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Report of the Workshop on "Diplomacy in the 21st Century"

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Mr. Stanzel presented the questions around which the four sections of Working Paper #1 are clustered. The discussion of each section was then introduced by a commentator who had distributed written comments ahead of the workshop.

1. Individual Level: The Diplomat

Will the necessary changes in the profile of a future diplomat fundamentally change the character of diplomacy, and if so in which way?

Introductory statement: Michael Koch, Federal Foreign Office

In the 21st century, diplomats face a world that is more complex, fragmented and diffuse than ever before. New actors, new ways of communication and new understandings of diplomacy continuously put pressure on them. Thus, insecurity, resistance to change as well as profound self-reflection are observable at the individual level. At the same time, ethics and norms of the diplomatic profession are increasingly reflected upon, such as the principle of discretion and non-interference. In order to remain competitive in such a demanding environment, it is crucial for MFAs and their employees to come to terms with these changes and to draw the necessary practical conclusions.

Discussion:

Diplomatic networking is at the heart of interactional changes: Not merely small and clearly defined circles ("club diplomacy") but rather international and diverse networks conduct diplomacy in the 21st century. This increases the level of complexity of interactions. Diplomacy has to deal with non-state-actors, national and international society, diasporas, academia etc., and its position within these networks is always challenged, making for some degree of "insecurity" of diplomats concerning their role. Here, the role of citizens is of prime importance, both as a "driver of issues" and as a source of political legitimacy. Modern diplomats are highly accessible and accountable to the public; this marks a "value change" which blurs the distinction between diplomats and politicians.

The significance of **diplomatic recruitment** is crucial for the modernization process. A change of people might determine a change of institutions, necessitating new selection criteria established within the recruitment process: Should diplomats "look like their society?" Should MFAs aim for multiculturalism? Gender equality? Specialists and/or generalists? Specific character traits? The latter are particularly hard to define.

The question of who becomes a diplomat is logically intertwined with the general **function and power of diplomacy** in the 21st century. New diplomats to this day are recruited into a nation-state institution and thus obliged to serve the public interest, not a specific or

partial one. Balancing discretion and transparency has always been important for the conduct of diplomacy, but the complexity of relations has profoundly increased, and societal values have changed. Therefore the "building of trust" has become even more important than it was the case in the past. Is diplomacy in the 21st century first and foremost about "understanding, communicating and servicing?" Does it "bring the world home", even "educating" political leaders about what is going on in the world? Does it fulfill a "bridging activity" between societal and political forces? Are MFAs nowadays service instruments for societal and political demands? These reflections were embedded in the concept of power and its, changed or consistent, meaning in diplomacy: Is Diplomacy soft power? Smart Power? Power projection? Power management? To what degree does the individual diplomat still reflect the power of the nation-state?

Against the backdrop of these considerations, the *raison d'être* of diplomacy might be called into question. Even if a **replacement of the diplomatic service** as a whole is unlikely at this time, its institutional design (e.g. MFAs as central actors, rotating staff "on the ground," two-tier MFAs with generalists and specialists) requires modifications in order to maintain a position for diplomacy in the 21st century that permits it to reach its objectives successfully.

2. Instrumental Level: Digitized Communication

What can the consequences of digitization be harnessed profitably for decision-makers, information processing, and the employment of social media?

Introductory statement: Corneliu Bjola, University of Oxford

Digitization permeates not only diplomacy but also every other aspect of private and public life: The amount of information and social media presences multiplies each year, new digital services, platforms and strategies are continuously emerging, and their usage is acquired through practice. Thus, the potential of digital technology for various purposes of diplomacy is enormous and far from exhausted. Digitization carries its own cultural subtext, and with it new risks and new responsibilities. From new opportunities to influence public and individual opinion all the way to the conduct of "digitized negotiations," new developments have a dynamic that is hard even to interfere with. It is no longer an option to withdraw from the process of digitization.

Discussion:

Diplomatic values are contested by digitization. First of all, digitization opens up a new dimension of transparency. As a result, the room for discrete, confidential and thorough communication is most likely to shrink; discretion and transparency run the danger of being thrown off balance. It is moreover in the very nature of digital communication to intervene in other nation-states and to exercise its "duty of care;" this could harm the uni-

versal principle of non-interference in domestic affairs. Digitization also imposes a high pressure of **accountability** on the individual diplomat. He has to react both in real-time and in-depth, with the direct responsibility for all published statements.

Digitization enables diplomacy to provide innovative services for citizens, and to connect with them in a new way (e.g. crisis communication). Here the **integrity of diplomacy** needs to be preserved in order to remain true to diplomacy's purpose of building trust. Information channels must be trusted in order to fulfill their functional role of enabling checking of information. The promotion of a country as well as the influence of disinformation campaigns rely on the credibility of diplomatic institutions; it is thus imperative to increase their resilience to negative narratives as well as to the temptation of digitized "Potemkin diplomacy." A way more adequate to the potential of digitization— and thus to update the narration about digitization—would be to "map" truly deep digitization, something that is far from sufficiently explored presently - while the vision of "algorithmic diplomacy" is at the doorstep already.

Digital and social media strategies are still rare in diplomacy although they are increasingly needed. The "clarity of mission", and its adequate processing, are essential for success. It is debatable whether centralized or decentralized messaging is more successful, with particular acknowledgment of the non-Western perspective. This can also be applied to the internal "sea of communication." Both external and internal communication consume resources (time, personnel, funds) and require an efficient "knowledge management." Furthermore, digital content has to meet demanding criteria: communication has always to be *up to date* and to reflect what is relevant *now* and *where;* a cultural, political and local matching with the interests of the addressees must be aimed at. It must as well fit to the digital platform where it is published. As to the fact that each platform serves different purposes, not all of them are equally suitable for the objectives of diplomatic institutions. Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook etc. differ with regard to their target audience, language, content, and digital relevance. The function of diplomacy can in this context be regarded as mediator between the political and the public sphere ("setting the stage"), but it is also tempted to satisfy itself with simply "selling a brand."

3. Institutional Level: State-to-State Diplomacy and Transnational Actors

How can diplomacy as an agency of government interact with the new multitude of state, transnational and non-state actors?

Introductory statement: Sascha Lohmann, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

The application of power has transformed diplomacy in the 21st century towards increasing application of non-military means. This is reflected by the rise of economic statecraft, driven both by "post-heroic societies" and the financialization of the economy. Thus, markets are likely to be the main "battlefields of the future." Accordingly, firms and busi-

nesses have become international actors with political influence (e.g. state cooperation with Google and Facebook), and economic interests underpin diplomacy in many ways. Neither the diplomatic apparatus nor academia pay sufficient attention to this fundamental change.

Discussion:

Sanctions are one of the most visible **economic tools of diplomacy.** Their use might represent either a diplomatic success or its failure. Either way, the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the political goals these measures are aiming at. Hence, sanctions can be regarded as a "signal" for norm violation, which does not necessarily change behavior. Sanctions are embedded in a closely intertwined system of economic and electronic interdependence; these infrastructures, building upon the historic linkages of trade and culture, are the preconditions for economic threats.

At the level of **multi-lateral diplomacy**, huge changes and the tendency to form "rigid blocks" are observable; states are less cooperative and pursue their own identity/value politics (even inside the EU). Such an overarching weaking of multilaterism will have— still unexplored— consequences for diplomatic institutions. As to actors with "non-state character," multinational corporations, parliaments (or even the Inter-Parliamentary Union—IPU—) have become increasingly important in diplomatic practice. They might differ from governments in that they possess their proper identity, but are less, or differently, value-bound. It is of importance for diplomacy to find a way to engage with such new inter-societal forces, aiming to both counter "**uncivil society**" and target civil society.

4. Global Level: "Successful" Diplomacy in an Environment of Competing Governances

What are the preconditions of legitimate, efficient and effective diplomacy in the widening field of competing governances?

Introductory statements: Rhonda Zaharna, American University; Liana Fix, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

We need to better distinguish between instruments and dynamics of the new "**public sphere**". We observe the evolvement of "new tribes" here. This creates not only a new arena for diplomacy; such tribes are not defined by territories, they exist fluidly, and they use a language of identity and emotionality. The consequence might be that diplomacy as a whole has to move beyond the barriers of states and their tools and to explore how to work at the evolving "new frontier".

Here, and in the context of comparing cultures of different governances, **Russian Diplomacy** is a rewarding case of comparison to Western diplomacy. Even if societal transformation processes in Russia are similar, their effect differs as to structural conditions.

The "revival" of Russian diplomacy relies on a highly personalized and centralized presidential-autocratic system; an ongoing "securitization" process and a turn towards conservatism and historical legacies undermines its stance. Accordingly, the challenge of transparency in Western societies is matched with more and more secrecy in Russian diplomacy.

Discussion:

The concepts of **"public sphere"** and "**tribe**" lead to the question whether a connected, homogenous online community exists, or if it is fragmented, and thus an ever-changing phenomenon that forms and disperses quickly. The term "public sphere" might likely be too narrow and too politically colored to describe such a pluralistic phenomenon. Tribes by their nature might be „swarming," pursue the most varied purposes all the way to new religious orientations, and accordingly, "tribe" and "public sphere" should be referred to in plural to emphasize the heterogeneity of "multi-tribes" and "lots of public spheres." Vice versa, the public sphere shares a certain social hemophilia ("thinking in the same terms"), and a collective intelligence; they might therefore well be able to provide a new and appropriate physical environment (an "architecture") for the tribes. New concepts of politics are to emerge; diplomacy has to deal with the non-territoriality of these new tribes, and to mediate as a "boundary spanner" between diverse identities, religious beliefs and political perspectives. In that sense, publics can be regarded as potential instruments of diplomacy.

As the appearance of such "tribes" as well as the example of Russia—also, possibly, China—show, **complexity management** has become a major task of diplomacy and a test for its core competency ("If you want to solve a problem bring in an expert, if you want to manage complexity bring a diplomat"). Complexity management is basically about finding consensus and cope with the linkage of issues; it thus requires a sense of relativism, especially in a fragmented world of global governance. This goes along with a communicative complexity, addressing both internal and external demands, which evokes an overlapping discourse ("Talking *with* and *about* countries"). Diplomacy is thus as it traditionally always was still much more about gaining time ("Zeitgewinn") than providing solutions. In this regard, it is crucial to define what diplomatic "success" signifies, and if and/or to what extent it is tied to national interests.

5. Theoretical and Procedural Questions

Introductory statement: Christer Jönsson, Lund University

The basic theoretical question for a research project on diplomacy is **how we look upon it**, respectively how we *choose* to look upon it. Up to now, there exists no paradigmatic theory of diplomacy; but the theories of realism and the English school provide us with

possible theoretical approaches. According to realists, diplomacy is an art of convincing without using force. Diplomacy reflects state power and seeks political solutions of the least costs, morality playing no role. The English school, in turn, regards international diplomatic interaction as a necessity for separate units, whereby its influence on state power remains moderate. Concomitant norms, rules and practices are part of the diplomatic institution. Other approaches focus on the symbolic dimension of diplomacy, diplomatic practice, or social anthropology. International Relations approaches are generally not applicable to the study of diplomacy since they lack a relativist approach. Regardless of the theoretical lens chosen, it must be clear if diplomacy is looked upon as a narrow national, or an elusive international institution that "it is always there".

In the discussion, workshop participants agreed that a sole theoretical approach should at least at present be avoided as it might lead to a narrowing of focus. A **pragmatic approach**, i.e. theoretical eclecticism might be more helpful to create a "place where academics and practitioners find each other more fruitfully" in their research. Future research within the project would nonetheless benefit from an in-depth theoretical framework. With regard to this, it has to be taken into account that a Eurocentric bias of the outcome probably is unavoidable for the time being.