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Net Diplomacy III: 2015 and Beyond (Part III)

Barry Fulton, Editor

The Culture of Diplomacy in 2015: What Kind of Service Will We Cultivate?

The culture of diplomacy in 2015 will need to be less divided by service, internal and personal identity politics, and special interests, and more wedded to building a broader community of common purpose and service to the nation.

--Stephanie Smith Kinney

Stephanie Smith Kinney is a senior Foreign Service officer. The opinions and views in this paper do not reflect State Department policy, but only the perspectives of the individuals interviewed and the author.

American citizens and their elected representatives seem to be coming to grips with what the national security and foreign policy communities have been observing for some time now: The international arena is more complex, less stable, more dangerous, and less predictable than in the waning years of the Cold War. As we look to the future, diplomatic readiness will be at least as crucial as military readiness to maintenance of national security. Our diplomatic personnel and resources need to match the quality--if not quantity--of our military personnel and resources.

A Hollowed-Out Institutional Base

Numerous blue ribbon panels of outside experts have called attention to a wide variety of problems at the U.S. State Department, ranging from a deteriorated and outmoded institutional infrastructure to management failures, recruitment and retention issues, and serious budgetary deficiencies. Interviews conducted with career officers serving at all levels of the Foreign Service for one of the department's Senior Seminar Research Papers in March 2001¹ showed that they believed the Department of State still has the talent but lacks a vision of its own identity--in striking contrast to values-based institutional cultures such as the U.S. Marine Corps, West Point, or Motorola. Only one mid-level Foreign Service officer (FSO) pointed out that, in fact, the Department of State does have formal core values, which are published on page seven of the Department of State Strategic Plan: impact, expertise, discipline, dissent, diversity, partnership, and commitment.

The list of "core values" cited by all ranks of FSOs in the interviews went on for more than a page and betrayed confusion about what State's values are and about the very definition of the word "value." All but two of the thirty-three Senior FSOs interviewed believed the Foreign Service has "core values"; however, this group was split fifty-fifty on whether the Department of State as an institution has them. Close to half of mid-level and junior officers interviewed were unsure whether either State or the Foreign Service has core values. Senior and junior officers identified values that are positive; a

substantial number of mid-level officers identified “core values” that are negative—for example, “Cover your ass” (CYA); “Kiss up, kick down”; “Look out for yourself, no one else will”; “Don’t rock the boat”; “Rank has privilege but not accountability”; and “Everything is negotiable.” Only one person among the hundred interviewed volunteered that there might be a linkage between our evaluation system and institutional values, suggesting that “perhaps our core values are embodied in the evaluation system precepts.”

In different ways, respondents reiterated the same point: every corps needs a shared core culture to function effectively; every organization has a distinct culture that shapes its work environment, and the most successful ones inculcate a shared sense of mission and well-defined “common institutional values.” The perceived absence of either common institutional values and shared sense of mission at State were among the factors that contributed to a widespread perception that both the department and the Foreign Service are “hollowed-out institutions.” As the grassroots employee movement known as SOS published in its fall 2000 letter, “The State Department’s traditions and culture block needed change while its dedicated employees are distracted with trivia and drift without a common institutional vision....We must transform our outdated culture and demonstrate a clear commitment to change.”²

There are many at State who feel an instinctive discomfort with topics such as “core values” and “institutional culture.” Perhaps this factor—that “tribal elders” have not taught the younger generation the truth—among others, helps explain the decline in a strong professional culture at State. Max De Pree describes this phenomenon in his book *Leadership is an Art*:

Shared ideals, shared ideas, shared goals, shared respect, a sense of integrity, a sense of quality, a sense of advocacy must be explicit.

We must work to maintain these values. Successful [organizations] tend to become institutions. Institutions foster bureaucracy, the most superficial and fatuous of all relationships. Bureaucracy can level our gifts and our competence. Tribal elders must insistently work at the process of corporate renewal. They must preserve and revitalize the values of the tribe. They nourish a scrutiny of corporate values that eradicates bureaucracy and sustains the individual. Renewal comes through genuine service to others. It cannot come about through a process of mere self-perpetuation. Renewal is an outward orientation of service, rather than an inward orientation of maintenance.³

The State Department continues to stand in stark contrast to the military, which insists on “professional education,” including emphasis on core values,⁴ as opposed to episodic “training” for its officer corps. Why should the development of officers for the nation’s diplomatic service require less than that required of our warriors? The State Department has developed guidelines for a “learning continuum,” which remain largely ignored by most officers because, unlike in the military, there are no real incentives (or sanctions) aligned to encourage professional education once one has been hired. A respected public diplomacy officer has observed that one reason the department has neither shared values nor professional education “is the conceit that State selects ‘the very best’ who therefore arrive fully equipped for a diplomatic career without further education or institutional identification. The military...trains and educates for its requirements.”

Despite some views to the contrary, it appears that the Foreign Service and the Department of State are, in fact, representative of America now—increasingly fragmented and divided by personal and special narrow interests rather than bound by a common sense of purpose for the whole. The culture of diplomacy in 2015 will need to be less divided by service, internal and personal identity politics, and special interests, and more wedded to building a broader community of common purpose and service to the nation. The time has come to start building a more unitary culture and service ethos at State in order to meet the challenges of the coming decades. How do we do that?

Diplomacy Is Our Profession

Fifteen years from now, let us hope that the department has been able to institutionalize the case for expert diplomacy as a crucial element of our national security triad, along with timely intelligence and superior armed force, and that diplomacy is clearly recognized as the profession of all who work there. Employees of State and the public will understand that State's work involves the management of the power and influence of the United States within a global nation-state system, which the United States has helped to develop and continues to cultivate because it is in our national interest. State's fortunes will rise as an increasing proportion of its employees, as well as its public, better understand that professional practitioners of diplomacy form one of the fundamental elements of the international, nation-state system in which we now live--a complex, interdependent system of international institutions and law, finance, treaties, alliances, and interstate practice that continues to evolve, as it has since at least the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

As members of the Department of State, our duty will remain that of serving as the nation's first line of defense and its last, best instrument of power short of armed conflict. What we do may not have changed as much as the way we do it, including the way we prepare an increasingly diverse workforce to carry out its mission. As we look at the coming decades, the purpose of the Department of State should be to provide 1) diplomatic counsel and support for the president's international policy agenda; 2) service to American citizens abroad; and 3) a high-quality, career cadre of trained diplomatic representatives, international negotiators and foreign policy and international management leaders within the government, as well as within the officially recognized international community.

With vision, will, and intentionality, in the coming decade, State's culture could be quite different from what it is today. We could have a State Department more clearly defined in terms of professional standards, role, and mission, and more purposefully and expertly prepared to carry out its complex mission in terms of the mindset, knowledge, functional skills, operational know-how, and technology required to do the job. We will simply have to define our institutional mission and needs more clearly, align incentives and disincentives accordingly, and rigorously enforce them until they become common knowledge and practice--for all employees.

Many elements of State's work and the personal attributes required to carry them out are as old as diplomacy itself: the need for profoundly educated, observant, curious, creative and courageous individuals with an exquisite command of spoken and written English and the interpersonal and cross-cultural communication, management and negotiation skills to match. Old functions will be carried out in new ways as a result of social and technological innovation--for example, a universal database, knowledge management and real-time global collaboration via information technology (IT) and the Internet, paperless personnel and financial management systems, distance learning, and virtual conferences on the Web.

Still other elements will be totally new, pioneered by a younger generation more recently trained in the arts of national power--statecraft and diplomacy--and empowered to envision and bring to life the best international environment possible for our nation and its citizens. A new generation of State employees and leaders will make the following IT applications standard rather than exceptional: knowledge and database management, multimedia reporting, Internet-based global collaboration and videoconferencing, geographic information systems (GIS), global positionings systems (GPS), presentation and marketing, language translation, remote sensing and imaging and digital communications systems. Most of all, we will need an institutional culture with values and incentives that encourage a bold institutional vision for the future and the pioneering thought and action required to fulfill it. We will need a culture that puts as much primacy on action as it does on observation and reflection.

One new role of the Department of State will be to help Americans, as citizens of the world's hyperpower, to understand that diplomatic services around the world--including our own--do more

than represent and serve national interests. They also serve a larger international purpose, that of knitting the multistate system together through a web of relationships and common parlance, practices, and values that facilitate relations and negotiations among contending nation-states. As such, diplomats and diplomacy help order a messy--often dangerous--international arena. In a globalized world, this arena is now as close to Peoria as a paycheck, a market, a mutual funds portfolio, or the proverbial button, be it on one's computer or otherwise.

The Internet, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Wall Street may now provide opinionated new players in an increasingly complex international arena, but they still do not and cannot speak for the nation-states themselves. Nor can they speak for those entities that would like to become recognized as nation-states. This function for the foreseeable future will continue to rest with the officially designated and recognized agents of each state or aspiring entity. Not just anyone can or will be able to do the job; those who do it should be properly prepared.

In the case of the United States, those most responsibly involved in American diplomacy will necessarily be career or politically appointed federal employees acting under instructions from a higher authority. That's the way the international system works. Hence, the requirement at State for a well-articulated, commonly understood American diplomatic culture, one still based on the basic values fundamental to the American diplomatic tradition--service, teamwork, integrity (intellectual and personal), learning, and leadership.

Notwithstanding the remarkable advances and challenges of the information revolution and the growing number of nongovernmental players pursuing special interests and making their views known, for the foreseeable future, only a limited number of individuals will have the authority to sit behind a plaque labeled "United States of America" and speak authoritatively for this country. A significant number of these individuals should be purposefully and intentionally educated and developed to do this through a State Department career. This does not mean, however, that such individuals will work only in and for State. If properly developed, they should, in fact, move in and out of State and have experience in other executive agencies and on the Hill.

A Unitary Culture

To serve the nation in this way, State needs its own "excepted" (special) service and a more unitary culture and personnel system in order to address the special requirements and needs of a national diplomatic and consular service with far flung responsibilities. It needs to provide more well-defined, transparent career paths and professional development for all employees, whether they be worldwide available diplomats or primarily domestic international policy or resource management officers. Given the increasing rate of change in the world, State will need a culture and cadres of employees uniformly prepared to be flexible, adaptable, and agile.

As things stand now, State's institutional culture is fractured and fragmented, divided among three personnel systems (Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service Nationals) and a growing army of temporary contractors and part-time retirees from another era. The Civil Service encourages narrow, technical expertise and assumes no overseas experience or knowledge, nor does it make it easy to acquire such. The Foreign Service is supposedly a generalist officer corps but is in fact increasingly characterized by five groups of specialists ("cones"), which were developed in an era when it was possible to think that politics and economics were separable and that the flow of information fundamental to "public diplomacy" could be managed in such a way that it could not and would not be accessible to people in the United States--that is, before the Internet.

A more unitary culture and up-to-date personnel system are needed for the Department of State by 2015. Such would focus on the need for developing high quality, career cadres of bilateral and multilateral diplomats and foreign affairs managers, experts, and specialists. A more unitary approach would rely on well-articulated general requirements applicable to all employees, with more exacting

standards and increasing developmental requirements appropriate for those who aspire to executive positions. (Training would be necessary but not sufficient for promotion.) A shared evaluation system linked to common, basic precepts would contribute to a more coherent institutional culture.

State's diplomatic professionals, whether primarily worldwide available or domestic, will need to be profoundly and broadly educated and experienced, first and foremost in the history, government, and society of their own tremendously diverse and complex country. To truly represent the geographic and cultural diversity of the nation, State will need to recruit nationally for all its functions, not just for its worldwide available personnel. Since oral and written communication are the primary tools of diplomacy, and knowledge management is the overriding challenge of the IT revolution, all career employees of State in 2015 will be subject to high, test-based standards for English language use and literacy, as well as IT skills. Science and technology literacy will be necessary. Analytical, marketing, and management skills would be required for officer-level personnel.

These senior personnel, whether primarily worldwide available or domestic, will be expected over time to become knowledgeable of or expert in the formulation and management of foreign policy and consular services, human and financial resources, security, emergency task forces and crisis operations. Forward-looking retirees who have been master practitioners and are well prepared to teach will be regularly recruited to develop and train the next generation of State employees. The department, in cooperation with a major university, will make available to all employees, through a combination of distance learning and coursework at the Foreign Service Institute, a one-year, graduate degree in Diplomatic Studies.

This vision of State offers an opportunity to align institutional organization and human resource management to meet the changing circumstances and challenges of 2010 and 2015. It would provide an opportunity to clearly articulate and enforce universal high standards, expectations, and performance criteria for everyone. There is no reason that both worldwide available and primarily domestic personnel should not be defined and aligned in a consistent and coherent fashion, with the notable difference that service abroad would convey special credits toward extra pay and early retirement and other benefits (as is the case now), thus ensuring that those bearing the burden of a commitment to worldwide availability are recognized and rewarded accordingly. Everyone will be expected to meet the "needs of the department."

By 2015, therefore, the following should apply to both domestic and worldwide available personnel at State:

- Rank-in-person for all career department personnel (like the military services) in order to facilitate mobility and flexibility (moving people around to do different jobs as needed) and a common basic evaluation process for American personnel throughout the department and its overseas components. The basic universal evaluation process could be augmented by additional components as function and rank dictate. For example, promotion of worldwide available personnel would take into account such factors as foreign language, cross-cultural communication, and foreign ops. (Note: it is unclear whether such an approach might also be applied to specialists and support staff, but an overriding need for flexibility and agility suggests it should.)
- At least one tour overseas early in one's employment history at State (within the first five years). This would help ensure a broad-based, first-hand knowledge of the department's overseas dimension and responsibilities. The common experience would contribute to institutional cohesion and increase the talent pool for lower-level jobs abroad. At least one overseas tour should be considered a "condition of employment" for everyone, the same as the requirement to meet high English language and IT standards.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in both policy and resource management for those aspiring to executive positions. Officers would be encouraged to pursue a "major-minor" mix of professional education and career development in these two broad areas. Unidimensional career paths might also exist, but presumably top out earlier. All officer positions domestic and

worldwide would be designated as primarily policy oriented or primarily program/resource management or operations oriented. Classification would depend on the most important functions and skill sets required for each position, irrespective of cadre. Officers pursuing executive-level leadership positions might have more expertise in one area than another, but they would need some service in both to rise to executive positions.

- Limited tenure in a single position. All State positions would carry a recommended maximum tenure designator (for example, no more than six years in the same position in the department or four years in the same position abroad); exceptions would be unusual but possible for compelling needs of the service. There would be a presumption throughout the department that employees move around, although some domestic career paths within the department probably would be relatively less mobile than the typical Foreign Service worldwide available pattern. Some kind of assignment mechanism for the domestic cadre would be required.

Collectively, these (and other) reforms offer the opportunity to foster a shared experience within a shared culture, thus promoting cohesion. At the same time, a form of “term limits” inhibits ossification and entrenched bureaucratic interests that resist cultivating the agility that will be required in the future. The support of Congress as well as top department leadership would, of course, be necessary.

New Century, New Culture--The Right Stuff

The future will be about interconnections and the unexpected. Building a system based on narrow specialists and specialties with limited mobility and vision will probably be neither realistic nor practical. One of the enabling fictions of our current problems--that you can segregate policy and resource management--must not be allowed to continue. The future calls for multidimensional officers at home and abroad, officers expected to develop and command a mix of substantive knowledge; geographical expertise; interpersonal, functional, and operational skills; and know-how. Assignments or developmental experiences should ensure that all potential executives have experience in interagency coordination, constructive relations with NGOs, the private sector, and the Congress.

A wide variety of general career paths for all employees will need to be identified, but they should serve as notional rather than strictly prescriptive models. Employees should remain responsible for managing their own careers, albeit with updated Bureau of Human Resources (HR) systems and support. Incentives and HR policy will clearly communicate and be aligned with five-year projections of institutional needs and expectations so that both the employer and the employees have a better understanding of the likely consequences of their decisions.

In short, the more diverse the backgrounds of an institution's employees, the more intentional an institution needs to become regarding the development of its workforce. Professional education and career development models will have to be further developed, including mandatory training and types of assignments (required but not sufficient) for promotion from junior to mid-level to senior ranks and for certain kinds of jobs, especially at the executive level. To maximize the investment, all long-term training assignments will need to be linked in advance to ongoing assignments; certain kinds of mid-level assignments could also be linked with short-term training requirements, such as a new course in the fundamentals of international law for jobs involving multilateral negotiations or the United Nations.

None of these suggestions or visions is necessarily new. What will be new in the coming decade is a more focused sense of purpose within State's institutional culture and infrastructure. State will need to care enough to professionally develop and credential its people if it wants to be known for providing the very best in diplomatic service at home and abroad.

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Endnotes

1. Stephanie Smith Kinney, "Developing Diplomats for 2010: If Not Now, When?" Senior Seminar Research Paper (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, March 2000), <http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat>.
2. SOS Petition, "Open Letter to the Next Secretary of State," November 9, 2000.
3. Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art*, New York, N.Y.: Dell Paperback, 1989, pp. 90-91.
4. Jonathan M. Padfield, "Clausewitzian Genius: Educating the Military Junior Officer," CDR, UNS, National War College Long Paper, Spring 2001, pp. 11-12.

Training Diplomats for 2015

Already the first tentative shoots of interstate building akin to the nation-state building of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are beginning to show, and both state and interstate entities are going to need diplomats, however called, to work the permeable membrane between them.

--John Hemery

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A number of conferences around the turn of the millennium debated the future direction of diplomacy. Some questioned whether there was a place or a future for the profession at all, given the inexorable march of global capital forces, the proliferation of nonstate actors, and the communications revolution. The boundaries between "domestic" and "foreign" and between "state" and "nonstate" have become increasingly blurred, and the once-discrete functions of diplomats (foreign policy analysis, representation, negotiation) now are performed routinely by a large cast of others including home civil servants, bankers, aid workers, civil society leaders, and miscellaneous experts. By 2015, will there be anyone called "diplomats" left to train?

On the whole these discussions concluded that there probably will be a continuing role for diplomats. The state will remain a key actor, even if increasingly in groups and jostled for space by private organizations, business, and financial institutions. Some of the traditional functions of the diplomat will still be needed, not least looking after citizens abroad. And despite changes in the way things are done--more readily with e-mail and videoconference--states will still need to talk to one another, and that means having people on the ground to do the talking who have been there long enough to understand what is really being said.

Thus, much of the knowledge and professional skill now necessary to effective diplomacy will still be required still in 2015. It is perhaps unlikely, therefore, that by then the training of diplomats will be unrecognizably transformed, conducted by Trekkies with pointed ears in Lycra catsuits.

Nevertheless, in a multifarious and increasingly fluid international system, and not least in self-preservation, diplomats and their ministries are reexamining the particular value they can add to governance. And to continue to be relevant, training policy and practice will need to keep pace with that thinking.

Some things will not change much. Still common to all will be the vestiges of eighteenth-century protocol, though further diminished and practiced with widely varying ardor. It will continue to be

necessary, consequently, to acquaint diplomatic staff with the formal rules of procedure and precedence. Some of the rules are useful, and pomp and ceremony will continue to matter to many governments, regrettably mostly to those who can least afford the cost. But it is clear that the trend in diplomacy is away from prestige and protocol.

There are a number of reasons for this. Much diplomacy is conducted, without plumed hats or spurs, by nondiplomats from other ministries or from outside government altogether. An increasing proportion of diplomatic activity takes place in multilateral working institutions having neither historical baggage nor national image to project. Modern society itself becomes steadily less formal, and foreign ministries with stretched resources and watchful taxpayers will not greatly mourn the passing of the grand style. With any luck, therefore, by 2015 less time and money will be spent on the autoerotic exchange of courtesies under the candelabra with the *chers collègues*.

People almost certainly will still need to be taught how to write with clarity, brevity, and precision, and how to structure a report. Diplomatic communication both within and between governments is conducted increasingly with lean informality by secure e-mail, and there is little demand and less time for the elegant embellishments of traditional diplomatic prose. Absolutely essential, though, for those involved in text-based negotiation--as, for example, within a Working Group of the Council of the European Union--will be the ability to draft and redraft quickly, with an eye both for the vital detail that preserves a position and for the creative ambiguity that breaks a deadlock.

Foreign ministries will continue to fulfill the core tasks of looking after the interests of citizens abroad, providing essential consular and, to varying extents, commercial services. As the number of citizens traveling grows, so the volume of consular work will increase, demanding a comparably higher proportion of staff resources, including training.

Diplomats will also continue to require a body of appropriate knowledge about their own and other countries and about the systems through which they interact. That knowledge needs to be continually updated throughout a person's career--a more difficult prospect in diplomacy than in many professional fields because the scope of work is impossibly broad and the shelf life of information is frustratingly short.

Some training will be completely new. The revolution in information and communications technology has led to changes in both diplomatic practice and diplomatic training. For example, virtual teams of diplomats increasingly meet electronically to discuss and amend draft texts. Prenegotiations are carried out more and more online. Most of the traffic between ministry and post is direct from desk to embassy desktop. The same is true of communication between ministries and to an increasing extent between governments, with obvious implications for traditional hierarchies. The skills involved in performing these arts are going to have to be taught to enable diplomats to be as effective in cyberspace as in person, to ensure a common ministry standard, and to safeguard the vital bureaucratic processes of filing, retrieval, and archiving.

Computer-based learning will also increase, though it will not replace training in person. The work done by the Open University [<http://www.open.ac.uk>] and the Mediterranean Diplomatic Academy [<http://www.diplomacy.edu>] point the way. People posted abroad and unable to take part in home-based training can continue their career progression through distance learning, including online seminars and tutorials. The Canadian Foreign Service discovered that drop-out rates, usually high in such programs, fell noticeably if those taking virtual courses had a personal mentor with whom they could communicate by e-mail, obtaining feedback on their work. The most successful distance-learning courses combine self-directed study with periodic one- or two-week residential seminars during which the diplomats can interact directly with their tutors and fellow students and feel part of a community.

Distance learning can make a significant contribution to foreign ministries in developing countries having neither the funds nor the specialists to provide training for their own diplomats. The Graduate Institute of International Studies at Geneva has pioneered such a project with the foreign ministries of

Cameroon, Kenya, and Trinidad and Tobago.¹ Similar opportunities for online learning could help to facilitate the professional development of embassy staff engaged locally.

Apart from serving traditional needs and embracing new technology, training in 2015 will reflect changes in the role of foreign ministries in diplomatic affairs. Clearly there is no longer a place for the gatekeeper in a system without gates, in which experts in line ministries deal with each other across borders directly and the bulk of international intercourse bypasses government altogether. The forward-looking foreign ministry will embrace the global market and the burgeoning matrix of overlapping, interlocking institutions. Its core contributions will be forecasting and understanding, negotiating, promoting, influencing, coordinating, facilitating, and networking.

Foreign ministries will continue to play to their main strength as interpreter of other societies and governments to the home government, and of the home society to others. But as the ripples of events in the world are felt ever more widely and quickly, governments of all sizes will have to anticipate and respond to more developments in more places that affect their citizens than before. Complex bargaining within multilateral institutions also requires member states to take positions on a far wider range of issues than they might individually.

The consequent need for in-depth reporting suggests a continuing role for the bilateral mission, even if perhaps increasingly shared among more than one country and accredited to more than one capital. But if diplomats are going to offer more than can be gleaned from the media or the Internet, they will need a better than passing knowledge of the societies in which they are posted. Training departments with any sense will work closely with universities and institutes at home and in host countries, helping diplomats to develop quickly the specialist knowledge they will need to provide informed analytic judgment.

In addition to knowing about states, though, diplomats will need increasingly to understand the quasi-governmental and nonstate actors in international affairs. Some foreign ministries are helping this process by facilitating two-way secondments between the ministry and humanitarian agencies and transnational corporations.

Perhaps the most significant development in diplomacy in the coming fifteen years will be the emergence of a representative function on the part of thus far inchoate international phenomena such as the financial markets. Already the first tentative shoots of interstate-building akin to the nation-state building of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are beginning to show, and both state and interstate entities are going to need diplomats, however called, to work the permeable membrane between them.²

Foreign ministries will take the lead, in cooperation with agencies for cultural exchange, tourism, trade, and investment, in promoting their country and influencing opinion abroad. Both ministry and embassies will serve not only as coordinators but increasingly as facilitators-in-chief, thinking creatively of ways to mobilize to positive effect their incomparable networks of contacts worldwide.

Until recently, many in the profession have regarded public diplomacy as a second-order activity. In ministries that traditionally communicate only through spokespersons, it may not be recognized as a legitimate or valuable activity at all. But in most countries by 2015, it will have become accepted that every diplomat has to be an articulate spokesperson, whether for his or her own ministry's interests in the competitive bargaining for funds and influence with other ministries at home, or for influencing attitudes and opinion in parliament, government, business, and the wider community in host countries.

Thus, one of the core responsibilities of diplomats (as well as one of their key *raison d'être* when fending off periodic government cuts) will be not only to lobby widely for support on key issues, but also to manage how their country is perceived abroad, with all the material consequences that entails. This implies at least three dimensions of training: understanding the objectives and techniques of

diplomacy aimed at publics rather than at governments; being able to coordinate diverse contributions to a coherent public diplomacy strategy; and in possessing public presentation and media skills.

Such training has inevitably to be practical and interactive in order to be effective. One model developed by the Centre for Political and Diplomatic Studies [<http://www.cpbs.co.uk>] is built around a series of prepared television news broadcasts over a number of days, requiring trainees to exercise political judgment in assessing the implications and prioritizing the importance of fast-unfolding events; to practice communication and negotiation skills within a team charged with working out the appropriate action and approach; to apply planning and management skills in coordinating a response to such events; and to demonstrate presentation and media skills under pressure when doorstepped by a television news crew or when conducting a press conference.

These are the essential qualities to be inculcated in the diplomats of 2015: lateral thinking, effective teamwork, sound judgment, clarity and brevity of expression, confidence and practiced ease in dealing with the public and the media. As diplomacy at the highest level becomes focused more and more in multilateral fora, these qualities will need to be buttressed with highly specific training in negotiating within the machinery and decision-making culture of particular institutions, as well as in the negotiating styles and special sensitivities of partner states.

Finally, and crucially, diplomats at all levels will need training in results-oriented management. Fast-flowing, multidimensional developments require teams of specialists used to assembling quickly, sharing expertise without much regard to rank, coordinating their efforts under facilitating leadership, and as quickly disassembling before being reassembled in a different constellation to deal with another issue. The narrowly vertical hierarchy with its limited vision and congested bottlenecks is simply too constipated to be useful, if the ministry's objective is to be effective. Training departments of 2015 will need to bring their people on through career-long progressive development, from leadership training and encouraging early responsibility among the young through section and departmental coordination, to encouraging in senior managers creative thinking and the capacity to delegate.

However, none of this more imaginative approach to growing staff will make complete sense, or even much sense at all, unless embraced within a comprehensive program of human resources development attuned to the more flexible, diverse career patterns and expectations of young professionals. Personnel and training departments will need to enable each diplomat to see the purpose of each phase of training, the need to accumulate competencies in a planned way, and the improved opportunities and career prospects that follow from taking professional development seriously. This will happen only if led with conviction and energy from the minister downward.

Herein, though, lies both a danger and a challenge. By 2015, the gulf in technical capacity between developed and less developed countries--already significant--will have widened considerably. As the speed and complexity of diplomacy increases within multilateral institutions such as the European Union, and even more in the global markets, so states with less sophisticated information and communications systems and less flexible and responsive management cultures will be progressively less able to advance and defend their national interests effectively in relation to the more developed countries.

Hence, when thinking of training in 2015 we should be conscious that there will be two very different realities--one group of countries still operating in terms and largely with means appropriate to the diplomacy of the mid-twentieth century; the other, much smaller but with disproportionate influence, adapted to operating at high speed and with maximum communication and coordination between government departments and between the capital and missions.

The camp in which a foreign ministry finds itself will not be determined simply by money, though that is not unimportant. It will be determined principally by political and institutional culture, a readiness or lack thereof to recognize the changing rules of the evolving game and to adjust systems,

resources, and attitudes to them.

To the extent that less developed countries, or simply conservative societies with traditional approaches to governance, feel excluded from the game or disadvantaged in the scramble for resources, influence, and opportunities, there will be a risk that management of competing interests through complex negotiation will be short-circuited by the short sword.

It is thus very much in the self-interest of those with the capacity to operate effectively in the international system of 2015 to do all they can to spread that capacity as widely as possible, so that best practice in human resources development might be applied within the international community as a whole.

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Endnotes

1. For more information about this distance-learning program contact scott@hei.unige.ch.
2. I am grateful for these observations to Professor Richard Langhorne, director of the Center for Global Change and Governance at Rutgers University. For a stimulating discussion of this process see his *The Coming of Globalisation: Its Evolution and Contemporary Consequences*, Palgrave 2001.

Digital Diplomats

Machines cannot replicate the essential personal skills of diplomacy, what British diplomat Harold Nicolson has defined as moral precision, the willingness to confront foreign policy decisions directly and with conviction.

--Wilson Dizard, Jr.

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Mao Tse-Tung was once asked by Henry Kissinger about the impact of the French Revolution on world history. He replied that it was too early to tell. His caution applies to all exercises in prediction, even one that attempts to project events only to the year 2015, the mark set by the *Global Trends 2015* report. The report takes a prudent approach in its projections, a useful guideline for this *iMP* survey of diplomacy in a changing world order.

Here we will look at the role of American diplomats in this new environment. This group includes State Department professionals, both Foreign Service officers and those who support them in Washington. There are other players outside the State Department who have a stake in how American diplomacy is adjusting its operations and its agenda to Information Age realities. They are officials in other federal agencies (Defense, Treasury, Commerce, and Agriculture, among others) who are involved in foreign policy decisions. Many of these agencies have, in effect, their own foreign services, to the point where they outnumber State Department employees at large embassies overseas. Another important set of players are in the private sector--corporate executives, academicians, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations, all of whom bring professional expertise, information resources, and political influence to the foreign policy process. They are accordingly part of the mix in our examination of the new digital diplomacy.

These groups, public and private, are caught up in the change that is reshaping American strategic interests. It is the impact of advanced information technologies, from computers to the Internet. This development has particular meaning for diplomacy. Information is its stock-in-trade--gathering and analyzing facts in ways that lead to actions affecting U.S. interests in the world beyond our borders.

This basic process has not changed since the evolution of modern diplomatic styles in the fifteenth century. As historian Garrett Mattingly notes in his magisterial work on Renaissance diplomacy, an ambassador's role then was to "uphold his majesty's honor at a foreign court, aided by no more than his wit, courage and eloquence." The "technologies" available at the time were nothing more than quill pens and paper.

Diplomats have traditionally been suspicious of new technologies. When the first Foreign Office telegram was brought to him in the 1840s, British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston declared, "My God, this is the end of diplomacy." In Washington, State Department officials had similar misgivings about Samuel Morse's invention. They did not hire a communications clerk for a dozen years after the Morse telegraph network began operations. His duties were to pick up cables addressed to the department at the local Western Union office.

The State Department is now involved in another cycle of catching up with technological changes. After considerable delays (and particularly congressional reluctance to appropriate funds), the department has begun to upgrade its communications networks and information facilities to something approximating the state-of-art capabilities of other U.S. organizations, public and private.

The new cliché is "knowledge management." It extends beyond the department's internal structure to include digital "collaboration zone" relationships with the other Washington agencies involved in foreign affairs decisions. The purpose, in government-speak, is to "implement the infrastructure needed to enable all agencies, regardless of their respective locations, to communicate and to provide an interoperable platform for knowledge sharing." In simpler language, this means working smarter in an Information Age environment.

After floundering around for decades, the department began to get its digital information act together in the 1990s. Its most important move, in 1998, was to consolidate management of its information resources in one office--the Bureau of Information Resources Management. Equally significant, the bureau is headed by an undersecretary of state. The change gave information management equal status for the first time with politics and economics in the department's policy structure.

Upgrading the department's information facilities was given an additional boost earlier this year by Secretary of State Colin Powell. He made it clear early on that the project was among his highest priorities. One result was the Bush administration's request for a dramatic increase in funding to upgrade State's information technology facilities. The administration's FY 2002 budget submission to Congress included \$210 million for this purpose, more than doubling current-year funding. The new funds will be the first installment in a two-year program that will give all department employees Internet access from their desks as well as access to a network for classified computer communications. They will also have state-of-the-art links with other government agencies and, significantly, with private organizations that offer databases that are relevant to the department's work.

In summary, the next few years will witness a dramatic upgrading of the State Department's information resources, changing the ways in which its professionals do their job. If all goes well, they will finally be able to function effectively in the digital environment that surrounds them within the United States and, increasingly, abroad.

The changes will affect both the department's organizational pattern and the foreign policy issues that are its daily business. There is lingering rear-guard resistance to the new order because it upsets hallowed bureaucratic turfs, and more particularly, the careers of officials who tend them. However, technology is slowly eroding these turf claims.

One of the more interesting changes is a new emphasis on “American Presence Posts” (APPs), which can best be described as microconsulates for the Information Age. They are small decentralized offices in provincial cities abroad consisting of a Foreign Service officer whose primary working tool is a computer linked to the embassy in the capital city. The first APPs were set up in France in 1999, beginning with Lyon, the country’s second-largest city and a major high-tech center. The new outposts were the result of a campaign by then-Amb. Felix Rohatyn, a world-class financier, who wanted to decentralize the Paris embassy’s outreach to French industry. He saw APP officers as “diplomatic entrepreneurs” serving what he called their customers in a way capital-city embassies cannot.

“The classical ‘big embassy’ structure in developed countries,” Rohatyn has pointed out, “is today akin to using mainframe computers in the age of the Internet.” Aside from their ability to provide an effective American presence, the APPs are a fiscal bargain. The cost to the State Department of the first three APPs in France was about \$200,000 a year. By contrast, the annual operating budget of overall U.S. representation in Paris at the time was \$35 million.

The APPs are only one of the organizational reforms that will change the ways in which American Foreign Service officers conduct business from now on. These small posts have been hailed in some quarters as a move in the direction of “telediplomacy,” in which “virtual embassies” serve as electronic data-gathering outposts for computerized decision-making in Washington.

This would be technocracy run amuck. Machines cannot replicate the essential personal skills of diplomacy, what British diplomat Harold Nicolson has defined as moral precision, the willingness to confront foreign policy decisions directly and with conviction. The point is made in a Georgetown University study of the future of American diplomacy: “There will be no such thing as remote-control diplomacy. The ‘global village’ is a deceptively attractive term which obscures the real differences in peoples and governments. Foreigners will continue to live, think, and view events in ways that are foreign to us. We will continue to need diplomats pounding the pavements, talking to all sorts of people in foreign countries and analyzing the significance of what they have learned.”

British journalist Michael Prowse has pointed out that the most important thing to understand about the new diplomacy is that it has moved from the age of Metternich to the age of the microchip, the technical module of the Information Age. Understanding and acting upon the implications of this shift is a direct imperative for American national security and the foreign policies that support it. As Joseph Nye and William Owens have noted: “Knowledge, more than ever, is power. The one country that can best lead the information revolution will be more powerful than any other. For the foreseeable future, that country is the United States. America has apparent strength in military power and economic production. Yet its more subtle comparative advantage is its ability to collect, process, act upon and disseminate information, an edge that will almost certainly grow in the next decade.”¹

The old issues will still be around, but they must now be viewed through the prism of new digital realities. The pressure to do so is insistent, affecting all parts of the foreign policy agenda.

While it is difficult to assign strict priorities to the issues affected by digital changes, trade policy leads the list. It is the area that touches a broad range of American interests—not only the economy as such, but also where people live, what they do at work, and generally how they feel about themselves and their prospects. It matters that that United States has become a world trader on an unprecedented scale in recent decades. Trade once followed the flag. Now it follows electronic pathways that have largely been created and exploited by American business, from satellites to high-capacity undersea cables and wireless telephones.

The U.S. economy not only exports internationally; it has moved its operations overseas. By the mid-1990s, global corporations were earning \$7 trillion in annual sales through their foreign affiliates, an amount greater than the world’s total exports at the time. AOL markets its services in eight languages on all continents; General Electric has more employees in India than in the United States; London has more American banks than New York City; the largest retail chain in Japan is Seven

Eleven. These enterprises share a common dependence on advanced information resources to backstop their global operations. It is one of the reasons why information goods and services now make up the largest single part of the U.S. export package.

American digital diplomacy has played a large role in bringing this about. As recently as fifteen years ago, U.S. information exports were severely limited by protectionist policies imposed by other countries. At one level this protectionism involved local telecommunications systems abroad. Telephone networks were government monopolies that were badly run, in part because they relied on local industries for equipment and services, cutting out the American exporters who usually offered superior products.

This situation has been turned around in the past dozen years, largely as a result of aggressive negotiations by Washington agencies, led by a White House unit, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). A breakthrough event was the 1992 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The United States, Canada, and Mexico lowered or eliminated restrictions on regional trade in information products and services, the first such trade agreement to deal with these exports. The NAFTA agreement was followed in 1994 by a more comprehensive treaty that set up the World Trade Organization (WTO). Among other provisions, the WTO treaty established the first global rules for opening up information industries to crossborder competition.

At the same time, most countries privatized, in whole or in part, their telecommunications monopolies, opening them up to foreign competition. As a result American exporters of information equipment and services now trade in nations that account for more than 90 percent of global communications facilities. Another result is that communications traffic has boomed. The Gartner Group, a Connecticut consulting firm, recently estimated that "instant messaging" by computers, mobile phones, and the Internet now totals more than 15 billion messages a month worldwide.

Despite these advances, digital diplomacy has its work cut out for it in trade negotiations. Most countries continue to place various restrictions on foreign imports of information goods and services in ways that harm U.S. exporters. In part, these restrictions are intended to protect data privacy for their citizens. The American approach to this problem is to rely primarily on voluntary industry standards. Most countries abroad favor government regulation. Because these rules vary country by country, American information exporters are often handicapped in marketing their products.

The Internet poses special problems for American diplomacy. Authoritarian regimes in China, Burma, and Saudi Arabia attempt, with diminishing success, to restrict access to Web pages. For most other countries, the Internet is a welcome addition to their information resources. However, it opens a new set of issues that affect U.S. interests. One is the rapid growth of Internet "e-trade," buying and selling goods and services on the network. From small beginnings in the 1990s, Internet-based trade now accounts for hundreds of billions of dollars in cross-border commerce. Traditional trading practices are affected as governments measure the effect of this shift on their own economies, particularly as it affects their reliance on revenues from customs duties and sales taxes.

These trade concerns spill over into other areas for American foreign policy. Human rights are involved as policymakers debate the need for environmental and labor protections in expanding trade access for American corporations in developing economies. National security interests are affected by the easy access that international terrorists have to the new information networks for coordinating their activities. An expanding area of concern involves the simple question, who owns information? The Internet, among other networks, has wreaked havoc with traditional arrangements such as copyright, libel, and trademark protections. Negotiations are under way in The Hague to draft a treaty to revise the old rules in ways that reflect the new digital impact on how information is produced and distributed.

These issues, and others, are the agenda of a new kind of diplomacy, increasingly dominated by changes brought on by advanced digital resources. Some pundits argue that the so-called information revolution will lead to the end of the nation-state, that we will be living in a borderless cyberspace.

French scholar Jean-Marie Guéhenno views the Information Age as imperial in the sense of a virtual society too vast to constitute a political entity, a world that is at once unified and without a center. Global relationships, he argues, will be increasingly dominated by commercial institutions, using the power of information technology.

Other observers take a more moderate view. James Rosenau of George Washington University suggests a scenario in which traditional boundaries are replaced by what he calls "the Frontier," a new political arrangement in which international relations are dominated less and less by nation-states and more by congeries of spheres of authority that overtake the old divisions of territorial space. As British commentator John Browning points out, "Government isn't disappearing. It is being disintermediated."

The American foreign policy establishment is beginning to adapt to the implications of this shift. This change includes a new role for diplomats, men and women who adapt the old skills of analysis and negotiations to the issues raised by the new Information Age.

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Endnote

1. Joseph Nye and William Owens, "America's Information Edge," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (2): 20-36 March/April 1996.

The Perils of Secrecy in an Information Age

The United States government must find a more appropriate balance between vigorously protecting a limited field of state secrets and fostering a culture of public accountability, transparency, and openness appropriate for a networked Information Age.
--Jamie F. Metzl

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A spate of high-profile incidents of espionage over recent years, including the Robert Hanssen, Aldrich Ames, and John Walker cases, has rightly concerned many Americans about the sanctity of official secrets. Although dangerous breaches such as these demand a crackdown on imperfect security practices, changes in the global information and communications environment make it more important than ever before that all government agencies, including the FBI, the CIA, and the State Department, learn to operate in an open and transparent manner. In a world increasingly influenced by interactive mass media, the overall benefits of greater openness far outweigh the very serious cost of these high-profile lapses. This will only become more true in 2015 and beyond, as the Information Revolution continues to influence the development of global consciousness and public participation in affairs of state. The U.S. government must find a more appropriate balance between vigorously protecting a limited field of state secrets and fostering a culture of public accountability, transparency, and openness appropriate for a networked Information Age.

Information is power, and governments have always safeguarded their own secrets and sought to uncover those of competing states. In the United States, the 1917 Espionage Act, the 1947 National Security Act, and a host of executive orders have tightened a secrecy regime inspired by the

challenges of two world wars, the Cold War, and the nuclear arms race. The bureaucratic structures put in place to ensure high levels of official secrecy have also spawned a government culture of excessive secrecy.

Secrecy and compartmentalized information by definition hamper internal government and public discussion and debate. Because standards for classification are not clearly articulated by statute and because institutional prudence encourages officials to over-classify materials, the torrent of classified materials continues. In 1999 alone, an estimated eight million new secrets were classified, a 10 percent increase over the previous year.

These high levels of secrecy have become a national liability in the Information Age. With massive amounts of relevant information on most topics now available on the Internet and elsewhere, relevance does not come from hoarding information. Instead, it comes from developing and identifying appropriate filters to sort through masses of data and from building relationships with those, often outside of government, who have the most immediate access to relevant information.

Although extensive official secrecy was empowering when governments had more information than nongovernmental actors, it now often amplifies intelligence shortfalls and prevents governments from partnering with and fully engaging nonstate actors in open knowledge networks. In a networked information environment, we can learn more by developing close and cooperative links with the thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating throughout Africa, for example, than by relying on a small number of political and intelligence officers reporting from African capitals. The secrecy that interferes with developing these types of relationships harms critical public outreach and makes government agencies less able to attract young people and private sector specialists who live, work, and breathe in an open and free communications environment.

Thinking differently about official secrecy will require a long overdue shift in the way the U.S. government views itself and understands the source of its global power. Openness is a key element of national power and influence in an Information Age. A nation's foreign policy is played out today on every level of society. Cities, states, nongovernmental organizations, corporations, private associations, global news organizations, and others have multiple contacts around the globe and interact with increasingly sophisticated foreign counterparts. A nation's ability to promote its values and policies and the relevance of its institutions now rests on government participation alongside such actors in a multidimensional global dialogue. As one voice among many, governments that maintain transparent processes and carefully explain and justify their actions to these domestic and foreign constituencies will be far more able to advance policies and principles than those that do not. Excessive secrecy harms the national interest of the United States as much as compromised secrecy.

Initial steps have been taken to address this problem. Following a series of high-level studies and commissions on overclassification, the Public Interest Declassification Act now before the Senate calls for the establishment of a board to advise the president on declassification issues. This important but pedestrian legislation replaces the abandoned and more ambitious Government Secrecy Act of 1997, which had called for a new federal statute on document classification and a national declassification center to streamline the declassification process. Ambitious measures such as those in the 1997 act will be needed to transform a government culture of secrecy to a culture of openness, with clearly articulated, limited areas where secrecy is appropriate and necessary.

As long as rogue nations seek to build nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, terrorist groups plan deadly attacks, and international criminal organization construct global crime networks, America will still need to define and protect essential secrets and severely punish those who compromise secret materials. A more focused classification system would allow for a stronger but limited protective system based on clear statutory guidelines.

As we protect legitimate secrets, however, we must remember that a culture of secrecy hampers our overall interests far more than a more open system. Only by building a narrow classification system that defines a limited field of materials for classification can we begin to discuss official secrecy in the

context of our overriding national interest in a more open, transparent, and popularly interactive government. The U.S. government must shed all but the most critical secrecy components of its postwar architecture and institutional culture if its foreign policy institutions are to maintain their relevance in a networked world.

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