

Bio-Diplomacy

Introduction

Bio-diplomacy is aimed at pursuing biopolitical goals through diplomatic channels. Bio- diplomacy should do its share in preserving the natural environment and the great wealth of bios because "the present threats to bios are international problems and the required solutions relate to the development of educational activities for peace and international understanding." Diplomats of all ranks and nations should be able to appreciate the great importance of this task and make the best possible use of all the levels of power at their disposal. Following the envisaged laws of Biopolitics and putting them into practice, in a coordinated fashion at the international, national, regional, and local levels will undoubtedly provide for increased cooperation of people across all the borders separating them. It is imperative that the current, rapid expansion of technology should be accompanied by the enhancement of societal values. In particular of those pertinent to the bio-environment.^{1,2}

Main Bio-Environmental Issues in Bio-Diplomacy

The main issues related to this goal are the following:

- re-establishing the equilibrium between the growing global population and food resource availability: the arable land area now available accounts only for 11 percent of the total land area;
- achieving a balance of wealth and use of resources, and bridging the gap between the very rich and the very poor, since both categories jeopardize the bio-environment, albeit for different reasons;
- coping with global land degradation problems, protecting the forests, water, and soil, reforesting vast deforested areas, reviving the desertified regions, etc.;
- studies on the global long-term effects of human technology and civilization: the ozone hole, greenhouse effect, forest fires, radioactive fallout; development of efficient methods to overcome, or, more importantly, to prevent these deleterious effects; minimization of the waste production in industry through the establishment of waste-free production cycles;³
- special focus on Third World problems which currently have acquired international dimensions;⁴⁻⁷
- prevention of pollution export, due consideration of the potential negative effects on the other parts of the world, particularly on the bio-environment and the economy of the developing countries;
- enhancement of the human responsibility for all the forms of fragile and interdependent bios;
- improvement of the human relations on the basis of unifying biopolitical concepts, re- establishment of the links between the human population and the ecosystems of the planet;
- attaining the goal of world peace, replacing the still dominant divisive approach to all these problems by a more complete multinational and multi-cultural approach.

To address these bios-related problems, diplomats must acquire a basic idea of bios and feel how fragile and interdependent all forms of bios, including humans, actually are. This feeling will be stimulated by familiarizing people with the fundamentals of biology as applied to bio-environmental issues.

Organizational Matters Relevant to Bio-Diplomacy

Bio-diplomacy should be based on collective thinking and therefore, on specific institutions which are to pursue the goals of preserving bios and stimulating all the social and cultural activities related to this miraculous gift. Bio-diplomacy has been a major concentration of the B.I.O. since its foundation. The necessity of internationally organized and institutionalized cooperation in the interests of bios preservation and enhancement was re-emphasized at the B.I.O. International Conferences, with particular reference to the technological aspects of cooperation and the task to promote a global educational system focusing on bios ideals.

The following guidelines might be of help for all those willing to set up new institutions and to improve those in operation for the purpose of carrying out biopolitics projects:

- survey the educational and research potential available in the region, nation or province, selecting the scientists with a background and interest in the fields relevant to biopolitics;
- assess the priorities and devise new educational strategies;

- establish a research and development (R and D) group to be used as a task force for converting the results of academic research and concrete political proposals into projects on biopolitics;
- organize seminars and discussions, as well as relevant published contributions to be earnestly considered by all the bodies of power at all levels;
- get non-governmental organizations involved in biopolitical activities as far as possible;
- establish close international ties with businessmen and entrepreneurs (use the section on Bio-Business);
- address international organizations of the United Nations caliber to facilitate worldwide co-operation in the field of biopolitics.

Importance of Long-Term Thinking in Bio-Diplomacy

If one succeeds in promoting political actions related to bios, the following points will be of paramount importance:^{8,9}

- to consider primarily the long-term effects of the measures to be taken;
- to take into account that some of these measures will have irreversible effects;
- to estimate the breathing time available for each of these practical steps;
- to take special care of the possible synergistic effects;
- to consider not only the current problems but also the future human needs, therefore favoring solid scientific data and concepts to fashion;
- to prefer well-prepared, thoroughly considered positive action to mere discussions and debates, however the latter may be useful and encouraging.

Body of Humanity - Body of Bios

Bio-diplomacy substitutes the policies which create division and fragmentation with a far-sighted unifying vision of interdependence. Governments throughout the world invest big fractions of the national income in developing new defense systems. However, defense of the bio-environment, bio-defense¹⁰ may unite people throughout the world in order to initiate a new form of international cooperation.

It is imperative to realize that "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."¹¹

Since all people belong to the body of humanity¹⁰ differentiation in culture, color, tradition, religion may be viewed as an enrichment of bios rather than a reason for division. The human body originates from one cell with the same genetic material. The cells then divide, and through the different gene expressions, the differentiation process is achieved. Therefore, a human body forms, with all its different parts being interdependent. Every part of the body is needed, and no part can work independently from the others because unity and interconnectedness bring the harmony and serve the healthy body. In the same sense, all human beings belong to the same genus and to the same species. We all have the same genetic material which, through differentiation and growth, has developed into the body of humanity, in which all humans are interdependent.

The common roots of man constitute not only the body of humanity for human society, but also the bios body for all forms of life,¹⁰ having the same pattern of genetic material as the common denominator. Therefore, it is not the body of humanity only, but the body of bios which should serve as the context of human activity. The abundance in the living varieties, from microorganisms to plants to animals to humans, reveals the interdependence and the wealth we possess as a result of the differentiation process. However, humanity has no right to destroy parts of this body. "If a tree is cut in the Amazon, the lungs of the body are injured, and the entire bios body suffers."¹⁰ Human knowledge should be used to face the challenges of interdependence and harmonious co-existence. The essential new values can be provided by education.

"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."¹¹

Objectives:

- to re-examine the basic tenets in diplomacy, shifting from the fragmented competitive policy to a vision of unity and interdependence;

- to convince decision makers on the need to promote worldwide educational reforms so as to change the patterns and attitude in implementing foreign policy;
- to inform the political decision-makers on the new worldwide trends in diplomacy created by issues associated with the bio-environment;
- to encourage international cooperation in the field of bio-environment;
- in particular, to enable countries not only to control, but also to promote the eradication of environmental deterioration.

References

1. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, A., (1985) . Biopolitics Dimensions of Biology. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
2. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, A., (1989) "Biopolitics The Bios Theory" in Biopolitics The Bio- Environment Volume II (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.). Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
3. Pruginin, A., and Glass, J., (1991) "The Israeli Environmental Scenario for the Year 2025" in Biopolitics The Bio-Environment Volume III, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.494-528. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
4. Barajas, E., (1991) "Bio-Diplomacy: the Colombian Dimension" in Biopolitics The Bio- Environment - Volume III, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.438-443. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
5. Laabi, A., (1991) "Aspects of Environmental Policy in Morocco" in Biopolitics The Bio-Environment Volume III, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.444-445. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
6. Abbas, T.A., (1991) "Sudan: the African Dimension" in Biopolitics The Bio- Environment Volume III, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.446-448. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
7. Lord Ennals, D., (1987) "The Bio-Environment Policy Recommendations" in Biopolitics The Bio-Environment Volume.I, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.95-99. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
8. Papaioannou, J.G., (1989) "Environment and the Role of Ekistics" in Biopolitics The Bio-Environment Volume.II, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.206-233. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
9. Papaioannou., J.G., (1991) "Priorities and Urgency of Environmental Problems" in Biopolitics The Bio-Environment Volume.III, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.), pp.295-299. Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece.
10. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, A., "The Need for Environmental Education for the Citizens of the World", presented at the Annual Conference of the Alliance for Environmental Education, Washington D.C., June 1991.
11. Falkman, K., (1992) "The Art of Bio-Diplomacy" in Biopolitics the Bio-Environment Volume IV, (A. Vlavianos-Arvanitis, Ed.). Biopolitics International Organization, Athens, Greece (in print).