Humanity’s Best Hope: Increasing diplomatic Capacity in Ten (uneasy) Steps

by Daryl Copeland
September, 2014
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**Executive Summary**

In an increasingly heteropolar world order, diplomacy most everywhere is in trouble. A range of technology driven transnational issues are confounding foreign ministries and bewildering the institutions of global governance. If these challenges are to be successfully addressed, diplomacy will play a crucial role; and neither security nor development can be achieved by other means. Diplomacy, however, is facing a crisis of image and substance, of relevance and effectiveness. If diplomatic capacity is to be increased, radical change will be required.

As a precondition to improved performance, a blueprint for diplomatic transformation will be essential. Action is needed in ten critical areas:

- Mandate and Mission
- Organizational Structure
- Representational Footprint
- Corporate Management
- Political Leadership
- Bureaucratic Culture
- Diplomatic Practice
- Science and Technology
- Digital Tools
- Resource Allocation

Given the scope and complexity inherent in this outline, following-through will be difficult, but not impossible. With the right combination of determination and vision, the reform of foreign ministries can be achieved. The need is urgent.
You used to ride on the chrome horse with your diplomat,
Who carried on his shoulders a Siamese cat.
Ain’t it hard when you discover that,
He really wasn’t where it’s at...

- Bob Dylan, Like a Rolling Stone, 1966

They fooled themselves through a tragic misunderstanding of the issues... and a misguided faith in the prowess of their own diplomacy.

- Charles Taylor, Snow Job, 1974

In its range and influence the quality of Canada’s diplomacy has fallen... the department - and the government as a whole - is reaping the whirlwind of decades of mismanagement and neglect.

- Andrew Cohen, While Canada Slept, 2003

In the alternative universe that is contemporary Ottawa, secrecy is accountability, subversion is reform, communications are policy, movement is action, convictions trump evidence and incompetence passes for effectiveness... reality is what the government and its acolytes say it is, neither more nor less. And so it is with foreign policy.

- Paul Heinbecker, Globe and Mail, 2014

Doing diplomacy has never been easy, and these days the challenges are especially daunting.

With some significant exceptions – China, India, Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia amongst them – the budgets of foreign ministries are being cut, diplomatic missions are being closed or downsized and foreign services are losing staff.

Since the end of the Cold War, governments, particularly Western governments, have tended to look to the military as the international policy instrument of choice. Think Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now, with naval exercises in the Black Sea and the bolstering of defences in countries along NATO’s eastern flank, Ukraine.

The costs have been high, and the results, at best, mixed. The military has shown itself to be both too sharp, and too dull a tool. Take the sword out of the scabbard, and it makes a dreadful mess.

Diplomacy, on the other hand, offers much promise. Relative to defence and development assistance, its approach to the non-violent management of international relations through dialogue, negotiation and compromise is highly cost-effective.

But the diplomatic profession has been slow to adapt to the globalization-driven reconfiguration of the operating environment. It is widely misunderstood, and suffers from a debilitating image problem. Indeed, just when it is needed most, diplomacy’s institutions and methods are in crisis.
Before a credible case can be made for the infusion of new resources, ways must be found to identify new economies and to adapt. Far-reaching reform will be required.

The good news is that if done right, it should be possible to increase diplomatic capacity by making a virtue of necessity. What, then, would be involved?

A great deal.¹

1. MANDATE AND MISSION

A mandate to develop and deliver traditional foreign policy, and to provide a familiar range of programs and services is no longer adequate if foreign ministries are to demonstrate their value and improve their performance.² States-to-state relations remain essential, but since the Cold War a profusion of new actors and forces have necessitated the creation of an entrepôt, a docking mechanism between national governments and all aspects of the widening world beyond. If re-imagined as a catalyst, or central agency for the strategic management of globalization and “heteropolarity” foreign ministries can assume a new role as the nation’s international policy broker, guide and storyteller.³ This would involve transferring or eliminating many lower level functions, along with some highly specialized, to focus on regional priorities and thematic clusters where foreign ministries hold unique advantages.⁴ As other government departments assume line responsibility for the stewardship of specific files, the foreign ministry will be able to free up resources for redeployment to more elevated and emerging priorities, among them the too often neglected articulation of grand strategy.⁵

By increasing the level of activity and taking the lead on whole-of-government, whole-of-country international policy development and integration, foreign ministries can get out of the weeds, end duplication, resolve counter-productive turf wars, and concentrate on generating effective

¹ Although the following analysis is based in part upon my thirty years of work in the Canadian foreign service, it also draws upon my consulting experience and extensive research conducted during the preparation of Guerrilla Diplomacy (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009) and numerous other publications. Author’s bibliography available at: http://www.guerrilladiplomacy.com/biography/bibliography/.


³ Under conditions of heteropolarity, and unlike the case under previous multi- and bipolar world orders, the primary sources and vectors of power and influence on the part of both state and non-state actors are characterized by difference rather than similarity.

⁴ This trend is already underway as specialist departments such. health, environment, industry and finance, with large international directorates, assume lead responsibility by default. A program of planned, phased and deliberate transfers would make for better public administration.

intelligence and analysis for citizens and decision-makers. Critical, cross-cutting issues that are not the responsibility of other agencies or levels of government could include public administration and governance; trade policy; rule of law; promotion of human rights and democracy, and; a range of broadly-based international challenges that are rooted in science and driven by technology, such as climate change and management of the global commons.⁶ Established responsibilities for the delivery of bi- and multilateral relations, as well as consular services would remain part of the mix, but for diplomats, there is now much more to be done – and done differently.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Amongst the various organs that together constitute the apparatus of state, foreign ministries are often the oldest. Due, in part, to a reflexive reliance upon diplomatic convention, these departments are rarely models of progressive public management or administration.⁷ Rigid and highly stratified, such agencies are almost always characterized by internal silos and a profusion of levels.⁸ More than a few have become ossified and sclerotic, with a heavy reliance upon titles and designated ranks, established procedures, and authoritarian, command and control style social relations. Equally damaging, the foreign ministry’s overseas orientation – backs to the capital, face to the world – contributes to damaging misconceptions and domestic isolation.⁹

But this need not be so. Slowly but surely, diplomacy must move away from an excessive reliance on convention, state-centricity and the Gutenberg galaxy, and in the direction of public engagement, experimentation, partnership with civil society, and adventures in cyberspace. As a result, the organizational design and shape of a foreign ministry must be rigorously re-imagined. Managerial and administrative overheads can be lowered through de-layering, off-loading and outsourcing. An organization that functions as an international network node and focal point for policy analysis and development can be smaller, flatter, and more nimble. Economies realized as a result of refocusing activities at headquarters could, and should, be reinvested to expand the scope, intensity and extent of activities abroad. Similarly, for purposes of tapping into the valuable knowledge embedded in diaspora communities, branch offices staffed by political officers could be established in major cities across the country.

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⁸ In the case of Canada’s DFATD, despite countless reform initiatives in 2014 there are still eight levels between desk officers and the Minister - the same number as when I joined the Foreign Service in 1981.

⁹ Diplomacy has been associated with weakness, appeasement, and caving in to power since at least Chamberlain’s ill-starred, “peace in our time” visit to Munich in 1938. For an updated, but equally negative characterization, see the “World of Peacecraft” spoof on a diplomatic video game broadcast 10 August 2014 on Last Week tonight With John Oliver: https://m.youtube.com/watch?utm_term=0_e87ea75dce-e5cfd10e05-215168137&utm_campaign=e5cfd10e05-AFSA_Media_Digest_8_13_14&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Daily+Media+Digest&v=g8ZWCGKlFNQ.
3. REPRESENTATIONAL FOOTPRINT

Representation abroad, the nation’s diplomatic footprint, should focus on efforts applicable to the immediate circumstances and surroundings, rather than maintaining formal chancelleries and residences. In some places, major capitals and world cities for instance, investing in visibility often pays off handsomely by producing accessibility and branding dividends. Maintenance of an appealing, centrally located, Official Residence is often necessary to attract busy, high-level decision-makers and opinion-leaders. But a model that makes sense in London, Washington or Beijing might not work everywhere. Instead, an approach that responds to local conditions might be preferable. When it comes to representation, cookie cutter formulas and preconceived notions about standards and norms no longer obtain results, and achieving results, not waving the flag, is the ultimate purpose.

The representational footprint must also be supple enough to morph quickly if and when the need arises. In certain locations, a fleet-footed approach that avoids the long shadow of financial and personnel liabilities will be superior. In such instances, portable brass plaques on hotel room doors, secure mobile communications, and the avoidance of lingering overheads might best fit the bill. The future favours clicks over bricks, hubs and spokes over universal replication, and new approaches generically. Storefront operations will, in some circumstances, trump high-rise office towers or elegant digs in leafy suburbs, and while personnel security will always matter, the nature of the work is not amenable to absolute guarantees. To cope with a heteropolar world order in ceaseless transition, flexibility and adaptability are essential.

4. CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Foreign ministries, in my experience, are not typically well managed. As a result of rigorous screening and elevated entry requirements, most diplomats are reasonably well educated and intelligent, theoretically capable of becoming good managers. But, too often, those who rise to the senior executive level do so by demonstrating skills, abilities and experience not usually associated with excellence in the management of human or financial resources. A brilliant policy analyst, advocate or specialized expert, for example, will not necessarily be equipped to make the transition to the role of director or above. In relatively insular and closed systems such as foreign ministries, where altogether too much turns on the personal, rising to your level of...

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10 This type of representation will be sufficient in many small states, as well as in situations of emergency response, disaster relief and civil conflict. Still, a profusion of shorter-term commitments, combined with the absence of long-serving locally-engaged staff with established contacts and deep local knowledge, will pose a new range of management challenges.

11 See, for example, Copeland, Daryl (2012) “We can’t do effective diplomacy from a bunker”, iPolitics. 12 December. Available at: http://www.cdfai.org/inthemedia/inthemediadeceber102012a.htm.

12 Unsurprisingly, similar observations apply to the case of multilateral diplomatic services. On the EU’s European External Action Service, which is staffed by the foreign ministries of member states, see Schult, Christoph (2013) “Uniquely Poor Management: Report Skewers Top EU Diplomat Ashton”, Speigel Online International. 23 April. Available at: http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/report-criticizes-eu-foreign-policy-chief-catherine-ashton-a-895933.html.
incompetence, or the Peter Principle, is altogether too common.13 Beneath a veneer of fealty to concepts such as objectivity and merit, factors that are overwhelmingly personal and situational, and conditioned by healthy doses of chance, luck and timing, reign supreme.

To break the tradition of corporate cloning, the challenge will be to convince those at the top that foreign ministries are not cathedrals, that the Foreign Service is not a priesthood, and that diplomacy cannot be based on liturgy. Getting around such entrenched perceptions will require a determined and systematic effort to ventilate the cloister by turning the inside out, and bringing the outside in. Regular training and professional development assignments at all grades should be the rule rather than the exception. Participation in secondments and exchanges, not just to other government departments but to the private sector, think tanks, universities or NGOs, should be made a pre-condition to promotion or posting abroad, especially at the head of mission level. In short, the foreign ministry needs to be shaken out, and shaken down from top to bottom. If incumbent employees and managers can’t function successfully on the outside, or are uncomfortable in business or civil society, then further elevation should be impossible and counselling-out assistance provided.

5. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

When it comes to creative international policy development and the achievement of specific objectives abroad, foreign ministries tend to work best when they are called upon to deliver by demanding ministers who enjoy high standing, extensive experience and political weight. With a directed and media-savvy minister at the helm, ready to champion departmental interests, much can be achieved, even under predominantly adverse conditions.14 On the other hand, in the absence of energetic, inspired political leadership, foreign ministries tend to turn inwards, undertaking endless reviews, re-organizations, and otherwise trying to keep busy while biding time in anticipation of the next cabinet shuffle.15

The presence of an active, engaged minister is useful in other ways as well. Unlike many government departments, foreign ministries do not typically enjoy the affection of a significant domestic constituency. They are not able to make friends and influence people by administering employment-generating programs, sending cheques, or building infrastructure. A high-profile minister can help to compensate by promoting the work of the ministry, both within and outside of government. At cabinet meetings, a strong minister can make a convincing case for the provision of budgetary resources. Similarly, systematic ministerial attention to the cultivation of relationships with key social media players, editorialists, talk show hosts, bloggers and interest

14 In Canada’s case, the most recent experience of this sort occured during the tenure of Lloyd Axworthy, 1996 - 2000. At a time major spending cutbacks, with considerable help from DFAIT officials, he was able to deliver what came to be known as the “Human Security Agenda”. There has been precious little by way of Canadian diplomatic initiative since. See Copeland, Daryl (2012) “Once Were Diplomats: Can Canadian Internationalism be Rekindled?”. Smith, Heather and Turenne Sjolander, Claire (eds.) Canada in the World. Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp 125-44.
15 During such periods, ambitious careerism tends to flourish - with little else to do, the search for opportunities to secure promotion can easily become a preoccupation.
groups can pay important dividends when it comes to the generation of public and political support.16

6. BUREUCRATIC CULTURE

The nature of corporate management usually reflects an organization’s bureaucratic culture, and that culture will either enable or constrain the ministry’s political leadership. Within foreign ministries, the dominant culture and values are generally conservative and change-resistant, turning more frequently on convention than originality. Moreover, while ministers and deputy heads come and go, the main body of the workforce tends to roll over much more slowly than is the case elsewhere in government. In terms of the ongoing need to accumulate knowledge and experience, this can be a strength, but when the nettle must be grasped, an inordinate fondness for the familiar too often translates into an obstacle to progress. In such an environment, many careers have been made by kissing up and kicking down, by specializing in sycophancy and making the boss look good rather than by pushing back or speaking truth to power. Pressure to run with the herd easily translates into blessing the received wisdom and can turn collegiality into an instrument of conformity, if not repression. Intimacy with the mechanisms of bureaucratic self-service breeds unseemly workplace traits and appetites. When process trumps substance and ideas – the lifeblood of diplomacy – there is a problem.

Empowering employees to shape their own futures implies an organizational culture that is less risk averse and authoritarian, more adaptable, and, above all, more confident, trusting and respectful. If the foreign ministerial workplace is to become more supportive and rewarding, then the Foreign Service will need a cultural revolution, featuring an emphasis on continuous learning and the encouragement of criticism and dissent.17 If diplomats are to use their

16 Domestic outreach programs, whereby foreign service employees speak to members of the public about diplomacy and the work of the department, can also be valuable in this respect. In Canada’s case, although such activities have traditionally been encouraged, recent years have seen sharp decline. This has been due mainly to the imposition of a political pre-clearance requirement on all staff in advance of any public communications. See Davis, Jeff (2010) “Bureaucrats chafing under ‘unprecedented’ PMO/PCO communications control”. Hill Times. 26 April. Available at: http://www.hilltimes.com/page/view/control-04-26-2010; Simpson, Jeff (2010) “The price we pay for a government of fear”. Globe and Mail. 08 June. Available at: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/the-price-we-pay-for-a-government-of-fear/article1595378/.

17 The U.S. State Department has since 1971 maintained a “Dissent channel” which “is a serious policy channel reserved only for consideration of responsible dissenting and alternative views on substantive foreign policy issues that cannot be communicated in a full and timely manner through regular operating channels and procedures.” For its part, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) annually awards “Constructive Dissent” prizes. Neither have been an unqualified success. See Bird, Kal (1985) “Dissent In The Foreign Service”. Alicia Patterson Foundation. Available at: http://aliciapatterson.org/stories/dissent-foreign-service; Taylor, Guy (2013) “State department has a dearth of diplomats to award for dissent”. Washington Times. 26 June. Available at: http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jun/26/state-department-has-a-dearth-of-diplomats-to-awar/?page=all; Spero, Domani (2012) “Foreign Service Dissent Award Snubs Most Vocal Foreign Service Dissenter of the Year”. Diplopundit. 31 May. Available at: http://diplopundit.net/2012/05/31/foreign-service-dissent-award-snubs-most-vocal-foreign-service-dissenter-of-the-year/. Susan Johnson, the immediate past president of AFSA, recently remarked: “...getting ahead now pretty much means having an instinctive and practiced capacity to kiss up and not to question.... Diplomacy has been redefined in
judgement, tact, and discretion, and act with greater autonomy and self-reliance, then they must be assured that their superiors will tolerate a wide range of occupational hazards. Executives must be willing to learn from the occasional misstep rather than punish the intrepid. Failure, especially, should be perceived and assessed as a learning experience rather than a career catastrophe. Risk aversion must give way to risk tolerance, openness and innovation.

7. DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE

Because governments will always have official business to transact among and between themselves, traditional, state-to-state interaction performed by designated envoys will not disappear anytime soon. Still, given globalization, the proliferation of new actors, and the deterritorialization of political space, making formal calls, leaving diplomatic notes, writing reports and awaiting instructions are no longer enough. The epicentre of diplomatic practice is now far removed from quiet clubs or closed meeting rooms, grand hotels or formal chancelleries. Today’s representational encounters tend to take place publicly in the media and at conferences, in the souk or kasbah, on a blog or along Main Street. On other occasions they will be set in complex emergencies and conflict zones, in a refugee camp or in a Quonset hut astride the wire. In these increasingly commonplace instances, a finely honed sense of protocol, or the ability to deliver a formal demarche, are no longer germane to diplomatic effectiveness; contacts, networks, social media savvy, strategic communications and nation branding skills, however, almost always are.18

While still behind the curve in adapting to the wholesale transformation of the operating environment, diplomatic practice is gradually coming to terms with the need to evolve. Perhaps especially for smaller and medium-sized countries, who may face capacity limitations and lack coercive, hard power alternatives, this will likely translate into an increasing reliance upon public diplomacy, or PD, which refers to the sum of efforts undertaken by national governments to engage, understand and influence foreign publics. PD relies in large part upon soft power, the power of attraction (which is earned rather than wielded).19 It involves the orchestration of joint ventures with civil society partners, the strategic use of new and conventional media, and various techniques of image projection, reputation management and relationship building. Think of PD as international public relations as practiced by governments.20 Perfecting the practice of persuasion and engineering a positive predisposition represent sophisticated forms of triangulation whereby results are achieved indirectly by acting in concert with foreign publics

   19 Harvard academic Joseph Nye has written extensively on soft as well as smart power. For an introductory overview, see his TED (July, 2010) presentation “Global power shifts”, available at: http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_nye_on_global_power_shifts.  

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and relying upon them to influence host government behaviour. In crucial respects, PD is the new diplomacy.\textsuperscript{21}

Relentless innovation and experimentation, and the development of more nuanced and sophisticated levels of linguistic, cultural and historic expertise are imperative. Not least, if PD and knowledge-based problem solving are to reach their potential, a much greater capacity to address science and technology based issues will be essential.

\section*{8. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY}

With disturbing events in the so-called Islamic State, Gaza and Russia/Ukraine along with the recent spike in armed conflict and geopolitical rivalry globally, it is easy to lose a sense of perspective. Daily headlines notwithstanding, in the globalization era not only has the longer-term trend been towards a decline in organized violence world-wide,\textsuperscript{22} but many of the most profound challenges that imperil the planet and afflict us all are immune to the application of armed force.\textsuperscript{23} Instead, these issues, ranging from climate change and environmental collapse to pandemic disease and resource scarcity, to name but a few of the “wicked” problems, have in common a significant scientific and technological dimension.\textsuperscript{24} Each is a driver of underdevelopment and human insecurity and, far more than religious extremism or political violence, represent fundamental threats to world order.\textsuperscript{25}

In this context, it follows that the capability to generate, absorb and use science and technology (S&T) should play a crucial role in resolving differences, reducing inequality and improving security and development prospects.\textsuperscript{26} Addressing the needs of the poor, sustaining broad-based development and bridging digital divides must become a preoccupation of both diplomacy and international policy. As a response to the negative attributes of globalization – especially the tendency to polarize at all levels, socializing costs while privatizing benefits – tools such as

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} The University of Southern California’s \textit{Center on Public Diplomacy} maintains an expansive web site (available at: \url{http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/}) and blog (available at: \url{http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/newswire/cpdblog_main}) which together constitute an excellent source of analysis and commentary on this subject. See also Copeland, Daryl (2013) “Taking Diplomacy Public”, in R. S. Zaharna \textit{et. al.} (eds.) \textit{Relational, Network and Collaborative Approaches to Public Diplomacy: The Connective Mindshift}. London: Routledge pp 56-69; Copeland, Daryl (2011) “The Seven Paradoxes of Public Diplomacy”, in Ali Fisher and Scott Lucas (eds.) \textit{The Trials of Engagement}, Leiden: Brill pp 183-200. Canada was a once a leader in PD, but over the past decade has in large part retreated from the field, with the US, UK, Germany, France, Brazil and China now much more active. Much of this may be attributed to the Harper government’s insistence on the centralized control over all public communications. See note xvi above.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} See \textit{Human Security Report 2013}, available at: \url{http://www.hsrgroup.org/human-security-reports/2013/overview.aspx}.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} That is, states can’t garrison against threats to public health, despatch an expeditionary force to secure the alternatives to a carbon economy, or call in an air strike on diminishing biodiversity.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} By my reckoning, “wicked” problems tend to be complex, unresolved, transnational and science-based (CUTS). See, for example, \url{https://www.wickedproblems.com/1_wicked_problems.php}.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Although domestic politics often present a formidable obstacle to action in addressing many of these issues - for example, as regards efforts to limit carbon emissions - diplomatic performance can nonetheless be improved.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} See Copeland, Daryl (2010) “Science, technology and global change”. \textit{The Mark}. 07 December. Available at: \url{http://pioneers.themarknews.com/articles/3358-science-technology-and-global-change/#.U-zgwaOTF62}.
\end{itemize}
science diplomacy are indispensable. And there’s the rub. S&T capacity is largely alien to, and almost invisible within the institutions of global governance. Foreign ministries, development agencies, and indeed most multilateral organizations are without the scientific expertise, technological savvy, cultural pre-disposition or research and development (R&D) network access required to manage S&T-based issues effectively. If this is to change, structural obstacles will need to be overcome and priorities reallocated accordingly.

9. DIGITAL TOOLS

“Digital diplomacy” is a catchy term, but, like diplomacy itself, it is not clearly understood. Also referred to variously as Twiplomacy, e-, i-, cyber-, or virtual diplomacy, it has been made possible by the adoption, within diplomatic institutions and government more generally, of digitally based systems of data creation, transmission, and storage using the internet, social media platforms, computers, and a variety of wireless electronic devices. After a slow start, the modes of diplomatic communication are evolving to keep pace with the times, and especially with the need to connect directly with foreign populations.

The increasing reliance upon Web-based and wireless media by diplomats should not be entirely surprising. It is the most practical way to reach the exploding array of non-state actors whose support for diplomatic initiatives is often crucial. The results of digital diplomacy, particularly as regards its impact on public opinion, can also be measured on Web analytics facilities such as


28 While detailed, file-specific scientific and technical knowledge will not usually be required, diplomats simply must become more comfortable and conversant with the current range of S&T-driven issues.

29 For a variety of reasons, including the pervasive influence of the “military-industrial complex”, defence departments, in most industrialized countries receive the lion’s share of government spending on S&T/R&D. In the case of the U.S., this amounts to just over one half of the total for all such expenditure. See Congressional Research Service (2013). “Federal Research and Development Funding: FY 2013. CRS Reports for Congress. 05 December. http://www.phibetaioita.net/2013/07/congression-research-service-catalog/.


31 PD and ICTs can also be used offensively. In this context, the US State Department in 2011 established the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, which works to undermine extremism by countering its ideological basis. See: http://www.state.gov/r/csec/.
Klout, which can be helpful when it comes to demonstrating value for money. The business case for investing in digital diplomacy is therefore compelling, and diplomats have begun to understand the potential of new media as a force multiplier. Blogging, as well as the use of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, is now commonplace. Benefits include:

- **Effectiveness**: In an increasingly network-centric world, foreign ministries can better connect and communicate with new players in international society, including NGOs, business, think tanks, universities, journalists, and individuals, some of whom might otherwise be attracted to radical religion or extremist politics.
- **Efficiency**: Digital diplomacy can capture scale economies, reach much larger audiences and capture a range of related benefits associated with the migration to virtuality.
- **Leverage**: As a key component in any strategy to maximize comparative advantage in a competitive environment, foreign ministries can use new media to play to the strengths of national image and reputation while minimizing the constraints associated with capacity or security limitations.

The sooner that ministers come to understand that diplomats must be free to engage in unscripted digital communications, even if that means the occasional misstep, the better the chances will be of capturing the full potential of new media.

All of that said, and despite the current spasm of cheerleading, not everything associated with the increasing reliance upon digital communications is positive. The necessity of e-waste management is a growing burden. Because all digital communication is mediated, it will be prone to hacking, theft, manipulation and disruption. While useful, the extent to which technology can be substituted for labour is not unlimited. The critical importance of face-to-face interaction and personal relationships will endure.

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34 Again, the USA, who at one point believed that they were losing to Islamic extremists the on-line PR battle for hearts and minds, has lately been in the forefront in adapting digital diplomacy in the context of a broader “smart power” strategy. See Clinton (2011) [http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/09/172034.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/09/172034.htm).

10. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Although frequently overlooked, success in diplomacy – and ultimately, in the reform enterprise – flows directly from the understanding of, and connection to place. This is the major benefit associated with the staffing and operation of diplomatic missions abroad, whether temporary or permanent. When it comes to delivering on critical responsibilities, such as the promotion of economic relations or the generation of political intelligence, it is the connection to place, including an intimate knowledge of history, geography, culture and language, which represents the foreign ministry’s core advantage over the competition. Moreover, in the roiling interstices between underdevelopment and insecurity, it is life skills such as problem solving, improvisation, cross-cultural communications, and agility that are now in increasing demand. Area knowledge and personal experience are critical, and they are best honed through overseas assignments.

Although unique, this aspect is typically, and ironically, undervalued by governments, and is often regarded as something that can be acquired by other means or for less. That conclusion is incorrect. It is no one else’s job to make sense of the world through the unique prism of national interests, policies and values, and to convey that understanding to ministers and populations. That is the value proposition upon which diplomacy’s business case rests, and in large part it turns on changing the ratio between headquarters and missions by expanding representation and redeploying staff abroad. This redeployment, accompanied in Canada’s case by a resource-intensive return to PD, will have to be financed, at least in part, through re-investment. Those additional costs, while significant by departmental standards, would barely register in relation to overall government expenditures. The returns, on the other hand, would be considerable.

NOT YOUR PARENT’S WORLD ORDER

Despite a profusion of spirited denials, policy and decision-makers in the West face a very different future than that imagined by the framers of the Atlantic Charter. Put another way, the neo-conservative triumphalists who became so prominent at the end of the Cold War could not have been more wrong. Sometime between the invasion of Iraq and the end of the financial crisis and Great Recession, the American unipolar moment passed. In its place is a vacuum, a whirling vortex featuring unanticipated hazards, with a multiplicity of flash points.

With the end of US pre-eminence and ongoing internal pre-occupations within the EU, dominant doctrines, leadership in the realm of thinking and ideas, and the role and place of international organizations are in flux. All of this is already being mirrored in shifts in the institutions of global governance. In fits and starts, but nonetheless inevitably, the G7/8 is

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37 By comparative OECD standards, Canada has an unusually high concentration of its foreign service staff working at DFATD headquarters. Efforts in recent years to remedy this imbalance have been undermined by budget cuts. On the most recent round of reductions, see Copeland, Daryl (2012) “In defence of DFAIT: Diminished diplomatic capacity damages Canadian interests”. *iPolitics*. 06 July. Available at: [http://www.ipolitics.ca/2012/07/06/daryl-copeland-in-defense-of-dfait-why-diminished-diplomatic-capacity-damages-canadian-interests/](http://www.ipolitics.ca/2012/07/06/daryl-copeland-in-defense-of-dfait-why-diminished-diplomatic-capacity-damages-canadian-interests/).
making way for the G20, the US dollar for a basket of reserve currencies, the Bretton Woods agencies for a new development bank controlled by the BRICS, NATO for the SCO, the Trilateral Commission for INSouth, and the Washington Consensus for the Beijing Consensus. Though these are early days yet, it is now clear that the post-Cold War world is unravelling. As the status quo fissures, rival ideas and competing structures are flourishing.

Post Iraq, post Afghanistan, post Kyoto, post Arab Spring, and post WTO, market democracies will not represent the end of history after all. We are instead witnessing a new order in the making, and it is not converging around Western institutions or ideals.

In the emerging heteropolis, instability is likely to become the new normal before any kind of new and more complex balance is established. Rather than a thinly veiled disguise for dominance/dependence, this time around interdependence will be real, but values, interests and objectives will inevitably conflict. Sparks will fly. Fragile states will fail. The trick will be to find ways to prevent fires, and to accommodate change much more successfully, and especially more peacefully, in the 21st century than was the case in the 20th. In that regard, while deterrence may still have a role, the actual use of armed force is unlikely to be of much utility. Diplomacy, conversely, will be central.

But before diplomacy is ready for prime time, it will have to be fixed.

**DOING THE NECESSARY**

From August 25th-29th of this year I attended an international conference in Salzburg entitled *Architects or Sleepwalkers: 1814, 1914, 2014 - Lessons from the Past, Visions for the Future*. I have returned from that event more convinced than ever that although the world desperately needs more diplomacy, more of the “same old, same old” will not suffice.

Refined manners, deference, book learning and even Ivy League educations still have a place in diplomacy, but so do resilience, self-sufficiency, grass roots volunteer work and independent world travel. To increase diplomatic capacity and to build a better diplomat, new approaches are imperative. Foreign ministries still tend to attract, and advance, individuals with a greater interest in protocol and privilege than the causes of poverty or the abuses of power. Being an effective diplomat involves much more than acting as an international policy bureaucrat, delivering programs and services, writing reports, organizing visits and discussing with others who look, talk and act alike about what might be going on outside the compound. Genuine diplomacy, and the intelligence gathered from it, is about learning first-hand, and being at ease with the task. In the barrio or favella, on main street or at the ends of the earth, flopping around like a fish out of water just won’t do. In the rough and tumble precincts that prevail, CD plates and fancy titles can be as much of a hindrance as a help.

Better leadership, deep administrative, management and structural reforms, strategic thinking and working smarter will undoubtedly be required if the diplomatic deficit is to be covered. Similarly, getting more of the right kind of people out into the field will be necessary, as will experiments with innovative tools such as crowd-sourced problem-solving and open policy.

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development. But not any one, or even all of the measures set out above will be sufficient. It must not be forgotten that at the end of the day there is no getting around the dialectic relationship between results and resources. Reinvestment in the diplomatic function will be needed before a credible bid for the provision of new resources can be made. However, governments, opinion leaders and the citizenry must first be convinced that foreign ministries and diplomats are prepared to do the necessary.

In short, the world’s second oldest profession must not only change, but be seen to be changing.

Convincing evidence of that commitment has so far been scarce, but it is urgently needed if humanity’s best hope is to realize its potential.

41 The advent of the Internet, combined with the widespread use of social and digital media, have had the effect of turning the world into a giant laboratory. Canadians Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams have done pioneering work in this area under the banner of “collaborative intelligence” - see their book Wikinomics (New York: Penguin, 2006). See also, Innocentive: https://www.innocentive.com/innovation-solutions/corporate-innovation; Crowdsourcing: http://www.crowdsourcing.com/; Policy Horizons Canada: http://www.horizons.gc.ca/eng/content/innovation-labs-bridging-think-tanks-and-do-tanks. Launched with much fanfare in 2012, little has come of an effort to launch open policy development at (then) DFAIT. See: http://ascentum.com/2012/02/01/open_policydfait-conference/.


43 In this paper I have touched upon some of the most accessible and overdue reforms - harvesting the low hanging fruit, as it were. Other, more complicated but less obvious measures, such as the conversion (and enlargement) of the foreign service into a comprehensive international service, would take more time and involve collective bargaining. Nonetheless, the creation of an over-arching international policy occupational group would contribute to policy integration by including in the same unit all employees engaged in international policy work, regardless of departmental affiliation. At time of writing, an exercise of this sort is apparently under consideration in Ottawa.
About the Author

Daryl Copeland, Senior Fellow at the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute, visiting professor at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, London Academy of Diplomacy (University of East Anglia, UK), as well as an analyst, author, educator and consultant specializing in the relationship between science, technology, diplomacy, and international policy. His book, *Guerrilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations*, was released in 2009 by Lynne Rienner Publishers and is cited as an essential reference by the editors of *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. A frequent public speaker, Mr. Copeland comments regularly for the national media on global issues and public management, and has written over 100 articles for the scholarly and popular press. His work has appeared in many anthologies, as well as in the *International Journal, World Politics Review, Foreign Policy in Focus, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen, Embassy, The Mark, iPolitics* and elsewhere. He was awarded the 2010 Molot Prize for best article published in *Canadian Foreign Policy* (“Virtuality, Diplomacy and the Foreign Ministry”, 15:2).

From 1981 to 2011 Mr. Copeland served as a Canadian diplomat with postings in Thailand, Ethiopia, New Zealand and Malaysia. During the 1980s and 1990s, he was elected a record five times to the Executive Committee of the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers. From 1996-99 he was National Program Director of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs in Toronto and Editor of *Behind the Headlines*, Canada’s international affairs magazine. In 2000, he received the Canadian Foreign Service Officer Award for his “tireless dedication and unyielding commitment to advancing the interests of the diplomatic profession.”

Among his positions at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) in Ottawa, Mr. Copeland has worked as Senior Intelligence Analyst, South and Southeast Asia; Deputy Director for International Communications; Director for Southeast Asia; Senior Advisor, Public Diplomacy; Director of Strategic Communications Services; and, Senior Advisor, Strategic Policy and Planning. He was DFAIT representative to the Association of Professional Executives (APEX) 2001-06.

Mr. Copeland teaches at the University of Ottawa’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and is Visiting Professor at the London Academy of Diplomacy (UK) and Otago University (NZ). He serves as a peer reviewer for University of Toronto Press, *Canadian Foreign Policy*, the *International Journal* and *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, and is a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. From 2009-11 he was Adjunct Professor and Senior Fellow at the University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs. In 2009 he was a Research Fellow at the University of Southern California’s Center on Public Diplomacy.

Mr. Copeland grew up in downtown Toronto, and received his formal education at the University of Western Ontario (Gold Medal, Political Science; Chancellor’s Prize, Social Sciences) and the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (Canada Council Special MA Scholarship). He has spent years backpacking on six continents, and enjoys travel, photography, arts and the outdoors.
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