

International Broadcasting as a Tool of International Diplomacy

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Abstract

This paper focused on international broadcasting as a tool of international diplomacy. The study used descriptive analysis and source material from existing secondary sources. It is discovered that old and new entrants into international broadcasting are using it as tool of international diplomacy in the following ways: as image enhancer, propaganda, cultural transmission, protection of former colonies, information channels to nationals in Diaspora and others. The paper recommended that diplomacy in 21st century should be improved upon in Nigeria by upgrading the nation's satellite communication system.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Tool, International Broadcasting and Culture

Introduction

Broadcasting is referred to as the dissemination of information to a large heterogeneous audience through the electronic media. Broadcasting over time has evolved into different forms covering its different functions such as educational broadcasting, public affairs broadcasting, community broadcasting and also international broadcasting. However, the focus of this study is on international broadcasting as a tool of International Diplomacy.

International broadcasting can be defined as broadcasting across national frontiers to a foreign rather than a domestic audience. It is a deliberate dissemination of broadcast messages to an audience outside the borders of the broadcast organizations territory. Douai (2009) citing Price (2003) suggests that international broadcasting is "the elegant term for a complex combination of State-sponsored news, information, and entertainment, directed at a population outside the sponsoring State's boundaries. It is the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders in another.

The international broadcasting industry has experienced a period of rapid expansion and transformation. Major broadcasting nations have invested heavily in international broadcasting over the last 15 years, particularly in satellite television 24hoursnews services.

Generously funded new entrants such as Al Jazeera, NTA, AIT, Channel Television and silverbird have achieved strong foot holds in areas of strategic interest. The budgets for international broadcasting industries remain largely stable despite the financial crisis many broadcasters have introduced comprehensive services and technological transformations include multimedia broadcasting, live streaming, use of new media vehicles and delivering content to mobile phones.

International broadcasting is a key tool of International diplomacy for nations which see public diplomacy as a staple of their diplomatic efforts, and is effective in enhancing their international image, standing and perceptions amongst foreign publics. However, independence is crucial to the credibility of the broadcaster and its ability to attract and maintain audiences; longevity, consistency, stable funding and effective cooperation with the ministry of foreign affairs are important factors in success.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy according to Encarta Dictionary is the management of communication and relationship between nations by members and employees of each nation's government. The purpose is to project good image of the country.

Diplomacy, according to Goodpaster (1996) facilitates communication between the political leaders of states and other entities in world politics. Without communication, there would not be any international system as there will not be any interaction among states. The negotiation of agreements is important for advancing relationships and achieving mutual benefits. The diplomats have to determine the areas of overlapping interests and through reason and persuasion bring the parties to some arrangements. Information and intelligence gathering is an important contribution to the formulation of a state's coherent and intelligent foreign policy. As policy is not formulated in a vacuum, knowledge and information about the particular state towards which the policy is formulated is essential for peaceful inter-state relations.

Diplomacy serves a number of purposes, all of which are concerned with the implementation of a state's policy towards other states or non-state actors. Skilful diplomacy projects a favourable image of a country and in so doing, aids the country in its efforts to achieve its objectives. The essential functions which diplomacy has fulfilled within the modern states system include communication, negotiation of agreements, gathering of intelligence or information, mini mization of the effects of friction and symbolizing the existence of the society

of states (Mack 1989).

Diplomacy is important for minimizing friction, which is inevitable in inter-state relationships. Friction is a source of tension and discord that may be unrelated to the true interests of the parties concerned and as such, it must be minimized to avoid hostilities and to maintain peaceful relationships (Craig and George, 1995).

Diplomacy also functions as a symbolic representation of a society of states. The presence of diplomats in states is a visible manifestation of a certain set of rules to which states and non-state actors in the international system follow, establishing some degree of international order.

All these functions of diplomacy contribute to the security of nation-states and establish some form of international order. Through the functions of communication, negotiation, intelligence; and through its symbolic function and establishment of rules, diplomacy helps states to interact with minimal friction and tension.

Overview of International Broadcasting

International broadcasting started with the use of shortwave radio in the early 20th century, the revolution in communications technology has been a major catalyst in broadening the audience for public diplomacy activities. This technology, ranging from the popularization of satellite television through to the rapid development of cheap, accessible handheld communication devices, has had a big impact on international broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy.

The direct targeting of a foreign country's population at all levels is now not only feasible but a reality, via media that is popular, accessible and mobile.

Over its 80 years history, the style, presentation and rationale for international broadcasting have evolved, shaped by global events, threats and conflicts. Colonial imperatives, World War II, the Cold War and the War on Terrorism have each had very significant roles in the way government sponsored international broadcasting has developed and been used as an instrument of public diplomacy.

Colonial responsibilities in the Dutch East Indies prompted the Dutch Government to start its international broadcasts in 1927. This was soon followed by the British Government's BBC Empire Service, which commenced transmitting in 1932. World War II saw the growth in the use of foreign directed broadcasters on both sides of the war. Radio Japan was used by the Imperial Japanese Army as a propaganda tool, gaining infamy through the "Tokyo Rose" legend — the nickname given by American servicemen to the broadcaster's female wartime presenters. Voice of America (VOA) was heard for the first time in 1942 following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and quickly became an important element of the country's war effort.

The Cold War period was a time of expansion and creativity for the US international broadcasters, as VOA was joined by Radio Free Europe (RFE), Radio Liberty (RL) and later Radio Marti in the quest to fight communism. In 1961, when President Kennedy appointed Ed Murrow as the head of the US Information Agency (USIA), the home of VOA, the USA made clear the importance it ascribed to international broadcasting and its role in public diplomacy. Murrow had made his name as a fearless commentator with his CBS radio programs, "See it Now" during the 1950s, and had been an opponent of the Joe McCarthy anticommunism campaign in the early 1950s.

Statement of the Problem

International broadcasting can be justified as a means of projecting an appropriate image of the funding country so as to extend its influence, facilitate the acceptance of its foreign policies and, possibly, further its general economic and trade objectives. While this can be said to be true, the question is, what is the extent to which these international broadcasters are using broadcasting as a tool for International diplomacy?

Methodology

The Researcher uses a descriptive analysis and sourced from secondary sources.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is tied to the Dependency theory of mass media. The Postulation of the theory according to Asadu and Usua (2011:32), is that the developed nations see exposure to international media as a way of becoming developed, more enlightened and more conscious about what happen around the world. The developing nations on the other hand see it as a way of depending on the developed world for information and culture, hence, the developing nations are challenged to bridge the gap by using modern technology to project their national image and cultural heritage. Therefore this theory is relevant to this study.

International Broadcasting

International broadcasting according to Craig and George, (1995) is an elegant term for a complex combination of state-sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring state's boundaries. It is the use of electronic media by one society to shape the opinion of the people and leaders of

another. It involves what was once with pride called propaganda. The Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, and the BBC World Service are the best known examples, but the practitioners are legion. Newer satellite services are often linked to government or regional policy but are not "state-sponsored" in the literal sense. There are those who argue that CNN is an instrument of U.S. hegemony, consciously or unconsciously, but it is not an international broadcaster in the club-like definition of the term some media scholars argued. Similarly Al Jazeera has been described as bearing the heavy bias of its regional political setting, but it is not state-sponsored nor does it appear to be state-financed. The category is not defined by the technology of distribution. International "broadcasters" have traditionally used shortwave radio as a dominant mode of distributing their signals, but now many technologies, including FM, Internet, and satellite to home, are involved.

A line is usually drawn between "international broadcasters" that are transparently such and so-called "clandestine" or "black" radios, instruments of information transfer that are secretly sponsored by governments, intelligence agencies, or state-linked political movements. There are varying styles in international broadcasting, a British style, a French style, and one or more American styles (reflecting the division between U.S. sponsored broadcasters) Fouad (2001) contends. These differences in style track broadcasting histories, varying foreign policy objectives, responses to the nature of societies targeted, political involvement at home, and deep-seated domestic cultural proclivities.

International Broadcasting in Nigeria

International broadcasting in Nigeria began through radio broadcasting. According to Media Rights Agenda (2001 :30), the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) had the exclusive responsibility of broadcasting beyond the borders of Nigeria. However, this right was nullified when the Voice of Nigeria (VON) was established under the Voice of Nigeria Corporation Decree No.15 of 1991 by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida on May 14, 1991. In accordance with the provisions of sections 8(1), 8(2) and 29 of the Decree, VON had exclusive responsibility for broadcasting beyond the borders of Nigeria.

The advent of satellite broadcasting in Nigeria facilitated international television broadcasting in Nigeria. For one, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was quick to get on the platform. The NTA which is seen as the mouthpiece of the government, through its NTA International (NTAi) broadcast began as a tool for the promulgation of government's viewpoints, and ideology in accordance with the provisions of its enabling law.

Following the deregulation of the broadcast industry in 1992, commercial broadcast commenced and now organizations such as African Independent Television (AIT), Silverbird Television (STV), Channels Television, and Television Continental (TVC International) strove to gain satellite broadcast presence. According to Akpan (2011), as at 2011, various Nigerian-owned television stations could be accessed on prominent satellite networks such as: Trend TV, My-TV, DaarSat, and NTA Star Times. These satellite platforms are basically of two categories: Direct to Home (DTH) Pay TV which require a dish, and DVB-T (Terrestrial) which does not require a dish, making. Other digital satellite platforms on which Nigerian international broadcasters can be found are: DSTV (owned by Multichoice of South Africa, GOTV (also from Multichoice), StarTimes, BenTV. The internet has also made it easier for Nigerian radio stations to broadcast internationally. Notable stations such as: Cool 96.9 FM, Rhythm 93.7FM, Eko FM, and Radio Continental stream live broadcasts online.

International broadcasting as a tool of public diplomacy

To implement a public diplomacy program, a government employs an array of tools. The range is broad, but generally includes activities such as cultural diplomacy, events, tours or the activities of cultural institutes such as the Nigerian cultural council, British Council, Japan Foundation, Confucius Centres and the Goethe Institute. Others are educational diplomacy; scholarships, exchanges, study tours, visitors programmes, media and special visitors communications programs: media and public relations, information management and branding, and international broadcasting (Hopkin 1999). But this study is limited to international broadcasting.

Many of these activities are highly targeted, designed to reach discrete but influential audiences. International broadcasting, by comparison, offers governments the opportunity to reach and target the broadest spectrum of foreign publics and on a regular and consistent basis.

Today, international broadcasting is being used by developed and emerging economy countries across the world to promote their cultures, ideas, perspectives and products. In the last decade, there has been an exponential growth in government funded international broadcasting. It looks as if this expansion appears to have slowed down in the wake of the global financial crisis and tight government budgets, however, it remains a significant and visible feature in a range of international diplomacy programme, even where notable public diplomacy strategies and clearly defined objectives are absent.

How International Broadcasting is being used Around the World as a tool.

A big question about international broadcasting and its role in public diplomacy is why so many governments have adopted it as one of their key public diplomacy planks. So what prompts a government to spend annually tens of millions of dollars on their country's broadcaster to attract a fickle audience? While there are overlaps in the answers for every one of those broadcasters, the diversity underscores the plurality of international broadcasting's role in public diplomacy. A survey of broadcasting nations demonstrated the broad variation in their goals for their international broadcasters, ranging from a postcolonial sense of responsibility to a more modern desire to promote cultural diversity in a globalised world. Hence, some of the functions of International broadcasting are stated below:

Media scholars according to Richter (2008 :1-2) having conducted a comparative analysis of the international broadcasting of United States of America, Britain, Germany, and France, outlined the basic uses of international broadcasting as follows:

- 1. It serves as tool for accurate information in time of crises**

International broadcasting encapsulates many of the conflicts and difficulties central to the need that one society may desire to shape the information space of another. There is the struggle to harmonize goals of 'objectivity' with the need to act as an effective instrument of propaganda, the potential split between advancing national policy and acting as a credible journalistic enterprise and the tension between promotion of favourable regimes and the nourishment of dissent (Price,2003 :72). It also helps in peacekeeping, in times of conflict it can be used as a form of negotiation.

- 2. A Tool that facilitates International Relations**

From the point of view of Hali (2000), international broadcasting is a tool in facilitating international relations among nations. He stressed the role information plays in international relations, both as a means of communication between people and as an instrument of understanding and knowledge between nations. The implication of the above statement is that international broadcasting is regarded as central to the success of diplomatic activity.

For Japan and South Korea, the common objective has been to promote a better understanding and appreciation of their cultures and world views. And, like China, each has a channel dedicated to their internationally dispersed diasporas, although for different reasons. Recent legislation has enabled South Koreans living overseas to vote in national elections, and this has provided a further incentive for the South Korean government to support the Korean language KBS World TV, which started broadcasting in 2003. South Korea's earlier entry into international television broadcasting, the Arirang service, was prompted by the popularity of the Korean Wave ("Hallyu") cultural phenomenon which captivated East Asia in the mid1990s.

Arirang was to be a vehicle to ride the wave of that popularity, as a culture focused English language service, broadcasting initially to foreign residents and tourists in Korea and then expanded in 1999 to international audiences.

Despite its promising beginnings, more than a decade later, with no supporting legislation and a very limited budget, it is a broadcaster that seems uncertain of its role and independence.

With the stated objective of promoting international understanding of Japan and its perspectives, Japan's aim in international broadcasting is similar to its European counterparts. Yet it has been a relative late comer to international telecasting. It was only in 2009 that it established a foreigner focused international broadcaster, in the wake of concerns expressed by Japanese politicians and other leaders in the mid 2000s that Japan was being left behind in international broadcasting. NHK World's linkage to Japan's other public diplomacy efforts is very limited, and its own ambitions are to become the credible voice of views from Asia and to use Japan's comparative advantage in business to provide a niche news service.

China's international broadcasters have no doubts about their role: they are an integral element of China's public diplomacy efforts. In part, their task is to mount a counteroffensive on the "*Western media's ideological assault on the rest of the world*". But the Chinese Government is sending two messages through its use of and investment in international broadcasting. Firstly, it is using its media resources to impress and remind the world that it cannot be taken advantage of again following the humiliations of the 19 th and first half of the 20 th centuries. The second is the endeavour to depict China as an attractive, internationally responsible and respected member of the global community.

Canada's approach to international broadcasting is unique among the G8 countries. Its very limited investment in international broadcasting is matched by its very limited interest in using it to promote the country or to advance its foreign policy objectives. Indications are that it has no plans to change this position. Canada's longstanding concern is about the impact of American culture on Canada, which appears to drive much of what could be described as the current public diplomacy effort. Canadian Heritage's website notes that "*Canada has a relatively small and diverse population and we live next door to the most powerful and pervasive culture in the world*". Broadcasting's role in Canada is to protect domestically, rather than to promote internationally.

3. It provides compensation for the lack of media supply in underdeveloped regions

An increasing penetration of community radio into many regions provides a tool and platform for (local) community debate and dialogue and supports democratic processes within societies. International broadcasting is capable of playing the same role for regional and global communities. Broadcasters will be able to enter into partnerships with the local media, supply and exchange media content and enhance the intercultural dialogue.

The Arabic and English language broadcaster, Al Jazeera, is unique among the surveyed broadcasters in the way it perceives its role as an international broadcaster. In fact, the roles of its Arabic and English services are subtly different, and the services themselves are quite distinct. Both aim to cover the news from a grassroots perspective, to “*balance the information flow from South to North*” and to be “*the channel of reference for the Middle East and Africa*” (AlJazeera 2010). However, while the Arabic channel aims to “*tell the truth*” and to provide “*the opinion, and the other opinion*”, the English channel’s mission is to “*set the news agenda*” while presenting an alternative to the Western dominated English language news media: “*the channel will set the news agenda, bridging cultures and providing a unique grassroots perspective from underreported regions around the world to a potential global audience of over one billion English speakers*”. Rather than representing the interests of Qatar to the world, Al Jazeera aims to represent the interests and meet the information needs of the Arab world. The strict Qatari censorship laws in place when the current Emir came to power have been wound back, leaving Al Jazeera as one of the few media services in the region which provides a credible source of news, but from a non Western perspective, in contrast to the BBC/CNN international news services.

4. As a Tool for projecting and enhancing national image

In today globalized world, diplomacy does not stop at contacts, dialogue, shuttle and cross national activities. It extends to how efficiently a nation is able to sell her image through the media. Usman (2008) describes this as the politics of international news and broadcasting. According to him:

Diplomacy is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of groups or states. It usually refers to international diplomacy as the conduct of international relations through the intercession of professional diplomats with regards to issues of peace making, trade, war, economics and culture (<http://www.defencejournal.com>).

A final and overarching goal common to the European broadcasters is the desire and need to represent their nations to the world. This equates to a public diplomacy goal, emanating from the ambition to further their foreign policy aims. It is specifically articulated in the

BBC Charter, which charges the BBC with “*bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK*”, “*representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities*” and “*to be the world’s best known and most respected voice in international broadcasting, thereby bringing benefit to Britain.*” (BBC Charter 2006).

In the Netherlands, one of the primary goals for RNW in its Media Act is to “disseminate a realistic image of the Netherlands abroad”, and in the Deutsche Welle Act, DW is required to “convey the image of Germany as a cultural state in the European tradition and as a free and democratic constitutional state” (Deutsche 2010). The French government was explicit at the launch of France 24 about the need to convey the French point of view and balance AngloAmerican cultural imperialism.

5. As tool for cultural Projection.

Another goal of international broadcasting is not only to tell the news as it happens but also to project certain views and perspective, depending on the motive of the news organization. The Nigerian home videos, dances, musics, films and drama series aired through the international media are systematically projecting Nigerian rich cultural heritage. In Nigeria, The NTA, AIT and Channels Television are being used as tools for cultural transmission, image enhancers and way of reaching out to Nigerians in diasporas.

6. It projects the culture and language of a society

There are various cultures all over the world, and each has its unique mode of operation. So many people attach a lot of importance to their culture and there are certain rituals, taboos and instructions that guide the culture. International broadcasting could help solve contemporary challenges brought about by the need to bridge the gap in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and societies that have entered into frequent contact with one another due to globalization. According to Richter (2008 :.3), international broadcasting aims to introduce topics and views from the home country to broaden a foreign public’s agenda and to stimulate new perspectives. However, to reach this goal, the existing agenda must be complemented by topics that relate to regional interests and cultural concepts.

For France, this is one of the chief raisons d’être for services in the Maghreb countries of North Africa. A second motive is the desire to promote (or at least preserve) the use of nations’ (nonEnglish) mother tongues. For France, this is a major driver of the broadcasting effort.

In part, this derives from the EU initiative ‘mother tongue plus two’, but reliable sources suggested

deeper forces in play, stemming from the European imperative to maintain cultural diversity and counter the threat of AngloAmerican hegemony and homogeneity.

Curiously, given its lack of imperial baggage, Deutsche Welle's (DW) formal mission statement stresses "in particular" the promotion of the German language. Even when broadcasting in other languages, DW presenters speak with a German accent. For RNW, the mission is less to promote the Dutch language than to reach Dutch speakers outside the Netherlands.

7. It offers a connection to the home country for fellow countrymen abroad:

To maintain contact with a country's citizens travelling abroad or expatriates who have emigrated and share news from home as well as cultural programming.

Within Europe there are subtle differences between each nation's perspective on the functions of international broadcasting and their goals for their international broadcasting efforts. These stem from their historical background, their legislative arrangements and their cultural standpoints, some of which are articulated in their formal missions and goals.

Historically, the BBC World Service (BBCWS) and Radio Netherlands Worldwide (RNW) had similar aspirations — to reach their colonial populations with news in their home language. Radio France International (RFI) emerged in the '70s with a similar goal, but in a postcolonial context. For all three, there remains a lingering and quite compelling sense of responsibility towards former colonies, particularly those with insufficient resources for maintaining a healthy fourth estate (Deutche, 2008).

8. It enables the disseminating of social and political convictions, concepts and Ideologies:

To advance a nation's foreign policy interests and agenda by disseminating its views on international affairs or on the events in particular parts of the world (the Western media fulfils this purpose with intent (Asadu and Usua 2011; Asekun, Owom,Chioma and Olatubosun, 2014; Price and Margolin, 2008).

The US perspective on international broadcasting reflects its great power role. The goal of the BBG (which controls the various US Government funded broadcasters including VOA), is not to promote the USA, but to demonstrate the parity of ideas. According to

BBG's executive director, Jeff Trimbel, America already promotes itself very effectively in other ways (Anne-Marie, 2009). Instead, BBG is an integral part of America's soft power efforts — the legislation which establishes BBG clearly links US sponsored broadcasting entities with US foreign policy, requiring that VOA include editorials which present the views of the US government, but rather than reflecting the views of a particular administration, the legislation promotes broader US philosophies of freedom of speech and access to information, reinforcing the inviolable principles of the First Amendment.

9. It serves as tool for conflict resolution

It is important to appreciate the role of International broadcasting in solving series of global conflict in terms of facilitating dialogue and peace building effort discussion programmes, news commentaries and news/event analysis. Some examples are the activities of terrorist (Boko Haram) in Nigeria and the recent bombing in Paris, France. The media helps raising concerns about such situations and construct global agenda for peaceful co-existence.

Reviewing this wide spectrum of national objectives for the international broadcasting exercise, there are five broad reasons driving governments to use international broadcasting to achieve their international diplomacy goals:

1. To provide credible alternative sources of information and ideas, particularly to nations which may have insufficient resources to support robust independent media (such as former colonial possessions).
2. To access and influence the overseas nationals residing in diaspora
3. To preserve culture and non English speaking languages.
4. To counter Western and English language media, cultural or political dominance, and
5. To project a country's culture, ideals, values and expertise.

Whether these enterprises are successful in achieving these ambitious and diverse goals is a challenging question, but what is clear, is that there is a broad variation in the structures and strategies that governments and private individuals have employed broadcasting tool in pursuing international diplomacy goals.

The Relevance of Diplomacy in the 21 st Century

From the evolution of diplomacy, it can be seen that diplomacy has been adapting and changing with the requirements of international politics. The functions of diplomacy have constantly found new meaning to the prevailing conditions of the world. It has been argued that since WWI, the conduct of relations between states by professional diplomats has been in decline due to changing circumstances (Rosenau 197). The role of the resident ambassador and his mission has declined in relation to that of other channels of international business. Heads of government and other ministers, who meet frequently in direct encounters, have bypassed the resident ambassador, as it is sometimes more effective and efficient to discuss matters directly with their counterparts.

Due to the increasingly technical nature of key issues in areas such as in the military; and in economic, social, educational, scientific, ecological areas etc., the diplomats do not have such specialized knowledge and need to rely on the respective experts for negotiations. In the 21st century, bilateral diplomacy has also declined in relation to multilateral diplomacy, as a consequence of the proliferation of international organizations. Many important issues are dealt with at least in part in a multilateral context such as diplomatic issues through the United Nations and defence issues in the framework of NATO or ARF.

A decline in the role of professional diplomacy or a change in its character as shown above does not mean that diplomacy has ceased to make a central contribution to international order in the 21st century, White, (2003) contends. The various functions of diplomacy, all of which have contributed greatly to state security, remain important in the 21st century. In the area of communications, diplomats are specialists in precise and detailed communication. They are able to convey moods, intentions as well as information in messages even through broadcasting. Although the negotiation of agreements between states can and does take place without the mediation of diplomats, the latter are still indispensable in this area. The conclusion of agreements by heads of state or foreign ministers is often only the climax of a long process of negotiation by the diplomats. In the gathering of information about foreign countries, diplomats are uniquely skilled in getting information about the views and policies of a country's political leadership. It is the knowledge of personalities which is important, as leaders shape a country's policy. The function of minimising friction in international relations might be carried out without diplomats, as others might be capable of applying intelligence, international broadcasting and tact in international exchanges. However, diplomats are the best persons for this role as the diplomatic profession embodies traditions and conventions that equip them for performing the role. Although the function of symbolising the existence of the society of states can be fulfilled not only by organised diplomacy but also by universal international organisations such as the United Nations, the presence in capital cities of a diplomatic corps is a sign of the existence of foreign states.

The contributions that diplomacy makes to the security of nation-states cannot be quantified easily as skilful diplomacy enhances the survival of nation-states. International broadcasting remains a key instrument for managing international diplomatic problems in the world community, contributing to international order and nation-states' security. Therefore, Nigeria government should upgrade her international communication system to march with the world powers broadcasting outfit.

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