

BOOK REVIEW

The Trends In Modern Diplomatic Practice: by Roberto Regala
Milano, Giuffrè, Editore, Rome 1959; Copyright 1959, pp. 123.

Published with the avowed intention of "arousing greater interest among the young men and women in the foreign service, or those who may aspire to join the calling in the future, in the methods and techniques of diplomatic practice so that they can render more valuable contributions to one of the most difficult but at the same time rewarding and attractive professions — that of diplomacy," this book is an orderly analysis of the nature and concept of diplomacy and its basic functions in the light of present needs and conditions.

Diplomacy as a concept has had to gear itself to the demands of an extremely volatile world situation and has assumed added responsibilities and functions. While retaining the outer shell of classical diplomacy, modern diplomatic practice has adopted new and revolutionary techniques in achieving its ends.

Propaganda and other media of influencing public opinion are now regarded as standard diplomatic implements and have played a major role in the death-struggle for power between East and West. Whereas the old school of diplomats deemed it foolhardy and even dangerous to consider public opinion as a motivating force, the modern tendency is to lay great stress on its power and effectiveness. To this end most diplomatic missions employ press attaches responsible for the maintenance of good public relations with the people of the foreign state. The author accurately observes that Soviet Russia has gained an advantage in the cold war through its effective, if at times unscrupulous use of propaganda.

The diplomat is entrusted with three basic functions, viz.: representation, negotiation and protection of national interests abroad.

It is noteworthy that the author while explaining the basic functions of diplomacy does not lose sight of the necessity of a higher end in view. He writes "In this nuclear age in which we live, we should try to view the functions of diplomacy with the main aim of seeking or promoting the fundamental objective of peace."

The cardinal principle of international relations being mutual respect for one another's sovereign rights, states possess unqualified freedom to choose its diplomatic representatives. As a corollary however, no state is bound to receive such representatives if it may deem unacceptable. No standard qualifications are set for the diplomat. All countries may send persons of whatever calling, age, religion or sex. But obviously it augurs well for all to know the qualities which make a good diplomat. Among others the diplomat should be thoroughly conversant with such vital subjects as economics, finance and politics and must be refined in the social graces. A working knowledge of the language of the foreign country where he is stationed is necessary if only to show a genuine interest in the state with which he seeks to promote friendly relations. Above all he must be a man of unimpeachable character and highly intelligent. In brief, the good diplomat is a "Jack-of-all trades" who is master of all, one truly representative of the best his home state can offer.

The book under review is invaluable as research material especially to those interested in pursuing a career in the diplomatic service. Based on five lectures delivered by him at the School of International Functionaries in Madrid, it speaks well of the author as a legal scholar and as a highly-respected diplomatic official. Ambassador Regala does credit to his nation by this fine contribution to the still meager literature on modern diplomatic practice.

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