Christopher Prior / Falko Schnicke

Ignorance and Vulnerability in Post-Colonial Diplomacy

Global South-UK Relations in the 1950s and 1960s

Abstract: In the post-colonial era, both former colonizing and former colonized powers found themselves engaged in a dramatic renegotiation of diplomatic relationships. Against this backdrop, the access to, or withholding of, information and understanding about other states became a key asset in any mobilization of leverage and maintenance of agency. This article draws upon the case studies of the UK's diplomatic relationships with African states and India in order to emphasize the virtue of combining New Diplomatic History (NDH) and history-of-knowledge approaches. Competing knowledges, and the denying of access to knowledge to others, could be mobilized in pursuit of competing agendas, both across and within national governments. The fragilities and contingencies behind the availability of information, coupled with enduring colonial-era prejudices which others could exploit, created areas of ignorance, and rendered governmental knowledge processes vulnerable.

Keywords: post-colonial; diplomacy; knowledge; ignorance; Global South; UK; India; Africa; Ghana; Nigeria; royal visits; Cold War; New Diplomatic History

In the post-colonial world, the acquisition of foreign policy knowledge was a central concern in the Global South as well as in the UK. The UK's Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi, Ronald Belcher, experienced this. In the mid-1960s, he saw an opportunity for the UK to enhance its post-colonial role in Asia and Africa. As multilateralism intensified during the era of decolonization, the UK government

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became acutely aware of being frozen out of conversations between its ex-colonies. Concerns inevitably emerged in the Foreign Office (FO) about what India's emerging role in post-colonial Africa might mean for the UK's efforts there. So, when Belcher reported that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs had difficulty developing "any kind of expertise on African matters since they had so few officers that had any first hand [*sic*] knowledge of the continent", it encouraged officials back in London. Belcher suggested here was a chance for the FO to shape India's understanding of Africa.[1] British diplomats not only faced a situation where they were acting as representatives of an *ex*-colonial power, but where the reconfiguration of inter-Global South dynamics through emergent processes and affiliations such as the Non-Aligned Movement threatened the UK's sense of its agency to foster positive Global North-Global South foreign relations. But what is important to us here is the willingness of a British diplomat to highlight the potential of the deployment of knowledge for policy outcomes. The only trouble was, in the wake of the end of empire, the limits of the UK government's own understanding of its former colonies was also becoming painfully apparent. In 1966 UK officials were debating how to talk to their NATO allies about the state of affairs in Africa. Cutting through London's carefully constructed efforts to project itself as an expert on Africa, FO official Guy Millard was sceptical. "I must say that I have some hesitation in making any statement in NATO about the situation in Anglophone African countries, as we have done from time to time in the past", he wrote, for "[t]o do so implies that we have some inner knowledge of what goes on there, which seems doubtful".[2]

What becomes clear from this example is that in the course of decolonization, foreign policy knowledge became precarious. Foreign policy actors felt its collection had become an uncertain process. Moreover, as a result of the Cold War, foreign policy knowledge was intertwined with both non-Western and Western interests. Looking at the 1950s and 1960s and taking a knowledge-historical approach, these three aspects are central to this article. This period witnessed fundamental and rapid changes in international relations, instigated by decolonization, the emergence of new global players, and the global Cold War, all of which had repercussions for the functioning of foreign policy apparatuses in Asia, Africa, and Europe. Thus, we can understand the level of attention that any possibilities for understanding other nations' intentions generated, but also the emergence of uncertainties expressed by different powers.

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1   The National Archives, London, (TNA), FO 371/176530, Ronald Belcher to John Chadwick, 14 October 1964.
2   TNA, FO 371/187696, G. E. Millard to John Barnes, 3 August 1966.

Both colonial legacies and post-colonial motivations kept former colonizer and former colonized in close contact. The UK remained central to many Global South nations' international trade.[3] Whilst the Commonwealth did not emerge as the global force for which the UK had hoped, it was still something into which African, Asian, and UK governments invested time and political capital to bolster their own international positions.[4] Thus, the UK remained an important power that, as far as was possible, Global South governments sought to manage or at least influence. Conversely, the UK believed Anglophone Africa and Asia including India were the two main Global South regions within which it could carve out its own significant roles in a post-imperial world. In the 1950s and 1960s, these were central to British articulations of both possibilities and anxieties.[5]

Knowledge, understood as "a capacity for action that transforms, or even creates, reality", is a central foreign policy resource.[6] Given that diplomatic knowledge has also always been knowledge about the world,[7] in the age of global transformation this was even more so. Until today, "[s]tates […] are made of knowledge, just as knowledge is constituted by states", as Sheila Jasanoff suggests.[8] However, the absence of available or secure knowledge due to the transformation of the international system after the Second World War was a significant obstacle to states' sense that they understood one another. It was associated, at the very least, with a perception of foreign policy vulnerability, a perception that existed on various sides, as the references by Belcher to India and Millard's comments on UK expertise show.

Even though knowledge has received relatively little attention in political science, IR, and historical research,[9] the study of the production, availability, and the (intended) use of diplomatic knowledge allows a fresh look at the period of transformation during the decolonization of Asia and Africa. This includes attention to ignorance, conceived as "historical forms of not knowing and […] historical strate-

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3   See, for example, Joe U. Umo, An analysis of Nigeria's trade with special reference to import demand, in: Jonathan H. Frimpong-Ansah/S. M. Ravi Kanbur/Peter Svedberg (eds.), Trade and Development in sub-Saharan Africa, Manchester/New York 1991, 262–280; Dietmar Rothermund, An Economic History of India. From Pre-Colonial Times to 1991, London/New York 1993, 159.

4   Philip Murphy, The Empire's New Clothes. The Myth of the Commonwealth, London 2021; TNA CAB 163/54, Joint Intelligence Committee, "Outlook for Nigeria", 6 March 1962.

5   Frank Heinlein, British Government Policy and Decolonisation, 1945–1963, London 2015; Philip Murphy, Monarchy and the End of Empire. The House of Windsor, the British Government, and the Postwar Commonwealth, Oxford 2015, 88–106.

6   Marian Adolf and Nico Stehr, Knowledge. Is Knowledge Power?, London/New York 2017, 20.

7   Noé Cornago, Diplomatic Knowledge, in: Costa M. Constantinou/Pauline Kerr/Paul Sharp (eds.), The Sage Handbook of Diplomacy, London 2016, 133–146, 134–136.

8   Sheila Jasanoff, The idiom of co-production, in: Jasanoff (ed.), States of Knowledge. The co-production of science and social order, London/New York 2004, 1–12, 3.

9   Cornago, Diplomatic, (2016), 134.

gies of dealing with unknowns".[10] Ignorance always encompasses more than the available knowledge of societies and individuals,[11] and must therefore also be the subject of a history-of-knowledge approach.[12]

Using non-Western and Western archival material, this article undertakes such a history-of-knowledge analysis of the UK's diplomatic relations with African partners and India to underscore their interdependencies and interwoven problems. We use the approaches of New Diplomatic History (NDH), whose innovations on what diplomacy is, who conducts it, and how, we reflect back on the analysis of state diplomacy. As discussed by other contributors to this issue, NDH is valued because of its focus on the impact of social-cultural formations upon policy, and on the process of policy formation, rather than simply on outcome.[13] This is not to say that it is not worthwhile to study non-state diplomacy – quite the contrary. Despite claims that NDH approaches privilege topics beyond the state,[14] however, we agree with those who are convinced that NDH approaches can also be instructive for the still-important analysis of state diplomacy, asking new questions, and researching new perspectives.[15] At the same time, our methodological thesis is that the NDH can achieve its goals even better if it incorporates a history-of-knowledge approach.

To prove this point, we take an actor-centred approach and research foreign policy knowledge production because we believe this is the best way to incorporate and decentre multiple perspectives on different creators of knowledge production in African states, India, and the UK. Studying cases of Global South-UK relations, we are interested in how historical actors viewed knowledge, which networks were maintained or newly formed, and what agency non-Western figures ascribed

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10   Lukas M. Verburgt, The History of Knowledge and the Future History of Ignorance, in: Know 1 (2020), 1–24, 8.

11   Cornel Zwierlein, Imperial Unknowns. The French and British in the Mediterranean, 1650-1750, Cambridge 2016.

12   Peter Burke, What is the History of Knowledge?, Cambridge/Malden, MA, 2016, 31–34; Adolf/Stehr, Knowledge, 2017, 69–99; Sven Dupré/Geert Somsen, The History of Knowledge and the Future of Knowledge Societies, in: Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte 42 (2019),186-99, 191–194; Verburgt, The History (2020).

13   Giles Scott-Smith, Introduction. Private Diplomacy, Making the Citizen Visible, in: New Global Studies 8 (2014), 1–7; Houssine Alloul/Michael Auwers, What is (New in) New Diplomatic History?, in: Journal of Belgian History 48 (2018), 112–122; Giles Scott-Smith/Kenneth Weisbrode, Editorial, in: Diplomatica 1 (2019), 1–4.

14   See the introduction to this special issue for details on this discussion.

15   Helen McCarthy, Women of the World. The Rise of the Female Diplomat, London 2014; Jan Hennings, Russia and Courtly Europe. Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648–1725, Cambridge 2016; Albertine Bloemendal, Reframing the Diplomat. Ernst van der Beugel and the Cold War Atlantic Community, Leiden/Boston 2017; Susanna Erlandsson, Off the Record. Margaret van Kleffens and the Gendered History of Dutch World War II Diplomacy, in: International Feminist Journal of Politics 21 (2019), 29–46.

to themselves. The central question is thus how diplomatic knowledge was produced and how these productions were viewed in the post-colonial world.

We consider two illustrative ways by which a history-of-knowledge approach may be meaningfully incorporated within an NDH analysis. In the first part of this article, we will emphasize that even state diplomacy is complex, and that it is necessary to analyse different levels of action to get a nuanced picture of post-colonial diplomacy. In the second part, we look at second-tier actors (who do not need to be active in foreign policy headquarters, or who need not be state actors at all in order to be influential on state diplomacy), their knowledge, and the knowledge about them.

Competitive state agencies: contested knowledge and hierarchies of understanding

As we have identified, NDH scholars' contribution to the field of diplomatic and foreign policy history is to expand the remit of those settings, socio-cultural forces, and processes thought influential in policy formation. Scholars have convincingly argued for considering the "hybridity of diplomacy",[16] calling for different cultures of diplomacy to be taken into account.[17] But what of the underlying understandings that shape such a process? For example, if a government acts not as a single unit but as a series of departments, which are all required to cooperate in the creation of policy solutions, it raises the question of the production of knowledge upon which decisions are made: who produces knowledge where? How does it circulate? And how is knowledge contested within the policy-making process? For instance, do different actors and government officials weaponize their own knowledge in defence of their own approaches or agendas? To ask such questions is to take seriously what Peter Burke has formulated as a fundamental insight: "There are only histories, in the plural, of knowledges, also in the plural".[18] We believe therefore that a focus on the cultures of diplomatic knowledges is instructive.

Particularly at moments of challenge or uncertainty – not least Britain's transition from colonial to post-colonial power – the resulting internal tensions within Whitehall highlight how a desire for control over how understandings of the wider

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16 Scott-Smith and Weisbrode 2019, 3.
17 Hillard von Thiessen/Christian Windler (eds.), Akteure der Außenbeziehungen. Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2010; Jason Dittmer and Fiona McConnell, Introduction. Reconceptualising Diplomatic Cultures, in: Jason Dittmer/Fiona McConnell (eds.), Diplomatic Cultures and International Politics. Translations, Spaces and Alternatives, London/New York, 2016, 1–20.
18 Burke, 2016, 7.

world were created was central to competitions for the control of policy. Intellectual clashes between departments concerned with Britain's foreign relations grew out of the distinctive collective ethoses each department cultivated as responses to their respective operational remits. Throughout the 1960s, FO staff believed themselves more professional and important than Colonial Office (CO), Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO), and Commonwealth Office staff. FO staff felt themselves concerned with the bigger picture and cultivated a sense of superiority accordingly; for them, the complications and nuances of policy specificities should, where necessary, be brushed aside in pursuit of a macro agenda.[19] One official joining the diplomatic service in 1965 later recalled, "[o]ne was flung more or less in at the deep end; a man educated at Oxford in Greats could do anything".[20] They also liked to think of themselves as hard-nosed, *realpolitik*-embracing types,[21] making it unsurprising when, in contrast, they felt others were too naïve.[22] Conversely, some officials believed that UK foreign policy-making lost the insights of many years' experience when, as an institutional consequence of decolonization, the CO and CRO were rolled together in 1966 to form the Commonwealth Office, and then again when the Commonwealth Office was rolled into the FO to form the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1968. One official in 1970 felt the loss came because the FO had "not got the slightly in some ways different touch that is needed in dealing with the commonwealth [sic] countries", because some FO officials "are a bit critical of the Commonwealth, think that the Commonwealth is treated a bit too generously […] and they are a little bit impatient with the Commonwealth to-day, and this is very unfortunate".[23] Thus different priorities informed different ways of interpreting the world, creating tensions at the very heart of the foreign policy-making apparatus.

When cross-departmental policy-making forced different approaches to face one another, clashes could occur. Departments' senses of their own superiority were commonly articulated through displays of supposedly superior access to information or through laying claim to expertise or the 'correct' ways of deploying such expertise. When making predictions about the future, the different departments adopted different stances which began with diverging assumptions about Africa's

19 Dennis Amy, interview with Liz Cox, 19 March 1998, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Amy.pdf (23 September 2022).

20 Mark Pelley, quoted in John Young, Twentieth-Century Diplomacy: Case Study of British Practice, 1963–1976, Cambridge 2008, 26.

21 TNA FO 371/187696, Millard to Barnes, 3 August 1966.

22 TNA FO 371/187696, M. Brown, minute, 5 August 1966; see also Lord Greenhill, interview with John Hickman, 14 February 1996, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Greenhill.pdf (26 September 2022).

23 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Mss.Brit.Emp.s.533/17–18, Margery Perham, interview with Malcolm Macdonald, 28 September 1970.

future. Those whose institutional history was connected principally to the CRO, such as diplomat David Hunt, could feel that CO types had their heads in clouds over any chances of success for big questions such as if Africans should be left to determine their own futures without need for oversight from London. In contrast, from the other side came the view that figures such as Hunt were hopelessly naïve about modern Africa's future prospects and capacity to stand on its own.[24]

Such quarrels had consequences. In 1959, for example, Whitehall was seriously grappling with the implications of Pan-Africanism. Officials ruminated on what such solidarity meant for the UK's post-colonial position in Africa. But the problem was that the figure London judged central to the project – Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah – was not someone about whom British officials were able to establish consensus. He could, in the future, swing either to the West or to the communists. Each department attempted to make predictions which were each very much the product of their immediate operational circumstances. The CO was worried about Pan-Africanism as a danger that encouraged "leaders to adopt immoderate policies, raises the temperature of public emotion, and so increases the political and security difficulties facing Colonial Governments in their efforts for measured profess towards self-government".[25] This pessimistic way of perceiving Africa came out of an operational environment in which CO staff turned their attentions to maintaining the smooth transfer of power elsewhere in Africa. They construed Pan-Africanism as a complicating factor in late-colonial governance, chiefly in terms of what Nkrumah's pan-continental political presence meant for British decolonizing efforts in East Africa. Uncertainty should be read as troubling.

The CRO countered with an optimistic reading. There was territorial dislike of the fact that the CO's paper had been put before the Cabinet without prior consultation. But the CRO stance was also rooted in its overarching desire to see the Commonwealth maintained as a constructive force going forward. The CRO was unhappy that the CO had made "no attempt whatever to set out the more positive aspects of Pan-Africanism".[26] The CRO's chief aim was, obviously, the smooth emergence of the Commonwealth. It felt the most effective means of securing this goal was by keeping Nkrumah onside as far as was possible. From this perspective, Pan-Africanism could potentially be a constructive means through which African nations develop alongside one another in the future. Furthermore, if Pan-Africanist nations were also within the Commonwealth, then any radical potential of Pan-Africanism could be neutralized.

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24 David Hunt, On the Spot. An Ambassador Remembers, London 1975, 142–143.
25 TNA DO 35/9389, The effect, present and potential, of the 'Pan-African Movement' on colonial territories in Africa, 16 March 1959.
26 TNA DO 35/9389, Snelling to C. Y. Carstairs, 19 March 1959; ibid., Allen, minute, 18 March 1959.

At a time of uncertainty, both in terms of the intent behind a new force with which London had to contend and in terms of the way it should be engaged with, different foreign policy departments operating from different starting aims and assumptions did indeed weaponize how the contours of the nascent post-colonial world might be understood. Reading diplomacy as a "multi-level endeavour"[27] is therefore advantageous because it allows different, even competing, bodies of knowledge to be analysed. There is then not one (British) foreign policy, but different approaches at the same time, and it is central to enquire about the 'mental maps' associated with them.[28]

Following these internal British disputes, evidence can also be found of irritations due to differing knowledge between Britain and external governments. The state visit of Queen Elizabeth II to India and Pakistan in 1961 is a case for that. It was the first post-colonial state visit to a former Asian colony, and its extended length of almost six weeks (instead of the normal three or four days) underlined the special historical relationship between the states involved.[29] The files created by the Indian central government for this visit, however, show that unevenly distributed knowledge between Indian and British representatives in Delhi played a significant role in the preparations.

In October 1960, for example, a few months before the visit, the Indian authorities were occupied by their own lack of knowledge. R. Gupta, Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, one of the provinces the visit covered, felt at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the British and complained to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Delhi: "I have met the Deputy High Commissioner for United Kingdom […] several times in connection with the queen's visit and I find that very often he is in possession of much more detailed information obtained by him from your office than I am." Gupta highlighted that the High Commissioner obtained information which was "said to have been received by him from your office, but of which we have received no intimation from you".[30] Even though it is the task of all ambassadors to obtain information for their states, the High Commissioners were in a unique position, especially in the immediate post-colonial era. Their offices were not only staffed with above-average personnel, but such personnel often had good, extensive personal networks, often stemming from the decolonization phase. This en-

27 David Criekemans, Exploring the Relationship between Geopolitics, Foreign Policy, and Diplomacy, International Studies Review 13 (2011), 713–716, 715.
28 Ibid., 716.
29 Falko Schnicke, Adapting to the Postcolonial World. The Commonwealth and the British Cold War Royal Diplomacy in the 1961 State Visits to India and Pakistan, in: Levke Harders/Falko Schnicke (eds.), Belonging across Borders. Transnational Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Oxford 2022, 229–259, 230–232.
30 National Archives of India (NAI), 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 13, Gupta to Baig, 7 October 1960.

abled them to make contact with many actors from different camps from an established position, while the newly independent states and their administrations first had to organize themselves.[31] This advantage provided them with a sustained privileged supply of information. Gupta described the situation as "somewhat embarrassing".[32] In his reply, Mirza Rashid Ali Baig, Chief of Protocol in the MEA Delhi, showed little understanding and instead responded with a counter-accusation:

> "In regard to what the Deputy High Commissioner has been informing you, I may mention that we are not in direct communication with him. The U.K. High Commission here, is however, almost in daily contact with us and in fact it has been embarrassing to us to be given by them day to day accounts of developments in Calcutta without having received any information or even a query from you."[33]

This internal Indian exchange is revealing because it shows that preparation for foreign policy relations can expose internal tensions. Part of this is the consequence of broader tussles over authority between state and federal levels in the post-independence period.[34] However, this is also noteworthy as it highlights the UK's position in India almost a decade and a half after independence: neither correspondent is surprised by the UK High Commissioner's information advantage, and instead they argue about responsibility on the Indian side. This can be understood as an indication that British information sovereignty was well known to both of them, since official and unofficial British networks obviously still functioned very well. This was evidently not the case for cooperation between the various Indian agencies. Baig himself admitted this, referring to the differences in communication techniques: "I am sorry there is so much duplication [in writing] and the U.K. High Commission are in a highly nervous state and what we do by letter they do by wire and telegram."[35] The acerbity between Gupta and Baig may therefore also be explained by the fact that the Indian federal government wanted to use the state visit to prove to the world and the former colonial power that independent India was a modern and efficient country. However, the knowledge deficiencies and the insufficient coordination between the various authorities, which must not have escaped the British side, were likely to contradict this message.

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31 Lorna Lloyd, Diplomacy with a Difference. The Commonwealth Office of High Commissioner, 1880–2006, Leiden 2007, 169, 181.
32 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 13, Gupta to Baig, 7 October 1960.
33 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 13, Baig to Gupta, 12 October 1960.
34 For one consideration of such dynamics, see Paul Kenny, The origins of patronage politics. State building, centrifugalism, and decolonization, in: British Journal of Political Science 45/1 (2015), 141–171.
35 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 13, Baig to Gupta, 6 December 1960.

Differences in knowledge could also have jeopardized official cooperation with the UK. For example, Indians and Britons made different assessments about the Queen's visit. While the Indian government described parts of the visit internally during the preparations as entertaining and ultimately apolitical, this was not shared in the British FO. In mid-October 1960, the FO in London circulated the second, detailed draft of the programme for the tour. It was clearly flagged as a "state visit"[36] and thought of exclusively in terms of representative appearances, for only those were listed. Some stops were undefined, such as the two-day stay in Jaipur (23-24 Jan. 1961). No official dates were entered for it, but there was no note that it would be a non-official part of the trip either. There was not even a reference to semi-public activities such as the 'Quiet Dinners' mentioned elsewhere in this itinerary.[37]

The Indian MEA, by contrast, pretended in its communication with local Indian authorities that it was planning several visits in one, some of which were not part of the state visit. This is why Baig, in a completely different diction to his British counterparts, explicitly and repeatedly pointed out that "The Queen's visit to Jaipur should be regarded strictly for sight-seeing and relaxation",[38] or, in other cases, that "no ceremonial functions" should be organized, because a certain part of her visit was of "a sight-seeing nature" only.[39] The background for this framing was that the central government wanted to present a modern nation, while the planned visits to the princely states represented what was thought to be a more 'traditional' view of India. It seems officials on both sides were not aware of these different readings; in any case, concerns that one was planning in a different direction did not find their way into the files. The result was a programme that included a tiger hunt and a lavish elephant procession for the Queen in Jaipur. In the end, there was no foreign policy scandal, but the British were not entirely satisfied with the outcome. Although the state visit was rated very positively overall, the Queen's visit to Jaipur, specifically, was not. The final British report by the High Commissioner in Delhi, Paul Gore-Booth, highlighted that "it might have been better for the Jaipur visit to have taken place later in the tour, instead of at the outset, because it tended to focus attention on aspects of Indian life which belong more to the past than the future". Considering that this kind of report always served to praise one's own office, this was a clear criticism. Gore-Booth even spoke of "rather incoherent arrangements" on the ground, for which, as he suggested, the local Indian authorities were responsible. However, this never became an issue with which he had to grapple because it had not

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36   TNA FO 372/7547, The Queen's Tour, undated (mid-October 1960).
37   TNA FO 372/7547, Second Draft Itinerary and Programme for the Visit of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran, 20th January–6th March, 1961, 18 October 1960.
38   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 9, Baig to Mehta, 20 October 1960.
39   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 10, Baig to Bhargava, 15 October 1960.

been noticed by journalists in situ.[40] The result of the lack of coordination and working with different bodies of knowledge was thus rather downplayed. In any case, it is noticeable that it was not blamed on the Indian federal government. Unlike other examples from this period, such as the communist states of Eastern Europe, which were said to have poor diplomatic organization and a lack of planning ability,[41] the Asian partner was not represented as fundamentally different from Britain in its diplomatic processes at this point. This throws a spotlight on the British world view during the Cold War. While there was less cultural bias with regard to non-aligned India, the European members of the Warsaw Pact were framed by FO personnel as unreliable and backward as an expression of their systemic difference and the different knowledge practices associated with it.

Our examples of intra-British, British-Indian, and intra-Indian rivalries hint at the complexity of state diplomacy in both internal and external relations. Competition between different hierarchical levels and diverse organizational units demonstrates that state diplomacy cannot be neglected when exploring the hybridity of external relations. Rather, state diplomacy must also be understood and researched as hybrid and contested. Looking at the production and dissemination of diplomatic knowledge for this purpose has, in our view, two advantages: first, knowledge is a political resource that the internal and external actors involved constantly wrestle over, revealing their different perspectives and priorities. Second, this struggle, at least sometimes, leaves traces in the historical sources, making knowledge practices accessible to historical research.

Fragile knowledge and the contingencies of post-colonial actors

In addition to the multifaceted nature of foreign policy organizations, the NDH has identified a focus on a broad pool of actors as an essential way to analyse the empirical and historical complexity of diplomacy. This offers multiple perspectives for the analysis of state diplomacy and the knowledge associated with it. When historians continue to "question the validity of focusing on states as the sole movers of international relations",[42] this approach is also suitable for examining the cooperation of these actors with state authorities. Focusing on non-official and

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40 TNA DO 161/77, Gore-Booth, Record of the Visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Prince Philip. Duke of Edinburgh to India, January-March 1961, 28 April 1961, 9.
41 See for example, TNA FCO 57/423, Killick to Bullard, 16 November 1972.
42 Alloul/Auwers, What, (2018), 113.

diplomatically active persons of the second tier[43] and questioning the clear separation between state and non-state actors, official and unofficial,[44] in this sense, allows for an understanding of both sides. Moreover, this is not only a research perspective, but can be reflected back to the sources: who acts as an intermediary between official and unofficial diplomats and how? What does the so-called official apparatus know about unofficial diplomats? What are the hierarchies of diplomatic knowledge? When and how do the foreign policy apparatuses know this and how do they deal with this knowledge? Questions like these can again be discussed in relation to our case studies by way of example.

In post-colonial Africa, among the things most immediately apparent to Britons who arrived with no prior experience of the continent was the enduring presence of a tangibly colonial legacy. Newly arrived in Lusaka in 1967, one diplomat later recalled that there "was a lot of post-colonial evidence around – the streets were still called King George this and Queen Elizabeth that and there were British Colonial Service servants still floating around in white shorts and socks".[45] There were plenty of white shorts and socks on display. At independence in Uganda, over 800 Britons remained in post as civil servants, with others remaining on shorter-term contracts. In 1965, there were still approximately 3,000 Britons working for the government in Northern Nigeria alone.[46] This was replicated across sub-Saharan Africa.[47] Plenty of expatriates held quite senior roles across all types of work in Africa, such as ministerial advisers or close aides to African prime ministers.[48]

London judged that such individuals could wield considerable influence within post-colonial governments. Barbara Ward, a prominent academic and journalist, lived in Accra and was part of what appears to be a small and well-defined group that socialized with Nkrumah; she had been a "wise and sympathetic confidante" to him since 1954.[49] Ward's husband Robert Jackson was a Commissioner of Development working on the Volta Dam project. For the UK's High Commissioner to Ghana

43 Maureen R. Berman/Joseph E. Johnson (eds.), Unofficial Diplomats, New York 1977; Scott-Smith, Introduction (2014); Albertine Bloemendal, Reframing the Diplomat. Ernst van der Beugel and the Cold War Atlantic Community, Leiden 2018; Alloul/Auwers, What, (2018), 116; Erlandsson, Off (2019); Scott-Smith/Weisbrode, Editorial, (2019).

44 Scott-Smith, Introduction, (2014), 3.

45 David Gore-Booth, interview with Malcolm McBain, 4 March 1999, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Gore-Booth.pdf (21 September 2022).

46 Donald Hawley, Desert Wind and Tropic Storm: An Autobiography, Wilby 2000, 101.

47 John O'Regan, From Empire to Commonwealth. Reflections on a Career in Britain's Overseas Service, London 1994, 147.

48 Geoffrey de Freitas/Helen de Freitas, The Slighter Side of a Long Public Life, Guildford 1985, 153; Hawley, Desert, 2000, 128; Georgina Sinclair, At the End of the Line. Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame 1945–1980, Manchester 2006, 70.

49 Jean Gartlan, Barbara Ward, Her Life and Letters, London 2011, 64.

in 1958, Jackson "render[ed] invaluable service in keeping Ministers on the rails"; together, Jackson and Ward were thought to wield "an influence which extends far beyond the field of development".[50] Similarly, Joan Wicken, who served Nyerere as a long-standing personal assistant, was thought by the Tanzanian High Commissioner to be a "moderating" influence on Nyerere. If she were to be "replaced by someone less able or politically unscrupulous the damage could be considerable".[51] The general tendency of UK policymakers was to suggest such expatriates "quietly exercised a steadying influence".[52]

The connections London made with such individuals could indeed yield intelligence rewards. When African governments sought to conceal information from the West, informal networks of expatriates passed intelligence to London in confidence. This is demonstrated by the arms shipments being transported through Tanganyika and Uganda into the Congo to assist Congolese rebels fighting Tshombe in 1964 and 1965. The first the Nairobi High Commission heard of these shipments was via an alert from the editor of the *East African Standard*.[53] Michael Davies, an expatriate working with a defence brief as Permanent Secretary in Uganda's Internal Affairs department, confidentially kept the British High Commission informed.[54] An expatriate working for an oil company in western Uganda fleshed out these details for those back in London.[55] Similarly, in the aftermath of Ethiopia's 1960 coup, when London was thinking about how to engage with Haile Selassie in order to promote the liberalization of its government, Selassie's legal adviser, Sir Charles Mathew, spoke to the British Embassy in Addis Ababa in "strict confidence" about what was going on behind the scenes, helping the FO get a sense of how the emperor would likely respond to their own potential representations.[56] These were therefore individuals who did not work for the UK in an official capacity, but might best be described as unofficial diplomatic actors because of their often sustained, direct connections to the UK government. Such expatriate actors became a valuable source of foreign policy knowledge actively used by the FO.

If this was a legacy with potential for British post-colonial knowledge formation, it was also a fragile one. Consideration of the subjectivity of diplomatic agents has rightly been highlighted as insightful,[57] and it is also helpful to our argument because its examination underscores the hybrid form of post-colonial diplomacy.

50   TNA DO 35/9408, Ian Maclennan to Alec Douglas-Home, 30 April 1958.
51   TNA DO 185/39, R. W. D. Fowler to G. W. St. J. Chadwick, 20 July 1965.
52   Hawley, Desert, 2000, 128.
53   TNA DO 216/54, J. C. Strong to R. M. Tosh, 11 November 1964.
54   TNA DO 216/54, David Hunt to CRO, 6 Nov. 1964; see also ibid., Hunt to CRO, 28 December 1964.
55   TNA DO 216/54, Strong to Tosh, 11 November 1964.
56   TNA FO 371/154839, D. A. H. Wright to Stevens, 27 December 1960.
57   Scott-Smith/Weisbrode, Editorial (2019), 1.

The fact that such unofficial individuals no longer had a formal connection with London meant they were under no obligation to work in accordance with UK interests as policymakers saw them. The UK government essentially relied on such individuals to promote UK interests of their own volition. But in some retrospective testimonies, expatriates wore a dedication to the post-colonial state as a visible badge of pride. Andrew Stuart, an ex-colonial official who worked as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, and Tourism in Kampala from 1962, wrote of his time in post-colonial service that

> "We could get almost anything by going to the Americans and saying, 'we want a new hospital,' and they said, 'maybe not.' So we would go to the Russians and say that the Americans are very interested and they would say, 'well perhaps we will do it,' and you go back to the Americans and say, 'if you don't give us the hospital the Russians will.' We exploited it thoroughly."[58]

An example of what John Gaddis has called the "emergence of autonomy" of the newly independent states in the Global South,[59] with which they "could yet tip the balance of power in the Cold War",[60] it also points to the actors' room for manoeuvre. Given that Stuart's brief covered information, broadcasting, and tourism, he was presumably employing a capacious definition of 'we' when talking about who got hospitals built. We can therefore assume Stuart selected this anecdote not as evidence of his own activity, but as a self-consciously performative sign of his comfort and accommodation with the idea of an immediate switch in allegiances. Indeed, Stuart later argued his relationship with the UK High Commission was "not very good" because it had assumed he would be "administering for Britain".[61]

However, there are cases where those who stayed on did indeed walk a tightrope in their allegiances, thereby bearing out Stuart's observations. John Carmichael, a colonial official in the British government in Sudan who stayed on after 1956 as an economic advisor to the independent government, is a case in point. In attempting to secure an aid package from London to Khartoum worth £5 million in export credits, Carmichael on the one hand told the UK Treasury this aid offered the possibility of "considerable political advantages from it to the United Kingdom and to the Western World in general".[62] On the other hand, when communicating with the Sudanese Finance Minister Abdul Majid, he emphasized his own role as a useful

58 Andrew Stuart, Interview with Jimmy Jamieson, 10 September 2002, https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Stuart.pdf (19 September 2022).
59 John Gaddis, The Cold War. A New History, New York 2005, 119.
60 Ibid., 123.
61 Stuart, Interview, 2002.
62 Sudan Archive Durham 994/1/186, John Carmichael to HMG Treasury, 6 November 1958.

intermediary working in Sudan's own interests, having convinced London to give the credits because he had "come to know how to badger the U.K. into giving help to the Sudan *without strings*: I can do this in a good-humoured yet determined way which is perhaps not so easy for a non British", whilst emphasizing that if Khartoum did not take a British aid offer, London would be disappointed and query Sudan's intentions.[63]

The extent to which the fragility of the new environment in which information now had to be acquired directly shaped a sense of despondency or otherwise among the British back in London was not constant. Poppy Cullen has demonstrated that at points, such as in certain aspects of the UK's post-colonial relationship with Kenya in the 1960s, British attitudes could be marked by a "sense of self-confidence", with UK officials often believing "that they best understood Kenya's interests".[64] Yet the Millard quote from this article's introduction highlights mid-1960s doubts surrounding the idea that the UK had any 'special knowledge' of Africa, and thus that any self-confidence was not a constant. Yet perhaps there was a particular self-confidence in the way unofficial diplomatic actors were treated by London. In the post-colonial world, access to information remained possible but, with various London departments continuing to feel that these liminal or intermediary unofficial diplomatic actors remained 'one of us', the allegiances of those providing post-colonial intelligence were not necessarily scrutinized as rigorously as they might have been. The analysis of such unofficial diplomatic actors conducting diplomacy from below has been increasingly pursued by the NDH in recent years. It is instructive because it shows that such actors were often functionally dependent on the machinery of state diplomacy, but at the same time able to carve out agency within this framework. However, meaningful sources (usually ego documents) are needed to explore what they knew about the functions of state diplomacy and how they used them.[65] There is evidence that they tended to imitate state diplomatic cultures rather than create new ones,[66] but where they got their information remains an intriguing question.

Post-colonial knowledge networks thus proved complex and sometimes opaque to those involved, as a look at independent India and the role of the Indian princes in the late 1950s shows. Using royals in the age of rapid change during decolonization to gather information that was often only available locally was nothing new, as

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63 Sudan Archive Durham 994/1/186, Carmichael to Abdul Majid, 17 December 1958; ibid., 994/2/19, Carmichael to Abdul Majid, 21 December 1958, emphasis added.
64 Poppy Cullen, Kenya and Britain after Independence. Beyond Neo-Colonialism, Cham 2017, 264.
65 Erlandsson, Off (2019).
66 Geoffrey Wiseman, Bringing Diplomacy Back In. Time for Theory to Catch Up with Practice, in: International Studies Review 13 (2011), 710–713, 712.

the British FO had been using royal travel for this purpose since the 1950s. Various members of the British royal family sent reports from their travels to the Commonwealth back to London to provide intelligence on local conditions.[67] In India, the case was different, because in the planning for the 1961 state visit referred to above, not only state officials but also the Indian princes were involved. The princes constituted a local elite that could secure influential posts even after the British Raj.[68] However, they were generally not foreign policy actors in the sense of regularly cooperating with the Indian MEA to shape international relations. Nevertheless, some of them were repeatedly involved in receiving international leaders, and including such actors is one of the NDH's core concerns.[69] It proves productive for the analysis of interstate diplomacy, especially Indo-British relations, because it helps explain who was influential in foreign representation in the post-colonial Indian state. Looking at the princes reveals how the central government dealt with domestically competing diplomatic actors and how the hierarchies of the various levels were negotiated.

Given the historical sovereignty over their states, it should have come as no surprise that the princes played a role in preparing for the 1961 visit. On this occasion, they were partly in charge, but interestingly without being perceived in this capacity outside the MEA. Within the federal Indian government, they were sometimes perceived as a problem because of their own interests and divergent intentions, at least one that was repeatedly articulated. The Maharajkumar of Vijayanagram, for example, reminded the central government as late as October 1960, a few weeks before the visit, of the examples of Haile Selassie and US President Eisenhower, for whom he had hosted banquets in 1956 and 1959 respectively. He wanted to do the same for the Queen.[70] Baig of the Protocol Department had difficulty dissuading him as he did not have the authority to decide. In a noticeably annoyed tone, he tried to push the central government's line against the princes once and for all: "We have already written that the proposed banquet … should be dropped. In fact, this should be the practice [for?] all future visits".[71]

The irritable mood in Delhi may have stemmed from the fact that there had already been similar disputes with other princes. In September 1960, the Maharana of Udaipur had also insisted on his position in a communication directed to the Indian High Commissioner in the UK:

67 Murphy, Monarchy, 2015, 78–81.
68 Ian Copland, The British Raj and the Indian Princes. Paramountcy in Western India, 1857–1930, Bombay 1982; Barbara N. Ramusack, The Indian Princes and Their States, Cambridge 2004; Granville Austin, Working a Democratic Constitution. The Indian Experience, Oxford/New York 1999, 220–227.
69 Scott-Smith, Introduction (2014), 2.
70 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 10, Bhargava to Baig, 10 October 1960.
71 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 10, Baig to Bhargava, 15 October 1960.

"To the best of my understanding the Royal couple are [sic] coming to Udaipur more because of its old history and tradition[.] They are going to be my guests and naturally I would not have [it] any other way but the programme finalised with my approval. I shall be able to accommodate the honourable guests and their distinguished staff. For the rest, The Government should make arrangements."[72]

Whether this was a deliberate evasion of the Protocol Department is unclear. In any case, Baig, to whom this letter was forwarded, sounded almost meek when he told the Maharana that the planning was left to him.[73] It is reasonable to assume that the contrasting reactions from Delhi resulted from the differences in hierarchy between the various princes. While the Maharajkumar was the heir to the throne, that is the son of the ruler, in the person of the Maharana, Baig had to deal directly with the king. Moreover, Vijayanagram (founded at the end of the sixteenth century) was much younger and smaller than Udaipur/Mewar, which dated back to the eighth century. The Maharana thus came from one of the oldest dynasties in the world.[74] These disparities in status seem to have influenced the MEA's willingness to respond to the princes' positions.

When further disputes arose with the local Udaipur government, Baig even had to mediate from Delhi in favour of the Maharana, and he did: "Though the Queen will be staying in Udaipur with His Highness the Maharana, it does not mean that she is not the guest of the Government of India. In view of this, I trust that your Government will continue […] to give every help to the Maharana may require in order to make the visit a success."[75] In the end, conflicts over responsibility boiled so high that even Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru got involved. He went behind the Protocol Department's back in favour of the princes and informed the Maharana: "There will be no difficulty about protocol. Indeed, you need not to worry much about protocol. Treat her as an honoured guest."[76]

The princes' great interest in the British state visit can be explained by the fact that they saw it as an opportunity to present themselves to an international as well as local audience. For independent India, in this sense, Barbara Ramusack highlights the participation of the princes in events "where political ritual and symbolism were prominent",[77] especially, as with the 1961 visit, when the central govern-

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72   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 11, Maharana of Udaipur to Pandit, 26 September 1960.
73   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 11, Baig to Maharana of Udaipur, 27 September 1960.
74   Vinzinagram, in: The Encyclopaedia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literatures and General Information, 11th edn., vol. 28, Cambridge/New York 1911, 165; Ram Vallabh Somani, History of Mewar: From earliest Times to 1751 A.D., Jaipur 1976.
75   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 10, Baig to Mehta, 15 December 1960.
76   NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 10, Nehru to Maharana of Udaipur, 23 December 1960.
77   Ramusack, The Indian, 2004, 275.

ment paid for all expenses.[78] The conflicts mentioned therefore had as much to do with external representation as with internal Indian negotiations in the shaping of the post-colonial state. The repeated struggle over the planning of India's foreign policy occurred because the central government was dependent on princely cooperation, but at the same time tried to retain control. The internal Indian preparations for the 1961 visit were thus influenced by a plurality of actors who did not belong to the state apparatus but had significant influence, which they used not least for their particular interests.

Given this situation, it is astonishing how little the UK's FO was aware of this. In the British records, the princes do not appear as independent and in some cases even recalcitrant actors in their own right. The FO understood the state visit as an intergovernmental affair and obviously had no idea that there was a central group of actors below this level. This is clearly illustrated, for example, by the final report which stated that Indian preparations were "mostly done in Delhi".[79] When the Indian MEA was explicitly mentioned later, this would have been an opportunity to mention the princes.[80] However, it went unused because the British side was unaware of their importance for the planning process.

The disregard for the princes is testimony to the power of expectations of foreign policy apparatuses, which themselves sometimes see foreign policy as the exclusive product of official foreign policy experts, and thus ironically succumb to the distortion that the NDH has criticized in foreign policy research. It was also the product of a cultural bias that set the Western understanding of how (nation) states would function as absolute and thus overlooked Indian characteristics. Since the British FO did not expect princely participation, they did not appear in its considerations. The FO therefore missed out on an essential factor in the planning of the 1961 state visit. This was a disadvantage, because while they were well informed in some areas, in other places potential channels of influence escaped them. The Indian federal government for their part had no interest in reporting its own problems with the local actors to its British partner. The Indian MEA must have known about the UK FO's ignorance, but obviously saw no advantage in remedying it.

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78 NAI, 1(12)-PT I/60 Vol. 9, "Instructions regarding the arrangements connected with the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh to Jaipur and Sawai Madhopur from 22.1.1961 to 24.1.1961" by Kaushik, 19 January 1961.
79 TNA FO 372/7599, Gore-Booth, India: The Royal Tour, 19 April 1961, 1.
80 TNA FO 372/7599, 3.

Conclusion: The history of knowledge as an enhancement of NDH

In conclusion, our approach to Global South-UK post-colonial diplomacy reveals some recurring themes, as well as clear areas for further research. What this article has sought to do is to demonstrate both some initial findings from our particular approach and this approach's applicability to new areas and new questions in the future. African states and India were confronted with multiple knowledge hierarchies: internal and external, both legacies of the colonial era. Unevenly distributed knowledge created conflicts for foreign policy relations and was (potentially) problematic, but could also generate room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the UK. On the other hand, the UK attached a premium to a leverage of its colonial legacies in the pursuit of its understanding of Anglophone ex-colonies for a variety of economic and geopolitical reasons. But for all the possibilities of the maintenance of reliable channels that such leverage offered, knowledge was perceived to be a limited commodity.

Access to diplomatic knowledge in Global South-UK post-colonial diplomacy was often the contingent outcome of quite specific institutional or human encounters, rather than the methodical product of a routinized bureaucratic system and diplomatic interaction. From these settings, a consciousness of a particularly post-colonial fragility occurred to all the mentioned governments. Knowledge had thus not only become a central resource in the age of decolonization and the Cold War, but the experience of its uncertainty and complexity was also a unifying component in post-colonial Global South-UK relations. Ignorance and the concomitant loss of agency were perceived as a vulnerability by all sides. In the bigger picture, this finding can help to develop a perspective that completes our ideas about diplomacy as such by repositioning them: relative to a view that portrays diplomatic practice as the result of an effective bureaucracy, a sealed, omniscient apparatus, it must also be perceived in its contingencies. Diplomatic knowledge, our case studies suggest, is less secure than assumed, and less available than it appears from the outside.[81]

Focusing our attention on what diplomatic actors knew and did not know thus enhances our understanding of a moment in time at which the rules of engagement surrounding the UK's interactions with its ex-colonies, and vice versa, were still being rewritten. Such research is not without its challenges; it is particularly difficult to negotiate ignorance, as it leaves less of a mark in the records, but by triangulating different archival repositories it is possible to get a sense of the disparities in understanding across polities. What we have shown with our case studies

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81 Zwierlein, Imperial, 2016; Falko Schnicke, "It is Dangerous to Generalise About State Visits": Praktiken des Wissens in der britischen Außenpolitik, in: Anna-Margarethe Horatschek (ed.), Competing Knowledges / Wissen im Widerstreit, Hamburg 2020, 189–207.

is that knowledge and ignorance can, however, be explored through protagonists' self-assessments, through seemingly peripheral comments and documents that do not describe outcomes but diplomatic procedures and related problems. Because they are so rich and allow so many insights into the political landscape at large, we propose to intensify such research in the future. In doing so, one can profitably go beyond the perspectives we have pursued here and address questions such as: Who had what knowledge? Who was trusted and by whom? What was considered diplomatic knowledge? The backgrounds of the officials – briefly alluded to above – raise the importance of class, race, and gender hierarchies in the formation of cultural bias and, consequently, the creation of certain forms of ignorance about Global South polities and personalities. Beyond this, we have begun to consider the roles played by unofficial diplomatic actors, so it may reasonably be asked: To what extent and how did such actors use their knowledge in other fields (economics, academia, the media, civil rights movements, etc.) in the field of diplomacy? How did they gain this knowledge and how did they use it?

Scholars are now increasingly comfortable in adopting an expansive and ambitious approach to the study of the interactions between polities. It becomes more and more commonplace to consider "the main participants and divergent practices of diplomacy as a social cultural space, that is, rituals, networking, perceptions, as well as the day-to-day realities behind the conduct of international relations".[82] The approach we have proposed has wide applicability in building upon recent approaches to the field. For instance, Louis Clerc has emphasized the importance of place and geography in diplomatic processes, such as the significance of consular officials' activities as forms of site-specific cultural exchange.[83] But a consideration of how each precise constellation of each distinctive ambassadorial milieu and network shaped, and was in turn shaped by, precise and site-specific forms of cultural understanding and processes for the development of cultural understanding, would seem to us an extremely promising avenue for further study. Similarly, a worthy historical focus on new types of sources, such as diplomatic diaries,[84] offers up tantalizing questions: What constitutes a site of diplomatic knowledge production, and what is the relationship between such sources and the more formal ones that continue to constitute the central source base for any diplomatic history? And with the welcome focus on diplomacy not simply as a result but as an everyday process,[85] involving the daily sorting and organizing of information, what do such filing

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82   Alloul/Auwers, What, (2018), 113.
83   Louis Clerc, A Renewal of Diplomatic History or the Continuation of Old Trends? Selected Readings from the French-speaking Field of International History, Diplomatica 1 (2019), 291–298.
84   Erlandsson, Off, (2019).
85   Scott-Smith/Weisbrode, Editorial (2019), 4.

systems and knowledge routines tell us about the ways bureaucratic processes shape the steps diplomats take in making sense of the disordered world outside the neatness of the office?

As this brief outline has illustrated, there is still much work to be done. We believe, however, our understanding of historical foreign policy would benefit from a combination of NDH and history-of-knowledge approaches.