INFORMAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: ROLE AND IMPACT

[a]NATALIIA STYRNIK, [b]IHOR ISHCHENKO, [c]OLEH KUZ,
[d]YAROSLAVA BEDRYCH, [e]IRYNA LAZNEVA

[a]*University of Hradec Králové, 62/26, Rokitanského,
500 03, Hradec Králové 3, the Czech Republic*
[b]*Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, 72, Haharina Ave.,
49010, Dnipro, Ukraine*
[c]*Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, 9a,
Nauki Ave., 61166, Kharkiv, Ukraine*
[d]*National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 4,
Triohsviatytelska Str., Kyiv, Ukraine*
[e]*National University Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic, 64,
Zhukovskoho Str., Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine*
email: [a]*n.styrnik@gmail.com,* [b]*ivishchenko@gmail.com,*
[c]*olehkuz@hneu.net,* [d]*bedrych.@ukr.net,*
[e]*irishkins_29@gmail.com*

Abstract: The article attempts to systematize arguments in favor of the fact that today the study of political communication at the international level, its various manifestations and consequences, faces problems that do not fit into the rigid framework of generally accepted political and philosophical theories, approaches and schools, and thereby actualizes the task of theoretical methodological understanding of the ongoing global socio-political changes through the formation of a new paradigm for studying the politics of international relations, adequate to the state of the world community and the challenges of the time. It is shown that in conditions of modern extreme instability and conflict potential, a special role is played by unofficial diplomacy, carried out through informal communication in various formats, in particular, in the format of the track two and track 1.5 diplomacy. The effectiveness of this kind of diplomacy is demonstrated by referring to its evolution and successful examples of its application in the 20th century, as well as the foundations and prospects in the current century.

Keywords: international affairs; diplomacy; informal political communication; means of communication; nonverbal communication; cultural sensitivity; soft power; informal network.

1 Introduction

Communication in the system of international relations is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Many aspects related to its nature remain to be studied. The elements of the system of international relations are interconnected, and the activities they carry out serve as connections. Moreover, the connections between the elements are of a different nature and can be implemented in various forms. Without such a connection, there are no relations, and in a broad sense, there is no system of international relations itself. Therefore, the first essential feature of the concept of "communication in the system of international relations" is the fact of the implementation of the connection between the elements of this system, expressed in various forms.

In contrast to the most common approach in political theory to the definition of political communication as the transfer or exchange of politically significant information between actors, in the system of international relations the connections of its elements are not limited only by the boundaries of the information sphere. In the system of international relations, in addition to information, the transfer and exchange of resources, technologies, cultural and other spiritual and material substances, some of which belong to the category of values, are actively carried out. It is advisable to consider the entire set of such objects in the system of international relations as objects of communication. In this regard, the fact of the presence of specific objects of communication that can be transmitted by elements in the system of international relations determines the second essential feature. Informal communications are organically woven into this complex landscape.

In its most pronounced form, it seems, the specificity of international political communication is determined by the characteristics of its subjects and objects, and, consequently, the subject-subject and subject-object relations that arise between them. The aggregate subjects of such communication are traditionally states, interstate associations, and international organizations created by them. In the context of globalization, signs of subjectivity also appear among non-state and transnational players who have powerful resources and are increasingly active on the world stage. Here it is enough to name transnational corporations, global media empires, private military firms, terrorist organizations, etc. that actually compete with states and the institutions they create. Within the framework of the relations of these entities, a complex system of communication is being formed.

International relations and diplomacy are inseparable processes. The degradation of the diplomatic and negotiation processes leads to chaos in international relations and a growing atmosphere of general mistrust. Moreover, there are situations when official diplomacy cannot work effectively or, in principle, is unable to act in any way - in the event of a breakdown in diplomatic relations, in a state of war, in acute contradictions or, for example, in case of interethnic hostility. When other ways are impossible, informal communications and the so-called "track two" diplomacy come to the fore [6].

The emerging model of the new world order is acquiring the features of an unpredictable aggressive confrontation between nuclear superpowers and their allies within the framework of various forms of the "cold war" (information, sanctions, cyber attacks, hybrid warfare, etc.). In the era of hybrid conflicts, the concept of a hybrid peace has also emerged, the achievement of which is only possible through the use of unofficial diplomacy, soft power and the paradigm of informal communications.

2 Materials and Methods

The theoretical and methodological foundations of the study represent a multi-level complex of principles and methods of cognition inherent in modern science. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was made up of general scientific principles of system-structural and structural-functional analysis in combination with a specific historical research method, which makes it possible to trace the process of genesis, formation, and development of the objects under study in their relationship with other phenomena of the international political sphere. The basis for studying problems and solving set tasks was the application of the principles of historicism, systematicity, comparison, dialectical unity of the theoretical and empirical. The methodological basis of the study was the conceptual provisions of institutional, functional, sociocultural, communication theories, public diplomacy, and soft power.

3 Results and Discussion

Some political scientists emphasize that there have always been two forms of diplomacy - formal (negotiations) and informal, which refers to indirect communications through words (for example, statements by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) or actions (for example, putting troops on alert or military parades) aimed at attracting international attention to some issue related to the interests of this particular state [23]. Sometimes, diplomacy is equated with negotiations, which is, however, incorrect. Informal diplomacy is an element of the art of managing a state's foreign policy. Its only drawback is that the signal may be misunderstood, especially since it is perceived by the general public, including opposition forces within other states.

The problems of the modern world are so complex and multifaceted that no country can solve them alone. The only way to confront global challenges is the joint work of representatives of different states. During the Cold War, the situation was different: the planet was ideologically and politically divided into two blocks, where the main role was played by two "superpowers" - the USA and the USSR. It would seem that it was easier for the two participants in the dialogue to find a common solution. However, history has shown that even in the face of global problems, the USA and the USSR could not always agree. Often, on the way to an agreement there was a wall of mistrust, fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings.

Ideology and propaganda only aggravated the problem - it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between actual political initiatives and slogans.

Informal diplomacy played an important role in overcoming disagreements and misunderstandings between these countries during the Cold War. After the signing of an agreement on cultural cooperation in 1958, a small but important channel for the transmission of information opened up for the USA and the USSR. Scientists, athletes, writers, and cultural figures became able to exchange opinions on various issues that influenced relations between the two states. One of the striking examples of informal Soviet-American diplomacy during the Cold War was the Dartmouth process.

The Dartmouth Dialogue (as it was later called) was in no way intended to replace formal relations between the United States and the USSR. This is obvious even in view of the lack of any powers of "unofficial diplomats". Informal dialogue was supposed to be, in the words of Dartmouth meeting veteran Philip Stewart, at the intersection of official diplomacy and public opinion and serve as an important link "public opinion - informal diplomacy - official diplomacy" [3]. Thus, dialogue was intended as a tool to facilitate more successful work of diplomats at the official level.

For the first time, Norman Cousins voiced the proposal to convene an informal meeting of the most famous and influential public figures of the USA and the USSR during his speech before the presidium of the Soviet Peace Committee - formally a non-governmental organization. The proposal was welcomed by the Soviet side, but it took another eighteen months before a meeting was held on the Dartmouth College campus, that marked the beginning of the Soviet-American informal dialogue [5].

At all the first meetings, the issue of disarmament was hotly discussed. It should be said that in parallel, the so-called Geneva process was ongoing - official meetings of experts in the field of nuclear weapons and disarmament, one of the goals of which was to develop the terms of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons tests. Since 1962, this process has taken place within the framework of the Committee of 18 Countries, one of the UN bodies. The Geneva negotiations, as some participants admitted, were distinguished by a "banal lack of trust," which ruined all attempts to reach an agreement [4]. They were often interrupted for long periods. However, despite the fact that attempts to find a solution to the most pressing problems related to nuclear weapons had been going on for about five years by that time, virtually no progress was observed in the negotiations. One of the main obstacles to reaching an agreement was the issue of inspections documenting underground nuclear weapons tests. The Soviet Union categorically did not agree to them.

It is quite natural that this question arose at the Dartmouth meetings. Soviet participants opposed the idea of inspections, calling them interference in the internal affairs of the state [4]. However, as a result of the dialogue, both sides came to an important conclusion: the essence of the inspection problem was not the legal aspect (interference in the affairs of a sovereign state), but the issue of trust. There were acute fears in the USSR that inspections could be a cover for espionage. Therefore, the participants of the Dartmouth meetings made a logical conclusion: control and inspections are necessary, but they need to be introduced gradually, in accordance with the growth of trust between countries [4].

Of course, it was difficult for the participants in the first meetings to develop solutions to problems that official diplomacy had been working on for many years, but they did not have such a task. More important is the fact that the dialogue, not devoid of propaganda, but still more objective than a simple exchange of memorized slogans, made it possible to build trusting relationships between the participants in the first two meetings, despite the fact that one of the participants in these communications (the USSR) was an extremely ideological country with a dictatorial regime.

However, the Dartmouth process was tailored to an era of relative strategic stability and global strategic balance. Although the two superpowers were divided not only by military-political (geopolitical) and political-economic confrontation, but also by fundamental ideological differences, at the same time they were in a relationship of parity and their official and public circles spoke to each other on equal terms. Today, the geopolitical landscape in the world has become significantly more complex, and communications in international relations have accordingly become much more complex.

The identification of public diplomacy and propaganda, recorded during the Cold War between the USA and the USSR, contributed to the fact that in the changed geopolitical conditions, methods of direct propaganda were less in demand, and, accordingly, the previous tools of public diplomacy lost their importance. Therefore, a number of experts believe that the concept of "soft power", which replaced public diplomacy in the 20th century, essentially provided its new interpretation [17].

New technological capabilities, coupled with the development of civil society institutions, have significantly expanded the existing diplomatic arsenal. In addition to traditional channels for conveying information, the possibilities of non-profit associations and organizations, business circles, etc. began to be used.

In general, changes in public diplomacy in modern conditions are dictated both by changes in the nature of international relations (the abandonment of bloc confrontation while maintaining a multipolar world) and technological changes in the field of global communications (a single information field, the availability and openness of information resources, their multi-format nature, speed of information dissemination, etc.).

Against this background, the use of the media in order to form a certain view of an issue or situation within the framework of interaction with the journalistic community is, on the one hand, a classic practice of public diplomacy from the Cold War period and earlier, and on the other, taking into account the level of development of information technology, it opens up new possibilities.

Interaction with political actors - current and former politicians, representatives of academic circles, implementation of educational programs and internships is another classic tool of public diplomacy. The effectiveness of this kind of action is long-term in nature, that is, the result, unlike using the potential of the media, is not achieved immediately and in this regard is delayed. However, from the point of view of the potential opportunities that open up as a result of such impact, such tools, of course, are particularly effective.

Dartmouth, being one of the international informal forums that arose during the Cold War, had its own characteristic 'face'. As it was mentioned above, only representatives of superpowers took part in it. The events were closed, and information about them rarely appeared in print or on television screens. The conference did not issue manifestos and appeals, did not try to develop its own credo, but welcomed a polyphony of views. Long before the concept of discussion according to the rules of Chatham House, developed by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London (confidentiality of exchange of opinions, the obligation not to refer to each other outside the framework of the discussion), Dartmouth actively used its principles. As a result, a trusting atmosphere of meetings was created; their participants were more sincere in their opinions and used contacts among themselves to convey important information from official sources.

The Dartmouth experience is of interest primarily as a historical phenomenon, because the activities of this non-governmental organization contributed to the detente in relations between the superpowers and are worthy of close attention. Its participants set themselves not only the task of eliminating the use of force in international relations. Stopping violence does not mean achieving sustainable peace. To do this, it is necessary that a

solid basis for resolving conflict situations be created on the basis of civil society; multi-level dialogue is important, and Dartmouth was one of its manifestations.

One of Dartmouth's main legacies is its commitment to involving both government structures and civil society structures in their interaction in a multi-level process of peaceful resolution of conflicts. In contrast to the concept of "multi-track diplomacy", at the Dartmouth level communication occured between individuals, rather than official representatives of states or professional organizations. Another difference lies in the organization of the process itself and how the participants communicate. Its key element is the attitude of continuous dialogue, a multi-stage process of conflict resolution. One of the "textbook" newest examples of the application of Dartmouth's "lessons" is the attempts of Turkish President Erdogan to mediate in the Russian-Ukrainian war. This mediation made it possible to take a very significant step - to open a "grain corridor", a "fairway" that is not fired by the Russian aggressor for the passage of civilian bulk carriers with grain, which reduced the likelihood of a food crisis, in particular, in African countries.

Dartmouth activists relied on a gradual change in the climate of communication between participants and, as a result, on the penetration of the constructive influence of these meetings into wide circles of their political elites. Dartmouth's history has shown that under certain circumstances, such as changes in political leadership or foreign policy, "windows of opportunity" arise when an organization like Dartmouth can make a significant, and at times decisive, contribution to the outcome of a particular episode of international politics.

Dartmouth is less known than a number of international forums founded during the years of bloc confrontation. For example, in terms of its public resonance it cannot be compared with the Pugwash movement, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, in the 'intimacy' of its meetings, in the deliberate avoidance of the 'spotlight', in the targeted focus of the recommendations developed, lay its strength and no less significant role [19].

The Dartmouth experience was used by the Americans to develop a dialogue with the PRC, which began at the initiative of the Kettering Foundation, a longtime sponsor of the movement, and with the support of Gerald Ford in 1986. Here, the "continuous dialogue" model was complemented by an appeal to a broader form of interaction in the form of Sino-American forums. Thus, in 2000, 25 such events took place. The same experience was used in solving problems of interaction between the United States and a number of Latin American states. The "continuous dialogue" model was used in the 1990s in Russian-Estonian relations, as well as in resolving racial and ethnic conflicts in the United States.

It should be noted that for decades now there has been a discussion about the future of the diplomatic service. Basically, the participants in this discussion are divided into pessimists and optimists, into those who predict its decline, and those who consider this branch of public administration to be quite stable. However, it is obvious that in the modern world foreign policy is gradually losing its former status. In the context of a globalizing world, the line between foreign and domestic policies is gradually disappearing. Problems that were previously considered a purely internal matter of a particular country are often resolved only at the international level.

Unlike countries with authoritarian structures, in democratic countries there is a significant dispersion of centers of power and, accordingly, decision-making centers. Diplomats from these countries are not always sure whether the actions they undertake abroad will receive support from parliamentary institutions, local authorities, and municipal authorities. It is no secret that the solution to many vital foreign policy issues for the country moves from the diplomatic department to the administration of the president or prime minister, or to other departments. Institutions such as the Interministerial Committee for the

Coordination of Foreign Policy Activities, created in France in 1994, began to act as coordinators of foreign policy. It was headed by the Prime Minister, and included those cabinet members whose departments have access to the international arena. The special representative of the president takes part in the work of the committee, as well as the secretary general of the interministerial commission for European cooperation [7]. In Germany, the corresponding Office of the Bundeschancellor is also responsible for coordinating foreign policy. This is especially true for military security issues. American sources note that national security issues are practically moving out of the control of the State Department [21].

Within government structures, the range of departments that directly enter the international arena and interact with their partners abroad is constantly expanding. All this occurs in a complex political environment, where the boundaries between subnational, national, and international political fields become indistinguishable. Indeed, recently there is increasingly talking about a new form of international activity - citizen diplomacy, - since the transformation of state sovereignty and new technologies allow non-professional diplomats - non-governmental organizations, groups and individuals to enter the international arena, bypassing the state apparatus. In this regard, the question arises about the interaction between state and non-state actors on the world stage. J. Rosenau [15] proposes to consider modern international politics as "two worlds" - a world dominated by sovereign states, and a world where there are many other centers of power. Both develop in parallel and interact with each other. Researchers have also developed other scenarios that involve the intersection of official and unofficial diplomatic activities. S. Brown proposes to consider the modern world system as a "global polyarchy", permeated with complex connections [3].

"Logically, diplomacy is no longer the traditional conduct of public policy, it is a set of relationships established between both state and non-state actors, resulting in negotiations and the creation of new institutions", note Princen and Finger [14, p. 42].

The complexity of the system of international relations, the global nature of most problems, and the increasing intertwining of domestic and foreign policies lead to the fact that at the present stage multilateral diplomacy is acquiring decisive importance. International organizations (universal, regional, subregional), created by states on the basis of multilateral treaties and in accordance with international law, become the highest form of multilateral diplomacy. Each of them adopts its own charter, determines the budget, and establishes a headquarters and secretariat. Service in these organizations is called the international civil service and is subject to special regulation.

A new form of multilateral diplomacy was the convening of conferences, the participants of which were only international organizations. It is about, in particular, meetings in Strasbourg of the forum, in which representatives of the Council of Europe, NATO, and WEU participate, thus coordinating their actions in administrative and financial matters.

Multilateral diplomacy requires participants to strictly adhere to the rules of procedure, a clear understanding of the interdependence between various multilateral structures, and the ability to build and mobilize political coalitions that are beneficial to them. The negotiation process is of particular importance within the framework of multilateral diplomacy.

In the face of new threats and challenges, multilateral diplomacy goes beyond traditional boundaries and increasingly needs the interaction with new actors in world politics. As a result of the interaction of state and non-state actors in world politics, a kind of symbiosis occurs in the field of diplomatic activity.

B. Hocking suggested the term "catalytic diplomacy", implying close interaction between official and unofficial diplomacy [10]. Under current conditions, "catalyst diplomacy," which involves the interaction of governmental and non-governmental actors,

requires a flexible response and the development of such qualities as the ability to quickly adapt to the situation, the ability to, while pursuing own interests, attract opponents to one's side.

The exceptional complexity of the topics of multilateral negotiations on climate change, genetic engineering, and environmental protection required the involvement of representatives of science, industry, business, and authoritative non-governmental organizations in the negotiations. The Institute for Consensus Building, a non-profit private organization in Massachusetts, developed the famous theory of "parallel international negotiations." Its concept was tested during several rounds of negotiations on trade and environment issues held in 1994-1996, as well as during the preparation of the climate change conferences in Kyoto (1997) and Buenos Aires (1998). The heads of official delegations and the heads of relevant non-governmental organizations took part in the negotiations parallel to the official ones. They were able to meet in an informal setting that allowed them to implement something that is usually impossible to do at forum meetings, that is, to have free discussion and brainstorming. A survey of negotiators showed that everyone was very satisfied with the results of the meetings, which greatly facilitated the achievement of agreements at the official rounds [2].

In addition, today the rapidly changing geopolitical picture of the world poses for the states the problem of finding new forms of adequate response to emerging threats and challenges, as well as the task of increasing their diplomatic influence in the international arena, for which soft power is actively used.

The pragmatic task of "soft power" is to form within a specific country, which is the "object" of influence, a position of leaders, elites and citizens favorable for the "subject" of influence in relation to the political and economic actions of the state in whose interests this influence occurs [9]. Advocates of "soft tools" believe that the change in the global system has created a "hazy power space" that requires the careful development of new approaches to power. They argue that today's interest in neoliberalism and constructivism is no coincidence: these paradigms reflect the changing nature of world politics. The growing importance of "soft power," in their opinion, is due to the use of the following factors: 1) the interdependence of national economies, which has led to a change in priority from coercion to cooperation; 2) increasing costs of using force, especially among nuclear powers; 3) the affirmation, at least in the West, of a "prosperous society" whose members are not 'carried away' by the "ethics of war"; 4) development of civic consciousness and network cooperation [12].

Formulated by J. Nye in the early 1990s, the concept of soft power turned out to be one of the few Western concepts that has gained widespread popularity in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, the concept of soft power, the possibilities and prospects for its use to ensure national interests are actively discussed in academic and political circles of most of them. It is attracting the attention of economically developed regional powers such as Japan and Australia, which are concerned about maintaining or strengthening their authority and influence. The rapidly growing Asian giants, China and India, are turning to it, trying to rethink their place and role in the regional and global environment. It is attracting interest from mid-level regional powers such as South Korea and Indonesia, which are considering opportunities and prospects for enhancing their status in a rapidly changing world. It is approached by poor (Nepal and Bangladesh) and rich (Singapore and Taiwan) small countries and economies seeking to ensure favorable external conditions for their existence and development.

In China, the term "soft power" has become firmly entrenched in academic and political discourse. Several approaches to this concept can be identified in the works of Chinese scientists [17]. Within the framework of the structural approach, researchers identify sources of "soft power" and formulate its models. For example, sources such as multilateral diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and foreign assistance programs are highlighted.

Another version of the sources of "soft power" includes assimilating power (cultural values, ideology), institutional power (creation of international institutions, setting the agenda of international forums and organizations), identifying power (a country's influence on other states through recognition of its leading role). The practical implementation of the "soft power" strategy in China includes projects diversified across various regions and countries: cultural, scientific, and educational initiatives (for example, within the Confucius Institute), sporting events, active use of the media, development of local brands, creation of think tanks, environmental projects.

In the Islamic world, Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran have the most significant soft power potential. The soft power of the Turkish Republic historically dates back to the reforms of Mustafa Kemal in the first half of the 20th century, when the monarchical traditionalist state of the Ottoman Empire was transformed into a European-style republic. This vector was confirmed further: the course towards European integration and the reforms of Turgut Ozal (1983-1989), aimed at unifying the legal and political system of the country with the norms of the European Union. The approach to soft power changed with the coming to power of the moderate-Islamist Justice and Development Party, led by its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. His political course moved away from nationalism and pan-Turkism in favor of an Islamic orientation, and in the wake of the growth of Euroscepticism, the democratic image is changing to the image of an effective autocracy, justified by the principle of "balance between security and democracy" [22]. Turkish researchers view these processes as an attempt to synthesize Turkish nationalism and Islamic traditionalism, the basis for which is the formation of a new soft power strategy.

The informal ideologist of the soft power of the Republic of Turkey is the former head of government and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Ahmet Davutoglu. The concept of "invisible force" put forward by him shows the possibility of achieving foreign policy success through humanitarian and diplomatic influence [22]. This concept is a national version of the reception of the concept of "soft power". As noted by Western experts, "the concept of Ankara's "soft power" can be considered as the result of a synthesis of various approaches that make up the theoretical basis of modern foreign policy, which is constantly expanding and becoming more complex as new ideas are developed" [17].

The most classic "Western" understanding of "soft power" of Iran can be seen in the activities of President Mohammad Khatami (term 1997–2005). The concepts of "Islamic civil society" and "dialogue of civilizations" that he put forward implied the creation of a positive image by turning the country into a cultural bridge between the West and the East. The main goal of the state was declared to be the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens; special attention was paid to the transit of technologies and the implementation of a policy of multiculturalism. This policy was scaled back by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who replaced him as president (term 2005–2013). Supported by reactionary layers of the population, he added many "hard" elements to Iran's foreign policy, the most significant of which was the nuclear program. Despite conflicting rhetoric and a sharp decline in attractiveness in Western countries, his government continued its course towards creating a holistic system of "soft power" based on culture. "Despite tough positions on a number of issues and revolutionary rhetoric, namely the national-cultural community is important as a starting point for strengthening ties between the states of the region" [9]. It was under Ahmadinejad that two main directions of Iran's "soft power" took shape: 1) interaction with Iranian ethnic groups and peoples with similar cultures; 2) comprehensive, including armed, support for Shiite entities around the world.

H. Saunders - American diplomat, director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the US State Department in 1975–1978 and US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the Carter administration in 1978–1981 –

is known for significant achievements in the field of peace negotiations, including the conclusion of the Camp David Accords of 1978 and the Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt of 1979, as well as in the negotiations for the release of American hostages in Tehran in 1979. Subsequently, Saunders gained fame as a scientist and one of the creators and leading specialists in organizing negotiations in track two format.

Track two diplomacy is not a new phenomenon and has a long history. It turned out to be useful in certain situations. For example, the 1993 Oslo peace agreement between Israel and Palestine was negotiated largely through "track two" negotiations. The leaders of the two countries took ideas from the track two discussions and turned them into an agreement.

The role of such negotiations increases during periods when official channels of communication are in a kind of freeze, or when there is a lot of tension in bilateral relations. However, sometimes discussions even take a semi-official form - the so-called "track 1.5". Under Track 1.5 diplomacy, negotiations and meetings are informal and often initiated by non-state actors, which may be joined by state actors. The negotiations are intended to create a neutral forum where statesmen can then meet and lay the groundwork for real diplomatic negotiations [25].

An interesting example of Track 1.5 diplomacy is the negotiations between Biden and Xi Jinping in 2023 (the two leaders have not met since their contacts at the G20 summit in 2022). Thanks to high-level informal interactions, there has been a slight improvement in Sino-American relations. Over the past few months, high-level diplomatic dialogue between the two sides has intensified dramatically. This rise, experts believe, bodes well for the possibility of expanding these conversations to representatives of the Defense Ministries of both countries. Both American and Chinese political scientists rightly emphasize that both countries should continue Path 1.5 diplomacy [4]. The diplomacy of such a track allows discussions to take place without the need to maintain the 'appearances' that are necessary for high-level interaction. It is emphasized that such conversations can improve communication between the American and Chinese sides and make future discussions between senior government officials more attractive.

In this context, one should remember the Geneva Summit of 1985, when the former head of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, and then US President Ronald Reagan held their historic meeting. This summit became a historical milestone in the development of not even both states, but the world, since after it the Cold War turned to the finish line. As a result of an exchange of views, which took place behind closed doors, M. Gorbachev called the American president a "dinosaur", while Reagan labeled the Soviet counterparty as a "hard-headed Bolshevik", and nevertheless, the USA and the USSR for the first time assured each other that they would not strive for a military dominance. In a joint declaration, they stated "that nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought" [8]. It is also interesting to remember that during the events of the Six-Day War in Israel, the intensity of consultations in the UN Security Council gradually decreased, and it seemed that the discussion of the problem of the Middle East settlement had once again reached a dead end. But at a time when official diplomacy showed its helplessness, behind-the-scenes diplomacy once again demonstrated that it is the most reliable tool for achieving compromise and a peaceful settlement in the Middle East: the compromise proposed by British diplomats suited both the Arabs and the Israelis [20].

In today's extremely tense geopolitical situation in many regions of the world, so-called preventive diplomacy is also gaining special importance. Preventive diplomacy focuses on action in unstable regions during periods when there is a growing or high likelihood that regimes or individuals will take up arms or use other forms of coercion to "resolve" political differences.

The virtual failure of the policy of détente in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the apparent increase in tensions in the international arena left little room for preventive diplomacy in its current sense. At the same time, the paradox of the situation is manifested in the fact that the agreements on limiting strategic offensive weapons concluded between the superpowers at that time were striking examples of what we are now accustomed to calling examples of preventive diplomacy, since they really influenced the process of reducing the risk of unleashing a global nuclear war. This also includes the creation of so-called hotlines, the organization of centers to reduce the risk of a nuclear war, the formation of nuclear-free zones, etc.

Conflict resolution in the international arena requires the constant creation of new tools and improvement of old ones. The main need is for conscientious and timely information about emerging conflict situations. Specific symptoms, such as leaders' deliberate mobilization of aggressive public opinion or stockpiling of weapons, must be closely monitored. All preventive diplomacy actors - both governmental and non-governmental - must be guided solely by the desire to prevent armed conflict and the human suffering and material losses it generates.

It is worth noting that the concept of preventive diplomacy is most fully reflected in the works of Michael Lund. The author pointed out that the essence of preventive diplomacy is to prevent the uncontrollable escalation of conflicts and their transition into constant violence, accompanied by the reconciliation of armed forces. In his book on the concept, methods, and goals of preventive diplomacy, Lund defines it as follows: "It is an activity carried out in vulnerable regions in sensitive times with the aim of avoiding the threat or use by states or groups of armed force and similar forms of coercion to resolve political differences. which could arise as a result of the destabilizing influence of economic, social, political or global changes," and Lund further writes that "such activities may involve the use of a range of "diplomatic" (in the narrow sense), political, military, economic and other mechanisms and may be carried out by governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individuals or the parties to the dispute themselves..." [11].

Zartman defines the main meaning of conflict prevention in keeping them at the political level and eliminating the causes that can give them violent forms [26]. The moment of using preventive diplomacy in this case becomes of great importance. The action between peacetime diplomacy and crisis diplomacy is preventive diplomacy, defines Lund [11].

As the experience of recent decades shows, the effectiveness of international peacekeeping efforts is often insufficient, and the authority of the UN is undermined. In such conditions, the role of preventive diplomacy and informal communication channels, cultural sensitivity and informal networks increases significantly.

It must be emphasized that the role of multilateral and multi-track diplomacy especially increases at turning points in the development of the system of international relations. Its important advantage, compared to bilateral diplomacy, is the greater publicity of the work, greater flexibility in the forms of discussions, exchange of opinions, and the ability to connect channels of unofficial diplomacy.

It should be noted that Saunders is the author of the concept of five-step sustainable dialogue. It is necessary to highlight three pillars of this concept. The first is the emphasis on a "civil society peace process" ("a public dialogue"). The second basis of the concept, closely related to the first one, is a clear rejection of intrusive, hyperactive, and sometimes "aggressive" external moderation of the negotiation process, which began to spread rapidly with the growth of the number of peace processes in the 1990s (one of the striking examples is the Dayton negotiations on Bosnia). Instead, it was supposed to provide greater independence to the participants in the "civil dialogue": "it is not about playing the role of some kind of mediators from one side or another, but rather about the mission of specialists to establish a negotiation process, which the conflicting parties could then

conduct and support themselves" [18]. And finally, the third basis, which gave the final name to the format itself and, in our opinion, became the main contribution of this model to facilitating peace negotiations, is a key focus on the dynamics of the negotiation process within the five-stage dialogue model. The starting point here is that it is about a process, and a long one, at different stages of which different tools may be needed and step by step one can consistently achieve results - from more modest in the first stages to more significant and sound in subsequent stages. For Saunders, sustainable dialogue is "a conceptualization of what people do in conflict situations when they are in a safe space created to conduct a dialogue systematically over time" [18].

Actually, Saunders, back in 1985, divided this process into five interrelated stages, as it was mentioned above: (1) identifying and formulating a problem that both sides consider to be such; (2) making a decision on the advisability of actions to resolve it through negotiations; (3) organization of negotiations; (4) conducting negotiations to reach an agreement; (5) implementation of the agreement as a condition for the next steps to continue the peace process. However, only in the early 1990s Saunders finally firmly came to the conclusion that "the development of relationships within the framework of a sustainable dialogue can be presented in the form of a certain scheme of sequential actions," proposing a harmonious, five-stage sequence of stages of such a dialogue, starting with the pre-negotiation stage (when potential participants are still weighing whether to join it at all or not). Subsequent steps include: defining the problem area and agenda; analysis of specific problems during a certain continuous sequence of meetings of dialogue participants interested in resolving it; transformation of the group of dialogue participants into a kind of laboratory that explores the relationship between the parties to the conflict and offers scenarios for interactive steps to achieve positive changes; finally, exiting the sphere of discussion into a broader political space and exerting a practical influence, including on the course of the official negotiation process [1].

This approach and its more recent varieties, in particular, make it possible to smooth out the influence of the concept of development of "contracting" states, which is very difficult to achieve at the level of official diplomacy due to the impossibility of ideological "concessions" in public discourse. By the end of the twentieth century, two political models had emerged. One is based on liberal principles, while the second - on a rigid administrative-command system. They were called the Washington and Beijing Consensus, respectively.

It is easiest to establish a public diplomacy channel where there is an open request for dialogue and cooperation and, of course, such channels should be supported. But public diplomacy is truly urgently needed where relations are on the brink or already in a state of acute crisis. Organizing and holding any event to maintain informal contacts in the context of disrupted official interstate relations is a very difficult political and logistical task, but this is the art of informal diplomacy. In such cases, it is not always necessary to touch upon the most sensitive issues, such as interethnic conflicts or issues of unrecognized territories. But namely the platforms where experts, scientists, students, and social activists can meet in a fairly free and frank atmosphere make it possible to create a dialogue window, including on the most pressing problematic issues.

Literature:

1. Albin, C., & Jarblad, A. (2012). The sustained dialogue approach: Harold H. Saunders. In: Fixdal, M. (eds) *Ways Out of War* (pp. 53-70). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.105 7/9781137030542_3

2. Brasioli, D., & Hogenauer, A.-L. (Eds.) (2023). *Diplomacy in the post-globalized world: New challenges and strategic priorities*. Universite du Luxembourg.

3. Brown, S. (1995). *New forces, Old forces and the future of world politics* (Post-Cold war edition). HarperCollins.

4. Bunde, T. (2022). *The art of diplomacy: 75 views behind the scenes of world policies.* Econ Verlag.

5. Carson, A. (2018). *Secret wars: Covert conflict in international politics*. Princeton University Press.

6. Chen, T. (2021). Informal diplomacy reinforces formal international cooperation: Evidence from track two diplomacy. *Asian Survey, 61*(4), 641–662.

7. Erlandsson, S. (2023). *Personal politics in the postwar world: Western diplomacy behind the scenes*. Bloomsbury Academic.

8. Glass, G. (2015). *Cold War diplomat: Inside U.S. diplomacy 1981-2011.*

9. Hayden, C. (2011). *The rhetoric of soft power: Public diplomacy in global contexts*. Lexington Books.

10. Hocking, B. (1999). Catalytic diplomacy: beyond "newness" and "decline." In: J. Melissen (ed). Innovation in diplomatic practice. London: Macmillan, pp. 19-42.

11. Lund, M. (1996). *Preventing violent conflicts: A strategy for preventive diplomacy.* United States Institute of Peace Press.

12. Ohnesorge, H. (2023). *Soft power and the future of US foreign policy*. Manchester University Press.

13. Onditi, F., McLarren, K., Ben-Nun, G., Stivachtis, Y., Okoth, P. (Eds.). (2023). *The Palgrave handbook of diplomatic thought and practice in the digital age*. Palgrave Macmillan.

14. Princen, T., & Finger, M. (Eds) (1994). *Environmental NGO's in world politics: Linking the local and the global*. Routledge.

15. Rosenau, J.N. (1990). *Turbulence in world politics: A theory of change and continuity*. Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

16. Rouhana, N.N., & Kelman. H.C. (1994). Promoting joint thinking in international conflicts. *Journal of Social Issues, 50*(1), 157-178.

17. Saaida, M. (2023). The role of soft power in contemporary diplomacy. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 4*(4), 3119-3130.

18. Saunders, H. (2011). *Sustained dialogue in conflicts: Transformation and change*. Palgrave Macmillan.

19. Scott-Smith, G. (2015). Opening up political space: Informal diplomacy, east-west exchanges, and the Helsinki process. In: S. Mikkonen & P. Koivunen, eds. *Beyond the Divide, Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe* (pp.23-43). Berghahn Books.

20. Shalom, Z. (2011). *Role of US diplomacy in the lead-up to the Six Day War: Balancing moral commitments and national interests*. Liverpool University Press.

21. Tiuku, T. (2021). *Informal international relations*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.613

22. Tutar, Y., & Hyams-Ssekasi, D. (2023). Foreign unraveling the usage of the soft power in the Turkish policy. International *Journal of Humanities and Social Development Research, 7*(1), 35-61.

23. Weaver, M. (2014). The relationship between diplomacy and military force. *Diplomatic History, 38*(1), 137-181.

24. Weismann, M., Nilsson, N., Palmertz, B., Thunholm, P. (2021). *Hybrid warfare: Security and asymmetric conflict in international relations*. I.B. Tauris.

25. Yilmaz, M. (2004). Track-two diplomacy as a resolution approach to international and inter-societal conflicts. *Dokuz Eylul Universitesi Iktisadi de Ildary Bilimer Dergisi, 19*(2), 155-167.

26. Zartman, W. (2001). 'Preventive Diplomacy: Setting the Stage'. In W. Zartman, ed. *Preventive Negotiation: Avoiding Conflict Escalation* (pp. 1-18). Rowman & Littlefield.