

Preface

I had originally in mind to write a textbook on the current practice of diplomacy. Since I did not want to base it only on my experience of 34 years in the German foreign service (from 1964 to 1998), I added many examples from the practices and experiences of various countries. Thus, the result allows the willing reader to understand how diplomacy works and to learn from the examples of worldwide practices. The book may even be useful as a reference guide.

My focus is on the existing practice of diplomacy and only occasionally I suggest how it could or should be. To understand the reality of diplomatic practices and to recognize differences, concepts are needed. As a point of departure, I have revived the dualism between foreign policy and diplomacy, foreign policy defined as the contents of foreign relations, and diplomacy as the instrument to manage the goals of foreign policy. As an institution diplomacy follows its own grammar that is based on rules for communication. In my view, diplomacy centers on the state and its little brother, the international governmental organization.

I have tried to consider the most relevant features of diplomacy. The reader will observe some peculiarities. I have included consular relations into my account of diplomatic practices. Due to the explosion of tourism and the extraordinary pressures of immigration, consulates and consular offices of embassies play an important role in international relations. Furthermore, I consider consular relations a dimension of diplomacy. I have also tried to do justice to the

international officials who have become important players on the diplomatic stage. In addition, I discuss the external missions of international governmental organizations. They have not yet found the necessary attention though every diplomat is familiar with their proliferation.

A friend of mine was surprised that I could work and write while living in the “hinterland”. However, the Internet has facilitated research. I have made use of Internet sources extensively and quoted them whenever possible. I was also lucky that the Cape Coral Public Library allowed me to use its inter-library-loan system frequently.

After having retired from the German foreign service I had the privilege to become a member of the International Relations Faculty of Boston University. I was happy to be given the opportunity to pass down some of my experiences as a diplomat to the young generation. The manuscript for my lectures on diplomatic practice became the basis for this book.

I am grateful for the good advice of my friend and colleague Walter Lewalter, a former German ambassador to Bulgaria, Indonesia, and the United Nations in Geneva and inspector general of the German foreign service. I am equally indebted to Lois Hohman who reviewed the text. It was a pleasure to cooperate with my editor, Mrs. Sandhya of World Scientific Publishing. Of course, I am alone responsible for the text.

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Juergen Kleiner
Ambassador (Ret.)
Professor Emeritus of International Relations
(Boston University)