

BBC World Service and the political economy of cultural value in historical context

Alban Webb
Andrew Smith
Jess Macfarlane
Nat Martin

June 2014

Contents

I	Overview.....	3
II	BBC World Service under Review.....	4
III	Valuing BBC World Service: cultural value by any other name.....	6
IV	Reflections: national interests and strategic challenges.....	8

I Overview

The cultural value of BBC World Service has been the *sine qua non* of British overseas broadcasting since it began in 1932. It underscored the early success of transmissions in English for all those ‘who think of the United Kingdom as home, wherever they may be’.¹ The introduction, in 1938, of foreign language broadcasting and the concurrent swelling of the Corporation’s studios and offices with cosmopolitan and multilingual staff during the Second World War gave the BBC a truly international appeal. But it was the fusion of editorial practices with the capacities and sensibilities of its transnational workforce that allowed the World Service to enhance its credibility with audiences. The Cold War further emphasized the cultural value inherent in overseas broadcasting, particularly to Iron Curtain countries cut off from the rest of the world. The ability of BBC broadcasters to speak, within cultural and linguistic idioms, to the indigenous aspirations of populations under the yoke of Soviet domination influenced audience behaviour and loyalty for generations to come. More recently, the strategic context in which the World Service operates has been marked by an intensification of competition, allied to a diversification of information platforms, and methods and behaviours of engagement with audiences that still need to be properly comprehended. Yet within this plethora of variable factors, so disconcerting and challenging for an organisation used to Twentieth-Century broadcasting certainties, the cultural brand of the World Service, the co-habitation of editorial values with cosmopolitan sensibilities, remains vital.

Yet, for all this, the cultural value of the World Service has evaded the kind of systematic and explicit recognition that its historic role in international broadcasting deserves. It has, however, been an implicit part of numerous discourses on the value and influence of overseas broadcasting. The World Service has variously been described as: a geostrategic weapon, in periods of both war and peace; a vital adjunct to political and economic interests; a major asset in terms of British prestige abroad; a core element of foreign and defence policy; Britain’s gift to the world. The perceived salience of these associations depends in no small part on the cultural currency mobilised by the World Service through its production of news, current affairs, entertainment and other types of programme material by a multinational workforce engaged in an embedded and long-term relationship with audiences. Over its eight decades of broadcasting, these are cultural assets that have facilitated the ascription of added strategic, political, economic and diplomatic value to the core broadcasting activities of the BBC. Nevertheless, a key challenge for the World Service has been the need to remain relevant to users of its output. In this respect, as the history of overseas broadcasting repeatedly demonstrates, the cultural profile of the World Service (cosmopolitan staff, working practices and journalistic capacities) is a critical mechanism by which it has retuned itself to audience appetites: the ability to differentiate and tailor output for distinct audiences, within a singular framework of editorial principles.

The ways in which the value of the World Service is understood and conceptualized depends very much on the outlook and priorities of the assessor. For the last seventy years, under Grant-in-Aid funding, the political and fiscal framework of overseas broadcasting has been dominated by the diplomatic, economic and defence requirements of the British government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in particular. The BBC, meanwhile, has had the twin role of managing these external expectations while facilitating the World Service’s organisational machine to ensure the

¹ ‘General Overseas Service’, *BBC Yearbook 1947* (London: BBC, 1947), p. 96.

journalistic standards are enhanced and protected. For the majority of its history, this has meant articulating a notion of the 'national interest' without compromising that emblem of the Corporation's professional credibility, its editorial independence. Audiences, however, have asymmetric needs depending on the context in which they are engaging with BBC output. Those in receipt of life-line services, as was the case during the Hungarian uprising in 1956, require a very different broadcast palette from those, for example, living in an expatriate community in Kenya. Therefore, part of the historic cultural experience of the World Service has been to deploy creative, communicative and connective strategies to bind these elements together within a recognisably BBC creed of broadcasting. As a consequence, the World Service is capable of reflecting multiple notions of value because it exists in a number of cultural settings (audience, stakeholder, production etc.) at any one time.

II BBC World Service under Review

Examining how the cultural value of the BBC World Service has been conceived of in the past, ascribed and applied, this study takes as its archival focus the regular, though far from systematic, reviews of British overseas information services. Until April 2014 overseas broadcasting had been funded by government Grant-in-Aid since the Second World War, unlike its domestic Licence Fee funded counterparts. As a result, the BBC World Service (BBCWS) has historically occupied an unusual place in British public service: paid for out of direct taxation, administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, yet editorially independent. Consequently, any discussion on the value of its output requires a consideration of the triangular interrelationship between the broadcaster, its audiences and users, and the British government. In broad terms this has meant that for the government the value of BBCWS has traditionally been as an instrument of influence; for audiences, the value of programmes was in being informed about and making sense of events both close to home and in the wider world; for the BBC itself, it was about fulfilling a need for the provision of independent authoritative news and information.

The reviews, beginning with the Independent Committee of Inquiry into the Overseas Information Services (Drogheda Report) in 1954, up to the review of Public Diplomacy by Lord Carter of Coles in 2005, reflect an episodic and sporadic history of institutional attitudes towards the exercise of influence abroad. They also, in light of the current preoccupation with the "soft-power" capacities of the nation state, offer a richer and deeper understanding of British traditions of overseas influence than is often acknowledged in recent studies of the "new" public diplomacy (global, multi-polar, social and digital) of the Twenty-First Century. In this respect, the battle for the attention, hearts and minds of overseas audiences is evolutionary, rather than epochal, despite the radical technological, behavioural and conceptual shifts of the last two decades. As Robin Brown suggests: 'the scope and visibility of the new public diplomacy is novel, the mechanisms that it employs are not. Persuasion, framing and agenda setting are basic tools of political influence'.² While it is true that contemporary international communications are multi-directional, multi-platform and embedded in everyday culture in ways that would have seemed unimaginable a generation ago, many of the principle motivations and objectives of organisations and governments

² Quoted in, James Pamment, *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A comparative study of policy and practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.9.

engaged in these practices reflect long-term strategies of engagement that are perpetually revised to reflect contemporary interests, concerns and anxieties. In this respect, the shifts and continuities in the conduct of public and cultural diplomacy sit alongside each other in a dynamic relationship that constantly presents new challenges.

Rapid recent changes in strategic and technological environments have, however, presented new categories of challenge and opportunity for those engaged in international broadcasting and the wider landscape of strategic communications. This has accelerated changes in the conceptual approach to public diplomacy which adds to the sense of unfamiliarity felt by many practitioners. As Foreign Secretary in 1998, Robin Cook's attempts to harness the image of "Cool Britannia" through his *Panel 2000* initiative may well have been thematically forward-thinking, but the instrumental approach taken, 'the projection and promotion of the UK's image, values and policies overseas',³ was closer in style to the methods of the 1940s and 1950s than the strategies employed just a few years later to manage the emerging realities of global social and digital communications. By the 2002 Wilton Review, the "projection of Britain", that Twentieth-Century mainstay of overseas information services, had been superseded. Public diplomacy was now 'work which aims at influencing in a positive way the perceptions of individuals and organisations overseas about the UK, and their engagement with the UK'.⁴ Three years later, this was further nuanced as 'work aiming to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas, in order to improve understanding of and influence for the United Kingdom in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long terms goals'.⁵

This is a welcome development for the BBC World Service who have historically baulked at the deterministic and instrumental strategies devised by funders in Whitehall. But as modes of persuasion gave way to a more open sense of engaged dialogic practices, so the political reflex inherent in setting public diplomacy objectives has, to some extent, been mediated by the understanding that the ability to control information flows in a virtual, as well as physical, multipolar communications landscape has significantly ebbed. This is something well understood by the BBC who argued as far back as 1967, at the time of the Beeley Report on the Overseas Information Services, that 'The aim of external broadcasting cannot be to achieve quick changes of opinion but to contribute to a climate of opinion, and for the BBC at least opinion based on an assessment of facts'.⁶ The legacy of the pursuit of an empirically-rooted contribution to a "climate of opinion" can be found in the World Service concept of the "global conversation", now a decade old initiative that spawned the *World Have Your Say* programme and a wider commitment to interactivity with audiences.

Achieving influence through an engaged reciprocal relationship with audiences and users, whether as an information provider or public diplomacy actor, should refocus attention on the manifest cultural capacities and currency of the BBC World Service and the need to protect them from challenges inside as well as outside the organisation. The all too often obscured, yet essential,

³ Quoted in, James Pamment, 'Western European Public Diplomacy', in Mai'a Davis Cross & Jan Melissen (ed.) *European Public Diplomacy: Soft Power at Work* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.27.

⁴ Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, December 2005, p.8. Available at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-carter-report>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ BBC, *Annual Report and Accounts, 1966/7*, p.87.

cultural value of the World Service will have an increasingly prominent role to play as its cosmopolitan staff and distinct working practices, global editorial outlook, and local rapport demonstrate cultural affinities that will become ever more important in building relationships of trust and credibility with users throughout the world in the years to come.

III Valuing BBC World Service: cultural value by any other name

Real independence for the BBC World Service under Grant-in-Aid funding was hard won in the years after the Second World War, yet there has remained a strategic accommodation on the part of the BBC with British government concerns which continues to be reflected in the range and breadth of its services overseas. For this reason, the idea of representing the “national interest” came to dominate the Twentieth Century history of the World Service as the *quid pro quo* of government funding. When the Lord President of the Council, Herbert Morrison, announced to the House of Commons in July 1946 the peacetime principle of editorial independence for broadcasts abroad it was couched in equivocal terms: ‘Clearly, it would be unthinkable for Broadcasting House [*sic.*] to be broadcasting to Europe, at the taxpayer’s expense, doctrines hopelessly at variance with the foreign policy of His Majesty’s Government’.⁷ Indeed, there were many in Parliament at the time who considered it axiomatic that overseas broadcasting by the BBC should support the foreign and defence priorities and military stance of the government. The experience of war had demonstrated and confirmed their belief in this as well as building consensus around the perception of the added value the reputation, reach and audience penetration achieved by the wartime World Service could deliver for the UK. Accordingly, the political and economic value of overseas broadcasting became a cardinal principle of governing attitudes towards the World Service and was a central feature of successive government and government-commissioned reviews of the World Service right up to the present day. These, however, were not core concerns for the BBC and any political or economic dividends were considered a collateral by-product of the job of broadcasting. Nevertheless, it has been necessary for the BBC, or at least its management, to account for its activities in these instrumental terms as part of the Grant-in-Aid regime. As the Drogheda Committee put it in 1954, ‘the aim of the Information Services must always be to achieve in the long run some definite political or commercial result’.⁸

The political and diplomatic dividend drawn from overseas broadcasting is not hard to see. Writing in the middle of the Cold War (one of a number of frontline battles of the airwaves fought by the BBC) and in response to the 1967 Beeley Report, officials at the Foreign Office argued that the ‘effective presentation of information is now, and will become to a much greater extent, as vital an element of foreign and defence policy as, say, infantry battalions or naval escort vehicles.’⁹ The ability of broadcasting to travel across cultural, linguistic, psychological and geographical borders and penetrate where other parts of the military and diplomatic machine could not was an unassailable advantage for the BBC World Service: one born out of a long-term engagement with the interests, ambitions and tolerances of audiences. But what made broadcasting such a versatile

⁷ Hansard, Fifth Series, *House of Commons Debates*, vol.425, col.1087, 16 July 1946.

⁸ BBC Written Archive Centre (WAC), Caversham, Berkshire, UK. R20/53, ‘Report of the Independent Committee of Enquiry into the Overseas Information Services’, 27 July 1953, p. 3.

⁹ The Public Record Office at The National Archive (TNA:PRO), FCO164/720.

commodity was the prestige it accrued for the UK by delivering trusted and reliable news overseas, or as a Foreign Office review explained it to the incoming Conservative government of Edward Heath, the BBC's 'international reputation for veracity'.¹⁰ For the Foreign Office, this presented the British government with 'a major weapon for the unimpeded presentation of British policies and views to both elite foreigners of influence and wider audiences'.¹¹ In this sense, the credibility of the World Service worked as a cultural transmission-belt drawing associations between British values, as reflected in the content and style of World Service output (itself the result of transnational and cosmopolitan working practices), and perceptions of British national interests, whether it be foreign, defence or economic. As such, the political and diplomatic advantages of the World Service to the British government relied on its ability to act as an editorially independent and verifiable source which had cultural relevance and value to audiences around the world. A good example of this was the re-emphasis, after the debacle of the Suez crisis, on funding the BBC Arabic language service. Colossal distrust of the British government was by then a mainstay of Arabic attitudes, but it did not prevent the BBC from maintaining a large audience in the Middle East. The BBC's broadcasting credentials and consequent audience penetration offered the government 'a major weapon in combating distorted or hostile interpretations of our policies and aims'.¹²

The economic argument in favour of the World Service was just as persistent, but perhaps less convincing. Nevertheless, while the BBC has always viewed supporting trade as peripheral to its core broadcasting task, it was sufficiently aware of its importance as a governing concern in Whitehall to have given it a great deal of lip service in the past. In the early 1950s, for example, the BBC was engaged in a hostile argument with the government over funding levels for the World Service. When the Drogheda Committee promulgated the economic argument in favour of overseas information services, the BBC was keen to capitalise on the perception that its broadcasts abroad could assist with advancing trade and the economic reconstruction of post-war Britain. What followed was an *ad hoc* arrangement whereby from time to time, in collaboration, for example, with the Board of Trade and the British National Export Council, series' of programmes would be commissioned and broadcast promoting trade and British technology overseas.¹³ Indeed, this approach formed the basis of an insurance policy for the World Service with successive government commissioned reviews extolling the virtues of export promotion on the basis of very flimsy evidence. This was crucial at the time of the Beeley review in 1967 in saving the BBC from the worst effects of deep cuts in public expenditure as a result of a major structural deficit and sterling devaluation. Reviewing the economic challenges facing the Foreign Office in light of devaluation by 1969, The Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation, chaired by Sir Val Duncan, went even further in articulating the function of overseas services in supporting Britain's commercial activities abroad. The United Kingdom's relative economic decline in these decades enhanced the pertinence of this argument, reaching its peak in the late 1970s and coinciding with the 1978 review by the Central Policy Review Staff (CPRS), led by Sir Kenneth Berrill, into Overseas Representation. The Berrill Report argued for severe cuts in overseas services except where their work explicitly supported economic development, thereby linking Britain's influence in the world to the country's economic performance. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to see the BBC parading its income-

¹⁰ TNA:PRO, FCO26/591, 'Review of the BBC's External Services', 10 December 1970.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., R Fyvis-Walker, 'Reductions in Public Expenditure – Overseas Information Services'.

¹³ BBC, *Annual Report and Accounts, 1953/4*, p.7.

generation potential: in its Annual Report for 1978/9 the BBC even cited the example of a British Truck firm that, as a direct consequence of a programme to Saudi Arabia, had received orders worth £2 million.¹⁴ However, reflecting on these imperatives a decade earlier, at the time of the Duncan Review, comments by the Managing Director of the External Services (as the World Service was then called), Oliver Whitely, were as withering on the subject of the political economy of overseas broadcasting as they were insightful:

The main value of the External Services is not that they may help to sell tractors or nuclear reactors, nor even that they may influence people in other countries, nobis or mobs, as to be more amenable to British diplomacy or foreign policy. Their main value is that because they effectively represent and communicate this British propensity for truthfulness or the adherence to the individual right to the perception of reality, they help to increase the instability of political systems based on the total inversion of morality and reality for ideological purposes. Countries which have such political systems are for that reason less amenable to British diplomacy, more difficult to trade with, and particularly if powerful and proliferating, liable to be a military threat to Britain, whose contrasted liberties constantly give the lie to their fictitious universe.¹⁵

IV Reflections: national interests and strategic challenges

The day-to-day oversight of government funded overseas information and representational services rested with the Whitehall departments most concerned with specific aspects of their activities (primarily the Foreign Office), but the frequency and degree to which their strategic rationale became defined by these *ad hoc* and appointed teams of reviewers is rather unusual in the conduct of government business. From the historian's perspective, they usefully bring the various actors to account, demanding they justify in policy terms the money spent on them and the intentions that framed their activities at particular moments in time. They also help to demonstrate the amorphous, multi-agency and contingent nature of British public diplomacy over the last 70 years. While the provision of accurate and timely international news with local appeal and relevance, accompanied by comment and cultural programming, has been the hallmark of BBC overseas transmissions since the outset, international broadcasting remains a multi-dimensional enterprise that goes beyond mere reporting. For example, the experience of the Second World War and the Cold War underscored its significance as an adjunct to defence policy, whether in cold or hot war conditions. The transition from Empire to Commonwealth, reported in real-time, illuminated the credentials of the broadcaster to speak to and join together a transnational community of interests while mapping the revitalisation of indigenous identities. Meanwhile, austerity Britain's post-war appetite to remain at the top table of world politics, without the resources to match, has been ably served by the World Service's international reputation and the reflected prestige this bestows on the United Kingdom. All of these attributes matter, especially to the British government, but ultimately they rely on the ability of the World Service to engage audiences and users on an individual and personal level and to give them a service they want or need in an attractive format, or at least in a

¹⁴ BBC, *Annual Report and Accounts, 1978/9*, p.49.

¹⁵ Quoted in Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Volume V: Competition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.711-2.

way that is palatable. This, in turn, is dependent not just on the editorial ethics and practices of the World Service (cultural expressions of an institutional sort), but on the cultural sensibilities, capacities and rich experience of broadcasters whose job it is to speak into the linguistic, national and imaginative idioms of audiences.

Changes in the external environment – i.e. war, decolonisation, terrorism, economic fluctuations, technological advances – were matched by (and often shaped) shifts in governmental priorities. As such, in any given time-frame, the rationale laid down to guide overseas information services reflected contemporary anxieties and opportunities just as much as the long-term capacities of the BBC World Service and the underlying strategic interests of the British government. This was evident in the Drogheda Report which argued that with the reconstruction of Western Europe now well under way, BBC services to near neighbours or friendly nations was an expense the country could do without. At the same time, as a victorious nation, Britain believed itself to have an inherent right to “great nation” status, something a commitment to a global service of international broadcasting demonstrated – not least by keeping the voice of Britain audible around the world. After the humiliation of the Suez crisis, relative economic decline, and with the process of decolonisation well underway, by the time of the Beeley Report attentions had turned back to what a refocus on Europe (and entry to the European Economic Community) could do for Britain. This was also true for Edward Heath’s Conservative government as they conducted negotiations with their European counterparts,¹⁶ but by the time of the CPRS review in 1978 and with entry secured, relations with continental Europe were no longer a priority. However, while the significance of Europe waned, so that of the developing world gathered pace as a focus for information work and broadcasting in particular. The idea of using radio services to promote Britain’s political, diplomatic and economic interests was again in operation, albeit with a different geographical focus: ‘enhancing the image of Britain as an innovatory nation, with advancing technology and competitive industry The main emphasis is on creating a climate in which governments, government departments and major industrial concerns may “think British”’.¹⁷ Nevertheless, despite changes, and reversals, in strategic approach over the decades the pervading governmental theme was to gain and sustain influence and the World Service was consistently acknowledged as having a significant role in that. As the 2005 Carter review put it in more measured, and decidedly Twenty-First Century, tones: ‘The primary purpose of the BBC World Service is to disseminate independent, impartial news and information around the world¹⁸.....Public diplomacy is arguably not the primary objective of the World Service, but it is inevitable that in providing an internationally renowned and highly valued service that there will be positive public diplomacy gains for the country associated with that brand.’¹⁹

Despite the regular reviews that have continued into the current era, international broadcasting, as with the wider application of soft power strategies, remains to varying degrees a

¹⁶ TNA:PRO, FCO26/591, ‘Review of the BBC’s External Services’, 10 December 1970.

¹⁷ TNA:PRO, FCO26/1928, ‘Report on Bengali, Hindu & Urdu Services’, 24 October 1978.

¹⁸ In 2005 this meant: ‘Major transitional countries (e.g. China, Brazil, India, Russia, South Africa); EU accession states (in Central and Eastern Europe); Key Islamic countries (e.g. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia); Major developed countries (e.g. Japan, France, Germany); The USA (which is sufficiently distinct from other major developed countries to warrant its own category)’.

¹⁹ Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, December 2005, p.8. Available at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-carter-report>

leap into the unknown. Initially hampered by a lack of audience research capacity (including problems of accessing data in closed societies),²⁰ knowing audiences, let alone making them “think British”, is an imprecise science. For the Foreign Office’s C.E. King in 1967 the effectiveness and value of activities ‘cannot really be proved or measured. It can only be guessed or assumed’.²¹ This official attitude was echoed a few years later by Norman Reddaway when he noted ‘that it is not possible to quantify accurately the effect of broadcasting. An act of faith and commonsense is necessary.’²² Consequently, for the majority of its history a genuine appreciation of the World Service’s effectiveness and impact has lain out of reach. This historic uncertainty in relation to the government’s public diplomacy machinery helps to explain the cycle of investigation and recommendation that has punctuated the existence of institutions such as the BBC World Service and the British Council.

More recently, an appetite for delivery and outcomes, allied to increasingly sophisticated techniques of analysis, has altered the terms of the debate. For the World Service this started with the 1984 examination of its services, led by Alan Perry of the Treasury. The Perry Review, which reflected the then Conservative government’s concerns with public service efficiency, represents the beginning of a new era of accountability for the World Service in relation to its funding, organisation and the strategic priorities associated with it. Over the ensuing decade or so numerous bodies and organisations, including the Public Accounts Committee, National Audit Office, Foreign Affairs Committee, McKinsey & Company, investigated the World Service examining, among other things, performance indicators, management structures and value for money of its output. It is interesting to note, however, that until these developments there had been very little requirement on the World Service to report to the Foreign Office in terms of formally agreed performance measures. Audience research was mainly used for internal information rather than external validation. This was about to change, as was the relationship between the World Service and the rest of the BBC. The appointment of John Birt as Director-General of the BBC in 1992 precipitated a radical reorganisation of the Corporation. Performance Review (the process by which each separate part of the BBC reported performance against a range of targets) and Produce Choice (in which budgets were no longer held centrally but devolved to programme makers) were significant changes in their own terms, but the 1996 proposal to merge overseas with domestic news, as part of a complete restructuring of the BBC, took everyone (including World Service management and the Foreign Office) by surprise. Many interpreted this as an attack on the World Service, threatening its distinctiveness and unique cultural attributes. Fierce parliamentary pressure and the establishment of a joint Foreign Office / BBC working by the Foreign Secretary effectively protected the World Service from these reforms at the time, but nearly two decades later the folding in of World Service into the BBC’s News Group has become a reality.

Meanwhile, changes on the home front over this period have been matched by major geostrategic shifts and technological challenges that have redrawn the map of overseas broadcasting as well as the methods by which it is achieved. The end of the Cold War saw a realignment (and

²⁰ For a more detailed exploration of the challenges facing audience research at the BBC World Service see: Marie Gillespie, Alban Webb & Hugh Mackay (eds.), ‘Designs and Devices: towards a genealogy of audience research methods at the BBC World Service, 1932-2011’, special issue of *Participations: International Journal of Audience Research* 8(1), 2011.

²¹ TNA: PRO, FCO 13/280.

²² TNA:PRO, FCO26/591, ‘Study of Essential Functions’, Norman Reddaway, 6 November 1970.

significant reduction) of services away Central and Eastern Europe to the greater Middle East. Shortwave radio has been joined by successive waves of different broadcast platforms – FM, satellite television, online, digital and social media – that have reshaped the infrastructure and organisation of the World Service as well as editorial and behavioural principles of engagement and interaction. At the same time, audiences have become less dependent on the BBC and other foreign broadcasters for news and information. It was with these types of challenges in mind that the 2005 Carter review of public diplomacy argued that the BBC World Service ‘will increasingly have to demonstrate the ability to respond to changing circumstances, whether they are technological, cultural, economic or political’.²³ And this is perhaps the most pressing test for the World Service: to harness these new developments and keep its hold on audiences while remaining editorially relevant. The history of overseas broadcasting by the BBC has been a remarkably successful and influential one over the last 80 years and the distinct cultural identity and value of the World Service has been an essential part of that success. Now funded by the Licence Fee (since April 2014) and with relations between the World Service and the British government (if any) under a new Charter uncertain, how will the BBC protect and nourish this most precious commodity in the future?

²³ Lord Carter of Coles, *Public Diplomacy Review*, December 2005, p.8. Available at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-carter-report>