

ACTIVITIES OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

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Abstract : in this article you will learn what diplomatic mission is, its activities, and the activities of diplomatic missions of some countries

Key words : diplomatic mission, embassy, activities.

Introduction

A **diplomatic mission** or **foreign mission** is a group of people from a state or organization present in another state to represent the sending state or organization officially in the receiving or host state. In practice, the phrase usually denotes an **embassy**, which is the main office of a country's diplomatic representatives to another country; it is usually, but not necessarily, based in the receiving state's capital city. Consulates, on the other hand, are smaller diplomatic missions that are normally located in major cities of the receiving state (but can be located in the capital, typically when the sending country has no embassy in the receiving state). As well as being a diplomatic mission to the country in which it is situated, an embassy may also be a nonresident permanent mission to one or more other countries. The term embassy is sometimes used interchangeably with chancery, the physical office or site of a diplomatic mission. Consequently, the terms "embassy residence" and "embassy office" are used to distinguish between the ambassador's residence and the chancery. The head of an embassy is known as an ambassador or high commissioner. The term *embassy* is commonly used also as a section of a building in which the work of the diplomatic mission is carried out, but strictly speaking, it is the diplomatic delegation itself that is the embassy, while the office space and the diplomatic work done is called the chancery. Therefore, the embassy operates in the chancery. The members of a diplomatic mission can reside within or outside the building that holds the mission's chancery, and their private residences enjoy the same rights as the premises of the mission as regards inviolability and protection. All missions to the United Nations are known simply as *permanent missions*, while EU member states missions to the European Union are known as *permanent representations*, and the head of such a mission is typically both a permanent representative and an ambassador. European Union missions abroad are known as EU delegations. Some countries have more particular nomenclature for their missions and staff: a Vatican mission is headed by a nuncio (Latin for "envoy") and consequently known as an apostolic nunciature .

Under the rule of Muammar Gaddafi, Libya's missions used the name *people's bureau*, headed by a secretary. Missions between Commonwealth countries are known as *high commissions*, and their heads are high commissioners. Generally speaking, ambassadors and high commissioners are regarded as equivalent in status and function, and embassies and high commissions are both deemed to be diplomatic missions. In the past, a diplomatic mission headed by a lower-ranking official (an *envoy* or *minister resident*) was known as a legation. Since the ranks of envoy and minister resident are effectively obsolete, the designation of *legation* is no longer among the diplomatic ranks used in diplomacy and international relations.

Multiple mission in a city

Some cities may host more than one mission from the same country. In Rome, many states maintain separate missions to both Italy and the Holy See. It is not customary for these missions to share premises nor diplomatic personnel. At present, only the Iraqi and United States embassies to Italy and the Holy See share premises; however, separate ambassadors are appointed, one to each country. In the case of the UN's Food Agencies, the ambassador to the Italian Republic is usually accredited as permanent representative. The United States maintains a separate mission to the UN agency, led by its own ambassador, but is located in the compound that houses its embassies to Italy and the Holy See. Several cities host both embassies/consulates and permanent representatives to international organizations, such as New York City (United Nations), Washington D.C. (Organization of American States), Jakarta (ASEAN) and Brussels (European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Reports are filed by telegram, telephone, facsimile, and e-mail, usually on an encrypted basis to protect the confidentiality of information. (It is now much less common to file reports by a letter or dispatch to be hand-carried in the diplomatic pouch by a courier.) One of the ambassador's key tasks is to predict a developing crisis, a task accomplished through the gathering of information from an array of sources and the use of experience and expert knowledge in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting emerging key issues and patterns and their implications. The ambassador's duty is to advise and warn, and he is expected to brief his government in detail and without distortion about the content of his conversations with the host foreign minister, the prime minister, and other key officials and politicians. Beyond these functions, the ambassador negotiates as instructed. Negotiation is a complex process leading to agreement based on compromise, if it reaches agreement at all. (The object of international negotiation is not necessarily to reach agreement; it is to advance the interests in an ambassador's charge.) The topic of negotiation and the timing of initial overtures are set by the ambassador's foreign ministry. The foreign ministry (perhaps with cabinet involvement) also specifies the diplomatic strategy to be used. Usually this is specific to the goals and circumstances. For example, the Marshall Plan, through

which the United States provided several western and southern European countries with financial assistance after World war II, was the strategy used by the U.S. to pursue its goals in Europe in 1947. The foreign ministry also establishes broad tactics, often regarding initial demands, bargaining counters, and minimum final position. For the rest the negotiator, either an ambassador or a special envoy, is in most countries free to employ whatever tactics seem best.

Diplomatic agreement

If a negotiation succeeds, the result is embodied in an international instrument, of which there are several types. The most solemn is a treaty, a written agreement between states that is binding on the parties under international law and analogous to a contract in civil law. Treaties are registered at the UN and may be bilateral or multilateral; international organizations also conclude treaties both with individual states and with each other. A convention is a multilateral instrument of a lawmaking, codifying, or regulatory nature. Conventions are usually negotiated under the auspices of international entities or a conference of states. The UN and its agencies negotiate many conventions, as does the Council of Europe. Treaties and conventions require ratification, an executive act of final approval. In democratic countries parliamentary approval is deemed advisable for important treaties. In the United States the Senate must consent by a two-thirds vote. Elsewhere, legislative involvement is less drastic but has increased since World War II. In Britain treaties lie on the table of the House of Commons for 21 days before ratification; other countries have similar requirements. For bilateral treaties ratifications are exchanged; otherwise, they are deposited in a place named in the text, and the treaty takes effect when the specified number of ratifications have been received. Agreements are usually bilateral, not multilateral. Less formal and permanent than treaties, they deal with narrow, often technical topics. They are negotiated between governments or government departments, though sometimes nongovernmental entities are involved, as banks are in debt-rescheduling agreements. The United States has long used executive agreements to preserve secrecy and circumvent the ratification process.

Conclusion

Except in the smallest states, foreign ministries are organized both geographically and functionally. The functional departments include administration, personnel, finances, economic affairs, legal affairs, archives, and perhaps offices dealing with science, disarmament, narcotics, and cultural diplomacy.

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