

DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION IN THE DYNAMICS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

THE DRAMATIC EVENTS IN UKRAINE, THE RECRUDESCENCE OF THE ARMED CONFRONTATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND UNFORTUNATELY THESE ARE ONLY FEW EXAMPLES, ARE BRINGING INTO ACTUALITY CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ'S ARGUMENT THAT „THE WAR IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS, WITH THE PURPOSE OF ANNIHILATE THE OPPONENT BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MORALLY”.

THAT IS WHY IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT WE ASSIST TO AN INCREASE OF THE MESSAGES COMING FROM THE POLITICIANS, FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, NGO'S, ACADEMIC AND MILITARY ENVIRONMENT CLAIMING THE RETURN TO THE DIPLOMATIC DIALOGUE, TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, AS THE ONLY ADEQUATE TOOL FOR MEDIATION OF DISPUTES AND FOR AVOIDING THE OPENING OF FURTHER WAR'S OUTBREAK. ALSO, WE CAN TRANSLATE THIS INTO A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR RELAUNCHING THE ANALYSIS ON THE LEGITIMACY AND THE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN FOR IMPROVING DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION AS A SPECIFIC FORM OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS - THE COMMUNICATION BEING AS IT WAS NOTED WITH SO PROVIDED JUSTIFICATION A DEFINING AND SPECIFIC PROCESS OF OUR TIME. CONSEQUENTLY WE CAN REPLY TO THE ARGUMENT SUSTAINED BY CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ WITH J.BURTON SAYING „COMMUNICATION AND NOT THE POWER, STRUCTURES THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD”.

OUR APPROACH HAS AS MAIN OBJECTIVE DEFINING THE SCOPE AND THE CONTENT OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION. STARTING FROM HERE, WE ARE ALSO PROPOSING A TYPE OF CLASSIFICATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION LEVELS AND ITS TYPOLOGIES.

AS A POSSIBLE STAGE CONCLUSION FOR THE PROJECT THAT WE INTEND TO PRESENT IN THIS PRESTIGIOUS PUBLICATION, WE CAN SAY THAT, HAVING IN MIND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ROMANIAN DIPLOMACY IN A SERIES OF CONSTRUCTIVE DEMARCHES AIMED TO CONFIRM AND CONSOLIDATE ROMANIA'S IDENTITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND WORLD WIDE AS WELL, AN APPLIED DISCUSSION ON THE SPECIFIC AND THE OPTIMIZATION PATH OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION IT IS NOT ONLY NECESSARY, BUT ALSO PERFECTLY POSSIBLE. THAT IT IS WHY WE ARE HOPING THAT THIS ARTICLE IT WILL BE READ ALSO AS AN INVITATION TO DIALOGUE, TO A CONFRONTATION OF ASSUMPTIONS AND ARGUMENTS.

KEYWORDS: *DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UKRAINE, NATO, EUROPEAN UNION, DIPLOMACY.*

The great number, scope, complexity and especially the worsening of political, economic and military problems facing the world in the early 21st century is bringing in the

public spotlight the need to increase the role of diplomatic contacts and negotiations with a view to reaching a peaceful and amiable resolution of these sources of tension, to reconciling existing conflicts and, if possible, to preventing new hotbeds of military conflict. In this context, diplomatic communication, together with all the associated norms, strategies and specific procedures, is undergoing a thorough process of theoretical re-mapping and pragmatic reengineering, applied to all its undertakings. In that respect, the evolution of today’s society, first and foremost the major effects of globalization have had a decisive and beneficial contribution to the series of actions that fall within the category of so-called “diplomatic communication.”

This far-reaching process of reshaping and reassessing traditional forms of diplomatic relations based on systematic contacts and the flow of communication is found in various new forms and approaches in Romanians diplomacy as well (which is only natural, considering that Romania fully observes the rule of law and enjoys equal rights and obligations as a NATO and EU Member State). Therefore it is only just that the diplomatic and academic communities in our country should take a deep interest in these issues of growing importance. Drawing on this starting point, I would like to introduce in the attention of the readership of this prestigious publication a series of aspects that in themselves should serve as starting point for forthcoming discussions.

Given the diversity of the theoretical perspectives, but also of the pragmatic definition of such theme, my approach will focus on several key aspects, which is why my attempted analysis will refer to two main arguments: the specific nature of diplomatic communication, namely the scope and content of the concept as such, respectively the levels and the main types of the international communication.

The first points of my approach would normally include other topics as well, such as diplomatic language (and here I would suggest a brief outlook on diplomatic vocabulary), in order to reach a more detailed examination of international negotiations, which I see as “the key test of the diplomatic communication.” I will dwell on these topics on another occasion in the hopefully near future.

The concept of “diplomatic communication”

Specialty literature makes reference to a plethora of definitions for the concept of “communication in diplomatic activity” (which is also referred to as diplomatic communication or international communication), but it is my opinion that one of the most evocative and intriguing of them is the term coined by Mathias Albert, Oliver Kessler and Stephen Steller. By concluding that “today communication is an integrating and probably integrated element worldwide,” the three claim that “it is shocking to see that the well-known concept of communication designates blank spaces in some of the most recent theories of international relations.”[1]

Far from being a bitter paradox, this observation can arguably be interpreted as a catalysing and motivating message to which we should respond with theoretical dimension demarches with a certain pragmatic purpose. In that respect I believe it is worth mentioning that Romanian literature in this field has also featured a series of original, accurate and relevant approaches, of which I would refer here to the definition given to the concept of international communication by Constantin Hlihor and Elena Hlihor: “The process whereby conventional and unconventional government players, representatives of political, economic, financial or cultural organizations and institutions or members of the public sphere and media share information of mutual interest, exchange information about

their pursued interests and behaviours in various context, in order to maintain balance, stability, peace and cooperation in all fields, but also in order to uphold a certain projected image among the international public opinion.”

This definition intends to account for a series of factors having a direct or indirect impact on the phenomenon and process of communication in the field of diplomacy, so as having either positive or negative influence on the intents and purposes pursued herein. I have first referred to the premise that the global context is a dual phenomenon, which means that is an environment shaped and reshaped by means of language and discourse by its own players. Seen as such, J. Burton’s argument is perfectly sound: “Is communication, and not the power, that structures the contemporary world.”

Another decisive factor in the new paradigm of communicational flow in the diplomatic sphere is the process of globalization, which in turn has determined an increase in the interdependence of states, organizations, regional or global entities. Accordingly, diplomatic communication faces three major situations upon which it needs to adjust to current realities. The first such situation is that modern communication technologies have allowed states, governments and other institutions to give up their traditional technologies and communication channels. In turn, the new communication technologies have prompted the emergence of a large array of professions, which are well integrated in the system of the institutions, including diplomatic ones. At this information dates we should also add another poignant phenomenon at international level and in the sphere of human activities, namely the World Wide Web.

Worth mentioning however is that all these transformations, although deep and meaningful, have not brought any major changes to the classic communication paradigm, so that the following elements are still operational: the transmitter, the receiver, the information per se, the communication channel and the process of sending the information from the transmitter to the receiver. An important aspect at this time is that considering the flows of globalized information, we cannot speak of a unique or monolithic character of the communication process. The observation is all the more valid when we talk about diplomatic types of communication.

In this particular case the main actor is the state, be it a regional or international entity. This entity can have its own, individual interests, it’s predominant or less desirable partners with whom it engages in dialogue and communication. As regards the list of existing communication standards and procedures currently recommended by the EU, these do not require their unconditional implementation.

Consequently, in the case of diplomatic communication, national customs and procedures that transmitter see as most efficient in their relationships with the receivers such as national, regional or international factors or the public opinion will prevail.

Levels of international communication

A defining aspect that must be taken under advisement when examining international communication is linked to the levels of this specific category of communication. Here is a brief description:

1) International communication referring to exchanges of information between the population of two countries, and its scope includes all information in the field of culture and civilization values.

2) Communication between two states or governments or between the state and the public opinion of another country. In this case, the main players are diplomatic offices and

media channels, which convey the messages through which states express their foreign policy objectives, and therefore plan on promoting and upholding their interests. These communicative flows are aimed at raising the awareness of governments, diplomatic institutions but as well of the public opinion regarding these interests. If the stated objective cannot be achieved, all communicative undertakings will focus on reaching a neutrality or non-combat attitude on behalf of the receiver of the messages.

3) Communication by way of classic or modern communication channels. In this particular case, the transmitter addresses a virtually unlimited number of receivers. Elements contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the transmitter are the following: national interest (of the transmitter and receiver), the media culture and editorial policy of the communication channel.

At the level of entities receiving the message there is also a series of elements determining the reception and interpretation/decoding of the messages. In that respect it is worth mentioning the differences operated by Constantin Hlihor and Elena Hlihor between the following:

1) Dominant encoding/decoding of the message, by means of which the transmitter and receiver agree on the meaning and significance of certain topics of international interest, on the assessment and solutions provided, as well as on the suggestions made.

2) Negotiated encoding/decoding, by means of which the transmitter and the receiver agree upon and accept only certain parts of the message and dismiss others.

3) Positive encoding/decoding, by means of which the receiver rules out most of the assessments, evaluations and solutions provided by the transmitter.

Types of communication at international level

Based on the aforementioned hypothesis and classifications, I believe we can continue our analysis with a more detailed discussion of the types of communication at international level, and above all diplomatic communication.

Therefore there is a series of certain patterns that we can use to make the following distinctions:

1) Official/unofficial or formal/informal communication, depending on the communication channel used by the transmitter.

2) Communication between governments, ministries or public diplomacy, depending on the players taking part in the communication process.

3) Verbal/non-verbal, written or symbolic communication, depending on the language or code systems used to convey the message.

Far from being simple distinctions of formal nature or strictly theoretical classifications or useful definition of terms, such classifications are necessary first and foremost in order to ensure the optimal coherence and desired purpose of the messages used by diplomatic entities to achieve their objectives and define their status. When we refer strictly to the specific problems of diplomatic communication, Voltaire's dictum remains fully valid: "Gentlemen If you wish to converse with me, define your terms!"

A topical issue and an open discussion

A potential preliminary conclusion of the approach outlined above is that, under the circumstances where Romanian diplomacy is currently involved in multiple constructive undertakings, each of them aimed at confirming at consolidating Romania's

identity at European and international level, an applied discussion about the specific problems facing diplomatic communication is not only compulsory, but also most beneficial. Moreover if we are starting our discussion from the premises that within any realistic and constructive approach the diplomatic communication can not be foreseen nor applied but as an exchange of information and messages between players belonging to different categories (conventional – states and unconventional – multinational or cross-border entities) that interact in the sphere of political, military, economic, financial, cultural or humanitarian relations through which they establish their rules of procedures, contact criteria and procedures of negotiating matters of mutual interest.

Therefore I would like these observations to serve as a possible premise for a more thorough-going discussion on the current status of diplomatic communication, and primarily about what the scientific and academic sectors can offer to decision-makers involved in the diplomatic dialogue of a modern, dynamic and responsible Romania with European and global actors, in a complex world facing various challenges.

REFERENCES

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