Digital Diplomacy: Prospects and Challenges

International Conference, 11-12 May 2015

Yerevan, Armenia

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The conference was held on May 11-12, 2015 at the Congress Hotel in Yerevan, Armenia. It brought together a wide range of academic scholars and digital diplomacy practitioners from around the globe to discuss what digital diplomacy is, how foreign ministries are engaging in it, and the promises and pitfalls of diplomacy in an increasingly digitized age. The conference was organized by the Diplomatic School of Armenia and co-funded by the European Union.

Opening Addresses

The conference began with three brief opening addresses. Vahe Gabrielyan, Director of the Diplomatic School of Armenia, opened the conference by welcoming all of the delegates and setting the stage for the next two days by noting that digital diplomacy is ubiquitous, is largely now a part of our lives, and yet is very difficult to define and conceptualize. This would be a key point that panelists and delegates would return to over the course of the conference.

Traian Hristea, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Armenia, followed by highlighting some of the activities the European Union conducts in order to help train diplomats in the framework of the EU funded project "Support to Capacity and Institution Building of the Diplomatic School in Armenia". Hristea noted the importance of both theory and practice in the training of diplomats, from understanding how social media, for example, interacts with the core functions of diplomacy, to practical training in how to use the tools effectively. In particular Hristea identified five areas of increasing importance to the EU with respect to digital diplomacy: 1) informing local and global constituencies about what is occurring within the EU and how it relates to them; 2) citizen outreach and communication; 3) the development of crisis communication tools; 4) building EU member state presence abroad; and, 5) promoting consular services through digital tools. Hristea ended by noting that diplomacy has been around for centuries, and likely always will be, but the digital sphere is changing its nature and it is the aim of the conference to understand these important changes.

To close the opening session, H.E. Edward Nalbandian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, argued that in the modern period there are ever increasing requirements for Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) to respond quickly to changes occurring in the system. Digital tools can help

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with this, but there are important consequences that need to be taken into account, including the sensitivity of information with which diplomats routinely deal, the impact of that information on constituencies, increasing responsibilities for diplomats to ensure the proper dissemination of information, previous unknown challenges that are unpredictable but nevertheless emerge, and, ultimately, the use of knowledge as power in the international system. Nalbandian closed by noting the importance of conferences such as this one in fulfilling the mission of diplomatic academies: to educate, and continuously update, the implementation of digital diplomacy.

Panel 1: Opportunities and Risks

The first of the four panels, entitled "Information and Communication Management for Diplomats: Opportunities and Risks," was moderated by Vahe Gabrielyan and focused on providing a framework for thinking about what digital diplomacy is and how digitization is changing diplomacy in fundamental ways. Marcus Holmes, Assistant Professor of Government at the College of William & Mary, gave the first presentation, entitled "E-diplomacy: Managing change at home and from afar." Holmes presented findings from a newly-released book on digital diplomacy (Bjola and Holmes 2015), and argued that e-Diplomacy, or digital diplomacy, is typically conceptualized as a form of public diplomacy. That is, its usefulness for states is understood in speaking and listening terms: digital technologies - such as social media platforms Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo - allow states to enter into dialogic communication with foreign publics in a (usually) non-costly manner. Holmes challenged this conceptualization by investigating e-Diplomacy's broader role in the management of international change. Drawing from sociological perspectives often termed "practice theory," he delineated two types of change in the international system - top-down structural exogenous shocks and bottom-up incremental endogenous shifting - and argued that diplomacy is ultimately a way for states to manage these two types of change. Psychology and neuroscience findings suggest that states manage these processes differently because each type of change requires different responses. Exogenous shocks require relationship building and intention understanding, activities that are most efficiently conducted in face-to-face personal interactions (Holmes 2013). Endogenous shifts require the ability to synthesize and analyze large amounts of data in order to determine changing trends, activities that are most efficiently conducted with digital technology. E-Diplomacy represents the latter set of activities – the gathering and analyzing of data from foreign publics that accrues through listening to discourse on the ground. What this suggests is that digital diplomacy should be viewed, according to Holmes, as a method of managing change, particularly the small types of changes that would be difficult to detect with the human eye. Critically, the existence of digital diplomacy does not imply that traditional face-to-face diplomacy is no longer necessary; indeed, quite the opposite. Traditional and digital diplomacy co-exist and complement, rather than compete with, each other. Therefore, in the end, digital diplomacy is a particular type of diplomacy, the value of which is derived from the ability of digital tools to identify, and respond to, small endogenous incremental changes in the international system.

Paul Sharp, Professor and Head of Political Science at University of Minnesota – Duluth, followed with a presentation on "The role of secrecy in an era of e-diplomacy." Sharp began by making the point that diplomacy is complex and understanding its nature is not straightforward (Sharp 2009). Sharp wants to investigate one particular aspect of diplomacy, specifically the way revolutions in

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information technologies and the emergence of e-diplomacy have had significant impact on what is known as "secret diplomacy." Sharp delineated three discrete forms of secret diplomacy. *Strategic secrecy* refers to the concealment of major agreements and commitments. *Operational secrecy* refers to the concealment of diplomatic negotiations, relations between diplomats, and information of interest to diplomats. *Official secrecy* refers to "known unknowns," things that are known but are treated as if they are unknown. Sharp then noted how digitization provides challenges to and opportunities for each type of secrecy. First, the impact of the digital revolution on secret diplomacy has been conventionally understood as negligible. Yet, as Sharp noted, it is hard to imagine a secret treaty existing today, given the information accessible to broad networks of people. Second, the impact of digitization on secrecy and discretion in the everyday work of diplomats is considerable but manageable. Attitudes regarding secrecy are changing. As Sharp noted, in day-to-day diplomacy there is a larger tolerance for individuals to speak out and say things, even when they make mistakes. Diplomats are spending less time guarding their secrets. Third, the impact of the digital revolution on the distinctions made between what is known and what is secret is considerable and empowering for diplomats, although not necessarily in ways we should like.

Costas Constantinou, Professor of International Relations, University of Cyprus, closed the panel by recounting some of his experiences teaching diplomacy to would-be diplomats and theorizing the role of humanism in diplomacy (Constantinou 2013). Constantinou asked the audience to consider the *visual* aspects of public diplomacy, specifically the increasing importance of pictures and imagery. Based on the propositions of the "pictorial turn" – whereby complex events are mostly and more intensely perceived, encapsulated and remembered through visual rather than verbal accounts – Constantinou argued that new media amplify the use of diplomatic images in support of visual narratives and counter-stories. For example, Constantinou presented recent images of politicians, such as Michelle Obama, engaged in visual public diplomacy campaigns, such as the "bring back our girls" effort to target Boko Haram in Nigeria. This powerful image and narrative was ultimately co-opted by groups seeking to project a counter-narrative and replaced the text in the image with political speech regarding President Obama's use of drones in Muslim countries. Constantinou suggested that these types of images demonstrate agency and humanism in public diplomacy, both in terms of the dominant narrative and counter narrative. Constantinou concluded by suggesting that the digitization of diplomacy has in effect moved the spectacle of diplomacy into a post-protocol era, in which diplomatic actors are no longer in charge of the presentation of the spectacle of diplomacy, given that the spectacle takes place on plural digital spaces and social media sites, and invariably manipulated and acted upon by the sympathetic or unsympathetic multitude.

The discussion after the panelists spoke centered on critical questions that would be discussed throughout the conference. First, a skeptical position regarding digital diplomacy was posed to Dr. Holmes, arguing that digital diplomacy does not actually exist in any meaningful sense. The core aspects of diplomacy, such as negotiations, are still conducted face-to-face in meeting rooms around the world as they have been for centuries. Holmes and others retorted that digital diplomacy is certainly not *replacing* traditional face-to-face diplomacy, but rather has its own value that complements traditional diplomacy. Constantinou also noted that while traditional diplomatic negotiation is still relevant, a pertinent question is *who* gets to negotiation and *under what conditions*. Digital diplomacy, including the visual aspects of it, might help us to gain a better understanding of the answer to those questions.

A second question centered on effects. All three panelists provided largely theoretical arguments. A question was posed regarding how we know whether digital diplomacy actually *works* or not. For example, in the visual diplomacy that Constantinou mentioned, how can we know that the visual aspects, per se, had important causal effects on outcomes? The panelists largely agreed that future empirical investigations are needed to complement existing theoretical perspectives.

Lastly, an important point was raised with reference to visual media. If digital diplomacy is becoming more visual, then how does the rise of mobile devices affect the ways states, and other actors, engage diplomatically, since images and other visual media may not travel as easily to mobile phones, particularly of the simple variety. A related question regarding security of images, particularly the ability to amend official images and create "counter-narratives," was raised. These questions regarding images and their relation to mobile digital diplomacy carried into the next panel.

Panel 2: Tools and Practices

The second panel, entitled "Diplomacy and Virtual Realities: Tools and Practices," focused on how digital technologies are changing diplomacy in practice. Tigran Mkrtchyan, Head of the Department of Press, Information and Public Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenia, moderated the panel and opened by echoing a key takeaway from the previous panel: digital tools do not replace, but rather complement, traditional diplomacy. The aim of this panel was to specify how, precisely, this was occurring.

Andreas Sandre, Press and Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy of Italy to the United States, began by providing an overview of some of his work helping diplomats to use social media and understand the various promises and challenges of digital diplomacy, reflected in his recent book on the subject (Sandre 2015). After a brief introduction in background, Sandre conveyed survey results depicting the various "virtual realities" that are currently occurring around the globe with respect to digital technology. Based on data gathered in January 2015 as part of the "We Are Social" initiative in the UK, Sandre noted a number of data points that help to lay out internet usage around the globe. First, in a world with 7.2 billion people, there are approximately 3 billion active internet users (defined as having used the internet in the last 30 days), with approximately 2 billion active on social media platforms. The use of social media has greatly increased in recent years. Second, approximately 3.65 billion individuals use mobile technology, and over a third of the webpages accessed around the world are accessed on mobile devices. Sandre argued that it is important to note that the technology that we should have in mind here is *not* necessarily the "smartphone" variety, with integrated graphics and high-powered processors, but also traditional "flip phone" devices. Finally, as mentioned in the previous panel, the geographic distribution of Internet users is important. North America, Western Europe, and parts of Asia are well-represented, whereas Africa is not. Sandre used this data to argue that there are significant, and growing, numbers of people who are connected to the Internet, the mobile sector is growing, and social media is also growing quickly. Communication is easier and faster than ever. This has led experts to think of digital diplomacy in terms of communication. Instead we should be thinking about digital diplomacy not as communication but as "real" diplomacy; strategy should not be crafted in the communication offices of foreign ministries but in the diplomacy office. Sandre ended by reiterating that digital diplomacy is not, and cannot,

just be about social media. States can engage in conversation with individuals who possess only flip phones.

Mark McDowell, Canada's ambassador in Myanmar, next provided insight into the "on the ground" experiences he has had as a practitioner of digital diplomacy, specifically with launching two social media campaigns in Beijing and Myanmar. These two examples represent very different social media environments. For example, in Beijing the social media environment is dominated by Weibo, as Facebook is largely censored. Myanmar, in contrast, is an environment where Facebook is very successful though Internet penetration remains relatively low. From these two very different environments, McDowell made a number of important points regarding digital diplomacy strategy. First, he argued that practitioners need to know their audience and how they market ideas. In Beijing, for example, McDowell believes they were successful because they were new to social media and, frankly, did not have a plan. This would become a revolving theme of the conference: sometimes the most successful digital diplomacy outcomes are achieved when there is a lack of a well-formed strategy in place before the campaign. What the Canada team did know, however, was that they wanted to reach a particular audience on particular topics. Therefore they focused their social media presence in China, for example, on topics that they believed would speak to their needs. Second, McDowell noted that you have to be prepared to make unintended mistakes. A post about the Ambassador's car, for example, led to unforeseen political ramifications since it touched a nerve about the potential misuse of government funds. In the end the situation was resolved in a favorable manner, but a key point emerges: digital diplomacy is not undertaken without risk. Finally, the experience in Burma confirmed for the Canada team that local content is key. Individuals in Burma want to hear about Burma, learn about Burma, and discuss issues that are relevant for Burma. This required significant efforts in developing localized content, which cannot be viewed as a separate job but rather a critical aspect of diplomacy.

Daryl Copeland, Senior Fellow, Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, broadened the perspective by suggesting a variety of ways in which digital technologies are fundamentally changing the ways that foreign ministries do business, not just in social media but in their core functions as well. For instance, Copeland discussed the existence of malleable "virtual desks," which exist only on the Internet, serve directors in a variety of functions, and are organized laterally in order to address any number of challenges that occur. These exist in contrast to traditional country desks, which are typically organized vertically, with a focus on a specific function. These desks allow individuals to become empowered because the hierarchical totem pole no longer matters – what matters is the node in the network, such as the virtual desk. This leads to outcomes where, as Copeland argued, "it's about clicks, not bricks." On the other hand, Copeland was also quick to point out limitations of digital technology in diplomacy. Copeland argued that social media is impersonal in nature, not conducive to relationship building based on confidence, trust, and respect. These are, of course, precisely the types of relationships that states normally seek with diplomacy. In the end, networks and technological tools are not necessarily relationships. Networks are necessary but not sufficient. Diplomacy is a contact sport. There is no substitute for face-to-face contact (Copeland 2009). Platitudes about digital technologies cannot change diplomacy's core essence.

Thomas Biersteker was unable to attend the conference but presented "SanctionsApp" through a video. SanctionsApp is based on the research of the Targeted Sanctions Consortium (TSC), a group of more than fifty scholars and policy practitioners worldwide with interest in and specialized

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knowledge of UN targeted sanctions. The first comprehensive, systematic, and comparative assessment of the impacts and effectiveness of UN targeted sanctions regimes over the past twenty years, the TSC includes analysis of all UN targeted sanctions regimes since 1991. Targeted sanctions are increasingly employed by the Security Council to address a broad range of threats to international peace and security, including armed conflict, terrorism, WMD proliferation, and human rights violations; currently the Council maintains thirteen different UN targeted sanctions regimes. Conceptual innovations include (1) a focus on episodes within broader country cases that allows detailed analysis of changes in types and purposes of targeted sanctions over time; and (2) an analysis of effectiveness in terms of the differing purposes of targeted sanctions – to coerce, constrain, or signal/stigmatize targets. One of the more intriguing aspects of the app is that it is currently used by diplomats at the United Nations as a digital tool to aid negotiations, further illustrating a point made by Sandra, Lampa, Holmes, and others that digital diplomacy is not just Twitter, Facebook, and other social media.

The discussion that followed focused on two areas: first, the extent to which digital diplomacy is possible with mobiles, particularly phones that are not of the "smart" variety; second, to what extent does the digital diplomacy "audience" effectively represent the population? As Sandre and Holmes both argued, there seem to be "haves and have-nots" with digital technologies. Therefore there may be a bias toward thinking about the "haves" when we approach the concept of digital technology. On the other hand, Sandre argued that digital diplomacy is *not* just social media and smart-phones. Digital diplomacy can be done with other technology as well, such as through SMS text messaging. Under what conditions these types of campaigns are successful remains an important theoretical question and empirical investigation that requires future research.

Panel 3: Accommodating Change and Assessing Impact

The third panel, entitled "Country Experiences: Accommodating Change and Assessing Impact," focused on the divergent experiences of foreign ministries around the world in instilling a culture of digital diplomacy. The panel was moderated by Tigran Balayan, Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armenia, who opened the panel by noting the unique opportunity to hear from diverse practitioners of digital diplomacy.

Graham Lampa, Special Advisor for Digital Diplomacy at the Department of State, United States, began by noting that in order to succeed in digital technology, foreign ministries must focus on three distinct areas critical to the digital enterprise: organizational culture and structures, content, and technology & training. With respect to culture, Lampa argued that young diplomats tend to know that social media and digital diplomacy matter, but are unable to articulate why. Older diplomats, on the other hand, know that they need to engage in digital diplomacy but do not know how. Developing trust and understanding between these two groups is critical because it allows both sides to learn from each other and experience the freedom to take advantage of social media tools. As Lampa put it, "young diplomats must make their name, while senior diplomats must preserve their name." In selling digital media to individuals in the foreign ministry, Lampa recommended on focusing on the claim that social media allows individuals to "read the minds of others and predict the future." By listening to what others are saying, foreign ministries can gain an understanding of

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what they think and where they are headed. With respect to instituting a particular structure of digital diplomacy, Lampa argued that individuals need to make the case that regional digital portfolios allow staff to specialize, contextualize, and prioritize their work. This aids in creating efficiencies that do not currently exist. One of the most controversial points made, which would become a point of discussion throughout the conference, revolved around content. Lampa suggested that in getting started with digital diplomacy, practice is more important than strategy. Lastly, with respect to technology and training, Lampa suggested that MFAs should consider simpler technologies, such as e-mail lists, before adopting "fancier" tools. Technology needs to be prioritized. Eventually, however, Lampa would like to see MFAs use the robust technology that they have access to. As he noted, "We all have supercomputers sitting at our desks, but we treat them like glorified typewriters with tubes out the back." This will not happen before cultural change occurs and the use of technology is central to the diplomacy missions.

Claire Collins, Programme Manager, Digital Transformation Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK, provided a very instructive look back at the experience of the Foreign Office in digital diplomacy, dating back to the first webpage for the office in 1997. This initial foray into digital diplomacy was a static page that was serviced out of the public diplomacy department. Clearance for content took days. Eventually this system proved untenable and the FO needed quicker response times. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami showed the need to have a digital presence that could quickly and adeptly respond to citizen needs. Many British nationals were involved in the tsunami and the FO found disseminating information to them difficult. Digital diplomacy at the FO benefitted from senior leadership understanding the need for it from an early stage. As Collins noted, this was critical during a period when many were skeptical of digital diplomacy services. In 2011 the "Government Digital Services" group was formed and tasked with transforming the provision of government digital services, including diverse services to citizens. The strategy it created sets out how government will redesign its digital services to make them straightforward and convenient to all, with a cost savings projected at approximately 1.7-1.8 billion pounds per year. Ultimately the aim is to maximize services for Britons most in need and embed digital tools across all elements of foreign policy, from diverse areas such as appointment booking services and crisis management. For any of this to be successful, individuals in the MFA need to be empowered, rather than restricted. Micromanaging only restricts creativity and innovation in the digital space.

Taavi Toom, Director General, Public Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia, shared similar experiences from Estonia. Toom noted that after independence from the Soviet Union, Estonia made a strategic choice to take advantage of its weaker points (such as being a small country far from the center of Europe). The MFA had the intuition that e-government could help with this initiative and transform Estonian government into a more efficient enterprise. For example, an e-Cabinet system created online efficiencies that had measurable impact on political processes, such as shorter meetings, more secure exchange of data, tax returns returned more quickly, and improving citizen opportunities to engage with government. One of the most recent projects is in e-residency, which seeks to open most of the services available in Estonia to foreigners, such that one does not need to live in Estonia in order to make use of its electronic resources. Toom identified several issues that would drive future conversations, including the "two body problem" mentioned above: how does one reconcile one's individual reputation online with the reputation of the state? And, how do content creators make e-government interesting? In contrast to McDowell's experience

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in Burma with ambassador cars and fish market photos, e-government services such as tax returns may not necessarily evoke the same excitement.

Jon Pelling, Head of Communication at the Embassy of Sweden in the United Kingdom, ended the panel by investigating "curiosity and adaptation," making several important points relevant to various aspects of digital diplomacy. First, Pelling argued that social media can override hierarchy. Echoing Copeland's earlier point, hierarchical arrangements in the MFA do not necessarily carry over to the digital realm. Second, experimentation is critical. One of the initiatives undertaken was to build a Swedish embassy in "Second Life," an online virtual world, which signaled that experimentation was valued and necessary. Third, the Swedish MFA pushed all of its embassies to Twitter and Facebook in 2 weeks. Requiring embassies to get on board quickly was disruptive but ultimately important in jumpstarting digital diplomacy initiatives. Lastly, Pelling suggested that the digital diplomacy culture is now pervasive to such an extent that it is the "new normal," where other in-house organizations are struggling to stay attractive and relevant (Pelling 2015). This is ultimately, according to Pelling, a positive outcome.

The discussion after the panel focused on a number of important issues, including privacy and digital diplomacy skepticism. A question from the audience to the panel centered on individual privacy and mistakes. For instance, in the Estonian example more and more services are being moved online, which seems to present important privacy concerns and greater chance that mistakes could occur, perhaps through hacking or otherwise. Graham Lampa quoted Alec Ross on the topic of privacy, noting that "the 21st century is a terrible time to be a control freak." The implication is that while mistakes might occur, and MFAs should be ready to apologize if they do, privacy concerns are crucial and discussions need to occur regarding the new privacy normal in the realm of digital diplomacy.

On the more skeptical side, Copeland asked whether there are times when foreign ministries would be better off if time and resources were spent on the "big issues," such as climate change and not be distracted by Twitter and Facebook. Holmes concurred by reiterating that digital diplomacy is most useful for adapting to the smaller changes and less well equipped for dealing with climate change; traditional diplomacy therefore can never be replaced. Constantinou noted that what we see in the modern period is a division of labor. Traditional diplomacy is still required for dealing with the big changes, but digital diplomacy can help in other areas. Trust, humanization, and other benefits of human contact are important and cannot be replaced. The audience seemed to concur on the notion that we are left with an empirical question that warrants future research: to what extent is digital diplomacy aiding states in managing change or is it, as Copeland noted, more or less on the margins?

One of the more intriguing aspects of the panel and subsequent discussion was that it was tweeted, and retweeted, in real time by panelists, moderator, and audience. Consequently discussions were occurring both face-to-face in the context of the conference as well as online, engaging with interested stakeholders in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

Panel 4: Best Practices in Training Digital Diplomacy

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The fourth panel, "Diplomatic Schools and E-Diplomacy Training Practices," focused on how MFAs train their stakeholders. Eiki Berg moderated the panel and opened the discussion by introducing two distinct areas of focus when we think about training. First, how do different institutions introduce new technologies and tools in their training programs? What are the decisions that need to be made and processes put in place for this to occur? Second, how are young and old trained while using these new tools?

Hannah Slavik, Educational Programmes Director, DiploFoundation, provided an overview of the training resources of DiploFoundation, a non-profit entity that focuses on advancing the power of small and developing states, increasing international accountability and inclusivity, aiding the legitimacy of international policy making, and strengthening global governance. Training at Diplo takes a number of different forms, from online-only activities to classroom courses to mixed design courses. Slavik argued that regardless of the form of the training, methodology and design are both critical. Interactive courses are most useful for training that focuses on analyzing situations and creation of strategy, versus training in a particular tool. Self-paced courses allow diplomats and other officials to drop in and out, following the training at their own-pace in a safe environment. Slavik has found that when attempting to train diplomats it is often useful to have a classroom component because instructors need to be able to respond to what the diplomats find relevant; online learning can be distancing for diplomats who prefer actual face-to-face learning environments. In the end, learner support is critical. Diplomats have a lot of responsibilities and are busy; supporting them, be it with logistics or substantive training issues, can help to increase the effectiveness of training programs.

Peter Clements, Head of Operations and Outreach, Diplomatic Academy, FCO, UK, continued many of the themes presented by Slavik, in particular contrasting the old training models of face-to-face classroom interaction with new training models that are recorded and available online, accessible to all staff any place and any time on a variety of mobile devices. Clements presented many of the key features of the diplomatic academy, including being expert-led, fully available digitally, a mixed model of e-learning and small group work, with an accredited diploma available at the end of the training. The key to Clements' success has been inverting the teaching model: pupils become teachers once they are trained and go out and teach fellow diplomats in the new strategies and technologies they recently learned. In the end, Clements noted that a key limitation that he and others continue to deal with is how to bring face-to-face interactions into the learning model. After all, a completely digital training program has advantages, but the lack of face-to-face contact is a difficult disadvantage that needs to be overcome.

Odd Mølster, Director, Section for public diplomacy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Norway, presented the Norwegian experience with public diplomacy. Mølster noted that similar to the UK's first homepage, the Norwegian historical webpage was very basic and essentially consisted of an electronic brochure about Norway. Official training programs in digital diplomacy began in 2003 and consisted of a simple message: "do not say much; be careful." In other words, the training was essentially fear based. Reforms to the training program aimed at getting rid of the fear, replacing it with a plan and strategy for the use of social media. The Norwegian team created a handbook on social media in the Foreign Service, with the main message revolving around the notion that social media should reflect the aims of Norway in the international community. Three objectives are critical: listen, inform, and engage. Mølster argued that having a plan was critical because it allowed

decision-makers at higher levels to fund digital diplomacy projects. The digital diplomacy team may not have needed a plan or strategy, but creating them was important to the success of the overall initiative.

Juan Luis Manfredi Sanchez, Professor at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, made a number of important points regarding his experience in teaching digital diplomacy in Spain. His presentation was constituted by "10 ideas" developed from his experiences in Spain. First, Sanchez argued that training should empower diplomats, not tools. This means that passion and curiosity should be engendered rather than training in particular technologies. Leadership is not defined by the number of followers one has. Similarly, young diplomats need to be able to fail; trying to become a leader will often lead to mistakes, which should be expected. Digital diplomacy should focus on real content and not propaganda. Ultimately innovation comes from "doing," rather than "thinking." Digital diplomacy practitioners should be empowered to make mistakes and *do* rather than simply think about the role of technology in diplomacy.

Saeed Seyed Agha Banihashemi, Dean of the School of International Relations, Iran, provided insight into his experience in teaching cyber-diplomacy in an international relations program in Iran. Banihashemi conveyed that there are many difficulties encountered in attempting to do this, notably English as a second language and the lack of an agreed-upon understanding of what a pedagogical approach to digital diplomacy should be. Banihashemi addressed these difficulties by approaching digital diplomacy from a particular perspective, that it essentially is the use of internet to gain data that is useful for the diplomacy, and brought three distinct subjects to bear to the study of digital diplomacy, including information technology (IT), game theory, and cryptography.

Julio Amador, Deputy Director-General, Foreign Service Institute of the Philippines, closed the panel by providing observations from his work in the Philippines. Amador argued that there is a "new normal" that we all need to adjust to: e-diplomacy is a critical component of international affairs, individuals use internet communication technologies to fulfill diplomatic objectives, and diplomats need to be 21st century digital citizens. Amador's team helps individuals to become acclimated to the new normal through both asynchronous courses on CD-ROM as well as synchronous e-classroom settings. A number of challenges were addressed, including measuring impact on end-users, pedagogical strategies for ensuring that diplomats acquire the intended information, and funding/resources in Manila can be a difficult issue.

The Q&A after the panel focused on two important questions: First, are plans and strategies necessary for legitimate digital diplomacy initiatives and training? Second, what can the academic community do to help digital diplomacy training? There was not agreement on the first question, though most of the panelists agreed that at a minimum, guiding principles are necessary. Sophisticated and detailed plans may not be required if the overarching principles are sound. Ultimately most panelists believed that having trust in the diplomats to do what is right is the most important strategy. With respect to the academic community, there was consensus that academics are useful in evaluating whether digital diplomacy "works." More specifically, academics can help to measure outcomes. By understanding the political economy of the foreign ministry, academics are able to run cost-benefit calculations of digital diplomacy initiatives and measure effectiveness. Lastly, there was discussion about the types of individuals that foreign ministries should be hiring,

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including data scientists, natural scientists, and so forth, in order to broaden and diversify MFAs themselves.

Closing Remarks

Vahe Gabrielyan closed the conference with observations regarding the proceedings and identification of meta-issues that have yet to be resolved and should be taken up in further research and conferences. First, the conference indicated that there is a divergence of opinion regarding the existence, and usefulness, of digital diplomacy. As Gabrielyan argued it does appear to him, however, that digital diplomacy is *part* of diplomacy, a *type* of diplomacy that is constituted by both tools and means. As such, according to Gabrielyan, it does require its own life and discrete unit of study. It is here, in other words, whether we like it or not. But importantly, the human dimension is still important and that aspect of diplomacy will likely always remain as well

Several questions remain. Is all information important? Is it all quality information? Gabrielyan indicated that when it comes to digital diplomacy, more may be less. There is a discount rate with information and, perhaps counter intuitively, it may be that saying less is often more powerful. This runs contrary to most uses of social media, which tend to privilege increased information transmittal. Future research should look at this dynamic in order to provide recommendations to diplomats in how often to talk on social media.

Second, given the level of detail typically provided in digital diplomacy, such as discussion of day-to-day life and practices, Gabrielyan theorized that this might be occurring at the expense of broader understanding. An appropriate metaphor here might be a map. A very detailed map would provide information on every single street and alley in the globe. Yet it is precisely that focus on detail that would distract from a larger understanding of what is being analyzed, such as the broader context. If digital diplomacy is increasingly about details then it is worth asking what effect this will have on the broader picture. Is all information, in other words, created equally? Do we always need the level of detail in a street map? Gabrielyan indicated that it would depend on the question we are trying to answer.

Gabrielyan concluded by suggesting that these are areas where the academic community and practitioners can come together to propel our understanding of digital diplomacy forward. This conference has been one of the first steps in this collaboration but undoubtedly many future steps will come.

Gabrielyan closed the conference by again thanking everyone for their attendance and positive engagement with one another.

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