

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON DIPLOMATIC TRAINING

### 36th Meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Academies and Institutes of International Relations

College of Europe  
Brussels and Bruges  
24 – 26 September 2008

The 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Deans and Directors returned to Europe with fond memories of the remarkable Meeting at Maputo in 2007. The co-chairs opened the meeting with renewed thanks and congratulations to the host institutions in Mozambique and South Africa.

The College of Europe had organised a similarly innovative programme, commencing in the magnificent Egmont Palace in Brussels, and concluding in the calm beauty of the College in Bruges. In addition to being mounted in two centres, the programme offered for the first time the opportunity to pursue more than one theme, in a series of parallel workshops on current practical aspects of diplomacy.

*Paul Demaret*, Rector of the College of Europe, welcomed Members to the meeting, observing that in troubled times it was more than ever the task of diplomacy to keep channels of communication open. The training of diplomats was central to that mission.

*Ambassador Jiří Gruša*, Director of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, noted that diplomacy required an intimate alignment of expert knowledge and human skills, combining efficacy with ethics, economics with cultural awareness. Diplomatic academies harnessed old virtues – wisdom, balance, courage, moderation – to meet new challenges. The Forum had a special contribution to make, a global network of partners helping to forge common understanding and foster non-totalitarian mentality.

*Professor Casimir Yost* brought greetings from one of the founding fathers of the Forum, Dean Peter Krogh, who on this occasion had shown once again strategic vision in putting domestic diplomacy ahead of international diplomacy. Dean Krogh had saluted the College of Europe, one of the twelve founding institutions of the Forum in 1972, and wished the Meeting well in Bruges, one of the world's treasures.

*Professor Dieter Mahncke*, Head of International Relations and Diplomacy at the College of Europe, recalled the contribution of diplomacy to conflict resolution and peaceful change in what Hedley Bull had called 'anarchical society'. In a globalised world it was no longer possible to limit diplomacy to the pursuit of narrow national interest. It was necessary to shoulder a larger responsibility for a world facing challenges which could only be met together. These meetings offered a valuable forum for exchanging views, deepening understanding and improving awareness of different approaches to our common task.

## **The Future of European Diplomacy**

*Eneko Landaburu*

Director General for External Relations, European Commission

In a globalised international system, Europe had become a ‘pertinent space’, a serious actor in world affairs which demanded a coherent, strategic, *agile* diplomacy.

The 1990’s had seen a series of revolutionary changes, in technology, in financial and economic affairs, in regional politics. New global actors had emerged, new issues had come to the fore such as climate change and energy security. In response to these new challenges and opportunities, the Member States of the EU needed greater unity of voice and of action.

The Union had achieved already a great deal of integration, in economic and monetary policy, in trade, in domestic security co-operation under the Schengen regime. The Member States and institutions needed now to press ahead in the creation of effective co-operation in diplomacy.

What needed to be done? The first key elements included the development of improved capacity for strategic analysis, stronger and clearer common vision, and a common approach to the challenges which affected all alike – for example, organised crime and energy security.

The European Commission had already its own programmes of co-operation with the other EU institutions and with Member States. It had a leading role in the process of further European integration in pursuit of security, liberty, democracy and prosperity. The EU was neither a government nor a traditional international institution; it had no naturally cohesive motor. It was often the institutions which had provided that motive force, which had imagined the way ahead and pointed the way for the Member States to follow. The Commission was in this sense a laboratory of ideas on which the Member States could build.

The pressure and momentum of events often left government leaders too little time to think. National diplomats and international diplomats operated side by side, but not always having had the opportunity of stepping back and reflecting, analysing the situation and forging a sound basis of policy and action. An example could be seen in respect of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine: the EU did not have then sufficient knowledge of the origin and meaning of those events on which to base a coherent response. (There was in many of our countries a disjunction between the academic analysts and the practitioners of diplomacy.)

An attempt was being made in the Treaty of Lisbon to address the question of coherence by unifying in the same person the roles of High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (currently Mr Javier Solana) and the new role of Vice-President of the European Commission – drawing together the roles and resources of the Commission and of the Member States. That person would be supported in his/her efforts by an External Action Service comprising the network of 135 Delegations of the European Commission with its 5,000 staff at post, officials of the General Secretariat of the Council, and diplomats and other officials seconded from the Member States. The new service would help to create a ‘European culture of diplomacy’.

The development of this system would require improved administrative and co-ordinating capacity. But that in itself would not be enough. In this context the diplomatic academies of Europe had a great opportunity and responsibility to help create something qualitatively new – ‘European’ diplomats.

The Commission was making its contribution to this process in the training of its own officials in such diplomatic skills as political analysis and reporting and complex negotiation. They also were facilitating programmes of exchange and secondment between the Commission and the diplomatic services of the Member States, including attendance at each others’ courses of diplomatic training. National diplomatic academies had in this context precious experience to share.

There were some who saw this evolution as a threat to national diplomatic services. But there was space in the international system for both to operate separately and together as their interests severally dictated. Most Member States now saw the potential benefits of a unified European diplomatic voice as a multiplier not only of European but also of national interest. (An example could be seen in the way in which *Mr Sarkozy*, a Gaullist, had represented not just France in conversations in Moscow in August, but the European Union, with the EU flag next to the French flag, and with *Mr Barroso*, President of the European Commission, at his side.)

The European Union was heading inexorably towards a European diplomacy. It would require improved analytic and reflective capacity. It would need an improved structure of training. The EU institutions looked forward to working with the Member States in this exciting new venture.

#### **In discussion:**

- A number of initiatives had been undertaken to draw closer together the diplomatic traditions and experience of the Member States. The European Diplomatic Training Initiative founded in 2004 by seventeen institutions from twelve countries, had offered the first course in ‘European Diplomacy’ in 2005. The European Diplomatic Programme, now in its seventh year, brought together two young diplomats from each of the twenty-seven Member States plus the Commission and Council Secretariat in five modules of practical training in the course of a year.
- A pool of training opportunities was being created through programmes of exchange and secondment between the EU institutions and the Member States. The objective was to nurture a European *esprit de corps* through common experience in training. Officials of the European Commission had to continue their Community responsibilities, for example in the fields of energy and trade; they needed to add a political dimension. Similarly, national diplomats needed to add to their knowledge of Community competence.
- There was a role for independent and semi-independent institutions as well in helping to create a European diplomacy. It would be helpful to define what a European diplomat needed in the way of knowledge, skills and training that were different from or additional to those for national diplomacy.
- In creating a common diplomacy the EU was not starting from scratch. A pattern of co-operation between Member State missions in host countries was now well-established, varying of course according to politics, place and personality.

- There was not enough intellectual political debate on the European project. Intellectuals were reluctant to get caught up in the compromises of politics, preferring to retain their purity of thought. Practitioners had to get on with the job. It was important to try to bridge the gap between them. Jacques Delors had been the embodiment of harmonious balance between ideas and action. Academics could help to foster such balance, pushing politicians to raise their sights to wider horizons. Practitioners for their part needed to make more time to read, no matter how difficult.
- It was going to be difficult to generate greater European political consciousness while the Member States remained immersed in their national preoccupations, and without the conjoined decision-making structures in foreign affairs outlined in the Treaty of Lisbon. Even with Lisbon there were unclear divisions of responsibility between an elected President of the Council, the President of the Commission and a newly-hyphenated High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission.
- There were bound to be institutional complications in establishing any new venture of such significance. But the European Union already offered a model of integrated diplomacy, co-operative effort and effective soft power projection.

### **Reports from Regional Groups: the regional dimension of diplomatic training**

For the first time, the Regional Groups were provided with a series of questions to help guide discussion:

1. what were the major challenges facing diplomacy in the region;
2. to what extent was there regional co-operation in diplomatic training;
3. how had the revolution in information and communications technology affected diplomatic training;
4. what opportunities were offered for mid-career training;
5. what training was available for negotiating with non-state actors.

#### **Africa** (*Ambassador Pandela Thomas Mathoma, rapporteur*)

Nine delegates had represented six countries. The principal challenge facing African governments was conflict resolution. They were attempting to build an African vision of diplomacy, a diplomacy of democratic legitimacy and post-conflict development. The African Chapter of the International Forum was establishing special programmes, both Anglophone and Francophone, to enhance the capacity of African diplomatic institutes.

Practical skills training was needed, including multilateral negotiation, conference diplomacy and the diplomacy of peacekeeping. They were working with UNITAR as well as with national institutions of donor countries, but the emphasis increasingly was on developing regional mutual self-help, for example through the Southern African Development Community. E-learning was going to play an important part in this effort, helping to resolve problems of distance and cost.

New initiatives for mid-career diplomats were being created, including re-entry debriefing after postings abroad, refresher courses and mid-career examinations.

In Africa civil society was an important factor in governance. Some were dealt with individually, others consulted collectively. Training for negotiation with non-state actors was a major issue to be discussed at the next meeting of the African Chapter.

**Asia** (*Ambassador Heng Xiaojun*, rapporteur)

Altogether 21 participants from 14 countries of Asia attended the discussion of the Asia Regional Group. The discussion covered professional training, regional co-operation and common challenges.

**Professional training programmes**

Programmes were offered at four levels – junior, mid-career, senior and for other government departments.

They focused on five major areas:

1. academic studies of international law, international economics, international relations and diplomatic studies
2. training in practical skills including protocol, negotiation, communication and administration
3. training in foreign languages
4. training in diplomatic practice in non-traditional areas such as climate change, energy and health
5. training in macro-aspects of diplomacy such as cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy and public diplomacy.

**Regional co-operation**

The ASEAN+3 Regional Annual Meeting on Diplomatic Training had been established in 2004 and had met since in Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Japan and Thailand. The next meeting would be held in 2009 in the Republic of Korea.

Extensive international co-operation continued to be conducted in the form of visits, exchanges of students and faculty, internships and co-operation agreements

**Common challenges**

1. foreign language training, especially in Western languages
2. conflict resolution and crisis management requiring training in cross-cultural communication and negotiation skills
3. public diplomacy in an international system governed by perception and image
4. network-building and maintenance
5. the definition and development of an Asian diplomacy with regional identity and integration comparable to that being developed by the European Union

**North America** (*Professor Alan Henrikson*, rapporteur)

The American and Canadian members of the group, mindful of the position as well of Mexico (attending the Latin American group) recognised the problems of energy (including the construction of natural gas pipelines from the Arctic region), economic development (the disparity between the United States and Mexico, which generated pressure for northward migration), and border security (for Canada and Mexico as well, being partners in NAFTA, it was vitally important to ‘keep the border open’).

Regional co-operation in diplomatic training was, at government level, mostly informal. The US and Canadian Foreign Service Institutes enjoyed good co-operation and exchanged visits and curricula, but did not have formal linkages such as those between their respective War Colleges.

There had been significant development in the field of ICT for distance learning. Canada's Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) now offered some 150 courses online, in addition to 200 classroom courses. A number of courses were offered in combination ('blended learning') with prerequisite modules offered online. Many of CFSI's courses were open to officials from all ministries. The US Foreign Service Institute (FSI) also offered many courses online, not only for language instruction but also in technical areas such as consular affairs. Relatively more of FSI's online courses were restricted. Via the SIPRNet, for example, a 'community of practice' group engaged in classified discussion on Afghanistan.

Both US and Canadian institutes were placing new emphasis on mid-career training in leadership and management. Increasingly the State Department was called upon to perform a 'clearing house' role, and was developing programmes of training in inter-agency skills for officials in other Departments including Defense, Homeland Security, Trade and Treasury.

Both governments recognised the importance to regional relations of effective outreach to non-state actors, influencing decision-making at sub-federal level. Training was provided in advocacy, using scenarios likely to be encountered in advocacy campaigns. (The Canadians had established an Advocacy Secretariat in their embassy in Washington near the US Capitol, from which Canadian diplomats were engaging directly in the American political process without being part of that process. It was a delicate but necessary task, a new dimension of diplomacy likely to be seen elsewhere.)

Beyond the promotion of the interests of the North American partners, the United States in particular had sought in its diplomacy, in the words of Tom Payne, 'to make the world anew', as reflected in the 'transformational diplomacy' of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to promote democracy.

*Ambassador (ret) Jeremy Kinsman* introduced the newly-published *Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support* ([www.diplomatshandbook.org](http://www.diplomatshandbook.org)), the inaugural project of The Community of Democracies (CD). Its preparation and publication had been financially supported by a variety of governments, such as Canada, Chile, India, Poland, the United States and others, and by foundations and universities, notably the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. As the Introductory messages from *Vaclav Havel* and from Foreign Ministers *Luis Amado* of Portugal and *Radoslaw Sikorski* of Poland made clear, the Handbook was a project whose supporters were from many countries.

Not all participants in the International Forum on Diplomatic Training were participants in the CD, though most were. The CD was not a bloc, was not adversarial, and did not advocate any specific national form for democratic governance. It acknowledged that a community of empathy existed among all democrats with fellow democratic advocates and human rights defenders in countries whose governments denied basic rights. The CD also acknowledged a duty of its participating countries to assist countries in democratic transition.

The *Handbook* had been commissioned to help enable diplomats of democratic countries to navigate the challenges of diplomatic representation at a time when diplomatic practice was in any case transforming. Diplomats had been concerned almost exclusively with communication on behalf of their governments with host country authorities. Today, they were increasingly mandated to engage with the public, and notably with civil society, that was itself informed about global norms of governance and engaged with civil society partners elsewhere through the revolution in information technologies.

How were diplomats to navigate these challenges: to reconcile in their activity the international covenants according a right to help, with the Conventions governing diplomatic representation; to reconcile the spirit of public diplomacy with the pursuit of specific interests engaged in the official diplomatic relationship with the host authorities?

There was no blanket prescription, no template meant to fit all situations. Guidance could be provided only by examination of the ways diplomats of democracies had supported democratic development in the past.

The *Handbook* was a practical, fact and reality-based field guide drawing on hundreds of interviews with diplomats and NGO representatives past and present. It offered country case studies from geographically varied episodes of democratic assertion in the past as in South Africa and Chile, to more recent experiences in Ukraine and Sierra Leone, to current situations of impasse as in Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe.

The *Handbook* demonstrated that every country-case was different, as each country's history and conditions differed. Moreover, beneficial change depended principally on the non-violent efforts of the people of the country concerned – outside support was only secondary.

Civil society was the building block for democratic development. Engagement with civil society was often best conducted by international NGO's to which diplomats needed to defer. The process of democratic development took place over the long haul. Indeed, democratic change was never-ending.

As a training aid for diplomatic academies as well as a factual analysis of country situations of interest to scholars and practitioners, the *Handbook* would be updated in future editions with new country case studies, to which the contributions of practitioners would be greatly appreciated. Already, since publication a few months earlier, there had been signs of a hardening of the political landscape, in part because of belief that the democratic agenda has been misused. Non-democracies were pushing back, or seeking to blame 'outside interference' for legitimate manifestations of civil society's calls for internal reform.

Democracies needed each in its own way to assess diplomatic activities in support of democratic development, the consistency of policy interests and engagement, and to work with each other and with civil society. The *Handbook* provided a record of such efforts and promoted insight into future possible applications. The Council for a Community of Democracies, the Community of Democracies Secretariat and a number of regional inter-governmental organisations aimed to support workshops for diplomats to discuss these issues, with the participation of representatives of civil society.

### **Latin America** (*Ambassador Fernando Reis*, rapporteur)

Six delegates had represented six countries. The diplomacy of the region was conducted at present against a background of change, with new issues, new governments, new social actors and new political movements. The nature and impact of those changes had not yet become entirely clear, though trends were observable.

They shared a commitment to peace and democracy, to economic development and regional integration. The principal challenges were social unrest and political frustration, in the context of increased vulnerability to the forces of globalisation.

There was a role for diplomacy in mediation, not least through the regional organisations UNASUR and MERCOSUR. But there was no magic recipe.

Latin American nations valued diplomacy for its own sake as it had promoted regional dialogue, respect for international law, strong support for peaceful settlement of disputes, counter-proliferation of nuclear weapons and conflict resolution.

**Europe** (*John Hemery, rapporteur*)

Thirty-five delegates had represented twenty-one countries, nine independent organisations and two international institutions.

The principal challenge facing diplomatic training for many in the region lay in preparing to work either with or without the new arrangements for decision-making and representation in the external relations of the European Union under the Lisbon Treaty.

The European Commission was leading the way, with six Directorates General engaged in a three-pillar effort to develop diplomatic skills: twenty-four Commission officials were now seconded to the foreign ministries and posts abroad of the Member States; they had developed an eight-module programme of diplomatic training as well as a new programme of training in political analysis and reporting for members of the External Service; and they had fostered a mutual opening up to each other of courses offered by the Commission and by the foreign ministries of the Member States.

Part of the objective was to encourage the development of a European diplomatic ethos. They were moving towards a ‘diplomatic college *process*’, on the model of the European Security and Defence College, rather than a formal establishment.

The European Diplomatic Programme (EDP) continued to bring together two young diplomats from each Member State plus the Commission and Council Secretariat for a five-module programme of training conducted over the course of a year. The training directors of the foreign ministries of the Member States, Commission and Council Secretariat met twice a year to share best practice and to co-ordinate programmes of exchange.

Diplomatic academies and other institutions were contributing to programmes of regional co-operation including the Central European Initiative, the Dubrovnik Diplomatic Forum, the European Diplomatic Training Initiative and the multinational online courses of the Diplo Foundation.

Estonia was engaged, with the support of Finland and Sweden, in a programme of outreach to Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Bulgaria had initiated a comparable programme of co-operation amongst Balkan foreign ministries, in association with the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.

A European diplomacy thus was evolving informally, drawing together different diplomatic traditions through multiple, cumulative programmes of practical integration and training. As with the development of the Internet, progress was being made through individual creative impulses without a central imposing structure.

At some stage it would become necessary to harness that complexity and pull the threads together. It was especially important to avoid the re-creation of a divided continent – an iron curtain in people’s minds.

## Reports from Workshop Sessions

In a further innovation, the programme of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting gave participants the opportunity of choosing to attend at least two of five workshops offered (twice) concurrently on a range of topics:

1. Teaching negotiation skills
2. Project cycle management in development co-operation
3. Training for successful intercultural communication
4. Public diplomacy: managing a crisis
5. Mediation

### Workshop 1. Training negotiation skills

*Professor Paul Meerts*, Clingendael and College of Europe  
(*John Hemery*, rapporteur)

The session offered both analysis and interactive demonstration. *Prof Meerts* addressed four questions:

*Why train diplomats for negotiation?*

Harold Nicolson had described diplomacy as negotiation. Maybe not entirely, but negotiation was the alternative to war, and was less costly.

We had first to look at ourselves, to try to understand ourselves and our own culture, and how other people saw us. Negotiation was about perception – an emotional, psychological process. You had to help diplomats remember the impact of history, of traumas. It was about empathy, trying to imagine being the other parties.

People could be good natural negotiators in the *souk*, but perhaps not be so good in international affairs. Horse-trading was not the same as dialogue, where face and national honour was at stake. It could be difficult to be the first to make a concession, to compromise. Training and preparation could lay the groundwork for effectiveness.

*Who delivered negotiation training?*

A great deal of negotiation training was offered in the United States, much less in Europe. Programmes were offered variously by academics, diplomatic practitioners and professional negotiation trainers, sometimes in combination.

There were broadly two types of audience – diplomats undergoing professional training, with an interest in effective practice; and students of negotiation, interested in the literature, in analysis. Even then, students were more interested in practice than in theory.

*What kinds of programme were offered?*

The four-day programme offered by the College of Europe in Bruges was a good example:

On the first day, an introduction to negotiation was offered in the morning, and in the afternoon an exercise in bilateral bargaining, essential to understanding multilateral negotiation. Each negotiation was specific to the circumstances.

On the second day, the morning was taken up in a discussion of strategy and tactics. In the afternoon they addressed negotiating skills, personal style, non-verbal signals, non-deliberate body language (blushing, showing the tongue), and the impact of culture on negotiation.

The third day was given to a multilateral exercise: they used as a vehicle a BBC videotape of a negotiation in Geneva in 1971 over UN co-ordination of disaster relief. (The United States had been at that time in multilateralist mode, and was encouraging co-ordination. But others, amongst them the ICRC and France, had wanted support but not direction.) Participants in the course attempted to negotiate a text, with brackets, and then were able to compare their agreed draft text with the real outcome.

On the fourth day, in the morning they conducted a comprehensive debrief of the exercise, examining the process, the procedure and the roles of the people involved. In the afternoon they returned to the core question of organising complexity, and minimising chaos.

*What sort of exercises were offered?*

*Prof Meerts* demonstrated a practical approach to negotiation training through four short exercises.

In the first exercise, all participants were asked to think about the question – ‘what is international negotiation’. Each spent two minutes drafting a personal definition, then turned to his or her neighbour to discuss the issue, and within five minutes to merge their two definitions into one. Then, the pairs were brought together into groups of four or eight to try to get an agreed group definition within ten minutes.

The exercise demonstrated all the dimensions of a more complex negotiation: process, personality, textual drafting, tactics (when to inject new text? how hard to fight for your own text? how carefully to listen to others’ views?)

The importance of the Chair quickly emerged, and the need for an agreed procedure and decision-making process (consensus, qualified majority, simple majority). Without these it was difficult to reach agreement.

Participants had been provided with the subject and the object, but no agenda. They had needed to define the main issues, how they were going to address them, how much time would be given to each and in what order. Every actor had had an investment in his or her own definition, then at two, then at four. They had been confronted with a two-level problem of internal and external negotiation. In each new constellation they had had to explore the views of partners, getting clarity, comparing texts, looking for common elements, then building coalitions at speed. Here the cultural factor came into play: some were pragmatic, flexible in the process but tough on the deal; others concentrated more on the formalities and procedures.

As the exercise had provided no sticks or carrots, discussion had been open-ended. Participants had come to identify with the wording they were prepared to accept. Because it was their personal opinion, they had become attached to it; the more their ideas had been criticised, the more defensive they had become. The negotiation was no longer about the best outcome, but securing one’s own version – emotion pushed the negotiation away from the objective and obstructed agreement.

Process was the water in the bottle. If you poured it over your hand, it was difficult to drink. You needed an appropriate regime and context in order to negotiate effectively.

The second exercise (the nine-dot problem) demonstrated the value of going outside the confines of the givens in order to solve the problem. Negotiation could be facilitated by adding new actors, including new issues, enlarging the context and creating more complexity in order to reduce complexity.

The third exercise asked participants to consider quickly how many Fs there were in the following passage:

Finished files are  
The result of years  
Of scientific study  
Combined with the  
experience of years.

The group offered a variety of answers. (Analytical people often ignored the 'of's, and in negotiation might miss the apparently unimportant.)

The fourth exercise (two donkeys confronted with opposing interests) demonstrated the value of lateral thinking and compromise in achieving win-win solutions.

*Prof Meerts* completed the workshop with suggestions for further reading:

- [the six-monthly newsletter](#) published by the PIN (Processes of International Negotiation) Group, accessible at <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/PIN/>.
- [the Journal of International Negotiation \(Leyden University\)](#)
- [the Negotiation Journal \(Harvard University\)](#)
- *Getting to Yes* (Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, 1991)
- *The Practical Negotiator* (William Zartman, 1982)

## **Workshop 2. Project management in development co-operation**

*Prof Kurt Wagner*, German Development Agency (GTZ) and College of Europe  
(*Ekke Nomm*, rapporteur)

About half of the participants had had experience of development project management. *Prof Wagner* stressed the value of the topic, as people sometimes underestimated the importance of coherent project development.

The German Development Agency had phased out the logical framework approach and was concentrating on capacity-building through co-operative partnership. There were five elements to the process:

- finding co-operation partners
- establishing structures
- organising a steering mechanism
- agreeing procedures
- incorporating inbuilt scope for learning and innovation.

This had led to simpler administration and management of project proposals.

**In discussion:**

- Project Cycle Management (PCM) was considered to be an effective but technical tool. Stakeholders needed training in the use of both PCM and Logical Framework Approach.
- Clear indicators were needed throughout the PCM process.
- It was important not to be overambitious since, on paper, solutions to problems might look easy and resources ample.
- At the same time the process ought not to be oversimplified, causing it to become linear and routine.
- It was essential not to plan too far in advance, as conditions could change quickly. You had to leave room for adjustment and re-planning.
- In PCM, too much could be focused on output (numbers, activities) and not enough on outcomes (results, impact).
- Impact assessment, notably of training programmes, was notoriously difficult. The working environment was too complex to allow accurate measurement by success indicators.
- Development projects were becoming more integrated with recipient countries' own programmes, which led to more difficult co-ordination but also better results.
- The traditional bilateral development project was being broadened to embrace a network of projects. This maximised complementarities while helping to fill gaps and avoid duplication.

**Workshop 3. Training for successful intercultural communication**

*Prof Bénédicte Lapeyre, College of Europe*

*(Professors Alan Henrikson and Zuzana Lehmannová, rapporteurs)*

For real communication to occur, we had to be *sure* we were *understood*. This required the use of clear, precise, efficient language, not the flowery 'wonderful' language often associated with diplomacy. It also required knowledge of the social system and cultural background of one's interlocutor.

Broadly speaking, 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures differed in the role of authority. Some were power-orientated; some were more individualistic. In Japan, for instance, one preferred to speak to someone on the same level; in the West, in the United States at least, one might prefer to speak to someone who understood the issues, regardless of rank.

Miscommunication could result if one accepted quick answers from someone from a different tradition. It was important, therefore, to *check*, to be *sure* one had been understood. But how? One way was to re-phrase proposals or explanations as often as possible. It was not a waste of time.

In discussion, some reservations were expressed about the emphasis on clarity. Sometimes a diplomat might want to be precisely imprecise – to use ambiguity. This might be because the diplomat did not have enough information, and ambiguity offered a safety mechanism. In reality, diplomats often were not in control of communication. This was especially the case when operating in a foreign language and in public. (For this reason, training for public diplomacy at the US Foreign Service Institute now was conducted not in English but in the language of the target audience.)

Communication varied with what you were trying to accomplish: to make something happen, or to prevent it from happening. It varied also in style: for example, military communication differed from diplomatic communication. At the IFDT Meeting in Amman in 2002, *General Bo Wrangler*, then Force Commander of the United Nations Defence and Observation Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights, had observed that soldiers were taught ‘the principle of the objective’. Could it be that diplomats were less effective in their communication because they were unsure of the objective? They might be focused too much instead on the development of relationships. Successful communication, both in words and in body language, was more likely to be achieved if the officer, military or diplomatic, had a clear idea and a strong sense of *purpose*. Even at a reception, a diplomat’s presence was more likely to be enhanced if others knew *why* he or she was there.

Nevertheless, there were limits to how much could be learnt about, and the extent to which one could adapt to other cultures – even after many years of service in a foreign capital. ‘We have to be ourselves.’, said one former ambassador. While recognising the importance of empathy and cultural sensitivity, the objective had to be to inspire trust in others through one’s own professional competence and personal integrity.

There had been some discussion of whether new information and communication technology (ICT) aided or obstructed cross-cultural communication. Video conferencing was felt by some to be unhelpful. E-mail drained communication of emotion. Yet electronic communication, notably in online negotiation, kept the focus on the text, and on the shape and content of prospective agreement. It clearly was an area of diplomacy likely to develop further.

#### **Workshop 4. Public diplomacy: managing a crisis**

*Jamie Shea*, Director of Policy Planning, NATO HQ, and College of Europe  
(*Onno Simons*, rapporteur)

*Jamie Shea* had been NATO spokesman during the NATO air attacks on Serbia in 1999. It offered an object lesson in what to say and what not to.

There were two key problems: first, that a crisis could be simply generated by the media. For example, a report was posted that NATO’s use of depleted uranium in NATO weapons was causing leukaemia in Italian forces and amongst the local population. There had been no basis to the story, experts refuted the claim, but it still had taken six weeks of committee meetings and daily briefings, with not one percent added knowledge, before the media were satisfied. Not giving a response didn’t make the media go away, it only encouraged hot pursuit.

In a crisis, under media pressure, you needed an instantaneous surge capacity. The media were capable of switching bureaux and mobilising technical support quickly, putting cables in impossible places. Governments were less able to surge, but when a story became a crisis you had to be able to manage the story, to deal with bad news.

Hence the first lesson: you needed to have in normal times a prepared surge capability, with designated specialists who exercised regularly to rehearse their response, operating twenty-four hours a day. You couldn’t just stop at 22.00; the news didn’t stop. The 24-hour news cycle set the agenda as the sun moved round. There would be no quiet period; you had to analyse and act at the same time. If you didn’t occupy the space, someone else would. You had to dominate the news cycle.

The core thing was to appreciate the gap between the government perspective and the media perspective. Most of the misunderstandings occurred in that gap. Governments used words and concepts like freedom, democracy and rights. They offered intellectual arguments, better ideas, and being convinced, imagined that they therefore were being convincing.

The media, by contrast, dealt in pictures, played on emotions, conveyed on the ground reality: the consequence of airstrikes, civilian casualties. Without pictures, there was no news. Yet you couldn't get the military to waste resources on providing public images. There was thus an imbalance between *le poids des mots* and *le shock des photos*. You had to develop the capacity to fight the media on their own terms.

The second key problem was that the media did not need to know if something was true for it to be a story. It might be wrong, but they could always correct it later. Governments, though, had to be right. You might know the facts, but not the reasons why, and so could be slow to respond. But the slower the response, the greater the suspicion of a cover-up. The broadcaster Nik Gowing had referred to 'the tyranny of real time': reality had accelerated; our ability to report and manage it had not.

Governments had a long-term perspective, looking, for example, at the prospects for stability in Afghanistan in ten years time. They didn't rush to judgement. The media extrapolated reality from the moment – they and their audiences had a short attention span. They weren't interested in long trends. Thus government and media looked at reality from opposite ends of a telescope, with different perspectives.

### **How to handle this? Three main principles:**

#### **1. Information**

First accuracy, honesty and reliability, then you became a credible source of opinion. Not based on moral principles, but on solid facts.

The media absorbed information at a fantastic rate. They were just as eager for hard news at 3am as at 3pm; each had its own audience. You couldn't tell the press that there was no news; the show had to go on, the beast had to be fed. The task thus was continually to find new information (how to navigate, how to drop a bomb), in order merely to communicate. If you did not, the media would report rumours. Then you would find yourself just trying to rebut rumour, always on the defensive.

The best way to get rid of a story was to flood it with information before the media knew they needed it. Given ten percent more information every day, they would then go away. But part-information only whetted the appetite for the missing bits. The media were more interested in the cover-up story than in the information. Good information gave you credibility whether in success or failure. But in government, ninety percent of people didn't want to admit mistakes, so were inclined to cover up.

#### **2. Co-ordination**

NATO had had too many people telling different stories, offering contradictory versions. It was better to say nothing immediately. You didn't have to give an interview to the press. It was essential to get accurate information first. A conference call with key players could clarify what we knew, what we could add. All needed to stick to the line, horizontally and vertically.

Given political guidance, the master message could be adapted to local audiences, local conditions. A good image in your own media was not enough; public attitudes in every country were shaped by their own media.

There were more and more media to talk to – for example, the Arab world was not reached simply through CNN. Afghanistan had 190 radio stations, and nineteen television channels. People had choice of access to information and interpretation. So you needed more people in the structure to get messages out coherently.

In short, you needed to be pro-active, not reactive. One report in Peshawar at 08.00 was more effective in reaching Taliban opinion than blanket coverage in the United States at 17.00.

### 3. **Anticipation:**

You had to prepare stories in advance, ready to get out when the time was right. Ninety percent of stories reported other reporting. You needed to monitor the media and pick up the trend of reporting.

It meant also having good relations with the press. It was worth investing time having lunch with journalists, a drink in the bar, building personal relations. Journalists wanted to be inside the loop. A good operator in normal times would be trusted in a crisis.

The same was true in respect of NGOs. You needed to cultivate the relationship with them. For example, *Ken Roth* of Human Rights Watch had rung from New York to warn *Shea* of their report accusing NATO of war crimes. He had e-mailed the report in advance, making possible overnight preparation. The story the following day had accentuated the positive: ‘NATO refutes war crimes allegations’. Forewarned was forearmed.

### **What did you need to do? Six main tasks:**

1. Set up a media operations centre, operating 24 hours a day, staffed with public relations professionals capable of assessing the impact of media reporting, and revising your own strategy.
2. Monitor the media. A weekly grid (borrowed from Alistair Campbell) was helpful, showing what the main stories were (refugees, war crimes, a pilot’s day), where your weaknesses were, what opportunities you had.
3. Plan each day on a controlled theme – a speech for political leaders, a briefing for journalists on a press tour, synchronised op-ed pieces. The media reported what came at them, so you needed to keep them occupied and focused, feeding them what you wanted them to say.
4. Focus on which media market you wanted to target. The Financial Times and International Herald Tribune were not read by the majority of people. You needed to get to the Readers Digest, the popular media, local media outlets in their own language. There was no point wasting time preaching to the converted – you had to focus on what mattered, on the weakest link.
5. Prepare rebuttals. Propaganda didn’t kill itself; it would simply grow. You had to be ready to respond to *every* inaccuracy with an alternative case or fact. The Taliban were always there with simple, consistent messages having enough of an element of truth to be credible. They were better in this regard than the government.

The crisis never ended, you couldn't go on holiday at the 'end'; that's when the revision started, and counter-revision, and counter-counter-revision. What happened either justified or contradicted your interpretation of events. Good news could turn into bad news quickly. In Brussels, there twenty or thirty reporters for every policy maker. The battle for who had the final say became ever more intense. It was important to get things out in print – the spoken word died; the written word never died.

6. Engage the whole organisation, at all levels of the chain of command. You needed to be able to draw on people of sufficient authority to have clout in national capitals. You needed to get into the White House or the Élysée, to be seen to be at the centre of the action. A crisis had to be seen to be managed.

### **Conclusions:**

1. Take the media seriously. Cultivate them in peacetime.
2. Develop a clear and robust narrative. Do the strategy first; don't make it up as you go along.
3. Stay engaged.
4. Play down expectations – the media tried to inflate your responsibility. You had to accept criticism for what you did – but not for what you hadn't done.
5. Communicate pro-actively. You didn't need the media; you could get your messages out through your website, blogs, YouTube, your own television station with no pretence to being objective journalism. The formal media were losing ground to virtual / invented reality.

### **In discussion:**

- When bounced by a report, 'don't know' lasted no longer than twenty-four hours. You had to establish the basic facts, accept responsibility, take action, and if necessary correct later. But if you denied responsibility and then had to reverse, you lost credibility.
- You had to provide a convincing narrative for bad news you couldn't hide.
- Technology improved, but intelligence did not. Some people intentionally fed you false intelligence, to settle scores. It was difficult to manage.
- Truth was vulnerable to the resolute marketing of lies. You had to counter spin with counter-spin, against negative stories, exaggeration. If you had deep pockets you could employ a K Street firm to get your message across.
- There were two types of disaffection – the public demonstration, and the silent absence of support. Disaffection could be sustained; outright opposition couldn't.
- Communication being the arm of the weak, they used the media to fight. You could combat this only by being in the right, boosting your capacity to get credible messages from a legitimate government.
- The public still took its moral lead from its leaders. A united political elite could create a political space in which results could be achieved. But people needed to see progress, things going forward, light at end of tunnel.
- The European Union was missing the opportunity to project a positive image. It did brilliant things, but was not getting the credit. They ought to talk less of complex institutions and more of values.
- Communication skills were now important to every diplomatic career. Young diplomats needed to be trained, and given opportunities to talk to the media – but only within their level of competence and with a centralised message.

- The experience of the Canadian High Commissions following the tsunami disaster was instructive – six weeks of intensive work requiring decisions to be made quickly in the field. It had been necessary to speak directly to the media, to capture what was being done on the ground. Every other programme had been shut down – all had become consular officers dealing with humanitarian relief. This highlighted the importance of practical hands-on consular and communications training for all, but crucially for heads of mission.

### **Workshop 5. International Mediation**

*Prof Pierre-Yves Monete*, Secretary-General EUREAU, former Federal Ombudsman of Belgium, and College of Europe  
(*Gerhard Reiweger*, rapporteur)

Mediation was one of the tools of conflict management, deployed in pursuit of an advanced goal normally after the failure of dispute resolution through violence, negotiation or legal procedure. Often, parties resorted to mediation when simply exhausted by conflict.

It needed trusted facilitators, professional and neutral, perhaps working in teams. They had a confessional role, ensuring confidentiality while being capable at the same time of bringing psychological pressure to bear.

Successful mediation depended on the independence of the mediators. A good example could be seen in Bolivia, while the reverse had been felt to be true in mediation between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

There were two kinds of mediation: *passive* – enabling the parties to find solutions themselves; and *active* – proposing solutions.

There were no formal rules, no absolute framework, only general principles. The role of the mediator was to create an atmosphere of trust, in which the elements of a settlement could be identified and agreed.

#### **In discussion:**

- Timing was crucial, sensing when the parties were ready to come to the table and seizing the moment.
- It was difficult, however, to know who would be able to do so, and how.
- There was an increasing role for non-state actors in international mediation.
- It would be helpful to develop a cadre of international mediators trained in the techniques of mediation on the model of the new United Nations ‘standby team’ – six experts under the Department of Political Affairs capable of being deployed quickly to help defuse conflicts.

### **Raising Diplomats as Fit**

*Prof Armando Marques Guedes*, Universidade Nova de Lisboa  
(Chair: *Ambassador Dr Jiri Gruša*, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna)

*Raising Diplomats* was the first full length academic study of diplomatic training. It was organised in three parts:

The first part addressed the issue of what education was, or ought to be. There was no common view, no agreed pedagogical approach; rather, there were packages of prejudices about what might be useful or necessary. Educational reforms worldwide often were flying blind. It was clear, though, that education and training for professional

development in diplomacy aimed at strengthening the institution, and by extension the position of the country in the international system.

The second part focused on training for diplomacy. The earliest formal programme had been initiated by the Vatican in 1702. The first academy, the Oriental Academy, had been founded by Empress Maria Theresia in 1754.

There had been from the outset a tension between two approaches: the archival – rote learning of essential texts and documents, and the university model – learning for thinking and doing. For the latter it was necessary to draw on the experience of practitioners, but they normally had been needed to practice, not to teach.

Serious diplomatic training had been undertaken by two groups: the Great Powers having to be ready to confront problems on all fronts, and small countries (for example, Netherlands, Norway, Israel) punching above their weight with streamlined interventions.

Diplomatic training had evolved slowly, with long periods of stasis and short spurts of change driven not by philosophers or philanthropists but usually by upheavals in the international system. Periodic great conferences moved diplomatic practice forward, requiring new competences (multilateral conference diplomacy after Vienna, 1815; new consular and private international commercial law after Berlin, 1884-85; new financial diplomacy after Versailles, 1919; regional integration after San Francisco, 1945). The end of the Cold War, 1989-91 and 9/11, 2001, each had provided the spur to further change.

The book offered three detailed case studies of change in training regimes: in Japan following the Second World War and again the late 1970s and in the 1990s; in Egypt following the revolution in 1952 and again in the 1990s; and in Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

All foreign ministries were having to respond and adapt to the new realities of international relations in the era of economic globalisation, instant communication and the rise of non-state actors.

The third part of the book attempted to assess what sort of training was needed both to enable diplomats to be professionally effective and to promote the external objectives of the state.

There continued to be some differences of view on the nature of diplomacy – whether simply a soft-power tool of state interests, or a mechanism for conflict resolution and peacemaking. Some doubted that diplomacy could be analysed at all – histories were too narrowly narrative and anecdotal, studies of international relations were too broadly theoretical. Diplomatic training thus was located in an intellectual as well as a bureaucratic battlefield.

Some of the principal innovations in recent years had been developed by institutions independent of government (Clingendael, Diplo, Georgetown, Oxford, Vienna). Many foreign ministries nevertheless had come to embrace these changes of content and methodology, recognising that they equipped their staff with newly-required knowledge and skills.

An urgent new challenge was presented by the emergence of a supranational multilateral European diplomatic service, and the need consequently to train quickly and efficiently a new cadre of European diplomats in a difficult political topography. But this was changing, too, heralding perhaps a brighter future.

### **In discussion:**

- There were six big ‘No’s for diplomatic training:  
No nationalism – make it universal  
No old doctrines of political education – respect diversity of ideas  
No techno-bureaucracy – make it eclectic  
No theory – make it realistic and practical  
No backward vision – make it forward-looking  
No political instrumentalisation – help build an international community.
- There was a place in the curriculum for the study of the history of diplomacy, drawing on the experience of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Mazarini, de Callieres.
- It was important not to underestimate the value of state diplomatic academies. Independence did not guarantee either quality or relevance. The most useful training was rooted in current practice.
- Co-operation in training amongst foreign ministries in Africa enabled Africans to think constructively about what was required to develop their own diplomacy.
- Ambassador Gruša welcomed contributions to an expanded edition of *Raising Diplomats* to be produced next year.

### **Concluding Session**

*Prof Casimir Yost* offered sincere thanks on behalf of all participants to *Rector Paul Demaret* and his marvellous team. The Workshops had made a brilliant contribution to the Meeting, and had given future hosts something to think about.

According to custom, the Meetings of the IFDT were held every other year in Vienna, and every other year on another continent. In recent years they had been held in Northeast Asia, North America, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. Next year the Meeting would return to Vienna. It was hoped that the Meeting in 2010 might perhaps be held in Asia – to be confirmed.

Recommendations for topics and presenters for the 2009 Meeting were invited by e-mail to the co-chairs or to the rapporteur. Seven or eight topics had been suggested already.

*Ambassador Dr Jiří Gruša* congratulated the College of Europe on the weather, the city of Bruges (reminiscent of Prague and its bridges), and the success of the programme.

*Prof Paul Demaret* thanked *Professors Dieter Mahncke and Sieglinde Gstöhl* for their immense contributions to the organisation and management of the Meeting, and also the speakers, chairs and rapporteurs for their contributions.

The Forum concluded with a Reception and Gala Dinner at the Provinciaal Hof, generously given by the City of Bruges and the College of Europe, and hosted by the Mayor of Bruges, *Mr Patrick Moenaert*.

### **Excursion**

At the weekend a number of members of the Forum enjoyed a tour of Bruges and Damme on Saturday, and on Sunday an excursion to Ghent and Antwerp, both kindly organised by the College of Europe.

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John Hemery  
Rapporteur