

Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Crossroad for ‘Small States’ Amidst Global Power Play

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Abstract

Whereas diplomacy in international relations still remain to be the use of negotiations and discussions in the daily interactions of states and non – state actors, the former takes precedence without a minimalist approach to what the former brings to diplomacy in the world system. The imperative of diplomacy has spread from its inception to the contemporary pitting its practicality with what the discipline ought to be. In this scenario, the traditionally big states seem to be cognizant that the ‘small states’ have a central place for proper global balance of power and to their success. This robust – dynamic nature of diplomacy creates crossroads of a kind in the 21st Century. In this matrix, this paper would want to interrogate the central idea by; *examining changes in diplomacy through to the 21st Century, assess the systemic vis a vis practical attributes of diplomacy in global power play of the 21st Century, and finally to establish possible strategies that ‘small states’ can take in their diplomacy in the 21st Century.* At the end of this discourse, the field of diplomacy will have been enriched by suggestions that diplomacy as a practice and a language among modern states is about what works – this being the reason for its constant change. The study will also underscore that ‘small state diplomacy’ is bound to re-ignite the Westphalian principle of equality of states in the 21st Century despite size and other dispositional attributes of states. The exigency/flashpoint of the 21st Century is its proneness to being an open field for practical purposes due to technology explosion.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Practical Diplomacy, Small State Diplomacy, Global Power Play, Traditional Diplomacy, Modern Diplomacy, 21st Century Diplomacy

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Introduction and Background to the Study

Diplomacy takes place in the world system through a number of events, conversations, communications, etc.... Modernization has added premium to the earlier form of diplomacy and well adored – representational (still the mainstream) through electronic communications, as well as many *informal formal* interactions in diplomatic intercourse. Many times these meetings are public and private. They can be held in the respective countries or at international organizations headquarters like the United Nations or elsewhere, and even likewise at regional bases in the wake of regionalism. Diplomacy does not mean state relations are rosy affairs. It is true often leaders may disagree on international religious policies, sports fora, trade policy, foreign policy, or other issues of importance to them. Amidst these, diplomacy is often encouraged to calm violence in settling disputes.

As often times referred to mean international diplomacy, the discipline diplomacy has been an integral part of international relations for centuries, and yet, continues to be a critical component of international relations work. As Hocking et’al. (2012) explains international diplomacy to mean, “the practice of public diplomacy has assumed centre stage. Whilst for some these may be welcome developments, for others they are deviations from traditional diplomatic functions of political interpretation, reporting and policy analysis.” Diplomacy is ever-changing in international relations. New elements must be kept in mind when thinking about how diplomacy is done. While the state actors continue to play a critical role in diplomacy, the advent of the Internet and the various forms of media, has led to the rise in non-state actors. Hocking et al. (2012) point, it is not just the rise of NGOs but the expansion in the number and variety of international actors empowered by the ICT and social media that need to be taken into account, but rather, as they extend beyond traditionally known actors to more amorphous civil society groups.

Key to confronting crossroads requires new approaches in diplomacy such as ‘coalitions of the willing’. In the yester years (traditionally diplomacy) diplomacy was centered on matters of war (conflict), and economics (often in the form of international trade). Much of the past diplomacy was concentrated on state security, territorial integrity. State security still matters but additionally; there is a great deal of attention to human security which requires knowledge of the same in global spectrum. The new approaches/ medium increasingly portend risks which ought to be checked such as cyber security, wiki leaks, and over and above how diplomats are to adopt a commercial role (what used to be consulate role is now core).

Manojlovic and Thorheim (2007) affirm, “Although global political and social systems are forever changing, the relevance and importance of diplomacy as a tool of international relations remains as pressing as ever. Ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) and their professionally trained diplomats remain highly significant actors in

the conduct of international affairs, despite fundamental changes to the Westphalian state system. The institution of diplomacy has indeed shown remarkable resilience and an ability to adapt to change rather than withering away as some observers have suggested. Although it has changed shape to accommodate new actors, concerns and technology, the basic element of diplomacy remains the same, namely the resolution of international conflicts in a peaceful manner by means of communication, negotiation and information-gathering. This being highly relevant within the fields of international business and the non-profit third sector.

In this crossroad, two parallels as important as they are seem to cause academic and professional jitteriness; *representation diplomacy* and *diplomatic representation*. The former is issue instigated action while the latter is issue expectant orientation. In the first instance there is no compelling need to have a representation among friendly states, instead the body diplomacy should be prepared with reactionary measures whereas the second parallel thinks that diplomacy is; traditional thus friendly exchanges are a necessity in the 1815 Vienna order, it provides mechanisms for real-time readiness to deal with arising issues, and considering that costs of 'presence in diplomacy' is a display of good relations. In this debate, according to Manojlovic and Thorheim (2007), representation has always been referred to as one of the central elements of diplomatic study and practice. Not only are there complications in defining theoretical aspects of representation, but also those associated with practical issues, such as what is being represented and to whom. In its conception and execution, representation contains a certain symbolic dimension and serves as a symbol of differing approaches to understanding diplomacy as an activity. In order to determine the utility of diplomacy in the contemporary world, different sides argue that residential bilateral diplomacy is either becoming increasingly irrelevant or that it is still upholding its importance. Such debates have been conducted under the veil of much broader discussions concerning the changes facing the international system. Bearing in mind the complexity of the contemporary international environment, transformations in the structures of diplomacy indicate the ways in which the state is responding to and managing change.

In a more analytical sense, whether at the behest of 'big or small states', diplomacy of 21st century has no uniformity of conceived thought among international relation scholars. They concur changes exist but it projects continuity of same practice in different environmental dispensations. Grossman (2014) confess that sometimes *when I* make a presentation about a vision for "21st-century" diplomacy, I wonder what is really new. Is this a "revolution in diplomacy" like the one in the mid-1400s described by Garrett Mattingly in his classic work, *Renaissance Diplomacy*? Is it similar to the changes identified by Harold Nicolson in his often politically incorrect, but still astute, *Diplomacy*, or those analyzed by Henry Kissinger in his monumental *Diplomacy*? Is there "new diplomacy" in Russian President Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea and his continuing effort to destabilize eastern Ukraine? What relevance is 21st-century diplomacy to the 150,000 thousand dead and nine million displaced in Syria's civil war? What is 21st-century diplomacy's answer to the "Islamic State"? And is Beijing's political, psychological and military pressure on its neighbors in the South China Sea a reminder of the staying power of a more traditional, perhaps even timeless, diplomacy?

What Grossman and other Euro – centric writers neglect to depict is a question of 21st century diplomacy onslaught for Africa's resources – new and old and China vs Western Allies in Africa. A plethora of three serious issues also cloud 21st century which seem new unlike Grossman dilemma above; the emphasis on environmental diplomacy, push and shove over economic diplomacy (a confusion of unipolarism and multipolarism existing side by side), and a seeming global deterioration of human rights. There is a marked visibility and invisibility of 'big and small states' alike in the 21st century diplomacy.

Whereas the crossroads is not new in the field of international relations where previously it existed in terms of polar divide of USA and allies against USSR and allies. The crossroads has shifted again clearly depicting USA – Western Eurocentric vis a vis Sinocentric divide. The 'small states' diplomacy in the twenty first century finds itself torn in between both for political and economic ends. This era, though, is not one marked by ideology for big powers but on one hand the striving to sustain the prior to held power while progressively and ambitiously for China it is about whether they will oust the combined USA/Western Europe global dominance. The 'small states' through the realization of their power outside the traditional definition linger in between the duel as benefactors and the much needed providers of dynamic equilibrium among these major competitors (balance of power) through their alliances. They would have been very vulnerable in the Pre – Cold War with tinkering politics but now, in their West – East swing they still make important global players to either.

Diplomacy at Crossroads: What is the Problem?

Diplomacy of the present continues to have a very strong link with the diplomacy of the past yet the manner in which it is conducted portray variance. This disparity causes many to imagine that the old diplomacy was *ideal based* whereas new diplomacy is *reality based*, necessitating the adoption of practical methods by state actors especially which have since been interpreted often times as undiplomatic yet so pragmatic. The manner of this departure again (of practical diplomacy of the 21st Century to the traditional – theoretical diplomacy) has been exacerbated by the question of 'big and small' states amidst global power play. As the 'big states' endeavour to

redefine their locus in the polarity shifts, the ‘small states with advantages of globalization, regionalism, and the same shifts become more optimistic of creating a meaningful gain and influence in the mix. More of the conjuncture at the heart of preservation of the good interstate institution is the openness of practice of diplomacy through technology in the 21st Century.

Theoretical Discussion

In the complex (Murray, 2006), multi-actor and modern diplomatic environment the ‘impression’ of a solid body of diplomatic theory is no longer adequate. Weaknesses in diplomatic theory have become more apparent as the diplomatic environment becomes more complex. As the environment becomes more complex there is need for diplomatic theory to react and change accordingly.

Attempts according to Der Derian, J. (1987a) to address the frailty of diplomatic theory are not novel. They are, however, rare. For example, the weakness of diplomatic theory prompted James Der Derian to firmly ‘assert the need for a theory of diplomacy’. Wight in Der Derian argued that: diplomacy has been particularly resistant to theory. For Der Derian (Der Derian, 1987b), existing theories of diplomacy tend to be underdeveloped and lacking in theoretical rigor. In addition, Der Derian felt that explicit and substantial works on diplomatic theory are conspicuous by their absence in the diplomatic studies field. Der Derian decided it was time to embrace diplomatic theory *sui generis*. In essence, Der Derian sought to ‘fill a gap in the field: the gap of diplomatic theory’. Explicit theoretical works (Hocking, 1997) are only a recent occurrence in the diplomatic studies field. In addition, they are hardly numerous, which could suggest, as does Hocking, that existing theoretical works on diplomacy ‘tell us all we need to know’ in relation to modern diplomacy.

A similar avoidance of the basic tenets of diplomatic theory is apparent within Berridge’s Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger. Berridge (2001) relies upon the ‘classic texts’ to illustrate ‘the evolution of diplomatic theory’ from the 15th century till the 20th. For Berridge, modern diplomatic theory relates to ‘the business of a multiplicity of states’ and the practical activity of diplomacy, which is heavily influenced by a slow historical development. Berridge does elucidate several concise theoretical observations on diplomacy, which include: diplomacy has ‘no true end or purpose’; ‘negotiation should wait for the right season’; diplomats ‘need not keep their promises to foreign governments if this does not serve the interests of their own states’; diplomacy is about ‘permanent rather than sporadic negotiation conducted with wartime enemies as well as peacetime friends’; and finally, that ‘lobbying, gleaning information and negotiation are staple functions’ of diplomacy.

That both Berridge and Lauren (Bayliss and Smith, 2005) fail to elucidate the central tenets of diplomatic theory exemplifies a common occurrence in the diplomatic studies field. Where the explicit diplomatic theory literature is concerned a concise bullet-point description is difficult to extract. Such deficiency in diplomatic theory is apparent when compared to the rigour of IR theory. Berridge (2002) asserts that, the impression of diplomatic theory as robust is understandable. Within most diplomatic works implicit references to the foundations of diplomatic theory do exist.

Commonly, there are four central tenets of diplomatic theory that can be extracted with some difficulty. *Firstly*, that diplomatic theory is applicable to the state system and the traditional diplomacy that ‘greases’ it. This form of diplomacy is, *secondly*, conventional, official and professional and executed primarily through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or an equivalent diplomatic institution. *Thirdly*, this form of diplomacy is influenced by a long period of historical development, where evolution has been incremental rather than radical. Familiarity and continuity of diplomatic method are thus, *fourthly*, central to theorizing on state-to-state diplomacy. Within diplomatic studies, the state, and its traditional diplomatic institution, is thus endorsed as the ‘only diplomatic actor of significance’ in the modern diplomatic environment (Holsti, 2004).

Disciplines that are organized and integral require that practicality become an outcome of a theory. As well in practical diplomacy, the support of existing theories is essential. In theorization herein, we consider the contestations and find them to avidly fit into three broad schools of diplomatic thought; *the Traditional, Nascent, and Innovative* as validly remaining relevant in classifying and ordering the many disparate views on diplomacy. Whereas in no wise can one ignore the traditionalist theory of diplomacy, the paper in discussing practical diplomacy within the context described and set finds the last two most fitting; the nascent and the innovative theories.

Trying to perspectivize diplomatic thought in theory, we underscore Elaine and Nathan who are both Professors of political theory. In their words (Grimsley, 2018), whereas Elaine focuses her studies and research on empirical political theory in simplest terms as being, focused on explaining ‘what is’ through observation, where scholars seek to generate a hypothesis - a proposed explanation for some phenomena that can be tested empirically; on the other hand, Nathan’s focus is on normative political theory which is concerned with ‘what ought to be.’ The concern about how the world should be and exploring values and what should be done based upon those values. We conclude from this that theories are principles, ideas, or a system of ideas that explain, describe, and predict situation(s) or phenomenon succinctly and interrelatedly. In the current dispensation when handling practical diplomacy of 21st Century being at crossroads, it is foundational to assert that the Nathan’s normative guide is an

idealistic position reminiscent to the traditional diplomatic theory as opposed to Elaine's empirical theory (what is) that authoritatively reflect practical diplomacy of 21st Century in light of the nascent and innovative diplomatic theories.

This practical focus in diplomatic textbooks is significant, after all diplomacy is a profession and it is important to postulate on its professional nature. However, by focusing on the practical nature of diplomacy, diplomatic theory is largely ignored. In the former case, we theorize on a profession and an institutionalized activity, in the latter on the 'thoughts and ideas' of academics involved in the diplomacy studies field (Jackson, 2002). According to Murray (2006), textbooks claiming to be diplomatic theory are in fact geared towards the many practical aspects of diplomacy. Such 'conventional accounts' of diplomacy usually include: a narration of the progressive story of diplomatic history; the organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the formulation of foreign policy; the functions of the embassy; the qualities of the diplomat; and different accounts dealing with issues ranging from negotiation to immunities, and from international trade or law to etiquette and protocol.

The traditional approach to writing on diplomacy has several synonyms: statist, state-centric or rationalist being common (Harnes, 2003). The tradition in this case is to continue to emphasize the centrality of the state to diplomacy. Continuity allows each generation of Traditionalists to build on the foundations laid by their theoretical forefathers. Each of the Traditionalists relies on, develops and expresses an admiration for the work of their predecessors. Satow, for example, writing two centuries later considered the work of De Callieres as a mine of political wisdom. (Berridge, 2001). In *The Evolution of the Diplomatic Method* (1957) Nicolson too expresses admiration for the work of his traditional forefathers regarding de Callieres' work as 'the best manual on diplomatic method ever written.' And the title of G. R. Berridge's *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger* (2001) indicates an admiration for the earlier scholars writing on diplomacy.

Traditionalists share five common assumptions (Murray, 2013); *First*, they describe diplomacy as an almost exclusive state function. They infer that diplomacy is the privileged domain of professional diplomats, conducted almost exclusively by Foreign Service personnel and officials from Foreign Ministries. *Second*, Traditionalists interpret diplomacy as the study of the international realm of sovereign states. Traditionalists, thirdly, concentrate on diplomacy's role in relation to a classic political-military agenda. *Fourth*, Traditionalists consider diplomatic and political history as central to their school of thought. The study of diplomacy, they argue, demands an embracing of the distant as well as the recent past. *Fifth*, Traditionalists write prescriptive guides to diplomacy where they theorize on the practice of diplomacy. It is our view, in addition to what proponents such as De Callieres, Satow, Nicolson, and Berridge affirm we find there is associational link of diplomacy here to what other scholars (Jackson and Murray above) have termed 'holders of good offices'.

Within the rational tradition according to Sharp (2009), individual human beings are seen as moral agents exercising their free will in the service of their interests and what they regard as good. They can behave wisely and well or foolishly and badly, and by so doing, they can either help or harm themselves and others. In this regard, kings and emperors, presidents and prime ministers differ from the rest of us only in terms of the potentially greater consequences of their encounters with what Wight called "the same old melodramas" of international life. Like us, however, they exercise their free will in circumstances that make it more or less easy to be wise and good.

The second school, the Nascent school is almost polemically opposed to Traditionalism and most certainly emerged to challenge the dominant Traditionalist school. The statist parochialism inherent to Traditionalism means that 'such a perspective plays into the hands of those forces which view [traditional] diplomacy as increasingly removed from the real problems – and solutions – facing the world in the post-Cold War years' (Holsti, 2004). Scholars from this group focus on emerging forms of alternate diplomacy: hence the label Nascent.

Nascent scholars, share common assumptions and generalizations, allowing us to speak of a distinct School; *First*, Nascent theorists challenge the notion that diplomacy be interpreted in a rigid, precise or authoritative fashion, concentrating on the role of the state. These scholars, *secondly*, view the state and its diplomacy as blocking change to a more pacific international relations system. They can be described as 'those who regard the state as an obstacle to world order'. *Third*, Nascent scholars argue that the traditional diplomatic institution is in a period of crisis and obsolescence. Der Derian, for example, writes of the 'crisis in which diplomacy finds itself' (Der Derian, 1987a) and Riordan of the continuing fragmentation of traditional diplomacy 'where no country, however powerful, will be immune.' The obsolescence accredited to the traditional way of writing and thinking on diplomacy has led nascent scholars, *fourth*, to focus theoretical efforts on alternate diplomatic actors. The twenty-first century has provided the opportunity for these non-state actors to practice diplomacy through the many avenues, pathways and partnerships that now exists beyond the image of a traditional diplomatic gatekeeper. 'Today there are many gates to international relations.

The view of the innovative school is not far from the nascent, their problem is equally the traditionalist approach. Though they come out as a middle thought, it leans much on the nascent as it theorizes diplomacy. The Innovative school (Murray, 2013), emerged (largely) as a result of the two different schools previously described. As demonstrated, various scholars interpret modern diplomacy differently, in particular the questionable relationship between the incumbent state and emerging non-state actors.

Where Traditionalists and Nascent scholars are concerned, such approaches still yield cantilevered bridges since their builders do not significantly relax the fundamental assumptions that distinguish the contending research traditions (Sil, 2000). The result (Hocking, 1999) is that the student of diplomacy is presented with two different interpretations of modern diplomacy: a Traditional and a Nascent. Therefore, a middle ground, one that privileges both the state and the non-state, is conspicuous by its absence. Scholars from this group share five common assumptions or generalizations, which once grouped confirm the existence of the Innovative school of diplomatic thought.

The *first* assumption common to the Innovators is their criticism of the divisionary relationship between the Traditional and Nascent schools. This exclusivity is regressive and damaging because it encourages competition of opinion at the expense of accuracy. Traditionalist and Nascent scholars alike become consumed with defending their theories and thus stand accused of embellishing notions of diplomacy which do not exist (Newsom, 1989). *Secondly*, for the Innovators, polarization of diplomatic thought forces the observer of modern diplomacy into making a binary either/or choice (diplomacy is either relevant or obsolete, dead or alive, state or non-state, and so on). This confused and unfocused 'dialogue can result in two lines of divergent argument' which bogs the diplomatic studies field in sterile and unproductive debate (Hocking, 1999). Banishing or dismissing such either/or, new/old or state versus non-state rhetoric is a *third commonality* of the Innovators. They do so through a continuous and objective (re)appraisal of the state/non-state relationship (Thakur, 2006). Diplomacy is related to the positive networks and plural relationships they believe exist between diplomatic actors of all creeds.

Fourthly, they believe (Murray, 2013) that the modern diplomatic environment is best understood not in either/or terms but from an approach that values either/or opinions. This form of theoretical eclecticism is yet another distinguishing hallmark whose end result is an impartial school of thought which stresses on mutuality. *Finally*, innovators argue that the term diplomacy is applicable to groups, not only states but also nascent actors such as CSOs or MNCs who play a significant role in modern international relations the transformed environment of actors, issues, and modes of communication within which diplomats function.

Methodological Issues

This study strictly adopts a descriptive qualitative approach as to method and design and supplemented by case study design to bring out the elements of practical diplomacy from selected live examples. The nature of diplomacy and the field of international relation, scholars and practitioners would agree is more qualitative thus best described. The descriptive and case study designs complement each other to generate the crossroads of practical diplomacy of 21st Century and the theoretical diplomacy as written by scholars. The designs are better backed by content analysis.

Farah et al (2015) assert the principal tools of research for scholars and practitioners in the field of Diplomacy and International Relations is imbued with particularistic arguments that emanate from the diverse points of views of the people while undertaking studies in their respective areas of interest. It is therefore quintessential that content analysis as a tool for conducting studies in general in the field of Diplomacy and International Relations in particular be observed as an object of merging contestations and disagreements. It is indigenous to researches in the field of communications sciences that mainly focus on the study of communications, messages and symbols across cultures, events, observable properties and things in connection with the correlational discrepancy to adopt content analysis from available information explosion.

Different scholars look at content analysis diversely yet united in meaning. First, Prasad defines content analysis as "*the study of the content with reference to the meanings, contexts and intentions contained in messages*" (Prasad, 2008, p. 1). Secondly, Krippendorff in the book "*Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*" defines content analysis as "*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use*" (Krippendorff, 1993, p. 18). Whereas, thirdly, Hermann (2008, p. 152) suggests content analysis in the context of diplomacy and international relations to mean, "*books, films, pamphlets, party manifestoes, television programs, speeches, interviews, children's readers, newspapers, election commercials, blogs, diaries, letters, open-ended interviews, survey responses, cartoons*". For Prasad, content analysis is all about finding out what certain content would like to convey, the circumstances, and the purpose; Krippendorff on the other hand like Hermann view content as the principal object not restricted to written materials and technologically supported content - computer-assisted software content respectively. Finally, we would agree with Mayring that, the object of (qualitative) content analysis can be all sort of recorded communication (transcripts of interviews, discourses, protocols of observations, video tapes, documents ...) (Mayring, 2000).

Changes in Diplomacy through to the 21st Century

The paradigms have indeed taken deep turns in the field of diplomacy creating boiling points and landmarks in practical diplomacy. Giving a flashback to some milestones, we point; Hugo Grotius introduced the schools of natural law and international law specifying individuals to have inherent natural rights. He built his construction

with the notion that individual people, empowered by natural rights, are sovereign thus sovereign people are bound together to create sovereign nations to curtail the inter-religious conflicts then. He built the first theory of international law in his work 'On the law of war and peace,' which influenced the construction of the Peace of Westphalia. Notwithstanding Grotius, Cardinal Richelieu legacy became conceptual bridge between renaissance and modern diplomacy. To him diplomacy was; a continuous process and permanent activity, institutionalizing on 11 March 1626 Richelieu established the first Ministry of Foreign Affairs in same format we know today, and elaborated the principle of permanency certainty thus treaty negotiated and ratified must be observed with religious scruple. By this time (18th Century) old diplomacy meant French diplomacy the French language became official diplomatic language (*the lingua franca of diplomacy*), and has remained so until now, when it is being increasingly surpassed by English (Kurbalijah, 2013).

The factors that differentiate regional diplomacy (Camilleri, Undated) from the olden diplomacy and multilateral diplomacy arise from the conditions of proximity, manifested in shared strategic and economic concerns, very often accompanied by related historical and cultural backgrounds. In response, regional diplomacy takes on a dual direction. On the one hand, it is an inward directed process permitting consultation and cooperation among a group of neighbouring states on issues of shared concern. On the other hand, it is an outward directed process permitting a group of neighbouring states to adopt common positions and objectives in inter-actions at the global level. One striking of regional diplomacy is the elements enhanced sense of inter-dependence among nations and peoples, the ease and intensity of the means of transport and communication, and the extent and complexity of economic interactions.

Small states participate in such alliances, due to their geo-strategic location. In both NATO and defunct Warsaw Pact alliances, the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization have witnessed this. In spite of the security umbrella obtained, there is cognizance that small states in these alliances likely carried liabilities. Under very specific geo-strategic conditions, the membership of a small state in a military alliance may be desirable and necessary. The advantages of membership in a military alliance are clear for *some small states* in the NATO alliance e.g ex-Soviet Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania exploit the security by NATO (Setälä, 2005).

The unique challenge faced by American small states has been one of the subjects of attention of the OAS process. This attention found its most extensive expression in the series of meetings leading to the Kingstown Declaration on the Security of Small States, adopted in 2003, although this adoption has not had extensive operational follow-up. Small states in the region also benefit from the Organization of American States (OAS) role of facilitator, negotiator, and arbiter in bilateral disputes or conflicts. This role, over the years, has developed as one of the more unique and effective features of the OAS (e.g., in the long-running Belize and Guatemala territorial dispute; the 1969 El Salvador and Honduras conflict; and the maritime delimitation dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras) (Inter-American Dialogue, 2006).

According to Wivel (2005), the only way to avoid insecurity, which for small states in international relations is greater than for large states, is their association with international institutions. This way they “exercise” two functions: first, “they deter” the rigid attitude from large states through joint rules and valuable principles for all, while this decreases the risk of misunderstanding increase between the states and the chance to transform them into an armed confrontation, as well as it effects directly in the small states security. Secondly, these institutions provide a chance for small states to express their opinion even in the last instance. The small countries traditionally have a privileged position in the EU. He explains this with the fact that because of the institutional arrangements in the EU's key organisms (Council, Commission and the Parliament) the small countries impact proportionally against their potentials.

In the wake of ICC trials against Kenyan politicians, African states under the auspices of AU ignited a spirited ‘small state’ diplomacy against a Global institution ICC. Kalinaki (2013) reported Uganda and Rwanda asking President Uhuru Kenyatta to stop Deputy President William Ruto from flying to The Hague as his trial on charges of crimes against humanity kicked off. After failing to stop Mr Ruto's (then, now Dr Ruto) brief appearance in the ICC dock last week, African states, led by the African Union and masterminded by Uganda, are now pursuing an aggressive diplomatic effort to halt the trials. The strategy involves mobilising support across the continent “to turn a trial of two Kenyan politicians, into a trial of the African people.” Following the meeting, and teleconferences between the foreign ministers of Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Uganda between September 8 and 9 at which a strategy was developed to drum up pressure against the ICC, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn wrote to the ICC on September 10, urging it to respond to a request to transfer the cases against the two politicians and the journalist to local courts in Kenya. “Until the request of the AU is considered and clearly responded to, the case should not proceed,” Mr Desalegn wrote, in his capacity as current chairperson of the 54-member African Union. Without going deep into the aftermaths, the action and behavior of states collectively sent a clear indication on how ‘small states’ attempt to influence global politics.

Diplomatic Challenges and Power Play Strategies

Diplomacy and foreign policy are based on considerations of partnerships for the integrity of national security architecture. At the same time geopolitical choices are very complex especially in hostile neighbourhoods where states must frame issues of national interests e.g. energy (gas, oil) markets and prices for exports, tax policies all which affect political and economic stability of a given state. Through my diplomatic experience “small states” defined by small populations, lack of capacity to influence political, military and economic decisions of global magnitudes (Steinsson and Thorhallson, 2017) need to come up with new imaginations i.e. tact to maneuver statements with neighbours on territorial disputes to any other stalemates of international standing. In this regard safeguards to manage state risks would include use of normal diplomatic channels (note verbal, special envoys, meetings) and regional blocs so as to avoid sanctions of any kind and survive in the case of any deteriorating relations between Super Powers. Small states in particular those in Africa have to make strategic technical decisions that would balance economic benefits vis a -vis security guarantee. Other strategies should include effort to diversify from heavy manufacturing exports to service-oriented economy (Air transport, finance, hospitality, etc.).

Personal experiences as an ambassador, has made many realize that Small States can compensate for their limitations in exerting influence in the global power play by employing appropriate strategies as they deal with governments, institutions and multinational corporations (MNCs) that tend to dominate and control world affairs as they negotiate concessions, repatriation of profits, shares ownership, taxes, environmental issues and health diplomacy. In this regard, Small states must aim at focusing on Sustainable Development. Nothing explains this urgency in the 21st century better than the global emerging issues ranging from climate change that lead to global warming, infectious diseases like the COVID -19 pandemic, food insecurity to political and economic instability. The small states diplomacy should be at the forefront calling for more attention to be given to these issues.

Other concerns that need focused global attention are trade imbalance, inequality in economic growth, human rights violations, individual and state security (Cooper Heine & Thakur, 2013). To overcome these limitations small states should field a focused, diverse diplomatic force with relevant skills, expertise and manpower that can frame foreign policy issues and negotiate them for sustainable development. To offset overhead costs, small states should work with credible international institutions in order to access information, knowledge and expertise, required to reach balanced agreements. Small States institutions of higher learning and other research institutions should fill that space.

The Nordic states (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland) have overtime used soft power (the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coercion that includes use of culture, political values and developmental diplomacy) are soft-bargaining tactics and networking's that are crucial in influencing other states (Steinsson and Thorhallson, 2017). Small states like those in the East African Community (Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, and South Sudan) are capable of coordinating common foreign and security policies and they can draw UN resolutions and lead the debates in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through an East African treaty on common foreign and security policies (East African Community, 2010). This implies that political introversion and coherence through loose regional or sub-regional groupings can leverage the diplomatic engagement muscle of “small states” (Keohane, 1969).

Other challenges to small states include the fact that they are product of the colonial situation that created and molded political leadership through educational scholarships, which shaped economic and bureaucratic institutions that may have undermined and culturally impoverished African elites. Okumu (1972) argues that foreign relations of African states are influenced by the basic insecurity of not having developed sufficient control of their own economies and are therefore dominated by foreign authority. This is an explanation that still remains a factor at play in the present century. To deal with these challenges small states should focus on trade rather than aid which at times may involve high premiums in form of repayments. Gitelson (1977) opined that diversification by Small States may help to minimize dependence upon one supply or support source, domestic stability, technical and financial services, aid, grants and trade.

Small States have an opportunity to develop friendly relations with middle powers like, Israel, Canada, e.t.c to cultivate influence at the United Nations Organizations (UNO) and other global forums. This will secure them seats in the Security Council where major international issues are discussed and decided. These will also help them avoid isolation; boost their foreign policy and diplomacy as they continue to attract bilateral and multilateral assistance.

It has been noted that majority of the Small states' diplomatic endeavours suffer from bureaucratic, departmental and ministerial responsibility clarity. For instance, Ministries of Interior, Defense and that of the Prime Minister can assert their authority and take direct control of foreign affairs and diplomacy (Cooper, Heine & Thakur, 2013). To forestall any clash, all sectors must work as a multi-agency team with national interest at the core of every strategy decision.

Small States in Africa (since 1960-91) fearing to be sucked into a nuclear conflict declared the African continent as a nuclear free Zone. This action was intended to take care of economic and military support and at the same time avoid the risk of international isolation by the then Super Powers (Orwa, 1985). Such approach should

be advanced in the present multipolar world for the interest of the Small States.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The dialectics of continuity and change as Pigman and Chichester (2010) put are key to understanding diplomacy. Diplomacy studies are increasingly shifting away from statist, defensive accounts of Westphalian 'old' diplomacy and globalist accounts that suggest a zero-sum erosion of the relevance and sovereignty of any diplomacy. A conciliatory, post-globalist stance appreciates the evolution of diplomatic practice. For example, Pigman points out how "sovereignty is less important than power over outcomes", and Hocking shows how diplomacy shifts from "a club-like to a networked activity".

Gunasekara (2015) posits that a large proportion of states in the international system are small and there are no guarantees in international politics that 'small states' are secure. It is also true that 'small states' growing concern about the international environment and the security issues in it decide its decision to bandwagon or balance. However, this is motivated by the dimensions of threat, easy availability of allies, and the security climate.

To date, IR theories offer little help in understanding the strategies that small states employ in order to avoid both external and internal threats to their security. According to Elman, domestic-level factors are helpful in addressing foreign policies of small powers, rather than examining them using structural/systemic factors (Elman, 1995). According to Schroeder (cited in Elman, 1995), unitary state actors react to their strategic situation, respond to the perceived intentions and capabilities of other states, chose strategies consistent with their position in the global power structure, and pursue policies that are likely to provide them greater benefits than costs.

For a better relations among states where diplomacy is exercised for 'good' of all, on the contrary, Sharp (2009) has advanced that it is useful to rethink the implications of 'living separately' in multiple international societies through diplomacy studies. He uses Wight's classification of three complementary ways of thinking about international relations: realist-positivist, rationalist interest based and a revolutionary conception that "proceeds from the assumptions that the existing arrangement of relations is itself the source of most problems". Sharp discusses how humans as agents of historical progress might transform these problematic relations.

Grossman however, suggest that if 21st century diplomacy is to triumph, it must adhere to four principles that describe his approach to diplomacy; optimism - believe that diplomacy backed by the threat of force can help nations and groups avoid bloodshed, commitment to justice, truth in dealing, and checking realism tempered by a commitment to pluralism.

Charting the historical (according Murray, S. in 2013) and modern relationship between diplomatic theory and diplomatic practice, the modern diplomatic environment with its mixture of state, non-state and rogue diplomatic actors is equally puzzling. For the 21st Century diplomacy, to address the crossroads, it needs to move beyond its culture of theoretical resistance and embrace both the idea of grand and abstract theorizing for many benefits to follow.

As practical diplomacy becomes more integral, the West's slow belligerence to democracy seems to enhance. The gap calls for speculating what system is likely to form a framework for a thriving practical democracy this century and in years to come. Is it confucioracy? Not definite to suggest though. The reason for projection is centered on the weakness caused to West's solid hold on global affairs especially economic frontage. In rethinking the flashpoints in diplomacy, succinctly suggested, the major world states portray the world politically as market of appealing foreign policies to small states. In this market, Russia seem confident with their *Adventurist* foreign policy, the West are contented with their age old *Aggression and Encirclement* foreign policy, while China an economically rising power is depicting a *Welfareism and Non-Impeaching* foreign policy to its global actors. One would ask whether a foreign policy can exist without gain, which is answered in non-affirmative terms. The China's behavior which is a negation of West's long held policies on the weak and Russia's unpredictable policy are grounds for thriving of a context driven diplomacy (practical diplomacy) in the 21st Century. The China's behaviour is displayed through limitless loaning philanthropism and 'care - less' attitude on partners of interest.

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