

THIRD WORLD DIPLOMACY: REALITIES AND CHALLENGES

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The term “Third World” refers to developing countries. The term “Third World” arose during the Cold War to refer to nations that did not belong to the First and Second Worlds, the First World, being the Western countries, while the Second World was the Soviet Union and its allies.

While there was a debate on the appropriateness of the term, it got stuck and was embraced by the developing countries of the Non Aligned Movement. In academic circles, the countries of the Third World are often known as the "Global South".

The Third World countries represent at the UN as a separate Group, called “Group of 77” founded on June 15 1964, consisting of 77 developing member-countries. Although the number of developing countries at the UN stands at 130, the name of the Group has not been changed.

Before I discuss Third World diplomacy, I shall describe some of the salient features of diplomacy and its different dimensions.

Diplomacy & its various dimensions:

Everyone has an approximate idea of what the term “diplomacy” means. The 15th century Florentine statesman and political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli’s advice to diplomats was said to be that “ I have never said what I believed and never believed what I say.

Sir Henry Wooton, King James’ Ambassador to Rome described the role of an Ambassador: “An Ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of the country.

Neither of the descriptions corresponds to reality. Diplomacy is all about human relationship and an Ambassador is a person who has to build trust and confidence with persons in a country where he/she is posted. Trust and confidence does not come easily because it has to be nurtured carefully. It is like reputation that does not grow easily. It takes time, needs patience and perseverance to develop with the other party.

Sir Ernest Satow (1843-1929), defines it “as the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between

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governments of independent states.” The two words “intelligence” and “tact” have been employed in the definition. “Intelligence” refers to the appreciation of issues and “tact” relates to on, how, what and when to say to the other party. Timing and occasion of what to say are very important in diplomacy.

Diplomacy without military power is like music without instruments, according to King Frederick, the Great of Prussia (1712-1786). The statement found resonance in former Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan’s statement that diplomacy was good in resolving disputes but diplomacy backed by military power would be better, while he was leading a peace mission to President Saddam Hussein in 1998.

Diplomacy is a refined art of negotiation, representation and the ways in which diplomats communicate with each other to resolve bilateral issues. Shuttle diplomacy means high officials from headquarters travel to various capitals to resolve bilateral or regional issues and has reduced the role of traditional diplomacy in many ways and is likely to do so more in the future.

Diplomacy needs tenacity, presence of mind, coolness under pressure and appreciation of another point’s of view. Diplomacy by and large is a waiting game and in diplomacy nothing develops in haste. The task is challenging, intellectually stimulating and rewarding.

Bilateral diplomacy is distinct from multilateral diplomacy. Bilateral diplomacy consists of relations between the sending state and the host state. The core function in the bilateral diplomacy is to strengthen the bilateral ties in economic, social, cultural and scientific relations, apart from representation from the sending state to the receiving state.

Multilateral diplomacy takes place at the UN or at a multilateral body/inter-governmental organisations. Skills and functions in multilateral diplomacy are different from those of bilateral diplomacy.

One of the other distinguishing features of this new world of international relationships is the multilateral diplomacy. It is evident that most of the trans-national issues which have come on to foreign policy radarscope can neither be solved on a bilateral state to state basis, nor by a single state, how powerful it may be.

Global warming, refugee flows, terrorism or international drug trafficking or AIDS and other infectious diseases involve an elaborate network of foreign governments and domestic agencies. All countries must be involved if effective results are to be achieved.

Traditional diplomacy is related to political relations and is often used either to resolve or manage bilateral issues or differences through negotiations between two states. The discussions are held in secrecy.

I have used the word “manage” because all differences cannot be resolved quickly.

Management means actions to prevent differences not to escalate into disputes, disputes into conflicts and to limit the spread of conflict when it occurs. Often it is known as preventive diplomacy.

Preventive diplomacy focuses on peace building strategies including confidence-building measures between the parties to promote trust and create a framework for consolidating peace.

Prevention is a stage in which action is taken before conflict erupts. It is a process of early awareness of an emerging dispute and early action by preventive diplomacy. Preventive diplomacy involves an effort to confront the parties with strategies so that both perceive that they are placed in a “win-win” situation. It includes three stages: (a) early warning, (b) early action and (c) early peace building measures.

The collection of timely information at an early stage represents the starting point of preventive diplomacy. Early warning of a dispute is to be followed by early diplomatic action for removal of causes of conflict. Some authors have differentiated between two approaches of preventive diplomacy, namely (i) early preventive action, and (ii) late preventive action.

Public diplomacy is employed to interact with public and not with governments. The term public diplomacy was coined in the 1960s to describe aspects of international diplomacy other than the interactions between national governments. It is open and transparent.

Cultural diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy and is used to communicate with citizens in other states.. Film, television, music, sports, video games and other social/cultural activities are seen as cultural diplomacy. It is enormously an important to international cultural understanding, which is a key goal of modern diplomatic strategy.

The impact of culture on the conduct of modern diplomacy is unquestionable. Culture is a powerful instrument in the hands of diplomats to pursue national interest in an un-intrusive, intelligent, convincing and cost-effective manner.

Cultural diplomacy has acted as a peace keeping force in a number of situations throughout history. With increased social exchange and the