Innovation and Bilateral Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

As in other fields of activity, innovation is vital in diplomacy. Here we examine how it operates in bilateral diplomacy, sub-divided into conceptual innovation in the way foreign relations activities are envisioned and are structured, as also in the process innovation, which is at a level of detail in the delivery of relationship-building actions. We examine in particular the innovation implemented by developing countries, without leaving out advanced country systems. Some examples include diaspora diplomacy, the use of eminent person groups, 'track two' and 'track three' diplomacy and the application of ICT. We also look at the drivers of innovation, including a need to economize in an era of shrinking budgets in all the public services, including foreign ministries. It would be useful to search for examples of 'lean innovation' applying the ideas of CK Prahalad, whose work considered in particular the importance of the 'bottom of the pyramid', which suggests that developing countries can be sources of new ideas.

Keywords: Developing countries, conceptual and process innovation, lean methods, shrinking budgets

INTRODUCTION

In a book he edited on this theme, Jan Melissen wrote that innovation is at the heart of diplomacy.[1] Similar assertions can be made in other professions, of course, and we need close examination of the how and wherefrom of the innovation and diplomacy connection. For our purpose here, innovation for foreign ministries can be taken to mean for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the way countries conduct their international relations. I propose to limit my observations to bilateral diplomacy, not to neglect its multilateral cousin, but in recognition of a reality that the bilateral variant tends to receive less attention than it merits.

May I offer two preliminary thoughts on innovation? One of the original thinkers on the nature of innovation was Prof. CK Prahalad (1941-2010), a management guru of Indian origin who made his home in the US, reminded us of innovation that takes place at the bottom of the pyramid.[2] He believed that some of the most interesting

new business ideas came from those that addressed this mass market, especially in developing countries, not out of charity but to make money, out of providing goods and services to consumers with low incomes. He found examples in Brazil, India and Mexico and in other countries.

A related notion is of frugal innovation, where workable models, concepts and products come through the application of limited amount of funds. Again, it was in the leading developing countries that Prof. Prahalad found his exemplars, many of them in the automotive industry. Such innovation related activity is also called 'lean engineering'.

This leads me to the question: can we find instances of diplomatic innovation, or workable governance solutions, among developing states? Do we look hard enough for this, or are we focused almost exclusively on the rich countries, and the implicitly fixated on the premise that all innovation that affects the way in which countries deal with one another, bilaterally, regionally or on a global scale, must come only from these countries?

I do not have an instant answer, though I do want to offer some stray thoughts on the experience of developing countries of innovation, in diplomacy and in governance, offering some instances drawn from bilateral diplomacy. Admittedly, this requires deeper analysis, besides more thorough data collection. One difficulty is that developing countries do not focus sufficiently on their experiences, or record their narratives for publication.[3]

CONCEPTUAL INNOVATION

Let me keep the focus mainly on innovation in bilateral diplomacy, making a distinction between *conceptual* and *process* innovation. The distinction between concept and process is not rigid, but it helps to place innovative methods in distinct boxes, even if not watertight. Let us look at some recent examples, before attempting to identify new areas in which we could see more innovation in the years ahead. Some Western examples are blended with those from the developing world.

ICT is at the heart of much of the innovation we find in diplomatic networks, thought it would be an error to view it as the only source for new methods. One problem that developing countries face is that they are often at the wrong end of an 'ICT divide', and find it unaffordable to invest heavily in this sector. Cost is a real issue but it is possible to find ICT solutions that are relatively affordable. After all, what is key is not technology for its own sake, but the transformation in internal communication that ICT permits, within foreign ministries and between the ministry and its overseas missions. One approach is to permit new communication formats and links to work logically in their consequential changes. We also see that in some countries, the real barrier to applying technology is sometimes an old mindset, which

does not permit flexibility, and can inhibit young personnel in the diplomatic system from applying new ideas.

First, one of the biggest conceptual transformations in recent years has been in the **relationship between the foreign ministry and the embassy**, where the latter is no longer seen as the distant supplier of information and advice plus the executor of instructions, but a close collaborator, *virtually* embedded within the ministry. This first example does not come from a developing state but it is one that should be of relevance to all countries.

Such transformation is largely a product of the ICT revolution, especially the intranet ('virtual private networks'), which overcome spatial and time lag boundaries, to treat embassy personnel as located in an adjoining room or building. This also involves mindset changes, to accept the embassy as the country's best source of real time information on developments in the assignment country. That in turn, permits thinning out of desk officers and country bureaus in the foreign ministry, redeploying them on thematic and other tasks. This involves some other work method change as well.

- This enlarges responsibility for the ambassador and his team. They can no longer use the 'frog in the well' argument, that they are primarily focused on the assignment country and do not track the macro-foreign policy perspective. Their advice must be predicated on a holistic picture of national policy, even while their particular focus is on the assignment country. Not all are likely to be adept at this shift, or welcome it.
- Embassy products, be they reports, briefs for the minister and other leaders, or even drafts of documents, are increasingly circulated within the foreign ministry under the explicit label of the embassy, not as inputs into the editing or redrafting process in territorial departments, though naturally, the headquarters always retains the right to amend documents, or append their own comments, or reworked versions. This too adds to the embassy's responsibilities.
- A new form of instant, point-to-point confidential communication has emerged, based on the ICT network, through which middle-rank officials in the ministry and the embassy exchange ideas, drafts and initial proposals, without subjecting these exchanges to the standard distribution template of cipher cables. This has the advantage that desk officers in the ministry can show early drafts to embassy colleagues and get reactions, and carry out mutual soundings. But it also cuts their senior colleagues out of the loop; that would not happen if the normal cipher channel is used. Again, the analogy of 'the room next door' is valid, in the way these officials are able to consult one another.
- The embassy is reinforced in its position as the country's best source for panoramic and up-to-date information on the country concerned.
- In some countries, the embassy is accepted as a legitimate initiator of policy recommendations, possessing insights that give it this competence. Canada and

the UK are two countries where this is recognised, as also in the Scandinavian nations.[4]

The above model of new thinking on the MFA-embassy relationship has been applied in some countries in the West, though not all, by any means. The concept is novel in the Global South. In some cases, developing countries have not made the shift to truly interactive 'intranets', without which the method of a reworked embassy functioning, as described above, cannot get off the ground. Will this happen? We simply do not know.

Second, a conceptual innovation that does come from the developing world is the '**joint embassy**', first put into practice by the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS) in Canada, then in Brussels, with a third effort in London which did not work out. In 2011, the joint mission in Ottawa, which had functioned since 1982 was closed, owing to a shift in Canada's aid management policy, not owing to any failure of the joint format. One does not know if the idea was originally their own but OECS has probably been the first to try it out. Today, different clusters of countries that enjoy close affinity, be it in the Baltics, the EU, Scandinavia, or elsewhere are said to be exploring this option, in some cases limiting themselves to co-location or pooling of embassy logistic facilities.[5] We may imagine that this is a trend that will gain momentum in the future, as a practical measure to be applied at those locations that lie at the edge of the representation canvas of different countries, for reasons of cost and practicality. But joint embassies can only work for clusters of countries that have strong mutual affinities, and enjoy confidence in one another.

One area where developing countries have been very conservative is in the application of alternate representation formats. Rather few of them have fully exploited the method of appointing 'honorary consuls', as an almost zero cost option to no representation. We see this in the rather few appointments made (i.e. at places where they would not want to open permanent representation of their own), and in the limited use made of such appointments (in terms of using the appointees with clear vision). For instance, Guyana has only 20 honorary consuls, while Suriname has 24, and India has only about 60; in contrast, Slovakia has made over 150 such overseas appointments, while Austria has 250. (Exception: Ecuador holds an annual conference where all of their ambassadors, consul generals and consuls, i.e. political diplomats, career diplomats and honorary consuls, all attend in the capital; others like Kenya and Singapore hold regular conferences at intervals of a few years for their honorary consuls, to update them on the developments in the country whose flag they fly). Managing a large number of honorary consuls in this fashion requires adequate capacity at the foreign ministry to use them to full effectiveness, but the cost-value equation is hugely in favour of wider usage.

Just a few foreign ministries have applied 'lean staffing' at their embassies; Cuba with its husband-and-wife teams at all its embassies is an exception. But the notion

of a 'one-person' embassy (used by Denmark, Finland, and the UK, for example) is unknown in the developing world. In one African country, all its embassies follow a standard staffing template (i.e. with x number of diplomats, and y number of local staff), which is dysfunctional, and even wasteful. Kenya, in contrast, has managed to open a number of new embassies in the past decade, financing these through cutting back on home-based non-diplomatic staff.[6]

A third example comes from China, its practice of a **single-class diplomatic service**. Every new entrant to its foreign ministry commences work as a non-diplomatic staff member, and has to wait for four years before promotion to the rank of 'attaché'; an exception is made for those that have masters' or higher qualifications, who spend only one year at that level. (Thereafter, everyone serves for three years as attachés, and a further three years as third secretaries; that takes them to the rank of second secretaries when a high degree of selectivity kicks in and the top performers receive very fast promotions).[7] This has two kinds of effects: the number of non-diplomatic staff in the system is reduced – modern embassies find using locally engaged staff highly cost effective, (though China is not as yet an innovative user of local staff, unlike some other countries, mainly Western). This also helps in creating lean structures, though with a total strength of some 7500 officials, the Chinese Foreign Ministry is actually the world's second largest MFA, just behind the US. For officials, starting at a low rank provides good experience for those that rise to high positions later in their careers.

Fourth, let us consider the development of '**diaspora diplomacy**', through which countries reach out to their nationals who live overseas, as also to migrants and their descendants, who are in many cases nationals of the different lands. Looking to the methods first developed by countries such as Israel, China and India, we note that this form of outreach traverses three stages, which are often concurrent:

- Exploitative: appeals to the diaspora to send remittances home, invest in bank deposits, other financial instruments and productive avenues, via special schemes, cultivates other connections, including their involvement in economic, social and educational development programmes.
- Accommodative: offers them dual citizenship or other concessions, recognises their contribution via awards and conferences, sets up a ministry or some other agency to handle all its outreach activities.
- Networking: uses the diaspora to build long-term and two-way connections with the concerned foreign countries, making a special effort to reach out to succeeding generations of the diaspora.

Many developing countries now reach out to their diaspora, in Africa and the Caribbean, often through special units in their foreign ministries. In some countries, new ministries have been created for this purpose, as with India's Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, under a cabinet minister, and similar government departments in other

countries, among them Jamaica and Pakistan. It is usually a mistake to separate diaspora management from the foreign ministry, in that overseas, it is the network of embassies and consulates that is the key outreach agent, and it is essential for this work to retain an organic link between diaspora outreach and the foreign ministry.[8]

Two further trends are now visible with diaspora diplomacy. The countries that are home to the diaspora now use them to build closer ties with the countries of origin, in a kind of 'reverse diplomacy'; some among them are appointed ambassadors to the origin country, or given other high profile assignments that build on their connections. Further, Western countries are now learning ways to reach out to their own diasporas, sometimes creating new agencies for this purpose. Example: Japan, overcoming the legacy of history, now pursues a policy of outreach to its diaspora, and uses them to better connect with some Latin American countries where these diaspora communities have made their home for over a century.

In 2011, the US State Department launched an initiative, 'The International diaspora Engagement Alliance' (IdEA), which promotes and supports diaspora-centred initiatives in entrepreneurship, volunteerism, philanthropy, diplomacy and social innovation.[9] The Caribbean region has been one of the targets, and it cultivates diaspora giving in areas of education, health, nutrition and disaster relief in countries of origin. This is PD in the best sense, engaging ethnic communities as agents of change vis-à-vis home countries. One may expect other countries to emulate such reverse diaspora diplomacy.

PROCESS INNOVATION

We also find fine instances of the application of innovation in the way diplomacy is practised in different systems. The examples offered here are all drawn from developing countries.

First, consider the method of using **bilateral 'eminent person groups'** (EPGs) meeting annually, to brainstorm on ways to enhance and diversify relationships; members are drawn from business, academia, science, culture, the media and public life. In effect, they bring a dozen or more non-state individuals into advising foreign ministries, usually providing heads of governments with short, joint, actionable reports.[10] The first modern EPG of this kind was set up by Germany and India in 1992. Since then, some 15 or 20 countries have used this method but interestingly, bilateral EPGs are not much known in Africa or Latin America, though the format has been widely used in a number of regional organisations to address specific issue solving tasks, or produce recommendations. One key ingredient in making effective use of EP groups is to ensure they work on practical ideas, and not waste their time with 'exchanges of perceptions', to use a euphuism that describes tired old discussions. In the India-Germany Consultative Group (of which I was a member, 1992-98), this took the shape of the co-chairs insisting that each annual meeting produce a set of

proposals, not exceeding a page-and-half in length; preponderance of businessmen in the group also reinforced focus on concrete ideas.[11]

A variant of the method has subsequently developed in India, applied bilaterally with selected partners, to work on in improving relations through politico-security 'strategic dialogue'.[12] Participants are drawn from the same categories as in the case of EPGs, but with greater representation of retired diplomats and armed force officers, besides business leaders. India currently has such dialogue arrangements with China, Israel, Japan, Singapore, Turkey and the US. A key difference from EPGs is that the discussions cover regional and global issues, with no exclusive focus on actionable suggestions, though such groups also report their conclusions to the respective governments. This method deserves consideration in other bilateral situations, as providing a useful dialogue channel, supplementing official contacts.

We should also include in this cluster other non-official discussion formats: 'Track Two' (i.e. non-official); 'Track Three' (i.e. completely unconnected with governments); and 'Track One-and-Half' (such as the EPGs and the strategic groups described above). In essence, the first two of these (T/2 and T/3) usually work on bilateral problem solving or confidence building. We find examples of these throughout the world, though again, not many are to be found in Africa. The common thread in all these is *the involvement of non-state actors in the actual management of bilateral relations*.

Second, we see considerable innovation in **regional diplomacy**. We see this in the emergence of new groups. Take the initiative taken by small island states to set up 'AOSIS', Association of Small Island States. It harnessed small and relatively isolated countries to create a negotiation group within the G-77 and wider formats, to get all of them to pay special attention to their special vulnerability to climate change and the threat of rising sea levels, which they felt did not receive needed attention even from other developing states. Another instance of creative diplomacy has been the emergence of the IBSA group, which is neither regional nor theme based, but brings together the three largest economies that also happen to be democracies, from the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We might also say the same of BRICS, which commenced as a glimmer in the eye of a Goldman Sachs investment banker, who focused attention on large, dynamic 'emerging economies'. Not to leave out of reckoning other fast growing states, another cluster called 'N-11' has emerged – i.e. the 'Next 11' fast growing states, (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, The Philippines, Turkey, South Korea, and Vietnam), also identified by Goldman Sachs.

Another regional diplomacy innovation has been the use of a joint negotiator by the CARICOM group of 15 states in their dealings with the EU and at WTO. This gives unified voting strength to this group that is composed mainly of small island states, many of them with very small population.

Third, consider the **application of ICT** in developing countries. They are not the leaders in creating intranets, or in digitized archives. But some novel applications have emerged from this cluster of states.

At the time of the evacuation of Indian technicians from Libya in 2011, India used the social media to reach out to the scattered pockets of these workers, who were for the great part unregistered, with numbers and whereabouts unknown.[13] Twitter and social media networking contacts with families and friends around the world overcame these information gaps.

A Kenyan example illustrates innovative use of modern communications technology, with a diaspora angle, though not directly connected with diplomacy. At the time of post-election civil riots in that country in which many lost their lives, one problem was to locate the villages and clusters where losses were at their worst. A Kenyan based in South Africa, Ory Okolloh, who had gone back to Kenya to vote and observe the election, applied phone call cluster tracking to identify the trouble spots, calling this 'ushahidi', which means 'witness' in Swahili. That method was used subsequently in Haiti and Chilean earthquakes to locate main disaster spots. As *New York Times* wrote: 'With every new application, ushahidi is quietly transforming the notion of bearing witness in tragedy.'[14]

A different kind of ICT-enabled innovation comes from India. Here is a country that has felt inhibited, on grounds of security, in establishing a full-scale intranet for its Ministry of External Affairs (interestingly, China is another country that has not yet opted for a virtual private network for its diplomatic network). A group of young Foreign Service officials took the initiative to establish **an email group** that exchanges comments, references to published material (including the articles and blogs written by members), and referees an intensive discussion on professional issues. They moderate this in their spare time, having overcome initial setbacks and miscues; its 700+ members include retired as well as serving officials, with dozens of messages exchanged each week. I do not know of a similar group that crosses the divide between the serving and retired, functioning as a voluntary effort moderated by half-dozen young enthusiasts.

Fourth, we might consider an innovation that originated in the UK, but has been adopted among others by Australia and India, the '**challenge fund**', as a means of encouraging missions abroad to come up with novel ways of expanding connections. A fund is set aside for embassies and consulate to carry out projects that promote economic, cultural or public outreach, be it a business seminar, cultural or internet based activity, a film week or education event, or involve better ties with targeted segments of foreign publics, decision-makers or others. Embassies bid for funds, which are allotted in tranches to the best ideas. Each project has to be assessed for impact and result some six months after the event, to gain objective insight. Such 'libraries' of good projects serve to inspire subsequent rounds of disbursement of the challenge fund.

The Indian Commerce Ministry borrowed this idea in 2009, though I have not seen an assessment of results. Some information on such activities is on the British FCO website.

Finally, consider another small innovation. Some years back, Mexico found a simple, elegant solution in the US, to help the millions of 'undocumented' Mexican migrants to that country, who had no acceptable documentary proof that might enable them to open bank accounts or obtain driving licenses, compounding their problems. A Mexican consulate hit upon the idea of issuing such persons with a **Mexican identity document**, and persuaded the local authorities in one state to accept this as valid proof of identity. As one Mexican diplomat said, 'These consular ID cards are recognised by hundreds of city councils and counties, and thousands of police departments, along with the entire banking system in the US.' That method was replicated in other counties and states, and this provided enormous benefit to the migrants. Since then, some other Central American consulates that have their own undocumented migrants, albeit in smaller numbers, have used the same method. This action became possible, when Mexico took advantage of the uniquely decentralized nature of US governance, and more importantly, winning credibility that they would issue these identity documents with due care. It is unlikely that such action can be replicated in any European country.

FUTURE TRENDS

What might be the drivers for innovation in the coming years? How might these drivers play out in the kind of situations we may see in the immediate future?

Looking to the drivers, the following is relevant:

- Shrinking public budgets have a special impact on foreign ministries, which are continually challenged – usually by their finance ministries – to show how they add value. Cost saving drives will surely generate new approaches. For example, with the EU's diplomatic service entering into full operation, we can count on some small EU member-states cutting back on their overseas representation. Will other regional organisations – besides CARICOM – emulate them? Hard to see, but some signs are visible. For instance, the Visegard group of East European states (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are said to be considering joint embassies; might the Baltic states do the same? Individual countries are also likely to cut down on the size of embassies.
- Shortage of human resources (HR) as a consequence of the above, and a parallel trend towards 'lateral entry' and mid-career recruitment, tends to accentuate potential tension between those that join foreign ministries as a lifelong career, and those, mainly specialists, who seek short-term berths. The ensuing HR management challenge will be of critical importance, even more than in the past.
- Further evolution in ICT, and its practical usage, will always throw up many different kinds of applications, as noted above. It is impossible to anticipate the ways in which

ICT might be applied, for wide outreach in public diplomacy, in its different forms, and in the delivery of individualized messages to those that are the communication objects. The two-way nature of this communication is especially relevant.

- An intense search for new representation formats will come into effect; this currently includes joint embassies, co-location, one-man missions, 'non-resident ambassadors' (in the manner applied by Malta and Singapore) and hub-and-spoke arrangements. We will surely also see wider recourse to honorary consuls, though they do not substitute for one's own embassies, but are an effective alternative to no representation at all.

Developing states usually lack a mechanism for an exchange of experiences and for mutual borrowing of best practices in the field of diplomacy or foreign ministry management. Even the well functioning regional organisations, be it ASEAN or CARICOM do not do this, unlike the EU.[15] In Africa, and elsewhere, there is much potential for similar sharing of experiences among small states, to learn from and to encourage one another.

An exception is a cluster of small states that have come together to share development experiences, even while this is not focused specifically on diplomacy. The mission of the 'Small States Network for Economic Development' (SSNED) is to facilitate the exchange of "best practices" among small states, to promote the increased integration of the interests of small states into the policies and programmes of the international community and to undertake or support such related actions as will further the sustainable development of small states. http://www.ssned.org The six founding members are: Barbados, Malta, Mauritius, St. Kitts and Nevis, Samoa and Vanuatu, and the two founding partners are the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The network reaches out to 37 small states. Might they also share experiences in diplomacy management?

We should see more actions of this nature. The flattening of communications makes such exchanges easy. The barrier that remains is the traditional reserve of foreign ministries to open communication, compounded by a lingering air of secrecy over diplomacy practices. This might be overcome through more exchanges, such as those carried out in Malta and elsewhere at conferences that examine the methods of diplomacy, and via more comparative studies on diplomacy, which is the métier of DiploFoundation. More frequent and deeper professional exchanges would be to the advantage of foreign ministries, and would also give a boost to innovation.

That leaves us with one final question: how can a foreign ministry or any other organisation build innovation into its work culture, its basic DNA? Simply creating an innovation unit is surely not enough, even if does give a good signal. Some thoughts:

- Encourage new ideas and foster risk-taking, provided this is done on careful calculation of the downside, and the possibilities of failure. Risk and gain are two

sides of the same coin; not all good ideas will work, and it pays to learn from mistakes.

- Welcome staff at all levels to offer suggestions, and follow them up in terms of potential for implementation.
- Mentor young officials. A simple technique is to assign senior officials, or even select retired officials, to work as personal mentors or informal guides for new recruits, say for the first two years of their career. This is good human resource management and may also foster innovation, or a blending of youthful inquisitiveness and experience.
- Establish a system of reward and recognition for good work, open to officials at all levels, perhaps with a special set of awards for junior staff. It is not enough to simply recognise the best ambassadors and senior officials.
- Institute awards for ideas that reduce costs. Use the organisation's intranet for discussion on these issues.
- Innovation and knowledge management are also connected. Organisations can use IT to accumulate experience with ideas that work and disseminate this to all units in the organisation.

The experience of many colleagues suggests that good ideas often wither on the vine. Embassies or consulates that have instituted good practices receive neither recognition nor notice from their peers. This applies specially to process improvements. Example: as consul general in San Francisco, I inherited a situation of serious inefficiency in visa issue, to the point that this had become an issue with the sizable community of Indian origin, then around 50,000 in the Bay Area, and many more in the 17 states that this post served. Without getting into detail, a series of small changes were put into effect, with the cooperation of the entire team; this included use of colour coded plastic baskets, so that the supervisors could see at a glance as to which day's intake of applications was under process by each staff member. It also became a matter of motivation, getting the staff to understand that each potential visitor headed for India had to have a visa (barring a tiny percentage that might give up on their travel plans owing to visa delay); consequently, efficient turnaround of applications saved us at the consulate huge headache, in terms of dealing with those that complained over delay, making repeated phone calls or visits to expedite matters. This approach, and the methods we put into effect, worked remarkably well and in a matter of weeks, radical improvement was visible. Some months later, we introduced a 'same-day visa service' for all that handed in applications by noon, to pick up their passports by 1600 hours on the same day. The best part was a new sense of ownership by the team, including the local staff. The ethnic media that had been very critical, with justification, took note of the improvements, and our image with the diaspora and others also improved. We reported this to Delhi, but no one seemed interested!

This leads one to wonder if organisations are even aware of the potential for transformation that lies untapped among their staff and subsidiary units. Rather few developing countries' foreign ministries have given innovation, or process improvements, much serious encouragement.

ENDNOTES

1 Jan Melissen, ed. *Innovation in Diplomatic Practice,* (1999).
2 See Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._K._Prahalad
3 Kenya Foreign Ministry, exceptionally, held a symposium in September 2009 on the country's early diplomacy; the proceedings have been recorded in a publication titled *Reminisces on Kenya's Early Diplomacy, 1963-93;* this document is available at the website of the Foreign Service Institute, Nairobi.
4 This is one of the conclusions in my book *The Contemporary Embassy: Paths to Diplomatic Excellence* (2013).
5 Denmark and Finland have tried this out, embedding one-person embassies within a fellow-Scandinavian mission at a few locations. UK and Bulgaria are among the countries that have used this formula, with such micro-missions supported only by a few locally engaged staff.
6 Some small countries give diplomatic rank to all their home-based staff; this may give better immunity to home staff, but is intrinsically wasteful.
7 Rana, *Asian Diplomacy: The Foreign Ministries of China, India, Japan, Singapore and Thailand* (DiploFoundation, Malta and Geneva, 2007; OUP, New Delhi, John Hopkins, Baltimore). [www.diplomacy.edu]
8 One consequence of the work separation in India has been a demand for the Overseas Indians Ministry to open its own offices abroad.
9 See: http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/diaspora/index.htm
10 Rana, 'Building Relations Through Multi-Dialogue Formats: Trends in Bilateral Diplomacy', *Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations*, Kuala Lumpur, Vol. 10, No. 1 December 2008.
11 See Rana, 'Building Relations Through Multi-Dialogue Formats: Trends in Bilateral Diplomacy', *Journal of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations*, Kuala Lumpur, Vol. 10, No. 1 December 2008.
12 Tarun Das, 'Strategic Dialogue: Track Two Diplomacy', *Economic Diplomacy: India's Experience,* (CUTS, Jaipur, 2011).
13 *The Japan Times*: Monday, June 18, 2012.
14 See: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/weekinreview/14giridharadas.html
15 Western countries also hold an annual conference of the heads of personnel management for pooling of experience, following an initiative taken on this by Canada almost ten years back. There exists no comparable group covering countries of the Global South, though some of them, such as China, Kenya and Uganda have carried out their own foreign ministry level surveys of best practices.