CAN DIPLOMACY REMAIN AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT IN FOREIGN POLICY?

ABDEL RAHMAN KHALIL AHMED

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ABSTRACT

Diplomacy as an institution, whereby groups seek agreements or settle down their differences, is almost as old as social history. Diplomacy has been used and accepted in the past and in present days, as an instrument to formulate, and carry out the foreign policy of states, to manage international relations in general, and to reach peaceful solutions to conflicts in particular.

As a result of global interdependence, conflicts of interest among modern states have increased. The institution of diplomacy emerged as an important tool of resolving conflicts; it has become more institutionalized and recognized, and diplomats were granted special status and immunity to facilitate their functions. Nevertheless, diplomacy is said to be declining and has been criticized for its failure to prevent disastrous world wars. Some went further to accuse diplomacy of contributing to the outbreak of World War I (WWI) as a result of its secret treaties and negotiations. Others argued that technological advancement and intelligence have challenged the functions of diplomacy and were about to replace traditional diplomacy.

This paper argues that, despite all these criticisms and challenges, diplomacy will remain the best alternative instrument in foreign policy to handle and solve conflicts. To prove this, the paper tries to discuss the merits of the criticisms and the nature of the challenges posed by technological advancement and intelligence to diplomacy as claimed. The paper concludes that technology can consolidate and increase the efficiency of diplomacy rather than challenging it. In fact, intelligence complements the functions of diplomacy instead of competing with it.
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