

## **DIPLOMATIC CEREMONIAL AND DISPLAY OF MILITARY FORCE AS A DEMONSTRATION OF POLICY OF PRESTIGE AND STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

Policy of prestige has not received adequate attention by scholars of international politics despite its importance as one of the means of manifesting struggle for power in inter-state relations. This neglect has been prompted by three factors, namely, predominant concern of scholars on material aspect of power, perception of the policy by some scholars as an anti-democratic way of life, and perception of the policy as a contrast to acquisition and maintenance of power. Despite this neglect and exaggerated and absurd uses of the policy, it however remains an intrinsic and vital element of relations between states in international system. Apart from practices of diplomacy, the policy uses military demonstration as a means to achieve its purposes since military strength is a vital element of state power. This paper is a historical analysis of policy of prestige and projection of power, using diplomatic ceremonials and display of military force as its central thesis.

*Keywords: International politics, Policy of prestige, Diplomatic ceremonial, Struggle for power, Military force.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Policy of prestige has rarely been recognized by scholars of international politics as one of the basic manifestations of struggle for power in international system. This neglect is due to the assumption that both scholars and statesmen are more interested in material aspect of power than its immaterial aspect. Accordingly, though the policy is used as one of the main expressions of power, aristocratic form of social intercourse practiced in the diplomatic world, together with its ceremonial rules, quarrels about rank and precedence, and empty formalism, form the very antithesis of democratic life<sup>1</sup>. Even those not fully persuaded that power politics is nothing but an elitist atavism have been inclined to see in the policy of prestige as practiced by diplomats as an anachronistic game, frivolous and farcical and devoid of any organic connection

with the business of international politics, and finally, the policy is a contrast to the acquisition and maintenance of power<sup>2</sup>.

More frequently, policy of prestige is one of the instruments through which the policies of the status quo and of imperialism try to achieve their ends. This makes it easy for some scholars to conclude that the policy of prestige is not important and does not deserve systematic discussion<sup>3</sup>. In real terms the policy of prestige, however exaggerated and absurd, its usage may have been at times an important element of the relations between nations. Here again, it becomes obvious that international and domestic politics are but different manifestations of one and the same social fact which concerns power. In both ways, the desire for social recognition is a potent and dynamic force determining social relationship and creating social institutions. The individual seeks confirmation on the part of his fellow man of the evaluation he put upon himself. It is only in the tribute others pay to his goodness, intelligence and power that he becomes fully aware of and can fully enjoy what he deems to be his superior qualities. It is through his reputation for excellence that he can gain the measure of security, wealth and power he regards to be his due<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, in the struggle for existence and power, which is, as it were, the raw material of the social world, what others think about us is as important as what we actually are. The image in the mirror of our fellow's mind rather than the original of which the image in the mirror may be but the distorted reflection, that determines what we are as members of society. It is then a necessary and important task to ensure that the mental picture other people form of one's position in society, at least represent sincerely the actual position, if it does not excel it. These are the basic objectives of the policy of prestige. The purpose is to impress other state actors with the power of one's own nation actually possess or with the power it believes, or wants the other states to believe it possesses.

This paper aims at analysing two instruments which serve the purpose of policy of prestige, namely diplomatic ceremonials and the display of military force. To achieve the aim, the paper is discussed in four parts. While part one takes a look at diplomatic ceremonial, part two examines display of military force as one of the instruments of the policy of prestige. Part three highlights objectives of the policy and part four considers its weaknesses.

## PART ONE: DIPLOMATIC CEREMONIALS

On diplomatic ceremonials, the paper discusses practical cases that took place in aristocratic courts, bilateral diplomatic summit, and multilateral diplomatic foras, among others. The cases considered represent diplomatic ceremonials in the widest meaning of the term. Two episodes from the life of Napoleon of France show clearly the symbols through which the power position of a ruler or leader representing a nation, expresses itself in ceremonial forms. One shows Napoleon at the summit of his power, the other indicates he had left that summit behind<sup>5</sup>.

In 1804 when Napoleon was about to be crowned Emperor by the Pope, each of the two rulers had vital interests in demonstrating superiority over the other. Napoleon was successful in asserting his superiority, not only by the crown on his head with his own hand instead of letting the Pope to do it, but also by a ceremonial device that the Duke of Rovigo, one of Napoleon's Generals and Minister of Police reports in his memoirs

He went to meet the Pope on the road to Nemours. To avoid ceremony, the pretext of a hunting party was assumed, the attendants with his equipages, were in the forest. The Emperor came on horseback and in a hunting dress with his retinue. It was at the half moon, on the top of the hill that the meeting took place. There the Pope's carriage drew up, he got out at the left door in his white costume, the ground was dirty, he did not like to step upon it with his white silk shoes but was obliged to do so at last. Napoleon alighted to receive him. They embraced and the Emperor's carriage, which had been properly driven up, was advanced a few paces, as if it was the carelessness of the driver but men were posted to hold the two doors open at the moment of setting it, the Emperor naturally seated himself on the right hand and this first step decided without negotiation upon the etiquette to be observed during the whole time that the Pope was to remain at Paris<sup>6</sup>.

The other episode occurred in 1813 in Dresden, after Napoleon's defeat in Russia, when he was threatened by a coalition of all statesmen in Europe, a condition that would inflict upon Napoleon the disastrous defeat of Leipzig. In an interview lasting nine hours, Napoleon tried to restrain the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, from joining the coalition against him. Metternich treated Napoleon as a doomed man, while Napoleon acted like the Master of Europe which he was for a decade. After a particular stormy exchange, Napoleon, as if to test his superiority, dropped his hat, expecting the spokesman of the hostile coalition to pick it up. When Metternich feigned not to see it, it must have become clear to both men that a decisive change had occurred in the prestige and power of the Victor of Austerlitz and Wagram. Metternich summed up the situation when he told Napoleon at the end of the discussion that he was sure Napoleon was lost<sup>7</sup>.

The relations between diplomats lend themselves naturally as instruments for a policy of prestige, for diplomats are the symbolic representatives of their respective countries. The respect shown them is really shown their countries, the respect shown by them is really shown by their

countries. History abounds with examples illustrating these facts and the importance attributed to them in international diplomacy<sup>8</sup>.

In most courts, it was the custom to have foreign ambassadors introduced to the sovereign by ordinary officials while royal ambassadors were introduced by princes. When in 1698, Louis XIV had the Ambassador of the Republic of Venice introduced by the Prince of Lorraine, the Grand Council of Venice asked the French Ambassador to assure the King that the Republic of Venice would be forever grateful for that honour and the Council sent a special diplomatic letter of thanks to Louis XIV. Through that gesture France indicated that it regarded the Republic of Venice to be as powerful as a Kingdom and that it was for that new prestige that Venice showed its gratitude. At the papal court, the Pope used to receive the diplomatic representatives of different types of states in different halls.

Ambassadors of crowned heads and of Venice were received in Sala Reggia, the representatives of other princes and of republics in the Sala Ducale. The Republic of Genoa is said to have offered the Pope millions in order to have its representatives received in the Sala Reggia instead in the Sala Ducale. The Pope however refused to grant the request because of the opposition of Venice which did not want Genoa to be treated on equal term with herself. Equality of treatment would have meant equality of prestige, that is reputation for power and to this the state superiors in prestige could not consent<sup>9</sup>.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was still the custom at the court of Constantinople that Ambassadors and members of their suites who presented themselves to the Sultan were grabbed by the arms by court officials and then bent down. After the customary exchange of speeches between Ambassadors and Prime Minister, the Court official exclaimed "praise be to the Eternal that the infidels must come and give homage to our gloriously brilliant scepter"<sup>10</sup>. The humiliation of the representatives of foreign countries was intended to symbolize the inferiority in power of the countries they represented<sup>11</sup>.

Under President Theodore Roosevelt of USA, all diplomatic representatives were received together on the first day of January in order to present their congratulations to the President. President Taft changed the arrangement and ordered that Ambassador and Ministers be received separately. When the Spanish who had not been informed of this change, appeared on January 1, 1910 at the White House for the reception of the Ambassadors, he was refused admission, whereupon the Spanish government recalled the Minister and protested to the government of the United States. A nation that had lost its empire and passed to the rank of a third rate power insisted upon the prestige commensurate with its former greatness<sup>12</sup>.

In 1946, when the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union was seated at a victory celebration in Paris on the second row, while the representatives of other great powers sat in the first, he left the meeting in protest. A nation that for long had been a pariah in the international community had attained the

unquestioned position of a great power and insisted upon the prestige due to its new status<sup>13</sup>.

At the Potsdam Conference of 1945, Churchill, Stalin and Truman were unable to agree on who should enter the conference room first. Finally, they entered through different doors at the same time, these three political leaders symbolized the respective powers of their countries. Consequently, the precedence accorded to one of them would have given his country a prestige of superiority over the other two which they rather were not willing to concede. Since they claimed equality of power, they were bound to be concerned with the upholding the prestige in which that equally found its symbolic expression<sup>14</sup>.

France, since De-Gaulle opposed the supra-national tendencies of the European Committee, objected to the traditional style-stripped pants, morning coat and champagne in which Dr. Walter Hallstien, President of the European Common Market Commission has been receiving ambassadors presenting their credentials. Paris felt that such a ceremony creates the impression that Dr. Hallstien is equal in rank to a Head of State or government such as President De-Gaulle. The French contended that the Commission is not a government and the ceremony should be toned down. This is one aspect of French opposition to the supra-national features of the European Communities. France viewed them as a group of sovereign states<sup>15</sup>.

The peace negotiations among the United States, the South and North Vietnam government and the National Liberation Front (Viet Long) which were supposed to have started in November 1968 were delayed for ten weeks because of a dispute over the shape of the conference table. North Vietnam proposed a square table or four tables arranged in a circular or diamond pattern or a plain round table forming a complete unbroken circle. The United States on the other hand, proposed two half oval tables placed against each other to form a broken oval, or two half circular tables to form a broken circle or two half circular tables, separated somewhat from each other with two rectangular tables for secretaries between them.

As concerns the last proposal, the United States made the concession that the two half circular tables could be pushed together to adjoin the secretarial tables between them. However, the secretarial tables would have to jut out a few inches on either side from the curved tables. Finally a circular table without name plates, flags or markings was agreed upon. Two rectangular tables, measuring about 3 feet by 4½ feet were to be placed 18 inches from the circular table at opposite sides<sup>16</sup>.

What informed these absurd proceedings? North Vietnam insisted upon the recognition of the Viet Cong as an independent negotiating party. The United States wanted the recognition of its assumption, basic to its long-held conception of the war that the Viet Cong were a mere extension of the North Vietnamese regime. Thus, the controversy over the shape of the table was symbolic manifestations of the substances of the conflict. The shape of the table,

one way or the other would have prejudged that substantive issue. The shape finally agreed upon appeared to have that issue in abeyance<sup>17</sup>.

The political importance of the entertainment in which all diplomats vie with each other is well illustrated by this excerpt from an article dealing with the Washington social scene.

Now the question of whether foreign embassies actually buy anything for their countries with all these entertainment is naturally moot. There is no check on it. But most ambassadors pursue their social rounds with dead seriousness and regard it as one of the most important and productive aspects of their jobs. They are probably right. After all, propriety severely constricts the activities of an ambassador in the capital to which he is accredited. Certainly an ambassador does not want to be seen on the hill mingling with congressmen or publicly registering reaction to the tone of legislative debates. Yet he must get about enough to receive accurate impressions of American affairs and officials and in turn leave some impression of his own and his country on the public's mind. For this, the social avenue is almost his only approach and unless he is attractive and adept in the salon, he will not be of much use to his country in the chancery.

Because the Latin American throw the biggest and most expensive party in Washington and appear to profit the least thereby, there is a tendency to write them off as mere play boys that is a mistake. What the Latinos are striving for, above all his prestige, a place of equality in the family of American nations and who can says that by parading not only their wealthy but their good manners and bright zestful minds, in a series of unrivaled entertainment, they are not accomplishing something toward that end?<sup>18</sup>

The policy of prestige as policy of demonstrating the power a nation has or thinks it has, or wants other nations to believe it has, finds a particularly fruitful field in locality for international meetings. When many antagonists claims to compete with each other and cannot be reconciled through compromise, the meeting place is frequently chosen in a country that does not participate in the competition for prestige. For instance, The Hague which is in the Netherlands and Geneva in Switzerland have been favoured meeting places symbolizes a shift in the preponderances of power. During the better part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most international conferences were held in Paris. But the Congress of Budapest of 1875, held in the capital of the re-established Germany Empire

after the victory over France, demonstrated to the world Germany's new prestige of being the preponderant power in Europe<sup>19</sup>.

Originally, the Soviet Union opposed the choice of Geneva as headquarters of the United Nations since Geneva, the former headquarters of the League of Nations was a symbol of low point in Russian prestige in the period between the two world war<sup>20</sup>. When the distribution of power within the United Nations meeting in New York, in the aftermath of the Second World War, placed the Soviet Union in what appeared to be a permanent minority, confronted with a majority under American leadership, it advocated the transfer of the headquarters of the United Nations to Geneva which carried no symbolic reference to American supremacy. The meeting between President Nixon of United States and the Chinese Prime Minister Chon En-Lai in Peking in 1972 and not in Washington or at some neutral place has a symbolic significance for the shift that the nations concerned believe to have occurred in the distribution of power in Asia and in the world<sup>21</sup>.

Normally, a state that has a preponderance of power in a particular field or region insists that international conferences dealing with matters concerning that field or region meet within, or at least close to its territory. Thus, most international conferences dealing with maritime questions have been held in London. International Conferences concerned with the future of Europe after the Second World War have been held either on Russian territory such as Moscow and Yalta, or in territory occupied by the Soviet Union such as Potsdam or in the proximity of Russian territory such as Tehran. Yet, by the end of 1947, the political situation had changed to such an extent that President Truman could declare with considerable emphasis that he would meet Stalin nowhere but in Washington<sup>22</sup>.

## PART TWO: DISPLAY OF MILITARY FORCE

Besides the practices of diplomacy, the policy of prestige uses military demonstration as means to achieve its purpose. Since military strength is the obvious measure of a nation's power, its demonstration serves to impress the others with that nation's power. Military representatives of foreign nations are, for instance, invited to peace time army and navy maneuvers, not in order to let them in on military secrets, but to impress them and their government with the military preparedness of a particular nation.

The invitation of foreign observers to the two atomic bomb tests in the Pacific in 1946 was intended to fulfill a similar purpose. The foreign observers were on the one hand to be impressed by the naval might of the United States and with American technological achievements. Twenty-one observes from the United Nations Atomic Energy Control Commission reported in the New York Times, agreed that the United States was building a group of ship larger than many of the world's navies<sup>23</sup>. On the other hand, the foreign observers were to see for themselves what the atomic bomb could do above and under water and

how superior in military strength a nation that had the monopoly of the atomic bomb was bound to be in comparison with nations that did not have it. Because of the high mobility of navies which are able to bring the flag and the power of a nation to the four corner of the globe and because of the great impressiveness of their appearance, naval demonstration have on the past been favorite instrument of the policy of prestige.

The visit in 1891 of the French fleet to the Russian port of Kronstadt and the return visit in 1893 of the Russian fleet to the French port of Tonlon marked a turning point in the political history of the world. These mutual visits demonstrated to the world a political and military solidarity between France and Russia which was not long in crystallizing into a political and military alliance. The periodical dispatch on the part of the great maritime powers of naval squadrons to the Port of Far East demonstrated to the people of that region the superiority of Western powers. The United States has from time to time sent warship to Latin American ports to remind the nations concerned that in the western hemisphere, American naval power is supreme<sup>24</sup>.

Whenever the claims of a maritime power were challenged in colonial regions either by the natives or competing powers, these nations would dispatch warship to the region as symbolic representatives of the power of the country. A good example of this policy of prestige was the visit of William II paid in 1905 on a German warship to Tangier, a port of Morocco for the purpose of counteracting French claims on that state. The Mediterranean cruises American naval squadrons have been making since the second world war in Italian, Greek and Turkish ports are the unmistakable reply to Russian aspirations in that region. The selection of the most exposed regions of Western Europe for maneuvers by the combined forces of the Western allies is intended to demonstrate to the Soviet Union (then) and to the allies themselves the military power of the NATO alliance and the resolution to use this power in defence of the status-quo in Western Europe<sup>25</sup>.

One of the most glaring examples of the military type of the policy of prestige is partial or total mobilization. Mobilization as an instrument of the policy of prestige may be obsolete today, since contemporary warfare requires total preparedness in all aspects of armament at all times. In the past and as at 1938 and 1939, the calling to the colours either of certain classes of the reserves or of all those subject to military service has been a potent instrument of the policy of prestige. For instance, in July 1914, Russia mobilized its army, followed by Austria, Germany and French forces and when France and Czechoslovakia mobilized their armies in September, 1939 and France in March and September 1938, the purpose was always to demonstrate to friend and foe alike one's own military strength and one's resolution to use that strength in support of one's political ends<sup>26</sup>.

Here, prestige/reputation for power is employed both as a deterrent to and as preparation for war. It is hoped that the prestige of one's own nation will be great enough to deter the other nations from going to war. At the same time,

it is hoped that if this policy of prestige should fail, the mobilization of the armed forces before the actual outbreak of war will put one's own nation in the most advantages military position possible under the circumstances. At that point to the intimate relations between foreign and military policy in times of peace as well as of war<sup>27</sup>.

### PART THREE: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY OF PRESTIGE

The policy of prestige has two possible and ultimate objectives, namely prestige for its own sake or much more frequently, prestige in support of a policy of the status quo. While in national societies, prestige is frequently sought for its own sake, it is rarely the primary objectives of foreign policy. Prestige is at most the pleasant byproduct of foreign policies whose ultimate objectives are not the reputation for power but the substance of power. The individuals in the society, protected as they are in their existence and social position by an integrated system of social institutions and rules of conduct, can afford to indulge in the competition for prestige as a kind of harmless social game. But nations, which as members of the international community must in the main rely upon their power for the protection of their existence and power position can hardly neglect the effect that a gain or loss of prestige will have upon their power position on the international arena<sup>28</sup>.

It is therefore not accidental that observers of international affairs who underrate the importance of power tend to take questions of prestige lightly. It is also not by accident that only foolhardy egocentrists are inclined to pursue a policy of prestige for its own sake. William II and Mussolini are cases in point. Intoxicated with newly acquired domestic power, they regarded international politics as a kind of personal sport, where in the exaltation of one's own nation and in the humiliation of others one enjoyed one's own personal superiority. By doing so, they confused the international with the domestic scene.

At home, the demonstration of their power or at least of its appearance, would be at worst nothing more than harmless foolishness. Abroad, such a demonstration is a play with fire that can consume the player who does not have the power commensurate with his belief or his pretense. Absolute monarchy or dictatorship tends to identify the personal glory of the ruler with the political interest of the nation. In view of the successful conduct of foreign policy, this identification is a serious weakness for its leads to a policy of prestige for its own sake, neglectful of the national interests at stake and of the power available to support them. American policy in Indochina from 1965 to 1975 could well be seen in the light of this analysis<sup>29</sup>.

The function the policy of prestige fulfills for the policies of the status quo and of imperialism grows out of the very nature of international politics. The foreign policy of a nation is always the result of an estimate of the power relations as they are likely to develop in the immediate and distant future. The foreign policy of the United States for instance is based upon an evaluation of

the power of the United States in relation to the power of Britain, Russia, China, Germany and of the probable future development of the power of these different nations. Likewise the foreign policy of Nigeria is based upon similar evaluations which are constantly subjected to review for the purpose of bringing them up to date<sup>30</sup>.

It is the primary function of the policy of prestige to influence these evaluations. If for instance, the United States could impress its power upon the Latin American nations to such an extent as to convince them that its predominance in the western hemisphere was unchallengeable, its policy of the status quo in the western hemisphere would not be likely to be challenged and its success would thus be assured. The political stability Europe enjoyed during the 1920s and early 1930s was due mainly to the prestige of France as the strongest military power in Europe. German imperialism owes its triumph in the late 1930s mainly to a policy of prestige. This policy was able to convince the nations interested in the maintenance of status-quo of German's superiority, if not invincibility. For example, the showing of documentary films of the 'blitzkrieg' in Poland and France to foreign audiences composed preferably of military and political leaders clearly served the policy of prestige. Whatever the ultimate objectives of a nation's foreign policy, its prestige – its reputation for power is always an important and sometimes a decisive factor in determining success or failure of its foreign policy. A policy of prestige is therefore, an indispensable element of a rational foreign policy<sup>31</sup>.

The cold war which dominated the relations of the western world and the then Soviet bloc was fought primarily with the weapons of prestige. The United States and the then Soviet Union endeavoured to impress each other with their military might, technological achievements, economic potentials and political principles in order to weaken each other's morale and deter each other from taking any irrevocable steps toward war. Similarly, they tried to impress their allies, the members of the hostile alliance and the uncommitted nations with these same qualities. Their aim was to keep the allegiance of their allies, weaken the unity of the hostile coalition and win the support of the uncommitted nations<sup>32</sup>.

Prestige has become particularly important as a political weapon in an age in which the struggle for power is fought not with the traditional methods of political pressure and military force, but in large measure as a struggle for the minds of men. In wide areas of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, the Cold War has been fought primarily in terms of competition between two rival political philosophies, economic systems and ways of life. This is another way of saying that in these regions, prestige – reputation for performance and power has become the main stake for which political warfare is waged. The chief instruments of this struggle are propaganda which seeks to increase the prestige of one's own side and deflate that of the enemy and foreign aid which intends to impress the recipient nations with the economic and technological proficiency of the aids provider<sup>33</sup>.

A policy of prestige attains its set goals when it gives the nation pursuing it such a reputation for power as to enable it to forgo the actual employment of the instrument of power. Two factors make this possible reputation for unchallengeable power and reputation for self restraint in using it. The classic examples of this are the Roman and British empires of the old and good neighbor policy of the United States.

The longevity of the Roman Empire, in contrast to the fate of quick dissolution which generally befalls imperial structures of similar dimensions was due primarily to the profound respect in which the name of a Roman was held within its confines. Rome was superior in political acumen and military strength to any one of the component parts of the Empire. By making the burden of its superiority as easy as possible to bear, it deprived its subjects of the incentives to rid themselves of Roman domination. At worst, one or the other of the subjects might revolt, but there was never incentive enough for the formation of a coalition sufficiently strong enough to challenge Rome. Isolated revolts would be dealt with swiftly and efficiently by preponderant Roman power, thus increasing Rome's prestige for power. The contrast between the dismal fate of those who dared to challenge Rome and the peaceful and prosperous existence under the protection of the Roman Law of those who remained loyal increased Rome's reputation for moderation in the exercise of its power<sup>34</sup>.

The same reputation for power tempered by self restraint was one of the foundation stones of the British Empire. Political observers were surprised at the ability of a few thousand British officials to dominate hundreds of millions of Indians, not to speak of the voluntary ties of loyalty which kept the self governing dominions united in the Empire. But the ignominious defeats Britain suffered in the Second World War at the hands of Japan shattered forever its reputation for unchallengeable power. The cry for national liberation raised by the colonized races in Asia drowned out the memory of a tolerant rule mellowed by age and wisdom. When the two fold prestige was gone and the resources to maintain the empire by force had become unavailable, the Asiatic part of the British Empire did not survive the prestige of Britain<sup>35</sup>.

During the era of the Good Neighbour Policy, the hegemony of United States in the western world reposed upon the reputation for unchallengeable power rather than upon its actual exercise. The superiority of the United States in the western hemisphere was so obvious and overwhelming that prestige alone was sufficient to assure the United States the position among the American republics commensurate with its power. The United States even at time could afford to forgo insistence upon the prestige that was its due, because the self-restraint thus manifested made its hegemony more tolerable to its neighbors to the south. Thus the United States made a point, from the inauguration of the Good Neighbour policy to have Pan American Conferences meet in Latin American countries rather than in the United States. Since in the

western hemisphere, the United States had the substance of unchallengeable power, it deemed it the better part of wisdom not to insist upon all the manifestation of the prestige that go with such overwhelming power and to allow some other country in the western hemisphere to enjoy the appearance of power in the form of prestige. Only with the decline of the Organization of American States and a shift in American policy did this outlook begin to change<sup>36</sup>.

#### **PART FOUR: WEAKNESSES OF THE POLICY OF PRESTIGE**

For a nation to pursue a policy of prestige is however, not enough. It can do too much or too little in this respect and in either case, it will run the risk of failure. It does too much when, insecure in the awareness of its power, it invest a particular move with a measure of prestige out of all proportion to its actual importance. The prestige of a nation is not determined by the success or failure of a particular move at a particular moment in history. To the contrary, it reflects the sum total of a nation's qualities and actions of its successes and failures, of its historic memories and aspirations. The prestige of a nation is very much like the credit of a bank. A bank with large proven resources and a record of successes can afford what a small and unsuccessful competitor cannot: to make a mistake or suffer a setback. Its known power is big enough for its prestige to survive such reverses. The same is true of states in the international system<sup>37</sup>.

The pages of history are full of cases of nations, which secure in their possession of great power and recognized as such by their peers, having suffered defeat and retreated from exposed positions without suffering a loss in prestige. For example, when was the prestige of France higher? When it fought wars in Indochina and Algeria which it could neither win or thought it could afford to lose, or after it had liquidated these losing enterprises? How much in the long run, did American prestige suffer from the debacle of the Bay of Pigs in 1962? When France demonstrated the wisdom and courage to liquidate two losing enterprises on which it had staked its honour, its prestige rose to its height it had not attained since the beginning of the Second World War, and Bay of Pigs has weighed little in the scales of American prestige, heavy as they are with power and successes. A state must be careful not to confound ephemeral fluctuations of public opinion with the lasting foundation of national power and prestige<sup>38</sup>.

Prestige in a particular instance, like the power it mirrors, must be seen in the context of a nation's overall power and prestige. The greatness of the latter is reflected in the former, and the deficiencies of the former are compensated for by the latter. A state does too much when it paints an exaggerated picture of its power and thus attempts to gain a reputation for power which exceeds the power it actually possesses. In that case, it builds its prestige upon the appearances of power rather than upon its substance. Here, the policy of prestige transforms itself into a policy of bluff. Its outstanding example is the policy of Italy from the Ethiopian War of 1935 to the African campaign of 1942.

Embarking upon a policy of imperialistic expansion with the purpose of making the Mediterranean an Italian lake, Italy defied Britain, then the foremost naval power on earth and the predominant power in the Mediterranean. Italy did so by creating an impression that it was a military power of the first order. It succeeded in this policy so long as no other power dared to put its pretense of power to test. When its power was actually put to test, it revealed the contrast between Italy's reputation for power, deliberately created by a number of propaganda devices and its actual power which unmasked its policy of prestige as a policy of bluff<sup>39</sup>.

The essence of a policy of bluff is well illustrated in the theatre device of allowing a score of extras, dressed as soldiers, walk about the stage, disappear behind the scenery and come back again and again, thus creating the illusion of a great number of marching troops. While the ignorant and the gullible will be easily deceived by this appearance of armed might, the informed and detached observer will not fall victim to the deception. And if the stage direction requires that the army give battle to another army, the bluff becomes clear to everyone. Here the policy of bluff is reduced to its bare essentials and its mechanics are demonstrated in elemental form. Based on this analysis, one can argue that the policy of bluff can succeed in the short run but in the long run, it can succeed only if it is able to postpone forever the test of actual performance, and this even the highest quality of statecraft cannot assure<sup>40</sup>.

The best that luck and political wisdom can offer is to use the initial success of a policy of bluff for the purpose of bringing the actual power of one's nation up to its reputed quality. While the other nations are bluffed into giving that power underserved consideration, time is gained for bringing prestige and actual power into harmony. A nation, therefore that has fallen behind in the competition for power, especially in the field of armaments, might try to conceal its weakness behind a policy of bluff while at the same time endeavoring to overcome its handicap.

When Britain in 1940 and 1941 was open to invasion, its prestige, far exceeding at that time its actual military strength was probably the most important factor deterring the Germans from the attempt to invade its territory. Subsequently, while maintaining the appearance of its defensive strength, it was able to acquire actual defensive strength. It must be noted that luck came to the assistance of that policy of bluff in the form of Hitler's military mistakes and that this policy was not freely chosen by Britain, as forced upon it as a desperate last resort by an utmost necessity<sup>41</sup>.

While it is true generally, it is a mistake in international politics to engage in a policy of bluff, it is no less a mistake to go to the other extreme and be satisfied with a reputation for power which is inferior to the actual power possessed. Outstanding examples of this negative policy of prestige are the United States and the Soviet Union in the period between the two world wars and more particularly, the first three years of the Second World War. At the

outbreak of the war, the United States was potentially the most powerful country in the world and had openly declared its opposition to the imperialism of Germany and Japan. Germany and Japan proceeded as though the United States as a world power did not exist at all. The significance of the attack on Pearl Harbor lies in the implied expression of contempt for the military strength of the United States.

The reputation for power of the United States, its prestige was low that Japan could base its war plans upon the assumption that American military strength could not recover from the blow of Pearl Harbor in time to influence the outcome of the war. American prestige was so low that Germany and Italy, instead of trying to keep the Americans out of the European war, seemed eager to bring it in by declaring war against it on December 10, 1941. Hitler is quoted as having said in 1934, "*the American soldier. The inferiority and decadence of this allegedly new world is evident in its military inefficiency*<sup>42</sup>". This situation was informed by the absence of an American policy of prestige in so far as reputation for military power was concerned far from demonstrating to the other nations that the human and material potentialities of the United States could mean in terms of military power, the United States seemed anxious to prove to the world its unwillingness to transform those enormous potentialities into instruments of war. Thus, the American invited neglect and attack from its enemies, failure for its policies, and mortal danger to its vital interests<sup>43</sup>.

Also, the then Soviet Union had to cope with similar results not because it neglected but because it failed in its policy of prestige. Throughout the period between the two world wars, the reputation of the then Soviet Union for power was low. While Germany, France and Britain at times tried to secure Russian support for their foreign policies, no nation had a sufficiently high opinion of the power of the then Soviet Union to overcome the aversion to Russian political ideology and the fear of its spreading through the rest of Europe. For instance, during the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1938, France and Britain were confronted with the alternative of either approving the imperialistic expansion of Germany or trying to check it with the aid of the Soviet Union, the latter's prestige was that the western European powers rejected its proffered cooperation without much hesitation. The military prestige of the Soviet Union reached its lowest point during the campaign against Finland in 1939 and 1940<sup>44</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The policy of prestige has rarely been recognized by scholars as one of the manifestation of the struggle for power in the international system and the reasons for this neglect are due to the intangible relationship between the policy and the theoretical concern with the material aspect of power, its place as a vehicle of aristocratic form of social intercourse in the diplomatic world and its contrast to the maintenance and acquisition of power which is rarely an end itself.

This paper has discussed two instruments that the policy of prestige used – the diplomatic ceremonials and display of military power. Furthermore, it had discussed the two major objectives of policy of prestige – prestige for its own sake and prestige in support of a policy of the status-quo or of imperialism. Finally, the paper examined the weaknesses of the policy of prestige.

The paper further argued that the function of the policy of prestige fulfils for the policies of the status-quo and of imperialism which grows out of the very nature of international politics. The foreign policy of a nation is always the result of an estimate of the power relations as they exist among different states actors at a certain moment of history and as they are likely to develop in the immediate and distant future. Its purpose is to impress other nations with the power one's own nation actually possesses or with the power it believes or wants other nations to believe it possesses.

The policy of prestige has become important as a political weapon in an age in which the struggle for power is fought not only with the traditional methods of political pressure and military force, but in large measure as a struggle for the minds of men. The policy of prestige attains its objectives when it gives the nation pursuing it such a reputation for power as to enable it to forgo the actual employment of the instrument of power. This is possible courtesy of two factors – reputation for unchallengeable power and reputation for self restraint in using it.

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