

# Research on the Course of "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette"

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## ABSTRACT

On the basis of introducing the background of the course "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette", the construction concept of the course is analyzed firstly, that is, the diplomatic concept of the major countries with Chinese characteristics, the naval diplomatic concept with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy's characteristics. Then, several core abilities of students are discussed, including the ability to safeguard the national interest and national image, the ability to demonstrate the good manners of the Chinese navy, the ability to eliminate misunderstandings, and the ability to reform the international naval diplomatic etiquette; finally, some recommendations are presented for carrying out practice activities such as holding foreign language exercises, organizing in-class scenario simulation and extracurricular practical exercise, and organizing Western food etiquette practice, which is very helpful to improve the level of diplomatic etiquette of students.

**Keywords:** Navy, Diplomatic Etiquette, Courses

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Etiquette usually means people's specific behavior of expressing self-discipline and respect with a certain, conventional procedures and way in interpersonal communication [1]. Any etiquette behavior is composed of 7 elements [2], such as subject, object, medium, content, time, place, effect, according to which etiquette can be divided into government etiquette, business etiquette, foreign-related etiquette and other types. Naval diplomatic etiquette belongs to foreign-related etiquette, refers to the naval soldiers' customary practice to maintain image, show respect and friendship in foreign exchanges, and is the norm that naval soldiers must follow in friendly exchanges with foreign countries. Its subject is the PLA Navy soldiers, the object is the heads, officials, military personnel, the public and related things of the foreign countries, and the media mainly refers to joint performances, sports competitions, and deck receptions etc.

Naval etiquette is used most among the various military types, which is inseparable from its long time-long maritime mission and frequent interaction with other countries. The U.S. military believes that the value of naval diplomacy etiquette is "to create a respectful and polite atmosphere in social relationships," so warships visiting abroad acts as "friendship messengers" [3]. In recent years, Chinese naval diplomacy has flourished. A total of 35 convoys were sent to the Gulf of Aden between December 2008 and April 2020 [4], and visited several countries along the way. The 60th, 65th and 70th anniversaries of the establishment of the Navy have been held, during this period many extensive exchanges with relevant countries have been developed.

In view of the importance of diplomatic etiquette to naval soldiers, several naval colleges and universities with undergraduate education have set up "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette" course in recent years. The course includes the

concept and principles of naval diplomatic etiquette, protocol, courtesy, etiquette, warship etiquette, foreign language, foreign military etiquette and other content. The course's purpose is to improve students' international literacy and cross-cultural communication ability, help students to master the basic foreign affairs etiquette, understand the naval diplomatic activities of protocol, courtesy, and gain the ability to use diplomatic principles and foreign language in the diplomatic occasions. The course has achieved good results, however there have been some problems and confusion, such as: what kind of philosophy should be followed in course construction? What kind of core qualities should be cultivated for students? How to improve students' practical ability? This paper will discuss the above issues.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF COURSE CONSTRUCTION

At the Foreign Affairs Work Conference held in November 2014, Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed that "China must have its own major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics" and "to enrich and develop the concept of foreign work on the basis of summing up practical experience, so that China's foreign work has distinct Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Chinese manner." This requirement takes the formation and display of the characteristics, style and manner of Chinese diplomacy as the task of diplomatic work, points out the direction for the development of naval diplomatic etiquette in the new era, and defines the theme for the training students in diplomatic etiquette during college.

Naval diplomatic etiquette in the new era must adhere to the concept of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. The concept consists of three meanings [6]: firstly, China is the world's largest developing country, which is the basic orientation of China's major country; secondly, the opposition to hegemonism is china's national

policy, and it is by no means a commitment made by China's past leaders to the Chinese and the people of the world; and finally, there is an essential difference between the major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and the traditional great power diplomacy in human history. Naval diplomacy etiquette in new era must adhere to the diplomatic concept with Chinese PLA Navy characteristics. This concept is a way of expressing the diplomacy of the major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, which includes three meanings: firstly, to maintain the characteristics of the PLA Navy, that is, to maintain the glorious tradition and fine style of the PLA Navy. The second is to show the Chinese navy style, that is, to show the Chinese navy's stately power and civilized impressive. Finally, to promote the PLA Navy's manner, that is, to promote the good momentum of the development of the PLA Navy and strong manner in diplomatic etiquette. Under such circumstances, the course construction of "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette" should also keep pace with the times, and the teaching design, course standards, teaching methods, teaching content and assessment methods of the course should carry out the concept of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and the diplomatic concept with PLA Navy characteristics.

### 3. CORE COMPETENCIES TRAINING

The diplomatic etiquette training of students in naval colleges includes many contents with aim to improve students' international literacy and cross-cultural communication ability. In order to show the distinct PLA Navy's characteristics, PLA Navy's style and PLA Navy's manner in foreign exchanges, we should pay attention to improve students' following core competencies in the course of "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette".

#### 3.1. Ability to Safeguard National Interests and National Image

Safeguarding national interests is the first principle of diplomatic etiquette, which must not be forgotten. In diplomatic occasions, for example, there may be those with ulterior motives or those who do not know the truth spreading false statements that undermine the independence and integrity of China, which must be firmly refuted and must not be ignored. Symbols representing the image of the country and the army must be respected and preserved. For example, some celebrations will use national flags, military flags, after the event which may be scattered on the ground and trampled. Naval soldiers should carefully pick up for safekeeping. Students in their daily lives in college should be conscious to learn how to deal with such scenes.

#### 3.2. Ability to Demonstrate Good Manners

Its basic meaning is as the People's Daily editorial puts [7]: "China's diplomacy must adhere to traditional values. In foreign exchanges, we should better reflect the outstanding

cultural values of Chinese traditions such as equal treatment, harmony and difference, good faith and justice, and self-establishment, so that the world can feel the mind and spirit of China's diplomacy, and bring new style and positive energy to international relations." On the basis of adhering to Chinese traditional values, we should show Chinese navy's good style, that is, to show PLA Navy's stately power and civilized impressive. Meanwhile, students in college must understand the time connotation of "left hand sword, right hand flower", so as to achieve excellent discipline, appearance and bearing, and grow into civilized and polite soldiers.

#### 3.3. Adaptability to Eliminate Misunderstandings

For historical reasons, China has been prejudiced or misunderstood by some countries, and so has the PLA Navy. Common problems include malice towards Chinese socialist system, concerns about the so-called "a strong country must seek hegemony" after China becomes powerful, doubts about the rapid rise in the modernization of the Chinese military, especially the navy, and so on. These issues must not be avoided. We should face the response, and act in consonance with the requirements of the occasion. In the classroom, teachers should make scientific interpretations of relevant issues and guide students to think rationally, to understand and to speak clearly.

#### 3.4. Capacity to Reform International Naval Diplomacy

Naval diplomatic etiquette not only shows the personal connotation of naval soldiers' cultivation and cultural level, but also demonstrate the country's international image and international status. In the process of training students diplomatic etiquette, it is necessary to shape their innovation ability at all times, the initiative consciousness of reforming international naval diplomatic etiquette, and strong spirit of "we should be the reformer of the new era", so as to lay a solid foundation for injecting more and more Chinese elements into international naval diplomatic etiquette in the future.

### 4. THE COURSE PRACTICE

Genuine knowledge comes from practice. The course "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette" not only imparts the theoretical knowledge of the students' diplomatic etiquette, but also organizes the students to carry out practical activities, so as to help them truly master the diplomatic etiquette. It must not be assumed that students can master diplomatic etiquette simply through activities with a few foreign students. In fact, that may improve the understanding of foreign customs only, far from

understanding and mastering naval diplomatic etiquette for special professional backgrounds. If they want to form a certain diplomatic etiquette ability during the college period, it is necessary to obtain certain foreign language proficiency, and participate in some simulated practices. It would be more perfect if they have chances to visit some foreign countries with naval warships.

#### ***4.1. To Carry out Foreign Language Exercises***

At present, all naval colleges and universities attach great importance to foreign language teaching, and the overall level of students' oral English is better, which has laid a good foundation for their foreign exchanges. However, this is far from being skilled enough to deal with diplomatic situations, and further foreign language exercises are needed. First of all, to learn naval professional foreign language. All students should learn foreign language terms such as navy's command system, military structure, troop configuration, weapons and equipment, diplomatic etiquette etc. For example, for the same military rank, the English description of the naval rank and the army is very different. Calling the European and American naval Admiral as General will certainly make him unhappy for General is the army title. Secondly, to learn the foreign language expression of Chinese traditional culture words. For example, when PLA Navy vessels visit other countries, displaying calligraphy, Chinese Martial Arts, tea ceremony, ethnic dance, traditional musical instruments at deck receptions, and presenting postcards with Chinese landscapes, have become a common form of spreading Chinese culture. Those students participating in activities should have the ability to use foreign languages to introduce the above-mentioned skillfully.

#### ***4.2. To Organize In-class Scenario Simulation and Extracurricular Actual Exercise***

The organization of diplomatic ceremonial activities is essential during naval vessels visiting a foreign country or welcoming foreign warships. The activities include welcome, farewell, meetings, talks, banquets, signing ceremonies, cultural and recreational activities, visits, opening ceremonies, honors, wreaths, celebrations, condolences and so on. Before students go to work, they should be organized to simulate these activities so as to improve their interest in learning.

In the relevant courses, students are divided into groups of about 10 members, each group selects a topic, designs their own protocol order, flag hanging, activity flow, scenes, dialogue, and other content. In the special classroom the students perform in groups, the teacher evaluates and scores, and finally the winners are awarded to encourage. The course practice has proved that such activities have achieved remarkable results, and students have acquired a lot of knowledge through in-depth thinking. Naturally the actual exercise outside the class works best. If students can

travel with warships to other countries, personally participate in various diplomatic activities, the quality of diplomatic etiquette will certainly be greatly improved.

#### ***4.3. To Offer Course of Western Food Etiquette***

Banquet is a social activity that everyone can't do without. Western banquet is an official event during Europe, United States and other naval powers' receiving guests, so PLA naval soldiers had better understand some Western food etiquette in order not to be overwhelmed in the banquet, and have a polite, better display of good style. Western food etiquette involves seat arrangement, napkin use, tableware use, Western food order, food and beverage eating methods, etc., only through hands-on practice can the students master etiquette essentials. The students may be organized in the large dining hall, which can accommodate hundreds of people, to conduct practical course on Western food etiquette. Students teach themselves the theory of Western food etiquette before class, and watch the Western food etiquette teaching video. They study the classroom lecture, experience the whole process of Western food, and learn the contents of Western food etiquette. Course of Western food etiquette has strong sense of ceremony, the spot effects is excellent. The students can obtain knowledge from the process of tasting Western food delicious which can't be read in books.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

With the rapid rise of China's national strength, the great development of China's naval power has attracted the world's attention, and PLA Navy's overseas visits have become increasingly frequent. At this stage, the PLA Navy has the responsibility to make full use of the naval diplomatic etiquette to display Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese manner, to reflect the PLA's stately power and civilized image, and to inject more new style and new energy to the international naval diplomatic etiquette. In order to cultivate the diplomatic quality of naval soldiers and improve their level of diplomatic etiquette, it is very important to set up the relevant courses of "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette" in various colleges and universities, and to strengthen the diplomatic ability of cultivating students. The course of "Naval Diplomatic Etiquette" should not only carry out theoretical education on the core competence of diplomacy, but also organize a number of practical activities, so as to train students to become an outstanding glorious communicator of Chinese culture, and peace promoters who can enhance friendship and vividly show the good image of the PLA Navy.

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