



THE PROTOCOL ADVANTAGE

What is Protocol?

Functioning in today's global environment requires an ability to deal with people of diverse backgrounds and customs. In addition to a thorough understanding of what is expected in your position, having a working knowledge of different traditions, sensitivity to cross-cultural distinctions and a mastery of modern protocol and advance techniques are critical for successful dignitary management operations. The Protocol Advantage provides protocol professionals with the orientation necessary for effective interactions, here and abroad.

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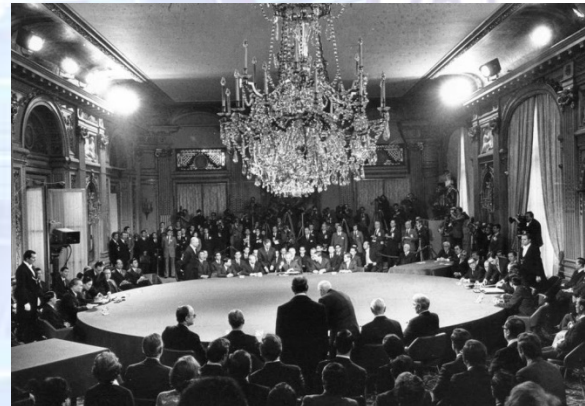
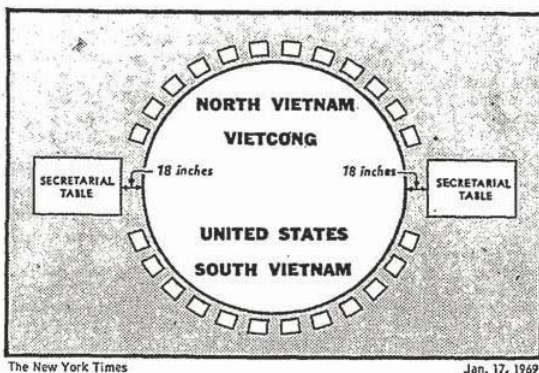
Introduction

If it wasn't for protocol, the Paris Peace Accords—which led to the end of Vietnam War—may have never begun.

The negotiations were challenged from the outset by an extended 10-week deadlock on procedural matters, mostly the shape of the table and seating arrangements. At the heart of the dispute was South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky's refusal to accept any seating plan that afforded the National Liberation Front (NLF) an equal footing with Saigon. North Vietnam and the NLF similarly balked at any arrangement that would recognize Saigon as the legitimate regime of South Vietnam.¹

tables positioned at opposite ends. This enabled NLF representatives to join the North Vietnamese team without having to be acknowledged by Saigon's delegates; similarly, South Vietnamese negotiators could sit with their American allies without having to be acknowledged by the North Vietnamese and the NLF representatives.²

Today's agreement provided a seating formula elastic enough for the allies to speak of two sides and for the enemy to speak of a four-sided affair. This ambiguity permits all participants to claim victory in the protocol dispute.³



When the talks finally opened, the parties were seated at a large round table devoid of "nameplates, flags or markings," with two smaller rectangular

The solution (left and above) was a 12-foot circular table—without nameplates, flags or markings—and two rectangular tables—measuring about 3 feet by 4½ feet—placed 18 inches from the round table at opposite ends (Source: NYT 1/17/69)

¹ The Paris Agreement on Vietnam: 25 Years Later, The Nixon Center, Washington, DC, April 1998 and Broening, Stephens. "Table Talks Tables Paris Peace Talks" AP News Wire 1/3/69

² Hofmann, Paul. "Extended Vietnam Talks Begin in Paris Tomorrow; Round Table Agreed Upon" New York Times 1/17/69

³ Ibid.



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This is the power of protocol, which is well known to those in the diplomatic and governmental communities. Its success in easing negotiations has led the business community to begin adopting these rules as well.

What Is Protocol?

Protocol is an internationally accepted code of conduct created to simplify relationships so that business and diplomacy can be conducted between individuals of different cultures without the risk of inadvertently giving offense.

Henry Catto, Chief of Protocol of the United States, characterized protocol as "...a formalized system of personal interactions designed to reduce diplomacy's and life's stresses to a minimum. It is a sort of systematized thoughtfulness."⁴

To some, these rituals may seem arcane, inflexible or even absurd when measured against such issues as war and peace, economic stability and human rights. But while these matters may seem on a surface level to be insignificant, there is a long-standing and unspoken acceptance that form is essential and that adherence to prescribed rules will promote accord.

⁴ Henry Catto, (Chief of Protocol of the United States 1976 to 1977) personal interview, 4/15/1988

Charles De Gaulle is reported to have said, "Dignity preserves authority." Without according respect to your opposition, no negotiations of any kind are possible, and protocol is the accepted path to dignified treatment.⁵

A Brief History

The more contemporary uses of protocol in political negotiations belie a much longer history.

The earliest recorded use of protocol actually extends back to the height of the Egyptian era, when hieroglyphics were utilized to record social exchanges between representatives of various tribes, nations and rulers. But the word "protocol" actually finds its origin in the Greek *protos* meaning "the first," and *kola*, meaning "glue," which came together as a common phrase referring to the front sheet attached to a papyrus roll.⁶

By the late Roman Empire, a *protocollum* was "a volume of leaves bound together with glue, in which public acts were recorded so as to guard against fraud or error on the part of those responsible for preparing them." *Protocollum* soon came to mean the process of drawing up official public

⁵ Cook, Don. Charles de Gaulle, A Biography. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1983

⁶ The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, (New York: Random House, 1969) 1156



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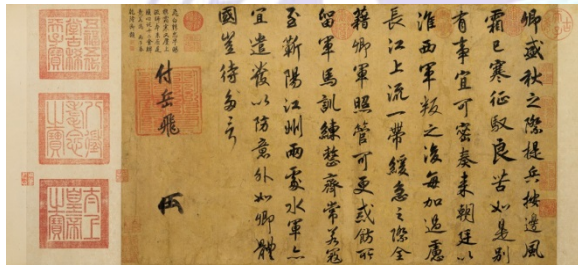
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documents and eventually, the documents themselves.⁷

A world away in ancient China, protocol was a way for imperial edicts and directives to be easily authenticated. It was decreed that anyone using vermilion ink aside from the emperor would be put to death. As a result, any document drafted in red ink could be firmly accepted as coming personally from the emperor, a handy technique to avoid counterfeiting.⁸



Imperial order with vermilion ink of Chinese Emperor Gaozong (1127-1162)

By the 19th century, the French terms *protocole diplomatique* or *protocole de chancellerie* referred to the body of ceremonial rules to be observed in all discourse between heads of different states or their ministers.

It is this French use of the term that serves as the basis for the modern understanding of protocol as the code of

international politeness that blends diplomatic form, ceremony and etiquette.⁹ Thus, any breach of these well-established rules may be interpreted as an indication of disfavor or as evidence of a substantive policy disagreement.

In democracies, much of the foundation for legislative behavior is derived from the British House of Commons, including the distance between the chairs of government and opposition legislators. This distance was proscribed in 1547 to be at least two sword lengths, and was intended to prevent dissenting lawmakers from impaling each other in fits of passion. In one 18th century meeting of the House, a member's wig was actually impaled and removed by another member's sword.¹⁰



U.S. Senator Charles Sumner was severely beaten by Congressman Preston S. Brooks.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Endymion Wilkinson. *Chinese History: A New Manual*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series. New Edition; Second, Revised printing March 2013

⁹ Jacques Gandouin, *Guide de Protocole* (France: L'Academie Francais, 1979) 4-12

¹⁰ "Off the Carpet" *Time* 6/10/1935 and "Renovated Bottle" *Time* 11/6/1950



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You might think that American legislators would be above such violence, but on May 22, 1856, U.S. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was badly beaten by South Carolina Congressman Preston S. Brooks in the Senate chamber while Sumner was delivering a passionate speech against slavery. Sumner did not fully recover for two years and then left the Senate to become U.S. Secretary of State.¹¹

Being an Effective Protocol Professional

What are the qualities and skills that make one an effective protocol professional?

New York City Mayor John Lindsay put it aptly in 1973 when he announced the appointment of William J.P. Curley, Jr. as New York City's commissioner of public events, a title then equivalent to chief of protocol. He said the job "requires the managerial skills of a business executive, the charm and energy of a salesman and the sensitivity and wisdom of a diplomat."¹²

¹¹ U.S. Senate Stories 1851-1877. "May 22, 1856: The Caning of Senator Charles Sumner"; Donald, David; Charles Sumner and the Rights of Man. New York, Knopf, 1970 and Potter, David M. The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861. New York: Harper & Row, 1976

¹² New York City Office of the Mayor Press Release #206-73 4/10/73

In addition, a protocol professional must also be knowledgeable about ceremony, history, culture and psychology as well as be scrupulously attentive to detail. The volume of detail required by protocol tasks is monumental.

The [public's] perception [of protocol] is that protocol is wonderfully exciting, glamorous, historic; the reality is [that's] partially true. It is exciting, but it sure includes a lot of dogged detail and decidedly un-glamorous work. That's what makes it work.¹³

A protocol professional must also be alert to security concerns, quick-thinking when the unforeseeable occurs, and unflappable during periods of high stress. For example, when kings, presidents and heads of government arrive in the United States virtually simultaneously—as for the opening session of the United Nations' General Assembly—the burden on the protocol officers is prodigious. The demands of a proper and gracious host must be as carefully met as when one important visitor is in town. A 1993 New York Times interview addressed some of the attention to rank and logistics that the United Nations' chief of protocol must oversee for the secretary general:

¹³ Barbara A. Margolis, (Chief of Protocol, City of New York) personal interviews, 11/87 - 5/88



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If a head of state comes calling, protocol demands that the Secretary General meet him at the delegates' entrance on the ground floor. He meets a head of government at the elevator on the ground floor of his office. A foreign minister must make his own way to the Secretary General's Office.¹⁴

Similarly, whenever official guests visit the White House, protocol requires that careful attention be paid to numerous details, and aides are "...given tours of the White House to familiarize themselves with its history and background and they are supplied with a manual that spells out the formalities of diplomatic protocol, the customs of different countries and the rules governing formal introductions."¹⁵

The Importance of Protocol

Protocol is a challenging, demanding and important aspect of government and business interactions. By placing protocol in its historical context and by stimulating discussion and analysis of the invaluable contributions protocol makes in the conduct of state and commerce, we hope to make the

challenging work of the protocol professional easier and more effective.

Remember, if you get protocol wrong from the outset, your negotiations will almost certainly be less fruitful. In international relations, protocol provides a path of safety and certainty and is an essential element in achieving your objectives.

Let us learn from the diplomatic successes—and gaffes—of others so that those whose reputations we protect are better served.

Like many other practices that evolved from specific historical situations and continue to be of value, protocol has long served an essential political function. It has often been a linchpin of negotiations—and failure to comply with these rules has resulted in escalation.

For example, a minor confrontation in the Caribbean has been cited as the catalyst for the "War of Jenkins' Ear," a nine-year conflict between Great Britain and Spain that began in 1739. British Captain Robert Jenkins claimed that his ear had been cut off and his crew mistreated after his ship was boarded by the Spanish Guarda Costa. The removal of his ear was culturally consistent with Spanish practice of giving the ear of a defeated bull to a successful matador as a trophy. So well known was this practice that Jenkins' story was widely believed—especially when he presented

¹⁴ Aly Teymour, (Assistant to the Secretary General and Chief of Protocol, United Nations) personal interview, 7/22/93

¹⁵ Gamarekian, Barbara, "Making White House Social Guests Feel At Home" New York Times, 7/3/81 B4



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his severed ear to Parliament. Coupled with the continued attacks by Spain on British trade, Jenkins' severed ear led to a declaration of war.

History shows us that these seemingly insignificant aspects of propriety and culture can be either implemented or ignored, both to quite significant effect. Gillian Martin Sorensen, New York City Commissioner for the United Nations and Consular Corps, remarked during her tenure on the importance of protocol efforts:

Protocol... is more than just arbitrary rules and tea parties. Protocol builds goodwill, which leads to good business. It is an expression of respect, of welcome, and hospitality leading to more serious purpose underneath. It is not a frivolous matter, but, really a central matter to [any jurisdiction that has] the hope of being visible [and] important on the international scene.¹⁶

Protocol is often used as a metaphor for statements of policy or power.

To announce a change in policy:

¹⁶ Gillian Martin Sorensen, (Commissioner, New York City Commission for the United Nations and Consular Corps) remarks at the National Conference on Consular Affairs and Protocol in New York City, 4/29/88

Western ambassadors attended the annual May Day parade in Moscow today for the first time in eight years, ending a boycott prompted by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.¹⁷

Protocol also provides a basis for mutual respect between foreign governments and businesses and plays a key role in fundamentally different parties reaching consensus. When protocol dictates standing and privilege, there will be no conflict over who receives certain honors and courtesies. Without protocol, diplomacy is impossible—and without diplomacy, war is inevitable.

The rules of protocol can also be used to dispel reports of dissension.

To dispel reports of acrimony between General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev and the next senior Communist party official, Yegor K. Ligachev, the Kremlin had them appear together at the annual celebration of Lenin's 1870 birth.

The frequent friendly exchanges between Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Ligachev at today's gathering, and the fact that they were seated next to each other, were unusual.

¹⁷ "West's Envoys End Boycott of May Day Fete in Moscow," New York Times 5/2/88 A12



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The Soviet President, Andrei A. Gromyko, is normally seated between the two leaders at public appearances because of protocol. Today he was seated on the other side of the lectern.¹⁸



From atop Lenin's Tomb in Moscow's Red Square, General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev (center behind microphones) makes remarks at the May Day parade. The Soviet Union long used precedence as a means to demonstrate who was in power and favor.

Kremlin watchers said that in this case, the leaders used protocol to underscore the erroneous impressions reflected in previously published reports.

On May 2, the New York Times followed up with another story, indicating a return to the Soviet hierarchy's traditional order of precedence:

Mr. Gorbachev presided over the Red Square [May Day] parade. He was flanked by [Soviet]

President Gromyko and [Soviet] Prime Minister Nikolai I. Ryzhkov.

Next came Yegor K. Ligachev, regarded for the past three years as the No. 2 Kremlin leader. Mr. Ligachev was recently reported to have lost his role as the chief Communist party ideologist.¹⁹

Even as protocol can be used to dispel dissension, an intentional slip can emphasize a schism.



Russian President Vladimir Putin found that his trip to EU headquarters was unilaterally shortened (1/28/14)

In January 2014, tensions were brewing between Russia and the European Union over which would control Ukraine and its breakaway Crimean peninsula. When Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Brussels for a prearranged visit to the European Union's headquarters, he found that the agreed-upon itinerary had been significantly cut

¹⁸ Philip Taubman, "Moscow Rebutting Reports of a Rift," New York Times 4/23/88, A1

¹⁹ "West's Envoys End Boycott of May Day Fete in Moscow" New York Times 5/2/88 A12



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back. What had been billed as an "E.U. - Russia Summit" was sliced from two days to three hours.

As a further insult, Putin would no longer be served dinner, which an article in the Times called "... a small sign of the way escalating tensions over Ukraine have scrambled even basic rituals of diplomacy."²⁰

The end of the Cold War and the expansion of democracy heralded an era in which governments spent less time on defense and political issues and focused more on creating commercial prosperity and economic stability. This is especially evident in international trading blocs like the European Union and parties to the North American Free Trade Agreement. But as in conflict-central negotiations, lapses in protocol can have significant economic consequences.

A brief article in the Washington Post on Aug. 20, 1993 reported that Boeing and McDonnell Douglas had won a \$6 billion dollar contract to supply Saudi Arabia with as many as 60 civilian jets. But there was no subsequent official comment from either company or the federal government. When asked, a Boeing spokesman remarked, "As soon as the Saudis say we have something to

say, we will say it." Equally vague, a White House official said, "We welcome such a sale, and at the appropriate time the Saudi government will make an announcement."

This was an unusual silence, but it carefully avoided repeating an earlier breach of protocol on the part of a senior French official, who, upon returning from Riyadh, publicly announced that Europe's Airbus consortium had all but won the Saudi contract. This premature report so enraged the Saudis that they reconsidered the deal and eventually awarded the contract to the Americans, who smartly respected the stipulation that the Saudis be the ones to announce the arrangement.²¹

The Washington Post

Saudis Shift Jetliner Order to U.S.

AUGUST 20, 1993 BY JOHN MINTZ AND RUTH MARCUS

Washington, D.C. — King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, responding to personal appeals by Pres Clinton, has decided that Saudi Arabia will buy as much as \$6 billion worth of passenger jetliners from Boeing Co and McDonnell Douglas Corp, instead of from their

The lesson to be learned here is that a full and sensitive appreciation of the

²⁰ Andrew Higgins, "Sign of a Chill: E.U. Doesn't Set Table for Putin," New York Times 1/28/14, A1

²¹ Friedman, Thomas. "Saudi Air to Buy \$6 Billion in Jets Built in the U.S." New York Times 2/17/94



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interests, customs, traditions and manners of the people with whom one is dealing is of paramount importance. Demonstrating an awareness of a society's traditions and values is often viewed as the highest mark of respect and rarely goes unrewarded.

Occasionally, errors in protocol can balloon into international incidents.

When President Clinton visited South Korea in 1993, he inadvertently delayed the formal state dinner and then embarrassed his South Korean hosts by incorrectly referring to President Kim Young Sam's wife as Mrs. Kim when she should have been addressed as Sohn Myong Suk or Mrs. Sohn.²²



The Clinton's attend a State Dinner at the Blue House in Seoul, South Korea on July 10, 1993

In addition, when Clinton rose to deliver his dinner speech, he placed a translator between himself and

²² In Korea, a woman keeps her maiden name and does not adopt the name of her husband, as is the custom in the West.

President Kim. This was doubly unfortunate. First of all, it is highly insulting, especially in Korea, to have anyone standing between two heads of state—and staff representatives reportedly had agreed that the presidents would speak in their native languages without utilizing interpreters, as Kim, himself, had just done. Adding insult to injury, the simultaneous translation did not match the text of the distributed remarks.²³

While this affair did not lead to a serious breach in U.S. relations with South Korea, some Korean officials interpreted this behavior as evidence of a lack of respect among Americans for the Korean government and people. The degree to which a diplomatic representative—particularly a head of state—observes the customs and traditions of a host is an especially important measure of the value and importance attached to both the personal relationship between the dignitaries and the relationship between their sovereign entities.

Gaffes can also just be embarrassing episodes that garner significant coverage by the media, such as when President George H.W. Bush became violently ill at a state dinner given by the Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa on Jan. 8, 1992, vomiting

²³ "Clinton's Flair Turns to Flubs" Associated Press 7/11/93



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copiously into the lap of his host and then slumping unconscious on live television, causing much alarm around the world.



President George H.W. Bush became violently ill at a state dinner given by the Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa (1/8/92)

"The president is human; he gets sick," said White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater.

Aides passed the episode off as a kind of gastroenteritis but was exhaustion a factor? The Tokyo stop was part of an packed 12-day trip to Asia, and earlier that same day, the 67-year-old president engaged in an intense tennis match with Emperor Akihito. Either way, the awkwardness of the episode can never be erased—and a new Japanese phrase for vomiting, *Bushu-suru*, was coined. The President certainly didn't want to miss the dinner and offend the Japanese, but postponing may have been a wiser decision.²⁴

²⁴ Wines, Michael. "Bush Collapses at State Dinner with the Japanese". New York Times 1/9/92 and ABC News video report aired on

Aside from illness, other incidental personal entanglements can bring the risk of highly public protocol ramifications.

In early 2014, President François Hollande of France split with his significant other, Valérie Trierweiler, shortly before a state visit to the United States. One of the most significant items on the itinerary was the 300-guest state dinner at the White House.



French President François Hollande (center) had to decide who would accompany him to Washington for a state dinner at the White House; longtime girlfriend Valerie Trierweiler (left) or actress Julie Gayet (right)

Coordinating a state dinner is always tough—especially when planning a dinner for the French, who have notoriously high gastronomic standards. Throw in this last-minute change, and you have an event replete with diplomatic landmines including what the First Lady's role should now be, who

1/11/92 <http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/jan-11-1992-president-bush-sick-japan-9357727>



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should now sit next to the French president and if there should be dancing if the guest of honor has no partner.



Reprinted White House program honoring the President of France (2/11/14)

In short order, formal invitations and dinner programs engraved with the gold presidential seal were reprinted, photos re-scripted, presidential remarks rewritten, "spouse" events canceled and seating charts juggled. It could have been worse: the year prior, President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil canceled a state dinner after learning that the U.S. National Security Agency had been spying on her.²⁵

Ultimately, White House staffers resolved the Hollande seating issue in "a dignified but creative way." They seated two particularly interesting guests near Mr. Hollande: Thelma Golden, Director of the Studio Museum

in Harlem; and Stephen Colbert, the TV host and actor. The evening was an apparent success, with Hollande telling those assembled that he wished he could stay longer in the United States.²⁶

While protocol offers a way to correct many unexpected hiccups in social interaction, errors in protocol—especially regarding religious observance—can cause especially loud outcries. When Wu Den-yih, Vice President of the Republic of China, traveled to the Vatican for the canonization of two past popes in April 2014, the trip was viewed by Taiwan's Foreign Ministry as a means for showing respect to the Holy See and policy neutral.

But unfortunately, Wu, a non-Catholic, was seen taking communion. This sparked anger among Catholics who believe that only those baptized should partake in the Eucharist sacrament.

It may be that he joined in [taking communion] because others nearby in the diplomatic group were doing so, and nobody reminded [him] about the rules.²⁷

This faux pas was completely avoidable had the ministry done a better job of

²⁵ Peter Baker, "French Breakup Makes A Dinner Harder To Do," New York Times, 2/8/14 A1

²⁶ Mark Landler, "State Dinner Guest List for Hollande is Impressive, If Minus One," New York Times, 2/11/14 A6

²⁷ Ibid.



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advancing the trip and briefing the vice president.

In the future, when the president or the vice president attend an important international event, they should put more effort into learning proper protocol and etiquette.²⁸



Wu Den-yih, Vice President of the Republic of China accepts communion at the Vatican (4/27/14)

Another notable incident that took on additional import due to religious tenets occurred during a surprise visit to Iraq by President George W. Bush on December 14, 2008. "This is a farewell kiss from the Iraqi people, you dog!" shouted Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zaidi in Arabic as he threw a shoe at the president during a press conference at the Prime Minister's palace in Baghdad.

²⁸ Tsao Po-yen and Jason Pan, "VP Wu breaches religious protocol at the Vatican." Taipei Times 5/1/14

"This is for the widows and orphans and all those killed in Iraq", he continued, as he launched a second shoe.

President Bush ducked twice to avoid being hit. In Arab culture, it's considered rude to even bare the sole of one's shoe at another person and that significance made the incident especially noteworthy.²⁹

The sensitivity relates to the fact shoes are considered unclean in the Muslim faith. In addition to ritual ablutions before prayer, Muslims must take off their shoes to pray and wearing shoes inside a mosque is forbidden.³⁰



A demonstrator threw his left shoe towards at President Bush during a press conference with the Iraqi Prime Minister in Baghdad (12/14/08)

²⁹ Shoes thrown at Bush on Iraq trip". Middle East (BBC News) 12/14/08 and ABC News video report aired 12/14/08 <http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/dec-14-2008-shoe-thrown-bush-iraq-12364410>

³⁰ "Bush shoe-ing worst Arab insult" BBC Report 12/16/08



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As a sidebar to this incident, *Ramazan Baydan*, the Turkish company that manufactured the shoes thrown at President Bush, received an immediate upsurge in sales with orders for 300,000 pairs arriving within the next week³¹

When he was the chief American delegate at the United Nations, Adlai E. Stevenson remarked, "A diplomat's life is made up of three ingredients: protocol, Geritol and alcohol."³²

Richard Gookin, Associate Chief of Protocol for Diplomatic and Consular Liaisons, added, "I'm lucky enough to be responsible for protocol, young enough to avoid the Geritol, and my doctor has said I must lay off the alcohol."³³

Even people who normally disdain protocol admit to embarrassment when they realize that they have violated it unintentionally. Edward I. Koch, former mayor of New York City and notorious for his disdain for social niceties, related this story at a 1988 Gracie Mansion dinner in honor of the king and queen of Sweden:

...While I will never ever tell a story that her Majesty related to me, because one does not do

that part of the protocol; one never reveals what a king or queen has told you. I did it once, when I met Prince Charles, and he told—I'm not going to tell you what he told me—but he told it to me in the presence of 12 people; and how was I to know that that was a secret. So when I left the boat and the reporters, obnoxious as they can be, wanted to intrude on my private conversation, and they asked me what had taken place and I, who satisfied them, told them what he had said, and immediately it went out on the AP wire. And I got a call from the English ambassador, and he said, "You have just violated protocol. You are not allowed to reveal anything that Prince Charles told you. And you must retrieve it." So I explained to him that that was not possible in America. And then I said to him "How was I to know ... I don't hang around with [royalty]. Next time you have to tell me." But now, having had the experience, I know that [one] does not reveal any conversation.³⁴

³¹ Turkish company sees boom in sales of 'Bush shoes'. Melbourne: Theage.com.au. 12/20/08

³² As reported by Elaine Sciolino, "U.N. Parties: Quick Exits, Roasted Goats," New York Times 11/5/86

³³ Richard Gookin, (Associate Chief of Protocol of the United States) personal interview, 4/22/88

Though unrealistic in the United States, the English Ambassador was entirely serious in his request for Koch to "retrieve" his remarks, and while Koch

³⁴ Edward I. Koch, (Mayor, City of New York) remarks at Gracie Mansion Dinner 4/15/88



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Functioning in today's global environment requires an ability to deal with people of diverse backgrounds and customs. In addition to a thorough understanding of what is expected in your position, having a working knowledge of different traditions, sensitivity to cross-cultural distinctions and a mastery of modern protocol and advance techniques are critical for successful dignitary management operations. The Protocol Advantage provides protocol professionals with the orientation necessary for effective interactions, here and abroad.

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was unable to do so, he had been taught a rare lesson (for him) in circumspect behavior.³⁵

As smart as he is, even Microsoft mogul Bill Gates makes the occasional protocol mistake—and Microsoft shareholders have suffered as a result. In one such avoidable situation, Gates was photographed shaking hands with President Park Geun-hye of South Korea with his left hand in his pocket. In Korea, a hand tucked inside your pocket means you're hiding something and shouldn't be trusted. Microsoft's stock price dropped after this incident.³⁶



A reporter for Korea's MBN News painstakingly analyzed the "hand in pocket" incident (4/23/13)

The tech company's stock took another hit after an incident in 1998 in Brussels, in which Gates was pied in the face. The turn of events was widely photographed

and distributed all over the world. In this case, as in the South Korea offense, better protocol could have saved Gates from suffering such embarrassment.



Bill Gates gets pied in Belgium (2/4/98)

Conclusion

Those in significant positions in government and business—whether elected or inherited—expect obedience to their codes and the prerequisites afforded by protocol as recognition of their status. This is a reality that every effective protocol professional must understand and appreciate, for the penalties for failing to do so can be severe.

The Protocol Resource and Operations Service (PROTOCOL) provides dignitary management and protocol counsel to corporate, government, NGO, not-for-profit, high net-worth individuals and special event organizations around the world. PROTOCOL's global network is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere in the world, even on short notice. While PROTOCOL enjoys a reputation for excellence, it is the success of our clients' ventures that are the hallmark of our achievement.

³⁵ Apple, R.W. "British, Uneasy over Irish, Cancel visit to US by Princess Margaret" New York Times 6/30/81

³⁶ Wax, Emily. "Cultural-sensitivity soldiers save diplomats, corporate titans from themselves" Washington Post 4/23/13