Lecture Transcript: Ambassador Bolewski-Oxford Speaking Notes

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Ambassador Wilfried Bolewski
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Ambassador Wilfried Bolewski, who teaches the Diplomacy and International Law classes at AGS was invited by Oxford University to give a Public Lecture on "Diplomacy and Crises: A practitioner's insight and outlook" in the Global Governance and Diplomacy Public Speaker Series on February 9, 2015. "I am looking forward to this academic venue to explore new perspectives for the role of Diplomacy as facilitator for Global Governance," says Professor Bolewski.

The Global Governance and Diplomacy Public Speaker Series at Oxford University "brings reputable diplomatic practitioners and academic scholars for a two-hour conversation with students and fellows of the MSc in Global Governance and Diplomacy. It is designed to allow students and fellows to interact with experienced professionals and to discuss new perspectives on current diplomatic events and global governance challenges" (Oxford University website).

"Diplomacy and Crises: A Practitioner's Insight and Outlook"
Global Governance & Diplomacy Public Speaker Series, University of Oxford, February 9, 2015

Quotable Speaking Notes

Quote: A well-known medieval prayer: "Give me the courage to change the things that should (and can) be changed, the patience to tolerate the things that cannot (now) be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two."

*This could also serve as "Leitmotiv" for any fore*ign *policy maker.*

In this lecture, I would like to open the black box of foreign policy decision making and share with you a few structural and personal insights into today's diplomatic policy-making in crises at the highest level: speaking frankly under the protection of the Chatham House Rules, but without breaking the rules of secrecy, loyalty or confidentiality expected from a former civil servant. Practitioner's contribution to the recent debate opened by Professor Bjola in the academic Forum: Diplomatic Challenges in a Crisis, published in the Hague Journal of Diplomacy

I.   Need for diplomatic decision-making in conflict resolution
The practice of Global International Relations is due for a thrust of innovation as old recipes no longer meet the demands of a multipolar or Multiplex world. In the new global context of complex diversity and interconnectedness, positive Foreign Policy Making is in need of orientation knowledge through new analytical thinking. Albert Einstein already taught us, 'You cannot solve problems with the same mindset that created them.' As participants in Foreign Policy Making in Government, International Organizations or in the corporate and civil society sectors (Corporate Diplomacy), we all need guiding principles for a sustainable management of differences in International Relations. The aim is to adapt

policies to changing realities, not the reverse. This would mean attempting to adapt changing realities to existing policies.

This Lecture will introduce you to the practice of in-depth analysis of root causes of discontent and conflict, separating incidental disruptions from fundamental movements and expectations, addressing underlying issues. Practical solutions for generally acceptable problem-solving must make use of the tools of Diplomacy including political psychology (i.e. the "human factor") as well as the understanding of and engagement with "the other" to accommodate the diversity of many national interests and values with those of the International Community.

II.   Ethics in rule-based diplomacy

- We are experiencing an Ethical turn in International Relations for the justification of policy options and their consequences. This reflects the public concern for relevance to all participants in contemporary international politics

- Ethical assumptions are embodied in International Law: UN Charter, VCDR, pacta sunt servanda, human rights and International Customary Law in general.

- Ethically appropriate conduct not as an option *("rational choice"?)* but as an expected precondition within a specific set of international social practices

- Elements of the primacy of ethics: reciprocal recognition, reputation as a continuous member of International Community, ethical appropriateness (*not only: ethic of personal conviction)* as discursive argument s(through the logic of arguing)

- *Ethic of personal conviction* (including emotional beliefs and perceptions) versus ethic of responsibility for public expectations (dichotomy): need for harmonization

- Ethical conscientiousness as a permanent feature and shared public expectation of the international setting (logic of appropriateness (= desirability, feasibility and public expectancy) leading to solidarity

- Need for ethical competence and skills to harmonize competing values and interests.

- Summarizing ethical context of principled foreign policy: juxtaposition between ethics and (enlightened self-) interests or search for an integral whole? National interests and community interests (see VII)

- Best practical guidance: Strategic moral diplomacy (Lynn Boyd-Judson): min 7 to 7:40

   4 steps:
   1) A variety of conflicting moral claims can be reasonably justified by different ethical norms (= context, societal or personality driven)
   2) An adversary (the other) is likely to hold a *moral justification* to his strategic decision-making (requires regard / empathy / understanding for other's moral, cognitive perspective): Empathy: cognitive, Sympathy: affective

3) Prescription: acknowledge the other's moral universe (and grievances) within strategic parameters in order to reach strategic goals

4) Effectively grant the other a space from which he can speak to the International Community

Reasons for Strategic Moral Diplomacy: Alterity Diplomacy (not as an academic fashion, but a pragmatic approach) min 8:45 to 9:00:

1) public expectation for sustainable justice

2) self-interest and ethical concerns (including the other) are not mutually exclusive = enlightened self-interest (includes always – at best – moral justification and consideration (to be persuasively communicated for widest general acceptance)

3) Need for moral reasoning: acknowledging the adversary's (other's) moral claim and legitimate position can serve as a viable, legitimate diplomatic alternative to exclusive diplomacy ("national interest"), harmonization, not priority

4) This supposes a "mental revolution"

Role of power:
- According to French philosopher Blaise Pascal:"Power rules the world, not opinion, but it is opinion that exploits power". I would add: "Ideas drive history".
- Present and future challenges cannot be met by missiles, nuclear weapons and not even armies. Military might alone has proven impotent
- A new perspective and different tools are needed to deal with "Global Commons" (Global Goods and Bads).
- Relative power nowadays (= influence) is rooted in the capacity to impact on International Relations by opening options others also profit from
- Proactive diplomacy needed for eliminating and solving threats via coalitions, global development, public diplomacy, economic integration, technological innovations
- Diplomats as managers of peace and security: using civilizing methods of diplomacy for conflict management
- Diplomats as better managers of conflicts than international lawyers who are always a step or two behind due to their occupational hazard of perusing precedents instead of spinning future scenarios (backward looking instead of forward planning)
- Need for coordinated synergy of crisis diplomacy: defence – development – diplomacy (3 D)

III.   Essential elements of diplomacy

1) Operative functions and procedures (communication, negotiation: arguing(= ideals) / bargaining (=resources), representation)

2) Principles: consensus (= absence of any objection expressed, binding for all participants), compromise, coexistence, mutual dependence and benefit, reciprocal restraint, solidarity complementing reciprocity, moving from estrangement / separateness to cooperation via Diplomacy

3) Diplomacy and decision making in crisis situations: institutional, procedural and psychological factors:

- Role of leadership as underrated factor in Foreign Policy analysis (human agency and perception) and general acceptance by domestic and international public opinion
- Personality component of leadership: interrelation between personality, its self-perception and the environment /the other
- Recognize dissonance between self-image, perceptions by others and mediated representation of oneself
- Decision making procedures concerned with perceptions of peoples, events and processes: Groupthink (group consensus, personal acceptance by the group, sanctity of the inner circle)
- Face-to-face diplomacy ("going into a huddle": personal chemistry)
- Behavioral psychology of foreign policy decision making: Conservative risk-aversion for *possible gains*, propensity to take risks only *to avoid losses*: cautious leaders are more concerned to avoid immediate losses (to uphold status quo) than to make future gains (Prospect Theory feeding into behavioral politics)
- "Gains" / "losses" = a matter of framing and perception
- Foreign policy decisions principally and pragmatically determined by bureaucratic infighting and the influence of fractional interests (including their emotional beliefs and perceptions), rather than by *"rational considerations"* (used rather as ex-post-justification) of the "public interest" or the adoption of pre-established governmental / leader's *"grand strategies", "dogmas", "doctrines"* (reserved for journalists and historians)
- Need for complexity reduction and harmonization of opposing values/needs/expectations/options and their consequences

IV. Crisis as normality: think the unthinkable

1) My Definition of crisis (natural or man-made):"Unpredictable, disruptive event / incident with considerable global impact for which traditional routine procedures have no adequate / appropriate response" Vital Crisis: a) threat to basic values, b) finite time for response, c) high probability of violent escalation

2) In order to capture the new reality and its incipient elements of change: a) openness of mindset b) analysis of singularity, individuality and uniqueness of event in its diversity (Not: precedents, models, grand strategies)

3) Result: (former) rule / status quo becomes the exception, exception becomes the rule: awareness of living in a continuous crisis climate, acceptance of change as the only constant in International Relations (reversal of mindset = state of perpetual crisis)

4) In the real world of International Relations, there are more "Black Swans" (wild-card discontinuities) than White ones , and, due to their interconnectivity they are proliferating at a faster rate.

5) Political decision-making in times of increased uncertainties (of consequences) needs risk-competences of actors / leadership on the basis of ethical values and principles

6) Real-time diplomacy: instantaneity of reaction even against the pressure of the public, dilemma: Missed opportunities lead to failed responsibility

7) For societal change to take root it needs a change in the way man comes to see things = new perspectives (see Albert Einstein: you cannot solve a problem with the same mindset which created it): embrace change, rather than deny its reality (see Kasparov article on Modernity)

8) Change of perception in society frequently occurs on the occasion of a collective shock event driven by new media: shock as turning point (seminal moment)

9) Crisis provides not only a danger to status quo, but it should also been seen as an opportunity for change. Structural reforms or policy changes often need a crisis to proceed.

V. Analysis of root causes

- The first requirement for thinking outside the box (of traditions) in order to capture the new reality and the elements of change is: In-depth analysis of root causes: separating incidental disruptions from fundamental movements and expectations, addressing underlying issues

- The (self-) proclaimed front-issues and symptoms (foreground factors) should be clearly separated from the underlying real issues (background causes): social, economic, ethnic, cultural, identity, religious, political

- Causal analysis of collective needs and fears as central concept in international crisis management: conflict as an intersocietal and interactive process driven by collective needs/fears and the root causes of the specific problems leading to crisis and conflict

- The unfulfilled interests, fears, needs and expectations of all parties concerned and the International Community should be exposed and taken into consideration.

- Importance of social-psychological dimensions of international conflict (beyond the traditional power-play)

- Salience of identity conflicts: perceived threat of self and sense of insecurity demand wider social recognition and effective participation

- Identity conflicts: search for recognition, acceptance and reputation, towards a new identity

- Ethnicity and religion: very often not a root cause of conflict, rather social grievances and subjective perception of marginalization

- Importance of positive inducements and inclusive engagement in shaping outcomes (versus: _negative, punitive sanction_s: _against equality, leading to singularization, exclusion and humiliation_

- Logic of positive inducements: catalytic carrots for policy change

- Practical options for problem-solving should be elaborated with their consequences, and risks accommodating the diversity of domestic interests with those of the International System: harmonizing the need for change with that for continuity.

- Conflict resolution demands openness to change via reversal of conflict dynamics towards mutual responsiveness, reassurance and reciprocity

- Result: Transformative change of political equilibrium into a new status quo accepted by all concerned

VI. Role of political psychology

A. Human factor over *variables / linear models / mathematical/arithmetic case studies or logarithms / algorithms for problem-solving*

- Impact of political psychology: a) situational analysis (diversity) vs. precedents, b) psychological specificities of actors, c) emotional logic / practice of emotions vs. *rationality / rational logic (fallacy of "ideal rational decision-maker")*

B. Fundamental decision dilemmas:

1) <u>Objective</u> cognitive limitations and shortcuts (uncertainties and changing operational environment)

2) <u>Subjective</u> behavioral biases: decision makers own view, values, history, psychology, understandings are the <u>starting point and prism of info perception</u>, processing and decision-making (*but not: operational code / pattern of predictable behavior*). This is the practical answer to the academic question: what shapes political behavior more? Situations or psychological makeup

3) Time pressure leads to stress (=excess of demands over capacities): a) impaired attention and perception, b) increased cognitive rigidity (over-simplification), c) narrowed perspective, d) shifting the burden to opponent (inaction rather than action)

4) Multitude of simultaneous demands (Obama's National Security Strategy: "balanced", in reality: cannot be balanced nor prioritized)

5) Crisis of trust (credibility and resolve) – relational as well as institutional (the most precious element in IR): the presence of distrust and uncertainty opens widow of opportunity for creative academia (ex. Regular informal meetings of Merkel with academics)

C. Different decision structures and processes
- Small-group dynamics (inner circle, no: advocatus diaboli)

- Leadership (policy, substance and optics): crisis reveals the real human character of leadership

D. 3 Examples of the foreign policy practice of psychological guidance to sense tendencies, moods, instabilities for effective governance (gaining time for flexibility to pro-act):

- PM Cameron installed "Behavioral Insight Team (2010): so called "Nudge-Unit" (2008 book by Chicago economist Richard Thaler and Harvard lawyer Cass Sunstein)

- Danish Government "Mind Lab"

- Merkel has been recruiting 3 political psychologists

VII.   National versus community interests: From sovereignty to international solidarity
-   Foreign Policy making involves accommodation of diversity of national interests with those of International Community = key to sustainable problem-solving

-   Globalization creates a new perspective and mindset among policy-makers: national interests vs. common responsibility

-   Dichotomy between national interests of states (public interest) and common responsibility of International Community: from national sovereignty to international solidarity (coexistence, coordination, cooperation, solidarity)

-   Purposes: Building on a convergence of interests to create a community of interests

-   Communitarianism (common values, goods, risks) in need for common problem-solving/solutions providing global legitimacy (for example: climate change, famine, migration, civil war, economic crisis, terrorism)

-   Nascent sense among policy makers of collective moral responsibility (new ethos**)** for common concerns in International Community: continual reconciliation between rights and interests of states (raison d'état) and those of the International Community (raison de système**)**

-   Paradigm shift of sovereignty from territoriality (and "domaine réservé") to functionality in the International Public Sector

-   Common value order consists of such constitutional principles such as peace, respect for human rights, self-determination of peoples, rule through law

-   International Organizations are more than reflections of narrow national interests, but become future flag-bearers and efficient instruments of <u>communitarian concerns</u> and expanded expectations of the Global Public Square (via increased autonomy from member states, professionalism of its staff and dialogue with civil society)

-   Solidarity: from moral duty to an emerging constitutional principle of International Law (disaster und humanitarian law, international trade law) enshrined in UN Charter (for peace and security)

-   Aim: Global Governance as <u>burden-sharing</u> of common but differentiated responsibilities and <u>leadership-sharing</u> with new agenda-setting actors

VIII. Mediatization of Diplomacy: Role of media in the Global Public Square

- Nexus between international crisis and diplomacy: the influence of the Public Square

- In lack of access <u>to</u> and direct knowledge <u>of</u> the decision-making processes, Foreign Policy is perceived by the general public through the mirror of the global media

- Elements of the media / foreign policy nexus / interdependence: a) foreign policy actors try to feed the media with its narratives, messages and justification for public support and b) media (as instrument, mediator of reality and actor) is shaping public (and policy-makers) perceptions and tries to exert influence on foreign policy processes and outcomes (participatory governance)

- Competitive interaction in framing issues and agenda setting by expressing problems, expectation and solutions

- Perpetual quest for face and voice in dramatic context (including the pursuit of human interest)

- Trilateral relationship between: policy makers / government, media and general public

- Temporal sequence of influence in disruptive events: a) media provides (first) info, b) government feeds assessment / narrative / policy and justification, c) media: reactions of public / experts, discourse, critique or legitimacy (general acceptance)

- Competing, intermingling processes / narratives vying for attention, interpretation and credibility are difficult to control in real-time (communication – diplomacy nexus)

- Communicative discourse and diplomatic persuasion co-dependent on reality (= words / deeds)

- Mediated political personalization provides "legitimacy" (lighthouse metaphor): "optics" of leadership

- Societal responsibility of the media: a) role of watchdog (for public values and acceptable behavior), b) gatekeeper of policy-makers' commitments (including scrutinizing government claims, c) educator: informing and empowering the individuals

- Prerequisites / ethical rules for responsible peace journalism:
  1) Making conflicts transparent (unveiling causal chains)
  2) Giving voice to all parties (mutual empathy – not: sympathy - , understanding via nuanced reporting, not in black and white
  3) Truth-orientated reporting (expose untruths / cover-ups on all sides): not just "telling a good story"
  4) Giving voice to the voiceless (people-orientated)
  5) Focus on conflict-solution creativity (not: victory-oriented)
  6) Highlight peace initiatives

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IX. **Practical, actionable solutions via engagement/inclusion: moving from confrontation to dialogue**
- New approaches:

- A) NGO impact on international conferences (Ex. ICC, Landmine Treaty, Climate Conferences)

- B) Minilateralism (the magic number for problem solving (flexibility, inclusiveness, effectiveness, leadership): Ex. Copenhagen Climate Conference, 2009, see also Lagarde article

- C) Ad hoc diplomacy (issue-related coalitions of the willing vs. historic alliances (Ex. Contact Group for Ukraine)

- D) Diplomatic reversal of military crisis dynamics in Ukraine, Merkel, Davos Economic Forum: EU cooperation with Eurosian Union (Vladivostok to Lisbon)

- E) Diplomatic freezing (Ex. China-Japan, Aleppo-Syria): recognition that different (territorial) positions exist, to engage in cooperation on other issues

- F) Self-regulating use of UN-SC veto in case of mass atrocities (French/Mexican proposal, supported by Elders and 60 states): reform not through geopolitical membership extension, but: issue-related transformation / adaptation according to global expectations (voluntary common restraint by veto powers)

X. **Outlook: Civilizing virtues of Diplomacy**
- Values of diplomacy as a humanist legacy: recognition of differences, concern for alterity, management of friction, mediation of estrangement while retaining separateness, communicative discourse, combination of <u>principles</u>/values (ethics, reciprocity, restraint, prudence, good will, compromise, concessions), reconciliation/harmonization/convergence of <u>interests</u> in response to mutually defined threats/crises/challenges

- Diplomacy as a process of communication and representation that facilitates social interaction between all human beings who have differences

- Diplomacy as an instrument of social steering

- Civilizing virtues of diplomatic culture (mindset): Ethic of Diplomacy as a mode of living together in difference = homo diplomaticus
    - aa) From diplomacy's statist tradition/institution to diplomacy as a behavioural skill set
    - bb) Functional shift in agency/authority/legitimacy from state practice to a space shared by states and non-state actors: Global Public Square as a network model of transnational governance

cc) From diplomacy of sovereignty/territory to diplomacy of solidarity (issue/value-related and relational)

dd) From statecraft to society-craft / management tools (representation to one another of separate collective identities, aiming at actionable problem-solving)

ee) From management of order to management of peaceful change

ff) From mere policy instrument to transnational process of inter/social relations: civilizing virtues of diplomacy as a system for intersocial relations: from international to domestic level and back (full circle)

- Extended epistemic community: thinking and acting diplomatically (global mindset)

- Procedural and substantive functions of Diplomacy as Global Governance rules (coordination of individual with general interests)

- Communicative discourse and the universal principles of diplomacy as justification (providing legitimacy)

- Global Governance through "*ethically principled pragmatism and engagement*" (to address fear, want, and unmet needs): Diplomats as facilitators of Global Governance

- But: also counter-movement: Transformation and fragmentation of diplomatic culture through domestic practices (non-state actors, paradiplomacy, BRICs)

- The aims of the governance of *diversity in universality* should be: to uphold basic global norms and rules, address the root causes of conflict and to seek achievable and sustainable diplomatic outcomes in order to shape disruptive uncertainty into opportunities.

XI. Conclusions

- As I have shown, positive Foreign Policy making should be made with an innovative, creative mind-set that is capable to think and argue outside the box of the *traditional way of theoretically analyzing, evaluating and dealing with past events and tendencies* in International Relations which has left so many present and future problems *without solution and hope*.

- The elements to be used for such a new constructive win-win approach can all be found in the functional procedures/tasks of Diplomacy (understanding the other, arguing ideals and bargaining resources, representation of all parties and interests concerned) as in its structural/psychological processes and principles/aims (compromise, consensus, mutual benefit, reciprocal restraint, inclusiveness, symbolism) moving from estrangement/separateness to cooperation and solidarity.

- The potential of imaginative Diplomacy is far from being exhausted. You will be the Masters of it.

Ambassador Wilfried Bolewski was Chief of Protocol to Chancellors Merkel and Schröder (2003 – 2006). Preparing and accompanying their official foreign visits he closely observed the face-to-face diplomacy and foreign policy decision-making at the highest level.

Subsequently, as German Foreign Ministry Special Representative for Universities and Foundations at the Foreign Service Academy in Berlin (2006 – 2008), Ambassador Bolewski addressed the gap between the academic and policy worlds and initiated projects transforming academic orientation knowledge into practical guidance for foreign policy problem-solving.

Ambassador Bolewski acquired diplomatic experience in international crisis management at the NATO desk (Nuclear Planning Group) of the German Foreign Ministry, the UN Conference on Disarmament and the NATO Defence College in Rome. As a career diplomat he served at several bilateral and multilateral missions on all continents and was Germany's Ambassador to Jamaica (1993 – 1997).

In 2008, Ambassador Bolewski became Professor of International Law and Diplomacy at the Free University, Berlin. He has since been teaching at Sciences Po, Paris (2008 – 2013), and the American University of Paris (2011 – 2ß012). In 2014, he initiated a professional "Foreign Policy Track" for International Relations and Diplomacy MA students at the American Graduate School in Paris. Professor Bolewski provides also diplomatic comments for the BBC and France 24.

Dr. Bolewski received a Doctor of Law degree from the Marburg University, Germany, with a thesis on International Law. He is the author of the book "Diplomacy and International Law in Globalized Relations" (Springer 2007). His special fields of expertise are: Political psychology in foreign policy and conflict analysis, Public International Law in the diplomatic decision-making process and Corporate Diplomacy.