**The importance of Diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and what makes a good diplomatic agent**

Nowadays, all countries in the world are becoming more and more interdependent. This interdependence can be observed almost in every sphere: in economics, technologies, science, culture, etc.

The fact that countries are interdependent presupposes that they should have international contacts that can be cultural, economic, and political as well. It is worth saying that political contacts are always of high importance, since politics, especially in countries where democratic institutions are not developed and every sphere of life depends on the country’s political course, plays an extremely important role in any country and easily influences our whole life.

Foreign Policy can be defined as the use of political influence aimed at inducing other states to exercise their law-making power in a manner desired by the states concerned. Foreign Policy presupposes that there are several forces taking part in the process: the first one is located inside a given country while the second one represents those who are situated outside the borders of the country. Foreign policy needs at least two independent states in order to exist as a process. Foreign policy of a particular state is realised through its behaviour towards other states.

Diplomacy is the machinery States utilise to achieve foreign policy objectives. It is one of a set of instruments through which actions are executed and policy objectives established. Diplomacy is the manner of action or reaction of a state towards the external environment, with the ultimate aim and objective of achieving specific goals towards the enhancement of national interest. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Contemporary English, diplomacy encompasses “the management of international relations by negotiation, the method by which relations among states are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys.” These are a few definitions of the dynamic concept of diplomacy. However, diplomacy should not be confused with foreign policy: the latter is the substance of State objectives while the former is the process by which policies are implemented in the international community.

One can therefore safely say that diplomacy is the medium for the achievement of the specific foreign policy objectives of nation-states. The use of tact plays a major role in this regard so as not to jeopardise the interests of these States. National interests have to be tactfully summed up to combine government and domestic satisfaction with adaptation to external demands and allocation of resources to competing activities, all which should be in favour of the welfare and prosperity of citizens, territorial integrity, economic development, prestige and reputation of the State, cultivation of friendship, peace, understanding, good neighbourliness and cooperation amongst states and the practice of civilized standards in the conduct of intra and international relations.

Diplomacy is the central technique of foreign policy, other techniques revolve around it. As a human concept, diplomacy is dynamic and does not occur in a vacuum: it is set in the international system, in a specific diplomatic environment (hostile, adversarial, coalition, and mediation diplomacy), and the domestic context influences its conduct, but its core function remains gathering information and impressions to analyse and report to the home office.

The functions of diplomacy include advancing the national interest through observing and reporting, negotiating, symbolically representing, intervening, and propagandizing. Diplomacy is conducted by officials with a variety of titles such as president, prime minister, ambassador, or special envoy. Diplomats not only seek to represent their states to the world, but also seek to represent the world back to their respective states, with the objective of keeping the whole ensemble together. Diplomats play special roles in promoting and upholding national interest in the international scene. Below are the key functions of diplomats.

• Reporting

A primary diplomatic role has always been to gather information and keep their governments posted with development in the host state. The analyses and report of diplomats are of good value: they inform the formulation of policies in their home country. For example, if a Russian diplomat stationed in Ukraine reports back home about the economic impact of outsourcing in Ukraine’s IT industry, it might influence Russia’s foreign policy on technical assistance.

• Representation

Whether substantive of symbolic, diplomats personify the states in their host countries. They are agents of communication between the home office and the host country which they have been accredited. A diplomat’s function as a representative could be symbolic, legal and political.

• Negotiation

The core function of negotiation is to provide a channel for peaceful resolution of disputes. Diplomats are negotiators. Negotiation is a cocktail of tact and technical skill that attempts to find a common ground among two or more divergent parties. Because diplomats are involved in drafting and discussing bilateral and multilateral agreements - treaties, conventions, communiqués, protocols, etc. - the skill of negotiation is pertinent: they must always be conscious of the country’s national interest.

A diplomat is a person appointed by a state to conduct diplomacy with another state or international organization. The main functions of diplomats revolve around the representation and protection of the interests and nationals of the sending state, as well as the promotion of information and friendly relations. Diplomats are the oldest form of any of the foreign policy institutions of the state, predating by centuries foreign ministers and ministerial offices. Diplomats in posts collect and report information that could affect national interests, often with advice about how the home country government should respond. Then, once any policy response has been decided in the home country's capital, posts bear major responsibility for implementing it. Diplomats have the job of conveying, in the most persuasive way possible, the views of the home government to the governments to which they are accredited and, in doing so, to try to convince those governments to act in ways that suit home country interests.

In this way, diplomats are part of the beginning and the end of each loop in the continuous process through which foreign policy is made. The diplomat should be an excellent negotiator but, above all, a catalyst for peace and understanding between peoples. The diplomat's principal role is to foster peaceful relations between states. This role takes on heightened importance once war breaks out. Negotiation must necessarily continue but within significantly altered contexts

The machinery of diplomacy remains at the epicentre of a State’s foreign policy objectives, and must be clearly distinguished from the concept of foreign policy. Diplomacy remains an instrument of foreign policy, and can be used to measure the efficacy of a State’s foreign relations, and in the pursuit of national interest in the dynamic environment of the international community.

It is my opinion that, the interest of States as articulated in the foreign policy should always be on the mind of a diplomat. In the modern era, diplomats could also leverage on the following to drive state interests:

• Bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and coalitions

• Public participation, mass media, exchanges, and leadership in guiding and creating a place for public opinion. These tethers on the concept of public and cultural diplomacy.

• The shaping of public opinion to become as accustomed to the necessity for and take for compromise in international politics, as it has been on questions of state and local concern. This involves the ability to evoke response from people and rally public opinion behind what is ideal and necessary for peace and progress

All of the above have its effect on the shaping of a country’s foreign policy, and might continue to play a primary role in diplomacy and international relations, but it will not change the basic principles of foreign policy (only objectives can change) and international relations.

Whenever more than two states have to deal with an issue, multilateral diplomacy is in demand. Globalization has subsequently added new chapters to diplomacy. Since the world has become smaller and the calls for multilateral diplomacy have become louder, multilateral diplomacy now stands in dire needs of improvement if it is to reflect effectively our interdependent globalized world. Since globalization is an international development, international cooperation is required. Global issues are diffuse and rest on the decisions and behaviour of millions, if not billions, of people. To facilitate technical cooperation, accelerate economic cooperation, fight hunger, promote development assistance, foster cultural relations, protect human rights, save the natural environment, and to avoid wars are some of the international problems that demand attention and need to be dealt with on a permanent basis. Diplomacy in its present configuration contributes to shaping the international community. Diplomacy will continue to contribute to establishing rules of international law. It does so by a large network of communication that is used by the players to protect the interest of their states.

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**The importance of Public Diplomacy on foreign policy and its challenges**

Public diplomacy is one of the most important parts of international and intercultural communication (DeMars, 2005; Nye, 2008). Governments across the world tend to use public diplomacy as an effective tool to build a positive image with publics of other countries. Public diplomacy eﬀorts aim at inﬂuencing foreign publics, so that they may inﬂuence their own government’s actions toward another nation. Public diplomacy eﬀorts have blended both interpersonal and mass communication tactics. Governments have used mass communication including radio, satellite television, print opinion pieces, and editorials to build positive national images. On the interpersonal side, cultural exchanges and travel tours have also been used to build relations. Today, social media and social networking are included in a more diverse toolkit of tactics for nations to communicate with foreign citizens (Zaharna, 2013).

The core idea of public diplomacy ‘is one of direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of aﬀecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments’ (Malone, 1985, p. 199). During the Cold War era, a mass communication-oriented approach to public diplomacy emerged. After the Cold War ended, nations, organizations, as well as individuals found themselves living in a much more inter-connected world; thanks to the accelerating trends of globalization and technology innovation. Mass media are no longer the only or default means to reach a mass audience as changes in global politics. Nation-states and diplomats need to explore a new approach that recognizes the complex architecture of the multi-hub, multi-directional networks that exist between communities around the world. These networks are created, sustained, and changed by various types of intercultural and international communication.

To properly understand the very nature of public diplomacy, it is necessary to ﬁrst brieﬂy introduce the discussion of global network society and the power of international communication networks. Castells (2008) argues that in the contemporary society, core communicative activities are globalized and networked. Castells conceptualizes social processes and institutions as ‘expressions of networks’. The comparative value of individuals, organizations, and nation states depends on if they can be included in important networks. What can be considered as valuable in networks is not static, but constantly ‘programmed’ in networks. In a network society, governments, like any other organizations, institutions, or individuals, are networked by communication and dependent on other actors. At the international level, governments are members of governmental organizations and treaties and rely on the authorities of this international polity to advance their interests. Nation-states increasingly form dense networks of international institutions, supranational organizations, and net-works of states to deal with global issues. Some nation states also actively form cooperative networks with NGOs. At the domestic level, governments are subject to pressure from business and interests groups, and their power is sometimes challenged by social movements. Even for semi-authoritarian governments such as the Chinese government, international pressure can be transmitted into a domestic force due to network interdependency.

From a public diplomacy standpoint, the legitimacy of many governments no longer solely depends on their internal factors but also on their relationships with other actors . For countries that seek to enhance their inter-national inﬂuence and improve their image and recognition in the global public discourse, being imbedded in well-respected international networks can be crucial.

Public diplomacy can perhaps be better defined by contrasting its principal characteristics with those of “official diplomacy”. First, public diplomacy is transparent and widely disseminated, whereas official diplomacy is (apart from occasional leaks) opaque, with narrowly confined dissemination. Second, public diplomacy is transmitted by governments to wider, or in some cases selected, “publics” (for example, those in the Middle East or in the Muslim world), whereas official diplomacy is transmitted by governments to other governments. Third, the themes and issues with which official diplomacy is concerned relate to the behaviour and policies of governments, whereas the themes and issues with which public diplomacy is concerned relate to the attitudes and behaviours of publics.

Of course, these publics may be influenced by explaining to them the sometimes misunderstood policies and behaviour of the this or that government. Additionally, to the extent that the behaviour and policies of a foreign government are affected by the behaviour and attitudes of its citizens, public diplomacy may affect governments by influencing their citizens.

Norway, for example, has gained a strong position in the international community for its long history of support for international peacekeeping. Norway has assisted with peace work in the Philippines, Colombia, Guatemala and Sri Lanka. Hence, in “the area of peace mediation and reconciliation’ it is perhaps second to none” (Melissen, 2005, p. 70), as continued participation in peace negotiations across the globe has provided the nation with expertise in that area. By defining its “national interest to include attractive causes such as economic aid or peacemaking” (Nye, as quoted by Melissen, 2005, p. 73) it has obtained a soft power, that in certain circumstances is superior to more influential countries. However, this soft power lacks the support of strong military power or geographical extension. The influence that Norway can exercise on places remote from its geographical position is possible because of the emphasis that it has put on constructing its national image. In order to be effective for the pursuit of its foreign policy it has to “be genuine and trustworthy; internally anchored and must be perceived as attractive” (Melissen, 2005, p. 84) for those targeted countries.

Nevertheless, it might be argued that the same factor that provides soft power to Norway may also be the same one that jeopardises it. The image of the nation is that it is fixed to its peace-promotion role, and that rather than flexibility it imposes rigidity because is “too easy for a country to be discredited and soon forgotten about” (Melissen, 2005, p. 84). Therefore, although Norway enjoys at the moment a very privileged situation in the international arena, exercising more soft power than some other nations with superior capabilities, it might be turned against itself as it lacks the capabilities that would help to change its area of influence.

Nevertheless, Norway has demonstrated that is able to exploit a resource that many other countries desire. Therefore, it is able to persuade others to act in its favour, such as some European countries that, because political interests are in a place to which Norway has access to, offered favourable conditions for its trade on seafood (Melissen, 2005, p. 82). Furthermore, it might be argued that such favourable political position because of its public diplomacy, persuades some states from the international community to turn a blind eye to other less honourable causes, such as whale-hunting.

This essay has discussed the fact that Public Diplomacy has become increasingly important in recent years. This essay demonstrates that currently there is a tendency to engage in these persuasive forms of influence. Soft power is one of the characteristics of Public Diplomacy, and these three examples can help to illustrate an increase in its use. Not all states are able to employ Public Diplomacy in a manner that serve their interests there must be a willingness for the target to embrace such influence. In other occasions, soft power on its own does not have enough power to convince others to support their interests, so must be used in combination with other types of power and influence.

Effective Public Diplomacy is the number one requirement reflecting a move away from old style foreign policy between governments to a new style of multimedia and multi-parity international policy. The very notion of security needs some serious re-thinking as a basis for modern diplomacy. In addition, the pivotal role of science and technology in modern international relations requires different skill sets among diplomats and better outreach by foreign services to other expertise, government and non-government, than is the case now. Governments must respond by changing the way they practise diplomacy, offer development assistance, and deploy force. This means making the new public diplomacy a core foreign policy tool.

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