

CURRENT APPROACHES OF DIPLOMACY IN THE CYBERSPACE

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Abstract

In recent years, the Internet has had a positive impact, both on individuals and on governmental activity, and so it became a free and open space enabling almost all kinds of tasks. But more and more frequently, the Internet has also been the target of many cyber attacks, generating data leaks and financial losses. The vast majority of financial and telecommunication systems have been affected by numerous such intrusions. These incidents are more and more common and they impact heavily both on governments and businesses or individual users. In time, cybernetic security has become one of the main priorities for all these above mentioned types of users. Thus, along with the technological evolution in each sector, the implementation of a series of protection measures, designed to prevent the cyber attacks that the majority of the population now faces, became indispensable.

Keywords: cyberdiplomacy, cyberwar, cybersecurity, cyberterrorists, negotiations

1. Introduction

Diplomacy represents the art and the model of conducting an interstate negotiation through representatives, with the aim of a proper evolution of international relations at various levels-economic, cultural,

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environmental, humanitarian or even military. By means of diplomatic relations, we can secure strategic advantages that bring us closer to common grounds between states, regardless the challenges. Thus, diplomacy is an essential instrument of skillful negotiations, basically meaning the polite expression and resolution of interstate conflicts. In this regard, diplomacy is strongly orientated towards the concept of negotiations that are indispensable in maintaining peace among nations, providing a major opportunity to develop a successful foreign policy.

Diplomacy aims at securing agreements between state actors, maximizing the advantages without taking avoidable risks. The diplomats should master the art of negotiation so that they can adjust interstate relations. To this extent, they make an efficient use of word power. The state and other organizations support diplomatic activity that empowers the leaders to approach issues from a different perspective and to develop proper strategies and tactics. A special case is represented by war diplomacy, when negotiations are meant to attract a solution to inner problems that have generated the conflict.

The diplomats benefit from diplomatic immunity, their rights having been stipulated since the XVIth century. By this immunity, they are offered protection from persecutions and penal trials or from personal attacks when they are in mission. Moreover, if during negotiations the host country becomes a war zone, the diplomats can be recalled for security reasons. In such cases, the diplomatic activity will be resumed by lower ranking officials. If a diplomat commits a severe crime abroad, he is considered *persona non-grata* and he is expelled to his home country where he is prosecuted. Diplomatic immunity is extended to the diplomat's family members¹. Diplomatic corps take part in conferences and negotiation rounds that involve both a technical and a normative part. An example of successful negotiation is Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, dating from 1978². Diplomatic recognition is an essential indicator for a country as independent nation-state. Sometimes this aspect becomes problematic, as there are nowadays several entities without full diplomatic recognition,

¹ *Imunitatea diplomatică*, 2013, [<http://www.businessintegrity.ro/content/imunitatea-diplomatic%C4%83>], 23 March 2017.

² *Camp David Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*, [<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/camp-david>], 23 March 2017.

such as Taiwan (the Chinese Republic). Still, the relations which such entities are maintained through informal channels. Palestine is another case in point, with its own diplomatic service in many foreign countries. Nevertheless, many Western countries do not recognize its officials' diplomatic immunity, the missions being conducted in more general terms³. Diplomacy is tightly interconnected with espionage and so the collected information may actually ease the path to concluding treaties and partnerships. There are both spies working for the Secret Services within embassies and infiltrated diplomats who gather information that can have an impact for all diplomatic sectors. These spies play a fictional role in the embassy while collecting both internal and external information, under the remote surveillance of Secret Services. Had a spy gets revealed, he is excluded and sent back home. As mentioned above, collected information can have a great impact, supporting commercial agreements, border issues or even the military aspects⁴.

Informal diplomacy has been used since a very long time and it is still "in force". It is a method of providing information on other state's government, at informal level. Given his unofficial position, the diplomat suggests in informal language methods to be used for conflict resolution. It was the strategy employed by US presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter⁵. Diplomacy is equally important for small states as it is for great powers, because it provides the framework for the voices to be heard and for their problems to be approached at the negotiation table. It ensures international cooperation, challenging small actors to develop an efficient diplomacy.

Diplomacy can also be classified into a number of categories that distinguish themselves from one another through diplomatic strategies employed in each sector. By means of this "division of labor", the diplomatic conduct reaches its aims and balances its advantages and losses.

³ *Diplomatic Recognition*, 2014,

[<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/palestine/recognition.htm>], 5 May 2017.

⁴ *Embassy cables: Where does diplomacy end and spying begin?*, 2010,

[<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/28/where-diplomacy-end-spying-begin>], 5 May 2017.

⁵ *Informal diplomacy*, 2010, [[https://www.boundless.com/political-](https://www.boundless.com/political-science/textbooks/boundless-political-science-textbook/foreign-policy-18/foreign-policy-108/diplomacy-573-4996/)

[science/textbooks/boundless-political-science-textbook/foreign-policy-18/foreign-policy-108/diplomacy-573-4996/](https://www.boundless.com/political-science/textbooks/boundless-political-science-textbook/foreign-policy-18/foreign-policy-108/diplomacy-573-4996/)], 5 May 2017.

Preventive diplomacy is a creation of the 1990's with the aim of easing interstate disputes and of preventing potential conflicts to reach a snowball effect and get internationalized. Prevention also refers to the administrative structure, ensuring national security and consolidating peace.

In time, this kind of diplomacy has evolved and it has transformed itself into a sophisticated mechanism severely regulating the military field, even though this is not the only important intervention. We can also discuss here the management of economic or energy issues. To summarize, preventive diplomacy has proved its usefulness by ensuring a stable and secured international environment⁶.

Economic diplomacy accounts for a major instrument in economic politics, connecting it with the citizens. It offers a successful framework for cooperation among institutions and it aims at promoting economic interests of states and citizens, by means of foreign policy instruments. A state may have particular interests in promoting its goods and services in another country, thus collaborating with international institutions and organizations. Companies exploit the potential to expand abroad, with mutual benefits for both countries. Nuclear diplomacy is a sector that has as an objective preventing attacks or a potential nuclear warfare. Cultural diplomacy or the use of *soft power* tools develops relations based on mutual respect and trust, seeking to achieve influence and advantages. It displays a range of ideas and concepts promoted by a state representative in order to exercise influence over a country or its citizens without the use of military or economic force. This type of diplomacy resorts to specific "instruments", both internally and externally, like festivals, libraries and cultural institutes or even international cooperation. It proposes itself to attract intellectual elites into the process of implementing the state's positive image at all levels of the society⁷. Public diplomacy has the aim to communicate with people in other states in searching for potential solutions to problems. Even though it is quite beneficial, it can degenerate sometimes into a "citizens' diplomacy" or even to reach the dimension of propaganda. Together with

⁶ *Revista forțelor terestre*, 2017, [http://www.revista.forter.ro/2010_2_t/05-inv/03.htm], 5 May 2017.

⁷ Lucian Jora, *Diplomația Culturală a Uniunii Europene. Aspecte funcționale ale serviciului European de acțiune Enternă*, 2012, [<http://revista.ispri.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/30-44-Lucian-Jora.pdf>], 29 April 2017.

the technological advancement, this type of diplomacy has transformed itself into cybernetic diplomacy, making the communication easier by means of mass-media or social media. Public diplomacy is now more and more frequently used by world leaders and diplomats.

2. E-diplomacy

E-diplomacy is a new evolution of the XXIst century, with a very well designed and secured platform of action. At its core we find new communication technologies providing the opportunity to interact with the wider public through a network designed for both internal and external leadership. This project appeared in America and it is managed by the US State Department, as a new instrument to fulfill diplomatic missions. It is aimed at enhancing security by information and governmental data updates for both the internal and external public. The electronic platform brings its contribution even to economic growth, time saving activities, as everything goes faster online. The platform can also be used by the army thus offering the possibility to a more efficient, safer and more secure communication with governmental authorities, all at a click's distance. Moreover, we should consider that cyberspace has become a matter of foreign policy, within multilateral forums, in current bilateral relations as well as in relation to the industry and the civil society.

The platform comprises several instruments that blend in with traditional diplomacy, being more efficient, with innovation and cutting-edge technology making the world faster and more interconnected. In 2009, e-diplomacy has been widely acknowledged by Americans, being mentioned both in mass media and social networks such as Facebook and YouTube, reaching out to a huge audience.

The "Development Review of 2010" magazine explains that in diplomacy this technology is the most revolutionary with a huge benefit. Such platform is useful to us, because the states can interconnect with each other and it can influence national debates. It is also through this technology that you can access your own debating agendas. The State Department has also founded other programs or platforms to achieve total success. These include the following applications: Dip Note, Democracy Dialogues and Opinion Space. The success of this cyber diplomacy has led the US State

Department to have up to now 230 facebook pages, 40 YouTube channels and 80 active tweeter accounts.

This platform was also implemented in Europe in 2000, under the name of GovDelivery, with over 1,800 organizations that are part of this platform and about 120 million subscribers. On average, monthly growth of UK citizens is over 50,000 subscribers per month. This platform is used, as well as those mentioned above, for the benefit of both citizens and government. This platform, through the advanced technologies used on it, aims to interconnect both governments and citizens, informing them about all the daily news⁸.

Every citizen subscribed to this platform can get news by email about anything happening in the government so that it gets involved in various public service programs. This platform also organizes online communities that aim to change societies' behavior and increase online audience⁹. GovDelivery is a platform that, with the help of technology, builds both online communities and enables citizens to communicate with the public administration. Thus, each subscriber once connected to GovDelivery can also receive information from governments and he/she can select the information he wants to receive from agencies already connected to this platform. However, the platform also communicates directly with the British government website, which can access various information directly, without having to access official websites. Thus, a study shows that about 3.5 million visitors were directed to the UK government website. Once you subscribe to both this platform and the Cloud, it accounts for over 85% of an organization's subscriber database.

This technology of communication between government and citizens proved to be beneficial in terms of receiving real-time information that is useful, building better decisions that will change the lives of every citizen.

The platform features advanced technology that can be used on any device, allowing the user to communicate with each government in real time, thus having the opportunity to express their views for future improvement

⁸ *Digital dilomacy*, 2012, [http://digitaldiplomacy.ro/interviu-faceti-cunostinta-cu-stepan-soukenik-consultant-in-comunicare-govdelivery/], 17 March 2017

⁹ *Digital diplomacy*, 2017, [http://digitaldiplomacy.ro/], 6 May 2017

as quickly and efficiently as possible. Thus, through this platform, every citizen will be safely informed in case of emergencies. The government is equally privileged, because with the help of GovDelivery it can receive information about every citizen subscribed to this platform, regardless of the case. In emergency situations communication is much faster and more accessible, so that the information comes from the government to the citizen in the shortest possible time.

For this step towards technology, EU countries have had different views, so some of them take that path, one side to consider this platform harder. Talking about the countries, we can bring Estonia as an example, which has turned to this technology at a fast pace, just like Slovakia, which through branding campaigns has reached the resources and technologies essential to the development of this type of platform¹⁰.

It is important to note that the vast majority of countries should implement such technologies for better communication between government and citizens. In order to be better informed in real time, especially during emergencies.

In the case of Romania, this process related to such technology is on the right track moving at a fast pace, with a very well-developed infrastructure in terms of IT. It is a good opportunity to implement new technology segments, considering the speed of the Romanian internet, the fiber optics and the fact that it is easy to get through to these platforms. It should be noted that Romania ranks fifth in the ranking of countries with a fast internet rate, thus being superior to many countries in the world.

Therefore, the Internet speed in Romania is around 37,5 Mbps as compared to USA with only 29,6 Mbps.

An essential aspect of why the Internet has so high a speed in Romania would be the neighbouring networks and the development of infrastructures and technologies in the IT field, which have a large number of customers, covering quite many locations. Thus, there is no need for an excessive investment in hardware and networking, so costs are low enough to develop this platform. In this respect, the cost is decreasing and the pace of its growth is rather rapid considering both the development of its

¹⁰ *Digital dilomacy*, 2012, [<http://digitaldiplomacy.ro/interviu-faceti-cunostinta-cu-stepan-soukenik-consultant-in-comunicare-govdelivery/>], 17 March 2017.

segment and its partnerships in Romania, as well as the speed of the Internet. Equally important would be the fact that through these networks with a large number of users, a segment of citizens can benefit from the new communication platforms between the government and the population¹¹.

The agenda for Romania towards this platform by 2020 contains five key objectives, including: legislation, innovation, procedural changes and behavioural mitigation. Thus, through these objectives, a framework is defined in terms of the institutional structure which envisages a unitary vision. Through this platform, Romania aims to manage information to citizens in real time and to achieve advanced cooperation between governments and citizens. By associating the technology and information tools with the classical tools and the five objectives that are under consideration, the Agenda set for 2020 envisages both technology development and the development of the economy in the IT market¹².

3. Cyber Diplomacy

Cyberdiplomacy represents a multitude of mechanisms in relation to new cybernetic competition from both the security and online crime scene and the internet governance. It aims both to evolve the sector such as the security of the cyberspace and to stop and fight cyber terrorism.

The use of both the computer and the internet has created social, economic and political benefits, they also made life easier for every single user. But it causes tensions and conflicts between countries or even causes material and financial damage. Thus, for national security, it has become a new challenge becoming one of the nonconventional threats to international addresses.

Cyberspace attacks highlight the fact that a public policy with a strong international component is needed. Thus, this space is very complex

¹¹ *Țara cu cea mai mare viteză la Internet. România, prezentă în top 5, 2013*, [<http://incont.stirileprotv.ro/mobile-si-telecom/romania-ocupa-locul-5-in-topul-tarilor-cu-internet-de-mare-viteza-dupa-letonia.html>], 27 April 2017.

¹² *Strategia Națională privind Agenda Digitală pentru România – 2020, 2014*, [<http://gov.ro/ro/guvernul/sedinte-guvern/strategia-nationala-privind-agenda-digitala-pentru-romania-2020>], 7 May 2017.

and the threats are more and more frequent. It has generated a new challenge for policymakers who are struggling both to fight crime and to modernize cyber security. In the cyberspace, security experts identified the following categories of threats: terrorism, crime, espionage and cyberwar. Otherwise, cyber space has turned into a war zone where simple users can be security engineers and terrorists who can launch an attack on a country as well as violate the law of other countries through computer fraud or identity theft. The events over the past ten years show that the attacks were of an economic and social nature¹³. The diplomatic impact was also accentuated by the revelations of *Edward Snowden* who worked in the *NSA* and *CIA* secret service sector. He issued flash news that the *NSA* has been monitoring the masses in the *US* and some *EU* countries. Thus, they had access to the telephone network and social media messages or accounts in the online environment, thus controlling the population¹⁴.

The elements that led to the consolidation of cyber diplomacy were the frequent attacks in the cyber space in the infrastructures area. One example is the *DDoS* attack in *Estonia* in 2007 that lasted three weeks and was in a hybrid form, attacking government websites and banks, universities and newspapers. Thus, it has been reported that cyber-protection measures in the cyber space and a diplomacy with a strategy designed in such a way that the security of users in virtual space is placed first¹⁵.

Cyber space is thus a component of the foreign policy, in the context in which states are debating in international fora the problems of the applicability of the consequences of cyber-attacks and the respect for human rights and the rules of behaviour in this environment. Among these problems difficulties were identified in addressing these issues at international levels due to differences in terminology regarding cyber-terrorism laws.

¹³ *European Parliament Think Tank*, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2015)571302], 24 February 2017.

¹⁴ *Who Is Edward Snowden?*, 2013, [https://edwardsnowden.com/], 28 Aprilie 2017.

¹⁵ *Denial-of-Service: The Estonian Cyberwar and Its Implications for U.S. National Security*, 2017, [http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/65], 28 April 2017.

The concept of cyber diplomacy involves both communication between states on the advanced security of cyberspace as well as collaboration and confidence building through the transparency of communications. The exchange of information and collaboration between cyber-security teams are also an essential aspect of this concept. Thus, by means of these CERT teams, who are responsible for emergencies and collaboration between governments, cyber security can be increased. Through this concept, both cybercrime and cyber damages can easily be identified, as well as cyber terrorists, so that human rights are protected and do not cause a risk factor, especially in terms of data protection¹⁶.

This concept includes tools and technology systems that aim to improve and analyze cyber security. Such tools range from media to web analysis, data, or platforms that can generate strategies to improve security and combat attacks and cybercriminals. The concept comes with a wide range of challenges such as: creating effective and secure spaces for state actors' debate and the development of digital tools so that in the future generations of political leaders communicate virtually through a platform. As regards the virtual environment, the European Union is becoming more and more active at international level, having a network of cyber partnerships and key countries in terms of improving security. These partnerships aim to explain the mechanisms and their development, but also to combat cybercrime. The European Union is thus helping with a cyber security strategy, called *NCSS*, to improve security in the virtual environment. These partnerships are intended to consolidate bilateral collaborations aimed at enhancing online governance and developing cyber security of diplomatic agencies¹⁷.

In the current debate on the role of internet governance and the enforcement of international rights in the virtual environment, the European Union is focusing on a number of key areas such as: improving and protecting the cyberspace, and strengthening cyber capacities in third

¹⁶ *Cyber diplomacy vs. Digital diplomacy: a terminological distinction*, 2016, [<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/cyber-diplomacy-vs-digital-diplomacy-terminological-distinction>], 6 May 2017.

¹⁷ *European Union Agency for Network and Information Security*, [<https://www.enisa.europa.eu/topics/national-cyber-security-strategies/ncss-map>], 6 May 2017.

countries. In the 2013 cyber security strategy, the European Union explains the strong need for international partnerships as an essential means of promoting political and economic interests, as well as the conclusions on cyber diplomacy adopted in February 2015¹⁸.

The Council conclusions on cyber diplomacy of 10 February 2015 addressed both the promotion and defense of human rights, the application of international security rights and the development of cybernetic capabilities. Thus, it is considered essential that cyber diplomacy embraces both the promotion of human rights and the right to free speech in the virtual space. In other words, it must also include the safety of the Internet so that it is not used abusively or for malicious purposes. This diplomacy must therefore be based on gender equality, protect the fundamental rights of the European Union by strengthening cyber security and developing cooperation with the Member States. This should help to reduce threats and cyber-attacks, and to better combat future conflicts. To allow citizens to use virtual space at its maximum capacity and enjoy its social and cultural benefits¹⁹.

This concept encourages the development and consolidation of cyber capabilities as well as the integration into global approaches in the areas of cybernetics. In fact, it supports initiatives to increase cyber security and the open online environment. The strategy addresses new threats and challenges in this area through collaboration with Member States and cyber agencies. It combats crime and supports countries adhering to the Council of Europe Convention. It aims at capitalizing on the specialized knowledge of the organizations and agencies or of cyber intervention teams.

4. Conclusion

The Internet and technology have become the engines of economic growth for the European Union, so security in the online environment of

¹⁸ *European Parliament Think Thank*,

[[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2015\)564378](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2015)564378)], 24 February 2017.

¹⁹ *Draft Council Conclusions on Cyber Diplomacy*, 2015,

[<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6122-2015 INIT/en/pdf>], 3 February 2017.

data, infrastructures and systems is facing more and more challenges such as: the Cloud, mobile and social technologies. In fact, the security of online commerce ensuring a part of the economy is also essential, so the European Union has a key role in setting ICT standards for cyber security and development.

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