

**PECULIARITIES OF DIPLOMACY
OF SMALL NATIONS**
(Machiavellianism as prototype of small nations' diplomacy.
Proportion of the small nations' diplomacy
relative to their potential)

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Diplomacy of small nations has passed a long way. Thucydides, ancient Greek historian, had defined the capabilities of states as follows: “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” Aristotle enriched the scientific thought of the time by his fundamental writing *Politics* where he thoroughly analyzed the processes of establishment and development of the state, legal foundations of power and state, its territorial, demographic and classes-related traits, etc. Given that in 4th century BC the ancient Greece was composed of city-poleis, i.e. small states, one may view the Aristotelian interpretation of foreign policy as peculiarity of small nation’s diplomacy, which was characteristic to the Hellenistic poleis. This unique trait of Hellenistic diplomacy later became the foundation upon the Western mechanism of diplomacy was built, including in terms of small nations’ diplomacy [1].

The small nations’ diplomatic service became a political category for the Italian microstates of the Renaissance period that had neither

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armed forces, nor police. How would they protect themselves in case of an external military threat? The answer is – by diplomacy, the theory and practice of which is summarized in Niccolo Machiavelli's teachings called Machiavellianism. The medieval writer, philosopher, renowned politician called it *virtu*, which roughly translates from Italian as collection of traits necessary to “achieve great things”. With his hallmark sarcasm and cynicism Machiavelli argued that overindulgence, shrewdness, lie and intrigues are acceptable in protecting the interests of the state. In diplomatic struggle Machiavelli saw two factors – law and force. The first one is used by people, whereas the second one by beasts, and since the first one often proves insufficient, people have recourse to the second, beastly method. Guided by this philosophy, Machiavelli advises the diplomats to choose the lion and fox among the beasts, as symbols of might and cunning. Machiavelli says: “It is necessary to be a fox to discover the snares and a lion to terrify the wolves.” He believes that the skill of diplomat is “to disguise the reality under words.” “Dishonesty of one is justified by carelessness of the other.” In his well-known work *The Prince* Machiavelli writes: “Our experience has been that those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word.” [2]

Thus, Machiavelli and followers of his teachings have replaced mutual trust, normal and gradual development of long-term programs and inter-state relations by a vicious theory, whereby the international law is subordinated to national interests.

Although Machiavellianism has been rejected and criticized by P. Kyler, H. Nicolson J. Cambon, E. Satow, V. Popov and other renowned

theorists, however, it has left a profound effect on the world diplomacy and even today draws interest of professionals. The reason is that along with its cynicism, immorality and opportunism, Machiavellianism contains a rational kernel for protecting the statehood and national interests of small states. One should not forget that Machiavellianism ascribes huge importance to the law and need for strong government [3]. The wisdom of this warning in modern times has been proven, for example, by the weakness of V. Yanukovych's power in Ukraine and its bloody consequences for the country.

We believe this has to be taken into consideration in establishing diplomatic services for such countries.

What is considered a small nation in the political science system and what role do such nations play in international relations? All the states that are not permanent members of the UN Security Council can be categorized as small nations. According to E. Plischke, a renowned American author on history of diplomacy, these are states with population smaller than 5 million [4]. The British, on the other hand, regard those with population of less than one million small nations and call them "mini states"[5]. E. Plischke argues that foreign policy of small nations has three directions: a) great powers, with whom they aspire to cooperate; b) large international organization, cooperation with which may bring actual financial and economic assistance; c) neighboring countries, the relations with which represent mutual interests [5]:

Historically, the status of small nations stemmed from their small potential (military, financial, economic, industrial, etc.), and hence, security vulnerability. This reality prompted small nations to seek balance between great powers and maintain neutrality (e.g. Austria) or gain their tutelage (e.g. Israel). If such state has a highly qualified diplomatic

service, then it actively participates in institutionalization of the international law standards and establishment of international organizations and collective security systems. On the one hand, this secures the small nation's integration in the international economic and political structures, and on the other hand, helps solving its own problems.

It has to be noted that in the political reality small nations often manifest corporate egotism and pose unfair demands to great powers. For example, integration of small nations en masse in international organizations may produce a risk of "dictatorship of dwarves", whereby the small nations unite and use the consensus principle and the veto right to seriously threaten interests of other countries. In order to prevent such developments the EU implemented institutional reforms, as set out in Lisbon treaties.

However, as the new age history of diplomacy shows, especially after abolishment of colonialism and the end of bipolar world order, wide horizons opened before small nations to get vigorously involved in foreign policy activities and even to be classified as international actors. Small nations can play key roles in the international arena. For example, Switzerland plays a great role in finance and diplomacy, Kuwait in hydrocarbons, the Netherlands and Sweden in the international law and Norway in Arctic matters.

There are numerous examples in the history of diplomacy, when the international problems are resolved not through diplomatic efforts, but from the position of hard power. Foreign policies of superpowers often involve "muscle flexing diplomacy" rather than using methods and rules. This practice, as a rule, has led to grave consequences for those who use it (the US wars in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, USSR and Russia in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Abkhazia and South Ossetia,

when they ignored diplomacy as an instrument of international relations). Long-term Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko vetoed UN Security Council resolutions 26 times, earning “Mr. Niet” nickname. But show of force eventually did not save the state from collapse.

Years-long research of small nations’ diplomatic services prompts a conclusion that the *flexibility and prowess of a country’s diplomatic system are inversely proportional to its military, economic and political potential*. The more powerful the country, the less artful is its diplomacy, and vice versa. Such viewpoint on power and diplomacy of countries may seem a paradoxical sophism. However, we believe it has the right to exist and may become a subject of serious and thorough research in theory of diplomacy.

Another peculiarity of small nations’ diplomacy to consider is the diplomatic mediation. There are different methods for that, including public/“megaphone”, secret, collective, separate, regional, international and other diplomacies. The mediation diplomacy has two aspects – external and internal. In the first case the small nation’s diplomacy participates in and facilitates regulation of international problems and resolution of conflicts. The second aspect relates to boosting the reputation and protecting the interests of the mediator country. The opportunities of Armenian diplomacy in this respect seem promising. It may undertake a mediatory mission in Iran-USA dialogue, Moscow-Tehran-Washington triangle, Georgia-Russia relations, in the Middle East, etc. As Armenia has no large potential, it may implement skillful diplomatic mediation using its geopolitical, historic, national intellectual and diaspora factors.

September, 2014

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