QUICK DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE
CONCEPT & STORY: JOVAN KURBALIJA
SCRIPT WRITER: ARVIN KAMBERI
EDITOR: HANNAH SLAVIK
PROJECT COORDINATOR: MINA MUDRIĆ
DRAWING: VLADIMIR VELJAŠEVIĆ

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IN THE INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD, DIPLOMACY IS OUR ONLY ALTERNATIVE. WARS DO NOT PROVIDE SOLUTIONS FOR MODERN PROBLEMS, WHETHER THESE ARE REGIONAL CRISIS, ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE, OR THE RISK OF GLOBAL PANDEMICS. COMPROMISE AND CONSENSUS ARE NOT ONLY THE MORE ETHICAL APPROACH, BUT NECESSITY.

DIPLO COMIC BOOKS AIM TO EXPLAIN THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF DIPLOMACY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD. THE COMIC BOOKS ILLUSTRATE THE LINK BETWEEN EFFICIENT DIPLOMACY AND FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR THE URGENT PROBLEMS FACING MANKIND. THEY ALSO SHOW HOW DIPLOMACY CAN BE IMPROVED THROUGH THE USE OF MODERN TOOLS AND APPROACHES.
4.30, Monday morning, 30 kilometers from the border

I can't believe it, the pipeline is broken!

The oil is spilling in the river!!!
WHAT? AGAIN?

.... HUGE OIL SPILL ...

FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM - AND DON'T CALL ME AGAIN FOR THIS KIND OF THING!!!

YES, I'M AWARE, WE'RE MONITORING THE SITUATION FROM HERE. I WILL ALERT SOME OF MY BEST FORCES.

PLEASE CALL THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT IMMEDIATELY. WE NEED A QUICK RESPONSE!

IT'S NOT SUCH A GOOD MORNING, SIR... WE HAVE A SITUATION HERE... I HOPE YOU HAVE SOMEONE Awake AT YOUR MINISTRY?

6.20, MONDAY MORNING, AT THE FLAT OF ANA GABEL, ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMAT.
Diplomats are often called upon to deal with situations for which they cannot prepare in advance. Knowledge, information, and experience are becoming key factors in enabling the diplomat to act appropriately in unpredictable situations. Modern technology can free diplomats from their routine tasks, leaving them more energy and time to use their experience, creativity and intuition.

A few minutes later at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Here comes Ana. You two are good friends?

Yes, we've known each other since we were students. She was really good with computers - that's probably why she likes all my innovations.
Hi Ana, how are you? As we discussed, I installed the "Lessons Learned Database" on your computer. I also made some changes to your browser - I think you’ll love it!

Thanks Luke! Looking forward to using them.

Most of Ana’s friends from student days are now active in environmental matters as members of NGO and Civil Society groups. In those days, Ana realized that environmental diplomacy will be a proper blend of her profession (diplomacy) and her activist drive (the environment).
ANA, THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENT IN THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY. WE WILL NEED YOU TO FLY THERE RIGHT AWAY!

OF COURSE!

ANA NEEDS TO PREPARE: WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD SHE BRING? DOES SHE HAVE ALL THE INFO SHE WILL NEED? HOW CAN SHE CONSULT THE EXPERTS?

LET'S TRY LUKE'S INNOVATION.
...TO THE AIRPORT, PLEASE...

WROOOOOOM

SVUUUUUUHHH

WROOOOOOM

ARRIVALS

HI VIC, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!

HI ANA!

UNFORTUNATELY, IT TAKES A DISASTER FOR US TO MEET... AND BAD NEWS NEVER COMES ALONE... THE AMBASSADOR IS ON HOLIDAY, AND I'M THE ONLY DIPLOMAT AT THE EMBASSY.
THE USE OF INTERNET IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RAISES MANY ISSUES FOR MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HOW TO ADAPT TO THE INFORMALITY OF THE INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS? HOW TO PREPARE A MESSAGE THAT CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE INTERNET? MINISTRIES GUIDELINES ON COMMUNICATION NEED ADJUSTMENT TO EXPLOIT COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES COMING FROM NEW MEDIA.
THIS MORNING, ONLY 30KM FROM OUR BORDER, A SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENT OCCURRED. THIS WILL POSE A MAJOR RISK TO THE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS, AGRICULTURE, AND THE WHOLE ECOSYSTEM...

I HOPE THAT VICTOR WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE THIS...

DARLING, WE HAVE TO GET BACK REALLY SOON...

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS > SEARCH > ENTER
"ANA AND VICTOR ARRIVE AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY MEETING"

TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF ONLINE MEETINGS, WHICH CAN REPLACE CERTAIN EXPERT AND TECHNICAL MEETINGS CONDUCTED IN DIPLOMATIC CENTERS WORLDWIDE. ONLINE MEETINGS ARE PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN THE PREPARATION FOR FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS. A BALANCED INTERPLAY BETWEEN ONLINE AND TRADITIONAL MEETINGS WILL MOST LIKELY DEVELOP IN THE FIELD OF MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY.
OUR COUNTRY WISHES TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING EFFORTS AS WELL AS IN THE "AD HOC ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE" WHICH SHOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH....

SOME COUNTRIES WISH TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE. GIVEN THE EFFECTS OF THE OIL SPILL, ANA'S COUNTRY SHOULD BE THE NATURAL HOST OF THE COMMITTEE. FOR THIS SHE HAS TO LOBBY HARD

I NEED TO CHECK THE MINISTRY DATABASE ABOUT THE RATIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES.

...WILL HOST COMMITTEE...

ANA PREPARES COUNTER-ARGUMENTS...
...YOUR COUNTRY HAS NOT RATIFIED SOME OF THE BASIC ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION TREATIES, INCLUDING THE OIL POLLUTION TREATY. SO, I DON'T THINK YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO HOST THE COMMITTEE.

WELL DONE ANA!
THE MINISTRY IS CURRENTLY PREPARING A REPORT ON THIS INCIDENT WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE MEDIA AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE AT 15:00. YOU WILL GET MORE INFORMATION AT THAT POINT. THANK YOU...

MEANWHILE, BACK AT ANA’S MINISTRY...

YOU DON’T HAVE TO WORRY GUYS... JUST ANOTHER CLEANING DAY AT THE FACTORY. IT’S GOING TO BE OVER SOON...

...OR MAYBE NOT ?!?
CANDIDATURES FOR POSITIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ARE OFTEN AN EXTENSION OF NATIONAL POLITICS, WITH HUNDREDS OF PARALLEL CANDIDATURES FOR INTERNATIONAL POSTS, AND ALL CANDIDATES LOBBYING FOR THE SUPPORT OF ALMOST 200 COUNTRIES, THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO “SWAP” SUPPORT. IF ONE HAS ACCESS TO THIS DATA, A CANDIDATURE DATABASE CAN PROVIDE A DIPLOMAT WITH NECESSARY INFORMATION TO PROPOSE A POSSIBLE “SWAP” WITH COUNTERPARTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

THERE’S A GUY WHO CAN SUPPORT US...

ONCE THE VOTING STARTS, WE WILL PROBABLY NEED HIS VOTE.

YES, WE PROBABLY WILL....

I REMEMBER THAT HIS COUNTRY IS ACTIVELY LOBBING FOR A TOP-LEVEL POSITION IN THE UNEP *. MAYBE WE CAN PROPOSE SOME HORSE-TRADING.

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THE MINISTRY DIDN’T PROMISE THAT POSITION TO SOMEONE ELSE? IF ONLY THE AMBASSADOR WERE HERE...

* United Nations Environmental Programme
I’ll check my candidature database, it’s constantly being updated.

SOF WE CAN OFFER A SWAP?

Good, we haven’t committed support to any candidate yet!

Yikes! We can support his candidate for the UNEP post in exchange for his support for my candidature for the chair of the environmental committee.

Let me propose a deal to him...

* personal digital assistant

13:15, somewhere in the air...

Riiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiing!

Mr ambassador, a phone call for you...

I feel almost like Bond, James Bond.
YES, AMBASSADOR, I HAVE ALREADY SENT. I HOPE THAT VICTOR IS MANAGING THE SITUATION...

ABSOLUTELY! ANA IS WITH HIM. WE ARE WAITING FOR THE LATEST INFO ON THIS SITUATION. IT HAS DRAWN A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST FROM THE MEDIA.

ANA AND VICTOR RETURN FROM LUNCH...

WHAT'S THE TIME?  13:25

DID YOU RECEIVE A MESSAGE?

BEEP BEEP

MESSAGE

ANA, WE NEED SUPPORT IN DRAFTING MINISTRY'S STATEMENT FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE. WHAT'S HAPPENING OVER THERE?

OPTIONS
HM.

YES, GOOD IDEA!

CAN WE REACH HER THROUGH SKYPE?

LET ME CONTACT ZOE - SHE WORKED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT BEFORE ME. SHE'S AT OUR EMBASSY IN ATHENS NOW. SHE CAN HELP US.

I FEEL LIKE WE'RE GOING TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS NOW.
THROUGH TECHNOLOGY (IN THIS CASE SKYPE) ZOE’S KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS CAN BE USED WHEN THEY ARE MOST NEEDED. ALTHOUGH SHE IS BASED IN ATHENS, FAR AWAY FROM THE NEGOTIATION VENUE, SHE CAN HELP WITH DRAFTING THE PRESS RELEASE. AN INTEGRATED DIPLOMATIC SERVICE WOULD ALLOW FOR THE ACTIVATION OF ALL TALENTS AND EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED. THE TECHNOLOGY IS AVAILABLE BUT THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLICY OF DIPLOMATIC SERVICES NEEDS TO BE ADJUSTED.
HMM?

HOW CAN WE GET THE MEDIA TO FOCUS ON THIS INCIDENT?

THE MEDIA IS ALL OVER THIS STORY, AND THE INTERNET IS FULL OF INFORMATION, OPINIONS AND SPECULATION...

WHICH IS ACTUALLY TRUE.

VICTOR, CAN YOU, PLEASE, USE YOUR BLOGGING SKILLS TO DISSEMINATE POSITIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH THE INTERNET?

I THINK THAT WE WOULD GET SOME FEEDBACK IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, BUT...

BUT WHAT?
I WOULDN'T WANT TO DO THAT. DIPLOMATS SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE HOST COUNTRY.

BUT IT’S PUBLIC OPINION... I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY...

PLEASE GO AHEAD WITH BLOGGING.

A QUICK RESPONSE FROM ALL COUNTRIES THREATENED WITH THIS CATASTROPHE IS NECESSARY.

Numerous replies are posted within a matter of minutes. The blog message contributed to shaping the public opinion and spin on the environmental negotiations. The introduction of new actors is one of the characteristics of modern diplomacy. The availability of the internet and ICT has influenced the shape of the current international scene. Business, civil society and academia have become important partners for diplomats. Multistakeholder diplomacy is becoming an integral part of diplomatic practice.

GREAT, IF WE'VE CLARIFIED ALL OPEN TECHNICAL ISSUES I CAN FINALISE THE PROPOSAL. I WILL DECIDE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CONSULT A SMALL ONLINE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY BACK HOME. I WILL GATHER THEM ON SKYPE, SO WE CAN HAVE A QUICK CHAT.
15:00 - In the meantime... Press conference back in the Ministry

FLASH
CLICK
FLASH

...I think that the host should defray the cost of the committee...

MAY I HAVE A WORD, PLEASE?
THE VIRTUAL EMBASSY IS A NEW DIPLOMATIC CONCEPT WHICH EMERGED ON MAY 22, 2007, WITH
THE OPENING OF THE MALDIVES VIRTUAL EMBASSY IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD OF SECOND LIFE.
VARIOUS VIRTUAL REPRESENTATION FUNCTIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH E-MAIL, THE WEB
AND OTHER INTERNET TOOLS AS WELL. BY 2011 IT IS EXPECTED THAT 8 OUT OF 11 INTERNET USERS
WILL SPEND TIME IN VIRTUAL REALITY SPACES SUCH AS SECOND LIFE. THIS WILL SUBSTANTIALLY
AFFECT MANY ASPECTS OF MODERN SOCIETY, INCLUDING DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION.
WHEN WE CALL AN EMBASSY “VIRTUAL” IT MEANS THAT THIS EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE PHYSICAL PREMISES. IN A VIRTUAL EMBASSY, THE AMBASSADOR REMAINS IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF HIS/HER OWN COUNTRY AND COMMUNICATES WITH THE OTHER COUNTRY THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS.
I will be more than pleased to help...

What? The virtual embassy? Yes, of course, I’m logging in to Second Life... yes, it is clear...

I would like to inform you that Mr. Fazanov is to arrive tomorrow.

We are so close to success!

I think they are on our side...

I’m in touch with a number of environmental specialists as well. They committed themselves to being members of the multistakeholder advisory group.

Before the signing ceremony I want to make sure we have the multistakeholder advisory group on board. We need professional support to the environmental committee.

You should inform them through a mailing list.

Of course!

Dear colleagues, I can only observe clear consensus that Miss Gabel will chair the committee which will be hosted in her country. We expect the secretariat to prepare the final communique for signatures.
This afternoon, an international environmental committee signed an agreement to resolve the oil pollution issue. As we reported this morning, the oil spill occurred 30 kilometers from the border...
YOU WERE GREAT TODAY!

OH, VIC...

HIK!

THEY HAVE GOOD COCKTAILS...

WE WERE GREAT. THE MERIT IS NOT ALL MINE.

I AM GLAD I WAS ABLE TO HELP.

MISS GABEL, I WISH SOME OF OUR DIPLOMATS COULD USE MODERN TECHNOLOGY LIKE YOU DO... WHERE WERE YOU TRAINED FOR THIS?

AT DIPLO. I WILL BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU MORE INFORMATION, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

THANK YOU, WE WILL TAKE IT INTO CONSIDERATION.

TJAH!
I HOPE WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES...

ME TOO...

WELL DONE ANA! THIS WAS A GREAT SUCCESS IN YOUR CAREER!

THANK YOU MINISTER... I WILL BE BACK TONIGHT... I THINK I'LL WRITE THE REPORT THIS EVENING, WHILE THE EVENTS ARE STILL FRESH IN MY MEMORY.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEE IT ON MY DESK

WHAT A DAY! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET HOME...

AND JUMP INTO A BUBBLE BATH...

DEAR PASSENGERS, PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS...

...IN A FEW MINUTES WE WILL BE LANDING...
Diplomatic reporting has changed substantially over the last few years. In the past, diplomats were the main source of information for the sending state. Today, diplomats do not need to report facts which can easily be ascertained on the internet. Instead, their role is increasingly to provide comments, analysis and reflections.

It’s almost 19:30, it’s going to be late when I finish this.
I HAVE TO UPLOAD TODAY'S EXPERIENCE INTO THE "LESSONS LEARNED DATABASE".

OH, THIS WAS ONE LONG DAY. I THINK I'LL SLEEP IN TOMORROW.

...zzzzzzzzzzzzz!
WHAT IS THIS, MAMA?

GLUB! GLUB! I'M DROWNING!

THIS IS A BAIT, KIDS. THE FISHERMEN ARE BACK.

A-HA!

HELP!

That means the water is clean now.

ARGH!

WOW, CLEAN WATER!

THE END
WHAT'S NEXT?