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Introduction

What Is Diplomatic Security?

Eugenio Cusumano and Christopher Kinsey

In the wake of the murder of the US ambassador Christopher Stevens in Benghazi on September 11, 2012, diplomatic security has gained new relevance in public debate, achieving critical political salience in the 2012 and 2016 US presidential campaigns and spawning into popular culture through Hollywood blockbusters like *13 Hours* and *Argo*.

The problem of protecting state embassies, diplomats, and sensitive information abroad, however, is not entirely new. The establishment of diplomatic missions in another state has long entailed a framework of norms and guarantees to safeguard diplomats and their dependents abroad.¹ Such norms and guarantees—referred to as “diplomatic privileges and immunities”—are a product of customary practices formally codified in multilateral treaties such as the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1969 UN Convention on Special Missions.² The admission of diplomatic agents to a foreign country is dependent upon the consent of the receiving state and subject to a special procedure that requires the formal accreditation of a foreign official by host state institutions. At that point, the diplomat is entitled to host state protection for the duration of her stay as a sending state representative.³

Still, host state protection is often no longer sufficient to ensure the safety of diplomats. From the 1960s onwards, the rise of terrorism has translated into an increasingly high death toll for foreign service personnel worldwide. The takeover of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979, followed in 1983 and 1984 by the bombing of the US embassy in Beirut, forcefully epitomizes

the vulnerability of foreign service personnel operating in countries that are incapable or unwilling to ensure the inviolability of diplomatic premises. The attacks suffered by the US missions in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the deployment of diplomatic personnel in conflict zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan exacerbated these dilemmas, prompting heavily contested policies such as the retreat of US missions into fortress-like suburban premises and the large use of private security contractors.

Albeit increasingly frequent, attacks against diplomatic premises and personnel remain relatively rare compared to other instances of political violence. Why should such fairly sporadic episodes be of concern to students and practitioners of international politics? As argued by many scholars, diplomacy is a cornerstone of interstate relations and a key institution in the international system. Consequently, growing violations of diplomatic inviolability may have far-reaching consequences, ultimately hindering effective dialogue and cooperation across states. Security is a crucial enabler of diplomatic activities, giving substance to concepts like “expeditionary,” “transformational,” and “preventive” diplomacy.⁴ State-building and conflict resolution therefore depend on the effective protection of the diplomatic personnel seconded to countries embroiled in conflict and social unrest. While taken in response to genuine security concerns, however, diplomatic security policies also affect the daily conduct of diplomatic activities. By increasing the separateness of foreign service personnel from local societies and informing locals’ perceptions of the sending states, security policies do not simply enable diplomatic activities, but may also contribute to reshaping diplomacy both as a practice and as an institution.

In spite of its theoretical and policy relevance, diplomatic security has received very sporadic scholarly attention. By providing a comparative analysis of diplomatic protective policies worldwide, this book seeks to fill this gap. Specifically, our volume seeks to answer three sets of interrelated research questions. First, the volume investigates how states worldwide understand and enhance diplomatic security. To that end, we asked our contributors to investigate whether the countries examined in this book suffered attacks against their diplomatic personnel in the past, how likely they consider such threats today, and what policies they have envisaged in response. Most notably, our authors have systematically examined the decision-making processes underlying diplomatic security policies, the magnitude and costs of the protective

arrangements in place, and the type of security actors involved in the protection of diplomatic missions in sensitive locations.

Second, we have investigated the reasons underlying the evolution of diplomatic security policies over time and their variations across countries. Specifically, this collection sheds light on factors such as threat perception, emulation, and national diplomatic and security cultures in shaping countries' diplomatic protective arrangements and broader foreign policies.

Third, we have analyzed the extent to which such security arrangements are perceived to be effective, examining if the security policies in place have proven capable of deterring attacks and mitigating their toll, how they have been reformed in response to major incidents, and how quickly they can respond to changing threat scenarios. As the Conclusion to this volume makes clear, effectiveness does not depend solely on the ability of protective measures to deter and mitigate the toll of attacks. Diplomatic security policies should also be measured against their ability to secure diplomats without hindering their ability to interact with local society and tarnishing the image of the sending state.

Answering these questions provides a novel contribution to both diplomacy and security studies, offering relevant insights for scholars and practitioners alike.

The Reason for This Inquiry

Over the last decade, challenges to diplomatic security have proliferated. The role played by diplomatic personnel in the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan has enormously increased the need to devise effective protective arrangements.⁵ By 2010, US expeditionary diplomacy entailed the deployment of over 25 percent of State Department (DoS) personnel to the thirty highest-risk countries.⁶ This shift inevitably translated into a proliferation of attacks against US diplomatic missions. Between 1998 and March 2013, the DoS Diplomatic Security Bureau (DS) reported 273 "significant" attacks, 46 of which resulted in casualties among bystanders, diplomatic security personnel, or US officials. The killing of US ambassador Stevens in Benghazi is only the latest casualty faced by US diplomatic personnel. Between 1977 and 2014, the United States lost more ambassadors than generals, and a total of sixty-six US State Department personnel have been killed by terrorist attacks.⁷

Diplomatic security, however, is not a solely American challenge. In 2003, the consulate general of the United Kingdom in Istanbul was destroyed in a bombing that killed fifty-seven people, including the British consul himself. In 2011 and 2013, the French embassies in Mauritania and Libya were also destroyed by car bombs, albeit with less deadly consequences. Both Germany and Italy conducted state-building activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, which exposed their diplomatic personnel to unprecedented levels of risk. Israeli diplomats saw their lives threatened by terrorist attacks in theaters as diverse as Egypt, Denmark, Thailand, and Argentina. Moscow's assertive foreign policy has exposed Russian embassies in Europe and the Middle East to terrorism and political hooliganism, as epitomized by the murder of the Russian ambassador to Turkey in December 2016. Rising powers like China and Turkey too have been confronted with the challenge of protecting their missions abroad, increasingly vulnerable due to their growing and at times controversial presence in sub-Saharan Africa and the broader Middle East.

In spite of its relevance and implications, diplomatic security has received sporadic attention from scholars of diplomacy and security studies alike. The editors of this book, for instance, examined US and UK diplomatic security policies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our previous work, however, only concentrated on contentious policies such as the increasing resort to private security contractors.⁸ Scholars of diplomacy have conducted a historical genealogy of the principle of inviolability, examined the past challenges faced by diplomatic missions located in conflict areas, and explored the implications of the expeditionary diplomacy concept embraced by the last US administrations,⁹ but have not systematically looked at protective policies and their impact on the conduct of diplomatic activities. Diplomatic security practitioners have sometimes published memoirs and conducted a historical overview of diplomatic security.¹⁰ Their work, however, is largely anecdotal and focused on the US case.¹¹ International law experts have examined in detail the principle of diplomatic immunity and the obligations imposed on receiving countries by the 1961 Vienna Convention, largely overlooking the political and security implications of certain host states' failure to abide by such duties.¹² The book is unique in that it offers the first systematic comparative analysis of the diplomatic security policies adopted by nine countries with a worldwide diplomatic presence.

Our study should be of interest to academics and policy-makers alike. Students of security will benefit from a novel contribution to the study of

terrorism, counterterrorism, intelligence, and state-building, and will be able to draw on the large body of empirical evidence deployed in this book as a source of insights into the study of foreign policy-making, national security cultures, threat perception, and securitization processes. Diplomatic protective policies worldwide display a wide panoply of security providers and institutional arrangements, ranging from the use of military special operation forces to the deployment of police units and the hiring of international and local private security companies. The multiplicity of actors involved in the provision of diplomatic security can provide important insights into the rationales underlying the choice of certain security policies and their variations worldwide.

Students of diplomacy will find in the book a comprehensive, comparative examination of different states' diplomatic security policies, the influence of states' diplomatic and national security cultures on the choosing of specific protective arrangements, and the impact of such security arrangements on the conduct of diplomatic activities. The need for tight security arrangements has increasingly affected the working routines, organizational cultures, and even architecture of diplomacy, forcing US diplomats to relocate into fortified suburban buildings. By secluding documents into compounds and reducing diplomats' ability to engage with local societies, enhanced security measures may have ultimately reduced the effectiveness of the diplomatic activities they enable. Hence, scholars of diplomacy can rely on this book as a starting point in the study of how security concerns have increasingly reshaped the way diplomacy is perceived and conducted.

As the safety of diplomatic envoys is widely regarded as a crucial precondition for the conduct of interstate relations, a reflection on diplomatic security should also be of interest to the broader community of international relations theorists, who will find in this book novel insights into the evolution of a key institution of the international system and the compliance pull of attached norms such as diplomatic inviolability. At the same time, this book should also appeal to diplomacy and security practitioners. A systematic, comparative overview of diplomatic security arrangements worldwide provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and implications of diplomatic security, and may therefore assist in the planning and daily conduct of interstate relations.

Research Design, Methodology, and Sources

The lack of previous systematic research on diplomatic security is partly explained by the challenges that such an endeavor entails. Due to their sensitive nature, measures to protect diplomatic personnel and premises are often shrouded in secrecy. Consequently, collecting information on diplomatic security arrangements is a dauntingly complex task. This is especially the case in countries like Russia, Turkey, or China, where scholars' attempts to conduct research on national security matters is often unwelcome and discouraged. As the release of certain types of information may inadvertently jeopardize the protection of diplomatic personnel and premises, ethical constraints also apply. Keeping these practical and deontological limitations in mind, the studies collected in this book systematize existing unclassified information to provide an empirically rich comparative analysis of the different protective arrangements enacted to protect diplomatic personnel and premises in the United States, China, the UK, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, Israel, and Turkey.

These cases have been selected for two main reasons. Firstly, all the countries examined have a worldwide diplomatic network, which has translated in the frequent deployment of foreign service personnel in areas fraught with political violence. Secondly, all these sending states have been increasingly confronted with the threat of terrorism, and have identified the protection of their diplomats abroad as an urgent issue. Hence, selecting these cases allows for a structured, focused comparison.¹³ Our analysis is focused as it only concentrates on a specific aspect of the foreign and security policies of the countries examined—diplomatic security; it is structured as the authors of the case studies have been asked to answer the same set of specific questions, which have guided and standardized the collection of data in order to make a systematic comparison and cumulation of knowledge possible.

Due to the difficulty of accessing empirical information on the subject, the authors of this book—all with specific expertise in the countries and issues examined in their respective chapters—have been confronted with a complex task. Their choosing, however, not only reflects their ability to conduct research on a secretive and unexplored subject, but also our aim to have this volume serve as a bridge between theory and policy and a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and epistemological pluralism. By involving practitioners with an academic background and decades of experience in Israeli and US diplomatic protection, our work offers insights into the inner functioning

of national security bureaucracies that academics often lack. At the same time, the inclusion of cases like China and Turkey broadens the analysis beyond Western diplomatic practices, which have monopolized most scholarship. Insights from critical theory also allow for a broader reflection on diplomacy as an institution that is often criticized as the reification of a Eurocentric world order and may therefore need to be forcibly imposed on host societies by means of increasingly tight protective arrangements.¹⁴

The analysis is primarily based on qualitative data. Due to the paucity of scholarship on diplomatic security, a wide range of primary sources has been used. Most notably, practitioners' personal experience, unclassified official documents in several different languages, and semi-structured interviews with diplomatic, military, law enforcement, and private security personnel have provided a large amount of otherwise unavailable empirical evidence.

Structure of the Book

In order to provide a systematic and theoretically grounded enquiry of diplomatic security, the book is divided as follows. As mentioned in the preceding section, the first chapters examine the diplomatic security policies of nine countries with a large and increasingly vulnerable diplomatic network, namely the United States, China, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, Israel, and Turkey. Here, the focus is on the different approaches states take to keeping a diplomatic presence in dangerous environments and on the different institutional actors and arrangements involved in the protection of their personnel worldwide.

Chapter One, by Patrick Cullen, is concerned with examining the evolution of the US diplomatic security apparatus from the creation of the State Department's first security office to the present day. His analysis begins by exploring the growing security needs created by the expansion of American diplomacy worldwide and the changing nature of the security threats it faces today. The array of institutional arrangements, policy instruments, and security forces deployed in order to guarantee the protection of US diplomatic personnel worldwide is then analyzed in detail.

Chapter Two, by Jingdong Yuan, broadens the scope of the analysis by looking at China's diplomatic security. As a rising power that has suffered relatively few attacks against its foreign missions, China lags behind in the elaboration of comprehensive diplomatic security policies. Lack of previous

experience, uncertainty regarding which agency should take over diplomatic security policies, and Beijing's approach to diplomacy—grounded on the principle of noninterference in host countries' domestic affairs—have hindered the development of fully fledged protective arrangements for Chinese posts abroad.

Chapter Three, by Christopher Kinsey, briefly puts UK diplomatic security in historical perspective before examining the institutional arrangements devised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) after the 2003 bombing of the UK consulate in Istanbul and the large-scale involvement of UK diplomats in the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. Chapter Four, by Jean Joana, focuses on French diplomatic security. His study unravels the uneasy relationship between growing security concerns, an organizational culture that sees protective arrangements as incompatible with the French approach to diplomacy, and the goal of streamlining and modernizing France's diplomatic presence abroad. Chapter Five, by Klaus Brummer and Ulrich Krotz, focuses on how German diplomatic security policies have developed after the end of the Cold War, examining the espionage and terrorist threats against Berlin's missions abroad. It then examines the arrangements in place to tackle them, emphasizing the key role played by the German Federal Police in protecting diplomatic posts and personnel.

In Chapter Six, Elena Kropatcheva examines how Russian national security culture has pervasively shaped Moscow's diplomatic security policies. Specifically, she notes that Russian diplomatic security is reactive in nature, shrouded in secrecy, and increasingly dominated by military institutions, thereby reflecting some of the overarching features of Russian foreign policy today. Chapter Seven, by Lorenzo Cladi, maps the current configuration of the Italian diplomatic network, which faces both increasing domestic pressure to reduce the costs and alleged privileges of the foreign service and a growing need for tighter diplomatic security arrangements, now consisting in the use of military police units, but also private security contractors.

Chapter Eight, by Barak Ben Zur, analyzes Israel's approach to diplomatic security. His study is backed by the insider information he acquired as the former director of the research division of the Israeli Security Agency (ISA), responsible for both conducting counterterrorism operations inside Israel and defending official sites, senior officials, and delegations abroad. The chapter follows the evolution of the Israeli approach to diplomatic security from the creation of the state of Israel to the present day. Chapter Nine, by Egemen

Bezci, focuses on Turkey, another country that has suffered from frequent terrorist attacks against its delegations abroad. According to Bezci, cronyism, organizational turf wars, and the heavy politicization of Turkish foreign policy bureaucracies have hindered the development of effective protective arrangements. Consequently, Ankara's growing foreign policy activism is likely to result in greater risks to its diplomatic missions.

The last two chapters and ensuing Conclusion provide an overarching, theoretically grounded examination of some key aspects of today's diplomatic security policies by examining the drivers and implications of the protective arrangements enacted by the countries examined previously. Chapter Ten, by Thomas Stocking, focuses on the notion of risk management as the cornerstone of US diplomatic security. Drawing on his decades-long policy experience in the US Diplomatic Security Bureau, Stocking examines how the meaning and practice of risk management has changed over the past forty years in response to major incidents like the 1983 and 1985 Beirut bombings, the 1998 East Africa bombings, the 2007 Nisour Square incident, and the 2012 attack in Benghazi. Chapter Eleven, by Clara Eroukhmanoff, takes a critical approach to diplomatic security, problematizing the peaceful and non-coercive nature of Western diplomatic activities in order to understand the symbolic significance of attacks against diplomatic personnel and warn against the securitization of diplomacy. By raising questions that are often ignored by mainstream diplomatic and security studies scholars, Eroukhmanoff's chapter both problematizes and complements the empirical, detailed, and policy-relevant insights offered by the rest of the volume, providing wider, thought-provoking insights into the institution of diplomacy. The Conclusion briefly outlines the findings of each chapter, examining how the book contributes to the study of diplomacy, security studies, and international relations at large, elaborating on the effectiveness and trade-offs of different diplomatic security arrangements, and suggesting avenues for future research.

Notes

1. Linda S. Frey and Marsha Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), and Grant V. McClanahan, *Diplomatic Immunity* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1989).

2. The Vienna Convention was signed on April 18, 1961, and entered into force on April 24, 1964. The UN Convention was adopted by the General Assembly on December 8, 1969, and has been in force since July 21, 1985, for only thirty-eight parties (1400 UNTS, 231).

3. Clive J. Barker, *The Protection of Diplomatic Personnel* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); McClanahan, *Diplomatic Immunity*.

4. On expeditionary diplomacy, see State Department, *Leading Through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 2010. See also Paul Sharp, "Obama, Clinton, and the Diplomacy of Change," in Paul Sharp and Geoffrey Wiseman, eds., *American Diplomacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). On transformational diplomacy, see Condoleezza Rice, "Transformational Diplomacy" (Georgetown University, January 18, 2006), <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm>. On preventive diplomacy, see United Nations, "Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results," *Report of the Secretary General* (August 11, 2011), <http://www.un.org/undpa/sites/www.un.org.undpa/files/SG%20Report%20on%20Preventive%20Diplomacy.pdf>.

5. Sharp, "Obama, Clinton, and the Diplomacy of Change"; State Department, *Leading Through Civilian Power*.

6. Alex Tiersky and Susan Epstein, *Securing US Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel Abroad: Background and Policy Issues*, Congressional Research Service, Report to Congress (Washington, DC: May 28, 2014).

7. US Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security, "Significant Attacks against US Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel" (Washington, DC: 2013).

8. Eugenio Cusumano, "Diplomatic Security for Hire: The Causes and Implications of Outsourcing Embassy Protection," *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 12, no. 1 (2016): 1–29; Eugenio Cusumano and Christopher Kinsey, "Bureaucratic Interests and the Outsourcing of Security: The Privatization of Diplomatic Protection in the United States and the United Kingdom," *Armed Forces & Society* 41, no. 4 (2015): 591–615.

9. Frey and Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity*; Geoffrey Berridge, *Embassies in Armed Conflict* (New York: Continuum, 2012); Sharp, "Obama, Clinton, and the Diplomacy of Change"; Nathan Hodge, *Armed Humanitarians: The Rise of the Nation Builders* (New York: Bloomsbury 2011).

10. Nick Mariano, *For God and Country: Memories of a Diplomatic Security Service Special Agent* (n.p.: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2nd ed., 2016); US State Department, *History of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security of the United States Department of State* (Washington, DC: Global Publishing Solutions, 2011).

11. Mariano, *For God and Country*; US State Department, *History of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security of the United States Department of State*.

12. Barker, *The Protection of Diplomatic Personnel*.

13. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy* (New York: Free Press 1979), 43–68.

14. On diplomacy as a Eurocentric institution, see Iver B. Neumann, "Euro-Centric Diplomacy: Challenging But Manageable," *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2013): 299–321.