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# Trends. Diplomats Acting Badly in the 21st Century: Not Doing as Doing, Weakness as Strength, Ecce Reward

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Assuming that an era of globalization brings with it increasing interdependence among nation-states and other political entities, one might be struck by three implications for behaviorist approaches to diplomacy.

First, the import of the difference between doing something and not doing something on the political plane appears to be decreasing. As interdependence increases, both action and non-action can have very significant consequences for actors, those acted upon, observers, and remaining entities.

Second, the decreasing difference in import between action and non-action gives more political power to the so-called have-nots versus the haves. In many ways, the former can more easily not do than do, given limited resources.

Third, the rising political power of the have-nots paves the way for negative reinforcement to become more important in diplomacy than previously. This can be illustrated by the political attention and other positive consequences induced by and for North Korea via the threat of development, proliferation, and employment of weapons of mass destruction; Russia via the threat of environmental degradation and of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; sub-Saharan African governments via the threat of the further spread of AIDS; Sudan via the threat of further slavery; and various terrorist entities via the threat of terrorism.

It would seem that diplomats in the 21st century must confront an Alice-in-Wonderland political psychology wherein the weak are strong and reward precedes that which is to be rewarded. (See Cremin, B. (2001). Extortion by product contamination: A recipe for disaster within the food and drink industry. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44, 1042-1052; Marongiu, P., & Clarke, R. V. (1993). Ransom kidnapping in Sardinia, subcultural theory and rational choice. In R.V. Clarke, & M. Felson (Eds.). *Routine activity and rational choice*. (pp. 179-199). Transaction Publishers; Ross, J.M. (1999). Psychoanalysis, the anxiety of influence, and the sadomasochism of everyday life. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 1, 57-78; Schelling, T.C. (1991). What purposes can "international terrorism" serve? In R.G. Frey, & C. W. Morris (Eds.). *Violence, terrorism, and justice*. (pp. 18-32). Cambridge University Press; Sharp, S., & Smith, P. K. (1991). Bullying in UK schools: The DES Sheffield bullying project. *Early Child Development and Care*, 77, 47-55.) (Keywords: Diplomacy, Inaction, Political Power.)