

International Forum on Diplomatic Training

42nd Meeting of Deans and Directors
of Diplomatic Academies and Institutes of International Relations

Warsaw, 23-25 September 2015

On the eve of the 42nd Meeting, the Ambassador of Austria to Poland, *Ambassador Dr Thomas Buchsbaum*, gave a generous Reception, welcoming members of the Forum to his Residence.

Dr Katarzyna Pisarska, Director of the European Academy of Diplomacy (EAD), welcomed fifty-five directors of diplomatic academies and institutes of international relations from all six continents. The objectives of the Meeting were to make good friends and to address serious issues. It offered a rare time for reflection, as well as to look ahead fifteen or twenty years.

The 42nd Meeting of Deans and Directors was special in three ways: first, it offered a new type of agenda, including interactive workshops moderated by experts from civil society, public diplomacy and economic diplomacy looking at new teaching methods; second, it had been organised by a non-government, non-profit institution, in partnership with a public body, the National School of Public Administration; third, it was convened in Poland, a country with an embattled history, now a dynamic and prosperous democracy at the heart of EU diplomacy, and engaged with Europe's eastern neighbourhood.

IFDT co-chair *Ambassador Barbara Bodine*, Director of the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, thanked the EAD for the high level of organisation and substantive programme, and thanked also *Ambassador Thami Ngwevela* and her team at the Department of International Relations and Co-operation for the successful 41st Meeting of the Forum at Pretoria in 2014. Diplomacy was a profession in transition; members of the Forum reflected a balance between training and education, and had an important contribution to make to successful change and development.

IFDT co-chair *Ambassador Dr Hans Winkler*, Director of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, reflected on the history of the IFDT, a gathering of diverse institutions learning from each other. The Forum itself continued to evolve, with a new Steering Committee to contribute to decision-making and to support the host institution of future Meetings. The IFDT aimed to be a down to earth, hands-on contributor to the development of effective training; it was driven by the energy and commitment of its participants.

Opening address:

Diplomacy in Democracy Development Support

Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of Poland, 1995-2005

President Kwaśniewski reflected on three episodes in his career in which diplomacy had made a crucial contribution to the political process.

The first had been the roundtable talks in 1989, between *Solidarność* and the Government on the future of Poland. They had met day and night for two months trying to achieve a compromise agreement on elections and governance. At the time, though, they hadn't imagined how profound the consequences would be – the end of Communism, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the re-unification of Germany.

The spirit of dialogue and compromise had been extremely important to the peaceful Polish transition, working in the style of the roundtable, not least in the decision to de-centralise the power of the state. Without that political diplomacy, confrontation between hardliners might have led to revolution, with many victims.

The second episode had been during the difficult transition to black majority rule in South Africa. In February 1992, three senior members of Polish political parties had spent two weeks in talks with CODESA and the *de Klerk* government, sharing their experience of the Polish transition, exploring ways of overcoming the tensions of a tragic history. Reconciliation had been better-organised in South Africa than in Poland, under the moral leadership of *Nelson Mandela* and *Desmond Tutu*.

The third contribution of diplomacy to political transition had been in Ukraine, during the Orange Revolution in 2004-05. An international mission of senior European politicians and officials had served as facilitators of roundtable talks in Kyiv to support peaceful transition. 100,000 miners had been ready to descend on Maidan, where 300,000 protesters already were gathered. There had been no rules, no leaders, and great danger of civil war – fortunately avoided.

With traditional democracy in crisis, training in diplomacy had never been more important. Pluralism, the political party system, responsible political leadership all were in trouble in the mature democracies, buffeted by the speed and complexity of technological change. New media created an artificial picture of reality, always with a short-term focus.

Politicians, paralysed by the media, were not brave enough to say, 'We'll not play this game.'. Traditional politics could still manage crises of economic policy and unemployment, but the unpredictable changes created by new technology were proving largely unmanageable. There was, as a result, a crisis of leadership. Understandable calls for a 'strong leader' were difficult to meet without ushering in authoritarian government. The new politics was good for winning elections, good for shows, but not good in the long run, nor for managing governance.

In a time of weak leaders, good diplomats came more to the fore, helping to steady the ship with dialogue and compromise.

In discussion:

- *Was the power of consensus-building enough? How to do the step before that, to get adversaries into the room in the first place?*

The best time to collect interlocutors was when the two groups were weak, when exhausted, having tried everything, military, propaganda; now it was time to settle. In 1988, the Communist Party had run out of ideas. 'Democratization of socialism' was not enough; only democracy. *Solidarność* also had run out of energy; they couldn't have mobilized hundreds, let alone thousands to protest.

A second driver could be the lurch of events from dramatic to out of control, as in Ukraine. Political leaders had contemplated killing in the streets, and had turned instead to the negotiating table.

The third essential element was the quality of the public debate. It was necessary to change the language in which we talked about each other and their ideas; to convince people that dialogue and compromise were not weakness; this was the only way societies could work effectively. Without educated debate, democracy was just a popularity contest.

Panel discussion: Preparing diplomats for the unknown

Senator Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz

Prime Minister of Poland, 1996-97

founder of the Polish Diplomatic Academy when Foreign Minister, 2002-03

Stability was the exception. Major events were usually unpredicted. (He had been a farmer, breeding pigs, then had found himself Minister of Justice.)

No-one had anticipated the events that changed the world (the First World War and collapse of empires, the advent of bipolarity). More important was how to respond to dramatic change. This required knowledge and flexibility, the ability to deal quickly with a variety of issues, to absorb shocks. These were the qualities of effective diplomats, and of politicians leading foreign services.

In practice, there was a lot of space for initiative. For example, Poland had been fortunate in its ambassador in Washington taking the unilateral initiative to launch a lobbying campaign for entry to NATO, the most successful in Polish history. The United States had been equally fortunate in its ambassador to Warsaw – mangling the Polish language on social media to connect with people, and demonstrating the power of positive soft power.

Ambassador Nancy McEldowney
Director, United States Foreign Service Institute

Global transition was under way, on different levels and at different speeds on each level. People's sense of connection to their governing institutions was changing, too; diplomats needed to adapt to those changes. The challenge was not only to respond, but to get ahead of the curve, to help shape the changes in such a way as to maximize the positive and minimize the negative.

Diplomatic academies had three simultaneous tasks:

- to continue what it was essential to preserve;
- to diagnose trends moving away from international institutions;
- to identify and instil new capacities and skills, to build the coalitions needed to respond effectively.

Diplomats were as pilots in an aircraft already in the air, but the flight conditions had changed dramatically. They needed to chart a new course, build a new engine, change the propellers. The potential for the positive was immense.

Ambassador Dr Hans Winkler
Director, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna

Diplomacy (and diplomatic training) had to accommodate three major changes:

- new actors – states, international institutions, non-state actors (including the Islamic State and Boko Haram), civil society organisations and companies
- new methods – direct communication between ministers, who still needed advice and the benefit of political analysis; international conferences were decreasingly useful
- new participation of the people – diplomacy by the people for the people, no longer just state to state; consular affairs came more and more to the fore.

Jean Pierre Froehly
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE

Abraham Lincoln had observed that the best way to predict the future was to create it. Would colleagues of the future be simply administrators, or shapers?

Diplomats had continually to reinvent themselves, not least in response to new ICT. The cable had been overtaken by the spoken word, posts now had to be online 24/7. External communication was not only about ways of communicating, but who was being addressed – different communities, through traditional mass media, and new social media.

There was change also in legal frameworks within which to operate – national and international law. New technology operated in a hybrid territory between legal regimes. Law itself was changing – soft laws had been added to formal law; communities were influencing the creation of new laws.

The major challenge lay in managing systems in transition, with changing relationships between people and governing structures. (56 heads of state and government had signed the Astana Declaration on common responsibility for human rights.)

Dr Katarzyna Pisarska, Chair
Director, European Academy of Diplomacy

Diplomats faced a challenge in engaging the new actors in practice. What structures, what skills were needed? A hundred interviews had suggested that the foreign ministry couldn't connect adequately effectively with civil society – how therefore were diplomats to project their messages?

In discussion:

- Knowledge and skills were not enough – character and talent were equally if not more important.
- Assessment centres were crucial, with psychological profiling of candidates – how extrovert, how good at communicating, how capable of standing up to pressure. Given the right people, they were more likely to have the capacities to manage change.
- Outreach by all means, but a basic dilemma remained – that some diplomacy still needed to be secret; how to reconcile this with the demand for total transparency? how to teach the young to be discreet, to keep secrets, while being open and engaging?
- 90% of contact could be frank and open, as for example between the foreign ministry and local authorities; it was enough to explain the reasons behind policy, and to encourage contact, for example between local authorities and their counterparts across national frontiers.
- Diasporas were a vital resource for outreach. Twenty million Poles lived abroad, in Russia, Central Asia and Western Europe. They could be encouraged to become more active in the political dynamics of their *own* societies.
- A key task of the new diplomacy was to understand the new set of players – and what motivated them. The international system was moving from rules-based architecture to interest-based networks, with more individual perception of identity and authority. As people became less invested in the system and the outcomes it was (failing) to deliver, so there was less incentive to accept compromise.
- Knowledge and expertise could be a trap, too; if you thought you knew all the players and their motivations, and understood how things were going to play out, the black swan would trip you up.
- Social media offered a vital tool to link government with civil society – though it was open to abuse. Diplomats had to engage, but it was important not to give them too precise instructions; given trust and responsibility, bright young people would know what was too risky. It had been no different in the pre-media age. (Ministers were more difficult to control, though.)
- Social media had changed how people learnt and behaved. Community-building meant that you had to be on the inside of these new communities, to interact with them. But they had no rules, no code of ethics, no responsibility for outcomes – it could be a dangerous space.
- Propaganda had been given a new lease of life. Alternative versions of reality were disseminated, and believed. People looked for information that corresponded to their thoughts and beliefs, creating self-reinforcing silos of ideas.
- Recruitment had to reflect changing societies, with a wider kaleidoscope of talent – intellectually, socially and ethnically – operating within a global conceptual framework.

- The core qualities needed in a good diplomat remained the same, however: analytic skills, strategic foresight, political judgement and, crucially, the courage to take risks.
- When purporting to encourage a rules-based international system, they needed also to address the failures of their own government.

Did we have any alternative to negotiating with the 'irresponsible actors'?

- In a rule of law country, there was no problem. But in practice, it could be different. Russian leaders and diplomats were telling evident lies, defending evident illegality. How to account for this? How to bear moral and legal responsibility for it? Problems arose when there were no clear rules. George W Bush had promoted the notion of 'preventive' strikes? Were they legal? Was there an evident right of self-defense? There were no easy answers. International law and treaty offered no adequate guide to action.
- The rule of law was the indispensable bedrock of the international system. There could be no compromise on torture, nor on the use of force.
- There was in the end no contradiction between rules-based and interest-based approaches to international action. We were always acting in our own interest. Rules were what made the system work – without them, there was only chaos.
- Courageous people could always make a difference.

Two working groups then convened simultaneously:

Working Group 1: Diplomacy and the Human Rights Agenda

Dr Pavol Nemes, German Marshall Fund (Slovakia)

Gunnar M Ekeløve-Slydal, Norwegian Helsinki Committee (Norway)

(Rapporteur: *Maria Swiderska*)

Gunnar Ekeløve-Slydal reflected on the origins of the Helsinki Committee system in the 1970s, during the Soviet period, when human rights became part of a comprehensive security arrangement in Europe. Human rights challenged both diplomacy and international law, as human rights were universal, not national.

Paradoxically, addressing human rights could lead to further human rights abuses, as authoritarian governments saw human rights defenders as a threat, promoting the 'western agenda', and sought to repress them. It was a challenge for diplomats to work out how to defend the defenders.

Progress had been made through the institutionalisation of human rights protection within a UN framework, notably in the international tribunals on Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the International Criminal Court. There could be friction, however, between the workings of a court system seeking justice, and the diplomatic and NGO community pursuing peace talks.

The 'war on terror' had exposed a cruel dilemma, attempting to defeat terrorism through intrusive surveillance, rendition and torture. Authoritarian governments were able to chide western governments for their hypocrisy on human rights.

The argument that human rights were simply a western notion needed to be combatted both in international law and in the encouragement of human rights movements in every country, especially those in which democracy had come to be equated with chaos. Diplomats could help by strengthening the links between civil society and government.

Dr Pavol Nemes reflected on the growing prominence of the human rights agenda in international discourse, with improvements in education worldwide, greatly accelerated by the Internet and the new media.

At the same time, international relations were becoming increasingly complex, unstable and difficult to predict. A sense of vulnerability had led some governments to try to defeat extremism with hard power. *Realpolitik* prioritised security over human rights. It was important to resist the securitisation of foreign policy.

Dealing with religious leaders and faith-based organisations presented a further challenge for diplomats. Many had enormous power, deeply rooted in the community. When politics and religion were intertwined, it could be difficult to distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. Careful analysis was required.

In discussion:

- The implementation of the emerging doctrine of the ‘responsibility to protect’ depended in the end on the will of the great powers.
- The idea of universal rights was coming under challenge from governments asserting different models.
- Social and economic rights were different from political and civil rights; they could not be challenged in court under international law. It was important to develop a narrative about how a rights system functioned as a whole.
- International conferences on human rights often were two conversations, upstairs and downstairs, with little interchange between government leaders and the representatives of civil society.
- Human rights were argued by some to be an assault on traditional values, whether political or religious. Diplomats needed to engage with civil society to understand the society and its history, to learn to speak about human rights issues in a more local way.
- A lot could be learnt through blogging. Diplomats could test their own language and the validity of their commitments in conversation with the younger generation, exposing themselves and their arguments to a broader audience.
- Development aid usually was welcome, until democracy-building and promotion of human rights challenged government authority. It was often necessary to work under the radar, dancing around the system to avoid being put in jail.
- Diplomats faced a dilemma, promoting human rights while respecting the admonition of the Vienna Convention to respect the laws of the country in which they worked.
- There was no such thing as ‘double standards’. Diplomats needed to refer to ‘common standards’. These were international commitments, and certain states needed to be reminded that they had signed up to these conventions.
- Edward Snowden had ignited the debate on transparency. There was an enduring struggle between the role and limits of government and freedoms of the individual, especially in turbulent and dangerous times, when fear loomed large.
- A balance needed to be kept between *realpolitik* and human rights; if one or the other were sacrificed, both were lost.

Working Group 2: Supporting Civil Society

Dr Krzysztof Stanowski, Solidarity Fund (Poland)

The working group addressed two questions: whether and how diplomats should work with civil society in their home country, and in the receiving country.

Dr Stanowski observed that traditional diplomats sometimes failed to imagine that civil society could be interested in diplomacy. Much work still was needed to improve contact between civil societies and governments.

The Solidarity movement in Poland was a good example of what could be achieved, a working class movement in partnership with intellectuals peacefully overcoming an entrenched government.

The key question at the time had been whether Poles were ready as a society to take responsibility for their own lives, their villages and towns. The pivotal moment had been the semi-free elections on 4 June 1989. In the end, the de-centralisation process had been all about civil society, from state to local ownership.

NGOs had been active also in the field of foreign affairs, hoping to deter a repeat of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. They became partners with Polish diplomats in changing foreign policy.

The Working Group divided into three sub-groups to consider how best to encourage better understanding between the diplomatic world and civil societies:

- In Indonesia, efforts were being made to bring diplomacy down to earth, explaining how it was contributing to the lives of ordinary people. As part of their training, future diplomats took part in civil activities. Increasingly, social media was a channel of fundraising for those in need.
- In Thailand, diplomats undertook local voluntary service, talking to local officials about local issues, getting to know the communities and understanding their needs.
- In South Africa under apartheid, NGOs had been very active in supporting local communities, churches and trade unions. But there had been government resistance to the engagement of embassies, seen to be interfering in the internal affairs of the country.

The overall conclusion from the discussions was that building connections between civil society and diplomacy was difficult but not impossible, and that the situation had started to change for the better.

IFDT Bazaar: Innovations and Challenges in Diplomatic Training

Member institutions gave brief accounts of new developments of note:

Angola – Institute of International Relations

Angola had been independent for forty years, but at peace for only fifteen years. The Institute was now twelve years old. One undergraduate course was open to all: there had been 4,500 applicants for only 100 places. There was a one-year programme for junior diplomats, and mid-career training on the job, with compulsory training for particular postings, including ambassadors, complemented by programmes for spouses and partners. Training in the Portuguese language was offered to foreign diplomats in Angola; they were thinking of introducing also Mandarin, Arabic and Spanish. As everywhere, they suffered budget constraints. Nevertheless, they were creating a new centre for international relations research, to improve their contribution to the Angolan foreign policy process.

Armenia – Diplomatic School

All training institutions were doing similar things, but confronted a radically new international system. The key challenge was: how to do diplomacy in a non-polar world, still in economic crisis.

Azerbaijan – Diplomatic University

The (then) Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy had hosted the 40th Meeting of the IFDT in 2012. Their alumni network was growing in government and in the business sector. They were facilitating inter-agency dialogue in programmes of advanced executive training. Junior diplomats were being mentored by ambassadors. The Caspian Sea study programme, open to all, had brought 100 foreign diplomats to Baku from 35 countries. The new School of Information Technology and Engineering was nurturing talent from all sectors.

Bulgaria – Diplomatic Institute

The Institute was developing programmes on energy diplomacy, and on the diplomacy of their complex region, in co-operation with their geographic neighbours, and with the diplomatic academies of Iran and Saudi Arabia. They also were engaged in the training of 1,000 diplomats and civil servants in preparation for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2018.

Canada – Foreign Service Institute

Resource constraints demanded being dual-capable. The Department had absorbed the development agency, bringing with it the management of a big budget, but few people with diplomatic training. They were working to keep abreast of new knowledge and skills – geo-economic re-balancing; faith and religion in politics; strategic thinking and reporting back; training people to engage effectively in the public sphere.

Costa Rica – Diplomatic Institute

Costa Rica had no army, so diplomacy was very important. The Institute was engaged in partner courses with Central American and Caribbean neighbours. At present, all were conducted in Spanish, though they aimed to expand into other languages.

Croatia – Diplomatic Academy

Diplomatic training was not only a task, but a way of doing a task. The Academy, which celebrated this year its twentieth anniversary, was engaged in a joint venture with the University of Zagreb, offering twelve courses in partnership, conducted in English. These covered the broad field of international relations from the perspective of any foreign service, not just the national service. Participants were drawn one third each from Croatia, from other foreign ministries and from the public, by competition. New entrants to Croatia's foreign service were offered one year of in-house training; the best went on to participate in the university course.

Diplo Foundation, Geneva Internet Platform

The Diplo Foundation had been offering online training for twenty years, to some 4,500 students. It was possible to start a new programme quickly, but it took five years to get it right. Similarly, the entry level to social media training was low, but it took a month to become a good listener, and a year to be a good user of social media. Diplo had pioneered the concept of 'the Internet in diplomacy' as a topic, not only as a tool. They had developed studies in e-diplomacy, and e-commerce, and had created the Geneva Internet Platform, where more than half of Internet issues were discussed. IFDT members were welcome to draw on Diplo experience in developing cyber-training.

Estonia – School of Diplomacy

Ekke Nomm, Director of the School, was attending his twentieth IFDT Meeting. The School was an independent non-profit foundation, closely allied with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They offered a nine-month programme, plus short courses both in Estonia and in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. They welcomed partnerships with others to learn from experience of instituting reforms.

Hungary – School of Public Policy, Central European University

The Central European University was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, contributing to regional development. The School of Public Policy was a multi-disciplinary and global institution committed to the values of open society, and creating strong and flexible links between research and practice. They offered executive programmes on ten sets of issues. Funding was a continuing challenge, as training budgets everywhere were being cut.

Indonesia – Centre for Education and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Centre offered training at basic, mid-career and senior levels, including courses in coping with new issues and trends, such as a programme on trafficking, in co-operation with IOM, and training for hardship postings in countries in conflict. They had developed a course on maritime diplomacy. They welcomed partnerships with other institutions, in Indonesia and abroad.

Netherlands – Institute of International Relations, Clingendael

Clingendael was an independent non-profit organisation, with close ties to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, for whom they provided a three-month full-time induction programme for new entrants. The Institute comprised an academy and a research department, with cross-fertilisation between them, as for example in the development of e-learning tools, and the study of new IT methods for diplomacy. They conducted programmes also for other governments, though the challenge as always was finance. Public tenders increasingly demanded high quality, but at ever-lower cost.

Philippines – Foreign Service Institute

The Institute was an independent chartered institution, attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The School of Diplomacy conducted research, provided training for the Foreign Ministry and other Ministries, and contributed to the recruitment process of new and mid-career entrants. They worked in partnership with other academic institutions.

Spain – Escuela Diplomática

The School had moved from offering voluntary courses to compulsory training for new entrants. They also provided mid-career training in specific professional competences, including preparation for promotion tests, such as for prospective heads of mission. New online courses had been developed, as well as training in public diplomacy. They were engaged in partnerships with the diplomatic academies in Brazil and Chile.

South Africa – Diplomatic Academy

The Academy's programmes were growing, and were open to more countries. They were trying to address the needs of the future, but as all others, faced the problem of balancing opportunities and resources.

Thailand – Diplomatic Academy

The Academy offered mainly in-house training, but increasingly for other ASEAN countries as well.

United Kingdom – Diplomatic Academy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Academy was a new institution, facing the challenge of innovation in a 200-year-old structure. The biggest constraint was time: the pace had increased, with fewer people doing more work. It was difficult to find useful learning time for staff. More was being offered in e-learning – not only for 'classic' diplomats, but for officials in other ministries, and for locally-employed staff around the world. Courses were offered at Foundation, Practitioner and Expert level, with increasing emphasis on shared learning, with peer presentation of new or best practice.

United Kingdom – School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

SOAS continued to develop its programmes of research and teaching on global policy, including global energy policy, as well as teaching and online learning in diplomacy.

Concluding remarks:

Contributions to the IFDT Bazaar indicated that programmes of regional co-operation were growing. The challenge for all members of the Forum was to see what more could be done in their own neighbourhood.

Keynote speech:

Diplomacy in a world of turmoil

Dr Andrzej Olechowski

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, 1993-95

Dr Olechowski reflected on the continuing struggle between diplomacy and the force of arms – the military always preparing for a show, the diplomats losing too often. In this time of tension in the Middle East, Africa and East Asia, and along the restless borders with Russia, diplomacy was needed more than ever.

The process of transition in Poland since 1989 had been miraculous – that Poles would get together, and get the job done: twenty-three years of continuous economic growth, despite the financial crisis and double-dip recessions.

How had they managed to do that? New infrastructure had been created quickly, and a bold set of laws for the market economy. There had been no restrictions on the political market, either – elections with crazy parties, but also able and energetic parties.

The de-monopolised economy had been a terrible challenge for many, but the country had been blessed with four advantages:

- courageous politicians, some badly advised, but others who knew what they were doing;
- a patient, hard-working people, looking to their families' future;
- an explosion of entrepreneurship (there having been no rich uncles on whom to rely);
- generous help from abroad, in loans and debt reduction.

They had been buoyed by expressions of sympathy from people around the world, who had wished them success.

Friday 25 September

Welcome Speech

Dr Jan Pastwa, Director of the National School of Public Administration, co-host of the 42nd Meeting, had overseen the rebirth of the Polish public administration after 1989, and had served later as Ambassador of Poland to the Czech Republic.

The National School had been established in 1990. It was not a university, but a government training centre under the Office of the Prime Minister. Its mission was not so much to give knowledge (the students all had MAs already in a variety of fields) as to help develop the skills and attitudes of public service: impartial, politically neutral, professional, competent, effective and accountable.

The programme covered law, economics, management, EU and foreign policy, and included a six-week internship in a foreign state institution, gaining practical experience, building networks and generating new ideas.

They prepared forty graduates per year, one-quarter of whom went on to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The School also contributed to programmes of international co-operation with Polish development assistance, helping to train civil servants in Afghanistan and Ukraine, and since 2009 through the Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration.

See www.ksap.gov.pl

Panel discussion – New methods and best practice in diplomatic training

Professor Alan Henrikson

Lee E Dirks Professor of Diplomatic History, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

More education and training was needed in how to integrate the big picture with action in specific situations. Diplomats needed to develop the skills not just of reporting, but of how to pay attention, how to spot new trends and recognise big tipping points.

There were five main elements to the capacity for intelligent *noticing*, each requiring training:

- the ability to recognise patterns, to pick up what was new, or missing (Kim's game)
- the ability to understand big data – providing context and structure to produce 'actional insights' (Gary King, Alex de Waal)
- the importance of studying and knowing geography, beyond essential network analysis (Ann-Marie Slaughter), having a sense of 'the power of place' (Harm di Blij, Robert Kaplan)
- the importance of remembering history; local, national, regional and global (Kissinger)
- the value of reading fiction, especially future-oriented fiction, building capacity to anticipate possible futures (the Fletcher Reads series, Gary Shteyngart, Peter Singer, August Cole).

Diplomatic training needed to help people open their minds, the better to prepare for the future.

Maria Clara Jaramillo

Director, Diplomatic Academy Augusto Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia

The Academy had been co-operating with a French university for thirty-five years. Its approach had been conservative and theoretical. (Many academics seemed to feel that diplomatic practice was not 'academic' enough to be a serious pursuit.)

Since 2011, the Academy had embraced a new methodology. The one-year programme still included the classic four pillars – international relations, economics, law and political science, but it moved beyond those, with thirty-percent of time now devoted to skills training, including negotiation theory and practice, leadership and communication.

Jon Davies

Director, Diplomatic Academy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom

The Diplomatic Academy was the newest institution represented in the Forum, breaking new ground for the FCO. Foreign Secretaries William Hague and Philip Hammond had set the goal of being 'the best diplomatic service in the world' – a useful aspiration, and a big challenge – to communicate it to staff, and to convince people in a busy life to get involved in their own learning and development, throughout an individual's career.

- The Academy had eleven faculties, each attached to one of the FCO's business centres, with the responsibility of defining their own needs in knowledge and skills
- there were no teaching staff; the emphasis was put on sharing knowledge and experience – part of a diplomat's normal role
- participants and contributors were drawn from across government, and from beyond government
- courses were not just for 'our diplomats', but also for local employees; two-thirds of FCO staff were working abroad
- courses were offered at three levels – foundation, practitioner and expert:
 - at Foundation level, basic skills and knowledge were addressed in blended learning, through e-learning, video, reading and pre-reading, with no classroom-based courses. Learning groups were designed to be led from within the group, sharing personal expertise and knowledge, engaging people in their own learning while contributing to team-building and coherent management
 - by 2017, it would be necessary to have completed the externally-accredited Foundation programme before promotion from Third to Second Secretary

- locally-employed staff were offered more digital training, through regional hubs for learning and development, with locally-engaged specialist L&D advisors, thus reducing travel costs
- at Practitioner level, some of the same approach was employed, but with more taught courses, continually reviewed and updated within the faculties, identifying changing needs and priorities
- officers would need to have reached 'Practitioner' level before promotion from First Secretary to Counsellor
- little work yet had been done in developing the Expert level; it would engage a small number of people, focusing on leadership and management skills
- it was an enduring challenge to marry traditional diplomatic skills with new skills and approaches, to encourage new thinking
- an example had been offered by the British Embassy in Amman. They had added a video to the embassy website, then had made a film about how they had done that, and how it had improved outreach. It had been simple, cheap, powerful and empowering. Others had been able to think, 'We could do that, too.'

In discussion:

Chair: *Ambassador Jan Piekarski*, European Academy of Diplomacy

It was important to *aspire* to be the best – just as in training to be an Olympic athlete

- There were varied approaches to recruitment, selection and promotion:
 - most were by open competition, examination and interview
 - some had subject and/or language requirements; others, none
 - locally-employed staff played an increasing number of roles, for which specialists were recruited locally
 - internships and apprenticeships were offered both within ministries and at post
 - 'diplomats-in-residence' served as mentors and advisors
 - some had 'king-makers' in each ministry, recommending those for higher diplomatic positions.
- A key challenge was balancing the immediate with the longer-term perspective, creating a coherent diplomatic corps when the skill sets were now so much more diverse – eg, trade talks on climate change.
- It was increasingly essential to be conversant with science. (An example had been set by Sir Crispin Tickell, when already senior, becoming a climatologist in order to negotiate environment deals. It was more difficult now, though, to spare people for a year, or less.)
- Ministries had to recruit intelligently, bringing in specialists from across and beyond government, providing 'on-boarding' training for them in pre-posting.
- Core skills did not change much; it was important not to lose that in the search for new methods.
- Diplomacy, like other professions, was prone to fads (eg civil society outreach; security sector reform; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration). Traditional diplomatic excellence could get lost in the wash.
- There was a difference between training and learning. You needed to get the balance right. It was important to help people learn about the context – beyond skills – through reading (including literary fiction) and discussion groups.
- You needed to get people to *think* more actively, watching people sitting in front, being conscious of what they were seeing and learning, reading memoirs for situational awareness.
- Hardware didn't work without the software.

Working Groups:

Three separate workshops were offered: on new technologies in diplomacy, on the European External Action Service, and on public diplomacy, ethics and values.

Working Group 1: Implementing new technologies in diplomatic training

Dr Jovan Kurbalija

Director, Diplo Foundation

Adriaan Zondag

Training and Research Fellow, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael

(Rapporteur: *Aleksandra Goclawska*)

Dr Jovan Kurbalija observed that the curriculum of cyber-diplomacy embraced new topics, new tools and new ways of teaching.

The terminology of new technology in diplomacy was still evolving: cyber-diplomacy, virtual diplomacy, e-diplomacy, net diplomacy, digital diplomacy.

Time was accelerating. We were increasingly dependent on the Internet, which had become a key part of life. But there were limits – the twenty-four hour day, the fact that we could keep only eight pieces of information in our working memory, and could sustain only 150 stable social contacts (Dunbar's Number). It was important to keep this in mind when developing cyber-training for diplomats.

History mattered. Two hundred years on from the Congress of Vienna, we still were debating the social contract: what was privacy, what was freedom?

Geography mattered. Internet access was highly dependent on cables carrying the signal through a limited number of hubs (eg, much of Latin America through Miami). It was necessary to develop a data geostrategy. It was possible now also to develop an emotional geostrategy (eg, through Facebook), mapping social relations in nations. In geopolitics, power was moving to Silicon Valley.

Diplomats needed to be taught how to use the social media. But it was important not to succumb to cyber-spin: it took only a day to start a Twitter account, but a month to become a reasonable follower, and a year to become an effective user. And the most important breakthroughs in recent diplomatic history (eg, the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programmes) had been conducted without Internet access.

Adriaan Zondag reflected on the ways in which the Clingendael Institute was using new technology in training, through blended learning:

- the Institute's Moodle site supported classroom teaching with online tools, as well as providing a place to upload resources for courses. It was being developed to enable tutors to provide feedback on students' work.
- Apple TV had been installed to increase the speed of data-access. (Most students owned Macbooks, and there had been problems with compatibility of software.)
- they were using Skype and fake Twitter accounts for crisis management simulations, providing practice in using technology to deal with emergencies.
- they had put their alumni record on Facebook, updated a few times a year, to help keep people in touch with each other.

In discussion:

- Online courses made it easier to reach diplomats and locally-employed staff serving abroad. Content and techniques of learning, however, needed to be adapted to people with different backgrounds. Specialized courses for life-long learning were replacing classic general courses.

- It could be helpful to train diplomats with others, such as those from business, journalism and civil society, integrating them with the wider community.
- Most teachers focused on transferring information; but learning was an emotional relationship between teacher and student. The ratio of teacher to students in online courses needed to be limited, to ensure that students' requests could be answered promptly.
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) were proliferating. Their relative success hinged on their quality.
- There were limits to the utility of online learning; training in negotiation and public speaking, for example, needed face-to-face interaction (though it was possible to teach *procedures* of negotiation online).
- Recording negotiation simulations, with personal feedback on student performance, had proved to be very effective, but was costly. The budget was the principal challenge.
- An effective learning management system was needed to link the providers of content (the tutors) with the IT specialists.

Working Group 2: Diplomatic training in the European External Action Service

Dr John Hemery

Chairman, Centre for Political and Diplomatic Studies

(Rapporteurs: *Professor Alan Henrikson, Solomiia Popovych*)

Dr John Hemery reflected on the origins and structure of training in the European External Action Service (EEAS).

[Copies of a detailed paper, "Diplomatic Training in the European Union," by Simon Duke, of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), were provided, together with information on the Palgrave Macmillan book, *The European External Action Service: European Diplomacy Post-Westphalia*, edited by David Spence and Jozef Batora.]

The EEAS (as reflected in the organogram presented) was a relatively vertical organisation, the formal structure of which had been inherited from the European Commission.

The Treaty on European Union provided only that there be an External Action Service to support the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission. The Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS stipulated only that there be 'adequate common training, building in particular on existing practices and structures at national and Union level.'

Consequently, the EEAS essentially was still being formed while in operation. Training was utilitarian, pragmatic and thus far largely dependent on the individual Head of Unit, rather than there being yet any integrated, systemic approach to professional development. Nevertheless, a review of the existing learning framework was soon to be undertaken.

The EEAS approach to training had been developed earlier in the Commission's Directorate General for External Relations (RELEX), and had been adopted by the new institution. The Strategic Training Framework had four key objectives:

- to create a common base of knowledge and competences, necessary in the new institutional and operational environment;
- to contribute to the establishment of an EEAS corporate culture;
- to build solid networks and platforms of exchange within the EEAS and with other EU institutions, Member States and International Organisations, as well as with Diplomatic Academies and specialised training institutes;
- to develop collective capacity of all EEAS staff to manage effectively the security risks to EEAS corporate assets (staff, physical assets, and information – in particular EU classified information) and operations, as well as to contribute to enhance the resilience of the Service.

EEAS staff were drawn, broadly one-third each, from the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and the diplomatic services of Member States. Officials from the European Institutions typically needed diplomatic training; Member State diplomats needed immersion in the byzantine management and financial procedures of the EU.

Training was provided partly by in-house specialists, and partly outsourced under a framework contract managed jointly by the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA, Maastricht), and the College of Europe (Bruges).

EEAS regulations provided staff with a minimum of ten days training per year; pressure of work, severe budget constraints and lack of dedicated training space meant that not all had the opportunity to fulfil their quota.

In EU Delegations abroad, there was a clear delineation between EEAS staff conducting political work, and Commission staff responsible for programme management, with a notable imbalance of resources between the two.

Many international issues remained within the Commission's competence – climate, development, drugs, environment, migration, trade – hence, the Commission still led on much training of EEAS staff both in Delegations and at Headquarters.

EEAS training was offered throughout the year in thematic modules lasting between one and five days, focused thus far (in the proportion of training offered) more on technical, managerial and financial skills, than on the development of substantive knowledge and practical diplomatic skills:

Length of course (days)

5	Human Rights
3	Mediation and peace-building
2	Conflict: from analysis to action
2	Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration
2	Security Sector Reform
2	Political analysis and reporting (offered 4 times per year)
2	Political Islam
1	Religion and foreign policy
1	History of European Diplomacy
1	Changing patterns of diplomacy
1	Basic intelligence
1	EU-UN partnership
1	Council of Europe
1	Diplomatic Law
1	Language and Diplomacy
1	Public Diplomacy and media
1	Welcome back from Delegation
1	Critical incident stress management (twice a year)
1	Hazardous environment / security training (including 'social media threats') (12 times per year)
1	Financial and contract management (8 times per year)
1	ABAC (Accrual-Based ACcounting) financial management (27 times per year)

EEAS staff also attended diplomatic training courses offered in the Member States.

The EEAS was a new institution, only five years old, yet it was already the fourth-largest diplomatic service in the world, needing rapid professional development. It would take a generation for it to become fully-fledged.

In discussion:

- The development of training for the EEAS was 'organic', requiring continued co-operation between the EU institutions and providers of training in the Member States.
- A useful comparative model was the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), with a very small central administrative staff in Brussels co-ordinating the contributions from Member States of a large number of professional courses.
- The ESDC offered a two-week EU Senior Mission Leaders Course, to prepare Heads of Mission for CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) missions abroad. It was attended by military and police officers, and by diplomats from Member States and from the EEAS.
- The European Diplomatic Programme (EDP), established in 1999, offered a three-module peripatetic training course, organised jointly by the EEAS and two Member States holding successive Presidencies of the Council of the EU. It was attended by two young diplomats from the diplomatic services of each of the Member States, and from the EU institutions.
- There was no recruitment from outside directly into the EEAS; the diplomatic services of Member States put up their candidates for selection.
- Member State foreign ministries were obliged to certify that officials (from other ministries, without any diplomatic training or experience) joining the EEAS were 'diplomats' – in order to conform to the terms of the Council Decision establishing the EEAS. This did not apply to those nominated to be Heads of Mission, who were experienced diplomats.
- Trade *policy* (as distinct from trade in *goods*) was a monopoly of the EU, though the EEAS had only partial/limited authority over trade policy, given the central negotiating role of the EU's Commissioner for Trade.
- In the United Nations General Assembly, an EEAS representative could present 'common positions', speaking ahead of and on behalf of all 28 Member States, and could intervene in the debate; but could not vote. This innovation had been controversial. The Caribbean Community (Caricom), for example, had asked whether it, too, could and should have a group/organizational representative in the General Assembly. Conceivably, also, the Arab League and other regional entities.
- In international institutions, EU Member States had been known to spend more time talking amongst themselves to arrive at a common position, than in negotiation with other partners.
- The Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO) in South Africa had an active portfolio of joint co-operation with the EU and the African Union.

Working Group 3: Public diplomacy, ethics and values

Ambassador Barbara Bodine

Director, Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

Dr Katarzyna Pidlarska

Director, European Academy of Diplomacy

(Rapporteur: *Maria Swiderska*)

Ambassador Barbara Bodine reflected on the line between personal integrity and professionalism when doing public diplomacy, or any diplomacy. You would never agree with all decisions made by government. How then could you remain loyal when it came to a policy with which you didn't agree? Where did professional obligation end, and freedom to express your personal opinion begin? These dilemmas were accentuated by social media. What role could academic institutions play in helping the millennials understand that there were limits to what they could do?

Dr Katarzyna Pisarska observed that public diplomacy wasn't propaganda; it was telling the truth. The world was lacking authenticity. In personal life you interacted with people who were the most authentic. The same was needed in diplomacy – to show the human face of government.

In discussion:

- A good diplomat shouldn't always agree with the government; critical thinking was needed. But you shouldn't state this on your personal Facebook page. You needed to be aware of the forum in which you were speaking out. There were limits to authenticity.
- A government climate scientist once had sung a song, in his personal time, about the Prime Minister, and had been suspended. For a small mistake you could pay a big price.
- Transparency was important, but it was difficult to implement a culture in which diplomats could criticise policy without jeopardising their career.
- Officials had to be allowed to express their opinion within the department. If they disagreed with policy, they could be moved to another department. If they strongly disagreed, they always had the option of resigning. It was politicians, not diplomats, who decided the agenda.
- Training was needed to help people express their positions in an unthreatening, analytic way, encouraging constructive professionalism.
- Professionalism in practice meant toeing the party line.
- Town hall meetings could be useful for airing different views.
- Evaluation of employees could be undermined if people were afraid to criticise. It was important to be able to identify areas for personal improvement.
- Managers needed to walk the talk, allowing people to criticise them. But changing a management culture was a long process – five to ten years.
- Cultural diplomacy was important. Education connected people.
- Exchange programmes were helpful, but expensive, and it was difficult to quantify the effectiveness of scholarships (though the Iran nuclear negotiations had been helped by the Iranian and American scientists having studied together).
- Public diplomacy was about values, not branding; that was for the tourism board. The diplomat needed to engage with civil society, telling the story of their country. NGOs were good at this, at changing perceptions. We needed to teach diplomats to work with their domestic stakeholders, to develop one story of the country in which everyone believed; for example, in Norway, where the majority of the society worked towards contributing to world peace. But the public diplomacy narrative wouldn't work if the people didn't believe in it.
- Governments couldn't implement effective public diplomacy on their own. They needed to build a deeper relationship with civil society.
- Public diplomacy was like faith; you either believed in it, or you didn't.

Third plenary

Professional development and lifelong learning

Aygun Hajiyeva

Azerbaijan Diplomatic University

Heru Hartant Subolo

Centre for Education and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Klaudia Wojciechowska,

National School of Public Administration (Poland)

Moderator: *Jason Worlledge*, European Academy of Diplomacy (Poland)

Heru Hartant Subolo

Centre for Education and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Indonesia's foreign policy 2014-19 focused on people-centred diplomacy, achieved through a programme of life-long holistic learning, at five levels from probationer to director general.

There were programmes on management and leadership, offered in partnership with the private sector. These drew on marketing strategy for economic diplomacy, and studies of corporate culture and networking to encourage a more open mindset. Coaching and mentoring enabled transfer of experience between seniors and juniors.

The key challenges lay in implementation: developing an e-learning platform; having limited resource persons (curriculum designers, evaluators, assessors, permanent educators); addressing the generalist-specialist dichotomy; and managing continuity and sustainability of training design.

Aygun Hajiyeva

Azerbaijan Diplomatic University

Executive education had been offered for the past nine years, for both government and business people, through the Advanced Foreign Service Programme, the Corporate Programme and Caspian Basin studies.

The University's work rested on four pillars: an aspiration to global leadership; innovative learning by doing and practical skills development in public-private partnership; social responsibility through project activity; and a thriving location.

Their mission was to provide, 'a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lives to build confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments'.

Their challenges included: structural and institutional impediments; immature human resources and learning and development systems; developing and retaining staff; lack of awareness and appreciation of the complexity of the task; and intensive schedules that overloaded individuals.

Klaudia Wojciechowska

National School of Public Administration (Poland)

The philosophy of the School was exemplified in the anecdote of Kalinisch, his dog and the cod liver oil: everything was in the method. They offered enthusiasm, bringing learning from third-sector actors, closer to the citizens.

They concentrated on raising the competence and knowledge of citizen-orientated civil servants, more than purely on the professional development of diplomats.

Their programmes did not focus so much on e-learning, as they had found that people appreciated face-to-face, classroom-based learning.

In discussion:

- E-learning made a complementary contribution to diplomatic training
- Blended learning worked best – online, reading, seminars, inter-active videos (small, short units while waiting for a plane)
- Business was always one step ahead of the public sector; there was much to learn from them

- Customised programmes for the corporate sector fed the diplomatic curriculum, with cross-fertilisation between public and private participants
- There were lessons to be drawn from within the workplace, too; little pearls which occasionally emerged
- Training needed now to focus on speed, efficiency and responsibility
- A key challenge lay in changing the mindset, from awaiting advancement to active pursuit of professional development
- There was a larger challenge in teaching leadership – becoming a better person, encouraging self-development to serve society
- Responsibility for learning rested in the end with the individual – personal development for career development.

Working Group 1: Role of Mentoring

Shamsiyya Mustafayeva

Azerbaijan Diplomatic University

(Rapporteur: *Maria Swiderska*)

[PowerPoint Presentation – Ambivalence in International Dialogue: Implications for Diplomatic Training-Mentoring, prepared by: Shamsiyya Mustafayeva and Astrid Schnitzer]

There was ambivalence in industry; did ambivalence impact on the work and lives of professional diplomats? If yes, how? In particular, how did a political conflict situation impact on the professional identity of a diplomat?

How did diplomats handle cultural diversity? How did it impact on their professional identity? The Azerbaijan Diplomatic University had conducted a review of the literature, and interviews with senior diplomats from six countries.

Owing to the nature of their work, diplomats had to be comfortable with a certain level of ambiguity. They often had only one or two stories about a country; effort was needed to learn more.

Diplomats carried a number of identities: personal, linguistic, national, professional and others. Training focused largely on cognitive intelligence. Three other competences were relatively neglected: emotional, social and cultural.

- emotional Intelligence entailed self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills – the capacity to build relationships
- social Intelligence was situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity – the capacity for empathy
- cultural Intelligence required knowledge, comprehension, skills – positive attitudes towards others.

Of these, the most important was emotional intelligence:

- self-management (managing emotions, reactions)
- building and maintaining resonant relationships beyond the issues of the day
- in the east business depended on relationships and trust; in the west, less so
- leaders who had emotional intelligence were likely to be more effective than those who did not.

Mentoring and coaching were not the same:

- mentoring wasn't psychotherapy, expert counselling or training
- coaching was a more official relationship
- the mentor could be anyone, even from outside the organisation, who kept you motivated and moving towards your goals, who played on your team and was interested in your development.

There were many benefits for mentees:

- seeing the institution through different eyes
- being challenged on received wisdom
- increasing awareness of issues at other levels of the institution
- meeting new members of the organisation
- receiving personal guidance and support, including careers advice.

There were benefits of mentoring to the organization, as well:

- where the quality of higher education had been inadequate, mentoring could help raise standards
- mentors could be trained also to be assessors and moderators.

Institutions needed to generate a culture of mentoring:

- students needed to feel they could ask more experienced people to be mentors
- ambassadors served as mentors to junior diplomats
- colleagues who had been teachers could become mentors
- active and continuous encouragement was needed, particularly for women, who were less likely than men to support each other.

There was a downside, though:

- few had the experience or the time to serve as mentors
- mentoring typically was unpaid, so there was little incentive to take on the extra burden
- foreign ministries often lost mentors to the private sector, where conditions and opportunities were thought to be better.

The Working Group broke into small discussion groups to consider the presentation and report back:

- culture clearly was important, but it was not obvious how emotionality could be taught
- the complexity of issues couldn't be resolved by mentoring alone
- perception was the key to understanding
- awareness was more important than practical effectiveness
- understanding the culture was essential to survival in a foreign environment
- protocol and etiquette could be a help, being universal
- self-management was extremely important, a precondition of managing the emotions of other people.

Working Group 2: Recruitment and Training of New Diplomats

Anna Paszka

Head of Intramural Training Department
National School of Public Administration, Poland

The School was not a diplomatic academy, but was training civil servants who go abroad.

There were three stages of recruitment:

Stage 1: tests of knowledge and skills, including languages (English, French or German), and psychological tests

Stage 2: a written exercise in Polish

Stage 3: an interview with the Recruitment Commission, assessing attitudes and motivation.

There were between ten and twenty candidates a year for each of forty places: maximum age 31, with an MA degree, and good command of English. NSPA graduates were guaranteed entry to the public service.

They followed a 19-week programme, organised in five training blocks:

1. Domestic law and public administration

- basics of economics
- public finance
- economic institutions
- economic policies of the state

2. EU and foreign policy

- Polish foreign policy
- decision-making procedures in the EU
- legal system of the EU
- current challenges

3. International law and diplomatic protocol

4. Management and building of attitudes and personal competences

- human resources management
- crisis management
- team management
- adventurous training to build team cohesion (sailing, canoeing, camping excursions)

5. Information and communications technology

The programme, which included one-to-one mentoring, encouraged development in attitudes to public service, in soft skills including negotiation and leadership, and personal self-improvement.

It was complemented by intramural training including sports, languages, seminars and conferences, and a diplomatic programme conducted by a former ambassador, with informal meetings with members of the diplomatic corps in Warsaw. Subject-related workshops were conducted in small groups, with research projects.

Study visits to London, Berlin and Paris were augmented by internships – two in domestic ministries, one in a foreign public administration (mainly in the EU, but also in the United States, Uruguay and Ethiopia – building on personal special interests, and in international institutions including the OECD, the European External Action Service and the United Nations).

The programme was funded by a grant from the Chancellery – an investment in the public service. Students were unpaid while studying, provided only with a stipend, followed on completion by five years obligatory service.

What candidates, what characteristics, how to attract them, what to teach them?

Maud Dlomo

Deputy Director General, Diplomatic Training, Research and Development
Department of International Relations and Co-operation, South Africa

Diplomats were elements of ‘soft power’ in support of foreign policy objectives. New diplomats were both ‘young’, and mid-career lateral entrants after a transition phase. Training thus needed to respond to present, transitional and future needs.

What kind of candidates?

- those who appreciated the history and represented the present values of the country; your national identity, what you stood for
- who would take the Ministry and country to the future – with affirmative action for those formerly excluded
- professionals who could implement foreign policy priorities – generalists and specialists.

What characteristics?

- patriotic
- interpersonal skills and self-awareness
- interest in and respect for other cultures
- compassion – an appreciation of human dependency
- adaptability, and ability to manage stress
- love for their own development – continuous learning and reading
- leadership and teamwork (a crucial quality)
- a problem-solver (not a whinger)
- communication abilities – oral and written skills, and emotional intelligence.

How to attract young people to the career?

- not difficult, given the aura of glamour and the promise of travel
- more important to find those who wanted to make a difference
- establish clear criteria and rigorous assessment
- need also to train those who may have 'stumbled over' the profession.

After a pre-course assessment in language, computer skills and foreign policy, new recruits spent two to three years on probation in Headquarters, pursuing academic, practical and language training, and doing administrative work. DIRCO strove to achieve a balance between formal training and on-the job professional development. They sought to mobilise experience, knowledge and opportunities from other sectors of government and the private sector.

What to teach?

- traditional and contemporary diplomacy
- balance history with the current state of affairs in rebuilding nations through post-conflict reconstruction and development
- balance theory and practice – case studies (eg the international response to the Fukushima disaster)
- make space for emerging issues in a changing geopolitical environment
- balance knowledge with experience
- utilise existing wisdom – ambassadors-in-residence, including external academic ideas
- prioritise character and attitude: no matter how bright you were, you were still only part of a team.

South Africa's experience:

- integrating the country in the family of states and international organisations – with new identity, values and priorities
- managing the experience/qualifications gap with new leaders and managers
- introducing a Cadet programme to stem the attrition rate of new recruits
- creating future expertise – eg women mediators and youth from government and civil society
- developing regional programmes to facilitate relations between these groups.

Recommendations:

an effective diplomatic training programme needed

- clear objectives – grooming for the future, state-building, professionalism
- to contextualise and clarify the role of the profession – linked to domestic priorities
- to develop language and communication skills – social networking, media and public diplomacy
- constant re-skilling – knowledge of new issues and innovation were essential to organisational renewal and efficiency
- values and attitudes were more important than ever.

Some key questions remained:

- how to develop modern training tools that appealed to youth?
- how to address new issues?
- how best to use the wisdom and experience of retired diplomats?
- how to shape the future through training?

In discussion:

- The Cadet programme – half training, half internship – had been designed to facilitate transformation in South Africa by attracting graduates in development, international relations, politics, law and languages into the foreign service. There had been 2,000 applicants for 40 places.

A panel of senior serving and retired diplomats had overseen a suite of psychological tests, and rigorous assessment of computer and language skills, attitudes and adaptability.

Successful candidates signed a contract to pay back all the costs of training if opting to leave the service on completion. Incentives to stay included relatively generous salary and leave, job security, and fast-track promotion.

- Orientation programmes were provided for advancement to the higher levels of the foreign service – six weeks to Counsellor, fourteen weeks to Minister Plenipotentiary (especially for political appointees). Administrators were trained separately – with special programmes for those transitioning to political work.
- Foreign internships could be difficult to arrange, taking months. Initial contact by website could be a hit and miss process.
- Retaining language proficiency was a problem, especially for a small country. It was not possible to send the same few people to the same country all the time.

Final session:

Future of the IFDT and closing remarks

Ambassador Barbara Bodine

Ambassador Dr Hans Winkler

It had been a wonderfully-organised and -structured Meeting, realised by a surprisingly small team of people, *Katarzyna Pisarska*, *Jason Worledge* and the team from the National School of Public Administration. Much had been learned, new friends made, and all had profited greatly.

How was the new IFDT structure working?

The recommendations of the Steering Group created at Vienna in September 2014, had been presented to the Meeting in Pretoria, and had been agreed unanimously.

The IFDT was still not an international organisation, nor an institution chartered in any country, nor an association; it remained an informal gathering.

The principal innovation had been the introduction of a membership fee – a symbolic sum of EUR 200 – payment of which was a pre-condition of invitation to attend the Meetings of the Forum.

The fee was to be used solely to cover the costs of establishing and maintaining the IFDT homepage, facilitating communication between members and providing information about upcoming events. Access was by individual password.

A key challenge was keeping membership information up to date. It was essential to notify the administration of changes in the principal of a member institution, and/or of the contact email address.

The Meetings were gatherings of deans and directors – not others, without a good reason. The Forum had become large, which was a good thing; but if it became too large, it imposed too great a burden on the prospective host. The more institutions that joined, the more discipline was needed on the part of participants. There were to be no delegations.

The host had to ensure that everyone would be welcome. The IFDT was not a political institution; it was an open academic forum, so no host could exclude any potential attendee.

The schedule created by the organisers at Warsaw had been ideal – plenaries and breakout sessions, with lunches, dinner and transportation provided – but participants had paid their own travel and accommodation (with negotiated preferential rates).

The schedule of future Meetings agreed thus far included:

2016 – Canberra

2017 – Santiago

2018 – Geneva

(co-hosted by UNITAR, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Diplo Foundation)

2019 – Georgetown

There had been a number of offers for Meetings in 2020 and beyond. It was encouraging that many institutions were prepared to accept the burden of organisation.

Vienna and Georgetown were prepared to continue in their role as co-chairs.

The Steering Group was working well; it had made decision-making more democratic and transparent. The members included the two co-chairs, the ‘troika+2’ (the two former host institutions, the current host and the two hosts to come), the webmaster and the rapporteur.

This group would decide who would be a new member. In principle, the IFDT was a gathering of independent institutions delivering diplomatic training and education. Some belonged to the foreign ministry, but were not just a department; they had a separate identity. There was continuing discussion about the inclusion of commercial organisations.

In discussion:

- The Forum had been a proving ground and mentoring organisation for someone new to diplomacy, brought along at first by her own boss and mentor. It was important not to lose that contribution to institution-building that had been done so well, in addition to network-building.
- If there were good reasons for having two participants from one institution, there could be two. It was just necessary to make the case. Flexibility was the main motto. But any additional place would be subject to an additional charge.
- Limits would be imposed, though. This year, four people had come from one foreign ministry, which was not fair to the host.
- Late registration and last-minute applications made it difficult for the host. Members were asked to respect the deadlines. After the cut-off date, applications would not be accepted.
- Invitations normally were sent out by the end of June, with a deadline for response by the end of July, or mid-August. (There had been a request that invitations be sent out earlier, perhaps in May, to enable people to secure cheaper airfares.)
- The Meeting at Canberra was scheduled to be held in the third week in September, Wed 21 – Fri 23.

Katarzyna Pisarska, Director of the European Academy of Diplomacy, thanked *Jan Paska*, Director of the National School of Public Administration, for all their assistance in what had been an example of co-operation between private and public institutions.

She offered special thanks to *Joanna Jasinska*, who had been working for months on the administration, to the whole team in Warsaw, to *Nadja Wozonig* in Vienna, to the speakers from other countries, and to all the guests who had contributed so much to the working format of the Meeting.

Members were encouraged to access the Dropbox link for the family photo, list of email addresses, and the feedback survey – to include suggestions of topics and ideas for next year.

Saturday 26 September Students' Day

Members of the Forum joined students from the National School of Public Administration for an additional morning of discussion on the politics of the Middle East, careers in international organisations, and diplomacy's possible futures.

Drivers of migration, instability and the shifting tectonic plates in the Middle East *Ambassador Barbara Bodine*

Grotesque groups like ISIL were trying to aggregate the worst excesses of terrorism. What were the root causes driving these developments – the 'black rhinos', slow-moving processes that we needed to be aware were growing?

Dramatic intervention and emergency care were no solution to great movements of people such as refugees from the Syrian conflict. It was important to focus on the underlying problems of society, or be condemned to reactive policy.

The revolutions of the Arab Spring in 2011 had often been depicted as democratic attempts to throw off authoritarian governments. Other factors had been more fundamental – demography, technology, economy.

In Yemen, over 60% of the population were under 25. In many countries, the young had been idealistic, absolutist, and impatient for change. They were different in background to earlier generations.

New technology had enabled connections with each other, and with the outside world; there had been a sudden explosion of awareness about where they sat in relation to the rest of the world. Many were educated and tech-savvy, but had no jobs. Stagnation in statist economies had fed their growing frustration.

The global downturn following the financial crisis of 2009, had damaged unbalanced economies even more. Tourism had gone down, food prices had gone up. (Yemen was now 95% food import-dependent.)

With 25-30% unemployment, high prices, and no marriage until economically independent, young people were marooned in a prolonged state of childhood dependence, with consequent cumulative frustrations.

Huge expectations had been unleashed by the Arab Spring, but nothing had changed – structures had not changed, economies had remained stagnant. Waves of emigrants, bereft of hope, fled their countries. Disillusionment degenerated into violent rejectionism of the old political order.

It was the responsibility of the diplomat to be the bearer of inconvenient truth to government. Long-term problems needed long-term solutions. Investment was needed in job creation and economic development, enabling people to stay at home instead of being forced to flee.

So – how to help the transition? It was a global responsibility, and especially for a country like Poland that had managed transition successfully, and could now deliver the wisdom of experience. The United States had led with the military, not very successfully. It was better now to lead with economic regeneration.

In discussion:

- Poland would try to help, but no country worked in a vacuum. Poland had to deal with its own difficulties, including economic stress and managing the fallout from the refugee crisis.
- There was xenophobia and racism in every society. The challenge was to shape a narrative that was positive and constructive, that appealed to our better natures. We had all been refugees at some stage; someone had let us in. It was important not to let the lowest common denominator, the shrillest voice, dominate the conversation. Politicians and civil society needed to step forward and take the middle ground.
- The growth of ISIL stemmed from the 2003 intervention in Iraq, and the subsequent decisions to dissolve the Iraqi army and public service. ISIL had become a de facto state, armed with Western equipment, funded by oil, holding territory.
- Could ISIL now be called a member of the international community? Plenty of governments had started as insurgencies. The difference with ISIL was that it was fundamentally a nihilist organisation, without the ability to construct an alternative legitimate government; the driver was simply to destroy, including ‘cultural genocide’, destroying connection to the deep past and root-identity of a people.
- NATO intervention in Libya to defend Benghazi had been justified, but there had been no proper analysis of and support for a viable governing structure and economy. Without commitment to rebuilding the state institutions, violence and chaos had been given the space to grow. ISIL had simply moved into the vacuum created.
- The Greater Middle East Co-prosperity Sphere Initiative – after the first Iraq war – had been mooted, but dropped, more rhetoric than substance at the time. Middle East Partnership initiatives had been too small, too bitty, to resolve the mega-issues of employment and governance. They had been too driven by the West, tarred with the image of an imperial presence. Military plus money did not replace wisdom.
- Working in the mayor’s office in Baghdad in 2003, had been a Spanish senior general who had guided the Spanish army from Franco to civilian control, and a Romanian diplomat who had helped the transition from Ceasescu to democracy. The US authorities had failed to tap into the wisdom that had been available.
- The United States had seen the Middle East as a security issue, not a governance and economic reconstruction issue. Policy had been driven by the military – defined in counter-terrorism terms after 9/11, and pursued largely single-handed. They needed now to reduce the security-centric vision, and to work in partnership with others.
- There was no longer unconditional support for authoritarian regimes who simply provided ‘stability’. It was essential to address root causes and wider implications, looking long-term both back and forward.
- Russia was now a necessary partner for the US in Syria. You didn’t always have the luxury of ‘purity of partner’.

UNITAR – A career in International Organisations

Emily Fraser

International Civil Servant

Founder of the UN Women's Leadership Conference

Geneva was the biggest of the UN capitals, and home of the most specialist agencies. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) provided programmes of training in multilateral diplomacy – both skills and substance – to support governments in working with the United Nations, eg in the lead-up to COP 21 at Paris.

How was it possible to navigate one's way into the organisation? Essentially, by being proactive and energetic, accepting new challenges when they presented themselves and wherever they might lead. Short three-month contracts sometimes were extended to six months or a year, even to a permanent job. You got to meet people who were on the inside, but there was no easy answer, no single path.

There was an open competition each year for appointment as Junior Professional Officers, with country quotas to keep approximately equal numbers. But it was not like being a diplomat, serving your government with a national agenda. A UN official was serving all 193 member state governments.

The key requirement was the same as in any job, being efficient under pressure of time with too few resources. You had also to be able to both speak and draft in at least two of the UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish), and to be conversant in different disciplines – international relations, politics, human rights, economics, environment, trade and science. You needed to be open-minded, prepared sometimes to accept the 'wishy-washy, empty language' required to find consensus.

In discussion:

- UNITAR offered training courses every month, both online and face-to-face in Geneva and New York, advertised online. Anyone could apply. Fees were payable, unless you came from a Least Developed Country. (It could be helpful to a cv to have completed UN courses in mediation, negotiation and chairing skills.) Courses also were created a la carte, *in situ*.
- UNITAR, and other parts of the UN family, took a lot of trainees and interns (typically for three to six months). They were unpaid, though, and it was a real challenge to live in Geneva or New York without funding.
- 2015 was the Year of Women's Empowerment, the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. Sustainable Development Goal 5 targeted women's role in economic and political life. UNITAR was working with UN Women, the UN Development Programme and the World Meteorological Organisation to increase the number of women in leadership positions, through capacity-building and skills development.

Only 30% of delegates to the UN were women. Humanitarian negotiations were more gender-balanced, but in other areas – science, telecommunications, peace and security – men tended to predominate. More needed to be done; a new initiative was to be launched shortly.

- There was opportunity for personal mobility within the UN system. All UN agencies had more than a single focus. There was pressure from member states to improve efficiency, but push-back from staff against mobility and change. It was a two-edged sword: after five years, you were just getting on top of the job, then moved on...
- There was no automatic visa-free travel as a UN official. It depended on the particular government's visa regime. A letter of invitation from the receiving government to work in the country might be needed to enter, with a UN *laiser-passer* (LP).

Diplomacy's Possible Futures (2005) Re-Viewed a decade later

Professor Alan Henrikson

In 2005, *Professor Henrikson* had contributed a paper to the *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* ¹, in which he had advanced five 'projective visions' for the future of diplomacy. He was re-visiting those themes ten years on:

Disintermediation

Just as banks were decreasingly the intermediary between people and their money, so foreign ministries and embassies were decreasingly the intermediary between peoples. Line ministries and businesses were dealing directly with one another, newly-mediated through information- and communication-technology.

Government efforts at nation-branding (eg, Cool Britannia, Nokia-land) offered brittle images that didn't necessarily work well. Some governments, such as Russia and China, were still attempting to restrict this surge of de-institutionalisation, by pressure, legislation and force.

Europeanisation

Eva Gross had referred to 'the Europeanisation of national foreign policy'.² Would the European Union come to subsume the foreign policies of its member states? There was variable geometry: Britain, France and Germany had negotiated with Iran together as the EU3, and then had been joined by the other permanent members of the UN Security Council in the P5+1 talks in Vienna. A growing number of large inter-regional conferences and summits provided scope for issue-aggregation. The EU had become an Observer member of the UN General Assembly (not without objection), and spoke on behalf of the twenty-eight member state governments.

Yet the diplomatic services of the larger EU member states still dwarfed the nascent European External Action Service – France, with more than 14,000 staff; the United Kingdom, with more 12,000; Poland, with more than 4,000.

Democratisation

People now had more say, through representative institutions or more directly via the Internet and social media. However, the rise of 'authoritarian democracy' blurred the concept.

In 1996, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had presented 'An Agenda for Democratization' ³ – a plan to expand the Security Council, open it to wider representation and consultation, and to bring new non-state actors into the UN dialogue.

The establishment of UN Women had been a major step up in democratization. The Rio+20 Earth Summit on environment and development in 1992, and more recently the People's Dialogues on Human Settlements, in Ghana and South Africa, were examples of growing individual idealistic activism outside formal political structures.

¹ *Diplomacy's Possible Futures*, (*Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 1 (2006), pp 3-27), summarized below:

In an attempt to think beyond the immediate horizon for diplomacy, five possible futures are envisioned. 'Disintermediation' suggests that diplomats, in competition with a dynamic private sector, may need to adopt business methods and use the internet — or be bypassed. 'Europeanization' could largely subordinate bilateral diplomacy within the regional European Union framework, although space might be left for 'public diplomatic' functions. International 'democratization' would accord a larger role to states hitherto excluded from decision-making within multilateral institutions, and also to civil society. 'Thematization' would require a higher degree of flexibility from diplomats as they engage in crusade-like efforts against terrorism, disease and other such threats. 'Americanization' implies the adjustment by diplomats to a world in which 'international relations' are conducted along the lines of US domestic politics, with lobbying and advocacy becoming major activities. The need to win greater public support, if not necessarily to involve the people directly in diplomacy, is evident in all of these 'projective visions'. © Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2006

² Gross, E, 'The Europeanization of national foreign policy: continuity and change in European crisis management', (Palgrave, 2009)

³ Boutros-Ghali, B, 'An Agenda for Democratization', (United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, 1996)

An increasing number of international institutions recognised that, to have a realistic prospect of coherent action, smaller countries needed to be heard. The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) sought to secure international support for defending their habitat. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) provided a platform for peoples without states, such as the indigenous Inuit people of northern Canada, or the Polisario group in Western Sahara.

In '*Networks of Outrage and Hope*'⁴, Manuel Castells had written about the diplomacy of the public, a dis-intermediated conversation beyond government, exemplified in Tahrir Square and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Each of these, though, had had short-term impact without achieving longer-term objectives. The efficacy of 'democratic' diplomatic methods remained an open question.

Thematisation

States and international agencies had become increasingly issue-orientated – combating disease, attempting to rein in arms sales, prosecuting the 'global war on terror' (itself a major shift in US foreign policy, representing a huge distraction from other issues vital for the United States).

Special representatives or envoys were appointed to address particular issues – the role of women in society, the supply of water, the resolution of conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. They had merit, focusing international attention on problem-solving, but they challenged the line of authority of diplomatic representation, and could interfere with the work of the accredited ambassador.

Focus on short-term issues – such as the response to the Ebola crisis – could divert attention from deeper ills of governance. The refugee crisis in Europe had displaced the conflict in Ukraine from the international news cycle.

Americanisation

In the United States, foreign policy was part of the domestic political process; lobby groups were directly engaged in the national policy debate, and increasingly were doing diplomacy in the national politics of other states.

Canadian activists concerned about acid rain in the Great Lakes region were partnering with American environmental groups like the Sierra Club to boost their voice in Washington. Advocacy groups formed international secretariats, not covered by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, to lobby governments directly on domestic legislation.

Diplomats accredited to governments were lobbying the legislature, as in Washington when the British, French and German ambassadors lobbied Congress on the Iran nuclear deal, in co-ordination with the White House.

Foreign leaders became lobbyists. Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu had been invited by Speaker of the US House of Representative, John Boehner, on his own authority, to speak before Congress on the Iran Deal. Gary Doer, when Prime Minister of Manitoba, had lobbied in the United States in support of the Keystone XL Pipeline. Before these, there had been Churchill during the Second World War, Jordan's King Abdullah II addressing Congress on peace in the Middle East, and latterly Pope Francis on climate change, immigration, poverty and capital punishment – all seeking to impact on the ethos of the domestic debate.

There was corresponding foreign direct investment in influencing: the top ten government spenders on lobbying in the United States were Azerbaijan, Canada, Germany, Georgia, Mexico, Morocco, Republika Srpska, Russia and the United Arab Emirates.

Alongside traditional diplomacy – the formal management of the rules-based international system – a parallel diplomacy was emerging through the networked society, with direct effect on government.

⁴ Castells, M, '*Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*', (Polity, 2012)

In discussion:

- It was increasingly difficult to define the ‘national interest’, which was multifarious, and constantly changing.
- PolDoc (www.poldoc.pl) was a nationwide, independent organisation dedicated to supporting PhD students and post-docs in their professional development, providing help in finding a job or research partner, organising workshops and securing grants.

Excursion to Kraków

(This vivid portrait kindly provided by *Pamela Henrikson*)

Under the leadership of *Małgorzata Zawadzka*, Program Coordinator at the EAD, a small but enthusiastic group of eight persons – two Americans, two Indonesians, two South Africans, an Azerbaijani and a Chinese – took a three-day side trip, organised with great care by the European Academy of Diplomacy, to the city of Kraków and environs. Kraków was an easy half-day train ride from Warsaw.

The group spent two half-days on walking tours with an excellent, licensed local guide, *Eliza Mrozinska*. The first day we concentrated on Kraków’s vibrant Jewish history with a visit to Kazimierz, the Jewish district, established by an early king and home to over 70,000 Jews when the Nazis took over in 1939. Amazingly, a number of synagogues, kosher restaurants, and Jewish homes remain. We visited these and sites used by Steven Spielberg in his award-winning movie *Schindler’s List*, as far as the Vistula River with historic factories on the other side. The evening ended in the district with a traditional dinner at the cozy restaurant, *Ariel*.

On the final half-day (our third in Kraków) with her, *Eliza* focused on Kraków’s storied Old Town. Its Market Square, the largest in Europe, is divided by a stunning Cloth Hall and is alive with cafes, shops and street life. Well-maintained town houses surround the square. St. Mary’s Church, with its splendid altar-piece and beautiful decorative interior, and the Town Hall Tower are other notable buildings, together with some handsome theatres and museums.

Kraków, like Vienna, had once been walled, but most of Kraków’s wall was dismantled in the 19th century, leaving only a small remnant, the Barbican, and a verdant walking park (“green belt”) surrounding the Old Town. We visited Jagiellonian University, the most prestigious in Poland and one of Europe’s oldest, climbed Wawel Hill to view the Royal Castle and Cathedral, which houses an ornate Baroque silver reliquary of *St. Stanislaw*, and where most Polish kings were crowned, and are buried.

We were impressed by Kraków’s rich history and tradition, all very well-preserved and integrated with the modern city, and with its evident pride in its ‘native son’, *Pope John Paul II*.

Between the half-days in the Jewish district and the Old Town, we traveled on the second day by bus outside of Kraków to Auschwitz and Birkenau. Although already well-known as the location of Nazi concentration and extermination camps during World War II, these sites, when actually seen, can hardly be grasped. The Auschwitz buildings where thousands were imprisoned under miserable conditions and tortured unimaginably, and the vast expanse of Birkenau with its rows of wooden barracks and rubble of gas chambers and crematorium, left a grim, indelible impression of the human capacity for inhumanity.

Fortunately, for our spirits, we ended the day with a tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Wieliczka Salt Mine, with its huge chambers carved from salt rock, some of them still serving as chapels, and fantastic and creative sculpturing.

The group returned to Warsaw as close friends, with an enhanced appreciation for Poland’s rich and complicated past, and a deeper understanding of Poland’s pride, strength, and optimism about its future.

John Hemery
Rapporteur