

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES IN USING DIPLOMATIC MEANS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTH SUDAN

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in order to examine the possible strategies in using diplomatic means of conflict resolution in South Sudan. The research was carried out through a cross-sectional and survey research design, and obtained relevant data from 78 respondents. The research study established that the use of diplomatic approach through peace mediation, being accommodative to the diverse interests of all parties and treating the opposition as stake holders not as enemies is slowly and consistently helping the leadership in South Sudan and her neighbors to work together with lessened suspensions hence for example Uganda opening up her boundaries. Mediation is a broad and rapidly growing field in resolving conflicts in South Sudan. The mediated settlement of conflicts has been of vital chip in helping their people live in peaceful parts of the country, engage in regional trade, education and any other form of co-operation which may leap the country from rags to development. Using tact and diplomacy appropriately can lead to improved relationships with other people and are a way to build and develop mutual respect, which in turn can lead to more successful outcomes and less difficult or stressful communications. The application of shrewd diplomat uses skills centered around an understanding of the people on the opposite side and being sensitive to their opinions, beliefs, ideas and feelings. Developing effective tact and diplomacy skills requires practice and good judgement. The study recommended that all South Sudanese conflicts should be handled through mediation.

Keywords: strategies, Diplomatic means, conflict resolution

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is crucial in some mediation processes, thus helping researchers to understand the factors which did lead to successful conflict prevention in the peace process. More recently, however, scholars have delineated several levels of diplomacy. Official discussions typically involving high-level political and military leaders and focusing on cease-fires, peace talks, and treaties as well as other forms of diplomatic promotion of peace building process. Diplomacy is the only comprehensive way to

reach a solution to any conflict in a reasonable manner. Especially if you want to build a lasting peace, without risking millions of human lives for example WWII and the creation of the United Nations in 1945 as a peace project. In case the conflict is violent, it cannot be solved by using violence something that is characteristic in the approach of the Peace Studies. In International Relations, and International Security as academic disciplines, there could be arguments that a violent international conflict or its most extreme forms such as wars can be ended by the application of violence/force (Berridge & James 2003). But that is just the way to end war.

Diplomatic means

According to Fisher (2005), the necessity of resolving the conflict through diplomatic means and avoiding military confrontation, as much as possible and start cooperation with the state as other important regional issues, concerns, which in turn is the most effective track for resolving the conflict. Moreover, an example of resolving the future potential conflicts by diplomatic means as proposed. The conceptual exploration and identification of concepts theoretically applicable in the field of international relations, as means of building peaceful resolution on international disputes. Furthermore, the enforcement of theoretical concepts to a specific and generally complex cases such as the application of diplomatic means in resolving conflicts between SPLA/M versus the SPLM/IO in promoting peace and stability in the country.

Madalina (2012) states that the peaceful settlement of international disputes is a fundamental requirement for the preservation of international peace and security. The contemporary international law consecrated the states' obligation to settle the conflicts between them exclusively through peaceful means. In the modern age, characterized by the dynamics of the international relations and structures, the problem of using the modalities of peaceful settlement of disputes is closely connected to the adaptation of international law to the requirements of the new international economic and political order. Together with negotiation, good offices, conciliation and international investigation, mediation represents an important modality in the peaceful settlement of international conflicts.

For securing its objectives, diplomacy depends upon three major means: persuasion, compromise and threat of use of force. Diplomacy has to depend upon several tactics or techniques for the chances of the success of diplomacy are directly related to the ability of using appropriate means through appropriate tactics. In the main diplomacy uses six techniques, which have been defined by the Hostile (Black Jeremy, 2010), a selection of a method or means is done on the basis of the time and circumstances of the situation.

Gutierrez (2015) opines that diplomacy is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states. It usually refers to international diplomacy, the conduct of international relations through the intercession of professional diplomats with regard to issues of peace-making, trade, war, economics, culture, environment, and human rights. International treaties are usually negotiated by diplomats prior to endorsement by national politicians.

Wicquefort (2010) argues that in an informal or social sense, diplomacy is the employment of tact to gain strategic advantage or to find mutually acceptable solutions to a common challenge, one set of tools being the phrasing of statements in a non-confrontational or polite manner. The scholarly discipline of diplomatics, dealing with the study of old documents, derives its name from the same source, but its modern meaning is quite distinct from the activity of diplomacy.

Diplomacy seeks to convince others of the justification of the goals which it is trying to uphold or promote, rewards in which diplomacy can offer rewards for securing acceptance of desired view of a particular international dispute or issue or problem. Gutierrez (2015) adds that there is promise of reward and concessions which includes diplomacy can promise matching rewards and concessions for securing a particular change or maintaining a particular view in the policies of other nations. Further, there is threat of use of force in which diplomacy cannot use force or violence in promoting the national interest. However, it can use threat of use of force ultimatums, symbolic boycotts, protest walkouts or even threat of war etc., for securing its objectives.

Prieto (2015) adds that there is use of non-violent punishment which involves depriving a promised reward or concession, diplomacy can inflict non-violent punishment on other nations. In a further study, there is use of pressure in which using pressure tactics, diplomacy can force other nations to accept the desired view or policy or decision or goals that it represents. Besides these, Diplomacy also uses propaganda, cultural links, exploitation of situations, creation of particular scenes and situations, rigidity or flexibility in negotiations and so on.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. Bellamy et al., (2010) argues that the disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement. The term conflict resolution may also be used interchangeably with dispute resolution, where arbitration and litigation processes are critically involved. Furthermore, the concept of conflict resolution can be thought to encompass the use of nonviolent resistance measures by conflicted parties in an attempt to promote effective resolution.

Conflict resolution, otherwise known as reconciliation, is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution (McElwee, 2007). Committed group members attempt to resolve group conflicts by actively communicating information about their conflicting motives or ideologies to the rest of the group for example intentions; reasons for holding certain beliefs), and by engaging in collective negotiation. Dimensions of resolution typically parallel the dimensions of conflict in the way the conflict is processed.

Bannon, et al., (2003) states that cognitive resolution is the way disputants understand and view the conflict, with beliefs and perspectives and understandings and attitudes. Emotional resolution is in the way disputants feel about a conflict, the emotional energy. Behavioral resolution is how one thinks the disputants act, their behavior. Ultimately, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist, including but not limited to negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, and creative peace-building.

Eskandarpour et al., (2011) writes that from history, different transnational actors and people to people interaction have always presented a complex web of diplomacy. Peace-making, trade, war, economics, culture, environment, and human rights are emphasized enough in the present system of multi-track diplomacy. Multi track diplomacy is the new hope of the peace building process for conflict prone areas around the world. ASEAN (2012) Report contained that South Asia is one of the diverse lands of ethnicity, religion and culture that lead this region as a conflict prone area in the world. Different intra state and interstate conflicts have become the barrier for the progress of this region. Pakistan and India are considered as military superpowers in this region.

Desalegem (2014) noted that the inability of the South Sudanese state to protect civilians is perhaps the central driver of violent conflict across the country. Despite a range of security crises re-emerging along the Sudanese border and within the different states such as Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity, parts of Warrap and Lakes and so on owe more to legacies of wartime division, coercive disarmament in 2006–2009 and the repercussions of disputed elections in 2010 in which instances diplomacy failed to bring lasting peace.

Problem Statement

South Sudan as we know it today is a country born out of political and civil conflicts spanning over 40 years in which the country was and is engulfed in political, social and economic conflicts. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 (CPA, 2005), the country had enjoyed relative peace until 2013 when conflicts broke out between forces loyal to President Salvar Kiir Mayardit (SPLA/M) against his former Vice President Dr. Riek Machar and others in SPLMIO which almost led to the collapse of the political administration. The dominant party in the country that is SPLM/A created a situation of deadly blend of conflict. Despite the peace which was enjoyed for eight years after the signing of the CPA in 2005, conflicts ensued which were rapidly brought down through preventive diplomatic means brokered by external forces such as Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and United Nations. The border conflicts and oil wealth control in Abyei between South Sudan and Khartoum Administration, and this promised peace for the country, but rise of sectional and factional interests within the government of SPLM/A (SPLM/A

main stream and SPLMIO) in December 2013 led to deterioration of peace and fighting erupted which almost led to the collapse of the government. Though fragile ceasefires and peace talks continued to try to bring the situation back to normalcy but with limited success. Though all efforts have been attempted to try to stabilize the country through declarations of cease fire, peace talks hosted in the Great Lakes Region (Luma, 2016), and the intervention of the United Nations to stop fighting, several areas of the country remain unstable such as Abyei, Jonglei state and others which diplomatic means have not been able to weed out. Therefore, the study will assess diplomatic means in conflict resolution in South Sudan.

Purpose

To examine the possible strategies in using diplomatic means of conflict resolution in South Sudan

Objective

To examine the possible strategies in using diplomatic means of conflict resolution in South Sudan

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Cull (2009), public diplomacy is an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public. However, a few key shifts have been made in the definition of public diplomacy throughout the years, which came to be known as the New Public Diplomacy. First, elements of nontraditional actors and NGOs were added to the process of public diplomacy; second, the mechanisms being used by different actors to communicate with publics have been influenced by new technologies especially the internet; third, international and domestic news spheres were blurred by these technological changes; fourth, old concepts of propaganda were replaced by new concepts of national branding and network communication; fifth, the new terminology of public diplomacy emphasizes the notions of 'soft power' and 'branding; and lastly, and most importantly, the new public diplomacy speaks of a departure from the actor-to-people Cold War-era communication and the arrival of a new emphasis on people-to-people communication for mutual enrichment. Thus, the prime task of the new public diplomacy is characterized as relationship building (Cull, 2009).

Moreover, the new public diplomacy is rooted in strategic people-to-people communication in an effort to establish sustainable relationships, with various

scholars even arguing that nothing works better than this approach when two entities work to develop mutual respect for their respective differences (Brown, 2002). Different perspectives exist about the actors in charge of public diplomacy processes, whether it is governments, NGOs, corporations or individuals. Yet, inherent in all perspectives is that effective public diplomacy is rooted in strategic people to people communication in the effort to establish a sustainable relationship (Payne, 2009). The new public diplomacy shift to people-to-people communication became known in the past few years as citizen diplomacy or Track-II diplomacy.

With the rise of technological advancements, globalization processes and especially the internet, the role of citizen diplomacy becomes vitally more important than it ever has been. The fact that people across the world are increasingly connected to each other through social media platforms has changed the Middle East and the world at large (Attias, 2012), while highlighting the power of networks to facilitate social change. The nation states of the world have moved from the bi-polar system of the Cold War to a global system integrating markets, nation states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before (Feigenbaum, 2002).

New global networks are being created, which are based on technologies, markets, interests and ideas. These networks carry an enormous potential for the future practice of citizen diplomacy by providing new platforms for them to take place within. According to Shemesh (2012) the dimension of virtual peace building is certainly an opportunity that is Facebook and other social media platforms bring people together and enable virtual contact between Israelis and Palestinians. Thus, if implemented correctly, citizen diplomacy can be powerful and effective in transforming the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, now more than ever.

Zyck et al., (2012) noted that conflict prevention is now official policy in the UN, the EU, the G-8 and in many states. It has been successfully applied in a range of places at the national level, including in South Africa, Macedonia, the Baltic States, Crimea, and the South China Sea. The many successful violence prevention efforts on the community and sub-national level often remain invisible. Much conflict literature emphasizes that despite these developments, conflict prevention has not been pursued sufficiently. There is still a lack of strategy and capacity for prevention efforts, and inadequate local knowledge and local networks. In order to fill the gap between conflict prevention rhetoric and practice, prevention needs to become a full-time professional and governmental endeavor. Only then, it is believed, can the devastating impacts of violent conflict be systematically avoided.

Away from traditional diplomatic practice, there has been increasing recognition of

the ability of science to create a coalition of support, to lay foundations for conflict resolution, or to build trust between nations. This trust is derived from the 'universality' of science where the values of transparency and rationality can transcend borders, politics, culture, and religion. Science in its true form delivers information that is evidence-based, not emanating from personal opinion or suspicion, nor swayed by authority (Domenici, Kathy, & Littlejohn, Stephen, 2001).

According to Turekian (2012), the concept of science diplomacy has developed to encompass interactions on various levels from state-based to those including international and non-state actors. Science diplomacy is the use of international scientific cooperation to foster communication and cooperation among the peoples of diverse nations and to promote greater global peace, prosperity and stability. The UK Royal Society has defined three categories of science diplomacy to reflect its various applications at the domestic, bilateral and multilateral levels: science in diplomacy: informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice, diplomacy for science, facilitating international science cooperation and, science for diplomacy and using science cooperation to improve relations between countries.

Tanya (2004) posits that mediation is a process of restoring broken relationship between individuals, communities, ethnic groups or nations with the involvement of a third party. It is a process that begins with the voluntary acceptance by the parties in a conflict of third party assistance with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict. The third party could be individuals, representatives of states, regional organization or international organization who enter a dispute as a result of their own initiative or in response to a call from the adversaries. Normally mediation is used in the heightened phase of a complex conflict when antagonists are seeking a way to break a stalemate.

According to Moore (1996), mediation is reactive in that it brings disputants to the negotiating table when dislocation in the social set up might have already taken place. In the same vein, mediation, being a part of a complex and continuous set of process, also takes place when the parties have come to accept that pursuing the conflict is unlikely to achieve their goals, but before they have reached the stage of consenting to negotiation. Thus it occurs when adversaries own conflict management has reached an impasse, and can be quickly successful when they are sufficiently cooperative and ready to do away with the stalemate by initiating some contact and communication.

Mediation is a broad and rapidly growing field. There are now many professional mediation associations, focusing on areas ranging from divorce mediation to public

policy mediation. These associations generally seek to develop and improve the practice of mediation by developing ethical standards, by offering mediation training, and by promoting the use of mediation. Moore reviews a number of such mediation associations and their activities (Shelton, et al., 2004).

Shelton et al., (2004) opines that generally, mediation codes of ethics require the mediator to be neutral and impartial, to avoid conflicts of interest, to obtain informed consent for their involvement from the parties, to maintain confidentiality, to reject cases which are beyond their expertise, and to be truthful in advertising their services and fees. The various associations' codes vary in their specifics. Research into mediation theory and practice has led to a proliferation of high-quality mediation training programs. Moore describes some of the basic elements of mediator training programs, including applicant screening procedures, training formats and methodologies, instructor qualifications, and criteria to guide the would-be mediator in selecting a program.

As the mediation field has developed, there has been an increasing trend in the public and judicial spheres toward using mediated negotiation as an alternative to more traditional means of dispute resolution. Gardy (2009) posits that legislation has been passed at the federal and state levels encouraging the use of mediation and executive orders have also mandated the development of alternative dispute resolution procedures in U. S. government agencies where appropriate.

Colosi (1993) argues that when disputants are ready to cooperate and communicate, mediation can provide a safe way for the parties to come together and in this way the third party involvement has the potential for the transformation of the conflict into a peaceable situation. As such mediation helps adversaries to gain greater understanding of the issues, interest and values that divide them by putting them in contact with one another, gaining their trust and confidence clarifying issues and formulating agreements. By assuming such tasks, the mediator is taking up a task that left to the adversaries alone could turn out to be contentious and probably troublesome for the conflictants to carry out themselves.

According to Muggah et al., (2013), it is necessary to broaden participation in cooperative programs and to increase the areas of cooperation. If the benefits are seen to be mutual, the chance of success is all the greater. The approach should be inclusive rather than exclusive. The countries of the affected region could pursue their national interests within context; pursuit of regional interests is to be also pursued taking on board the national interests of individual countries.

According to Muggah & White (2013) the purpose of both preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention is to stop armed conflicts before they escalate. Preventive diplomacy includes activities such as good offices, facilitation, mediation, conciliation, adjudication and arbitration, whereas conflict prevention is broader. Conflict prevention includes activities such as the strengthening of human rights oversight mechanisms and efforts to address the root causes of conflict such as improvements in governance, social and economic well-being, equality, and the management of common resources (Muggah & White, 2013). Monitoring, containment, and risk reduction are all aspects of conflict prevention. Together the two concepts are often referred to as 'preventive action.' Muggah & White (2013) note that there are experts who consider preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention to be two separate concepts, while others consider preventive diplomacy to be one part of conflict prevention.

Chichaya's (2010) list of the components of preventive diplomacy is broader, and includes confidence building measures (CBMs), fact finding missions, early warning mechanisms, conflict impact assessment systems, measures to promote democracy and human rights, preventive deployment of peacekeeping forces, establishment of demilitarized zones, and measures to monitor and limit the trade in small arms.

Muggah & White (2013) state that recent UN reports appear to suggest that conflict prevention may actually play a role in creating local conditions which facilitate preventive diplomacy. Yabi (2010) notes that while preventive diplomacy can resolve one-off crises, it is ineffective in solving recurrent crises.

According to Cristescu et al (2012), ASEAN leaders adopted preventive diplomacy as it enabled them to pursue the 'ASEAN Way.' The ASEAN Way is centred on 'mutual trust and confidence, principles of non-interference in internal affairs, quiet diplomacy, the non-use of force, and decision making by consensus' (OSCE & UN, 2011, p. 13). Della-Giacoma (2011) notes that ASEAN puts a 'higher premium' on non-interference than other regional organisations. As a result, ASEAN tends to focus on dialogue facilitation rather than mediation, which is interpreted by some member states as constituting interference in internal affairs (OSCE & UN, 2011). There is also a fear among ASEAN members that mediation may legitimise rebel groups. Cristescu et al (2012) note that preventive diplomacy was initially introduced by ASEAN as part of a Track II process, but that following several meetings of the ARF it has moved from a research initiative to a policy initiative.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research was carried out through a cross-sectional and survey research design. According to Oso and Onen (2009), a cross-sectional research design where populations are investigated by selecting a sample to analyze and discover occurrences at certain point in time. A survey provides numeric description of events of some part of the population and explains the events as they were and how they will be, whereas the cross-sectional design helps to obtain data from a given section of the respondents at certain time in the research process.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using computer program mainly Statistical package for Social scientists (SPSS) which was used so as to give a clear presentation of the various responses and the significance of each response depending on the magnitude of the corresponding number and frequency percentage of total responses and conclusions were drawn on the basis of those frequencies. Analysis was based on both descriptive and inferential statistics techniques where the researcher examined the findings and explained them to give meaning to the findings.

Raw data was collected, coded, grouped and presented in tables and graphs. The researcher was prompted to use this method because it analyses data to draw thorough conclusions. This study was based on two research hypothesizes to find out whether they were true or not, thus prompting the researcher to use this data analyzing tool.

FINDINGS

The research study established that the use of diplomatic approach through peace mediation, being accommodative to the diverse interests of all parties and treating the opposition as stake holders not as enemies is slowly and consistently helping the leadership in South Sudan and her neighbors to work together with lessened suspensions hence for example Uganda opening up her boundaries. With the rise of technological advancements, globalization processes and especially the internet, the role of citizen diplomacy becomes vitally more important than it ever has been.

In a focal point discussion with one of the respondents, using a global comparative approach, he revealed that the fact that people across the world are increasingly connected to each other through social media platforms has changed the Middle East and the world at large (Attias, 2012), while highlighting the power of networks to facilitate social change. The nation states of the world have moved from the bi-polar system of the Cold War to a global system integrating markets, nation states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before (Feigenbaum, 2002). New global networks are being created, which are based on technologies, markets, interests and

ideas. These networks carry an enormous potential for the future practice of citizen diplomacy by providing new platforms for them to take place within. According to Shemesh (2012) the dimension of virtual peace building is certainly an opportunity that is Facebook and other social media platforms bring people together and enable virtual contact between Israelis and Palestinians. Thus, if implemented correctly, citizen diplomacy can be powerful and effective in transforming the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, now more than ever.

Mediation is a broad and rapidly growing field in resolving conflicts in South Sudan. The mediated settlement of conflicts has been of vital chip in helping their people live in peaceful parts of the country, engage in regional trade, education and any other form of co-operation which may leap the country from rags to development.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the study, it was agreed that in certain situations which require refraining from conflicts, it is imperative to consider situational deployment of tact and diplomacy which enable effective persuasion and assertiveness in diplomatic negotiations. All respondents that is 100.0% agreed that the effective team players often use their technical know-how and experience to use the word of mouth and calm down the situation or persuade the belligerent sides to cow down in favor of peace talks and amiable resolution of conflicts. Accordingly, using tact and diplomacy appropriately can lead to improved relationships with other people and are a way to build and develop mutual respect, which in turn can lead to more successful outcomes and less difficult or stressful communications. During the study, it was discovered by the researcher that a shrewd diplomat uses skills centered around an understanding of the people on the opposite side and being sensitive to their opinions, beliefs, ideas and feelings. Desalegem who mediated the original peace talks between Machar and Kiir employed tact and was able to obtain a preliminary understanding by cooling the flared tempers and set the pace for fast tracked peace talks which followed until the country has been able to reach an agreement to re-integrate opposing soldiers into the SPLM/A government. Currently Riek Machar has been reinstated as the Vice President of the country.

CONCLUSION

The application of shrewd diplomat uses skills centered around an understanding of the people on the opposite side and being sensitive to their opinions, beliefs, ideas and feelings. Developing effective tact and diplomacy skills requires practice and good judgement. These skills are not limited to use in formal communications, such as in the workplace: tact and diplomacy are also important when developing and maintaining friendships. The research found out that 74.4% of the respondents agreed that there has been adoption of different levels of diplomatic practices which include negotiating with the opposition groups, negotiations with other or

neighboring countries. The use of diplomatic means has come to encompass direct communication and linkage between the involved states' governments or parties. The diplomatic process starts with simple and well intentioned diplomatic approaches which are enhanced as the situation becomes more complicated. The Naivasha Peace accords which ushered in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which has to date given a national and international recognition to the existence of the state of South Sudan.

RECOMMENDATION

All South Sudanese conflicts should be handled through mediation because mediated settlement of conflicts has been of vital chip in helping their people live in peace throughout the country, engage in regional bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, education from elementary to tertiary levels and any other form of co-operation through consolidation of working relations which may leap the country from rags to development for the future of the nation state.

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