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SOME ASPECTS OF WORKING PRACTICES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PROTOCOL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF UKRAINE

Abstract. The article describes the working experience of Yurii Lazuto, Head of the Department of State Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Hamburg.

The author provides a brief overview of the rules of diplomatic protocol based upon the principle of international comity and respect to all signs symbolising or representing state. Diplomatic protocol is of international and internal nature and is roughly identically observed in all countries, though with some minor derogations arising from the social system, national and religious traditions.

The author draws attention to the range of rules one should know and understand and the art of keenly appreciating a situation, responding to it swiftly and keeping one's internal peace and balance. It is also stressed that a public person must know all the subtleties of etiquette and diplomatic protocol during important press conferences, meetings, and international receptions.

Being universally recognised and generally known, the rules of protocol and etiquette do not require any regulation. The paramount principle of diplomacy is respect to partners. Thus, certain rules of behaviour were adopted in interstate relations. A protocol representative must be tenacious and not afraid to demand that heads and members of a delegation strictly follow the programme of a visit.

The author also shares his experience of practical training at the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany.

The author argues that abidance by the rules of protocol in international relations is not only necessary but also obligatory. Violating or neglecting them may prejudice honour and dignity of certain persons and the state's image. The practical examples of usage of protocol norms provided herein can help diplomats to upgrade their qualification and diplomatic mastery.

Keywords: rules of protocol, diplomatic mastery, international relations, state image, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

I

Everyone is well versed in football and protocol. It is not brain surgery. Just pick and kick in the first instance and raise it high, drain it dry in the second. But, as the renowned Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu put it, football specialists are few and far between. We all remember Valerii Lobanovskiy, the best football coach, who created the all-star Dynamo team. In 2005, the national football team of Ukraine guided by Oleh Blokhin, which came first in the group stage

and qualified to the final part of the World Cup in Germany, was called a fairy tale team. Andrii Shevchenko was its captain, who now as a coach has brought it to the first place in the group stage of Euro 2020.

In the diplomatic protocol, it is exactly the same. Honourable and seasoned diplomats remember Volodymyr Tsyba, Oleksandr Taranenko, Oleh Diachenko (my first mentor on diplomatic protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although before that I was responsible for protocol matters at Kyiv Intourist [the Kyiv Union of the State Committee of Tourism of the USSR], whose Director-General Volodymyr Fedorchenko paid a lot of attention to protocol issues, as did GDIP Director-General Pavlo Kryvonos), and Heorhii Cherniavskyyi, Head of the Presidential Protocol Office (more involved in ceremonial matters). Diplomatic protocol is 80 percent about the implementation of the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

In 'women's' protocol, one should probably mention Halyna Naumenko, Olena Yakymenko, Iryna Osaulenko, and Yana Skybinetska, all of them having extensive experience of working at foreign diplomatic missions.

In 2006, at the World Cup, the Ukrainian national team played twice in Hamburg, where I headed the Consulate-General, which I launched myself in 2002.

The German government officially invited President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko to the first game in Berlin. The invitation was ignored, which is, to say the least, unacceptable. Thus, when Yushchenko expressed his desire to come to the quarterfinals against Italy in Hamburg, the German Federal Foreign Office said that he could only be present at the match as a private person. Then, our ambassador in Berlin, Ihor Dolhov, asked me to resolve the issue with the authorities of the federal state of Hamburg.

It bears mentioning that at one time, by agreement between the foreign ministers of Ukraine and Germany, I attended a week-long internship at the protocol department of the German foreign ministry in Bonn and knew some nuances of interaction between the central government and the leadership of federal state governments. Hamburg has historically been very meticulous about Berlin. When the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) was in power in Berlin, communists had very strong positions in Hamburg. By the way, Ernst Thälmann Square and a museum dedicated to him can still be found in the city.

When social democrats were in power in Germany, the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union) was elected in Hamburg and vice versa. All of these and other aspects gave me hope for a positive solution to the problem of a proper organisation of our president's visit. After consultations with the mayor's protocol department, we were joined by Hryhorii Tokarevskyyi, a devoted and professional employee of the Presidential Administration of Ukraine.

Together with the German party, we drew up a program of the visit, meeting, and departure at the airport. An armoured car and an honorary escort were assigned. There were also some difficulties because, for instance, two people were expected from Italy and 32 more were to arrive with our president. Hence, it was impossible to place everyone in the main box. Part of them had to be placed in the box nearby.

The programme also envisaged a meeting of Viktor Yushchenko with Ole von Beust, Hamburg's First Mayor, who had been re-elected about a year before the Orange Revolution.

In parsing his election victory, experts noted that one of its factors was the use of orange on banners, posters, and slogans. This colour attracts people at the subconscious level – once it is anywhere near, a person will definitely look at it.

In May 2004, I brought it to the attention of Volodymyr Herasymchuk, Assistant for International Affairs of Kyiv Mayor Oleksandr Omelchenko. Later, when asked where Yushchenko's orange was from, he replied: 'Alex knows what he's doing'.

Once at a reception, I thanked Mr von Beust for the colour, to which he said: 'But how potently you developed this in Ukraine!'

This colour was used by proponents of Christian democracy, the ideology whose centre-right foundations had been laid down by Pope Leo XII more than a century ago. To cut a long story short, the quintessence of it is Christian morality and democratic values. The main principles are as follows:

1. Personalism. Human being is a person with the freedom of choice. His or her priority is to protect and realise moral values. Protection of private property.

2. Responsibility. Human being is responsible for his or her environment (family, group, community), posterity and society in terms of the power he or she holds.

3. Subsidiarity. The invention of Christian democrats. Absence of state interference with community affairs without asking for it. Non-interference but assistance. This is the basic principle of the functioning of the EU, which is enshrined in the Treaty on the EU.

4. Democracy. This is not 'demagoguery' and not anarchy. The community is at the centre of the society's functioning. Considering the community's interests is the paramount task of democracy. The concept of pluralistic democracy (ideological and social pluralism) prevails. Internal democracy is the key to effective reforms.

5. Social justice as a condition for achieving common good. It is aimed at the community, not the individual. 'No' to social 'one-size-fits-all' approach. 'Yes' to the harmonious development of society.

6. Solidarity. Mutual assistance and understanding. Collaboration, not hatred, in the fight against injustice and inequality.

7. Revolutionism as the adoption of everything new to achieve effective results in the fight against totalitarianism and overcoming poverty and backwardness in order to eliminate aggressive regimes and establish fair rules of political competition.

8. Non-confessionalism, which enables development in any region of the world. Christian democracy is separated from the influence of religion on its activities. Its inherent idea is that reconciliation in interreligious conflicts.

There are other principles but these are basic ones.

The CDU's main motto is 'freedom, justice, solidarity'. Christian democrats view social market economy as the basis of economic relations. They advocate mutually beneficial fair trade, environmental protection (solar and wind power are now rapidly developing, some large cities have banned the entry of diesel vehicles, encourage the use of hybrid and electric vehicles, and refuse to use nuclear energy).

Ever since Konrad Adenauer founded the CDU party in 1949, it has held leading positions in Germany and beyond. The European People's Party, which has a majority in the PACE, includes 72 parties of European countries adhering to its ideology.

It was the CDU representatives who developed and implemented economic and social reforms that transformed a war-torn country into a stable state with one of the strongest economies in the world and a far-reaching political influence.

The CDU members have been chancellors of Germany for over 50 years. The first was Konrad Adenauer (1949–67), who came from Rhine region; it was at his suggestion that Bonn became the capital city back then. He was followed by Ludwig Erhard (1963–66), the 'father' of the West German economic miracle, and Kurt Kiesinger (1966–69).

From 1969 to 1982, the federal government was led by members of the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany). The first among them was Willy Brandt (1969–74), who eased the tensions between Eastern and Western European countries and won the Nobel Peace Prize. He was also remembered for his scandal with the German Democratic Republic when, in 1974, Günter Guillaume, an intelligence officer of the Stasi, East Germany's secret service, who had worked as the chancellor's personal secretary, was exposed. Brandt was followed by Helmut Schmidt (1974–82), a native of Hamburg. In 1962, as a senator for internal affairs, he involved 25,000 soldiers in the operation to save the city's residents from a disastrous deluge [1]. The locals called him 'the master of the flood'. He was an excellent crisis manager and a wise man, and on several occasions I had an opportunity to communicate with him in Hamburg.

After Schmidt's unsuccessful attempt to organise a one-party government, he was replaced by Helmut Kohl (1982–98), who was chancellor for a record-

setting 16 years. His historic achievement is the reunification of Germany and the structural renewal of the former GDR. He was an ardent proponent of a united Europe and a five-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

Gerhard Schröder (SPD) served as chancellor from 1998 to 2005. During his tenure, Germany for the first time participated in NATO's military operations, particularly in Afghanistan. His proposed overhaul of the social security system brought about tensions within the party and street protests.

In 2005, Angela Merkel became the first female chancellor known for her pragmatic style of management. It was upon her initiative that after the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan, Germany set itself on a course to abandon nuclear power.

The most famous part of Chancellor Merkel's image are her jackets of all possible colours and shades. By the way, a few words about jackets.

After my internship at the German Federal Foreign Office's protocol department back in Bonn, I had to fly home through Frankfurt Airport. There was plenty of time, so we stopped off at Cologne, where I bought myself a jacket in a large store. The vendor said that at times Helmut Kohl used to come to the store in person to buy his clothes. A brief note about this was published by the journalist V. Bondarenko in the Kyivski vidomosti newspaper. After that, the staff of the foreign ministry would not give me a minute's peace: 'Buying things where chancellor did? Where did you get this much money?' In fact, I saved some money I had for business trips because I talked to several heads of offices and departments on a daily basis, and one of them would take care of me daily and invite me to dinner. And in the evenings, I ate out with one of our embassy staff members or with Ambassador Yurii Kostenko, my former classmate and deskmate at school no. 32 in Kyiv.

By the number of employees, the German protocol department was bigger than ours, with a ratio of 93 people against 15. Each of them was responsible for their own area of work: flags, souvenirs, invitations, transportation, accommodation, meetings, and departures. We were 'ultimate Messrs Fix-it', after all. I also participated in the delegation of the South Korean minister of foreign affairs. At the airport meeting, I was introduced in the line of those meeting members of the delegation, however, only by my surname. One day later, there was the religious holiday of Ascension. At that time, I was asked to accompany the delegation together with Sabine Stoer, an intern at the German Federal Foreign Office, who was later in charge of protocol matters at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Ukraine. She had all of the communication tools (mobile and radio) in her protocol vehicle.

Ahead was a police escort car followed by the guard and the delegation's motorcade. A press conference was scheduled at the airport, and we were a little late. While moving from one federal state to another, police escort cars changed, communication was acting up, and we could not understand which car we were

following. The escort took the right turning before the entry to the airport. Our driver said there was a shortcut, so, being late for the press conference, we decided to drive straight ahead.

Subsequently, the head of security from the criminal police of Bonn gave Sabine Stoer a thorough telling-off promising to send a letter to the foreign ministry about the impossibility of her further work in the diplomatic field. I thus decided to take the fall and explain that our protocol office was responsible for all the matters and that the decision to take the shortcut because of the delay was mine. Some flattery also came in handy. The incident was settled. This is an example of how important good communication is in protocol.

Nowadays, such problems are a thing unknown but during the first visit of Chancellor Helmut Kohl to Ukraine, there were almost no cellular phones, thus making us rely on the radio communication of the guard service.

According to the programme, we were to accompany the chancellor from the residence at Lypska Street to the Mariinskyi Palace to meet with President of Ukraine L. Kuchma. The road takes one and a half or two minutes, but suddenly a guard approached and reported that our president had not arrived yet, and that we needed to wait for a signal.

Knowing the guest's inclination to communicate with people on the streets, I drew his attention to the small crowd willing to talk to him. And then, out of the blue, a sweaty employee of the presidential protocol office caught up with us asking why we were not going and why the guard could not get in touch with us.

I invited Helmut Kohl to the car, and he asked with a barely noticeable smile: 'What? He is here?' And I explained our delay by the fact that the chancellor wanted to communicate with the people of Kyiv.

Time control is no less important. Small wonder Heorhii Cherniavskyi always asked representatives of advance teams not only about the exact time of the plane's arrival but also at what hour and minute its door would be opened, although in practice much depended on how quickly members of the delegation would take their seats in cars. Besides, the protocol officer in charge of the meeting could regulate the speed of the motorcade: either accelerate, to make up for a couple of minutes, or slow down on the way from Boryspil Airport to Kyiv.

For the most part, country leaders who visited Ukraine adhered to the principle of Louis XIV: 'Punctuality is the courtesy of kings.'

It is also not unheard of to worry not only about the programmes' precision but about your career. In 2001, the presidents of the CIS countries gathered to celebrate the then Victory Day (since 2016 – Day of Victory over Nazism in World War II). However, the plane of the Russian Federation with Mr Putin arrived almost 40 minutes later, so it was too late to bring the delegation to the residence, and it was too early to go to the "Ukraine" Palace, the site of commemorative events. I therefore asked the president of the Russian Federation

to go to the press, although it was not in line with the programme. Still being a democrat back then, he agreed and talked to reporters for ten minutes, who asked tough questions.

It was necessary to compensate for another 20 minutes, and I offered to visit the monument to the founders of Kyiv near the Paton Bridge but was rejected by the president's personal guard from Moscow, thus facing the threat of dismissal for 'breaking' the programme. This trick was once used during the visit of the President of Moldova, Volodymyr Voronin, when Petro Poroshenko, then People's Deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, interrupted a tour around the Roshen factory half an hour earlier. Therefore, the next impromptu programme item was a visit to the monument to Kyi, Shchek, Horyv, and their sister Lybid and admiring Dnipro landscapes.

Unfortunately, not all the leaders of our country excelled at punctuality. Many know about Viktor Yushchenko's tendency to be late and make others wait, which thus prompted him to take offense at the protocol officers.

Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk, whom I almost failed during his visit to Vienna, was an example of clarity and keeping his word. Having arrived to the capital of Austria a day earlier, I took a stopwatch to count the time from the hotel to the chancellor's office but did not consider that we would be accompanied by the police. The next day, two police officers on motorcycles coped with the traffic so deftly that we arrived five minutes earlier. Fortunately, before that I saw a very interesting museum room in front of the chancellor's office, so I suggested that we visit it – as if that was why we arrived a little bit ahead of the schedule. Mr Marchuk understood everything but pretended not to notice it and even thanked me.

There is one more detail about Yevhen Marchuk that struck me. During the visit to Estonia, negotiations were held with Ukrainian-English-Estonian translation with a press conference in the same format. And so, when listening to the translation of his words, the prime minister said in English: 'Unfortunately, I was not translated accurately' – and answered in English further.

In general, correct translation at the highest level is a huge responsibility. At Putin-Kuchma-Schröder tripartite meetings, Moscow translators refused to work out of fear of their boss's remarks, thus giving the floor to our best specialist at that time, Oleksandr Berchenko.

I myself sometimes happened to translate Helmut Kohl in Odesa, when he would go to the crowd and our translator (Nadiia Komarova) would be pushed aside. During a boat ride around the port of Odesa, the chancellor wondered what dishes would be served for dinner (his fondness for food was well-known) at the restaurant of the sea port. I asked the then mayor of the city, Edward Hurwitz, about it, and he replied in a purely Odesa-like manner: 'There will be everything.' 'How would I explain this to the guest?' I thought to myself. Well, pretty much in the same way. And indeed, the official dinner for the guests included everything

and even more. One could hardly imagine a dish that was not there. Then, the first deputy mayor of Odesa, Anatolii Vorokhaev, informed me about how the funds were raised for this event from local businessmen. The visit to Odesa made an indelible impression on our German colleagues. Anatolii Vorokhaev, the former school headmaster, was a great organiser. By the way, another ex-headmaster and now consul in Poland, Vitalii Maksimenko, is very well versed in protocol matters.

II

Proceeding from the fact that rules of diplomatic protocol are based on the principle of international courtesy, which provides for respect to everything that symbolises and represents the state, it is necessary to observe these rules in everything, including the appropriate clothing at official events.

Pay attention to MPs from Western countries or the US – they are all dressed in dark suits, white shirts, and ties. In so doing, they show their respect not only to their colleagues but also to their constituents. Once, in the mid-1990s, Russian President Boris Yeltsin had a meeting with President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma in Sochi, which was announced as a ‘short-sleeved’ meeting and nonplussed representatives of the diplomatic corps in Ukraine. It is clear that in this way they wanted to demonstrate closer than protocol-bound relations between the countries and heads of state but where is international courtesy?

The erstwhile dean of the diplomatic corps was Grach Silvanian, Armenian ambassador, a man with a great sense of humor. He invited several ambassadors to his residence and met them sitting, with his legs crossed and his bare feet in shoes saying: ‘They have a short-sleeved meeting, and we have a short-socked meeting.’

Compliance with the official dress code is mandatory for a protocol employee. Sometimes, it was not easy: you leave for a meeting at 6 am because before the plane arrives you have to check everything, the carpet to the stairway, bring the flag of the guest’s country, correctly place the motorcade – and further on according to the programme to about 9 or to 10 pm. Therefore, I always took a second shirt and a pair of neckties: the darker the evening, the lighter the tie. I also had a fair share of working for several days in a row without returning home.

In 2001, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon (then Rakhmonov) arrived in Ukraine on a two-day official visit. On 6 June, I accompanied the delegation to Lviv region under the programme’s schedule. In the afternoon, they left for Tajikistan.

On the following day, a delegation of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by Władysław Bartoszewski, arrived in Lviv. Delegates spent the day negotiating with the city and regional authorities. In the morning of 9 June, we arrived in Kyiv, where I handed the delegation over to my deputy for further escort, while I stayed at the airport to meet Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov.

At the presidential residence on Lypska Street, the latter was joined by our Anatolii Zlenko, our Minister for Foreign Affairs (according to the protocol, the lesser-ranking official of the host country arrives to meet the higher-ranking guest). At the sight of me, Mr Zlenko asked: ‘Why is it that I haven’t seen you at work for three days?’ In an hour and twenty minutes scheduled for the talks, I managed to come home, take a shower, change clothes, and return to accompany the delegation according to the programme. It included a lunch and a dinner, where Russian traditions required me to have a couple of drinks. This is the thing a diplomat should be especially attentive to. As our minister Gennadii Udoenko once said, ‘At the ministry, I learned to eat on the go and work a bit tipsy’. Of course, after a reception or working with a delegation, it was necessary to write a report about whom you talked to, what issues were raised, what the interlocutor was most interested in, and what information was brought to his attention. Thus, when drinking alcohol, a great deal of attention is needed, as someone may wish to trick you into telling proprietary information. I was asked if it was true that I could drink almost a litre of vodka and then drink more. Indeed, I sometimes had to visit two or three receptions, and then to meet friends to whom I told that, as chief of protocol, I had to drink at least ten grammes of vodka with each ambassador or head of a foreign mission. There being more than a hundred companions, simple calculus shows I had to drink a litre or so and then ask for mercy not to drink more. But in reality, I held a stiff drink in one hand and a glass of water in another, preferably coloured, and, pretending to be drinking water, poured vodka out of my mouth to the glass. Then again, you do not drink with everyone separately; rather, you do it in company, where you can simply clink glasses or lift them a bit upwards, look the other people in the eyes, and proceed to the next company.

Protocol employee should be persistent and not afraid to ask heads and members of the delegation to strictly adhere to the programme of the visit. In July 2001, Igor Ivanov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived in Kyiv for a working visit. He was travelling in the car with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ukraine, Viktor Chernomyrdin. At first, the motorcade went to the ambassador’s residence near Kyiv. There they continued the conversation and, according to the Russian custom, sat down to mark the meeting. My signals about the need to proceed to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where negotiations with our minister were to take place, fell on deaf ears. Then, I was invited to the table but had to refuse the proposal and emphasise that failing to meet the time limits would cause a whole range of slippages in the timetable of not only the minister but also that of the prime minister and the president of Ukraine. We had to drive very quickly and were fortunate enough to be accompanied by a police car. The delay was insignificant, and Viktor Chernomyrdin told Anatolii Zlenko: ‘Your protocol officer is a real mad dog’.

But I did not take this as an insult because he had treated me favourably ever since his visit to Ukraine as Russia's prime minister: back then, at an official dinner and at the request of President Kuchma's security chief, I wrote a poem for an ironic toast:

In Russia, everything's restored –
That's Chernomyrdin to thank for.
But to be mighty ever more
Kuchma we cannot ignore.

You should not be embarrassed in front of any person, whatever his or her position. One day, during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Lviv, a delegation consisting of cardinals and other highest Catholic churchmen gathered very slowly and was late for the next event. Hence, I went to the senior member of the group in the hotel lobby, pointed my finger at the clock, asked in Italian 'tempo, tempo, per favore' and then in English 'quickly, quickly, please'. We arrived to the next event without delay. The use of the guest's native language has always aroused a friendly feeling in foreigners. At least a few words of greeting, gratitude, apology, and farewell are enough.

In international relations, compliance with protocol rules is not only important but mandatory. Violating or neglecting them can harm not only the honour and dignity of individuals but also the state's prestige.

The practical examples of applying protocol norms mentioned in this article can help diplomats to enhance their competence and hone their diplomatic mastery.