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Transcript

The Development of Modern Diplomacy

International Law Discussion Group

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Sir Ivor Roberts:

The first edition of the book I have had the pleasure to edit (*Satow's Diplomatic Practice*) appeared in 1917 after the most catastrophic failure of diplomacy had led to the Great War. Four further editions followed in the next 60 years but this the 6th edition is the first for a full 30 years and attempts to survey a diplomatic world which my distinguished predecessor Sir Ernest Satow would have been hard pushed to recognise. Empires and colonies have disappeared; the Russian revolution has come and its effects largely gone at huge cost to mankind but something of the threat from global ideologies remains. And while the territorial ambitions of many of the participants in the First World War now seem grotesque, the urge to expand territory and the determination to resist are still with us, witness relatively recent events in Kuwait and Iraq and the Occupied Territories. But while the modern diplomat has to wrestle with these 'traditional' problems of the relationships between states, he or she now has to address the 'modern' problems of global jihadism, of nuclear proliferation and of climate change.

In the time available I want to look at the origins of modern diplomacy before during and in the wake of the Versailles conference, the failure of the League, the UN and the Cold war, containment to détente. I then want to look at multilateral diplomacy and summitry, modern diplomatic communications, track two, paradiplomacy and secret diplomacy, including the work of NGOs. I hope to leave you with the impression that although events in the last decade may have pointed to the sidelining of diplomacy it is as essential now to address the traditional and modern problems I've just outlined as it was when diplomacy began however imperfectly to put the pieces together at the Versailles Peace Conference. But let me begin by setting the scene as Satow found it in 1917.

The balance of power which had generally kept the European peace for nearly a century had as the 19th C came to a close been replaced with a system of bipolar military alliances (uncannily mirroring the two power blocs that emerged with the Cold War). These alliances exposed Europe to the risk that a single incident could prompt a chain reaction leading to a general war. The rise of Prussian, then German, militarism became the threat which by the end of the nineteenth century had entirely replaced a similar fear of French expansionism a century earlier. The system of alliances and the excessive weight given to military planning and timetables undermined any chance that diplomacy might head off what came to be seen as an almost inevitable clash.

So along with the disappearance of old Empires and much of the old order, the First World War also brought an end to old or orthodox diplomacy. The new diplomacy which was to replace it was usually vaguely defined but was clearly predicated on a new openness born of faster communications, the increasing power of the press, and a shift in the balance of forces in the democracies from the ruling elites to the governed.

Both before and during the war, there were repeated calls for diplomacy to be made more open and more accessible to public scrutiny and appraisal. Diplomats like the Cambon brothers, articulated this demand as early as 1905 as did various pacifist and other anti-war groups. As the cost of the war in terms of millions of dead became clear and as its origins were seen to lie in the failures of the old diplomacy, so the requirement for a new approach became more insistent. The clamour was heard for 'open covenants openly arrived at' in President Wilson's much quoted words. It was natural that electorates claiming to control governments should require to know what agreements were being made in their name and to exercise the constitutional right of accepting or rejecting them (as when the United States Senate in 1919 rejected participation in the League of Nations).

The problem is that if negotiation is carried on under the public eye—as President Wilson at first appeared to think it should be—it quickly turns into a travesty of efficient procedure and runs the risk of betraying any constructive purpose for which it may have been conceived. By its nature, true negotiation must be confidential. If exhibited, it degenerates into polemic; and this is not diplomacy, it is the continuation of warfare in peacetime by other means. The same thought is implicit in Machiavelli's prologue to his *Art of War*. In such a process of conflict the practice of diplomacy must be presumed to embrace not merely negotiation, but the use of a complex range of moral and psychological weapons.

Indeed when Wilson came to negotiate the Treaty of Versailles he clearly abandoned this transparency, the first of his celebrated Fourteen Points (America's war aims, formulated by Wilson before Congress in January 1918), and maintained confidentiality even from lesser allies. All the key decisions were taken by the triumvirate of Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau (with the Italian Prime Minister, Vittorio Orlando, the largely ineffective other member of the key body, the Council of Four) who paid scant regard to the views of others. This may be considered an early example of summitry (which I will discuss later).

The League of Nations

The failings of the Treaty of Versailles have been discussed exhaustively and this is not the place to rehearse them further. But in one area at least it provided the germ of an idea which after a false start would take root. The new diplomacy had, beyond its requirement for openness, a yearning for an international organization to settle disputes and deter those who sought to impose their will by force. In its faltering steps towards world government (the League of Nations), the Versailles conference changed the nature of diplomacy decisively even if another World War had to intervene before this became apparent. The League of Nations was first proposed—ironically given Britain's obsession hitherto with balance of power politics—by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, to President Wilson's personal adviser, Colonel House, as far back as 1915. Wilson made the idea his own and presented it first in May 1916. It then became one of his Fourteen Points, and Wilson pursued the idea at Versailles with characteristic eloquence and vigour.

But the League was emasculated by the US failure to ratify the Treaty and by the non-participation of Germany (excluded till 1926, and then withdrawing in 1933) and Soviet Russia (which was a member only for the years 1934–9, when it was expelled). Its limitations were demonstrated by its failure to impose sanctions on Japan in 1931 after its invasion of Manchuria, its response to Haile Selassie's famously pathetic and personal plea to the League for justice and assistance (equally pathetic), and its failure to act when Hitler occupied the Rhineland, in direct contravention of the Versailles Treaty. Collective security, the very purpose of the League, was hopelessly undermined. The failure of the League to prevent the slide into the Second World War as Hitler and Mussolini treated it with rank contempt marked the temporary eclipse of the new diplomacy. The alliances and pacts, the territorial acquisitiveness, and the suppression of self-determination, all features of the old order, returned with a vengeance. Once the war was over, however, there was a clearly recognized need to create a new international organization to replace the League and to be significantly different in its basic design.

The Cold War, Containment, and Détente

The shape of the post-war world was as we know however not set by a world forum but by a series of summit meetings of the three Allied leaders,

Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at Tehran and Yalta and of Truman, Stalin, and Churchill then Attlee at Potsdam. Churchill foresaw that Stalin, the ultimate apostle of *Realpolitik* would never trade the Red Army's gains for abstract principles and proposed instead that each of the Allies should have its sphere of influence. This was anathema to Roosevelt as a return to discredited balance of power and colonial politics which US public opinion would never support. Roosevelt, who famously described the Soviet leader as having something of a Christian gentleman about him, did not live to see the final unmasking of Stalin's bad faith as he took as his sphere of influence the whole of Eastern Europe and Germany to the Elbe. Thus, until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, new and old diplomacy coexisted. East and West were grouped in two mutually antagonistic alliances while a new world body, the United Nations, struggled to fulfil its potential. The West attempted to deal with the Soviet Empire and Communist China by a policy of containment which lasted 40 years. Containment as a policy was first articulated by the American diplomat George Kennan. In what became known as the 'Long Telegram', Kennan brilliantly analysed Soviet motives and political perspective: they were, he said, an unholy combination of Communist ideology, traditional Russian insecurity, and Tsarist expansionism. To deal with this threat, the West needed 'a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world'.

But containment was very much a policy for the long haul, reactive and predicated on the eventual collapse or transformation of the Soviet system. The Communist threat was not of course monolithic. When the US began to take advantage of the ideological split between the two Communist mammoths, the Soviet Union and China, in the early 1970s, President Nixon demonstrated his attachment to old balance of power politics by daringly opening up US contacts with Communist China and providing a triangularity among the three major nuclear powers which had hitherto been absent. At the same time Nixon initiated the policy of *détente* with the Soviet Union. For Kissinger, the architect of this and so many other aspects of Nixon's foreign policy, 'détente, desirable though it was, could not replace the overall balance of power'. In other words, it flowed from equilibrium and was not a substitute for it. This Sino-Soviet-US geostrategic triangle with the US in pre-eminent position was, as Otte points out, 'precisely the kind of policy for which he [Kissinger] had praised Metternich and Bismarck in his earlier academic writings'. In fact while Kissinger's conceptual approach to diplomacy was traditional, his practice was highly innovative. Given the limitations of

nineteenth century means of transport, neither Metternich nor Bismarck would have been able to follow Kissinger's practice of diplomacy even if they had wanted to. But Kissinger's uses of back-channel and shuttle diplomacy were remarkable. Kissinger as an academic had always been allergic to bureaucracy. His and Nixon's institution of back-channels, early on in the latter's presidency, stemmed from the need for secrecy both to prevent their radical foreign policy initiatives being undermined by State Department leaks and to ensure that opposition to his enthusiasm for linkage, negotiating on a broad front, was stymied. Kissinger himself put it more prosaically. His use of back-channels was designed to open up potentially blocked channels without completely sidelining the State Department. Once the back-channels 'gave hope of specific agreements, the subject was moved to conventional diplomatic channels. If formal negotiations there reached a deadlock, the Channel would open up again.'

Kissinger used back-channel or secret diplomacy extensively in his time as US National Security Adviser, initially to implement the policy of détente with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, through what 'Kissinger called "the Channel" used over and over again ... on every key problem in Soviet-American relations'. Later he used a back-channel with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam in an attempt to bring the Vietnam War to an end. Kissinger added a new word to the diplomatic lexicon in being an early proponent of shuttle diplomacy, whereby the intermediary in a conflict shuttles backwards and forwards repeatedly between the parties in conflict or in dispute to secure the desired result. Of course this type of diplomacy is not guaranteed to succeed, as General Alexander Haig found when attempting to mediate between Argentina and Britain during the Falklands War in 1982, but Kissinger's style and energy often secured results, on occasions because he had worn down the resistance of the opposing sides. As Hamilton and Langhorne put it, 'his mediation in the wake of the [1973] Yom Kippur War constituted a dazzling display of how modern technology could be harnessed to a diplomacy which was at once spectacular, secret and ministerial'.

Multilateral Diplomacy

Although Kissinger's theory and practice of diplomacy were highly individualistic and born partly out of impatience with traditional bureaucratic diplomacy, another form of diplomacy has flourished in the post-war period. The multilateral approach has become increasingly common post-1945 but it had its roots in antiquity. In an attempt to stop the feuding and warfare, the principal powers in the Eastern Mediterranean, ie the important Greek states

and Persia, 'agreed to convene great international political congresses ... to discuss a general settlement of outstanding issues'. This general peace, known as the King's Peace, involved eight congresses between 392 and 367 BC and 'not only established a territorial stalemate, with guarantees against an aggressor similar to those which later figured in the Covenant of the League of Nations ... they also agreed on certain general principles ... and on detailed practical rules of conduct for regulating international affairs'. In modern times, large-scale conferences took place infrequently in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Vienna and Berlin being major examples from the nineteenth century).

In the twentieth century, the Versailles conference set a precedent which has been followed ever more frequently since the Second World War despite the view of some sceptics who see such conferences as largely talking shops. (Paul Cambon believed that 'a conference which includes more than four or five people ... can achieve nothing worthwhile'.) This view has its adherents but there can clearly be advantages to a multilateral conference in terms of efficiency and speed of decision-making. This does not necessarily apply to a standing multilateral conference like the UN or other international organizations which are not time-limited. But a conference will almost certainly be the best forum for decision-making and reaching agreements where it has a deadline, is subject-specific, and/or where technical details are involved and the national experts assembled in one place. Berridge points out that multilateral conferences, particularly major standing ones like the UN, provide an opportunity for principals to meet in the margins to discuss other issues including bilateral ones, a particularly valuable opportunity for those states which have no or very poor diplomatic relations. They can also 'kick start a series of essentially bilateral negotiations that subsequently develop elsewhere. This was the extremely valuable function performed for the Arab-Israeli bilateral talks by the Geneva Conference of December 1973 and then by the Madrid Conference in October 1991.' The proliferation of international and regional organizations so prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s (partly a function of the greatly increased number of independent states who saw in these organizations an opportunity for exerting influence) has levelled off now. But multilateral diplomacy's advantages will ensure that it survives despite the frequent echoes of Cambon's put-down.

Summitry and Modern Diplomacy

Both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy can be and frequently are carried out at the highest, that is to say at summit, level. An important definition is that of

David Dunn who emphasized that they were meetings between those who 'by virtue of their position ... are not able to be contradicted by any other individual'. The word 'summit' was first used to describe meetings at this level in a speech in 1950 by Churchill ('a parley at the summit') but the practice, like multilateral diplomacy itself, has ancient roots. In the Middle Ages most diplomacy was carried out at summit level, often by kings and princes of neighbouring states. As the practice of resident diplomats became established in the sixteenth century, so summitry went into relative decline. As Geoffrey Berridge points out this was not just because of resident missions 'but because meetings between princes had in fact rarely proved fruitful; they were also dangerous'. (A visiting sovereign if recognised as such would of course enjoy immunity.) The practice enjoyed a renaissance in the nineteenth century and 'underwent a resurgence after 1914, fostered by the democratisation of diplomacy and the belief that issues of war and peace were too important to be left to professionals'.

The speed of international travel has seen the practice mushroom in the last 30 years. For some this has been the end of diplomacy, as the makers of foreign policy take it upon themselves to execute it. But that is a superficial assessment to which we shall return. Summits as originally conceived by Churchill were infrequent and involved only a handful of the most important people on the planet. The practice is now so widespread that it is possible to identify different types. The first category is the serial summit, which is part of a regular institutionalized series, examples of which are the European Council, G7/G8 and now G20 meetings, ASEAN, Arab League, Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM), and Franco-German summits. As can be seen many of these are linked to international organizations and can constitute a court of highest appeal when disagreements between members cannot be resolved at a lower level. The second type of summit is an ad hoc summit often set up to deal with a crisis (the Kyoto summit on climate change of 1999 for example) or to break the ice between states whose relations have been poor or non-existent. The meeting in Paris in 1971 between Heath and Pompidou which led the way to British entry into the EEC or Nixon's meeting with Mao in Beijing in 1972 were prime examples. Although the substance is often important, the symbolism of the meeting itself may be even more significant and it will undoubtedly tend to attract more publicity than a serial summit. The last kind is the high-level exchange of views. This least ambitious type of summitry is nevertheless extensively used, particularly by leaders undertaking a tour of a region. They may hope to get to know their opposite number however superficially and may be able to advance some issues which have been blocked.

The dangers of summitry are not always appreciated by its practitioners. Being high-profile events, expectations of them are often raised and the risk of failure greater. As Dean Acheson, the former US Secretary of State said, 'When a chief of state ... makes a fumble, the goal line is open behind him'. Personal chemistry may work to make the occasion a success but if the chemistry works to repel rather than attract the results will at best be meagre and the process best left to the diplomat to pursue. Sometimes they can be dominated by ceremonial and appear to be more exercises in publicity-seeking, all froth and no substance, than breakthroughs in diplomatic negotiations. The most successful summits are those which have been meticulously prepared, a requirement where the professional can be expected to come into his own. Whatever their shortcomings, summits and the accompanying media circus are now a permanent feature of diplomatic topography. The diplomat must learn to exploit a summit as an opportunity to buttress his own efforts and not to view it as an occasion which will diminish his own authority.

If the speed of international air travel has had a major impact on the diplomat, the speed of international communications has been equally significant. The advent of the fax, Internet, email, video or telephone conferencing, and other forms of information technology has transformed the means of diplomacy. A busy officer in an embassy will often prefer to email or even text his key contact(s) in host government departments to ascertain their views as rapidly as possible and without having to visit the ministry concerned. A sensible officer will use this approach when eliciting factual information. Officials in government departments now regularly communicate by telephone or other electronic means directly with their opposite numbers in other capitals, bypassing the embassy. This is now a fact of life and, given the specialization increasingly required to discuss issues like climate change internationally, it clearly makes sense for the 'experts' to communicate directly and ensure that the foreign ministry is kept informed as required under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. It is not however just a question of courtesy to inform the embassy of the substance of the exchange. The well-informed diplomat will be best-placed to put the information received into a broader political context. An example might be where he needed to remind the official in his home capital that the official with whom they have been communicating is a political appointee whose career is closely linked to his soon-to-be-departing minister.

At a higher level, heads of state or government often speak directly, with or without a video dimension, by secure telephone to discuss and resolve major

issues. In the early days of hot-lines between say Washington and Moscow or Washington and London, this was as a diplomatic weapon of last resort. These days such exchanges are fairly routine. Foreign ministers will often speak to each other by such means several times a day during a crisis. In Western capitals, such conversations will be recorded and a note or record prepared by a private secretary to inform those who need to know of the main points agreed or disagreed.

In London, the Prime Minister's office tends to take a very restrictive view of the number of people who need to see a record of the Prime Minister's discussions with his principal international interlocutors, often excluding ambassadors and senior officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to their irritation and to the detriment of the smooth working of diplomacy. An ambassador who is ignorant of the exchanges between his government and his host government at the highest levels cannot be expected to execute his mission effectively. While prime ministers, presidents and foreign and other ministers regularly interact as described above, there is another kind of activity which is essentially the antithesis of diplomacy, viz. megaphone diplomacy. Megaphone diplomacy is often the product of domestic political needs where politicians feel the need for their own domestic political purposes to talk toughly and often roughly even when it will damage their longer term aims. It's often the diplomat on the ground who has to attempt to repair the damage done by resorting to megaphone diplomacy.

If a diplomat no longer has a controlling monopoly in carrying out diplomatic tasks, part of the competition now comes not just from presidents, prime ministers and other ministers in terms of direct contact with the leaders of the country to which he is accredited, but from paradiplomacy and track two diplomacy, (track one being the traditional work of and by professional diplomats). Track two diplomacy is always affected by unofficial and often informal non-governmental actors. Examples include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), humanitarian organizations (eg Médecins sans Frontières), religious institutions (eg the Sant' Egidio community), academics, former government officials (eg the Carter Center), and think tanks, among others.

Civil society, that offshoot of the enlightenment, has developed in the early twenty-first century into a benchmark of a fully functioning democracy. One of its key manifestations is the flourishing of organizations outside the state sector. India for example is estimated to have over 1 million non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Non-governmental organizations come in many shapes and sizes. Many have a charitable base and some will have

humanitarian or human rights objectives; others focus on sustainable development and aid. Often their concern will be a single issue, eg climate change. Their objectives will be focused and invariably single-minded, less able or willing to take into account other aspects. As a result their relationship with governments, although sometimes harmonious, may be one of tension and occasionally confrontation. Whereas an NGO will usually have a bias in favour of bringing matters into the open, a government has to balance out all the interests involved and is generally predisposed to favour confidentiality and discretion to avoid embarrassment to itself or damage to its relations with other governments. Increasingly NGOs scrutinize and criticize the performance of government, and indeed a few NGOs will be active in the diplomatic field, sometimes duplicating, often monitoring, the performance of governments and international or national organizations. The ICG is a good example in this area. NGOs such as Amnesty International traditionally saw their role as one of challenge to states which they considered to be failing to meet their human rights obligations, but they are often seriously disadvantaged compared to states in terms of resources and access to information.

Why have NGOs been able to move into a field which was for centuries the monopoly of a politico-diplomatic class? One of the consequences of globalization, with its speed of communication and easy access to information for all, has been to weaken states' monopoly on diplomacy. This has led to a parallel growth in so-called track two diplomacy,¹ carried out either by private individuals or NGOs, a form of diplomacy which 'has increased exponentially over recent decades'.² NGOs and other international bodies have 'revived the medieval right of non-sovereign entities to send and receive envoys, conduct negotiations and conclude agreements'. The rise in importance of such bodies is partly a function of the way foreign policy, particularly among Western governments, is now less vertical and more horizontal in its interests. In other words governments pay increasing attention to issues like human

¹ As opposed to track one diplomacy by governmental or international organizations. . 'Formerly known as "citizen diplomacy", mediation in an inter- or intrastate conflict conducted by any agency other than a state or an intergovernmental organization, typically by an NGO. The term was coined in 1981 by Joseph Montville, then a US diplomat. Track two diplomacy may be pursued on its own or in partnership with track one diplomacy, in which case it will form part of an instance of twin-track diplomacy.' G R Berridge and A James, *A dictionary of diplomacy* (Palgrave, 2001) 235.

rights and climate change, terrorism and nuclear non-proliferation rather than the purely territorial or geographical issues which were the more traditional stuff of diplomacy. It is also partly a question of the spread of literacy, the generation gap and 'counter culture' of the 1960s, and the popularity of pressure group politics. NGOs in countries with non-democratic or authoritarian regimes seek to influence government policies to reflect the people's needs, rather than what they regard as merely the wishes of the ruling elite, and this is relevant to foreign as well as domestic policies.

Communications, television in particular, have brought humanitarian crises direct to the homes of the public, thus mobilizing rapid support for action by government and by public subscription. The famine in Ethiopia in the late 1980s was brought vividly to the TV screen, picked up, and amplified by pop stars. The result was a mobilization of effort to bring relief. Similarly in that decade, skilful manipulation of communication and films of the clubbing of seal pups, accompanied by targeted NGO pressure on EU governments, led to an EU ban on the import of seal skins from Canada. More and more, NGOs will be on the front line in areas of conflict, not just providing much needed aid and medical assistance but bringing abuses and violations of human rights to world attention. The relationship between NGOs and governments is a complex and often symbiotic one which can to some degree compromise the formers' independence. As has been said, '[I]f civil society becomes state-sponsored, it ceases to be civil, and NGOs become quangos'. But increasingly governments see the advantage of working with NGOs, particularly where their objectives match those of governments. The work of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in the human rights field is a case in point.

By contrast with the often ambivalent attitude of governments, the UN has since its inception sought to involve NGOs in its work. International, regional, sub-regional, and national NGOs can claim consultative status where their programmes are of direct relevance to the aims of the UN. NGOs play an important role in the work of UN human rights 'treaty bodies' such as the committees which monitor the implementation of the two Human Rights Covenants and the Committee against Torture (which monitors the Conventions against Torture). They supply the treaty bodies with information about human rights abuses and developments which enable the committees to verify or question the versions presented in governmental reports.

It is now common for NGOs to be involved in preparations for international conferences. The UN and its agencies are increasingly open to some form of participation by NGOs in conferences under their aegis. Issues as to rights of

access, rights to receive information, and rights to speak or make proposals are often a major part of negotiations on a conference's Rules of Procedure. The 1998 Conference on the establishment of the International Criminal Court provides an example of a fairly high level of NGO participation in a conference held under UN auspices. NGOs were entitled, for example, to attend the formal meetings of the main organs of the conference and make limited statements at the opening and closing sessions. But they had no access to the informal meetings where all of the real negotiations took place. Any influence they had was exerted in lobbying delegations at the conference or lobbying the relevant government in its capital. Another interesting feature of the conference was that NGO experts (particularly international law academics) were seconded to government delegations, especially delegations from small developing states. The inclusion of NGO experts in government delegations may thus have the purpose of assisting smaller governments which lack adequate resources. The rationale of other governments which include NGO representatives as part of their delegations may have both domestic and foreign policy roots. It may be at least in part to mute domestic criticism of a particular policy.

The role of most NGOs is not of course confined to the conference hall. They are more often in the front line in conflict areas (eg the work of Médecins sans Frontières in places like Darfur and Gaza) and in development. Oxfam for instance has a world reputation for supplying clean water and sanitation. Moreover, some of the larger NGOs are far more than collectors and disbursers of money. Oxfam has a sizeable policy unit which covers areas as diverse as the implications of climate change and women's rights in Africa. NGOs regularly report on situations and lobby for improvements. Although lacking democratic legitimacy, they fulfil an important role in what they do on the ground and for the causes which they champion, and are usually uninhibited in holding governments, both donors and recipients, accountable.

What is the lesson for conventional ambassadors or other diplomats? Not that they have lost their role but that they no longer enjoy a monopoly as actors in the field of international relations. There are advantages to working constructively with NGOs. These include obtaining good information and avoiding criticism for non-cooperation. As we shall see in the next chapter, the field is an increasingly crowded one but the diplomat's aim remains the same. To advance and protect their government's interests, making use of all the tools under their control and as necessary bartering information and intelligence with other actors such as NGOs. NGOs may certainly act in the diplomatic field, but when they are assisting governments they are doing so

as auxiliaries to diplomats, that is to say as paradiplomats.³ On other occasions they are acting as representatives of interest groups of civil society and thus, at their best, helping to remedy what may be a democratic deficit if negotiations are conducted at a purely governmental level.

Paradiplomacy can involve actors from sub-national or sub-state bodies such as the Canadian provinces, the Australian States, the Basque country, Catalonia, or the Scottish and Welsh executives. Track two actors who assist, support, and complement the work of traditional diplomats may also be described as paradiplomats. But many track two actors may be in conflict or competition with national representatives. Let me move on to secret diplomacy, a single definition of which is hard to construct. Berridge describes it as 'keeping secret all or any of the following: the contents of a negotiation; knowledge that negotiations are going on; the content of any agreement issuing from negotiations; or the fact that any agreement at all has been reached'. A corollary of this is often the secrecy of the identity of the person or persons involved in the negotiation. Successful instances of secret diplomacy include the negotiations to bring the Vietnam War to an end conducted by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho in 1972 and 1973.

Another example was the secret negotiation over the Oslo Accords in 1993. In 1992, after a Middle East peace conference in Madrid had made limited

3 Keith Hamilton and Richard Langhorne in *The Practice of Diplomacy* (Routledge, 1995) 147 refer to paradiplomacy in the use by Woodrow Wilson of his friend, Colonel Edward House and of the intelligence officer, Sir William Wiseman, by the British for 'diplomatic' purposes during the First World War: 'Paradiplomacy on this scale was frustrating for an ambassador of Spring Rice's calibre and temperament'. Spring Rice was the British Ambassador at Washington until January 1918. More recently, Tony Blair's use of Lord Levy in the Middle East during his premiership in a paradiplomatic role caused similar frustrations for the British ambassadors in the region.

<pi>A full definition is to be found in G Berridge and A James, *A Dictionary of Diplomacy*, online updating,

<<http://grberridge.diplomacy.edu/Teaching/display.asp?Topic=DictionaryN-R>>

<dis>**paradiplomacy**. (1) International activity (typically lobbying) by regional governments such as that of Quebec, and stateless nations such as that of the Kurds. Paradiplomacy of this kind is sometimes prefixed with one or other of the following adjectives: sub-national, sub-state, or regional. (2) The use by states of non-professionals—personal representatives and others without diplomatic status—instead or in support of the activities of their diplomats (sense 1). This sense is comparatively rare.</dis>

progress, a series of secret meetings took place in Oslo which was then taken over by senior officials sent by the then Israeli minister of foreign affairs Shimon Peres. The two delegations usually shared accommodation and meals while the Norwegian government dealt with the logistics and kept the meetings confidential, even providing a cover through the Norwegian Institute for Applied International Studies, Fafo. In both cases conventional diplomacy was in some respects acting as a front for the real negotiations. The Vietnam Peace Conference in Paris continued its weekly meetings (I was reporting on them from the Paris Embassy) while the real activity was going on elsewhere. The same was true of the Madrid peace negotiations and the Oslo Accords.

Secrecy is sometimes essential where disclosure of ongoing negotiations—particularly towards the final stages—could have an impact on financial markets. Active but discreet negotiations took place over 10 years to settle the 60-year-old dispute between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union over claims for bonds and private property taken during the Russian Revolution and counter-claims for the British part in the intervention aimed at defeating the Revolution. They ended with the signature in 1986 by the two foreign ministers of an Agreement⁴ which in the words of *The Times* on the following day ‘took the financial markets by surprise’.

Back-channel diplomacy, another phrase for secret diplomacy, was used in helping to bring the ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland to an end. Since 1973, a Northern Irish businessman with strong links to the IRA, and Michael Oatley, his MI6 officer, had maintained a channel of communication between the IRA leadership and 10 Downing Street, as Jonathan Powell, Mr Blair’s Chief of Staff, revealed. ‘It is very hard for democratic governments to admit to talking to terrorist groups while those groups are still killing innocent people. Luckily for this process, the British government’s back channel to the Provisional IRA had been in existence whenever required from 1973 onwards.’ In other words, one of the advantages of back-channel diplomacy is its deniability, particularly appropriate when the other party is neither another government nor even an NGO, while another is the ability to talk to those with whom it is official policy not to engage in negotiation. The secret link was only used on three major occasions: to negotiate an IRA ceasefire in the mid-1970s; during the first IRA hunger strike in 1980; and in the early stages of the peace process in the 1990s. There are of course disadvantages, principally the irritation caused to those who are the visible face of the diplomatic process.

These are often the same people who have to implement any agreement reached via the back channel. Much to his annoyance, the US Secretary of State, William Rogers, was kept in the dark by Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, over his negotiations with the Chinese on reopening relations for the first time since the Communist takeover.

Given their spiritual and humanitarian concerns it is not surprising that religious bodies have been active in international relations for many years, even for centuries. The Quakers are a case in point. More recently, the Community of Sant' Egidio, which began in 1968 as a Roman Catholic lay organization focused on the poor of Rome, has since spread to be represented in 70 countries and has been active in bringing an end to the civil war in Mozambique and in mediation and conflict resolution in Lebanon, Algeria, Albania, Guatemala, and Kosovo.

Another recent manifestation of track two diplomacy has been the emergence of specialist consultancies on security matters that not only offer their business-orientated political analysis to companies and on occasion governments but will also mediate in areas where governments fear to tread. Specialist risk consultancies have emerged engaging in activities such as negotiating ransoms for kidnapped businessmen, which have gone against the policies of most Western governments which refuse to pay ransoms and in some cases make doing so illegal.

If the diplomat has to compete in such a busy market place, has the role of a diplomat been superseded, rendered superfluous? Certainly if the marketplace of diplomacy has become busy, it has also expanded. The 1960s and 1970s saw a growth linked to the decolonization process. But the collapse of communism and the continuing vigour of nationalism also gave rise to a substantial expansion in numbers of independent states in the last 20 years. No independent state feels it has truly reached that status unless it has a network of diplomatic missions to fly its new flag in foreign countries and at the United Nations. The growth of international organizations and the need to staff them has also contributed, as has the broadening of many embassies' remit to take in work in economic and trade spheres while traditional consular sections and consulates have had to deal with an exponential growth in world tourism and immigration. While summitry has on occasions displaced the ambassador from prime position 'even the most energetic leader could not be in two or more places at once. Prime ministers and special envoys relied on ambassadors to pave the way for successful visits abroad, just as foreign ministers needed embassies to keep them informed about other countries' negotiating positions ahead of multilateral talks.'

A distinguished British diplomat, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, who was assassinated in Dublin by the IRA, wrote of the Paris Embassy's support for an EEC summit '... one doesn't reach the Summit without a base camp. The base camp was this Embassy.' It is the modern diplomat's task to man that base camp and occasionally perhaps to bask in the reflected glory of those who reach the summit. And it must make sense to put relatively modest amounts of money into preventative diplomacy and conflict resolution than to expend billions on a military mission and billions more on a reconstruction effort after the fog of war has cleared. So while there is less glamour than in diplomacy of old there is no lack of vital and fulfilling tasks to execute.