

# The Functions of Diplomacy

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ANON, JUL 20 2011

Diplomacy has existed since the beginning of the human race. The act of conducting negotiations between two persons, or two nations at a large scope is essential to the upkeep of international affairs. Among the many functions of diplomacy, some include preventing war and violence, and fortifying relations between two nations. Diplomacy is most importantly used to complete a specific agenda. Therefore without diplomacy, much of the world's affairs would be abolished, international organizations would not exist, and above all the world would be at a constant state of war. It is for diplomacy that certain countries can exist in harmony.

There has not been a documented start of diplomacy; however there have been instances ranging back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century where diplomacy arose in certain nations. Dating back to 432 B.C, the Congress of Sparta was an "illustration of diplomacy as organized by the Greek City States" (Nicolson 1). The origin of the word "diploma" comes from different sides of the earth. In Greece diploma meant "folded in two", while in Ancient Rome the word was used to describe travel documents. Often times the word diplomacy is given many meanings. Many times will the words "policy" and the word "negotiation" be seen as synonyms; hence the word "diplomacy" and "foreign diplomacy" are deemed to be similar (Nicolson 3). These "synonyms" of diplomacy are all faulty. While they may be very similar in some cases, they are not the exactly the same. Sir Harold Nicolson who was an English Diplomat born in Tehran, Persia, states that:

"Diplomacy is neither the invention nor the pastime of some particular political system, but is an essential element in any reasonable relation between man and man and between nation and nation" (Nicolson 4).

For the upkeep of the International System, diplomacy is used in every corner of the world. Without it many nations would not be able to conduct successful negotiations.

While many are not able to find a clear beginning or creation of diplomacy, modern diplomacy has become much more advanced and many aspects have changed over the years. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 created the first modern diplomatic congress in addition to creating a new world order in central Europe based on state sovereignty. Much of Europe began to change after the introduction of modern diplomacy. For example, "France under Cardinal Richelieu introduced the modern approach to international relations, based on the nation-state and motivated by national interest as its ultimate purpose" (Kissinger 17). The New World Order began to bloom in all of Central and Western Europe. Great Britain argued for the "balance of power" which kept European diplomacy alive for the next 200 years (Kissinger 17). Every country in Europe contributed a little to the diplomacy the world has today. The balance of powers theory that many famous realists such as Francesco Sforza, Machiavelli, and Guiciardini argued was and still is an essential component of modern diplomacy. Many could argue that diplomacy is a product of society and history itself. As countries progress different aspects are added to diplomacy. Separation of powers, national interest, and a country's sovereignty are only a few elements that were added to modern diplomatic history. Therefore, diplomacy can be seen as an ever-changing concept, the same way International Relations between countries fluctuate. Author of *The Pure Concept of Diplomacy* José Calvet De Magalhães stated that "continuity of the diplomatic institution throughout thousands of years and in all known civilizations shows that diplomacy is an institution inherent to international life itself, one that may undergo transformations or may be used with more or less intensity, but cannot be dispensed with" (Szykman). As Henry Kissinger states "By pursuing its own selfish interests, each state [is] presumed to contribute to progress, as if some unseen hand were guaranteeing that freedom of choice

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for each state assured well-being for all" (Kissinger 22). In the course of all diplomatic history

"[...] no country has influenced international relations as decisively and at the same time as ambivalently as the United States. No society, has more firmly insisted on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of other states, or more passionately asserted that its own values were universally applicable. No nation has been more pragmatic in the day-to-day conduct of its diplomacy, or more ideological in the pursuit of its history moral convictions. No country has been more reluctant to engage itself abroad even while undertaking alliances and commitments of unprecedented reach and scope" (Kissinger 18).

The United States headstrong tendencies to succeed have made it one of the most influential countries in the course of diplomacy. "The most famous of all peace proposals following World War I was the program of Fourteen Points, delivered by President Woodrow Wilson in 1918" (Szykman). Most can argue that without the United States, much of modern diplomacy would be gone.

There are in fact many functions of diplomacy that make diplomacy an essential ingredient for any peaceful and efficient change. The reason to negotiate with other persons has always been the same, to have better relations. Over the course of diplomacy being in existence, the structure of diplomatic posts has changed from a loose one to an organized institution made for a specific purpose. While the structure of diplomatic posts has changed, the functions always remained the same. There are four functions of diplomacy. The first function involves "representing a state's interests and conducting negotiations or discussions designed to identify common interests as well as areas of disagreement between the parties, for the purpose of achieving the state's goals and avoiding conflict" (Ameri 1). Representations of a state as well as negotiation are the most important functions of diplomacy. Negotiations between two representatives are a key component in diplomacy, because in doing so the representatives find a common interest. Finding a common interest is vital in conducting negotiations because with a common interest representatives are able to devise a solution that is in the interest of both sides. G.R. Berridge that negotiation

"can produce the advantages obtainable from the cooperative pursuit of common interests; and it is only this activity that can prevent violence from being employed to settle remaining arguments over conflicting ones" (Berridge 1).

The second function of diplomacy involves "the gathering of information and subsequent identification and evaluation of the receiving state's foreign policy goals" (Ameri 1). Diplomatic posts are concerned with gathering information; however when the information is sent back to their native country a Foreign Ministry analyzes the data and determines what foreign policy should be enacted. Political leaders choose what path is right for their country then. The third major function of diplomacy is expansion of political, economic, and cultural ties between two countries (Ameri 2). For example, after WWII countries such as the United States and Britain aimed their foreign policy at the extermination of communism. In present day, the United States State Department engages international audiences to speak about politics, security, and their values to help create an environment receptive to US national interests. In addition, "the State Department annually sponsors more than 40,000 educational and cultural exchanges" (Diplomacy). Finally, the fourth function of diplomacy is that "diplomacy is the facilitating or enforcing vehicle for the observation of international law" (Ameri 2). It is the diplomat's job to promote the country's national interests and keep ties with other countries open. The emphasis put on diplomacy is not just dominant in today's world, however it was a developing concept in the Renaissance as well.

Great thinkers such as Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Grotius, Richelieu, Wicquefort, Satow, Nicolson, and Kissinger had a profound impact on diplomacy. For Machiavelli diplomacy was a tool of deception to grant more power to the state (Berridge 24). Machiavelli's impact on leaders was a major one because he argued for leaders to be headstrong as well as reserved. Guicciardini promoted the upkeep of good relations; to be careful with whom one deals with and that reputation is key in a negotiation (Berridge 43). His contribution to diplomacy was that diplomatic posts are given to people who can be trusted and can promote their country's state interests. What these great thinkers contributed to diplomacy was immense. All of them contributed a different element to the ever-growing concept of diplomacy. Since the subject of diplomacy is always growing and changing, it can be said that because of its vast effect on the world, everybody needs diplomacy to survive. It has become such a vital part of everyone's life that is indirectly becoming a trait for survival.

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Throughout the course of history diplomacy has been a paramount element in the upkeep of peace and in the creation of positive change. Without diplomacy much of the world's affairs would not exist. There are many examples of how diplomacy has affected countries, and even individual citizens. An example of how negotiation positively can affect someone is Clinton's negotiation with Kim Jung Il in North Korea. Their peaceful negotiation resulted in the release of two American citizens. An example of how power can corrupt diplomacy is Libya and Switzerland. With the introduction of power, in other words oil, countries such as Libya with the leader Ghaddafi are able to have a stronger presence in the world and say things that can normally not be said. Power corrupts, however diplomacy seeks to rid corruption and reinforce the international system as well as international law. It is for diplomacy that international organizations can exist. In a diplomatic way, an international organization is merely a many members finding a common ground on a particular subject. In the United Nations for example, all the members try to find a common interest for positive change. Although it is sometimes perceived to be slow change, the method of diplomacy causes fewer casualties than any other one. If diplomacy were not in existence, international organizations would not exist. The world would be at a constant state of war, and war would in fact never end because they normally end with diplomatic negotiations.

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