

the role of the diplomat as representative of government. It is most certainly not to suggest that the role of diplomat and that of representative of an NGO or other actor is substitutable. Just the opposite: it is their peculiar qualities that define these roles. And yet, at the same time, the meshing of what has usually been defined as 'official' and 'unofficial' diplomacy is, I would argue, of interest and significance.

None of this should be news to a Canadian audience familiar with the trials and tribulations of the Canadian forest industry companies confronted by a continuing international campaign directed towards its forest management practices and orchestrated by environmental NGOs – notably Greenpeace.<sup>4</sup> As an exercise in diplomacy, an instructive feature of this long-running saga (as with other not dissimilar examples) is the particular gloss it puts on one of the roles demanded of the modern diplomat. I would suggest that this affirms rather than denies the diplomat's continuing significance. It illustrates, to return to Clark's concerns, the ways in which the spheres of the commercial and the political can become so closely associated in contemporary world politics. But, equally, it suggests that, in many contexts, aspects of the way in which the job is done are changing – and this may well present tensions in terms of what is being represented and to whom. In February 1997 I convened a conference (hosted as it happens by the Canadian high commission in London) on the changing role of the foreign ministry. In the conclusion to a keynote paper, William Wallace (Lord Wallace of Saltaire, a reader in international relations at the London School of Economics and the foreign policy spokesman for the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords) raised this precise issue before an audience which included diplomats from some forty countries: 'Do you expect to be representing states to each other in 20-30 years' time, or struggling to define the role of national governments in an increasingly diffuse global society?' This appeared to strike a chord with the diplomats. Presumably they were suffering from a temporary lapse of concentration and/or collective role denial.

4 See Brian Hocking, 'The woods and the trees: catalytic diplomacy and Canada's trials as a "forestry superpower"', *Environmental Politics* 5 (no 3, 1996), 48-75.

5 William Wallace, 'The changing nature of foreign policy,' *Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation*, Canadian High Commission, London, 6-7 February 1997. The conference papers will be published in Brian Hocking, ed, *Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation* (London: Macmillan, forthcoming 1998).

# Beyond Representation

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There is much of merit in Paul Sharp's recent survey of the problems associated with diplomatic representation ('Who Needs Diplomats?' autumn 1997), especially in highlighting key elements of strength in the embedded professional identity and symbolic role of diplomacy. At the heart of his argument, however, is a rigid attachment to the view that any account of diplomacy which moves the focal point away from an awareness of this important sense of institutional continuity (with a fixed image of conventions and notion of a special diplomatic disposition) towards a better understanding of why and how the machinery of diplomacy is changing must be firmly resisted. Such a perspective requires rebuttal on both practical and conceptual/intellectual grounds. At the practical level, the restrictive approach advocated by Sharp holds out the prospect of closure for any extended exploration of the complex sources and rich veins of activity found in contemporary diplomacy. At the conceptual level, the danger with this approach is that it tends to impose serious limits on the nature of the debate on diplomacy just as that debate is in the process of opening up.

What is striking about the traditional defence of diplomatic authority and *raison d'être* is the narrowness of its argument. Rather than a dynamic approach to the study of diplomacy, with a solid grasp of the changing context in which contemporary diplomacy must be located and a keen appreciation of the evolution in the role that professional diplomats play, the image presented is a static one. Diplomats and diplomatic activity remain associated with a rigid state-centric international system. Such a perspective plays into the hands of those forces which view diplomacy and diplomats as increasingly removed from the real problems – and solutions – facing the world in the post-cold war years.

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A backward-looking concentration on the question of representation has allowed the locus of debate to shift from the multifaceted manner in which diplomacy has responded to change (through an upgraded focus on information, communication, and negotiation) to the inevitability of decline. The shadow of 'the end of diplomacy' hovers over any extended discussion of diplomacy – as witness the titles of a number of recent meetings and speeches exploring this topic. The former Canadian deputy minister of foreign affairs sought answers to the query in a 1996 address entitled 'Must diplomacy always be on the endangered species list?'<sup>1</sup> A 1997 Wilton Park conference in Britain asked whether or not diplomacy was a 'Profession in Peril.'

This gloomy spectre of decline is not new. Almost three decades ago, James Eayrs confidently predicted that the performance of professional diplomacy would move towards decline – or 'deliquescence' – melting away into nothingness, fading into limbo.<sup>2</sup> Eayrs did not disguise the fact that he wanted this disappearing act to happen on normative/subjective grounds because of what he saw as the ethical and operational shortcomings of diplomats (ranging from a lack of moral sensitivity to crass opportunism). But, just as clearly, his prediction was based on his assessment of a number of objective conditions centred on the changes in the nature of the state system, the emergence of new actors in diplomacy, and the impact of technological innovation.

Eayrs's critique has proved remarkably prescient in capturing many of the challenges facing diplomacy and diplomats as we enter the next millennium. As he suggested, a number of factors have combined to open up the scope of diplomatic activity. Domestically, the public – or at least some elements of it – is no longer content to remain on the sidelines, 'seen and not heard.' In common with the ascendant 'world society' view, this process was seen as an outgrowth of 'changes in the nature of the states system' at the international level – especially the erosion of national sovereignty. Moreover, Eayrs's attention to the impact of technological change captures much about the increasing intensity and speed of diplomatic activity. Although at that time he was unaware of the notion of 'cyberdiplomacy,' Eayrs pointed to a future in which technological advances in electronic communication and easy

<sup>1</sup> Gordon S. Smith, speech delivered at Harvard University, 12 April 1996 (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1996, mimeo).

<sup>2</sup> James Eayrs, *Diplomacy and its Discontents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1971), 69.

availability of information would 'enable the individual to make his mark upon events by placing at his disposal resources previously monopolized by foreign offices.'<sup>3</sup>

Eayrs's forecast, nonetheless, fell far short of total accuracy. His expectation that the profession of diplomacy would be destroyed by vertical 'overproduction' (that is, the need to adapt to the proliferation of state entities) has not happened. While the proliferation of states – the result of the breaking up of some states (most notably, the Soviet Union) into smaller entities – has severely complicated diplomatic practices, the trend has not resulted in a general process of delegitimization of diplomatic mechanisms. On the contrary, the major problem associated with the proliferation of actors comes from the demand for resources (in terms of both funding and personnel) as a result of the expansion of diplomatic links with these newer countries. Furthermore, from the horizontal perspective, serious questions were raised about whether the 'function of diplomacy [could] be exorcised' as decisively as Eayrs indicated. John Holmes, for example, suggested that the key to understanding was not an outright rejection of the function of diplomacy but rather a better awareness of the way that diplomacy has (and should) evolve over time. This meant, above all else, closer study of the way in which 'the functions, habits, and priorities of diplomacy are mutable,' combined with a sense that the 'kinds and breeds of diplomats or interlocutors are likely to multiply.'<sup>4</sup>

In common with more recent critics of diplomacy, where Eayrs missed the mark was in his preoccupation with decline as opposed to change. The expanding scope, intensity, and form of diplomacy in the globalized and interdependent context of the 1980s and 1990s has not meant that diplomacy and diplomats are any less important. On the contrary, diplomacy appears to have risen in importance precisely because of this added complexity. In the words of one participant/observer: 'The virtual mission and the virtual ministry are no longer entirely in the realms of science fiction; but, equally, abandoned missions and abolished ministries are not part of the real world either. Contemporary diplomacy shows every sign of adapting vigorously to new conditions and participants: a private world once famous for the

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 78.

<sup>4</sup> John W. Holmes, 'The study of diplomacy: a sermon,' in *The Changing Role of the Diplomatic Function in the Making of Foreign Policy* (Halifax NS: Centre for Foreign Policy, Department of Political Science, Dalhousie University, 1973), 3.

conventionalities of its métier has become a much more public, complicated and fascinating piece of kinetic art.<sup>5</sup>

The contemporary literature on diplomacy has not moved entirely beyond the dominant themes of the past. Echoes of Eayrs's critique of diplomatic practice remains a distinctive strain in academia. This set of critical voices is no less certain of the normative benefits of shifting the centre of attention away from the professional diplomat. On the other hand, there are useful points being made about some of the key questions at the heart of emerging diplomatic practice. *Of other authors*

Despite the scepticism of diplomacy's traditional defenders, a significant element of this process of adaptation has been the closer drawing together of the traditionally separate functions of diplomacy and the policy process. Gilbert Winham, for example, has shown how complexity – in particular the new technical qualities and bureaucratization – contributes to this evolution. Instead of making diplomacy redundant, diplomats have been integrated far more deeply and widely into decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to expectations, it may be added here, this trend towards integration may be reinforced by the communications revolution involving information technology (by allowing a closer and faster connection between the various components in the diplomacy/policy transmission belt). If states have become more like firms in terms of the importance they place on bargaining, they have also copied the practices of some firms in offering forms of 'just in time' diplomatic practice. Indeed, the emphasis on speed is a theme which deserves much closer attention in the study of diplomacy.

These tendencies point to a fundamental duality about the intensity of contemporary diplomacy. On the one hand – and this is consistent with the heightened complexity found within varied sets of technical negotiations – a greater salience is accorded to an extant base of expertise and administrative capacity as factors in the ability of actors to make a contribution to contemporary diplomacy. On the other hand, there appears to be at least some room for a less emotionally

5 Richard Langhorne, 'Current developments in diplomacy: "who are the diplomats now?"', paper delivered at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, CA, April 1996, 12.

6 Gilbert R. Winham, 'Negotiation as a management process', *World Politics* 30 (October 1977); and 'The impact of social change on international diplomacy', paper delivered to the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, June 1993.

detached form of issue-specific, initiative-oriented diplomacy that cuts across traditional cleavages in the international system.

A second dimension of adaptation, which centres on the range of diplomatic activity, must be related back to the widening set of actors and agenda of international politics. As opposed to the traditional fixed concern with territorial integrity, the state faces a volatile environment in which it must not only try to 'do something', but be seen as 'doing something' across a wider continuum of international issues. This is true of the non-military security agenda and of many issues that deal with the promotion of economic well-being and social welfare. Yet, set within a context of these uneven – albeit intense – demands, and a sense of uncertainty about resources, all countries face pressure to make choices vis-à-vis diplomatic activity. According to Strobe Talbott: 'Only by leveraging our resources and being smarter in the way we marshal them can the State Department meet the challenges posed to American diplomacy by globalization and interdependence.'<sup>7</sup>

A third dimension which has received increasing attention is the salience given to 'access' to both information and power points.<sup>8</sup> A great impetus towards media/societal relations and/or lobbying has been built up in the expression of a 'public' face of diplomacy. The dissemination and management of knowledge become essential ingredients in this mode of operation, as part of either an 'outsider' (societal) or an 'insider' (power brokers) strategy. The mobilization of a sophisticated form of public diplomacy offers considerable rewards. However, campaigns of this sort open up considerable risks as well.

A fourth dimension of adaptation has to do with the increasingly intricate relationship between the state and societal actors. The impression given by Eayrs, as with most of the older literature, is that this relationship has been riddled with on-going and intractable tensions. A strong current in the contemporary literature, conversely, showcases at least the potential for 'creative statecraft' between state and societal actors. Evans, Jacobson, and Purnam, in an influential edited collection, refer to this constructive form of interaction as part of a shift

7 Strobe Talbott, 'Globalization and diplomacy: a practitioner's perspective', *Foreign Policy* 108 (autumn 1997), 74.

8 For an extended discussion of these points see Robert Wolfe, ed, *Diplomatic Missions: The Ambassador in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, forthcoming).

towards 'double-edged diplomacy' which links the domestic and the international.<sup>9</sup>

This theme is brought out more explicitly by Brian Hocking's use of the term 'catalytic' diplomacy to describe the development of some degree of symbiosis between the 'official' and 'unofficial' practices of state and non-state actors. Although tensions persist between the state and firms and between the state and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Hocking concludes that there is also some degree of mutuality of interest on an issue-specific basis.<sup>10</sup> This pattern of co-operation and conflict, albeit frustrating in its lack of uniformity, lends a richness to the exploration of diplomatic practices on a case-by-case basis.

The main point of this brief reply to Paul Sharp's article is to stress that diplomats and diplomacy are too important to be left to the care and nurturing of many of their keenest defenders. When faced with challenges of legitimacy and relevance, the instinctive tendency among these supporters has been to place both diplomats and diplomacy in a tight institutional shell as a form of protection. To adopt this narrow mode of defence, however, is misguided. Diplomats and their trade remain important not just because of the residue of an age-old professional legacy but because of the value of their everyday activities in the contemporary world. To overlook this is to condemn these players and their activities to the fate so many of their critics have long hoped for and expected.

<sup>9</sup> Peter B. Evans, H.K. Jacobson, and R.D. Putnam, eds, *Double-edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Brian Hocking, *Beyond 'newness' and 'decline': the development of catalytic diplomacy*, Discussion Papers in Diplomacy No 10, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, University of Leicester, October 1995, 17-26.

## COLD WAR INHERITANCES

Reviews by J.H. Taylor

### ENDING CIVIL WARS

Charles King

London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997, Adelphi Paper 308, 94pp, US\$25.00

Canadians who believe that their Country has a vocation for peacekeeping will profit from reading this book. In it Charles King, who teaches in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, analyzes the phenomenon of contemporary civil wars and how they end. Most of the world's wars are now civil wars. Allowing for problems of definition, King claims that since 1945 at least 90 armed conflicts might be classed as 'civil wars.' Thus most of the dilemmas of peacekeeping arise nowadays from wars within, rather than between, states. Civil wars have characteristics they do not share with wars between states. If our vocation is indeed to be peacekeeping, there is, therefore, a special relevance to studying civil wars and, in particular, what is involved in bringing them to an end.

Civil wars are notoriously bitter. To arrange a negotiated outcome often presents greater problems than to negotiate a settlement of a

war between states. According to one calculation King cites, wars between states in this century have lasted on average about 20 months, whereas civil wars have dragged on for 120 months or more. Why should this be so? King examines some of the traditional explanations. For example, civil wars are more often fuelled by blind sentiment than by calculation. A negotiated peace can hardly be expected to emerge when the parties to the quarrel hold passionately to mutually exclusive goals and are utterly unwilling to contemplate the sort of compromises essential to a successful negotiation. King allows that this line of explanation is to some degree valid. But he pursues the analysis further, maintaining that there are structural elements in civil wars — that is, incentives to continued violence and disincentives to compromise — which help explain why civil wars go on being fought far past the point where the interests of belligerents are served by the fighting. Among these, King points to the all-or-nothing spirit in which civil wars are pursued. This makes factional leaders fight on blindly in the hope of victory, even if that hope be slight, rather than face a negotiated outcome which would be disastrous for them.

Sheer practical difficulties of command and control in faction-ridden and loosely organized insur-

Lloyd, Trevor 368  
MacMillan, Margaret 365  
Simpson, Erika 786  
Stoett, Peter J. 599  
Taylor, J.H. 179, 788  
Wark, Wesley K. 372

# International Journal Contents

EDITORS NORMAN HILLMER/MARGARET MACMILLAN  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR GAYLE FRASER  
VOLUME LIII NO. 1/WINTER 1997-8

12. Juni 1998

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Post 105, D-3364 Bomm

## COMMENT & OPINION

- 1 Taking Canada seriously CONRAD BLACK
- 47 Globalization, enterprise, and governance:  
what does a changing world mean for Canada  
DARYL COPELAND
- 38 Revitalizing the G-7: prospects for the 1998  
Birmingham meeting of the eight  
JOHN J. KIRTON & ELLA KOKOTSI
- 57 Power and the federal state in Canada:  
is it being hollowed out? PETER W. B. PHILLIPS

## ESSAYS

- 73 Czechs and Slovaks - 1998: a year of anniversaries  
H. GORDON SKILLING
- 94 Human rights and the culture wars: globalization and  
the universality of human rights RHODA E. HOWARD
- 113 Human rights and foreign policy  
in the next millennium DAVID P. FORSYTHE *WFA*
- 133 China's post-Deng foreign relations DENNY ROY *WFA*
- 147 NATO enlargement: should Canada leave NATO?  
ERIC BERGÜSCH *WFA*

## THE READERS' COLUMN

- 169 The end(s) of diplomacy BRIAN HOCKING
- 173 Beyond representation ANDREW F. COOPER

## REVIEWS

- 179 Cold War, Middle East