

DIPLOMATIC TERMINOLOGY FROM THE TIME OF THE COLD WAR

Valentin Petroussenko

Plovdiv University “Paissii Hilendarski”, e-mail: petrus@uni-plovdiv.bg

Bisserka Veleva

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, e-mail: bnveleva@yahoo.com

Abstract: We are now on the eve of commencing celebrations of 30 years since the Velvet Revolutions came to destroy the long standing Yalta model of postwar Europe and global world. As this is a theme which never will lose its interest, it is also overused in the ongoing political analyses. However, before the popular unrest erupted and the totalitarian regimes scrambled down, it was a period of stability for over 40 years when the world politics were clearly marked behind the Iron Wall which was separating the bipolar world. But seen from our current position we must admit that Cold War period was a time of very active diplomacy in extremely difficult moments from time to time when a number of local and global conflicts emerged. It was time of very active and productive world diplomacy and all negotiations had their own features. However, there are still not much studies about the language of diplomacy connected with the peace and disarmament negotiations or dealing to solve some of the hottest conflict and crises on the world scene. Diplomats not only from both superpowers but other nations were actively involved in the concurrent talks and each of the groups had its own vocabulary.

This paper will deal to present and provide analysis how the diplomatic vocabulary was implied in different circumstances and what was the real meaning behind the glittering phrases on the table of negotiations. It will combine the linguistic assessment of the diplomatic language placed in the context of the historic developments and political bargaining.

Keywords: diplomatic terminology, international relations, Cold War

Each period from the history of mankind has its own discourse and means of communication. The language therefore is subject to different features and this is marked in crucial times when the understanding of each other was pivotal for the entire conduct of politics and providing successful diplomacy.

While politics are very much subject of life circumstances and a very emotional expression, sometimes going so far as an open manipulation or lies, the language of diplomacy always have been a product of strict protocol and following the frames of diplomatic tradition. It is therefore interesting to study the behavioral models from the time of the Cold War when the modern epoch brought some rare mixture of politics and diplomacy, all of them being instruments of the ideological confrontation.

Cold War in itself was unique. Apart of being a war controlled by the superpowers which were too much aware of the enemy’s nuclear potential this led to the logical concern how to avoid direct confrontation and not to loose the risky military games – which turned to the most common feature of the so called “proxy wars”. But the Cold War also, in words of W. Scott Lucas, “was a battle for hearts and minds”. (**W. Scott Lucas - Beyond Diplomacy: Propaganda and the History of the Cold War Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s”, Springer, 1999, pp 11-12**). For the first time the world politics were faced with the real phenomenon of turning decision making from the battle fields towards the diplomatic negotiations. Together with the failure of the League of Nations on the break of World War II the new generation of politicians were more inclined to dialogue through the channels of international diplomacy and these were the sincere hopes for the newborn United Nations as an international body of more strict dedication to peace and world balance.

Certainly, the change of mentality had been started quite earlier and the horrors of the World War I had introduced the new thinking in international categories. One of the first humanistic pioneers to begin with the Fabian Society in Britain during the late Victorian years. In Europe we have also another remarkable figure with amazing global (European and Asian) profile – that of Richard Nikolaus Eijiro, Count of Coudenhove-Kalergi, - ardent proponent of Pan-European idea. But the triumphant egoism of victors, the humiliating peace accords from Versailles system and the short-mind of the leading statesmen of that time (**Бояджиева, Н. - Международни отношения, С., Албатрос, 2017, , p.368**) drastically changed the initial impetus of the Wilsonian project of the League of Nations.

Nevertheless, during the two decades of interwar period the mainstream in politics and diplomacy was turned towards the concept (or fear) of war, therefore it was a busy time with many international forums dedicated to

disarmament, the ban of weapons of mass destruction, big part of which were initiated on early postwar period (**Boydjjeva, N., The Impact of the Cold War on the Origins and Evolution of International Human Rights Regimes In: Krakowskie Studia Miedzynarodowe, N3 (VI) Krakow, 2009, p.49**).

If the fear of war was a leading sentiment among political elites during the interwar period, it turned into a natural deformation of attitudes at the extent to evade the danger of war at any price which formed so debated political line of “appeasement”, the leading policy in the 30s which was championed mainly by British Prime-Ministers at that time.

In the semantic analysis meaning of “appease” is not much popular and it is difficult to be translated into other European languages. The original meaning can be traced from its contemporaries and Penguin Dictionary is very accurate on this:

"Appeasement policy, the policy of appeasing Hitler and Mussolini, operating jointly at that time, during 1937 and 1938 by continuous concessions granted in the hope of reaching a point of saturation when the dictators would be willing to accede to international collaboration. ... It came to an end when Hitler seized Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, in defiance of his promises given at Munich, and Prime Minister Chamberlain, who had championed appeasement before, decided on a policy of resistance to further German aggression."

(Walter Theimer (ed.), The Penguin Political Dictionary, 1939)

However, it is interesting that German language is not so eloquent defining such mode of policy which without any doubts was so pivotal to Hitler diplomatic gambling at the time.

However, there is not so precise terminology in German sources which may lead to its popular circulation in media and among scholars. For example we have such essential remarks which slightly give an idea of the real dimensions of this word in the following:

“Der Begriff Appeasement-Politik (Beschwichtigungspolitik, von englisch to appease, französisch apaiser, besänftigen, beschwichtigen, beruhigen) bezeichnet eine Politik der Zugeständnisse, der Zurückhaltung, der Beschwichtigung und des Entgegenkommens gegenüber Aggressionen zur Vermeidung von Konflikten”

(Source: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeasement-Politik> . Retrieved 4 September 2018).

Certainly, it would be very easy to criticize “narrow-minded” and selfish political leaders as Neville Chamberlain from today’s perspective as on that time most of their intentions were sincere, or at least they believed so and such a feeling was quite widespread. But at the same time we have Chamberlain’s cynical remark on the Munich conference bargaining:

"How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing."

N. Chamberlain, 27 Sept 1938, radio broadcast, on Czechoslovak refusal to accept Nazi demands to cede border areas to Germany. (Public domain).

Now, freshly after 1945 victory the former Allies were full of distrust and the world inevitably was slipping down to the abyss of nuclear destruction. What concerns the leading notions in the language of politicians and diplomats were again the words of war danger but now they had much more articulated ideological connotations. But leading terminology this time was related to the fashionable super weapon of nuclear nature. We see the presence of two levels of communication. While officially, on one hand, most of statesmen were concerning how to keep on crucial task of newly born United Nations Organization in safeguarding a world protected from war, -on the other hand political leaders were tempted by the monopoly of nuclear arms and their omnipotence over the world. This fashion was turned into popular culture when public was observing open air nuclear tests just like solar equinox features and “Bikini” concept transferred from military field into the world of new feminist trends. Such nuclear omnipotence was clearly visible in the political vocabulary of late 40s and the United States in possession of nuclear arms was stepping forward from traditional isolation and Western Hemisphere dominance towards a leading play game in world politics (**Hristov, M., Historical and Sociopolitical Prerequisites of the Military Latin American Authoritarianism, Socio-economic analyzes, Faculty of Economics, VTU, #1, 2018, p.48**). It was so until the Soviet Union regained the gambling in 1949 breaking the nuclear monopoly and then a new notion appeared in diplomatic vocabulary, namely the concept of (*nuclear*) parity. The world was entering to the new *bipolar era* and Cold War was at the doors. Consequently the both superpowers were armed with ideological shields and most popular concepts in their rhetoric became the notions of *anticommunism* and *imperialism*. Ideological propaganda

was flourishing of such accusations and was filling down the natural speech at political and diplomatic levels. Just few years later new members appeared to the scene, thus providing that high technologies would break big masters` predominance – we see in such form creation of so called “*Nuclear Club*” of countries (*nuclear-weapon States (NWS)*) when first Britain in the 50s and France in the 60s created their own nuclear armament programs. During these decades new concepts came into general diplomatic and politic dictionary. Altogether with the race of nuclear potential a new *theory of deterrence* appeared to provide an approach how new balances would be created in the field of international relations. At that time world politics seemed quite controlled to the extent even to calculate possible damages from a hypothetical use of nuclear arms on small extent. But if during the war in Korea such temptation was avoided a new crisis came in 1962 when *Cuban Missile Crisis* demonstrated that just a rhetoric in nuclear terms might be too dangerous to the entire planet. That is why surpassing the peak of ultimatums both from Kennedy and Khrushchev these political leaders came to understanding of a need from direct communication line and a new political trend of prudence was marked by initial negotiations on establishing new set of controls over nuclear armament (**Petroussenko V. - "Caribbean Crisis of 1962: New Visions on the Story of Conflict Resolution", Plovdiv University Yearbook, Plovdiv, 2000**). In that extent new public concerns were getting power which led to a series of high world summits and creation of a new concept of controlled international politics through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (added by another agreements on the ban of weapons of *mass destruction (WMD)*), which marked the 60s and continued through the new millennium as at the moment we have 190 countries adhered as signatories , and in 1995 the NPT Parties decided that the treaty will be agreed to extended indefinitely. The latest adherents signed NPT in 2006, as Serbia and Montenegro after their separation as state entities.

At present we are facing two new phenomena – change of the language of communication in diplomacy from traditional French to the new lingua franca of the Anglo-Saxon global predominance (**Veleva, B., *Lingua Franca and Interstate Relations. KNOWLEDGE-International Journal., Vol.24,; No. 1, 2018, p.144***). At the same time we see even bigger number of political interlocutors which are aspiring to take role in the world politics and new dynamics related to the digitalization era.

Thus, during the last three decades of Post-Communist developments there have been a number of new terminological inventions into the language of diplomacy influenced by the new ideological paradigm and were marked by the new political developments such as the European Union restructuring and expansion altogether with the extinction of the Warsaw Pact and new global claims of NATO with the current reshuffling of power potentials of global players which indefinitely are changing the once bipolar with multipolarity world politics and the consequent negotiations and/or confrontations are passing to a new model of communication. While traditional diplomacy is strictly keeping high levels of dialogue at international organizations such as the United Nations Security Council and OSSE, the regular channels of conveying political messages are subject to the new digitalization era and world web features – we see now that most of political declarations are made public through the social media and president Trump is a champion of bringing *Tweet diplomacy* on the table, which in itself sometimes is too fast and dynamic to assure a moderate and conciliatory tunes which are essentials in diplomacy and sustainable international relations.

