The Missing Link in the Study of Diplomacy: The Management of the Diplomatic Service and Foreign Policy

Makumi Mwagiru

Abstract

This paper examines issues in the study of diplomacy and foreign policy. Its beginning point is that although there have been important contributions about the content of the foreign policy and diplomacy; there is a dearth of literature on issues of the management of foreign policy and diplomacy. The paper argues that the biggest universal challenge for foreign policy is its implementation. The paper hence challenges the traditional division of foreign affairs into policy and administrative aspects and makes a case for the review of this classical understanding of the dynamics of the making and implementation of foreign policy. It is argued that the study of the content of foreign policy must be twinned with the study of the administration of the diplomatic service, the lack of which constitutes the missing link in the study of diplomacy. Eventually, the paper advances the view that the study of diplomacy can only be enhanced by opening up both its epistemology and its practical context.

***Key words**: Diplomacy, foreign, policy, Kenya, implementation*

Introduction

There have been useful and important contributions to the understanding of the foreign policy. However, while there have been significant contributions on the *content* of foreign policy, the central issue of its *management* has not been addressed. And neither, in the intellectual history of states' foreign policy have there been discourses on the management of the foreign (i.e. *diplomatic*) service. This paucity of research on the twin issues of the management of foreign policy and of the Foreign Service, reflect the contemporary uni-dimensional aspect of the literature on, and approach to, studying foreign policy.

This paper argues that apart from purely its content, the largest challenge for foreign policy lies in its implementation. The proper management of foreign policy and of the diplomatic service are central to the success or failure of the implementation of foreign policy. Foreign policy plus the administration of the diplomatic service and of the policy itself give rise to the implementation of foreign policy. This means that the traditional context of dividing foreign affairs into the 'policy' and 'administrative' aspects needs review. If not, the implementation of foreign policy will continue being held hostage to the turf wars between policy makers and administrators.

This lack of twinning the study of the content and implementation of foreign policy with that of the administration of the diplomatic service and the foreign policy itself is the major missing link in the study of diplomacy. This paper contributes to the enhancement of the study of diplomacy by opening up both its epistemology, and its practical context. In this context, the paper builds on the earlier pioneering contribution on the issues and prospects of the management of the diplomatic service (Mwagiru, 2006); and together they constitute the building block for a thematic literature that will further enhance the study – and practice - of diplomacy.

The missing link in the study of diplomacy

Earlier approaches to diplomacy were of the view that as a discipline, it could not be theorized about. This reason was that diplomacy was essentially appreciated as an art and not as a science. As an art, it was classified together with diplomatic history, to which field its earlier literature belonged. In the context of diplomatic history, diplomacy was explained in terms of its historical development from the ancient times to the present (de Callieres, 1983; Gore-Booth, 1979; Nicolson, 1954; Mattingly, 1955). With the signal development in the evolution of diplomacy – the beginning of the age of permanent missions – diplomacy came to be appreciated not just as an art, but also as a science. This gave rise to the publishing of the first books on diplomacy. These earlier books commented on the practice and rules of diplomacy.

The entry of publications on the practice and rules of diplomacy began a long tradition of the contents of the books on diplomacy. Thus, texts on diplomacy explained diplomacy as either diplomatic history, as genealogy (der Derian, 1991), or as the rules of diplomacy and diplomatic practice (Gore-Booth, 1979; Denza, 1976; Hardy, 1978; e Silva, 1973; Dembinski, 1988). Similarly consular issues were treated in the same way, although texts on consular practice and law were fewer (Lee, 1961; Lee, 1966). The entry of international organizations as actors who enjoyed diplomatic immunities also produced literature in the same mould as those for diplomacy (Crosswell, 1952).

This historical preoccupation of the writing in diplomacy did not encourage the emergence of a strong literature on the management of the diplomatic service (Busk, 1967; Ichman, 1961; Nicolson, 1950; Thayer, 1960). However many memoirs of practitioners have tended to touch on aspects of the management of the diplomatic service, and of foreign policy, albeit their evidence is often weak because it is anecdotal (Kissinger, 1979; Kissinger, 1982; Gromyko, 1989; Carrington, 1988; Garba, 1987; Scott, 1981; Hempstone, 1997).

The second great debate in international relations – between traditional methodologies of analysis and the scientific method (Bull, 1969; Singer, 1969; Berns, 1061; Young, 1969; Phillips, 1974) – did not affect the approaches to explaining diplomacy much. The literature on diplomacy fell firmly within the traditional methods of analysis. The fact that this did not change following the second debate, encourages the view that from the perspective of diplomacy, the behavioural revolution fished in troubled waters, and

caught nothing. In particular among the major tenets of behaviourism was the belief in value freedom. That perspective could never flourish in diplomacy which exists to proclaim and champion national values and attributes.

This argument about the second debate and diplomacy much should be understood from two perspectives. First, the understanding of 'diplomacy' is a matter of definition, and some usage confounds diplomacy with the study of foreign relations or foreign policy (Stern, 2000). Secondly, although the behavioral revolution did not conquer the discipline of international relations, it contributed methodologically in prompting the use of multidisciplinary analysis, the accumulation of data, and the creation of sub-fields (or islands of theory in international relations) such as foreign policy analysis (Banks, 1984). Apart from creating islands of theory, it led to the renaissance of older fields, which *inter alia* were subjected to the behavioralist approach (Walt, 1991). Hence, if diplomacy is defined as international relations, or as foreign policy, then some elements of behaviorism can be discerned: like the study of foreign policy analysis itself, and the use of data in analysis, as exemplified in the *International Studies Quarterly*. This tendency has been felt in some aspects of diplomacy such the field of negotiations, as its contributions to *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, show.

Hence, diplomacy can be appreciated within the epistemology of the classical framework, or it may encompass the methodologies of the behavioural revolution. Whatever the case however, its study from these perspectives, has demonstrated a missing link. This missing link is centred on the implementation of foreign policy. The implementation of foreign policy is best achieved where there is an effective and efficient management of the diplomatic service, and of foreign policy. Where the administration of these does not exist, or is weak, there will be corresponding difficulties of the implementation of foreign policy. Since the end of foreign policy creation is implementation, this missing link has far reaching effects on the foreign policy of the country, since a foreign policy that is not implemented is in effect a non foreign policy.

This missing link in the study of diplomacy generally has meant that there has been no research in the area of the management of the diplomatic service and of foreign policy; and consequently, there have not been any academic publications in this area. This missing link has also been reflected in the teaching of diplomacy, particularly at the post-graduate level. The academic *ancien regime* was steeped in the notion that diplomacy, as a subject, could not be theorized. Thus the concentration in teaching diplomacy was normally on the rules and practice of diplomacy. In this sense the teaching of diplomacy entailed a study of its history, and of the rules enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

In the traditional teaching of diplomacy, there were some simulations on diplomatic negotiations (Kappeler, 1990). But, these did not deliver all that simulations and the use of game theory in negotiations ideally promise. The simulations, as practiced, were to help the student draft documents of negotiations such as briefs, and out some techniques of negotiations. Yet, simulations and game theory can be useful tools for decision makers. They can help to gain insights into structures of cooperation, clarify ideas about

conflict and cooperation, and illuminate different perspectives in negotiations, including the processes of complex negotiations, conflict management, and generally in various sectors of foreign policy (Zartman, 1977; Schelling, 1960; Axelrod, 1984; Bennet, 1987; Zagare, 1978; Nicholson, 1992).

The study of the management of the diplomatic service and foreign policy does not entail the study of so-called 'practical' aspects of diplomacy (Ahsani, 1990). It entails the study and analyses of diplomatic policies in certain areas of diplomacy, in this case areas like administering foreign policy, administration of the diplomatic service, such as posting policy, training policy, relationships among the different organs of diplomacy, implementing strategic plans for the ministry, prioritizing foreign policy, implementation and the like. The administration of the foreign/diplomatic service is more straightforward in terms of its content. This is not the case for the administration of foreign policy. The administration of foreign policy does not mean making foreign policy for the country; if it did so it would create more impediments to this area. The management of foreign policy is concerned with how foreign policy that has already been created can best be implemented. Since the majority of those involved in the implementation of foreign policy are in the diplomatic service, managing that service goes hand in hand with managing foreign policy.

Paradigm shifts vs. change in emphasis in foreign policy

Most changes in government are accompanied by the claim that there is a 'paradigm shift' in their foreign policy. There are also various explanations about the areas of foreign policy in which a paradigm shift has taken place. Two explanations are particular relevance to the theme of this paper. In explaining the reasons for a `paradigm shift, the minister for foreign affairs of Kenya in 2005 for example stated that in "the past, civil servants had made some major foreign policy decisions without the involvement of ministers…" (*Daily Nation*, 11 May 2006:3) and that there is a "paradigm shift aimed at focusing on what is beneficial to the country's people and economy and not mere prestige." (*Daily Nation*, 11 May 2006:3).

The notion of whether in such cases there has been a paradigm shift in foreign policy or only a mere change in emphasis needs closer analysis. A paradigm shift entails a scientific revolution, in which the old tools of problem-solving are overthrown, and new tools that will be used subsequently in solving the pressing problems of the day are identified and enshrined. This is the essence of Kuhnian discourse (Kuhn, 1962). Kuhn's thinking was accepted in the social sciences, albeit with some important modifications. One of these was that unlike in Kuhn's world of physical sciences, paradigms in the social sciences are not incommensurable. Indeed, in the social sciences, disciplines thrive and grow precisely because of their inter-paradigm competitions.

The commensurability of paradigms in the social sciences explains the growth of disciplines like international relations (Banks, 1985a; Banks, 1985b). However, it is also true that in of foreign policy – and diplomacy generally – paradigms in the sense that Kuhn explained them of being incommensurable, do exist in *practice*. In foreign policy,

there exist two viewpoints. One supports the incommensurability of paradigms; the opposing view argues paradigms in foreign policy are commensurable.

This unlikely sounding co-existence of the two views about paradigms happens because practitioners whose reputation and political survival depends on the foreign policy they create and how well it is implemented insist that their version of foreign policy is paramount. In doing this, they insist that officials in ministries of foreign affairs must either toe their line or quit. Hence during the tenure of a minister for foreign affairs, there is only one vision of foreign policy, and of the ways of achieving it. For example, Raphael Tuju, as minister for foreign affairs had a certain vision of Kenya's foreign policy, and the way it was to be attained. He believed that Kenya does not have to vie for membership of United Nations committees, because the concern should not be prestige, but what is good for the citizens and the economy. During the minister's tenure, that was the paradigm, and it was considered to be incommensurable.

On the other hand, the notion that foreign policy paradigms are not incommensurable still persists. For scholars, for example on whom the sword of Damocles will not fall because they disagree on the content of foreign policy, there will always be alternative explanations. Similarly, members of the opposition in parliament will offer different views about what the content of foreign policy should be, and about how best it should be implemented.

This raises the question whether there can be a 'paradigm shift' in foreign policy, or whether there is at best a change of emphasis. A paradigm shift requires first, that there should have been a paradigm in operation; secondly that there must have been a belief about its incommensurability; thirdly, the paradigm must have developed significant anomalies, making it unable to solve the pressing problems of the day; and fourthly a new paradigm must be identified, and has have began the process of becoming the problem solving tool in the discipline.

This explanation is important because the notion of 'paradigm shift' has been used rather loosely in the discourses about foreign policy. On the one hand, for example, strategic plans for ministries of foreign affairs claim that they represent a paradigm shift, meaning a revolution or a transformation in the way of thinking. On the other hand, others argue that there is a paradigm shift whose aim is to focus on issues that are beneficial to the people rather than to deliver mere prestige. While Kuhn himself used the term 'paradigm' in twenty-one different senses (Masterman, 1970), the essence of a paradigm in his reckoning was clear. A paradigm is a tool for problem solving and not something metaphysical (Masterman, 1970).

Clearly, neither of the two senses in which the word 'paradigm' has been used reflects its true meaning. In both what is essentially referred to as ways of thinking, basically metaphysical, rather than the tools to be used in problem solving in diplomacy and foreign affairs. In neither case is there mention of the existing paradigm that is being replaced, and its inability to solve the pressing diplomatic and foreign policy problems of a country. In both, the major challenge posed is the change of emphasis about how

ministries of foreign affairs will conduct themselves. This change of emphasis requires officials to think about their ministry differently and to desist from making policy without consulting the minister. While that might be a timely change of emphasis however, it does not amount to a paradigm shift.

Management of the diplomatic service and foreign policy

For a paradigm shift to emerge in the practice of diplomacy the new paradigm should be centred on problem solving. It should also suggest how the persistent problems of diplomacy can be managed through an alternative problem solving approach. The discourse should highlight the problems of diplomacy in practice, and how earlier diverse approaches have not managed to solve them.

The concepts of the management of the diplomatic service and of foreign policy are important for the sound implementation of foreign policy. Managing the diplomatic service properly requires that officials be used efficiently. In this way they, can give policy makers sound information on which to base their decisions. Managing foreign policy entails treating it as something that is dynamic, and which should be constantly nurtured for it to deliver foreign policy goods for the country. Foreign policy is hence not a dead letter existing only in documents. Indeed it should infuse all aspects, and relationships of the diplomatic service.

The management of the diplomatic service and of foreign policy share much in common. The biggest distinguishing feature is that the same people are involved in both. Those in the diplomatic service are also responsible for the implementation of foreign policy. The only difference in their management is contextual: managing the diplomatic service entails addressing the resources necessary for ensuring efficient implementation of the country's foreign policy. Managing foreign policy requires engaging the environments in which foreign policy can thrive.

Traditionally the distribution of labour in the leadership of the foreign ministry argued that managing the diplomatic service was the sole task of the permanent secretary, while the creation and management of foreign policy was the sole task of the minister. This framework is untenable. It was based on nice distinctions, which in practice are not easily distinguishable. It was also founded on inaccuracies in understanding. The management of foreign policy is different from the *creation* of foreign policy. The distinction is that the management of foreign policy concerns shaping the players, the organs, and the environment, so as to best serve the actor (Mwagiru, 2004). Managing the diplomatic service on entails creating a framework and an environment in which talented people serve in the diplomatic service, and where all the players are attuned to thinking about of the best ways they can implement foreign policy.

Those engaged in the diplomatic service also implement foreign policy. The same manager should ideally manage both. This is sensible. When ministers for foreign affairs argue that civil servants make major foreign policy decisions without involving them, it must be assumed that they mean making political foreign policy rather than

administrative decisions about the implementation of foreign policy. The confusion about the roles of the minister and the permanent secretary arise because of this misunderstanding. As a result, people begin talking at, and past, each other, rather than to each other.

In carrying out the management function it is necessary to make policy on the implementation of foreign policy, that is make policy about foreign policy. This is quite different from making foreign policy generally. The former is within the province of the permanent secretary; the latter within that of the minister. Inevitably, there will be an overlap in these two functions particularly between making foreign policy and coordinating the implementation of foreign policy. But these overlaps can be easily handled by discussions between the two key players rather than fights between them. Such turf wars are the result of a misunderstanding of each official's role; and because they talk past each other, they tend to misunderstand each other (Doyal & Harris, 1986). The problem is that both parties are unable – or unwilling – to translate each other's language of discourse into one they can understand. If they were able to translate their respective languages of discourse from each other, then they would be able to disagree with each other, rather than misunderstanding each other. In order for people to disagree, there must be enough that is conceptually common to both. In diplomacy there is much conceptually that is common to both. And the disagreements arising from that conceptual commonality would eventually serve to promote the practice of diplomacy, and in doing so enhance the implementation of foreign policy.

Management of the diplomatic service

The rationale for the management of the diplomatic service and some issues informing it have been noted elsewhere (Mwagiru, 2006). That discussion dealt especially with issues of the administrative policies of the ministry of foreign affairs – for example strategic planning, self-sustainability of diplomatic missions, and the creation of a professional structure of service. This paper will address issues of the personnel of the diplomatic service. This is because those who work in the diplomatic service can either make it or break it. They can also either make or break the implementation of foreign policy. The management of diplomatic service requires the creation of policies on various issues, including recruitment, training, and posting policy.

Recruitment policy

Throughout the world wherever the role of diplomacy is taken seriously, there are clear policies about recruitment into the Foreign Service. It is also appreciated that the requirements for diplomats are not the same as those for the general civil service. A recruitment policy should be founded on a very clear idea about the kind of people – and talents – require for the foreign ministry. As modern diplomacy has become specialized, different areas of specialization should be sought, or at least the potential for them should be identified early. Such a policy should adopt a three-tiered approach to recruiting in the diplomatic service. The first step should be a written examination. This would examine both knowledge and aptitude, in order to identify the temperaments required in the diplomatic service. This stage would include largely new graduates from the universities; and it would help to trim the numbers down. Those who pass the written examination

should enter the second stage of an internship, either at the ministry or a diplomatic mission. This internship should be regulated closely so the internee is observed, and their writing, social and other skills and strengths are noted. The internship should last about two months after which the practical performance of the candidates is graded. This stage would also help to weed out those who are not suited to the service. The third stage would be an oral interview and it is those who finally succeed here who would eventually be hired.

Training policy

Apart from a recruitment policy, a training policy is also necessary. Such a policy becomes relevant once recruitment has been done, and operates until the official retires from the diplomatic service. The training policy should be geared towards ensuring that the new officials gain post-graduate qualifications to ensure a wide availability of specialized knowledge. Secondly the training policy should be geared to ensuring that all the new entrants have a professional qualification in. During the period of acquiring professional qualifications, specialized qualifications in various areas of diplomatic practice, for example, drafting documents of diplomacy, diplomatic negotiations, and the like should be required (Mwagiru, 2006). This aspect of training policy would take two or three years to accomplish. After that, entrants should be required to continue working at the headquarters for a similar period before being posted out.

The second aspect of the training policy should be concerned with continuing training. This is an aspect that should happen throughout a person's professional career. Continuity training means training beyond the first phase. An official who undergoes a course on diplomacy ten years into service is not undergoing continuing education, because s(he) will not be building on any knowledge, but picking up knowledge s(h)e should have acquired before. The major purpose of continuing knowledge is to acquaint officials with new knowledge, developments, and assessments in the numerous areas touching on diplomacy and its practice. Because continuing education is so important to a functional diplomatic service, provision should be made of the intervals after which a programme of continuing education should be undertaken. Sound recruiting and training policies, if they are functional, can contribute immensely to the elevation of the diplomatic service from the ordinary to the inspired, and even sublime. Indeed, it should earn the kind of praise given to France's diplomatic representatives, who were said to "have received an exhaustive, exhausting, elevated and elevating mental training, so that their minds operate with a rapidity and lucidity that is the envy of their colleagues." (Hayter, 1960).

Posting policy

A third important policy in the management of the diplomatic service is a posting policy (Mwagiru, 2004). A functional posting policy is crucial because officials of the diplomatic service, all over the world, spend about half of their working lives in stations abroad. This requires that their tenure should be managed in a way that takes their welfare and well being into account, creating an environment in which the country and its foreign policy are well served. Many countries in Africa have at best an *ad hoc* posting *practice,* rather than a policy. In this practice some officials stay at headquarters for

many years after a posting is due, while others move from one posting to another without ever touching the home base.

Posting is an important aspect of diplomatic life. Indeed, by definition, diplomatic service entails a service in which the officials will serve abroad as part of their duties. Working at the headquarters of the ministry of foreign affairs is elevating because the capital is a diplomatic centre in its own right, where officials can partake of extensive diplomacy. Similarly, working in a diplomatic mission is equally elevating because the diplomat encounters the other side of the coin, being the representative of the country in a foreign diplomatic centre. Posting has a lot of benefits for the practitioner of diplomacy. It enables officials to serve in different places with different languages, social systems and the like. It also enables diplomats abroad to make useful diplomatic contacts while abroad. Some of these contacts last for a lifetime and come in handy during various phases of a diplomatic career.

Posting has other important dimensions because it does not involve only officials, but also their families. Indeed it is in the sense of foreign postings that the family can most accurately be described as part of diplomacy and its practice. The family dimension makes it imperative to have a posting policy. In diplomatic law, the family of the diplomatic agent forming part of his household is granted the same immunities and privileges as those of the diplomatic agent. This reflects the theoretical foundations of diplomatic law of diplomatic law that certain people, like the members the family, may be considered an extension of the legal personality of the diplomatic agent. The rationale is that the family represents what is dearest to the diplomatic agent; and hence threats to it may compromise the unfettered exercise of that agent's functions. Hence, there must be a posting policy that takes into account *inter alia* the welfare of the diplomatic agent's family. The family of the diplomatic agent abroad is subject to many pressures, which can lead to depressions, family breakdown, and even suicide (Mwagiru, 2004). This aspect of the posting policy should recognize that a diplomatic agent whose family faces these problems will not to concentrate on the job; consequently, the implementation of the country's Foreign Service will suffer.

These aspects of the diplomatic life require a well thought out posting policy for the ministry. Such a posting policy will be concerned with a diversity of issues, and not just the physical postings of officials. Whatever else it might do, the policy should also create a professional, career map for each official, so that they know precisely where they will be at any period of their career. A posting policy that does this will encompass aspects of the training policy. Once an officer knows how the ministry has plotted their career – in terms for example of the locations of their posting and their job designations – that officer can choose the training and specialization courses to pursue, and identify from time to time the sort of refresher courses to attend. A posting policy that caters for training will help to deliver the complete diplomat for the country.

Management of foreign policy

The management of foreign policy raises separate but related issues to those of the management of the diplomatic service. Matters of the management of foreign policy are especially relevant for the implementation of foreign policy. In cases such as the coordination of foreign policy making, this area touches on the creating of foreign policy. While it might raise the eyebrows of over-suspicious ministers, this aspect is relevant to officials because they are also free to participate in the process of foreign policy making. The major issues that are of concern here are the coordination of foreign policy making, the coordination of negotiations, the management of the diplomacy of conflict management, and the harmonization of the diplomatic missions' reporting function.

Coordination of foreign policy making

This function is one of the most important aspects of the management of foreign policy. The ministry of foreign affairs exists in order to formulate foreign policy, and to implement it. Coordination touches on both these functions, and can be a bone of contention between ministers and officials. Coordination of foreign policy making involves various things. For example, if a minister is leaning towards making a certain policy, s(he) might want all the dimensions in that policy discussed, and its pros and cons identified. It should be the function of officials, especially those who work in the department concerned, to provide this input and advice. In doing so, officials should consult widely among various groups and people with interests and knowledge about the specific issue. If this approach of coordination is done properly and professionally, the minister will be able to make the foreign policy decision with the best information and the best analyses possible.

Coordination of foreign policy requires officials in the ministry to negotiate those aspects of the emerging foreign policy with those who have different opinions and perspectives. The fatal aspect for an emerging foreign policy is for officials to consider themselves to be the only stakeholders in the emerging foreign policy. Doing so, would in essence, be coordinating a foreign policy for themselves, rather than for the country. A good example of the function of coordinating foreign policy making is the creation of a written document of the principles governing the foreign policy. In such an exercise, there are many interests that shape the direction of foreign policy. These include the ministers, members of parliament, the ministry of foreign affairs, other ministries especially those directly involved in foreign relations, academics, non-governmental organizations, the media, and citizens at large. Coordinating all these is a huge task, but a national obligation. It is best done on the basis that many interests and groups have direct interests in the foreign policy and must be given a hearing. If this strategic map of players is not consulted fully, the document will be unable to raise the kind of bi-partisan support necessary for an effective foreign policy.

Managing the diplomacy of conflict management

The analysis of the diplomacy of conflict management as an aspect of foreign policy is an important part of the analysis of foreign policy (Mwagiru, 1999; Mwagiru, 2000; Mwagiru, 2004b). A diplomacy of conflict management chooses practices such as

negotiation and mediation as the method to manage conflicts abroad, which could have an impact on the country. It is this aspect of the management of the diplomacy of conflict management that foreign affairs ministries should concentrate on.

Various problems dog the practice of this diplomacy. This diplomacy often leads to the president having a leading role, which is not a surprising development; the marginalization of foreign ministers which is a more serious problem; and the centralization of foreign policy bureaucracy in the diplomacy of conflict management. This bureaucratization of the diplomacy of conflict management is probably one reason why ministers complain that technocrats make some important foreign policy decisions without consulting them.

A country's entry into the diplomacy of conflict management creates two sets of tensions in ministries of foreign affairs. Firstly, there is a conflict between the policy and administrative arms of the foreign policy establishment. The essence of this conflict was that the policy and administrative roles became mixed up. Indeed, one of its structural effects is the personalization of foreign policy by centering the administrative and political functions in one person, in this case the permanent secretary.

There have been attempts to help solve such conflicts as the ones between the permanent secretary and the minister. The emerging trend is the appointment of special envoys, to be the chief mediators. These are envoys of the president, and ideally should report to him. Some are able to report directly to, and receive instructions from, the president. Others however, for lack of the contacts or the political clout, are not able to the same, and the process – and their reputation - equally suffered.

The appointment of special envoys, while a useful device in rationalizing the management of the diplomacy of conflict management, can lead to serious administrative conflicts. With the entry of this new player conflicts develop between the minister, the permanent secretary, and the special envoy. Here, the envoys appointed have to deal with the minister for foreign affairs. Ministers are political competitors, and the tensions involve who knew the business better, or has more political clout. At the same time, there are permanent secretaries who the special envoy must also deal with and with whom there can be personality and administrative conflicts. Besides these three players and their offices, hidden from the battle is the president whose office cannot be kept out. Such conflicts play out like a classic Greek tragedy.

There are also tensions that develop in the relationship between foreign policy as a conceptual, strategic, and long-term concern, and the idea of diplomatic practice, and particularly its management. In the context of the diplomacy of conflict management these conflicts can be very severe and can turn conceptual tables right round. In the diplomacy of conflict management the mediation of conflicts in the neighbourhood, and beyond is considered to be very high politics. This means that it involves the president personally, and he identifies those to be engaged with him in the high policy. Hence, the permanent secretary by using that device can side-step the minister, who for reasons of political survival cannot be seen to be challenging the presidents choice of lieutenant in

the high stakes of the diplomacy of conflict management. The professionals in the ministries of foreign affairs also enter into the equation. If they are not involved in the conduct of conflict management, the cumulative effect is that the practice of diplomacy is left behind by the very foreign policy which it sought to serve, and which it has a duty to manage in order to ensure its best implementation.

Coordination of diplomatic negotiations

There is a very persuasive view that negotiations are the most important function of diplomacy, and of diplomatic missions and agents. This view is informed by the fact that in modern diplomacy, the function of negotiation is pervasive. Indeed, in multilateral diplomatic missions the core function is negotiating. As even bilateral diplomacy has become increasingly multilateralised, so the function of negotiation has also come to dominate it. Apart from being just a pervasive aspect of diplomatic practice however, negotiations are also an important part of the implementation of foreign policy. As a function of diplomatic practice, and as an aspect of the implementation of foreign policy, the task of coordinating negotiations forms an important element of the management of foreign policy.

Practitioners all over profess to be great practitioners of the negotiating arts. This may well be so, to the extent that those who learnt their trade under the diplomatic *ancien regime* did so in the belief that diplomacy could not be theorized. But diplomacy is now a science also, at least to the extent that its practice must be based not only on a deep understanding of its epistemological ethos, but also on an appreciation of the ability of every phase of the negotiation process to move some way towards delivering foreign policy inputs for the country. In the age of diplomacy as an art, which is still pervasive, the process of negotiation was appreciated only from one of its phases, the around-the-table negotiations. The science of the diplomacy of negotiations properly began with the understanding that the process of negotiations long predates the around-the-table negotiations. The process begins before the around-the-table negotiations, and continues long after the discussions at the negotiating table have ended. Thus, the process of diplomacy has come to be divided into the pre-negotiation phase, the negotiation itself, and the post-negotiation (or implementation) phase (Saunders, 1984; Saunders, 1985; Stein, 1989).

Coordinating negotiations means ensuring that all the negotiations done on behalf of the country are done properly, whether they are taking place at home or abroad. Once the negotiation process is divided into the three stages, it makes it easier to manage every stage, and ensure that all the tasks for the process are done. The three stages of negotiation are applicable to bilateral and multilateral negotiations. The artists of diplomacy only recognize the second phase; the scientists of diplomacy appreciate the wider dimensions of the process. In a multilateral negotiation, such as the United Nations General Assembly, the negotiations are prolonged, taking place over three months. The pre-negotiation phase for these involves researching and writing briefs to guide the negotiators during the sessions. Writing briefs for negotiations at the General Assembly

also involves prioritizing the agenda items, to make sure that those that are important for the country's interests are handled seriously. It is clear that the pre-negotiation stage for these negotiations is a long-term issue. It is not something that can be done in the one or two months prior to the General Assembly, where writing briefs entails copying verbatim the briefs of the year before, which themselves were constructed in a similar way. Indeed, writing of such briefs should not be left to the most junior official around, who might know little about the venue, and less about the process of negotiation. The pre-negotiation for this kind of negotiation is a year long activity that involves a lot of diplomacy, a lot of research, consultations, and concertation. This is true of all negotiations, whether multilateral or bilateral. To ensure that the country reaps the best benefits from negotiations, they must be coordinated carefully and professionally.

The coordination of negotiations is also crucial in the context of peace negotiations or mediations which are part of the policy of the diplomacy of conflict management. In mediations of this kind, similar phases of the process have been conceptualized. For a country that sees these activities as an important part of its foreign policy, it becomes imperative that the activities of the various stages be done meticulously. In mediation for instance, activities in the pre-mediation stage involve making sure that the time is ripe for negotiations. In this sense, doing this phase properly would prevent the problem of summoning a peace conference before knowing what to do once the conference is convened. Saunders has captured the challenges well:

> "Crucial as it is, around-the-table negotiation is only a later part of a larger process needed to resolve conflicts by peaceful means. In many cases, persuading parties to a conflict to a negotiated settlement is even more complicated, time-consuming, and difficult than reaching agreement once negotiations have began. Those who try to resolve conflict peacefully need to think in terms of a process that deals with the obstacles to negotiation as well as the hurdles in negotiation. Unless we enlarge our scope to understand why parties to a conflict will not talk, we are not constructing a theory of negotiation most likely to give negotiation a chance." (Saunders, 1985:201).

In diplomatic negotiations and mediations, the third phase – the post-negotiation or mediation – is crucially important, because it is during this stage that the ground is laid for implementing all that was agreed during the negotiation or mediation phase. In terms of foreign policy, some benefits will have been realized by being seen to be mediating a conflict that threatens either regional or international security. But the real long-term benefits will be derived after the implementation stage. Thus, it is important that the implementation stage be coordinated efficiently. This will avoid the problem of the country having to spend a lot of time and resources engaging in a process, only for the process – and its benefits – to be reaped by someone else, who may not have sown it. Indeed, coordinating the pre-negotiation or mediation stage, because of the outcomes that might result, the implementation stage becomes a crucial element of the management of foreign policy.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the outlines of two of the most important aspects of diplomatic practice, namely the management of the diplomatic service, and that of the foreign policy. Although these two dimensions of diplomatic practice are crucial to the implementation of foreign policy, it is surprising that the study of diplomacy has not engaged them as central components. Since modern diplomacy began, the study of diplomacy has required an appreciation of its history, and knowledge about the rules of its practice. In the latter case the rules studies were those developing in customary law; after the entry of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, these have guided the full substance of the teaching about diplomatic practice.

It is evident that –like elsewhere – matters of the management of the diplomatic service, and of foreign policy have not been accorded the primacy of place in diplomatic practice. Thus, rather than have policies on these central elements, there exists practices, which, in their nature, tend to be *ad hoc*, and hence operating without a fundamental glue that links them to a forward looking diplomatic practice.

At the same time however, some aspects of diplomacy – such as the diplomacy of conflict management – show the real potential for enabling countries to reach beyond their grasp. Diplomacy is a complex undertaking, and a hard master; but states must not despair. The proper management of foreign policy and diplomacy has the potential to confront the awful challenges of foreign policy and diplomacy. For this reason, the study of diplomacy can only be further enhanced by taking on board issues of the management of the diplomatic service and of foreign policy.

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