

THE ART OF BIO-DIPLOMACY

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What is Bio-Diplomacy? It is the art of preserving and promoting life between nations. In order to view bio-diplomacy in a clear light, it is useful to look at its opposite, which is war. The purpose of war is to extinguish life and to destroy what humans have constructed in order to gain control and power. But history shows that such control is short-sighted and doomed to failure. All exterior, physical control which is not accompanied by an interior conviction of the mind will sooner or later break down.

The rise and fall of communism is the most recent example in history of the failure to control by force. It is interesting to note that force, even if it is maintained over several decades, does not eradicate the collective memories of people. As soon as exterior control loosens its grip on people's acts and words, the minds and hearts spring forward, expressing ideas and feelings which, for generations, have been hidden under the surface.

Unrealized aspirations and unsolved problems reappear, making new demands on diplomacy that have been repressed by the global battle of the 'cold war'. A diplomatic report on the new republics of the former Soviet Union points out one hundred areas of conceivable conflicts. A bio-diplomacy worthy of its name, must direct all its skill and creativity to try to prevent problems from turning into armed conflicts. The experience of Yugoslavia teaches us how hard it is to stop a conflict once it has erupted into force.

The intervention with UN troops in an armed conflict in order to separate the hostile forces is generally a good idea as long as the parties can transform their hostile exchanges into peaceful negotiations for a solution. However, if the parties cannot agree on a solution, UN troops tend to freeze the situation, even deepen the differences, at great costs and great uncertainty. The case of Cyprus has been mentioned in this context. The international community hopes that the parties involved can reach a lasting settlement within the framework of the UN proposals.

An instrument which is often used by governments to show displeasure to other governments, is to recall the ambassador or to break off diplomatic relations. This is a very short-sighted and self-defeating policy, because the decision to send back the ambassador or to re-establish diplomatic relations becomes very difficult. Which criteria should be applied? Which concessions should be judged satisfactory for a normalization? Furthermore, how can you influence a hostile government if you have no diplomat who can talk with that government? The first rule of diplomacy is to keep contact with foreign governments, independent of your feelings for those governments. Diplomatic relations are not an expression of sympathy but of continuous contact.

The best way to realize preventive diplomacy is to tie nations together into a woven fabric of obligations and rights. We should become so inextricably intertwined that it would be impossible to resort to force to carry out destructive ambitions. The basis of the idea of the European Community is, as we all know, to safeguard peace in Europe for future generations. To fulfil this goal, all member nations must be prepared, for the common good, to make compromises that restrict their egos.

Diplomacy is an art of many skills. A diplomat must be able to make a realistic assessment of the situation at hand and must have the courage to transmit his objective judgment to his government without side-glances aimed at flattery or self-assertion. The messenger must be prepared to convey views that are contrary to the desires and expectations of the government. As truth always prevails, so does the honest diplomat.

In negotiations with foreign governments, the diplomat must be able to convince his opposition that the settlement he proposes is the best available. In order to last, a settlement must always be supported by the conviction of its signatories. Any agreement which has been settled by force or by falsehood, is doomed to break down as soon as the balance of forces is changed.

Brute force is the instrument of the weak. When a purpose is not strong enough to convince others of its desirability or necessity, applying force is a primitive and short-sighted answer, because it will only increase the opposition and endanger a lasting solution. To apply force shows a lack of perspective, and therefore, a lack of intelligence.

Conviction, of course, is bound by the situation at hand and by time. A good settlement today might prove unsatisfactory tomorrow. The art of diplomacy is to understand the changing realities and to adopt appropriate measures to new realities. In this way, diplomacy not only preserves life but also develops the conditions for life.

Life is characterized by a hierarchy of meaning. At the lowest level, cells move to sustain the building-blocks of life; at the highest level, intelligence moves to develop the human sphere of knowledge. Diplomacy must act on all levels of the global hierarchy: to preserve the

delicate ecological balance as well as to develop the possibilities for human individuals to receive education, increase their abilities and heighten their awareness of the necessity of peace for the progress of humankind.

Ambassador Kai Falkman has served successively as Attaché at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Attaché in Tokyo, Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, First Secretary in London, Counsellor in Lisbon and Ambassador in Luanda. He has also worked with Special Duties at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has been engaged in studies at the CFIA at Harvard University. Ambassador Falkman holds a Law degree and, from 1991 to 1995 was the General Consul of Sweden in Istanbul.