Дәріс 6

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| **Types of Diplomatic Missions** |
| A country may have several different types of diplomatic missions in another country.**Embassy**A diplomatic mission located in the capital city of another country which generally offer a full range of services, including consular services.**High Commission**An embassy of a Commonwealth country located in another Commonwealth country.**Permanent Mission**A diplomatic mission to a major international organization.**Consulate General**A diplomatic mission located in a major city, other than the capital city, which provides a full range of services, including consular services.**Consulate**A diplomatic mission that is similar to a consulate general, but which does not provide a full range of services.**Consulate Headed by Honorary Consul**A diplomatic mission headed by an Honorary Consul which provides only a limited range of services. |

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| **Functions of a Diplomatic Mission** |
| Basic functions of a diplomatic mission include:* Represent the home country in the host country
* Protect the interests of the home country and its citizens in the host country
* Negotiate with the government of the host country
* Monitor and report on conditions and developments in the commercial, economic, cultural, and scientific life of the host country
* Promote friendly relations between the host country and the home country
* Develop commercial, economic, cultural, and scientific relations between the host country and the home country.
* Issue passports, travel documents, and visas
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| **Treaties Governing Diplomatic Relations** |
| **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations - 1961*** [**Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/diplomatic_relations.htm)
* [**Optional Protocol / Acquisition of Nationality**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/diplomatic_nationality.htm)
* [**Optional Protocol / Compulsory Settlement of Disputes**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/diplomatic_disputes.htm)

**Vienna Convention on Consular Relations - 1963*** [**Vienna Convention on Consular Relations**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/consular_relations.htm)
* [**Optional Protocol / Acquisition of Nationality**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/consular_nationality.htm)
* [**Optional Protocol / Compulsory Settlement of Disputes**](http://www.ediplomat.com/nd/treaties/consular_disputes.htm)

**Convention on Special Missions - 1969*** Convention on Special Missions
* Optional Protocol / Compulsory Settlement of Disputes
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| **Qualifications of an Ambassador** |
| **The first reaction of most professional diplomats, when they are asked about the criteria to be used in choosing ambassadors, is to describe their own qualifications. This is a very natural reaction, but if anything useful is to come from such an inquiry it is necessary to step back and look at the essential elements of the position of chief of mission, i.e., of ambassador. One simple definition of diplomacy is that it is the oral aspect of international relations. There is an essential difference between what is written and what is spoken, not only because spoken words are essentially more ephemeral (verba volant), but because the spoken language has infinitely more nuances, being both richer and more subtle than written texts.****Consequently, in an oral exchange one can suggest more than one could in writing, and if one knows how to listen can also understand the other side better. It is in the oral domain that not only "interests" can be adjusted or comprehended, but also viewpoints, plans and intentions. But oral. diplomatic communication can only be effective if the conversations are part of an ongoing process, if the talks stretch over a period of time and can be resumed each time when it is necessary. And such conversations will only be effective if the interlocutors, while of a level of responsibility, are not those who hold supreme responsibility. If the top people meet face to face, men or women whose every word risks being the last word, the word without further recourse, most of the time they will not say anything useful because the tension is simply too great. On the other hand, someone who is situated a little lower on the ladder of responsibility can orally explore things much further without compromising anyone but himself, and in this manner he may encounter opportunities which he may either seize or let slip by.****No telephones, certainly not a red or green one, can change the situation. They have their utility in certain cases but they do not do away with the necessity for permanent conversation which, in the strictest sense of that term, is diplomacy. This is how we look at the essential requirements of the position. Let us now look at how and from where it may best be filled.****It seems to us that even with the most rigorous selection a corps of the highest ranking diplomats will not consist only of superb performers. Let us be honest - nobody has to the same degree all the qualities necessary to be a perfect ambassador. The distribution among them is likely to be the same as elsewhere: ten percent who are very good and the rest less good, some of them still less so. It would be a great mistake to seek only one type of personality. Yet there are certain qualifications which strike us as essential.****One qualification is what a French colleague, who is now a well-reputed author, called "the specialty of the general." The ambassador must always have his eye on the most general aspects of what he does, namely on the overriding interests. These of course today cover fields which are more and more specialized: not only strategy and tactics, economics, technology, but also social relations, pure science and, finally philosophy, culture, and religion.****What, then, is to be done? One has to supply the ambassador with attaches or special advisors. What then will be his relationship with them? Either he has confidence in them and delegates his authority, in which case he may rapidly lose control of the operations, or else he will not rely on them but will not be able to tell what is to be done. It is, therefore, highly desirable that he should have his own judgment which comes from experience. What kind of experience? Experience that comes from success in previous operations. In other words, it is not a bad idea that the ambassador should have had in his private life occasion to come to grips with the "real world" and that he should know, in any case, the colossal inertia of social structures and of individuals. In this manner he should be able to judge the quality of his advisors and experts and draw profit from their advice. It is true that he must also have a certain amount of technical knowledge in order to properly appreciate the quality of that advice. We believe that frankness requires us to state that there is no neat solution to this dilemma. There is no perfect way out. And there is no perfect ambassador. If there were such a person he would be highly inconvenient and bothersome.****In addition to the enlargement of the domains of science and culture which makes it difficult to discharge the functions of an ambassador during these closing years of the century, there are other problems which have to do with the transformation of the very tissue of international relations.****There was a time when it was enough to defend the "national interest," which was defined as everything that contributes to the prosperity, autonomy and prestige of the society and the state which is represented by an ambassador. There was no problem; it was understood that the purpose was to maintain the equilibrium between the five or six leading powers and at the same time to obtain commercial advantages, obtain respect for the rights of one's nationals, for one's flag, etc. Everyone's horizon was limited to his own nation. "Wer von Europa spricht," said Bismarck, "hat unrecht" - whoever speaks of Europe goes beyond what is his business. Put in simple words, whoever used themes that spoke of Europe was doing so only for selfish national reasons. That was perhaps true in 1878; it certainly is not true in 1983.****Today the horizon of diplomacy has widened under the influence of the threat of universal destruction, the growing interconnection of economic interests, the vast movements of populations, the diffusion of technical knowledge, the influence of the media, etc. Today, therefore, one has to take account both of national and of collective interests, which means that an ambassador must be alert to the effects that the policies of his government may have on others. Unless he is able to encompass both the national and the collective dimension, he is not doing his job properly. In a sense he cannot intelligently defend his nation's interests, for these encounter the interests of others everywhere. There are of course ambassadors who maintain a narrow perspective, but they are not really effective and thus do not belong to the minority of good ones.****His position, being situated at a high level of responsibility without himself having the power to make political decisions, allows the ambassador to weigh the national interest against the universal interest and to throw his weight into the scales of the latter if that is necessary. Of course this entails the risk of making himself odious to his own government or to the host government or to an international organization to which he may be accredited - or to all three at the same time.****Here, again, one must not expect a perfect solution; there can never be a stable equilibrium. What is essential is that the two concerns, the national and the collective one, be clearly understood and recognized at all times. In this the character - the strength of character - of the chief of mission plays an important role. He must not be narrowly centered on his own country. He must always seek to understand the reasons that dictated policies of his own government as well as those of the government of the host country.****It happens occasionally that an ambassador is accused of representing the interests of his own country less effectively than he represents those of the country to which he is accredited. Of course an ambassador does not like to hear this. And yet, without indulging excessively in paradox, it might be said that the accusation constitutes, at least in part, also a tribute to the intellectual and moral qualities of the diplomat in question.****It should go without saying that there are strict limits, dictated by common sense and the realities of the situation, to how far an ambassador can go in opposing a position of his own government. If a compromise is not possible and once the final decision has been made, he must of course loyally and scrupulously implement it even if it goes against what he had recommended. But until the final decision is made an ambassador owes his government the frankest and most unvarnished advice. In some cases, if he finds it incompatible with his conscience to implement what he believes to be a wrong decision he can of course resign - but such cases should be rare.****There remains the question where one should look for good ambassadors, whether they should be professionals or persons drawn into diplomacy from outside. It is difficult to be categorical: some professionals have turned in amateurish performances, and there are cases where amateurs rather quickly became good professionals. Yet one should not underrate the existence of a "diplomatic technique" which may seem esoteric to outsiders but really bases itself on long experience, There are real problems if one seeks to enrich the diplomatic establishment with talented outsiders from the world of business or finance or education; but those problems would be greatly diminished if the movement went in both directions - if there were a system of rotation whereby career diplomats go out periodically into that world to do practical work at a high level of responsibility and thus to enrich their own experience and the diplomatic service - with a better knowledge of the problems of the nongovernmental world. In this manner there would be a greater likelihood of coming up with the desired type: not "specialist of the general" but specialist and generalist at the same time, which is not so simple.** |

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| **A Short List of Key Qualities** |
| "Don't let it occur again." This concluded my first contretemps with a British ambassador, on the morning after my first dinner in his residence in my capacity as his newest first secretary. "Continentals don't like being nudged towards the lavatory after dinner; it is a purely English custom; why didn't you know?" Clearly my upbringing had been neglected, but I tried to fight back. "But Sir, what about me?" "Well you mustn't and that's all there is to it." The reaction carried me continent through thirty years of diplomatic dinners. He was an excellent ambassador and did not confine himself to such trivia, but the anecdote illustrates one side of an ambassador's life: whether his embassy is large or small, he is the head of a family consisting of his staff, and he and its senior members must train, drill, direct, rebuke and encourage them so as to make the embassy a smooth-running machine that can be relied on to handle efficiently any situation, however important or however trivial. Consequently a good ambassador must have personality and be a leader, be someone whom it is natural for his staff to look up to, and someone also for whom looking down at his staff in friendship and in collaboration is natural. In this essay describing some of the key qualities I have seen in successful ambassadors, the list is necessarily short. I have taken for granted the essential minima expected of someone who must work in close contact with national political and commercial leaders and national media, such as experience, grasp of affairs, and facility in the spoken and written word. The best embassy I served in was in Paris under an ambassador who was a towering personality and natural leader as well as a master of diplomacy. Those of us in charge of sections met him at 9:30 a.m. every morning. We discussed the morning papers, and he told us anything of interest said to him the previous day. On any matter within our province we were expected to give an immediate explanation of what it was all about, or say whom we knew who could tell us, or whom we knew who would not tell us but might tell him, the ambassador. Not to have the facts by 9:30 was bad; but not to have the contacts that would have them was a cardinal sin. Some ambassadors or their wives treat invitations to their staff like Royal Commands, and prior engagements have to go by the board. However, in that embassy a prior engagement to someone of the country was always an acceptable excuse. The ambassador knew that without those contacts his embassy could not function. This brings out another aspect of a good ambassador. He must make his staff feel part of a team in which each knows what is expected of him; and to get the best out of the team, he must not only lead it but be part of it himself and not above and remote from it. There is great satisfaction in being part of such a team, knowing that is is equipped to deal with anything that comes. Apropos of an embassy team having to be ready to cover all issues of interest and to be clear about who covers what, when I was ambassador to Denmark the British press made a great to-do about the prevalence of sex shops and the degeneracy of youth. Visitors invariably asked about it. "Is something rotten in the State of Denmark?" the bigger bores would enquire. The whole thing struck me as ridiculous, but to keep the visitors at bay I suggested to a young second secretary that the subject should be his. Subsequently, an earnest and humorless mission from the U.K. came to observe this allegedly permissive society, which they were either for or against - I forget which. But at their final press conference they complimented the young second secretary by name on his help and expert knowledge. He took years to live down this kiss of death. Of course it is ruinous to the work of the team and the effectiveness of the embassy if the ambassador cannot use its products. He is equipped with entree to the highest political, commercial and intellectual circles, with a house and servants and allowances to ensure he has easy relations with all who can influence his country's interests; so his staff have the right to expect he will use this paraphernalia, as well as his greater experience, to give point and substance to their work and to discuss with them how this should be done. He must be prepared to go out front and do and say what is necessary whether to minister, tycoon or editor, and indeed to relish it. He must be robust. Diffidence never got an ambassador anywhere. And as he must be robust with the leaders of the country to which he is accredited, so also must he be with leaders of his own country. Ultimately it is his Minister who is master, but the ambassador has and must use to the full, his duty to warn, argue and protest in the light of his local knowledge, as well as to inform, advise and ultimately to act on instructions, But there is no more unpleasant task for an ambassador than to argue on his country's behalf a policy which he believes is unfair or misguided, and nothing is so destructive to an embassy's morale. So in addition to officials in his Foreign Ministry, an ambassador must get to know the Ministers and the Members of Parliament and businessmen and journalists of his own country who are interested in the country to which he is accredited. To the leaders of that country he carries Letters of Credence asking that he be believed, but it is often just as important to his country's interests that he be believed at home. So it is helpful if in addition he cultivates his personal credibility and even something approaching a power base in interested circles in his own country. Once a Secretary of State went so far as strongly to encourage me to do such essentially domestic political work so as to take some of the pressure off him and his Ministers on a then unpopular cause. So here is another facet of an ambassador: he must be able to operate in the area where bureaucracy, public relations and politics all meet. When accused of an undiplornatically blunt riposte to President de Gaulle, a British ambassador (and an outstanding one) is credited with replying "Do you want me to be man or mouse, politician or diplomat?" To be good in a hot embassy an ambassador must be prepared to act the politician and publicist at his own discretion and take the consequences. Of course to do this he must have the confidence of his own government and represent their policy accurately, but the method and timing must often be his own. If relations between countries can be dealt with in confidence in quiet rooms, so much the better, but often they cannot be, and the ambassador must be ready to get movement by going public. In all these activities the ambassador must retain the confidence of the government to which he is accredited. When the policies and interests of the sending and receiving states diverge in important respects, it is the ambassador's duty to warn against it and explain the consequences. This usually involves the speaking or writing of disagreeable truths. It is not enough, however, to be truthful - the ambassador must also be believable. He may have to be clear at the expense of being tactful, since he must above all make sure that each government doesn't misunderstand what the other's intentions are, and the ambassador must see that the dialogue is maintained in a way in which it can continue. This task can be appallingly difficult, but personal integrity can carry an ambassador through. Ellsworth Bunker's embassy in Vietnam, and Henry Kissinger's negotiations with both China and the Middle East states are examples of how this problem can be surmounted. So we have a further facet of a good ambassador-integrity. One who attempts to persuade by overstating his case - or who seeks to please by understating problems will eventually lose all credibility, and how often has one seen this happen with the self-appointed unofficial intermediaries who too often muddy international relations! In conclusion, what about the merits of political as opposed to career ambassadors? Though not infrequent, political appointments are not in the British tradition, but with some notable exceptions they have usually been a great success. But as this essay suggests, to be an ambassador requires special disciplines and a knowledge of dos and don'ts most easily acquired by the long experience that goes with career. Moreover it is difficult for an outside appointee to perform the leadership-of-a-team function that gets the best out of an embassy - though some political appointees have done it with marked success simply because they were that sort of person. And this is the crux of the matter: appointments to important embassies should be made because appointees have the right characteristics to fill the job, either through career experience or other qualifications, but not because they are either career diplomats or politicians. Nevertheless, a well-run diplomatic service ought to be able to field suitable career candidates for virtually all embassies, though there have been and always will be exceptions. Indeed some of the great names of post-war diplomacy have been political appointees - though so have some of the outstanding failures. However, if political appointments were to become the rule rather than the exception and fill the majority of embassies of importance, the career service would cease to attract or retain the right caliber of entrant, and the country would reap double trouble from inexperienced ambassadors supported by deteriorating staff. |
| The Makings of a Good Ambassador |
| When I started my career as a diplomat before the second world, war, it was under an ambassador who, to this day, seems to me to typify the accomplished classical diplomat. In addition to Japanese, he knew Greek and Latin and spoke English, French and German. He used to say that in order to perform a diplomat's duties satisfactorily, one always had to be in a position to answer three questions: Who? When? What? The meaning of these three questions is that a diplomat facing any given political move must, under all circumstances, be able to tell his government who made a decision, on what date, and what it was about.. This ambassador's threefold question is, I believe, a fair summary of an ambassador's task in the classical era, and of the qualities required to fulfill them. First and foremost, he had to inform his government about the political life in his country of residence so as to ensure proper handling of relations and negotiations between states. Within the framework of their governments' instructions, ambassadors enjoyed extensive representational and negotiating authority. As a rule, inter-state relations were governed by treaties and agreements. International life was conducted on the basis of respect for one's signature: pacta sunt servanda. Today international life and diplomatic relations are completely different. There are many more independent states, and the number of diplomatic missions has grown exponentially. Understandably enough, an ambassador will not do exactly the same work when posted to a superpower as when he is in a country with virtually no land, population or resources. In the days of the League of Nations, the international order was in the hands of a small number of independent states to which were appended the colonial complexes. But in the meantime other forms of interdependence have emerged and have given rise to international legal entities to which diplomats are accredited, as is the case in the European Community, the O.E.C.D., and the United Nations with its many specialized agencies.An entirely new complex of issues has arisen, involving such issues as the environment, population, science and technology, economic and social development, narcotics, the law of the sea, or nuclear energy - issues of great importance which did not even exist a generation ago and with which a diplomat today must be conversant. Ambassadors accredited to international bodies no longer engage in state-to-state relations but deal with collectivities specializing in economics, international trade, culture, etc. So their competence should be both extensive and highly technical, as they are expected to handle issues involving such matters as non-tariff barriers or EC agricultural regulations. I think it is obvious that this requires an entirely different type of diplomat than those who engaged only in the traditional forms of international relations. The rise of multilateral diplomacy has been accompanied by a rise in rapid and easy international communications. The number of international meetings of heads of states and governments and of ministers has multiplied since the second world war. This trend, sometimes called direct diplomacy, has also substantially changed the role of ambassadors - changed it but not lessened its utility and importance. Politicians and direct government envoys, and non-professional ambassadors appointed on the basis of political criteria, tend to focus on the short term, if not on spectacular action. Professional ambassadors, acting as advisers to them, are responsible for reminding them of the importance of continuity and stability in international relations and for shifting the emphasis to a longer-term view. Yet another noteworthy feature of modern diplomacy is its organizational complexity. Major embassies house political, military, economic, scientific, agricultural, cultural and other departments. Thus an ambassador's role is also akin to that of a company manager, in charge of sometimes over a hundred staff members. Consequently, an ambassador must be a good administrator.The qualifications of a modern ambassador are implicit in this brief description of his duties. First, he must have in-depth knowledge and understanding of major world problems. Superhuman capabilities would be necessary for one to be familiar with all the details of these global issues. So ambassadors should try to form a clear picture of the international situation, to analyze it properly and to evolve their own judgment. They can no longer be content with understanding bilateral relations alone, in view of the interdependence of nations. There are far more factors in this judgmental process then there were in the days of classical diplomacy; consequently, the ability to synthesize should be developed even more than the ability to analyze. As communications were facilitated - thus giving rise to "direct" diplomacy - ambassadors lost a large part of their role as governmental go-betweens. The days when ambassadors awaited instructions and solemnly conveyed messages are over. Modern ambassadors take it upon themselves to inform their governments about the situation in their country of residence, about trends in public opinion, about possible reactions to measures considered by their governments. Often, because of the very speedup of communications that is supposed to lessen their effectiveness, they can suggest to their foreign ministries how they should be instructed. And because the ambassador is on the spot and knows both the issues and what can reasonably be achieved, he (or she) can have more influence than an ambassador had in the days of slower communication. Thanks to the information that embassies collect and synthesize, ambassadors, thus prepare the ground for and sometimes influence the initiatives of their governments, and are then in the best position to explain these moves in terms that the host country will best understand. This new role of ambassadors requires them to make many new kinds of contacts, not only in official circles but also in all social groups and more particularly in the media. In this way, ambassadors continue to "convey messages," but they convey them to millions of people. As regards the human qualities an ambassador should have, it seems to me that the principal one is broadmindedness. Ambassadors should be open to cultural diversity and be able to understand it. They must certainly strive to promote their country's national interests, but should not follow narrowly nationalistic impulses to which people are subject who have not made international relations their career. A good ambassador must be a patriot - that goes without saying; but he must always bear in mind that every country is part of an international system and that the future of the world depends on at least a tolerably good functioning of that system. |
| Common Denominators of Good Ambassadors |
| Having been both foreign minister and ambassador, I have seen the problem of ambassadorial appointments from the side of both those who make the appointments and those who receive them. I have been in a position to judge when and how ambassadors fall flat on their face, and why some distinguish themselves. I believe there is one common denominator for the performance of superior ambassadors, and that is skill in communication. It is communication of a very special kind, which must be learned, but without the basic aptitude for communication an ambassador cannot be successful in his manifold tasks. Contrary to the traditional image of an ambassador as a highly polished individual who is so circumspect in what he says that it requires a special talent (allegedly found only in other diplomats) to figure out what he is communicating, I have found that plain speaking is an essential ingredient for a diplomat's success. He must of course be tactful and sometimes artful in the way he communicates, but the message must come through clearly and precisely. Articulateness in explaining, reporting, defending, and discussing information on his country's position and other matters is, to my mind, essential. The finest among American ambassadors with whom I have had dealings were Robert Murphy, Charles E. Bohlen, G. Frederick Reinhardt, and Llewellyn E. Thompson. They all had a thorough knowledge of international affairs, they were cosmopolitan and had empathy for the concerns of other countries, and they were not too cautious in the way they explained what was going on and what their country was trying to accomplish. The worst among American diplomats whom I have met - and I would rather not give their names - were those who were exceedingly cautious (not merely circumspect) and who wanted to elicit information without giving anything in return. For communication among diplomats is a two-way street: one cannot expect to obtain much information unless one is able and willing to convey information. The ambassador with whom everyone wants to talk is the one who is interesting to talk with. This was especially true, I think, of the men whom the United States sent out to foreign countries in the earliest days of the republic, when they were statesmen who had been among the decision makers in their own capital and "men of the world" who moved easily among the decision makers of other countries. It will be seen from the above that I am not necessarily critical of the custom of the United States to choose some people for ambassadorial positions who are not professional diplomats - but I believe such persons must have unusual stature in order to be successful, they must be well-read, well-spoken, they must have a thorough knowledge of international affairs, and they must be persons of cosmopolitan tastes and attitudes. Provincialism, ethnocentricity, inability to understand nuances in foreign countries, and the belief that one's own country is the best in everything-these are handicaps which, after a certain age, no amount of training or experience can overcome. In my own country, which has a relatively small foreign service with only a limited intake of new officers every year, almost every diplomat can expect to become an ambassador. This has its advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages is that our diplomats need not be afraid that their career will be in ruins if they make a mistake, and that they can consequently be innovative. Among the disadvantages is that there is too little selection of the best people and a consequent tendency on the part of some of our ambassadors to become bureaucratic. Yet excessive competitiveness can also be a liability, as I have seen in the case of diplomats who came from an environment where they had to claw their way to the top: they became competitive also with their peers, both within their service and with their diplomatic colleagues of other countries. Diplomacy requires effective habits of cooperation. The best ambassadors I have known have been people who, in addition to a thorough knowledge of their own country and the country of their assignment, also have a well-rounded view of the world (Weltbild) into which what was happening could be fitted. Without such a world picture it is virtually impossible to reach a firm conclusion about the significance of developments. Nowadays politics permeates every field of state activity. Any small war anywhere has the potential of leading to a world conflagration. The growing closeness and interdependence of nations and the interaction of their public opinions have had the result that the acid of ideological indoctrination seeps into every cleft of international and internal differences. No wonder that any cool assessment of the moving forces of our times requires increased knowledge, sound judgment, and the ability to attach the proper importance to what is happening in a large variety of fields. A good ambassador must understand the significance also of things that happen outside the area where he is accredited. Communication, as I have used the term above, includes not only collecting and conveying information to and from one's government; it also means negotiating both in the sense of developing concrete agreements and in the sense of adjusting differences and lining up support outside of concrete agreements. While skillful reporting makes the reputation of the ambassador, negotiating is the real essence of his activity. Negotiating is not just sitting at a table where two or more countries more or less oppose one another. It begins a long time before a date is set for sitting down at the table. The process of softening up the other side is almost as important as the exchange of more or less brilliant arguments at the negotiating table. The ambassador must convince the other government of the importance of the subject under negotiation, and of a compromise useful to his own country. But he must also convince his own government of the limits within which a compromise can be found (or even whether a compromise is necessary). People at home are often inclined to consider the limits recommended by an ambassador as due to excessive caution on his part, alienation from his own country, or plain muddleheadedness. The worst thing would be to recommend or predict an outcome of the negotiations which turns out to be too pessimistic, for instance if the foreign ministry then sends out someone "stronger" who finds that he could "easily" obtain more than the ambassador had thought possible. To find the right course between these conflicting assessments needs skill, experience, courage, and a cool head. The least desirable outcome from the effort to steer between the Scylla of failure and the Charybdis of overcautiousness would be to send meaningless communications to the home office "in order to protect oneself." One may protect himself or herself for the immediate moment but may damage his further career in the process. A good diplomat must be precise. Experience teaches us that the higher the summit the flimsier the agreements. Top-level politicians are much too impatient to watch details, important as they may be, and are always in a hurry to shake hands to mark a "rapprochement" or other agreement. As an American diplomat once said to me: On an icy summit there grows only what you have carried up there. So it is wise to send conscientious, publicity-shy individuals ahead to prepare the texts and give the top officials concise information about the points to be especially watched. For instance, the word "support" can mean anything from a timely smile to substantial military support. Specificity is therefore most important. Naturally there are exceptions when agreement for the sake of agreement, even at the cost of vagueness, is desirable or necessary - but such cases are very rare. A good diplomat also needs a sense of humor. He should always have some remarks ready to ease tension once negotiations get near a breaking point. One example that comes to mind involves a negotiation in which everything went wrong. (It happened to involve agrarian exchanges in Central Europe, a subject that is always tough and intractable). One of the negotiators had a long beard, and his stolid demeanor did not augur well for a successful outcome. His counterpart finally said: Before we part, I have one more question. When you go to sleep at night, do you tuck your beard under the covers or do you leave it above them? There was laughter all around, and for the first time the patriarch allowed a smile to crease his lips. Eventually an agreement was concluded, actually a lot sooner than had been expected. I do not mean to imply that the jocular question was the reason for the successful outcome of the negotiation, but I believe the incident illustrates the importance of the ability to loosen up the atmosphere, of knowing when some levity will help smooth the way to easier discourse and thus to agreement. A word about discretion. An ambassadorial position should never be given to anyone who is hungry for publicity. In my opinion it is best, even in official reports, to use personal quotations only when absolutely necessary, unless the information conveyed is meaningful only when attributed to a certain high-ranking functionary who conveyed it with attribution in his mind. If ever a "friend" or mere acquaintance reads his name in a report of another government, even if everything in that report is favorable to him, he is much less likely to be candid and open at the next encounter. Any experienced diplomat knows that written reports nowadays can find their way to offices for which they were never intended. To give contacts confidence that their remarks will be held in confidence, I usually preferred to talk with them in informal surroundings rather than in their offices. I also found it prudent even to protect my handwritten notes. Finally, like anyone who wishes to be successful in a competitive environment, an ambassador must have good judgment. This goes almost without saying, but good judgment today doesn't mean what good judgment meant at the time of sailing ships and horse-drawn carriages. When important things are happening, the ambassador's interpretation of them must be prompt if it is going to do any good because the press will be doing its own interpreting and so will other governments. Therefore reporting and analysis must sometimes be not only timely but almost instantaneous. Good judgment today must come faster than it did a generation ago. And if an ambassador has in his mind a concept of the interrelationship between events around the world, he is more likely to be listened to and his judgments will carry greater weight. This applies both to his written communications to his capital and his oral exchanges with officials of the country to which he is accredited. |