

Lecture on the subject “Diplomatic and Consular Service”

Topic: Professional Diplomacy

Presented by Associate Professor Begaliev N.

Professional Diplomacy

1. Definition of Diplomacy
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1. To come up with the accurate definition of diplomacy is not easy for two obvious reasons: 1. it is diverse and complex 2. It is obscure and not open to public. The definitions given in the dictionaries do not cover all the points of the professional functions. The diplomats are seen as tricky players of some games and roles. Diplomacy is identified and confused with the external policy which is close but not correct.

2. The notion of Diplomacy originates from the Greek word “Diploma” that means a strong piece of documentation that gives the authority to the carrier on the behalf of the creator to represent and be a “proxy” person. This piece of documentation in the form of two pieces of wood being stuck in one composed a text of instruction and introduction. The term “diplomat” was put into the verbal turn-over years after the actual practice of international interactions. Selecting the optimum definition of the notion diplomacy we identify diplomacy as the scope of international relations by means of negotiations which are regulated by ambassadors and ministers.


“Diplomacy is the skill and art of setting up of international confidence”.

“Diplomacy is the intellectual and tactful way of carrying out international relations exclusively peacefully. “Ambassadors are the persons that keep the balance of war and peace”.


The background of diplomacy has many stories of the place of birth. What we can definitely tell is that diplomacy comes out when the state has some specific interests to be sorted out with the neighboring state or some other party. The history of the international relations gives us the examples of some negative experience when violence was used or from the position of strength as well as some sophisticated diplomatic arrangements created in Egypt with the skill and proficiency close to nowadays standards.




3. Diplomats are the professionals involved in the area of activity with the variety of hard rules based on the traditions that require persistence and independent mind to be successful. We can trace the smooth evolution of the images and requirements put in front of the diplomats. In the early days of this political genre it was expected that ambassadors should have poetic talent, wear fancy clothes, good command of Latin and Greek, philosophic contemplations and skill of sophisticated communicator. In one of the comments Nickolson made a point that the ideal diplomat of the XVII century would be absolutely useless. In some other statement he comes up with the idea that the diplomat performing abroad has no right for the dramatic mistake that can easily corrected at his home country and the aftermath recovered. It means a great burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the diplomats.




4. Requirements put in front of the diplomats. It varies respective to the roles. The diplomats working at the International Organizations like United Nations and others should have the gift of eloquence and be convincing in the speeches in front of the International colleagues reproducing the view point of the State of Accreditation. The diplomats working at the embassies and consular posts should pay more attention to the writing skills with the pieces of documentation. All the negotiations and meetings should be recorded with the description of the ongoing dialogue and the atmosphere and the spirit of the interaction. In the Middle ages when diplomacy was the privilege of the upper classes all the meetings were held at the balls the skill of dancing was required as well as playing cards and producing the impression on the ladies who could easily disclose the Royal secrets.




5. Diplomat is the person of the independent mind. Going further along the lines of the requirements two key ones should be mentioned as the basic: He should be the great negotiator that presupposes him being clever. The selective system of the diplomat is focused on this parameter in the admission with favour to the contenders who speak their mind and creative judgment on the ongoing events. The reason for this selective approach is that submissive person is good for the military service, but not for diplomacy. For diplomacy being clever and intelligent is not enough, one should be creative and selfstanding. This requirement is to meet the contemporary requirements and challenges put in front of nowadays objectives of the International relations which is to set up a preventive vehicle with the forward looking approach. It requires a deep and profound knowledge of the country, its culture, language and the people before he gets to the capacity of supplying his Government with the quality analytical information and the possible prognosis.




6. Loyalty of a Diplomat. With regard to Diplomacy Loyalty is the commitment to the interests of the accredited state. In other words he should be a patriot of the sending government. The Department of the Ministry the embassy reports to expects some positive information to stay on the safe side. So the temptation is great to come up with the comfortable information which is not correct. A true diplomat who is clever should ignore the clouded judgment and stay with the real state of things. What should a loyal diplomat do when he does not share the actual sense of the incoming instruction? – He should do his best to do what he is told and on the other hand he should come up with the Letter of Protest as the sign of disagreement.




7. Linguistic Skills of a Diplomat. There are different styles of writing. A reporter writes exactly what he sees with the effect of his personal view of the event. A writer comes up with his personal contemplations. A financial person gives an account of the actual flow of financial resources. Writing in Diplomacy has some specific features. All his reviews should be based on the actual facts without any exaggeration. The wording should be crystal clear and supported with evidence. The other part of it should be analytically lined up to be properly perceived and be the right base for the relevant actions if necessary.



8. It is a key issue as much is left in the hands of a Diplomat when the problem comes out. Therefore the personal skill and attitude matter a lot and can be decisive in many occasions. Since the key obligation of a diplomat is to collect the information, have it double-checked and bring in recommendation for the relevant reaction and action if necessary. There are three ways of perceiving and dealing with the problem: a) to take up a positive step to solve the problem – creative; b). to develop the negative attitude towards the problem – killing approach; 3) to ignore and do nothing. These are the options confronting a Diplomat. Saying this we me an ambassador or a diplomat of a senior rank with the right to take up a decision. The problem is of two-fold character. On the one hand he should be the vehicle of his government and keep up the relations with the visiting state on the other. So he happens to be in the position of the conflict of interests. To be patriotic is his obligation. It tells him to be straight-forward and resolute. At the same time he destroys the relations - the result of his activity. In any way he should stay cool and be reasonable to arrive at the conclusion which is the best solution for the parties involved. The skill of a diplomat is to turn any problem or challenge into a possibility.



9. Daily Routine of a diplomat. The life of a diplomat is not easy and stressful. They have to travel a lot from one country to the other one (some 6-8 times for the career life time) in different climatic zones and not safe places security wise. One should get adjusted to the new cultural environment. It gets worse if the relations with the hosting country are not friendly and the diplomats should take up some additional steps security wise. It has some negative effect on the health and the family. It has been estimated that with the 7-8 hours working day the diplomats stay on duty for some 14 hours with no set limit. The working day begins with the radio latest news. All the local newspapers are looked through. If some news comes out to be interesting it should be reported to the immediate boss. At 10 in the morning diplomats have meetings in and out of the embassies. At 13.00 all the official lunches take place and dinners are fixed for 21.00.



10. Diplomats as Interpreters. Most of the junior diplomats are involved in interpreting which is very important as he is the translator of the information between the parties. What are requirements for interpreter? – 1. First of all he should be knowledgeable on the topic in hand; 2. He should be informative and correct; 3. He should not be involved in the intercourse as negotiator; 4. He should have a good command of the language with the dialects and other versions of the Language (BBC and American English).

11. “Old” and “New” Diplomacy.

We briefly mentioned of the old days diplomacy when diplomats met each other at the balls, had a good skill of dancing and playing cards and enjoyed life in a big way. The significance of diplomacy was minor and non-effective as the key decisions were taken by the kings and the role of the diplomats was formal and auxiliary. The principal change came into being with the end of the World War I which proved the necessity of setting up multilateral diplomacy as the vehicle of the of the peace making with the idea to solve the problems with the involvement of some parties. The US President W.Wilson created “14 points” in which he described the format of the coming International relations. In the course of time the specialized International Institutions like League of nations and United nations were set as the centre of regulation of disputes, conflicts and dichotomy. The world was in the process of change with the growing number of states and the actual players in world politics. Talking of the “new” diplomacy we should keep in mind the tendency for “open” diplomacy which was welcomed by most of the states including the confronting ones like USSR and USA. Open diplomacy meant the banning of the confidential arrangements (Treaties). But it did not work as most of the countries did sign confidential treaties.

The other sign of new diplomacy was the arrangement for the exchange of the correct information. It did not concern the confidential information which is a part of the state secrets. In the common sense it is perceived that diplomats are crafty people with the gift of stuffing false information. The information received by diplomats should be based on confidence and mutual respect. Lying in diplomacy is a strategically wrong approach which will come out sooner or later and kill the reputation of a diplomat. On the negotiations on disarmament the Soviet diplomats kept on saying that chemical weapons were not developed at all. This position ended up with confession of the base and volume of that weapon when it was proved by the other party. In early 60-s the USSR set up the nuclear missiles in Cuba to set up the actual threat to the strategic enemy of that time USA. In the negotiations all the Soviet diplomats kept on saying that all the weapons were conventional (defensive). The Soviet embassy and the ambassador were in the dark on the type of weapons. Mr. Dobrinin made a point in his book that the Cuban crisis was very destructive with the negative consequences and the loss of confidence that alienated the countries for many years.