

1. What are the disadvantages of a diplomat acquiring only a smattering of a foreign language?
4. How are an ambassador's activities affected if he does not speak the language of the country?
5. What advantages can a diplomat find in the acquisition of languages?
6. Why are the language problems we are confronted with of only a recent origin?
7. What do the language problems result in?
8. Why is the interpreter's work challenging?
9. What role do diplomatic interpreters play in negotiations?

Exercise 56

Explain and comment on the following:

1. "The man who speaks a foreign tongue, not his own, is to a certain extent wearing a disguise."
2. If one wants to discover a foreigner's ideas, encourage him to use his own language.
3. In the matter of languages 'a little knowledge is a particularly dangerous thing.'
4. A thorough working knowledge of a foreign language should be an essential for a diplomat
5. Any slip or even weakness of the interpreter may have the most serious consequences.

Exercise 57

Here are two short texts criticizing the US diplomacy. What exactly is being criticized? Read and discuss the texts.

- a. an extract from the book *Talking To Strangers* by Monteagle Stearns, a former U.S. diplomat

The United States may be the only remaining military superpower, but in its approach to diplomacy it too often looks like the only remaining banana republic. Professionalism is prized in the U.S. in virtually all professions except diplomacy. Our closest allies take

diplomacy more seriously than we do. So do our adversaries. In its day, even the Soviet Union, not a state that relied on diplomacy when intimidation was an option, managed its foreign service less cavalierly than do most American administrations. In the training they gave their young diplomats, especially language training, the Soviets were light years ahead of us. Typically, promising candidates were identified in secondary school and after passing their entry examinations spent five years in a diplomatic prep-school (the Moscow⁷ State Institute for International Relations). The orientation training of US Foreign Service officers, including language training, is less than a year.

Effective communication with foreigners requires the ability to speak their languages, to understand other cultures, to see the world through other eyes. Comprehension of a foreign culture is impossible to achieve without proficiency in the language. Only by knowing what the world looks like from inside will diplomats be able to provide political superiors with a realistic interpretation of the motives of the other government and a reasonably accurate forecast of their future conduct. There is nothing else that a diplomat does that could not be done by lawyers, business people, or academics, all of whom do, in fact, serve frequently as nonprofessional diplomats.

- b. an extract from an article by Adam Watson

Some criticisms of present-day diplomacy are worth considering. The most familiar concerns secrecy. Many people feel that secret diplomacy leads to intrigue and war, and the public has the right to know what is being said in its name. Another criticism is that the international relations of a democracy should not be left in the hands of professional diplomats. A diplomatic service, it is argued, is unrepresentative, it does its own recruiting and forms an unelected elite.

The US practice of assigning ambassadorships to people who have contributed to election campaigns has obviously disadvantages, but there is a real gain both to the Administration and the host government to have an American ambassador who has easy access to the President and knows his mind. It can be argued that for the same reasons 'non-career' European ambassadors at posts like Tokyo, Washington and