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Juergen Kleiner. "The Inertia of Diplomacy." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 19:2 (June 2008): 321-349.

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Articles on the theory of diplomacy and diplomatic history form important book-ends to the June 2008 edition of *Diplomacy and Statecraft*.¹ The space between these two articles in text well represents the gulf of understanding that appears to separate historians of diplomacy from their colleague-rivals in international studies and political science—best illustrated in the Summer 1997 issue of *International Security* (vol.22, no.1). Eleven years later, the gulf remains, and scholars concerned with theoretical and historical treatment of foreign relations may do well to read both articles at the same time. As they do so, however, it is important to recall that it is *just* a gulf and not an ocean that separates our disciplines.

Juergen Kleiner's methodology is fairly characteristic of the social sciences, developing definitions and theory that largely remain static, to describe a system that is rapidly changing. His efforts to define terms and to offer illustrations are far from wasted, though they often lack the evolutionary perspective and the explanatory background of trends and personal initiative that are typical for historians. Moreover, while his examples from the recent past may give historians pause, their illustration of and corollaries to developments in the humanities is striking, and they hold a lesson for us all, that there is still a lot of common ground between historians and social scientists despite our methodological differences.

Kleiner opens his article by offering specific definitions for the terms *diplomacy*, *foreign relations*, *diplomat* and *negotiation* (321-326). Drawing on Hobbesian political theory that

¹ The other article, at the beginning of the volume, is Karl W. Schweizer and Matt Schumann, "The Revitalization of Diplomatic History: Renewed Reflections," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 19:2 (June, 2008), pp. 149-186.

apparently retains some currency,² he clarifies that states retain pride of place on the international stage, and sets out clearly the parameters of diplomatic action, language and initiative, and of rights, privileges and functions for ministers, diplomats, messengers and translators. His familiarity with and legalistic treatment of these concepts is a credit to his training and career in the German Foreign Service, though perhaps bewildering to historians who seek evolutions more than definitions.

He continues to sharpen his vocabulary in a section on cyber-diplomacy, discussing the increased volume and sophistication of diplomacy's intersection with the media and the public sphere, especially through the internet. With the rapid expansion of public diplomacy to almost unlimited proportions, Kleiner notes the potential for the word *diplomacy* to describe interactions involving any person, group or representative from one country and the society of another (326-327). Rejecting the thrust of what is now called *international history*³ he opts instead for a narrower definition of diplomacy, restricting that term to describing only that which directly concerns a country's foreign policy. Society does enter the fray, however, as he notes a certain theoretical "stability" in international public opinion (327-328 and footnote 20) informed by media institutions that reinforce preconceived notions. Juan Cole recently contended otherwise, that policies as much as preconceptions determine impressions overseas,⁴ but one may begin more importantly to see here not only distinctions in language and approach, but an entirely different appreciation of the subjects and scholarly contours that define diplomatic history.

Moving from theory to a couple of contemporary practical examples, however, Kleiner soon closes some of the gap between theory-laden political science and more concrete diplomatic history (328-330). Citing U.S. demands on the Japanese beef market, and Norwegian conditions attached to Tanzania's urban development, he discusses the kind of interference that has often occurred historically, but which now forms an important component of international law. The gap with the humanities closes further in his discussion of outsourcing from ministries of foreign affairs, by which tourism, migration, development assistance and other issues, while falling in the realm of foreign policy, are left to other government bodies (330-332). He notes that there is now a fissure between *foreign policy* and *foreign relations*, and a much larger one between these terms and *diplomacy*. He acknowledges the confusion created by this situation, particularly in democracies such as the United States, where redundant agencies battle for political clout, and where a majority of diplomats come from outside the State Department! The conclusion is chilling for scholars of humanities and social science alike: that chiefs of

² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1651).

³ See the variety of scholarship in, e.g. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds. *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2004).

⁴ Juan Cole, "Anti-Americanism: It's the Policies," *American Historical Review*, 111:4 (October, 2006), pp.1120-1129. See also the larger AHR Forum, Historical Perspectives on Anti-Americanism, *ibid.*, pp.1041-1129.

mission lack sufficient authority over their subordinates, and thus that diplomacy has grown beyond the reach of a coherent ministry of state.

The complexity of the diplomatic historian's craft expands in the other direction, as well, with Kleiner's treatment of multilateral diplomacy and permeable borders (332-335). No longer able to assess bilateral relations from the perspective of archives in two capitals, historians studying European reactions to the Iranian nuclear program will have to consult four or more, and at least six for negotiations on North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Worse yet, he notes the development of supranational governing bodies such as the European Commission, and of international civil servants. Indeed, he highlights specifically the role of globalization in diluting the states system established by the treaties of Westphalia and Osnabrück in 1648. The result is not only a proliferation of diplomatic posts, but also of new responsibilities that accrue to the composers, executors and ultimately historians of a much more broadly-defined foreign policy.

This breadth of definition is compounded by immigration and counter-terrorism issues, which again may speak more to issues of culture, identity and economics than to the classical aims of alliance and defense with which diplomacy has often been associated (335-338). Kleiner suggests that there is work to be done on the multilateral projects regulating labor and immigration visas, and in fighting the Taliban. The same is true for weapons and technologies of mass destruction, which generate international concern on a scale out of all proportion to the territorial and political ambitions of those who possess them. These phenomena are not only multinational problems, however, but also sub-national, with corollaries in what Kleiner calls *paradiplomacy*. The situation is complicated even more by non-government organizations, multinational corporations and sometimes even private citizens (338-342).⁵

In light of all of the above, Kleiner concludes that the diplomat's purview has expanded rather than contracted, though foreign service officials remain in a formal sense only the representatives and executors of foreign policy, without a lot of their own creative input. Nonetheless, he suggests that contemporary diplomats, as much as their historical forebears, retain a common commitment to peace, progress and humanity. Diplomacy, he suggests, is here to stay, and its future as a field of historical study appears therefore to possess great promise in a variety of intriguing directions. In this respect, he echoes the other, much more historical article in the June 2008 issue of *Diplomacy and Statecraft* on the evolving nuances and theory of diplomatic history: while methods and details differ considerably, their substance and contours are remarkably similar.

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⁵ Some of these issues arose more than twenty years ago, and received eloquent expression in Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, 1990).

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