Diplomacy’s Possible Futures

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Summary
In an attempt to think beyond the immediate horizon for diplomacy, five possible futures are envisioned. ‘Disintermediation’ suggests that diplomats, in competition with a dynamic private sector, may need to adopt business methods and use the internet — or be bypassed. ‘Europeanization’ could largely subordinate bilateral diplomacy within the regional European Union framework, although space might be left for ‘public diplomatic’ functions. International ‘democratization’ would accord a larger role to states hitherto excluded from decision-making within multilateral institutions, and also to civil society. ‘Thematization’ would require a higher degree of flexibility from diplomats as they engage in crusade-like efforts against terrorism, disease and other such threats. ‘Americanization’ implies the adjustment by diplomats to a world in which ‘international relations’ are conducted along the lines of US domestic politics, with lobbying and advocacy becoming major activities. The need to win greater public support, if not necessarily to involve the people directly in diplomacy, is evident in all of these ‘projective visions’.

Key Words
Future projections for diplomacy, disintermediation, integrated diplomatic services, democratization of diplomacy, thematic diplomacy, crisis management, gaiatsu diplomacy.

Introduction

What follows will attempt, with due modesty before the Unknowable, to depict a number of possible futures of diplomacy — ‘fragments of future history’, as these plausible visions might be called. A true ‘predictive history’, as the philosopher Immanuel Kant conceived it, would be ‘a divinatory historical narrative of things imminent in future time’ — that is, an actual storyline of impending events. In projecting history forward, I shall not try to foresee it, in Kant’s sense. I shall nonetheless endeavour to think beyond the immediate horizon, and to envision the situation and character of diplomacy as it might appear in perhaps twenty to 50 years from now. Diplomacy evolves, and, as Harold Nicolson long ago recognized, it can change quickly.

Such conscious future-projection is more and more necessary, because, with history having accelerated as it has done, national governments, international organizations and those who represent them are called to make very rapid and precise decisions. The exigencies of political decision-making in the world today put a premium on anticipation — on insight and foresight — as well as on reflective hindsight. These qualities are fortunately ones for which diplomats are known.

The ‘lessons’ of experience — of past history — are a necessary guide, of course. Nineteenth-century history is studied today because many nineteenth-century problems are with us. These include the phenomenon of terrorism resulting from radical ideologies as well as from nationalist feelings, against both imperial structures and modernizing forces. In some respects, the nineteenth century is as relevant to our situation today as is the twentieth century, with its large-scale geostrategies, as these were carried out by major powers in two world wars and a worldwide Cold War. The nineteenth century

3) Harold Nicolson, The Evolution of Diplomacy: Being the Chichele Lectures delivered at the University of Oxford in November 1953 (New York: Collier Books, 1962). As Nicolson notes, the direction of change in diplomatic method is not always forward-tending: ‘The word “evolution” is not intended to suggest a continuous progression from the rudimentary to the efficient: on the contrary, I hope to show that international intercourse has always been subject to strange retrogressions’ (p. 10).
was, at least at the international level, relatively peaceful. International stability was maintained by statesmen and diplomats in the discourse of the 'Concert of Europe', and through the balance of the European great powers that underlay it. The 'long peace' of the Cold War years was, by contrast, less dependent on diplomatic harmonization than on military equilibration — the correlation of armed forces and a non-quantifiable 'balance of terror' imposed by nuclear technology and pre-emptive-strike fantasies.5

Despite some resemblances with the past, the twenty-first century may still be very different from what has gone before. The international system today, which is 'unipolar' in that the United States is clearly militarily predominant, is pervaded by the processes of globalization. Driven by economics as well as technology, globalization is a force that seems to be largely beyond the control of political leadership — or, still less, of professional diplomacy. Nonetheless, the dynamics of globalization may offer opportunities for diplomats. More than leaders or officials at home ever can, diplomats experience directly the upheavals that globalization and related turbulences can produce. These include the 'clashes of civilization', among them the confrontation of the Western world with Islam that, as Samuel Huntington has contended, give conceptual definition to our time.6 Diplomats should be in a position, if they are prepared and politically authorized and popularly supported, to lead a ‘dialogue of civilizations’.7

Globalization — the global spread of ideas, goods and money that is transforming our cultures — is not, of course, entirely new. As a historian, I see it as dating from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when it came to be widely believed that the world system was 'closed'. People saw that there was no longer an open frontier for expansion, that outward industrial and political forces were beginning to bump into each other, and that expansionist energies could even bounce back upon their sources, impacting upon metropolitan societies. The political

5) See John Lewis Gaddis, The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), on these and other factors that maintained the tense stability of the Cold War period.
7) One such initiative, undertaken multilaterally at the instigation of a reformist government in Iran in 1998, was the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001; see http://www.un.org/Dialogue.
geographer Halford Mackinder vividly likened this new situation to a kind
of echo chamber. A sound from Europe — or today more likely from else-
where — could spread outwards in concentric rings, converge at a point
on the opposite end of the earth, and then come crashing back. ‘Every
explosion of social forces’, Mackinder warned, ‘instead of being dissipated in
a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply
re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political
and economic organisms of the world will be shattered in consequence.’

Diplomats are uniquely well placed to swim in such historical and cultural
crosscurrents. More than that, in the midst of these reverberations they
should be able to identify and interpret the essential messages, and relay these
to their governments and also to their publics. No group is better situated to
filter out the feedback effects of globalized communication.

The span of globalization is, of course, limited and also uneven — despite
the image that we generally hold of everyone, everywhere, talking with
anyone, anywhere. As the British diplomat Robert Cooper has observed,
different parts of the world are living in different phases of history. Pre-
modern, modern, and post-modern elements coexist in the same world, even
inside some of the same countries.9 A diplomat’s intermediary role can thus
in some places seem like time travel, and require chronological as well as
geographical imagination.

There are still regional differences. In Robert Kagan’s provocative essay,
‘Power and Weakness’, Americans are said to be living in an older world of
‘power’, whereas Europeans have moved beyond that to live in a self-contained
world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation
[…] the realization of Kant’s “Perpetual Peace”’ [1795].10 Henry Kissinger
does not even perceive a single world system. Despite the unifying effects
of globalization, he believes that the world has a number of ‘international
systems’ within it existing side by side. The ‘great powers’ of Asia, for example,
live in ‘the world of equilibrium’. He comments: ‘Wars between them are
not likely, but neither are they excluded. The international order of Asia

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8) Halford J. Mackinder, ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’ [1904], in Halford J. Mackinder,
Democratic Ideals and Reality, with additional papers, edited and with an introduction by Andrew
9) Robert Cooper, ‘The New Liberal Imperialism’, Observer Worldview, 7 April 2002. See also his
The Postmodern State and World Order (London: Demos, 2000).
therefore resembles that of nineteenth-century Europe more than that of
the twenty-first-century North Atlantic. The very rules of interaction are
therefore likely to be different from one ‘system’ to another. This also puts
a premium on the diplomat’s international experience and cosmopolitan, as
well as local, knowledge.

What are the possible worlds into which the future diplomat may enter,
given that uniform global development is still incomplete and likely to
remain so? The five projective visions of diplomacy that suggest themselves
to me, on the basis of much reflection, are shaped by an awareness of the
world’s variation, in terms of both history and geography. My fundamental
criterion is whether a new or rapidly evolving pattern is likely to stand the
test of time. No model of diplomacy’s possible future is likely to fit all parts of
the world, even while globalizing or unifying, in the same way and with equal
plausibility. Some patterns are more likely to be realized in certain places.
Other patterns, however, could become more nearly global, or universal.

The five models — or ‘fragments’ — of diplomacy’s possible future
history have been given the following names, the exact meaning of which
may not initially be fully evident: disintermediation; Europeanization;
democratization; thematization; and Americanization. Each shall be briefly
described and explained in turn.

Disintermediation

A first model for the future of diplomacy — reflecting the strong challenge
posed by the dynamism of the private sector — is that state-run diplomacy,

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11) Henry Kissinger, Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the Twenty-First
Diplomacy (Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 1986); and Alan K. Henrikson, ‘Diplomacy
for the Twenty-First Century: “Recrafting the Old Guild”’, a retrospective essay based on Wilton
Park Conference 503, 21-25 July 1997, on ‘Diplomacy: Profession in Peril?’, in Colin Jennings
and Nicholas Hopkinson (eds), Current Issues in International Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, vol. 1
(London: The Stationery Office, 1999), pp. 3-47, wherein it is posited that the body of practitioners
of diplomacy ‘is, in fact, one of the constitutive “orders” of the international system, and it has been
at least since the Congress of Vienna’ (p. 7).
13) These are the terms of categorization that I used as a speaker on ‘The Future of Diplomacy’
during the closing symposium of ‘The Role of Diplomats in the Modern World’, 697th Wilton Park
with its formal structures and bureaucratic procedures, could be largely bypassed — that is, no longer chosen as the preferred intermediary. Indeed, with the increase of transparency that globalization brings, for many international purposes there may be no need for a ‘middleman’ at all. This is a general trend that is affecting governmental authorities and institutions, not just foreign ministries and diplomatic services. The term ‘disintermediation’ (admittedly a mouthful) originated, of course, in the field of economics, to describe what happens when producers of goods or services become able — by using the internet and e-business sales’ methods, for instance — to ‘cut out the middleman’ and get directly in touch with the customer.

A former senior Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs’ official, George Haynal, who himself has a business background, applies the term ‘disintermediation’ to the pattern that he sees beginning of private withdrawal from the use of governmental services — on the analogy of what happened to Canada’s chartered banks in the 1990s. People just did not want to use the established old banks any more. They did not want to put their business through them and found instead that brokerage firms, insurance companies and other financial-service providers could fulfil their needs more cheaply, more efficiently, and also more rewardingly. The same, Haynal suggests, could happen to diplomatic services in Canada and elsewhere.

All established institutions that purport to act as intermediaries between people and power, to view the phenomenon more generally and philosophically as Haynal does, are being subjected to similar challenges of legitimacy and mandate. They are being ‘disintermediated’, or bypassed, by constituents who feel constrained by excessive paternalism, stirred to act by a seeming lack of accountability on the part of institutions to which they have entrusted their affairs, and, very importantly, newly empowered to act on their own by information technology. As Haynal sees it, disintermediation is a truly historic challenge. The response of institutions might (or might not) be transformative. Haynal notes, for comparison, the limited response of the Catholic Church to the challenge of the Reformation.

15) Haynal, ‘Diplomacy on the Ascendant in the Age of Disintermediation.’
To carry this history-based scenario further, corporations, providing new services somewhat in competition with governments, might actually begin to conduct their own ‘foreign policies’. Numerous multinational corporations today have budgets that are larger than those of many sovereign states — three-quarters of which are quite small, with populations of 20 million or fewer. Why, for example, does a large financial corporation such as Fidelity Investments — for many years America’s largest mutual funds company — really need diplomats? It has its own sources of information, plus the means to gather it, and even extensive representation abroad — its own ‘foreign service’.

The above-described speculative future — in which diplomacy would have to work to reform itself in order to meet heavy private-sector pressures — implies a relatively peaceful — or at least politically stable — world, one in which most transactions can take place normally and without the likelihood of major disruption. The events of 11 September 2001 — the al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon — suddenly ‘brought the state back in’, in order to provide homeland security. Terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, Madrid and London, and recurrently in Baghdad and some other highly populated centres elsewhere in the world, have produced an upsurge of statism, or state protectionism.

The ‘9/11’ effect, however, may wear off. If it does, the ‘privatization’ of foreign policy and diplomacy, and even of physical-security services, may become much more prevalent. The consequence for ‘disintermediated’ diplomacy might be that, as a result of stronger competition, the diplomatic profession will be required to mimic private enterprise and its methods. One already sees experiments in the ‘branding’ of countries, such as the early effort of the UK’s Labour government under Prime Minister Tony Blair to promote the image of ‘Cool Britannia’. The US government’s more recent effort to sell the idea of ‘America’ to the Arab and larger Islamic world, using Madison Avenue methods, is also illustrative of the new approach. The penetration of

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'marketing' techniques into the public diplomacy of governments indicates the profound adaptation, or reformation, that professional diplomacy could undergo.\textsuperscript{18}

It should be noted, however, that there are counter-trends, perhaps even long-term ones. The very technology of the 'information age' that permits direct communication, and 'disintermediation', also creates opportunities — although probably, on balance, smaller opportunities — for state interference. The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a 'rising' power, has sought to manage the communications' flow in and out of the Chinese mainland with some skill. With the demonstrated ambition of playing a major role in twenty-first-century Asian and also global diplomatic relations, it naturally is jealous of its state prerogatives and official prestige.\textsuperscript{19}

It thus aims at 'reintermediation'.\textsuperscript{20} By arranging to preserve its intermediary functions against pressures that would deprive it of its dominance and central role, the government of the PRC engages in what has been called, in the business world, 'anti-disintermediation'. It can employ legal and administrative action as well as use economic incentives and disincentives.\textsuperscript{21}

In China and perhaps other authoritarian societies, market forces and popular demands may therefore from time to time meet their match in state power, in the exercise of \textit{Macht}.

\textbf{Europeanization}

A second model for diplomacy's possible future, pertinent especially to the more advanced regions of the world, is that of 'going European' — that is, of subordinating or even replacing national diplomatic services with integrated-

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  \item \textsuperscript{18} Symptomatic of this is Mark Leonard and Vidhya Alakeson, \textit{Going Public: Diplomacy for the Information Age} (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2000).
  \item \textsuperscript{20} I am indebted for this point, and for the aforementioned scholarly references, to my colleague at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Professor Alan Wachman.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} 'Google Censors Itself for China', BBC News, 25 January 2006, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4645596.stm}.
\end{itemize}
international or even fully joint services. Within the EU, bilateral diplomatic missions are already being somewhat eclipsed by the inner communicative activity of the EU and also by efforts to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) for a united Europe. The ‘cross-national collegial solidarity’ of the members of the Comité des représentants permanents (COREPER) of the Council of the EU, in particular, demonstrates the unifying effect of engagement by national representatives in the same basic activity — that of building ‘Europe’. One is reminded of Harold Nicolson’s comment on European diplomats in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: ‘They desired the same sort of world. As de Callières had already notice in 1716, they tended to develop a corporate identity independent of their national identity.’

According to the Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, there would be, if and when the Treaty or a partial substitute measure is enacted, a new European ‘Union Minister for Foreign Affairs’ (Article I-28). This person, intended also to be one of the Vice-Presidents of the European Commission, would have responsibility for conducting the CFSP and for the overall consistency of the international relations of the European Union and its members. He or she, it was stipulated, should also express the EU’s positions in international organizations and at conferences. In fulfilling this mandate, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs was to be ‘assisted by a European External Action Service’ that would ‘work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States’ (Article III-296). Even within the United Nations Security Council — of which two European countries, Britain and France, are permanent members under the Charter — there would be deference to EU positions: ‘When the Union has defined a position on a subject which is on the United Nations Security Council agenda, those Member States which sit on the Security Council shall request that the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs be asked to present the Union’s position’ (Article III-305).

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Seen from the outside, this does not really look like ‘multilateral’ diplomacy, although it is sometimes called that. Relations within the area of the European Union itself are less and less ‘diplomatic’, in the traditional sense of that term. They are inter-domestic. ‘The process of European integration’, as analysts have noted, ‘is marked by a growing interconnectedness of domestic administrative systems of member states where sector-specific policies are coordinated across national borders without involving diplomats.’ Diplomacy’s new intra-European mode conforms to a process of isomorphism. How far this process of policy integration across diverse sectors can go, given the centrifugal effects of the EU’s recent addition of ten new members that are mostly from the less-developed and more nationalistic eastern parts of Europe, remains to be seen. With further enlargement, ‘deepening’ may give way to ‘widening.’

Despite the increase of EU integration, European countries’ bilateral relationships, including those established diplomatically by their bilateral missions in one another’s capitals, are likely to survive. Partly because of their close physical locations and their intimate histories, many countries in Europe may still think of foreign policy in ‘bilateral’ terms. Many of these relationships are ‘special’ — such as that between Austria and Hungary. Consular work and many related cultural activities also, of course, remain bilateral. Bilateral embassies, which now commonly house officers belonging to other governmental departments and agencies as well as professional diplomats, can provide orientation as well as habitation. The ambassador can be an ‘arbiter’ among these elements. He/she can also ‘inject reality’, based on local knowledge, into briefings of ministers. There is a further reason why bilateral embassies may remain important in the EU era. It has been noted that there is an ‘illusion of familiarity’ among EU states’ decision-makers because of the regularity of their meetings and frequency of their consultations. Bilateral diplomacy can be a corrective to and balance against this over-scheduling — or ‘calendar’ — effect.26

Ambassador Karl Theodor Paschke, former Director-General for Personnel and Administration of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concluded in a special inspection report to the German government regarding

Germany’s embassies in EU countries that although ‘certain functions of traditional diplomacy have become superfluous’, such as handing over letters and delivering formal démarches, Germany’s ‘embassies in Europe have not become obsolete’. He found widespread consensus that ‘European cooperation can only thrive where it is sustained and underpinned by stable, close, trouble-free bilateral relations between EU members’. If anything, Paschke’s report suggests that the need for bilateral missions in Europe may actually be increasing because of the growing need for governments to ‘explain’ their countries’ policies and politics to the publics of their fellow EU member states.27

The European Union has a particular challenge in this respect with its ‘democratic deficit’ — the widespread perception that policies and decisions are made in Brussels and in Strasbourg without adequate participation, or even knowledge or informed consent, on the part of the mass of Europe’s ordinary citizens. The low voter turnout for the June 2004 European Parliament elections was particularly alarming. ‘The average overall turnout was just over 45 per cent’, The Economist noted, ‘by some margin the lowest ever recorded for elections to the European Parliament’. Most ‘depressing’ of all, ‘at least to believers in the European project’, was the extremely low vote in the new member countries: in Poland, for instance, it was just slightly over one-fifth of the electorate. ‘Disillusion with Europe’ then was manifested also in the protest vote for ‘a rag-bag of populist, nationalist and explicitly anti-EU parties’.28

This reaction, too, may be an indication of the complex process of ‘Europeanization’ and of things, both positive and negative, to come. The rejection of the EU Constitutional Treaty by a majority of both French and Dutch voters in their national referenda in May and June 2005, respectively, clearly indicated disaffection. Some of this popular feeling, it is important to emphasize, was directed against their own governments’ leadership and possibly that of their neighbours, and also against EU budgetary inequities and unwelcome social policies, rather than against the goal of further European


Both ‘bilateral’ and ‘multilateral’ diplomacy on the part of European states, and the diplomacy of a ‘communitarian’ European Union, will need to play a larger role within society. ‘Europeanization’, at whatever speed, will surely continue.

It may even spread. The European Union’s increasing international role is influencing the shape, as well as the substance, of the ‘partner’ entities with which it deals. While these are mostly individual countries — notably the countries that are designated for possible accession and are negotiating with European diplomats the adjustments needed to absorb and implement the acquis communautaire — Europe’s partners also include regional organizations such as the new African Union (AU). Not merely because the AU and its members depend heavily on the EU for development aid and other assistance, Africa is receiving a European organizational imprint. The Caribbean and Pacific regions, too, are feeling the effect of ‘Europeanization’ in the form of parallel structures. As Ambassador Michael Lake, recently head of the Delegation of the European Commission in South Africa, observes:

Through the dialogues that the European Union periodically holds with Latin American and Caribbean countries and with the nations of South-East Asia, in the context of EU-LAC and ASEM conferences respectively, those broad and distant regions are also directly encountering the diplomatic model of ‘Europeanization’.

31) Personal communication from Michael P. Lake, 2005-2006 European Union Fellow at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 21 January 2006.
Democratization

This leads to the third model, or fragment, of possible future diplomatic history. I call it ‘diplomacy as democracy’. This refers to democracy at the international level. This is a concept that Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali sought expressly to develop when he was serving as Secretary-General of the United Nations in his paper *An Agenda for Democracy*. 'Democratization internationally', he argued, is a necessity on three fronts — that of transforming the structures of the United Nations itself, that of providing new actors on the international scene with formal means of participation there, and that of achieving a culture of democracy throughout international society.

I confess to earlier scepticism of the ‘international democracy’ idea, as it seemed to rest on a faulty analogy of countries with persons. The basic principle of ‘one country, one vote’ at the UN, with no weighting, is manifestly undemocratic when one considers the size of the populations of China and also other larger countries such as India, Indonesia, Japan, or Brazil that are not permanent members of the UN Security Council. Yet the UN Charter’s reaffirmation of ‘the equal rights of ‘nations large and small’ and the UN commitment to act in accordance with the principle of ‘the sovereign equality of all its Members’ (Article 2, paragraph 2) are likely to remain fundamental norms of the world organization.

Owing in part to an interest in geography, I have come to see ‘democracy’ at the international level as well as at the national level as a system of representation of *points of view* as well as an expression of numbers of persons. I refer not to the points of view of individual countries as ‘countries’, or to the points of view of clusters of countries, conceived as ‘regions’, in the voting group sense, but rather to their *situational* points of view — ultimately, *physical* points of view. ‘Democracy’ at the international level should include *geographical representation*. There must surely have been a nature-based as well as a Burkanian or other philosophical element in the thinking of the founders of the United Nations when they wrote into the Charter, in the first paragraph of Article 23, the phrase ‘equitable geographical distribution’ as a major criterion for the election of non-permanent members to the Security Council.

My consultative work on the diplomacy of small states for the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank has further sensitized me to the possible meaning of this requirement, as very small states can be highly
responsive indicators of the well-being of the entire global system. Small states’ perspectives add new sight-lines to the international consensus. These are especially valuable regarding matters of the global environment. Indeed, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) has been characterized as the ‘international conscience’ on that subject.32 An illustration of an initiative taken by them is the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, in 1994. From that conference resulted the Barbados Programme of Action, which has framed the discussion of the environmental and development concerns of the world’s island and coastal developing countries ever since. As current UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, the places inhabited by peoples of the small island states are the ‘front-line zone where, in concentrated form, many of the main problems of environment and development are unfolding’.33

Their experiences and perspectives are invaluable to us all. Many of their problems, although local to them, are regional, inter-regional and even global. The catastrophic impact of the December 2004 Sumatra-Andaman earthquake and ensuing tsunami, felt most immediately by low-lying coastal communities in Indonesia and Sri Lanka and also by some smaller Indian Ocean states including the Maldives and Seychelles, demonstrates the vulnerability that can result from damaging corals, felling mangrove trees and bulldozing coastal dunes as well as, on a larger scale, systemic global warming and rising sea levels.34 In the northern hemisphere, too, climate change is a ‘local’ concern, and affected ‘smaller’ peoples — native groups as well as countries, such as Iceland or Norway — have strongly voiced their worries internationally. As the Arctic icecap melts, so their very identities, and also possibly their material futures, are put at risk. Greenhouse gas-heightened warming, said Paul Crowley of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference during the December 2005 UN climate


33) Statement by the Secretary-General, General Assembly Plenary – 1b – Press Release GA/9610, Twenty-Second Special Session ENV/DEV/519, 1st Meeting (AM), 27 September 1999.

conference in Montreal, threatens ‘the destruction of the hunting and food-gathering culture of the Inuit in this century’.\textsuperscript{35} Even the continued flow of the Gulf Stream, it is now reported, could be adversely affected, in time possibly even reversed, if the Kyoto Protocol and its long-range emissions’ standards are not universally accepted and effectively implemented.\textsuperscript{36} Recognition of the ‘globalness’ of environmental and other physically related world-systemic issues is a very sound basis, along with population size and wealth or power considerations, for determining the ‘equitable geographical distribution’ of influence at the United Nations and in related negotiating contexts.

Solutions to truly global problems, as Inge Kaul and her colleagues at the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have emphasized, should increasingly be seen in terms of providing ‘global public goods’ — that is, those that are in everyone’s interest or, differently stated, in the democratic interest. As Kaul and her UNDP team point out, there is a ‘participation gap’ that prevents global problems from being well understood and adequately addressed. Despite ‘the spread of democracy’, there are still ‘marginal and voiceless groups’. They suggest that by expanding the role of ‘civil society’ and also of the ‘private sector’ in international negotiations, governments could ‘enhance their leverage over policy outcomes while promoting pluralism and diversity’. While keeping in mind the need for ‘legitimacy and representativeness’ — that is, the formal requirements of one-country, one-vote democracy based on sovereignty — they observe that ‘the decision-making structures in many major multilateral organizations are due for re-evaluation’,\textsuperscript{37}

What could this mean for diplomacy? It could mean that as the ‘democratic’ responsiveness of the international community grows, diplomats are increasingly assigned to multilateral work within a reformed and more open United Nations’ system. It could further mean that they will be assigned directly to ‘priority concerns’ — for example, to

environmental and developmental and also to health issues (such as HIV/AIDS or avian flu) — rather than to countries as such or even to international organizations at all.

**Thematization**

This brings me to my fourth futuristic model, the rise of what has been called ‘thematic diplomacy’. This is akin to, but also is somewhat broader than, the more technical ‘functional’ diplomacy — such as the highly specialized diplomacy of trade negotiations, as practised at the World Trade Organization, or nuclear safeguards discussions, such as carried out within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the institutional setting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for example. It is also older. The nineteenth-century (and continuing) international campaign against ‘slavery’ — or, more particularly, the slave-trade — is a case in point.38

‘Development’ itself is one current grand overarching theme. ‘Human rights’, in general terms, is another. So, too, is ‘security’, of course. This word suggests far more than merely police protection or physical defence provided by armed forces. It implies the psychological and social need to feel safe — a subjective problem as well as an objective problem. The sources of insecurity today are many, and some are internal.39 Theme-related, or thematized, diplomacy is a way of mobilizing the resources of society, and also of mobilizing public opinion — internationally, as well as at home. The current and possibly long-term ‘global war on terror’ of the United States is the prime contemporary example. How long this preoccupation with global terrorism will last — whether it will be temporary and associated with a particular administration — will depend in part on the course of events — that is, on detailed future history in Kant’s ‘narrative’, or fully predictive, sense. Incidents can determine trends.


The British historian Niall Ferguson, taking a longer-than-usual view, thinks that 11 September 2001 actually changed very little. It was ‘less of a turning point than is generally believed’, he writes. Yet as a ‘deep trend’, as he terms it, ‘the spread of terrorism’, or ‘use of violence by non-state organizations in pursuit of extreme political goals’, will likely continue into the future. The hijacking of planes and suicide attacks on high-value targets had occurred long before: ‘All that was really new on 11 September was that these tried-and-tested tactics were applied in combination and in the United States’.40

Thematic diplomacy is topical, as this example suggests, in the sense of being contingent upon occurrences, upon things that happen and make news. These occurrences, although sometimes dramatic, can be very local and also ephemeral. Thematic diplomacy tends to be focused on emergencies. An outbreak of famine in the Sahel or a SARS epidemic in China or a report of nuclear rumblings on the Asian subcontinent or perhaps on the Korean peninsula might concentrate global attention. Such events can be used to highlight ‘themes’, which may or may not be related to basic trends. Thematized diplomacy resembles in this respect another kind of diplomacy — crisis management — which does not even attempt to address the more profound or enduring causes of problems.41

The skilful exploitation of critical happenings, however, can set a nation, and other nations that may be associated with it, on a long forward course. ‘Making history’ in this way might turn out to be going on a tangent, and a serious historical policy miscue. It is difficult to know in advance. Leadership sometimes does make its own destiny. President George W. Bush’s resolve after the events of ‘9/11’ was impressive in its way. He saw America — the whole country — as having been ‘attacked’ and persuaded most Americans that the United States was ‘at war’ with al-Qaeda and any other terrorist enterprise with a global reach. If reactive, it was decisive. President Bush remembers exactly what he was thinking when he was told that a second aeroplane had hit the second tower of the World Trade Center. ‘They had declared war on us’, he recalled, ‘and I made up my mind

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at that moment that we were going to war."42 The 'war' characterization — as surely was expected of US leaders — turned out to be a powerful rhetorical engine of consent — at least of acquiescence. While it did not launch a 'crusade', a word that President Bush once inadvisably used, it did help diplomats and military officers to form an ad hoc 'coalition of the willing' — a broader and even more diverse alignment than was the international alliance led by the United States during the Cold War.43

A highly 'thematized' coalition is not likely to be permanent. Its existence depends upon continually having something to react to and visible targets to pursue. In organizational and operational terms, this invites the creation of 'task forces' and 'special missions', typically consisting of outsiders and experts rather than of formally accredited diplomats or established resident representatives. Thematic diplomacy is not institutional or positional. Operating within a 'thematized' climate of opinion such as that of the present, the challenge for traditional diplomacy is to strive to maintain, on the basis of well-situated facilities and long-developed relationships, constancy of presence and continuity of representation.44 The capacity to deal even with international crises, as with smaller emergencies, depends on being there. The most effective diplomat is the one who is locally involved and on the scene.

Americanization

The fifth and final model of a possible future for diplomacy is the most complex and interesting of all. By 'Americanization', I distinctly do not mean what is today sometimes much too easily said: that the United States has become an 'empire', and, being the sole surviving superpower, is exercising (whether it knows it or not) 'hegemonic' control over the world.45 What I have in mind is something very different, although not completely unrelated. This last vision of diplomacy shall be called the 'American politics as world politics' model, as more than once in Europe I have heard the observation

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43) William H. Riker, The Theory of Political Coalitions (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1962), notes the element of 'demagoguery' that can override the calculations necessary to maintain an effective international coalition (pp. 242-243).
that, nowadays and for the foreseeable future, ‘diplomacy will be about reacting to the United States’. The significant difference between this present-day necessity and the Cold War-era necessity of reacting to (or ‘containing’) the Soviet Union is that the present reaction is an interaction, and this interaction occurs largely but not entirely inside the United States. The essential perception, and ‘visionary’ projection, is that there is occurring, more and more, an approximation and even assimilation of ‘international relations’ to the model of American domestic politics.

The United States is an open society. Moreover, it is one without a pre-eminent centre — that is, a single controlling point, whether Washington DC or, within it, the presidency or Congress. The separation of powers and the federal system, and also the increased influence of interest groups and the media in American national policy-making, make the processes of government in the United States highly indeterminate. In this respect, foreign policy is increasingly not very different from domestic policy. The locus of decision — where power actually lies — is often difficult to find.

A former British ambassador to the United States, Sir Nicholas Henderson, vividly complained about this situation. ‘You don’t have a system of government’, he said when trying to gain US support for the United Kingdom during the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas crisis. ‘In France or Germany, if you want to persuade the Government of a particular point of view, or find out their view on something, it’s quite clear where the power resides. It resides with the Government. Here there’s a whole maze of different corridors of power and influence. There’s the Administration. There’s the Congress. There are the judiciary. The lawyers in this town. You know, it’s difficult not to believe that the Mayflower was full of lawyers.’ Perhaps indirectly admitting his own occasional wanderings in pursuit of the ever-relocating, elusive quarry of power in Washington, he noted: ‘A familiar sight in Washington is to see some bemused diplomat pacing the corridors of the Capitol, trying to find out where the decisions are being taken. And when he’s found that out, he may find it isn’t on the Hill after all. It’s somewhere else.’

The real problem of dealing with the United States is therefore not that of finding an overall ‘counterweight’ to it, or balancing it within ‘a multipolar world’, as French statesmen, in particular, have suggested.48 It is, rather, to engage it. What the United Kingdom has regularly done at the purely diplomatic level, in attempting to manage the United States, is instructive. By firmly siding with the US government over the Iraq problem, which came to a head in early 2003, the British government forced a measure of consultation upon it — at least with British leaders, including Prime Minister Blair, and certain British emissaries, including Britain’s UN Representative at the time, Sir Jeremy Greenstock. Procedure at least, if not fundamental policy, was thereby influenced.49 Somewhat similarly, following the al-Qaeda attacks in September 2001 the North Atlantic Council gained a degree of influence over policy-making in Washington by invoking Article 5 — the mutual-defence pledge of the 1949 Washington Treaty. It was a gesture for which the United States had to feel, and to express, gratitude. These were, however, still essentially interventions that were external to the American political process.

In order to gain further influence, it is becoming necessary for foreign diplomats in Washington to engage in the political processes of the United States, as Ambassador Henderson sensed a generation ago. Outright lobbying — that is, internal action within American domestic politics — is needed. Active public relations’ efforts may also be required, even with the help of private PR firms.50 Today it is clear to most diplomats that effective representation in Washington requires the enlistment of not just ‘allies’ in the US government itself but also ‘friendly’ NGOs, businesses, labour unions and other players in the game. The ‘national government’ of the United States now includes a good deal more than just the institutional ‘US government’, and it extends well beyond Washington itself.51 However, having a high

49) The British former European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten has observed: ‘Where substance is important to America, the most that Britain can usually do is to affect process.’ See Chris Patten, Not Quite the Diplomat: Home Truths About World Affairs (London: Allen Lane, 2005), p. 96.
profile in Washington — a big embassy, lavish entertainment budget and so on — still makes an impression. Embassies are, in a sense, the 'palaces' of our time. They symbolize the domestic presence of a sponsoring foreign country within the United States.

The country that has probably done most in recent years to advance this 'internalization' of diplomatic conduct is Canada. Under Prime Minister Paul Martin, the Canadian government launched an 'enhanced representation initiative' towards its neighbour to the south. Not only Washington DC itself, but also other cities, states and regions throughout the United States were targeted by Ottawa for the insertion of Canadian influence. The Canadian government’s reasoning was that by the time that an issue of serious interest to it — such as softwood lumber — gets to Washington and into the halls of Congress, it may be 'too late' to effect the desired changes. As Canadian Ambassador Frank McKenna explained, this was being done because 'we know that it is a whole lot easier to resolve issues at the retail level before they become gridlocked by Washington politics'.\(^\text{52}\) Preparation for early intervention where it counts, which may be far outside the Washington Beltway, was thus made.

Moreover, open 'advocacy' was pursued, not just quiet diplomacy. A formally designated Washington Advocacy Secretariat under a Minister (Advocacy) was set up in Canada’s monumental new embassy building on Pennsylvania Avenue close to the Capitol. Not only Canadian diplomats but also other Canadian officials, and federal and provincial legislators as well, were brought into play. As appropriate, they were to be brought to Washington and deployed elsewhere in the United States, wherever needed to make the most pertinent points in the most telling way. The Martin government’s initiative was expressly intended to improve the 'management and coherence' of Canada’s relations with the United States, and to offer 'a more sophisticated approach' than the one that had gone before — an implicit criticism of the style of Prime Minister Martin’s predecessor, Jean Chrétien. A feature of the new approach is that it would recognize 'the valuable role of legislators and representatives from various levels of government'.\(^\text{53}\)

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The situation that Canada faces in dealing with the United States arises, fundamentally, from proximity. So interdependent are the two North American countries that Canada can be more affected by US domestic policy than by US foreign policy towards Canada. One of the first people to understand this well was Allan Gotlieb when he served as Canada’s ambassador in Washington. If ‘American foreign policy is largely an aggregation of domestic economic thrusts’, explains Gotlieb, the result is that ‘Canadian foreign policy is the obverse side of American domestic policy affecting Canada’. This means, in practice, that Canadians cannot rely on their ‘principal interlocutors’ in the US federal government (including State Department counterparts) to speak up for them and protect their interests. Canadians had to ‘recognize, realistically, that a great deal of work has to be done ourselves’. In order to do so, Canadian diplomats had to act like Americans. This could affect the training of diplomats, the selection of personnel and the very image of the ‘Canadian ambassador’ in Washington and in American society.

From the Canada-US example described above, the ‘Americanization’ of diplomacy might be thought to be a ‘fragmentary’ vision, limited only to neighbouring countries or to wider contiguous regions. There is some merit in this view. Interdependence between societies that are close together is generally higher than between countries that are further apart. However, even in cases of more geographically and culturally distant relationships, such as that between the United States and Japan, strong influences that penetrate beneath the formal surface of decision-making can be observed. Called *gaiatsu* diplomacy in the Japanese system, the heavy and even intrusive pressure applied by former US Vice-President Walter Mondale (known as ‘Mr *Gaiatsu*’) when serving as US Ambassador to Japan was at times markedly effective.

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Diplomacy’s Possible Futures

As it evidently was in Japan, such pressure can be functionally useful, for both parties — to make a country do ‘the right thing’ in its trade and other relationships, in its own interest as well as in the interest of others and even of world order. Pressure from outside has helped the ‘infigters’ for internationalism in Japan to liberalize and further internationalize Japan’s financial and other markets. It has probably also contributed to Japan’s global diplomatic engagement. Even the People’s Republic of China is increasingly open to, if not actively receptive towards, such targeted pressure with respect to such issues as intellectual property rights and, to an extent, even human rights. While fundamental restrictions remain, there are now in China ‘open debates on sensitive issues’ of foreign policy, such as non-proliferation and missile defence. As for Chinese diplomacy itself, many of its current senior and mid-level practitioners hold postgraduate degrees from American as well as European universities. To be sure, as China analysts Evan Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel point out, ‘even as China becomes more engaged, it is also growing more adept at using its foreign policy and foreign relations to serve Chinese interests’.57 Although such experience is likely to foster a more interactive ‘American-style’ diplomacy, encounters with the United States do not automatically produce acceptance, or even understanding, of American foreign policy views.

Between societies that share value systems and have similar legal systems, as basically do those of North America and of Europe, gaiatsu diplomacy should normally be expected to have more entry points. A specific example of this easier Atlantic interpenetration is the European Union filing an amicus curiae brief with the United States Supreme Court in opposition to the Massachusetts Burma Law, a state legislative measure regarding the state’s purchasing policy against firms doing business with military-controlled Burma (Myanmar).58 The basic policy positions of Europe and the United States regarding Burma were not very different, so Europe’s pressure was generally not taken amiss. In the environmental field, European pressure from NGOs, as well as from national governments and from the EU itself, can have a morally progressive effect — reinforcing and encouraging American supporters of the Kyoto Protocol. Such interaction was very much in evidence.

57) Medeiros and Fravel, ‘China’s New Diplomacy’, pp. 30 and 34.
on various levels during the December 1995 Montreal climate conference. On a profound ethical matter such as the human death penalty, still actively on the books in some American states and allowed under US federal law as well, many Americans positively welcome European diplomatic as well as legal, NGO and popular interventions.

Some of the ‘Americanization’ model of diplomacy, such as lobbying and advocacy, may be coming to Europe itself. The controversy over subsidies to Airbus and Boeing, part of the global business competition between the two aircraft giants, is but one example. Diplomats and other agents, especially the respective corporate representatives, are active in Brussels with the European Union, in Geneva with the World Trade Organization, as well as at other key decision-making centres including Toulouse, the site of Airbus-France. These representations are mostly not formal-organizational. They are informal-political. And they are increasingly vocal and public, with the practical aim of getting things done and doing them in the ‘North American’ way, by self-help.

Fragments of a Future Whole?

Do these projective visions add up to a single, if not fully integrated, overall picture of the future of diplomacy? In the sense of a larger ‘universe’, or whole diverse body of things, perhaps they do. They do overlap somewhat. Europeanization and Americanization, for example, can be seen as almost mirror images of each other — the former being distinctively a top-down process, and the latter being characteristically a bottom-up process. The threat of disintermediation, or avoidance of institutions and bypassing of middlemen, will mean that all diplomacy must be much more attentive to the people, both as consumers and as citizens, rather than just as abstract ‘public opinion’. With greater transparency in markets and politics, people increasingly have choices, and they may wish to exercise them. Democratization is also sensitive

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to others’ points of view, which can be the perspectives of sovereign states, whether large or small. Many are situated geographically in discrete and very often dire circumstances. The relevant perspectives can also be those of different social groups in various regional and subregional settings. The *thematization* of foreign policy, and of the diplomacy that accompanies it, is also people-sensitive, although in this case the relationship to the public may be more of hierarchical guidance — dictation from above — than of democratic impulse — direction from below. Ultimate popular control of foreign policy is surely right and wise, but as diplomats know, the *vox populi* is not invariably the *vox Dei*. Intermediaries are needed between past and present, between prince and president, between place and people, between culture and ideology, and also between power and purpose. These exchanges, and possible transitions, need to be negotiated.

The answer to Immanuel Kant’s 1798 question, ‘is the human race constantly progressing?’, is of course still not evident. The actual story — the specific narratives — of future international history, including diplomatic history, cannot be dictated in advance, in Kant’s sense of ‘predictive history’. However, some general lines for the future development of diplomacy can reasonably be extended forwards in time, on the basis of what is known about the world’s processes, if not about mankind. ‘Whatever concept one may hold, from a metaphysical point of view, concerning the freedom of the will, certainly its appearances, which are human actions, like every other natural event, as Kant wrote, ‘are determined by universal laws’. Globalization may not obey universal law. But, like ‘universal history’, it is inclusive — and a process that may unite even as it divides. Although its actual history may be fragmentary, the ‘universe of discourse’ of diplomacy is cosmopolitan. It is inspired by unity. The diplomatic historian should be inspired by no less.

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61) Kant, ‘An Old Question Raised Again’.