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REVIEW ARTICLE

DIPLOMACY IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

Diplomacy is a reflection of the values of nations and peoples, their cultural and civilizational specificities, political choices, and their religious precepts and traditions. It is a portrait of the past, a reflection of the present and a vision of the future. Any form of diplomacy is built around the principles governing the political structure of the State it represents, whose interests it serves and whose entity it embodies abroad. Diplomacy can be defined as the art and science of conducting international relations. Diplomacy according to the Islamic Shari'ah is one of the best ways to show the Islamic values, merits and advantages in conducting international affairs with non-Muslims. This research article explores the principles and tools of diplomacy used by Prophet in the first Islamic State of Madinah, and also to analyze the foundations and objectives of Islamic diplomacy. It further discusses briefly diplomacy under rightly guided Caliphs and also under banu Umayyad.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the oldest ways of solving disputes among human beings peacefully has been the diplomatic negotiation. Nowadays most of the nations use this method to ease strained relations, reduce hostility, and establish economical and political relations, as well as halting armed combats, and consolidating peace. Diplomatic interaction, being a universal bequest of antiquity was practiced in Islam right from the periods of Prophet Muhammad (SAW); the first four Caliphs; the Umayyad dynasty; the Abbasid Empire; down to the Ottoman Empire. Diplomacy is one of the most practical and dynamic topics of international relations; therefore, the religion of Islam since its beginning, has recognized this logical approach as one of the most important ways for conducting international affairs through ambassadors and envoys who use peaceful means. The Prophet (SAW) of Islam, with respect to existing traditions and Quranic teachings, signed diplomatic negotiations in ties with Arabian tribes and other states. The Prophet (SAW) implemented this method by delegating ambassadors or representatives to different countries. Prophet Muhammad's conducts were actually the reflection of all the Islamic principles like justice, tolerance, truthfulness and fair play to anyone.

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Diplomacy in Islam

Prophet Muhammad never showed himself as the rigid and narrow-minded diplomat, but he always accepted negotiation and disliked armed combat as solution. For instance in the case of Charter of Medina, Prophet Muhammad attempted to negotiate with all these people of Medina and the Jews, and later the negotiation had been documented which is known as "Constitution of Medina". It is a document of great historical significance. The provisions of the Treaty itself really showed the credibility of Prophet Muhammad as diplomat. Another remarkable diplomatic practice of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) can be clearly notice in the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. In this Treaty he really exhibited to Muslims the real art of negotiation. As a peace-oriented diplomat Prophet Muhammad preserved peace and offered negotiation even when his attention to enter Mecca was deterred by the Quraisyh. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the negotiation upheld the principle of tolerance, persuasion and patience. Prophets diplomacy really enabled him to handle this extremely complicated and fragile negotiation. Even the terms of the Treaty were unfavorable to the Muslims Prophet Muhammad still did not react aggressively. Indeed the Prophets political foresight and diplomacy later led to the clear victory of Islam in the following years. Initially, diplomatic procedures were adopted in Islamic history as a means of spreading the word of Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) dispatched emissaries to the kings and princes ruling at the time, inviting them to embrace Islam, a

practice that the Rightly-guided caliphs emulated following on the path of the Prophet. The advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula is considered as a major paradigm shift at all levels, especially at the political level as it is related to the external relations of the Islamic state. Although, the Arabic diplomacy in the pre-Islamic era was also associated with foreign relations more commercial interests, however, the diplomatic practices in Islam went beyond such boundaries of the pre-Islamic era, and flied to all directions. There are religious texts in the holy Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) that cares and encourages diplomatic immunities. The texts represent the greatest respect for the human dignities, and it provides him with everything that will preserve him the dignity, such as personal immunity, privileges, virtue and many examples that we shall see in dealing of the holy Prophet (PBUH), which He (PBUH) established and affirmed the fundamentals, and which was continued after him by the rightly guided Caliphs.

The origin of the principle of diplomatic immunity in Islam is the maxim which is actually word of the holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that says (do no harm).Therefore immunity that was established by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is that an envoy should not be killed. Instead, envoy must be allowed to return safely, whether the other party accept or reject the message that he brought. Since the beginning of his prophethood to the end of his life, the Prophet met with many delegates. The envoys that came to meet the Prophet were called Wafd meaning the delegate body. Some of the historians have reported that the Prophet sent over 300 letters to the tribe chiefs, state leaders and religious authorities. Furthermore the Prophet's behavior consistent with Quranic teachings is highly appreciable as he receives the envoys and representatives of foreign states as his guests. The ambassadors were received and stayed in Dar-ul-Zeyfan (guesthouse) that was protected and safe, which is considered as an example of the impunity of diplomatic and consular accommodation. It was customary to give presents to the envoys. History records examples of the Prophet's presents to envoys. Freedom was given to the envoys to perform their religious right. The seventh to ninth year of Hijrah (Post Hudaibiyah and Fall of Mecca) can be regarded as the "Age of Deputation". Some of the deputation received by the Prophet Muhammad like Banu Ashja, Banu Juhaina, Banu Muzainah, Banu Saad bin Bakar, Banu Tamim and also some deputation from Southern Arabia like the envoys of Oman, Yemen and Bahrain. Even Prophet (PBUH) also gave a great welcome and a kind treatment to the deputation from Christian state like Christian Najran and Princess of Banu Kindah from Hadrilmaut. Prophet Muhammad in managing the political affairs of the state devised his own tool of diplomacy which is largely practice in today's political affairs such as negotiation, sending a diplomat abroad, signing a treaty and arbitration. As far as practice of diplomacy under rightly guided Caliphs is concerned just like in the time of Prophet Muhammad, the era of his foremost successors, also recorded some diplomatic relations with foreign States. This era witnessed tremendous exchange of envoys between the Muslims and non-Muslim states. Further regarding the origin of the diplomacy in Islam it originated in the time of the Prophet. The Prophet had sent his emissaries in different places such as Al-Abbas was sent to Makkah, AnasIbn Abi Murthid al- Ghanawi to Awas (near Taif) and MunzirIbn Amir-al-Said to Najad. Moreover regarding the permanent diplomacy in Islam is concerned, Dr

Hamidullah was of the opinion that it was totally temporary in the beginning stage. The permanent diplomacy came into existence during the reign of banu Umayyad and lives into account till the destruction of Baghdad by Mongols in 656 A.H.Under the Umayyad Caliphs diplomatic intercourse with neighboring Kingdoms has attained the height of 'sophistication'. The Muawiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan (602-680 AD), an Umayyad Caliph, was known for his preference for diplomatic methods which has been observed to be a reason behind the longevity of his reign. These periods also witnessed quite a number of Muslims sent on diplomatic missions to the courts of various potentates for reasons ranging from political, commercial to social purposes. And on some other occasions, just for the purpose of exchanging friendly gifts.Finally it demonstrates that Prophet Muhammad gave a moral basis to diplomacy and the art which was distrusted, because of its inglorious record, came to assume a mission and a meaning unfamiliar to its earlier adepts. In addition some of the main objectives of diplomacy being a peaceful solution of international problems and promotion of harmony between different states, therefore it should be of interest to see how the Prophet Muhammad who was also head of a state, achieved these objectives by the well-known methods of diplomacy, i.e,negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Holy Prophet, with respect to existing traditions and Quran teachings, signed diplomatic negotiations in ties with Arabian tribes and other states. The Prophet implemented this method by delegating ambassadors or representatives to different countries. The Prophet never showed himself as the rigid and narrow-minded diplomat, but he always accepted negotiation and disliked armed combat as solution. Initially, diplomatic procedures were adopted in Islamic history as a means of spreading the word of Islam. There are religious texts in the holy Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) that cares and encourages diplomatic immunities. Moreover the era of rightly guided Caliphs witnessed tremendous exchange of envoys between the Muslims and non-Muslim states. Further regarding the permanent diplomacy in Islam is concerned it came into existence during the reign of banu Umayyad. Finally the Prophet (PBUH) gave a moral basis to diplomacy and the art which was distrusted, because of its inglorious record, came to assume a mission and a meaning unfamiliar to its earlier adepts.

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