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Diplomacy's Value

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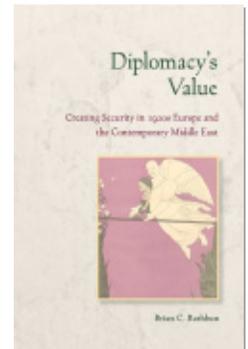
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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book has a very personal beginning. After my wife and I finished graduate school, she was hired to work as a diplomat for the U.S. State Department. After the initial excitement that accompanies one's first grown-up job (better said, vicarious excitement, because I was unemployed, having been beat out for that very same job by this wonderful woman I had married), I realized that I had absolutely no earthly idea what Nina would be doing. She was similarly clueless, having received the same apparently inadequate Ph.D. education I had. How could it be that after six years of graduate school at Berkeley we had no real understanding of what comprises most of interstate relations—communicating via diplomacy? I noted this as a future research topic. Ten years later, this is the result.

When I finally started looking into diplomacy as a concept and a phenomenon, I felt better. No one else seemed to have any idea either. I found a half-dozen reviews of the literature on diplomacy, all complaining that no one had studied it and no one knew how it worked. They provided a few requisite quotes from diplomats who claimed that their brilliant skill was simply intuitive and inexplicable and then went onto a list of the various functions of the diplomat—smiling at cocktail parties, acting pretentious, and so on. Yet, frustratingly, none of these works really did anything about this enormous gap in our scholarly knowledge.

To make progress, I first had to understand that diplomacy was, at least conceptually, very different from foreign policy. Diplomacy is not the formulation of foreign policy interests; it is the pursuit of them without recourse to force. This can be done in different ways. State leaders can engage in coercive bargaining, pragmatic statecraft, or reasoned dialogue. There are different diplomatic styles used to pursue the same goals.

I had the perfect laboratory to test these arguments—1920s Europe. I had been interested since graduate school in this somewhat neglected period in great power politics. After I published my first book, I turned back to it, hoping to make the case again that parties defined the national interest differently. In hindsight, this would have been a mistake, a mere retread of my first book. And it would not have worked in any case. The definition of the national interest was not in dispute in the domestic politics of France, Britain, and Germany between the wars. This had frustrated me when I first took up the topic, but when I reopened it, I saw that this fact served my new theoretical purposes. Foreign policy goals were not contested, but diplomatic style was.

It indicated, yet again, that important elements of state behavior are not structurally determined. Diplomacy is the exercise of agency. Those with different diplomatic styles take the same interests and go about achieving them in very different ways. Indeed, it is hard to think about diplomacy in any meaningful way if it is simply endogenous to attributes of the environment such as the position of a state in the distribution of power. If the powerful always get what they want, then the neglect of diplomacy in the international relations literature is forgivable. Yet they don't, and it isn't.

It is not enough, however, simply to show that diplomacy matters. I wanted to say something about what diplomatic styles we could expect states to pursue. Here I drew again on psychological attributes of decision makers, in particular social and epistemic motivations. These two factors combine to produce a number of diplomatic styles that we find implied in different schools of international relations theory. In other words, not only do we have realist and liberal scholars, we also have realist and liberal practitioners, and we can predict who they are likely to be. Scholarly debates are replicated in the real world with real consequences.

I envision this book as the last in a triptych of books that one might think of as neo-idealist in character. They are idealist in that a major takeaway from all of them is that we are not destined to a competitive world of power politics; leaders exercise considerable agency in their foreign policy choices. In *Partisan Interventions*, I contend that states often intervene with military force for humanitarian purposes. In *Trust in International Cooperation*, I show they are capable of trusting other states to effectively create multilateral security institutions. And in this book, *Diplomacy's Value*, I demonstrate that liberal and realist diplomacy enables states to reach win-win outcomes that they would otherwise not have achieved through coercive bargaining. The books are neo, however, in the sense that they are neither naïve nor normative. All three are based on rigorous objective analysis with a careful research design. The last

two make the case that decision makers can reach cooperative outcomes even when motivated primarily by egoistic ends. But also, always, there are opponents of humanitarian intervention, multilateralism, and reasoned diplomacy. These outcomes are by no means predetermined. Particular political parties favor them, while others do not. I do not think that we are on a long march to a liberal paradise.

I was fortunate enough to be put through the fire by Iain Johnston, Todd Sechser, Wayne Sandholtz, Jacques Hymans, Mark Haas, Jon Mercer, David Welch, Vincent Pouliot, Robert Trager, Paul Sharp, Jennifer Mitzen, Marcus Holmes, Mark Trachtenberg, Jordan Branch, Arthur Stein, Andrew Moravcsik, Burcu Bayram, Aaron Rapport, Mai'a Davis Cross, and audiences at Princeton University, the University of Texas–Austin, UCLA, and McGill University. Any remaining mistakes I blame on them for not catching.

Heather McKibben helped me immensely in situating my argument against the alternatives and showing how they are often more complementary than competitive. Dustin Tingley greatly influenced my thinking about case selection. Ron Krebs was instrumental in helping me distinguish foreign policy from diplomacy. Andrew Moravcsik made me deal with the role of interests and beliefs in isolating the causal importance of diplomatic style. Nina brought me down to size repeatedly by saying, “Yes, of course,” to every insight I thought I had generated about the diplomatic process, as diplomats will do. Robert Jervis was one of the reviewers for Cornell University Press. His endorsement was one of the highest points of my professional career. Another anonymous reviewer was also superb. Anyone who has worked with Roger Haydon at the press knows how he combines humor with professionalism to make publishing a book painless. It was great fun to do this again with him. I thank my graduate student Mark Paradis for research assistance. The Center for International Studies at the University of Southern California and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada were generous in providing me with research support.

A theme in this book is that by combining efforts one can create value. This is also true in my life. Nina and I have done this with our two sons—Max and Luc. These precious little boys make me want to be a better person, father, and scholar, although with various degrees of success. If you two ever read this, know that your dad loves you.

