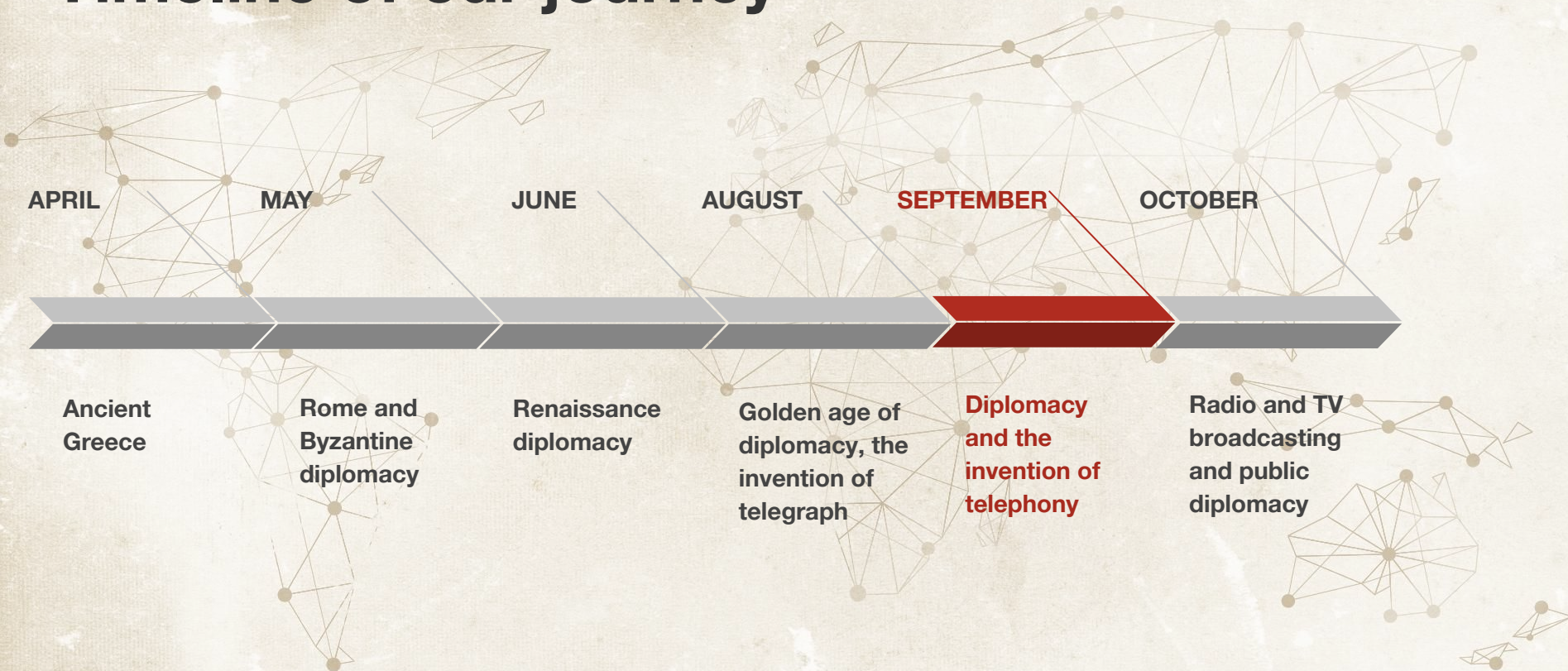


Telephone diplomacy: Dialling the 'red line'

Diplomacy and technology: A historical journey

Dr Jovan Kurbalija, September 2021

Timeline of our journey

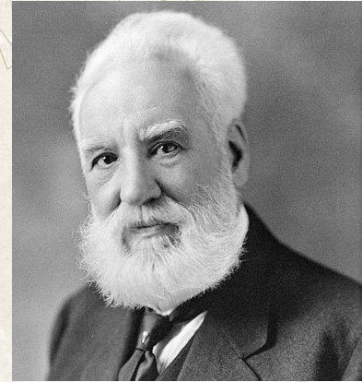


Invention of the telephone



Antonio Meucci (1808-1889) invented the first voice-communicating device in 1854, and called it a **teletrofono**, but couldn't afford to patent it.

Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) produced 'the first telephone capable of transmitting speech with adequate quality'



Anti-telephone campaign

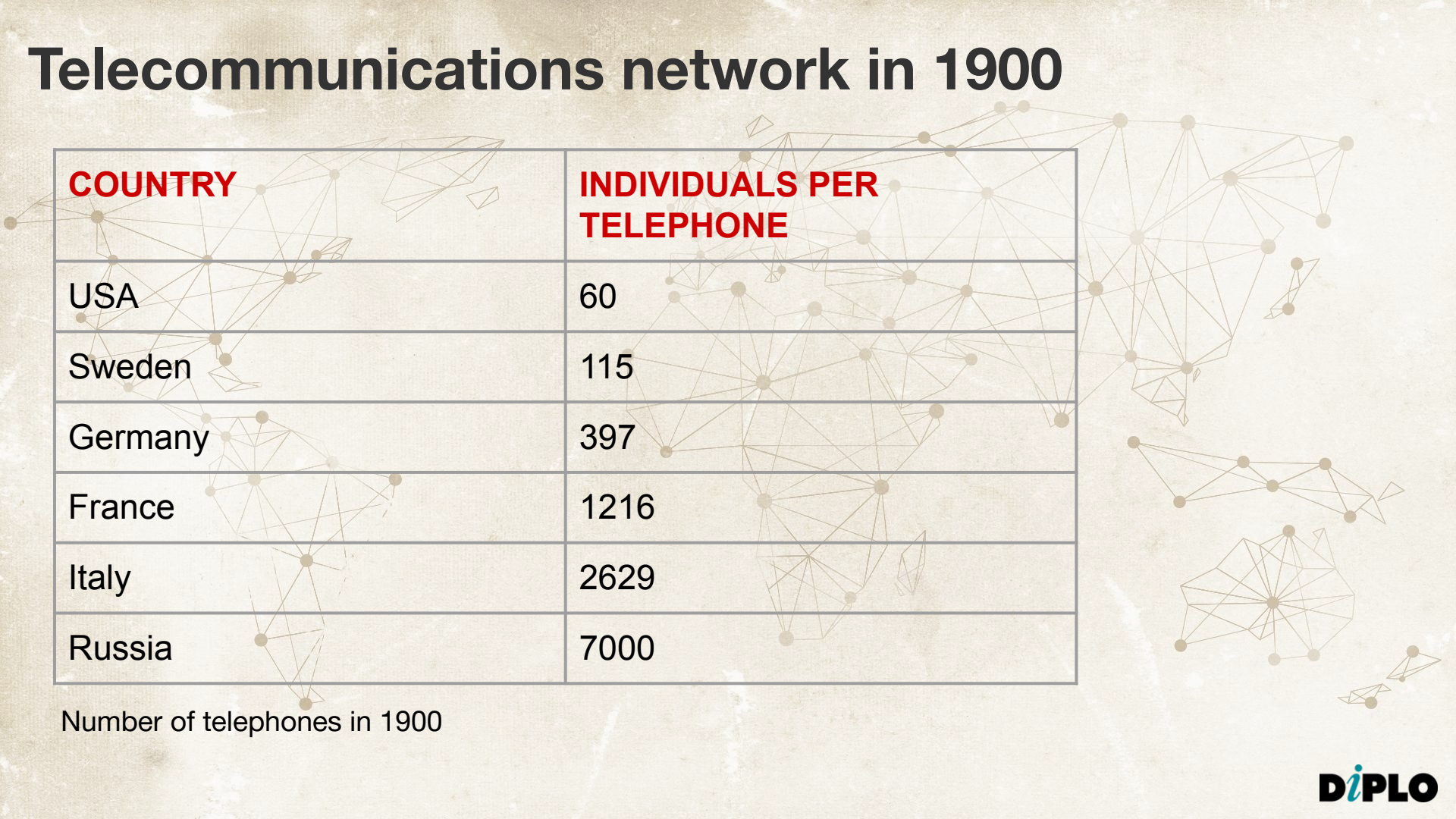
- Western Union (a leading telegraph company) opposed the development of telephony. When Bell wanted to sell them a patent, they replied:

“...The idea is idiotic. Furthermore, why would any person want to use this ungainly and impractical device when he can send a messenger to the telegraph office...”

“Technically, we do not see that this device will be ever capable of sending recognizable speech over a distance of several miles.”



Telecommunications network in 1900

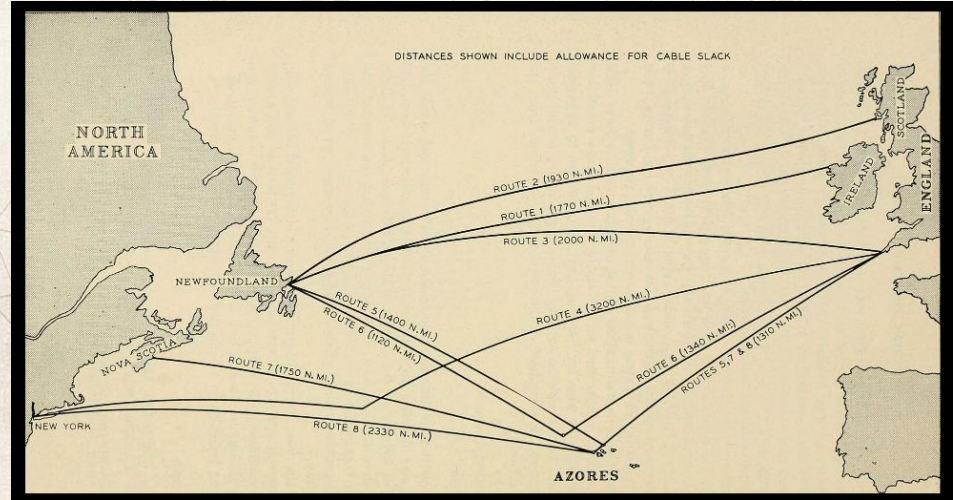


COUNTRY	INDIVIDUALS PER TELEPHONE
USA	60
Sweden	115
Germany	397
France	1216
Italy	2629
Russia	7000

Number of telephones in 1900

The importance of telephone for diplomacy

- Delayed impact on diplomacy due to technical problems in transmitting telephone signal over the long distance
- The first direct telephone line between New York and San Francisco established in 1914
- The trans-Atlantic telephone lines between the US and Europe were established in 1956



Transatlantic telephone cable routes, 1956

The importance of telephone for diplomacy

- The real impact of the telephone on international relations was felt after the Second World War.
- Country leaders started using the telephone, as the existing ways of communicating were too slow for the events happening.
- After the Cuban Crisis (1961), the hotline between Moscow and Washington was established (the red telephone)

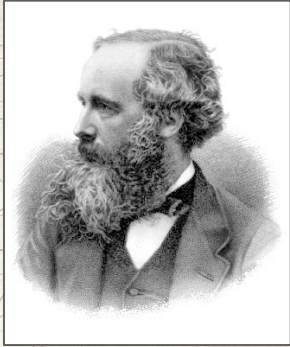


The Pentagon Hotline terminal room



Dr. Strangelove, S.Kubrick, 1964

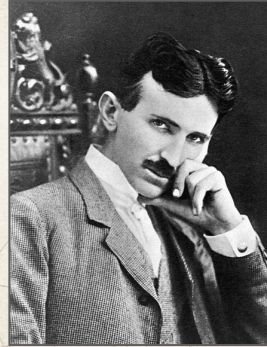
Invention of wireless (radio) communication



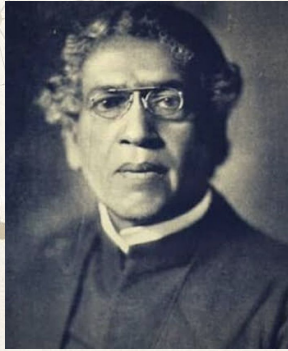
James Clerk Maxwell



Heinrich Hertz



Nikola Tesla



Jagadish Chandra Bose



Guglielmo Marconi

Wireless geostrategy

- The UK and the US held a monopoly over cable infrastructure
- France and Germany invested in the development of the wireless (radio) communication, in order to bridge this gap
- In 1903, AEG and Siemens-Halske (Germany) merged into a new company, Telefunken
- Marconi banned operators who used his system to communicate with radio apparatus by other companies.
- Germany's attempt to challenge this monopoly failed.



Telefunken, Nauen station, 1906
The most powerful wireless
facility in the world

Browser wars of the wireless telegraphy age



- At the time, two companies provided the radio equipment and operators: The **Marconi Company** (US), and **Telefunken**(Germany). The *Titanic* was subscribed to Marconi.
 - Marconi Company operators were forbidden to "talk" to a Telefunken ship operators. Telefunken, in turn, issued the same order to their operators.
 - The *Titanic* SOS went unanswered by a Telefunken ship, only miles away. The *Carpathia*, a Marconi ship, heard the SOS and responded, even though they were some distance away.
-
- The International Radiotelegraph Conference held in 1912 ended Marconi's monopoly, by introducing the principle of interconnectivity among radiotelegraph systems.

The rising importance of media in diplomacy

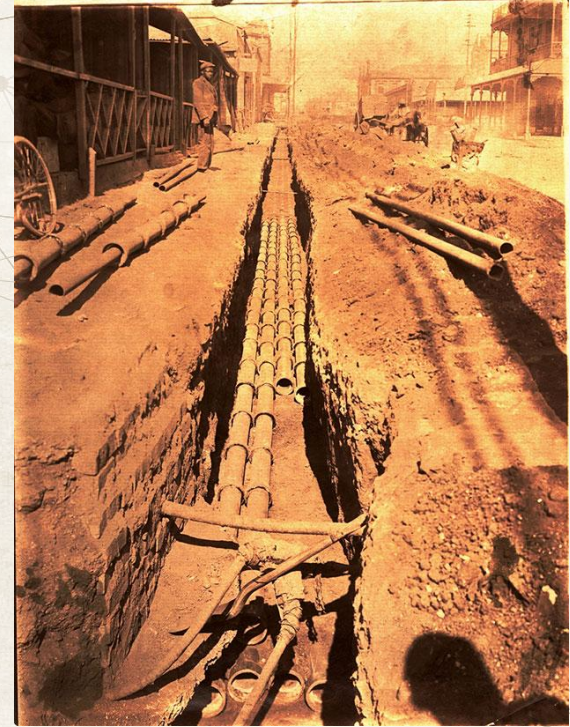
- The 'long peace', initiated by the Congress of Vienna (1814) introduced the **Concert of Europe** (a consensus among the Great Powers to maintain the integrity of territorial boundaries).
- Mass literacy and the growing number of newspapers, triggered the development of public opinion. Monarchies and governments introduced censorship and started using newspapers for propaganda.
- The US invasion of Cuba in 1898 was the first example of the importance of the media in international relations.



Newspaper Depiction Of The USS Maine Exploding In Havana Harbor

Meanwhile in... Africa

- The development of the first telephone networks coincided with the push of European powers to establish a control over inland Africa.
- The development of the telephone lines was done in a way to serve primarily the needs of European masters and not the needs of broader local populations.
- The first submarine cables got to the north of Africa in 1956 but it wasn't until 1969 that they reached the sub-Saharan part of the continent.



Cheers! Absinthe

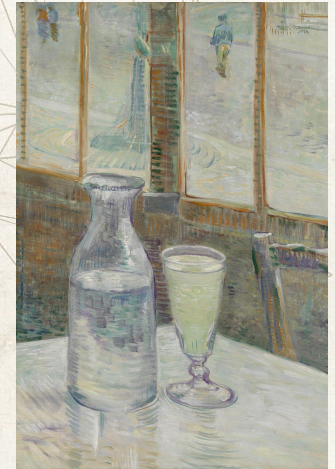
“After the first glass of absinthe you see things as you wish they were. After the second you see them as they are not. Finally, you see things as they really are, and that is the most horrible thing in the world.”

Oscar Wilde, Irish poet

The wormwood plant is naturally rich in **thujone**, a chemical compound believed to trigger inexplicable transformations of the mind.



Did You Know: Many art historians claim that Vincent van Gogh's bizarre paintings and strange behavior were a result of his love of absinthe. It's said that Van Gogh would even drink turpentine and eat paints to feel effects comparable to absinthe due to a similar chemical ingredient.



In the spring of 1914, artist Pablo Picasso created six copies of his sculptural work "Glass of Absinthe" depicting an image of the drink decorated with an authentic absinthe spoon.