

THE TRANSFORMATION OF DIPLOMACY

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Since the end of the Cold War, international agenda has changed considerably - changing with them the character of diplomacy. As Brian White describes, diplomacy has become more global, complicated and fragmentary.¹ Thus, changes in diplomacy are especially visible by the involvement of many new actors in the area of international cooperation. A fast developing international system opened doors to many new actors, including international organizations, transnational corporations, and important interest groups. Diplomacy that, from the middle of the 15th century, was known as an important tool of foreign policy became wider in the post-Cold War era. In fact, the transformation of diplomacy has not been completed yet. Nowadays, for instance, governmental diplomacy must deal with various non-state actors that shape its agenda. As Giandomenico Picco points out, “diplomacy, one of the last monopolies of a government, is now accessible to and performed by nongovernmental organizations as well as individuals who have one main characteristic: credibility”.² At the same time it would be a big mistake to consider that the role of governmental diplomacy has declined. “Although the entry of these new players has ended the effective monopoly diplomats once enjoyed over international relations, governmental diplomacy continues to have an important role”.³

Nowadays, the role of the state has changed in response to the rapidly changing international environment and the involvement of new actors. The result, of course, is that diplomacy has changed with it. Multilateral processes connected to security, economic, social, technological and other changes influence the essence of modern diplomacy. One of the authors who has been able to elegantly express the subject of change is Richard Langhorne. According to him, “the current sense of flux in diplomacy which is evident both on the ground and in studies of the subject is primarily due to the conjunction of major growth in the diplomacy of states at a time when the role of states is changing and this change is leaving space for the emergence of new and untrained users of diplomacy, users who sometimes do not acknowledge that either need or in practice actually employ diplomacy at all”.⁴ Thus, it is true that contemporary diplomacy has become a transnational process of social relationship realized by an enlarged diplomatic community.

Diplomacy is facing new challenges, including an expanded foreign policy agenda, changing social demands, and the rapid growth of domestic agencies operating abroad. One feature of the 21st century that is changing the character of diplomacy is the use of advanced information technologies in modern communication. Nowadays, operativeness of information's circulation and its accessibility changes the dynamics of diplomatic work requiring faster reactions and other principles of information

¹ White, B. „Diplomacy” in Baylis, J., Smith, S. (ed), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. P. 393.

² Picco, A. „A New International System?”, *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 4/2 (2005), P. 32.

³ Riordan, S. *The New Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. P. 130.

⁴ Langhorne, R. „On Diplomacy”, *Political Studies Review*, 6/1 (2008), P. 55.

selection. Moreover, the 21st century agenda requires experts in various fields: energy issues, environment, finance, economics, human rights, health issues, information and communication technology, organized crime, security issues and terrorism. Diplomacy's transformation in the 21st century has been characterized by fast growing cooperation and coordination between institutions in solving different questions.

Many of the above mentioned features of diplomacy correspond with the typologies of Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham. Describing the changes of diplomacy in the 21st century, these authors pay attention to transformation in the mechanism of diplomacy and diplomats. The authors, for instance, point out the following changes: expanded diplomatic dialogue; changes in emphasizes – more attention for multilateral diplomacy; a large number of involved experts and specialists; the growing importance of mass media, international community and nongovernmental actors.⁵ In fact, diplomacy, similar to security, does not exist in a vacuum. It is influenced by a continual process of change. As the world changes so too does diplomacy.

The transformation of diplomacy happens at high-speed. If we take three basic features of diplomacy as the starting point (representation, negotiations and exchange of information) we see major changes. Twenty years ago, the essence of diplomacy was described with the following components: state-centric environment; dominant formats of mutual cooperation between countries; ministry of foreign affairs as the exclusive institution for foreign policy implementation; exclusiveness of diplomatic institution in representing important governmental issues; controlling of local-international events; communication by traditional ways of information exchange and presence of generalists during dialogs. However, we now see the following changes: ministry of foreign affairs has delegated some functions to other actors; the role of nongovernmental actors has increased; multilateral cooperation formats become more important; the structure and functions of diplomatic institutions are redefined; the balance between generalists and specialists is redefined; the influence of information on agendas of foreign affairs is growing; global information environment is defining the work of foreign office; the ways of communication are diversified; innovative information technologies are introduced; fast exchange of information minimizes the importance of previously planned policy, fast decisions are emphasized and experts' role in negotiations becomes more important.

One of the most adequate ways of understanding the meaning of diplomacy nowadays is its division into two perceptions. The first is the narrow meaning of diplomacy, the second – the wide one. Talking about the narrow meaning of diplomacy, it is important to mention that it is based on traditional interpretations of diplomacy as the tool of foreign policy. In this case we talk about foreign affairs as government institutions. But if we take into consideration that 21st century diplomats work in other government organizations as well as that there are different actors in the international system we have to use a wider definition of diplomacy that offers a more exposed interpretation. In this case, diplomacy is usually closer to international communication and dialogs. Considering the aforementioned discussion, I want to

⁵ Evans, G., Newnham, J. *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*. London: Penguin Books, 1998. P. 130.

even argue that the role of diplomacy will be even more important in the future than it has been during the last twenty years. As Paul Sharp has recently written on the role of diplomacy and diplomats, “the demand for both is currently on the rise”.⁶

⁶ Sharp, P. *Diplomatic theory of international relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, Pp. 1-2.