A Critical Analysis of Diplomatic Communication from the Ancient Times to the Digital Era: A Policy Strategy for the Nigerian State

By

Araziua, Dennis Owenorisiede
Department of Public Administration
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
Email: [owenorisiede.araziua@uniben.edu]
Tel: [+234-70-55736388]

Abstract

For many centuries, diplomacy has been a very important instrument of statecraft and trade relations between various kingdoms and states; and one major tool that has helped many states to preserve their historical and political legacies for that long is diplomatic communication. Though, over the ages, like the proverbial phoenix, the language and technology for interaction keeps changing in every successive generation, but the fundamental principles and objectives of diplomacy has remained basically the same ever since. It is against this backdrop, therefore, that this paper attempts a critical analysis of the concept of diplomatic communication and tries to juxtapose it with the myriad of challenges and trajectory it has encountered in the course of history. Using the theory of liberalism as a premise, this paper adopts the descriptive and qualitative method of scientific injury to interrogate the dynamics between the ancient art of circumlocution and rhetoric; against the modern digital age of precision in language. Finally, the paper concludes by highlighting some of the triumphs and prospects of diplomatic communication in the 21st century; and makes some salient recommendations on how the Nigerian state can use effective diplomatic communication to foster and sustain friendly relations with other nations of the world.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Communication, Circumlocution, Diplomatic Communication, Diplomatic Correspondence.

Introduction

According to Tran (1987), communication is to diplomacy, what blood is to the human body. Any attempt to block or cut-off blood supply signals the death or

paralysis of the individual. As it is with humans, so also it is with nation-states. Any miscommunication at the diplomatic level is capable of causing some serious atrophy or violent conflict in the relationship between and amongst states. Therefore, over the ages, diplomatic communication has been the lifeline of diplomacy itself; serving the purpose of representation, protection, negotiation and promotion of a county's national interest at the global level.

Traditionally, before the advent of the modern era, diplomacy and diplomatic communication was the exclusive preserve of kings and princes amongst sovereign state. But since the end of the 2nd World War, things have changed significantly with the increasing involvement of non-state actors in international relations, especially the United Nations. Therefore, in today's world, the importance of diplomatic communication cannot be over-emphasized, as global advances in technology has continued to enhanced the growth and efficacy of international trade, politics and diplomacy around the world.

However, the origin of diplomatic communication, itself, dates back to the era of the ancient Greek city-states when kings literally depended on heralds (or messengers) and merchant caravans to deliver messages to their counterparts in other states in order to settle territorial disputes, promote trade routes, establish alliances, initiate friendly relations as well as to prevent the occurrence of war (Hamilton & Richard, 1995). Although this initial era of diplomatic communication was somehow very slow, laborious, unpredictable and unsecured; but over time it became more refined and began to serve the purpose of the day.

Thus, over the centuries, and in every successive generation, information and communication technology has introduced new tools into mainstream diplomacy (from the era of using beacons, pigeons or falcon couriers, to the era of the telegraph and lately the email) which has made it easier for diplomats to communicate and conduct official business with their counterparts across the globe. On the other hand, as more opportunities came for diplomatic and international communications, so also did the risk of committing cultural, linguistic and diplomatic faux pas increased, especially in relations with other states (Cioffi, 1997).

Conceptual Clarification

Diplomacy: This can be defined as the art or practice of conducting international relations between and amongst sovereign states through dialogue, negotiation, treaties or any other peaceful instrument short of war or violence. Often times, diplomacy entails the use of tact and subtle skills in written and spoken communication to project a country's foreign policy and to influence the international system as a whole.

Communication: ls the art or process by which ideas, emotions, opinions, knowledge or information is exchanged and transmitted from one person or entity to another through a common system of symbols, signs, behavior, attitude, speech, writing or any other mechanical or electronic device. Normally, communication is a two-way process that involves the following elements: a sender, a message, a medium, a receiver and a response or feedback.

Circumlocution: This is the use of many words where fewer would suffice, especially in a clever but deliberate attempt to be vague and evasive in speech and written communication. Circumlocution, indeed, is an age-long diplomatic art of conveying unpleasant information, idea or opinion without necessarily offending the sensibilities of your respondent or others. Most politicians, lawyers and diplomats are adroit in the use of circumlocution in their daily official conducts.

Diplomatic Communication: Is defined as that kind of communication which employs the use of reason, propriety, etiquette and wisdom to convey a message from one authority (usually a Sovereign or a Head of State) to another, through a mutually acceptable medium of communication showing respect and understanding to the policies, peculiarities and sensibilities of other states. Often times, it denotes a state's policy thrust, commitment and approach to certain issues that concerns international relations.

Diplomatic Correspondence: These are written communication (mostly official and sometimes unofficial letters) between one diplomatic mission and another concerning specific areas of their country's relations that needs to be addressed appropriately. Typically, they are used in the appointment or recall of an ambassador, the announcement of the ascension to the throne or death of a

Sovereign, as well as the expression of congratulatory or condolence messages between and amongst states.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout history, diversity has been one of the most veritable and enduring concept that has challenged and defined humanity for centuries. In the quest for friendship, peace and security, man has jettisoned the idea of isolationism, aggression and imposition of self-will to embrace freedom, democracy and diplomacy (Duarte, 2002). It is against this backdrop, therefore, that this paper is anchored on the theory of liberalism. Liberalism is a theory in international relations whose major theme resonates around the prevention of conflict and the peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes, especially with the aid of dialogue, negotiation and other tools of diplomatic engagement, without recourse to war.

According Waltz (1979), liberalism as a theory originally arose from a deep scholarly and philosophical roots of the Enlightenment period of the late 17th and early 18th century Europe. Some of the major exponents of liberalism include Voltaire, John Locke, Adam Smith and Emmanuel Kant, amongst others. Interestingly, majority of the liberalists were also idealists who strongly believed in the possibility of attaining inter-state friendship and cooperation through the instrumentality of diplomacy.

Consequently, with the ascendency of diplomatic communication from the era of the Renaissance to the present time, Liberalist scholars, and thinkers have always challenged the realists' fundamental assumption that the international system is all about power politics. Rather, the liberalist believes and advocates that international law and diplomacy should continue to serve as the foundation of a global society and a key element in the promotion of world peace and security.

From the foregoing, therefore, it could be stated that right from the Middle Ages to the modern times, the postulations of the liberalist school of thought have always aligned, over the years, with the fundamental principles of diplomacy and diplomatic communication (Gilboa,2006), For instance, the liberalists often argue that international diplomacy, empowered with an excellent communication

system, can be used effectively to promote inter-state cooperation, as well as to chart a non-violent solution towards global issues and politics.

A Brief History of Diplomacy

The origin and history of diplomacy cannot be attributed to one particular society or era alone, as different people in different places of the world evolved their own system of governance and inter-state communication independently of each other. However, the European diplomatic tradition that eventually became the genesis of modern worldwide diplomacy could be traced back to the Greek, Roman, Italian and French system spanning many centuries ago.

The Greek City-States

According to Hoebel (1950), modern European diplomacy commence around the 4th to 5thcentury BC amongst the ancient Greek city-states. By the 6th century BC, trade inter-dependence and political complexity amongst the Greek city-states had increased, and to avoid intermittent conflict, it became imperative for them to find a more peaceful and friendly way of settling their disputes without necessarily resorting to violence and war. Therefore, those interactions conducted in an atmosphere of peace and cooperation subsequently gave birth to the idea of diplomacy.

Nevertheless, the earliest evidence of Greek diplomacy can be found in its ancient literature, most notably is Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, as well as in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian Wars. Greek diplomacy took many forms and shades, but "heralds" were said to be the first diplomats mythically believed to have been invested with immunity by the gods. Most times, because these heralds were inviolable, they were the favored channels of contact and diplomatic communication between two states. In time past, these heralds were mostly chosen for their exceptional memory and oratorical skills which is required to sway foreign assemblies or to call for a truce during war (Adçock & Mosley, 1975).

Another set of officials used by the ancient Greeks to conduct their diplomatic relations were the "Proxeni" and the “Presbeis". Proxonoi were a type of Honorary Consuls or Agents residing in their own city of birth, but serving as a representative of another city-state in certain matters of mutual interest. While

Presbeis, on the other hand, were Eminent and Senior Citizens of a particular city-state who were commissioned to address and persuade the political elite of another state, especially in their Temples or Amphitheatres about matters of trade, friendship and alliances.

However, as stated by Herrick (2013), ancient Greek diplomacy was more of an episodic event or activity; rather than a continuous and deliberate political process. In other words, each event or conflict elicits the use of diplomacy and diplomatic personnel to resolve it, after which their service is dispensed with until another conflict emerges again. Therefore, unlike modern-day ambassadors, herald and envoys of the ancient Greek city-states were itinerant visitors to other states who never took up any permanent residency in the receiving or host state.

The Roman Empire

The history of the Roman Empire can be divided into two separate eras and entities (the Western Roman Empire, also known as Ancient Rome; and the Eastern Roman Empire, otherwise referred to as Byzantine); each with its own unique contribution to world politics and history. In terms of diplomacy, the ancient Romans adopted substantially the traditions and practices of the ancient Greek city-states. As noted by Hooker (1999), although the ancient Romans regarded warfare and conquest as a more essential instrument of statecraft, but they also do, sometimes, employed some elements of diplomacy in the administration of their vast territory and in their interactions with other states.

But after the fall of ancient Rome, the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) became the most dominant hegemonic power in the then old world; and one of the secret for its political longevity, from 338BC to 1453AD, was its pragmatic diplomatic and administrative acumen. For the Byzantine Empire, diplomacy was a matter of survival and necessity because it had limited military strength and many hostile enemies along its vast frontiers. Therefore, one of the basic principles they applied throughout their long reign was to avoid war at all cost; and diplomacy became one of the most extensive instruments used to win and sustain the friendship and loyalty of its neighbors and numerous vassal states (Bury, 1989).

During its golden age, the Byzantine Empire was regarded as the bridge between ancient and modern diplomacy. The empire not only learnt the art of statecraft from other civilizations (like the Phoenicians, Egyptians and Greeks), but it also introduced new conducts and traditions of its own into the practice of diplomacy. For instance, Jonsson and Hall (2002) posit that the Byzantine Empire were the first to introduce the "Office of Barbarian Affairs" into modern diplomatic relations which centuries later metamorphosed into the present-day Ministry of Foreign Affair. Also, knowing the importance of prompt information to diplomacy and warfare, the Byzantine Empire established the first ever "Intelligence Service Unit" (comprising a network of official and unofficial spy agents) into its diplomatic functions and responsibilities.

Another major contribution of the Eastern Roman Empire to the development of diplomacy was the establishment of a Professional School for the training of diplomats. Furthermore, as noted by Viotti and Kauppi (2001), these trained professional diplomats were instrumental in the establishment of the three-step diplomatic policy that later characterized the basis of the empire's dealings with other states for several centuries, viz: (a) foster rivalry amongst Barbarians, (b) secure the friendship of frontier 'tribes, and (c) convert as many heathens as possible to Christianity. Such cunning practice is still evident even in modern diplomacy till today but they now come in the form of alliances, foreign aids and socio-economic ideologies.

The Italian City-States

The Renaissance diplomacy first developed amongst the Italian city-states in the 15thcentury, particularly in Venice, Milan, Naples and Florence; and it is widely considered to be the beginning of modern European diplomacy. By the 16th century, this type of Italian diplomatic practice, also known as the Renaissance diplomacy, had spread throughout Europe, even as far as England and Spain, initially through trade representatives of Italian city-states to other European kingdoms, and later through the exchange of envoys and ambassadors.

One of the outstanding features of the Renaissance diplomacy was the establishment of the concept of "Permanent Diplomatic Mission" amongst the Italian city-states. For instance, in 1450, the Duke of Milan, Francesco Storza,

appointed Nicodemodi' Pontremoli (also known as "Sweet Nicodemus", because of his oratorical skills) as the first permanent envoy to the court of Cosimo de' Medici, the Duke of Florence. However, as noted by Harriman (2013), the remarkable success, prestige and popularity of the Renaissance diplomacy was due largely to their belief in the idea of pacifism and their exceptional skill in diplomacy; rather than their reliance on military might and conquest.

Another major highlights that characterized the Renaissance diplomacy of that era, was its emphasis on trust and friendly relationship with other city-states through the regular exchange of diplomatic correspondence. At this period in history, there were no newspapers, so the various Princes and Rulers relied on their envoys in other Royal Courts to furnish them with timely and regular intelligence reports about trade, military size, and political gossip concerning their city of posting. Overtime, an expansive diplomatic archive were built to receive, to process and to preserve the deluge of information that comes daily from envoys abroad (Albrow, 1997).

Furthermore, during the golden age of the Renaissance period, the city of Venice became the epicenter of European trade, arts and diplomacy. It was in Venice that the technique of diplomatic reporting (called “relazioni”) was first developed. According to Hause and Meltby (2001), the technique entails an envoy giving a sort of valedictory speech, at the end of his tenure and detailing the state of relationship between Venice and the receiving country where the envoy have served. Thus, after this ceremony, the Grand Duke or Chancellor would append his royal seal on the written version of the speech and forward it to the curators to be included in the city's secret archives of diplomatic document for future reference.

The French Empire

According to Berridge (2005), apart from the Vatican, perhaps, no other nation can take credit for the development and reformation of modern diplomacy and international relations like the French. Though the French borrowed extensively from the Italian diplomatic tradition, but by the 17th and 18th century, it, has started developing and polishing its own system of diplomacy that later became the toast and envy of the whole world. True to their flamboyant nature, the French

introduced a lot of diplomatic ceremonies, etiquette, lingua and finesse into the conduct of modern-day international relations and diplomacy (Schroeder, 1994).

After the French Revolution of 1789, French diplomacy entered into a new phase based on their concept of liberalism and republicanism. Despite their inclination towards elaborate diplomatic ceremonies, the French introduced the idea of clandestine negotiation, confidentiality in information gathering, and the system of signing treaties in French alphabetical order with individual country's name given utmost priority. Also, at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the French helped to settle the issue of diplomatic precedence by establishing the classification of Heads of Diplomatic Missions by their date of presenting Letter of Credence to the Sovereign or President of a state.

Indeed, one of the most outstanding contributions of the French to modern-day international relations was the professionalization of diplomacy (Haine, 2000). This feat is credited to Cardinal Richelieu, the French Chief Minister, who established the first ever modern Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1626 to serve the foreign policy of France by coordinating and managing all diplomatic appointments and communications. This represented a paradigm shift in the history of diplomacy and international relations; as the power over foreign policy was subsequently removed from the purview of the Sovereign and the Royal Court to that of Parliament and the Ministerial Cabinet.

Also, other great-reformations that the French brought into international diplomacy include the adoption of some set of rules and protocols through the Congress of Vienna. For instance, at the prompting of Cardinal Richelieu, an unwritten rule was established that made it obligatory for only Great Powers or nations to exchange Ambassadors in each other's capital-city. Also, through the philosophical thought of Cardinal Richelieu, the French introduced the idea of diplomats serving only one master (i.e., the state) and maintaining only one policy (i.e., the national interest). Furthermore, in the history of diplomacy, the French were the first to introduce the concept of press coverage and press briefing into international relations through the 1815 Congress of Vienna (Colton & Palmer, 2008).

The Language of Diplomatic Communication

The Greek Language

Language and communication are like Siamese twins. You cannot successfully separate one from the other without leaving behind some noticeable scars or vestiges. Over the centuries, language has been the major conduit through which diplomatic communication has be transmitted from person(s) to person(s) and from state(s) to state(s). However, as posited by Trager (2017), we do not know for certain where and when human societies first felt the need to communicate with each other, but it is safe to assume that they did so from the very earliest times in different forms and for different purposes.

Right from the early ages, the language of diplomacy (or the diplomatic lingua franca) has never been static or stale, rather it has moved like a pendulum, pandering to the winds of time and following the trajectory of the reigning hegemonic power. Therefore, following Alexander the Great conquest of the ancient world, in the 4" century BC, Hellenist Greek became the first lingua franca of much of the Mediterranean region, the Middle East, Europe and part of Asia and Africa. Consequently, for many centuries and up to the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Hellenist Greek remained the language of diplomatic communication; and all trade transactions, Agreements, Treaties and Alliances between states at that time were ratified in Greek (Browning, 1992).

The Latin Language

However, with the ascendency of ancient Rome as the dominant power in Europe, Mediterranean, Asia Minor and North Africa, Latin language not only supplanted Greek as the lingua franca of these vast geographical territories and entities; but it also became the language of diplomatic communication in the various royal courts of Kings, Dukes and Princes of that era (Campbell, 2000). The Italian Renaissance of the medieval period also gave a boost to the spread of Latin language to other realms through arts, religion, academics and diplomacy. Perhaps, another very important political and religious entity that propagated the use of Latin language in religion and diplomacy was the Holy Roman Catholic Church. For many centuries, in its entire temporal and spiritual jurisdiction, Latin was the only language of religious worship, scholarship and diplomatic communication.

The French Language

Following the emergence of the French Empire in the early 18th century, the French language gradually began to replace Latin as the language of diplomacy and international relations in continental Europe and beyond. Within a space of time, many French phrases and terminologies, like "doyen", "raison d'état", "charge de affair", "de facto", "de jure", etc. were incorporated into modern diplomacy, international law and international relations as a whole (Grab, 2003).

Furthermore, the primacy of the French language in diplomatic communication before the early 20thcentury could be seen in the threat issued in 1817 by the Austrian Foreign Minister to communicate in German with his British counterpart, as a retaliatory measure against the latter's attempt to communicate with him in English instead of (French), the acceptable lingua franca of the era. Also, to underscore the importance of French as the language of diplomatic communication from the early 18" century down to the mid-20" century, the Congress of Paris and Congress of Vienna were both conducted and ratified in French.

The English Language

From the early 19thcentury, when the British Empire became a colonial power, English served as the lingua franca for all the colonies, territories and dependencies under its jurisdiction in Asia, North America, Africa, Australia and the West and East indies. Even years after the post-colonial period, some of the newly independent nations, especially those with multiple indigenous languages, still opted to continue to use English as their official language and medium of diplomatic communication with the external world. But, by the early 20th century, after the 1st World War, when the United States became the dominant world power, English subsequently became the language of diplomatic communication worldwide. As started by celebrated New York Times columnist, Stanley Meisler (2011), the fact that the Treaty of Versailles was written and ratified in French as well as in English, signified the ascendency of the latter over the former in international diplomacy.

The Role of Technology in Diplomatic Communication

Since the existence of mankind, right from the Paleolithic period to the present age, our ability to communicate through spoken and written language has made us different and unique in nature from all other creatures on planet earth. Speech, in particular, helps man and society to share their feelings and thoughts with others, transmit their knowledge, arts and culture with each other, and also to cement social links that endures for centuries (Siddiqui & Alam, 2009). Therefore, throughout recorded history and the political evolution of state, diplomatic communication has been anchored on three basic elements: (i) the spoken language (ii) the written language, and (iii) the medium or technology by which the former and the latter could be accomplished.

The Spoken Word

Ancient Greece may be regarded, once again, as the forerunner of the verbal skills associated with modern diplomacy. Diplomatic communication among the Greek city-states, in ancient times, depended on direct and oral exchanges or face-to-face contact between envoys or representatives. During this era, diplomatic communication was open and transparent; as envoys (comprising of heralds and presbeis) were required to address foreign assemblies or royal courts directly. Thus, relying heavily on their rhetorical skills, celebrated rotators, like Pericleo and Demosthenes, were often entrusted with diplomatic tasks or missions (Conley, 1990).

Steganography

Apart from the spoken word, one other primitive technology that the ancient Greeks also employed in their diplomatic communication was steganography (the art of encrypting messages in codes); which dates back to the 5th century BC (Wayner, 2009). According to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, steganography was first used by the Greek tyrant Histiaesus who shaved the head of a servant and tattooed a message on his scalp. When the hair had grown back, the servant was sent to deliver the message (a warning of an impending attack by the Persian army) which was decrypted when the servant's hair was shaved off once again. Other forms of steganography that facilitated diplomatic communication in ancient times include paintings on caves, sculptures on wood

or clays, as well as the use of beacons, pigeons and symbolic ornaments like white handkerchiefs.

The Art of Writing

The art of writing is one of the most important communication technologies that revolutionized society and the history of mankind, especially in the area of religion, statecraft and diplomacy. As noted by Glassner (2004), the art of writing was invented by the Sumerians of Southern Mesopotamia around 3400 – 3100 BCE. Gradually, the technology navigated through the rich cultural and diplomatic heritage of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and finally Rome. It was from this ancient traditional art of writing that the Greeks learnt the act of inscribing important diplomatic treaties and trade agreements in stones and bronze pillars (Stelai) which were kept in their temples and other sacred placed for posterity sake. Consequently, by way of cultural diffusionism, the ancient Romans copied the art of writing from the Greeks and spread the technology to other parts of the world through the Latin language. Therefore, throughout the Middle Ages and before the invention of the printing press, the Holy Roman Catholic Church dominated the technology for diplomatic communication of that era, due to its monopoly on the production and supply of parchment. Consequently, in most European royal courts of that period, clergymen from the Roman Catholic Church became the personal scribes and envoys of kings which gave them a lot of power and influence to dictate the diplomatic policies and development of their respective state. (Senner, 1991).

The Printing Press

In 1450, a German citizen named Johannes Gutenberg invented the first ever printing press in Europe. This remarkable invention marked a very important milestone in the annals of diplomatic communication. Within a short period, the technology spread like a wildfire throughout Europe and elsewhere around the world. By 1500, about six million books, on all kinds of subject, were already circulating in Europe, thus, breaking the monopoly on knowledge, religion and diplomacy hitherto held by the clergy and the nobility (Eisenstein, 1950).

However, at the diplomatic front, the invention of the printing press made communication between and amongst states much easier, faster and more durable,

especially in the preservation of written diplomatic documents (treaties, alliances and trade agreements) in royal archives and libraries. But despite the advent of other forms of diplomatic communications, centuries after, the printed documents remain the most legally respected piece of agreement in international law and diplomacy.

The Telegraph

According to Huurdeman (2003), the 19th century was on era of great scientific and technological breakthroughs, with the telegraph being one of the most important inventions that altered the face of international trade and diplomacy. Indeed, the advent of the telegraph in international politics, not only affected the distribution of power in Europe, but it also drastically altered the mode and speed of diplomatic communication around the world. Thus, instead of relying on the old system of using beacons, courier pigeons or horse-driven carriers; many diplomatic missions installed telegraph machines in their offices and residence that conveys messages faster, cheaper and safer.

By the end of the 19th century, the telegraph had become a major feature in diplomatic exchanges between nations and amongst many international organizations all over the world. One major outstanding contribution of the telegraph technology to diplomatic communication is that it taught many diplomats the art of precision and concise writing which greatly improved and influenced subsequent style and etiquette in diplomatic correspondence. However, there was also a time in history when some statesman cleverly manipulated the telegraph as a subterfuge to undermine the power and interest of other states (Kennedy, 1971).

One of such infamous diplomatic telegram that changed the course of European history was the one sent by the Prussian Emperor to his Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck, expressing his misgivings about the French imperialist quest in continental Europe. Bismarck reportedly shortened the original telegram and sent it to the French government which later provoked a war between the two states (much to the intended and gleeful expectation of the Prussian Chancellor) and subsequently culminated in the ultimate unification of the German state.

The Telephone

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the trio of telegraph, the telephone and the radio had become the three-most outstanding technological inventions that have altered the course of history and diplomatic communication in the world. David Mercer (2006) argued that while the telegraph delinked communication from physical travelling, the telephone on its part transferred voice over long distances, and the radio technology helped to re-introduce the concept of public diplomacy. Since its introduction into diplomatic communication in the early 20th century, the telephone, in particular, has become an integral part of the private and professional lives of diplomats which further facilitates closer contact between Heads of State/Governments. However, it was not until after the 2nd World War that the impact of the telephone on international relations became truly felt. Then State leaders, especially those of the USA and USSR, began using the telephone more frequency to de-escalate tension in their relationship which later culminated in the establishment of the famous "hot line" between Moscow and Washington after the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962.

Internet and Email

In the last 30 years, or so, the rapid development in the information and communication technology (1CT) sector has led to significant changes in the socio-cultural, economic, as well as the political and diplomatic relations of modern societies. Indeed, these days, access to information and control of its various medium contributes tremendously to the prevalence of “soft power” amongst nation-state and some international organizations. As articulated by Briggs and Burke (2005), from the early 21st century, the ICT or digital diplomacy era have not only introduced such electronic tools like the internet, email and social media into diplomatic communication, but it has also challenged the way things used to be done traditionally in the past and how world leaders and statesmen communicate with each other.

Most recently, also, the covid-19 pandemic shifted diplomatic interactions and activities from physical meetings and conferences to online and cyber space with the introduction of video-conferencing through various social media platforms like Zoom, Twitter, Facebook, Google etc.,which made remote participation possible for diplomats, statesmen and other non-state actors. Moreover, before the

advent of covid-19, President Donald Trump of the US is one world leader who elevated the use of social media tool, especially the Twitter platform, in modern day diplomatic communication. Often times, during his first term in office, President Trump, announced many foreign policy and official statements through his official twitter handle.

Findings/Conclusion

Historically, modern diplomatic methods and principles originated largely from European customs and traditions of the Middle Ages. However, by the early 20th century, diplomacy had developed to a very sophisticated art being studied in specialized academy. More so, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 has provided a pragmatic framework for diplomatic procedures and protocols; including the mode, medium and language of communication (Barston, 2006). Today, in the 21st century, diplomacy is now conducted by trained officials, such as Ambassadors, Envoys and Ministers, who understands the importance of diplomatic communication in the conduct of a country's foreign relations.

Therefore, over the centuries, diplomacy has outlived steganography, the telegraph, telephone and many other succeeding information and communication technologies. Though most of these technological innovations did influence diplomacy in certain aspects; but they did not significantly erode the historical and philosophical basis upon which diplomatic communication was founded. Rather, by hindsight, every successive communication technology has offered diplomats and statesmen handy and new tools to perform their jobs even much better. Consequently, today, diplomats now use the internet and social media to find and share information with their colleagues in other states across the globe (Fiske, 1982).

Policy Recommendations

Throughout the period of European history, diplomacy has proven to be a very resilient and adaptable institution; and one essential tool that has contributed to that attribute is communication. However, miscommunication in diplomacy can also undermine or threaten existing peace and security between nations which may result into serious conflict. Therefore, to avoid such unpleasant diplomatic gaffe or scenario, this paper makes the following recommendations:

- First, potential diplomats, politicians and statesmen should be sufficiently schooled in the art of diplomacy and diplomatic communication before being posted out as envoys or ambassadors to foreign states and international organizations like the United Nations.
- Secondly, in view of the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of the world, leaders should endeavor to use diplomatic communication as a tool to advocate and promote universal norms, values and conducts that binds us together as one human race that is capable of living in peace and security.
- Thirdly, diplomats and statesmen should learn how to adopt and adapt to modern communication tools or technologies, like the internet, email and social media, to perform their diplomatic functions and responsibilities more effectively and efficiently.
- Lastly, in these days of cyber-security threats, efforts should be made to protect and secure the nation's diplomatic communication channels or portals from the activities of international hackers that are capable of undermining a country's national security interest.

References

Adcock, F. & Mosley, J. (1975). Diplomacy in ancient Greece. Thanes and Hudson Publishers.

Albrow, M. (1997). The Global age: state and society beyond modernity, Stanford University Press.

Barston, R. (2006). Modern diplomacy. Pearson Educational Publishers. p.116.

Berridge, G. R. et al., (2001). Diplomatic theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger. Palgrave McMillan.

Briggs, A. & Burke, P. (2005). A social history of the media: from Gothenburg to the internet. Cambridge University Press. P.132.

Browning, R. (1992). The Byzantine empire. The Catholic University of American Press.

Bury, J. B. (1989). History of the later Roman empire. Macmillan and Company.

Campbell, G. L. (2000). Compendium of the world's languages: Abaza to Kurdish. Routledge.

Cioffi, C. (1997). Diplomatic communication: theory, signals, channels and networks. *Review ofInternational Interaction, 6*(3).

Colton, J. & Palmer, R. (1992). A history of the modern world. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Conley, T. M. (1990). Rhetoric in the European tradition. University of Chicago Press. P. 107.

Duarte, J. A. (2002). "The challenges of diplomacy in a changing international order", in Wan, H. & Miao, L. (eds.) China and the world in changing context. Springer Books. P.112.

Eisenstein, E. L. (1980). The printing press as an agent of change. Cambridge University Press.

Fiske, J. (1982). Introduction to communication studies. Methuen Press. P.82.

Gilboa, E. (2006). Mass communication and diplomacy: A theoretical framework. *Journal of Black Studies and Theories. 10*(3).

Glassner, J. J. (2004). The invention of cuneiform: writing in Sumer. JHU Press.

Grab, A. (2003). Napoleon and the transformation of Europe. Macmillan Publishers.

Haine, S. (2000). The history of France (2nd ed.). Greenwood Press. P.92.

Hamilton, K. & Richard, L. (1995). *The* practice of diplomacy: Its evolution, theory andadministration. Routledge Publisher.

Harriman, R. (1995). Political style: the artistry of power.University of Chicago Press. P.88.

Hause, S. & Maltby (2001). A history of European society: essentials of western civilization.Thomson Learning Inc. pp.258- 252.

Herrick, J.A. (2013). The history and theory of rhetoric. (2nd ed.). Pearson Books.

Hoebel, A. (1950). The beginning of diplomacy: a sociological study of inter-tribal and international relations. *American Sociological Review, 15*(3).

Hoffman, S. (1987). "Liberalism and international affairs", Janus and Minerva: Essays in theoryand practice of international politics. Westview Press.

Hooker, R. (1999). *Rome: The Punic wars*. Washington State University Press.

Huurdeman, A. (2003). The worldwide history of telecommunications. Wiley-Blackwell.

Jonsson, C. & Hall, M. (2003). Communication: an essential aspect of diplomacy. *International Studies Perspective, 4*(2).

Kennedy, P. M. (1971). Imperial communications and social and economic strategy (1870 -1914). *The English Historical Review,* p.728.

Martin, T. R. (2013). Ancient Greece: from prehistoric to Hellenistic times (2nded). Yale University Press.

Meisler, S. (2011). United Nations: A history (2nd ed.). Grove Press.

Mercer, D. (2006). The telephone: the life story of a technology. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Schroeder, P. W. (1994). The transformation of European politics. Penguin Books.

Senner, W. M. (1991). The origins of writing. University of Nebraska Press.

Trager, R. F.(2017). Diplomacy: communication and the origins of international order.

Tran, D. (1987). "Communication and diplomacy in a changing world". Available from:www.unesco.org/ulisegi-bin. Accessed on 10thJuly.

Waltz, K. (1979). Theory of international politics. Addison-Wesley. Pp.60 - 67.

Wayner, P. (2009). Information hiding: steganography and watermarking. Morgan Kaufmann, Publishers.