

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY:

AI in Politics.

A blessing or a curse?

Now or later?

Most people think that AI is coming down the track at high speed and it will arrive in the near future. They are wrong! AI is here, now, and unless we make some rules pretty soon we will lose the game.

Of course it depends what game is being played and whose side you are on!

To demonstrate the argument for doing something now, let me introduce you to **Alisa**, a digital Russian woman who ran for president in 2018, after announcing her robotic candidacy in 2017. Putin, surprisingly, went on to win, yet he also went on to comment that “AI is not only the future of Russia but the future of all humanity.”

To reinforce the message, I’d also like to mention another woman, **Sam**, she is from New Zealand and was the first virtual politician in the world. Currently, Sam is reaching out to voters through social media and is sharing her thoughts on climate change, healthcare, and education, among other topics.

If we are going in this direction we need to know how Alisa, Sam, or any other bunch of algorithms would govern? It’s interesting to wonder why their creators and designers decided to present AI beings as female. Probably, because we, in our simple minds, think that females are less threatening, more kind, less aggressive and, of course, would never go to war! Maybe they haven’t heard of Katherine de Medici, Katherine the Great and

many others like her who, shall we say, were not exactly shrinking violets when it came to demonstrating power.

This is one of the things I'm here to talk about alongside the other question in everyone's mind - including mine: "Why would I vote for a machine, a non-person, a bunch of algorithms?"

Well, it could be that I am fed up with the permanently messy state that democracies almost always seem to be in and, consequently, wish for an honest and straightforward intelligent leader who judges things as they are and works out the best way forward - the Utopian idea.

After all a robot relies solely on logic and facts - in our minds at least.

A robot is honest and precise - not sinister or looking for personal gain.

A robot can process data many times faster than any human brain.

A robot functions 24/7, not in need of sleep, food or, to put it bluntly, sex with a foreign spy - so, no more James Bond or, more current, a certain Western President.

A robot can take into account the opinion of each and every one out there, properly and fairly representing minorities as well as the large populations of countries such as China, India, Russia and the US.

A robot does not get old.

A robot does not get tired.

A robot does not forget.

This all sounds great! Doesn't it?? I'm not so sure. Would the creators of the robots be agenda free? Of course not, even if they

were entirely altruistic their own prejudices would almost certainly show themselves somewhere in the algorithmic maze being created. And all of that is before the robot starts to think for itself. I presume all of us are familiar with HAL from 2001 and, more recently, the fact that one of Microsoft's main AI experimental being (thing?) was shut down for being, at best, non PC and, at worst, malevolent.

The fact is that humans are not logical, nor do they think in a straight line - would a leader who did be accepted.

Actually, we Greeks are or at least were the world experts on this part of the subject. Presented with the perfect leader who was successful beyond belief, for his fellow citizens, not himself, they threw him out - his most famous creation is about a kilometer from here! Would the Greeks accept another Pericles for more than a year - I doubt it.

Would anybody else - I doubt that too!

Now, let's get to **Sweden**. 12 years ago, in 2007, Sweden became the first country to open an embassy in the virtual world of a game called "Second Life." It's an Internet-based and avatar-populated world run by Linden Lab, based in San Francisco. Among other things, the embassy included a room dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg, who helped save thousands of Jews in World War Two. It's a recreation of his office in Budapest, where he worked as a diplomat.

In an Internet-run world, **Finland** opted for a digital innovation by introducing a set of 49 culturally and emotionally charged emojis that express the country's unique Nordic customs and lifestyle.

Then, in this next picture, we see a member of the **European Parliament** using his phone and a selfie stick while in a voting session on February 2019 in Strasbourg.

On April 14, 2014, almost 300 girls were abducted from a government secondary school in Chibok, **Nigeria**, by the armed Islamist group Boko Haram. The then First Lady of the USA, **Michelle Obama**, took to Twitter to send the hash-tagged message “Bring Back Our Girls.” Soon, it was turned into an anti-drone campaign, directly objecting to children who had been killed by US drone strikes during Barack Obama’s presidency. That was one of the most publicized political Twitter disputes.

Now, let’s stay on **Twitter** but get back to the country we are. In **Greece**, the previous Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras has 530 thousand Twitter followers while the current PM is followed by 220 thousand people. On the slide, you can see who the most-followed politicians around the world are in 2019.

1. Barack Obama, United States, 106.7 million
2. Donald J. Trump, United States, 61.3 million
3. Narendra Modi, India, 48.2 million
4. Hillary Clinton, United States, 24.7 million
5. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey, 13.8 million
6. Sushma Swaraj, India, 12.9 million
7. Joko Widodo, Indonesia, 11.6 million
8. Queen Rania, Jordan, 10.4 million
9. Rahul Gandhi, India, 9.9 million
10. Imran Khan, Pakistan, 9.8 million

(Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Greece, 0.25 million,
Alexis Tsipras, Greece, 0.5 million)

And here, we see Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leader of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon in Qingdao, **China**, on June 10 of this year. [Xi has called on Chinese diplomats to ‘formulate principles and policies of China’s external work in a scientific way.’]

Moving on, in February of this year, at the **United Nations Security Council**, a Chinese researcher said human diplomats would have difficulty winning a strategic game against artificial intelligence.

Now, our global tour continues in **Shanghai** where Deayea, a technology company has developed brain-monitoring devices – you can see them in the pictures above. As you see, they look like normal, usual caps. Train drivers who work at the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed rail line might be wearing them regularly, but from the moment they put them on, they become so much more than regular drivers.

What all the above have in common is that AI already has an invasive presence in every part of our lives as well as nearly every professional sector. **AI is here now and will not be going anywhere.** But what exactly is it? To be very simple, Artificial Intelligence is intelligence exhibited by machine rather than a ‘natural being’. As a term, it is a moving target and acts as an umbrella term for machine learning, automated reasoning, computer vision, and natural language processing.

Future avenues of research will arise from new technologies including virtual reality as a tool for cultural diplomacy; drone use for consular aid; 3D printing for foreign aid projects (e.g., printing and building cheap homes for refugees) and cyber agreements regarding free movement of autonomous cars across borders.

Due to the advent of AI, diplomacy today is not limited to the inside of negotiation rooms. **Digital Diplomacy, previously known as e-diplomacy**, is taking up more and more space, with governments and diplomats flooding the social media, especially Twitter, but also Facebook and Instagram, as well as blogs to engage – and increase and diversify – their audience. [Other new diplomacy-related terms are: Net diplomacy, social media diplomacy, diplomacy 2.0 and cyber diplomacy, data diplomacy, modern diplomacy, science diplomacy, virtual diplomacy, public

diplomacy, networked diplomacy, domestic diplomacy, selfie diplomacy, real time diplomacy, “Twiplomacy,” celebrity diplomats.]

Arab Spring, terrorist groups' use of the internet to recruit youths to Jihadi movements Ambassadors now use messaging applications such as WhatsApp in order to influence UN deliberations as they take place. In addition, MFAs have launched virtual embassies in virtual worlds in order to brand their nation.

Historically, ambassadors, diplomats, and other kinds of representatives were in danger of being harmed or even killed. Thus, the also historical expression, “Don’t shoot the messenger!” Today, the Internet of Things allows us to save ambassadors’ lives thanks to the so-called “cyber embassies.” Negotiators can enter a room digitally (i.e., through holoportation or telepresence) rather than physically, which is a life-, money- and time-saver!

Instant translation is another maybe not life- but certainly money- and time-saver in the negotiation rooms. Diplomats can wear AI earbuds loaded with software that instantly translates multiple languages, which will help Intelligence Units save precious time and language-learning expenses.

So, when we talk about DD, we’re talking about an interesting combination of informing and networking. The adoption of DD has led to changes in how diplomats deal with information management, public diplomacy, strategy planning, and international negotiation, among other things.

Moreover, DD includes the full use of **Big Data**. With Big Data analyses, several crucial issues can be assessed with much accuracies, such as threats to embassies, disease outbreaks, where and when a surge of crime is likely to occur, even how possible it is for someone to have a child in the next six months based on their credit card transactions. That same tool can be used to define who should get a Visa, for example. The

administration of visas is currently still dependent on the subjective judgment of consular officers, while AI can minimize the cases of error by eliminating human error. That way, we can cut down on embassies' expenses, make countries safer, and boost tourism.

So, we can see clearly that AI is already here and is and will have an ever increasing effect on our day to day lives. If it were not an electronic system but a group of humans or perhaps a organization, the world would be clamouring for a set of rules by which this entity could be monitored if not controlled (eg; Facebook or Google)

This would be easy if there were a single target, but there isn't! There are thousands, possibly millions of AI enabled devices or services already working. It would be impractical to try and produce detailed rules for each and every one of these. Perhaps we should only concentrate on the really sensitive stuff, for example Digital Diplomacy and try to ensure that there are at least some rules before 'our' AI out-thinks us and starts talking to 'their' AI which is out-thinking them.

If we wait for that to happen we will be in very dangerous territory.

It may be that the simplest way to start this process is to require that when developing and applying AI certain basic and existing laws have to be applied and the created entity must adhere to, for example, **human rights legislation and this body of law must be an overriding principle of AI.**

Human rights must apply online as they do offline; they must apply in the digital society as they do in the real one. Then, we start to get to safety. If we develop DD (Digital Diplomacy) at the expense of **data security**, we're compromising democracy; thus, we've lost the game.

Now, combining those two, I'll say this: Just like each state separately, the EU too must strike the right balance between freedom and the protection, between the rights and the duties of individuals. As uncomfortable as this might make us feel, AI does have the propensity to harm, so the adequate protection of all data – big data, personal data, sensitive data – is of the essence.

In DD, this is even more important, not to say crucial!

Human rights should be the EU's main guideline when it comes to the application and utilization of DD around the world. The EU has already recognized the importance of DD in its legal documents to device its External Action Service. In the context of human rights, there is no doubt that the EU possesses an originative, leading-edge stance. And DD can contribute to further improve the EU's normative power in that context. With the use of DD, the EU can develop two-way interactive communication between diplomats and stakeholders.

At this point, the EU's main concern is the increasing mismatch that is opening up between the **EU and China**, particularly in the field of technology. Just as Europe becomes more restrictive Beijing seeks to lower barriers for hi-tech acquisitions.

China's stated ambition to become a world leader has significantly increased the burden and challenge to its diplomats. Several prototypes of a diplomatic system using artificial intelligence are under development in China. One early-stage machine, built by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is already being used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. China is implementing a social ranking system meant to monitor the behaviour of its population. The system assigns scores to the citizens (e.g. regarding their conduct) based on the data obtained through partnerships with the private sector – this is nothing less than the beginning of George Orwell's '1984'.

The spreading of AI across borders, and its 'dystopian' use by the Chinese government has challenged the promotion of Western values and interests through multilateral engagement, as well as the protection of human rights in the age of exponential technological development.

Looking to the future, one can easily tell that the environment for Chinese firms to acquire assets across Europe will become more restrictive, promising a bumpy road ahead for EU-China relations in the hi-tech sector. More than ever, the challenge for the EU and China will be to manage differences rather than deepening cooperation.

Next to last, I want to pose two deeply essential questions, concerning two more challenges:

Firstly, how can the European Union and all its associated institutions use AI to optimize their position of power on the global scene, particularly when it comes to international agreements of economic or sociopolitical nature? So, in the short-term, this question leads to the sister question: What will the forthcoming European Commission decide?

Secondly, going a little further into the future, I have to ask: Will we wholly obey to the instructions of algorithms? Or will we demand that humans make the final decisions always after taking into foremost account the honest, fair and accurate results of a robot? Simply put: Who will be governing whom?

If you want my two cents in this, the ultimate decision should be made by a human. And this should remain a fundamental principle.

As a closing thought, I'll ask: Could artificial intelligence provide the answer for Britain's exit from the EU? Could and should Brexit become BrexAlt? "Brexit has come too soon for artificial intelligence to play a key part in its eventual outcome."