

Diplomatic security and the birth of the compound system¹

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Until the middle of the nineteenth century, diplomats and consuls had usually exhibited no great fear of politically inspired assault on their persons or premises. In view of the widespread acceptance of resident missions and corresponding growth in respect for diplomatic law, it was accidental fire that had always been the more common source of anxiety for their buildings; and – other than ordinary criminality – disease, especially cholera and plague, the more usual worry for the lives of their residents. However, at this juncture matters began to change. In Asia, resident diplomacy was spreading rapidly but soon facing resistance. The Indian ‘mutiny’ in 1857 had vividly demonstrated the potency of racial and religious animosity to European tutelage in general, and when China and Japan were forcibly opened to foreign commerce and had permanent diplomatic missions imposed upon them, their occupants confronted an extreme xenophobia that was exacerbated by the arrogance, rapacity and duplicity of many of their own traders. In Europe itself and the Americas, diplomatic security was at this point still not a great concern, but by the beginning of the following century the rise of nationalism and radical socialism had introduced an ideological temper to international relations that even in these regions posed a new threat to missions during temporary disturbances of civil or international order.

In seeking to protect themselves short of departing for home, diplomats had traditionally relied on the willingness of the governments of receiving states to provide them with effective local guards; and, failing this, on rudimentary self-defence or temporary retreat to a safer spot. However, in the changing circumstances of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was to the compound system – a more advanced form of self-defence – that they

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began to turn, especially in what in Europe was called 'East Asia'. Why did this happen and what form did it take?

The unreliability of local guards

A practical corollary of the customary rule of diplomatic inviolability – as well as a general principle of international law – was an obligation on the part of the receiving state to provide adequate protection to the staff and premises of diplomatic missions accredited to it, and bear its expense.² Where there was only a modest threat to diplomatic security, where relations between sending and receiving state were at least fairly good, and where the local government remained firmly in control, local guards were in fact usually adequate to their purpose – not least because they were more likely to have early warning of threats to a diplomatic mission than were the staff of the mission itself. Where conditions were more difficult, a large special force for the protection of diplomatic missions might be created by the local authorities, as in the case of the *betté-gumi* in Japan.³ Here, in the 1860s, random attacks on diplomats by sword-wielding *rōnin* (masterless *samurai*) occurred with alarming regularity in the disorderly conditions attending the power struggle between the declining Tokugawa shogunate in Yedo and the clans supporting the restoration of the governing power of the emperor in the sacred city of Kyoto.⁴ There were, however, three major drawbacks to heavy reliance on local guards.

The first drawback was that posting its own guards around a mission's premises – better still from the host's point of view, within a post's boundaries and even its buildings – not only provided earnest of the receiving state's willingness to discharge its duty of protection but also enabled it to keep a close watch on the diplomats' comings and goings, as

² Although it was only in the course of a meeting of the International Law Commission in 1957 that it was (readily) agreed that states had a 'special' duty of protection in the case of diplomatic missions. See *Yearbook*, p. 63; and, for a valuable recent discussion, Värk, 'The siege of the Estonian Embassy in Moscow'. The special duty was duly codified in Art. 22(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961).

³ Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. 2, pp. 384, 386; Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, p. 7; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 66-7, 79, 391. After the first attack on the British Legation, in July 1861, its Japanese guard was increased from 150 to 500 men, Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, pp. 154-5, 179.

⁴ On the violence against diplomats in Japan during this period, see Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 1, pp. 331-4, 377 and vol. 2, pp. 151-70, 192, 431-5; Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes*, pp. 25, 82; Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 96-102; Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. 1, p. 389 and vol. 2, p. 449ff; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 28-9, 46-8, 358-63.

also those of their visitors.⁵ Providing them with escorts outside was an equally good excuse for controlling their contacts with the wider population.

The second drawback to using local guards was that if their government became hostile or was in danger of collapsing, they could no longer be trusted. When they were really needed, therefore, at best the local defenders might simply melt away, as happened in Petrograd during the Bolshevik Revolution;⁶ at worst, they might collude with the attackers of those they were supposed to be protecting, as was strongly suspected of the 80-man guard of honour of Furahan infantry provided for the Russian Embassy in Tehran in 1828, the consequence of which was the massacre of almost all of its inhabitants, including the ambassador.⁷ As for the *betté-gumi* in Japan, despite their large numbers they failed to prevent serious attacks actually penetrating the legations in Yedo or insults and violence from being offered to diplomats outside.⁸

The third drawback of relying on this system was that receiving states were rarely either willing or able to depute their best troops to the defence of foreign missions: local guards were, in other words, too often incompetent even if not treacherous. The *betté-gumi*, for example, were drawn from a 'rather humble class' of *samurai*,⁹ were rotated with great frequency, and had 'no tie of any kind' with the diplomats.¹⁰ Sir Rutherford Alcock, who was the first British Minister to Japan, serving from 1858 until he was appointed to the same position in China in 1864, reflected in his memoirs that he could know nothing of his Japanese guards and had no voice in their selection; he regarded them as worse than useless.¹¹ As for the special guards assigned by the Chinese authorities to each legation in Peking, the former junior diplomat and then journalist of *The Times*, Valentine Chirol, wrote about them with even more withering contempt. They were:

⁵ Oliphant, *Narrative*, vol. 2, pp. 120-1. It was to reduce the obstructions placed by the *betté-gumi* in the way of making local contacts that Satow and his friend Algernon Mitford (later Lord Redesdale) – both Japanese speakers – took a small house outside the perimeter of the then temporary British legation at Sen-gaku-ji, Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 196.

⁶ Buchanan, *Petrograd*, pp. 143-4, 200.

⁷ 'Narrative of the Proceedings of the Russian Mission', p. 510; see also p. 500. In addition: *Annual Register* 1829, pp. 222-3; *The Times*, 13 May 1829; Bournoutian, 'Griboedov, Alexander Sergeevich'; *The Monthly Magazine*; Armstrong, *Journal of Travels in the Seat of War*, pp. 131-4.

⁸ Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. 2, pp. 384, 386; see also Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, p. 7; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 66-7, 79, 391. After the first attack on the British Legation (July 1861), the Japanese guard was increased from 150 to 500 men, Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, pp. 154-5, 179.

⁹ Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. 2, pp. 384, 386.

¹⁰ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 67. The American Legation at Yedo had a higher opinion of the quality of the Japanese guards but theirs was a minority opinion; see for example Townsend to Seward, 9 July 1861 <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1861v01> ; Pruyn to Seward, 26 May 1862 <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1863p2> .

¹¹ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, p. 434; see also pp. 7, 154-71.

decrepit old men and half-grown youths, the refuse apparently of the coolies of the town, in ragged uniforms and armed with every description of eccentric weapons, who lay for the greater part of the day sweltering in the foetid atmosphere of their tents or lounged about the footpath lazily scowling at the “foreign devils” whom they were supposed to protect, their evil faces suggesting a new rendering of “*Quis custodiet ipsos custodiet*”.¹²

Disappointment with the competence of local guards was not confined to diplomats in the East. In July 1918, the detachment of Bolshevik troops guarding the German Embassy in Moscow allowed a Left Social-Revolutionary to trick his way past it and promptly assassinate the ambassador, Count Mirbach.¹³

The limits of self-defence in the typical embassy

In Europe and the Americas, serious violence against diplomatic and consular missions was normally rare. And this was not only because it was in Europe and the regions heavily colonized by its peoples that the value of permanent missions was first appreciated and diplomatic law – reinforced by reciprocity – correspondingly developed. Diplomats – whose tours of duty were also often much longer than they are today and were accordingly better acclimatised – were invariably of the same social class as the local officials they dealt with, shared similar prejudices and mixed with them on social occasions; while consuls, for their part, were often recruited from local business communities. As a result, not only could reliance be placed on the sympathy and practical support of local authority in the event of a threat of mob violence, but it was generally unthinkable that this should ever be officially inspired; should it have been so, it could easily have led to war. Diplomatic and consular missions in Europe and the Americas, therefore, hardly ever had to be located, designed or staffed with defence against serious physical assault much in mind; and the same assumptions appear to have been initially carried to the East.

Such working assumptions were in fact unavoidable, because convenience and prestige argued irresistibly for the location of embassies and legations as close as possible to the nerve centres of sovereignty – courts, later ministries – to which their chiefs were accredited. And, since these locales tended already to be built up, and since envoys (who usually had to cover most if not all of their own expenses) were in any case hardly ever

¹² Chirol, *The Far Eastern Question*, p. 43.

¹³ Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, p. 303.

disposed to go to the trouble and cost of buying or erecting buildings that might well prove hostages to international fortune, there was little alternative to renting existing properties. These were usually domestic residences, sometimes owned by *grandees* or merchants going through lean times; and such premises were by no means always easy to find. In St Petersburg, for example, the Austrians, Danes, and finally the British – from 1863 until 1917 – actually shared with their Russian landlords the Saltykov mansion, a building located on the Great Neva river adjacent to the Troitski Bridge and facing the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. As far as the health of their inhabitants was concerned, building inspectors were more anxious about the furnishings of such properties and the condition of their drains than with the state of their defences.¹⁴ In Japan, the guest apartments of Buddhist temples were the only accommodation available for diplomats to rent in the Tycoon's capital.¹⁵ Among these, Tozenji, the temple the British had been manoeuvred into taking for their legation, might have been an 'earthly paradise' to look at, wrote Alcock, but – being in a hollow surrounded by woods and open on all sides to attack – could have been specially designed to accommodate 'the stealthy approach of the midnight assassin.'¹⁶

In normal times, therefore, self-reliance consisted of the customary means for protection against ordinary criminals. In Europe, these included stout walls, sturdy doors, and heavy locks, together with door-keepers, footmen and other servants (who might, in extremis, be called on for assistance), and by a more or less discreetly armed and magnificently attired *chasseur* to accompany and ensure the dignity of the head of mission inside as well as outside its walls.¹⁷ In the East, diplomats also had their servants but they usually carried revolvers as well and slept with them to hand;¹⁸ in addition, legations generally had at least one night-watchman. By the late nineteenth century, a military – and possibly a naval – attaché began to appear in embassies, and he might also provide a little more insurance, although intelligence gathering was his main responsibility. Embassies at Constantinople kept a small warship permanently stationed nearby on the Bosphorus in order to provide some reassurance to their

¹⁴ Cross, 'The Queen's house on the Neva; 'The British Embassy in St Petersburg'; Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire*, p. 224.

¹⁵ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 63.

¹⁶ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 1, pp. 102-4, also vol. 2, pp. 153-4, 179; see also Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 98-9. It was close enough to the seashore to be convenient for communication with any British ships in the bay but not to be able to rely on them for defence, Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 63.

¹⁷ Dufferin and Ava, *My Russian and Turkish Journals*, p. 14; Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson*, p. 205; Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁸ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 47; Cranmer-Byng, 'The Old British Legation at Peking', p. 76.

diplomats and other nationals resident in the Ottoman capital, but these *stationnaires* were of little real fighting value.¹⁹

In more troubled times – times of war or political upheaval – and in regions less used to resident diplomacy, the additional practical steps a diplomatic mission could take to defend itself were extremely limited.²⁰ The number of military co-nationals actually resident in the mission could be increased, and with them its arsenal of small arms and ammunition. However, this was usually possible only when military missions happened already to be in the receiving state for some other reason, as in Turkey against the background of the Balkan Wars in the early twentieth century, and in Russia during the First World War.²¹ And, while such precautions might suffice to withstand attack by a leaderless, primitively armed, and relatively small mob, they could hardly have been expected to resist a serious assault. In September 1917, when a Bolshevik takeover began to seem inevitable to the British Embassy in Petrograd, the idea of asking the Admiralty in London to moor two submarines alongside the Saltykov mansion as a deterrent to attack was seriously considered – but it seems to have proved just a dream.²²

Heads of mission might – and in the East usually did – refuse to put up with treatment on formal occasions that degraded them in the eyes of anti-foreign elements, the theory being that, by thereby preserving their national prestige, the idea that violence against them would have serious consequences for relations with the sending state would be reinforced;²³ but, unless carefully handled, standing on their dignity could simply prove provocative. They could even agree to disguise their missions, as the British Minister did in the case of the temporary legation built for him by the Japanese at Sengakuji in Yedo in 1866;²⁴ but this was hardly consistent with the preservation of prestige and was, in any case, in practice likely to deceive only malcontents with too much alcohol inside them. In the event of a breach in relations with the receiving state, the staff of a diplomatic mission could be reduced to a small consular nucleus and its protection placed in the hands of a third state; but the mission of such a state would be unlikely to risk its own relations with the receiving state by taking

¹⁹ Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey*, p. 22.

²⁰ I am not considering the *political* steps a mission could take; for example, courting those offering the most worrying threats. Nor am I considering the retaliation a sending government could threaten in order to *deter* an attack; for example, action against the receiving government's own envoy (should one exist) or a naval bombardment.

²¹ Berridge, *British Diplomacy in Turkey*, p. 126; Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire*, pp. 209, 215, 273; Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, pp. 53-5; Knox, *With the Russian Army*, p. 705.

²² Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, p. 114.

²³ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 1, pp. 379-82.

²⁴ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 156.

active defensive measures, even should these be within its means – which was even less likely.

The diplomatic contradictions of retreat to a safer spot

All things considered, therefore, in desperate times – and in the absence of a decision to recall it – a temporary move by a mission to a safer spot within the receiving state sometimes seemed the best bet and might be left to the ambassador's discretion by the foreign ministry at home. In Japan, the diplomats' chosen haven from the perils of Yedo was Yokohama, previously an isolated fishing village on the same bay on which the Tycoon's capital was located. This is where his government wished the foreign traders to be confined; where, accordingly, it had gone to great trouble to develop port facilities;²⁵ and where, as it happened, it was equally happy – as was the Mikado's government following the restoration – to see the barbarian diplomats corralled in the same place.²⁶ There are other examples: in late 1870, all of the embassies in Paris, then besieged by Prussian forces, followed the French provisional government to Tours; and, while some of the diplomats who left Petrograd at the end of February 1918 went home, others – Allied as well as neutral – set off on a special train into the interior, eventually establishing themselves at the small provincial town of Vologda, about 400 miles due east of Petrograd and reassuringly at the junction of the Archangel and Siberian railway lines.²⁷

However, retreat to safe spots such as these also had marked disadvantages. For one thing, it was always thought to be undignified, show lack of personal courage, and risk diminishing the prestige of the sending sovereign. Such considerations seem to have weighed heavily with Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Russia and doyen of the St Petersburg diplomatic corps when the capital's missions faced the double threat of Bolshevik unrest and approaching German armies – and he refused to move.²⁸ Retreat was also virtually guaranteed to invite the charge of desertion of those fellow nationals unable to leave the

²⁵ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 1, pp. 136-8; Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, p. 105.

²⁶ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, pp. 31-2; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 396.

²⁷ *The Times*, 26 February, 29 March 1918; Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, pp. 248-50.

²⁸ Buchanan, *Petrograd*, pp. 139-40, 166, 180-1; Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire*, p. 252; Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, p. 123; Knox, *With the Russian Army*, p. 728; Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, p. 121; Oudendyk, *Ways and By-Ways of Diplomacy*, pp. 236-7. In the event, by the end of December 1917 Buchanan was relieved of any further need to ponder the question of retreat because his health was in decline, and – together with his family and various members of the British military and naval missions – he was allowed to return to England early in the following January, Buchanan, *The Dissolution of an Empire*, pp. 274-8.

capital. Thus, although the British Ambassador, Lord Lyons, seems to have been the last head of mission to leave Paris in 1870 in order to keep in touch with the government to which he was accredited, and also took the precaution of leaving behind a skeleton staff, he was still attacked in parliament and the English press for abandoning the large British community remaining in the French capital and suffering increasing privation.²⁹ Above all, unless it meant following a government that was itself pulling back in the face of an invading foe, re-locating at a safer spot seriously impaired a mission's ability to discharge its key diplomatic functions: reporting on events, lobbying and negotiating with the government, building bridges to opposition elements, and so on.

It was particularly for the last of these reasons that Ernest Satow, who had arrived as a student interpreter in Japan in 1862 and was later to write the famous *Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, was contemptuous of the retreat of the diplomats to Yokohama: 'Fine houses, comfortable living and whole skins at Yokohama,' he wrote, 'were doubtless preferable to makeshifts and dangers at Yedo, but for all they knew or could learn of pending international questions they might just as well be resident at Hong Kong.'³⁰ Settling at Yokohama also suggested weakness in insisting on the right to keep a legation at the seat of the Japanese government, as agreed in the treaties of 1858. The United States Minister had refused to go to Yokohama at all, and as a rule the other ministers ended up compromising by maintaining outposts at Yedo as well.³¹

It was also because it seriously checked the ability of the diplomats in Russia to influence events that Robert Bruce Lockhart was similarly derisive of their retreat to the 'Allied Elysium' at Vologda.³² Following the departure of Buchanan, Lockhart – a Russian-speaking consular officer with orders to serve as Britain's unofficial representative to the Bolshevik government – installed himself instead in an apartment close to the Saltykov mansion and resisted encouragement by the Americans to join them.³³ And when, in March 1918, the new government shifted to Moscow, almost 300 miles south of Vologda ('as a connecting link with Moscow it was as useless as the North Pole'³⁴), Lockhart immediately

²⁹ Jenkins, *Lord Lyons*, pp. 357-8, 365-6; Berridge, *A Diplomatic Whistleblower in the Victorian Era* <http://grberridge.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/GrenvilleMurray.01.pdf>, p. 119.

³⁰ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 396.

³¹ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, pp. 44, 54-5, 155; Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. 1, pp. 383-4; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 28-9, 165, 167; Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 99-107.

³² Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, p. 304.

³³ Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, pp. 200-1, 224, 240. The Foreign Office described Lockhart as head of the 'British Commercial Mission to Russia', a mission with a 'political character' behind a 'commercial façade', Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, p. 128.

³⁴ Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, p. 281.

followed it, setting himself up in rooms at the Elite Hotel. But this was an exposed position, and he paid a price for risking it. Courting even more danger because of his shadier activities during the 'Red Terror' provoked by the attempt on Lenin's life and Allied intervention against the Bolsheviks, and despite the de facto diplomatic immunity he had been granted by way of reciprocation with his Bolshevik counterpart in London, Maxim Litvinov, Lockhart was arrested and imprisoned in the Lubyanka for a month before being released in a prisoner exchange.³⁵ The submariner Captain Francis Cromie, who had been naval attaché at the British Embassy and was left behind in the Saltykov mansion with a few intelligence officers and some remaining members of the military missions, paid a higher price: he was shot dead defending the embassy in the course of an armed Bolshevik incursion at the end of August 1918.³⁶

In short, a departure from the capital for a remote spot might guarantee the safety of the diplomats but at the cost of rendering them professionally useless, while staying or retreating with a *hostile* government might promise them more to do but at real risk to their freedom and even their lives.

Resort to the compound system

With the traditional methods for guaranteeing diplomatic security so obviously wanting, especially in the East, what was to be done? Writing only a few years after the 'Indian Mutiny', Sir Rutherford Alcock saw no alternative to adoption of the system established for a Resident in India who was exposed to the same sort of danger as diplomatic missions in Japan. This meant, he believed, a force composed of 'European or Indian troopers' permanently attached to the legation, the larger element to consist of a body of infantry for static defence, with a smaller one composed of a mounted unit for purposes of external escort. The residence itself should be located in a 'defensible position' and built with defence in mind.³⁷ The ideal was a complex of purpose-designed buildings (including barracks and stables) on a sizeable plot of land. They should as far as possible be constructed of fire-resistant materials, have an independent water supply, occupy an elevated position, and have a formidable perimeter barrier – whether a thick, high wall or a deep trench with a high

³⁵ Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, pp. 244-7, 317-21; Oudendyk, *Ways and By-Ways of Diplomacy*, pp. 292-8; Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, pp. 138-9.

³⁶ Hughes, *Inside the Enigma*, pp. 121-2, 134, 138.

³⁷ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, pp. 196-7.

wooden palisade behind it.³⁸ Where, as in Japan, the geography of the country and its seat of government made this a practical possibility, such diplomatic compounds – stockades by another name – should have ready access to the sea, both for reinforcement by the crews of warships in harbour, and – in extremis – for escape.³⁹

These were the key elements of the essentially colonial-style ‘compound’ system: the means whereby token self-defence would become the effective means of resistance to determined attack in an actually or potentially hostile environment. But having such a plan was one thing; putting it into effect was quite another. Aside from its expense, the main problems, of course, were the difficulties of finding suitable sites not too remote from the local government, and the risk of stimulating further local hostility by the presence of large foreign garrisons.

The compound system had begun crudely to emerge in Japan even before Alcock urged it in his memoir. The Russian Legation established in 1859 – probably with the memory of Tehran 30 years earlier in mind – had its own guard of 300 men ‘fully armed and equipped’;⁴⁰ and when Satow arrived in Yedo in 1862, Alcock already had a marine detachment of 50 men in addition to 12 mounted troopers in his own legation.⁴¹ But the Japanese objected particularly strongly to the escort of diplomats through their streets by barbarian cavalymen, which literally *paraded* contempt for the adequacy of their own security measures, and – to Alcock’s disgust – the issue was raised by their mission to the European treaty powers in 1862.⁴² In Europe, there was even stronger resistance to large, visible garrisons. Thus, even after a Left Social-Revolutionary tricked his way into the German Embassy in Moscow in July 1918 and assassinated the ambassador, the German demand to be permitted to send a battalion of their own soldiers to guard their mission was refused.⁴³

As to finding suitable sites, in the early 1860s, the foreign legations at Yedo successfully negotiated property rights for new compounds on commanding positions at

³⁸ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 63-5; Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 102-3.

³⁹ Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, p. 98. The *stationnaires* moored in the Bosphorus served a similar purpose for the embassies in Constantinople.

⁴⁰ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 1, p. 240.

⁴¹ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 32; see also Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes*, p. 31.

⁴² Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, p. 408. The Americans also thought external escorts provocative; see Pruyn to Seward, 26 May 1862. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/FRUS.FRUS1863p2> In the 1870s, the legations scaled back their home guards, although this trend was also encouraged by the Meiji restoration in 1868 and the later curbs on the privileges of the *samurai*, including the carrying of swords in public, Daniels, *Sir Harry Parkes*, p. 94.

⁴³ Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, p. 303.

Gotenyama, hitherto a pleasure ground of the Tycoon's capital.⁴⁴ But these were abandoned after the new British Legation – already well advanced – was burned down in early 1863, probably deliberately.⁴⁵ The centre of gravity of the missions therefore remained in the safe haven of Yokohama for the following decade, the British subsisting at Yedo first in Tozenji of ill repute and then with a temporary new building thrown up by the Japanese in the grounds of another temple, at Sengakuji.⁴⁶ The latter, said Satow, was 'enclosed by a lofty black wooden fence which imparted to the establishment somewhat of the aspect of a jail.'⁴⁷

By 1875, when the British had succeeded in taking occupation of another new permanent building in the capital – by then 'Tokyo' – the threat from anti-foreign *samurai* had receded. Nevertheless, it had not disappeared altogether and it was feared by some that it might return. Therefore, the new legation compound – at Kojimachi, close to the imperial palace – was located on a prominent position, and the minister's residence was given a tower that would serve, among other things, as a 'lookout over the city' during any emergency.⁴⁸ A unit of British guards was accommodated on the compound, as was a cavalry escort for the minister, the latter being retained until the 1890s.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, it is clear that the idea of the compound system – which included not only a national garrison but also a high perimeter wall around a plot of land sufficiently spacious to enable as much self-reliance for essential services as possible – had been firmly planted in Japan and that its influence on provision for diplomatic security was widely felt. This was particularly true elsewhere in the East, notably in China, where – after the Boxer uprising in 1900 – the fortification of Peking's Legation Quarter took the system to its logical conclusion: it became a compound of compounds. In Ethiopia – one of Africa's few independent states prior to European decolonization after the Second World War – the legations in Addis Ababa were established on the same principle.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon*, vol. 2, p. 197; Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 102-3; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, p. 103; Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, p. 71.

⁴⁶ Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, pp. 103-7.

⁴⁷ Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan*, pp. 164-5.

⁴⁸ Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, p. 112.

⁴⁹ Hoare, *Embassies in the East*, p. 114.

⁵⁰ Hohler, *Diplomatic Petrel*, pp. 118, 120-1, 124, 135; *The Times*, 21 April 1936; HCPP (Cmnd. 5213) 1936.

Conclusion

Diplomatic security in Europe and the Americas was only a real problem during rare periods of serious civil or international disorder. This meant that the location and physical characteristics of buildings were chosen for their diplomatic rather than defensive value, and that chief reliance for security against incidental violence was placed on the local authorities, and – against officially inspired violence – on retaliation in kind. At most, only a token presence of home-supplied guards was the norm. In extremis, retreat to a safer spot was the usual reflex, particularly if this had the diplomatic advantage of keeping in touch with a recognized government. By contrast, for a relatively brief but significant period in the middle of the nineteenth century, the permanent missions recently established in the remote, unstable and xenophobic conditions of East Asia were soon felt to require adoption of the *compound system* long employed by political officers in the colonies of the European imperial powers: walled or palisaded enclosures defended by substantial bodies of home-supplied guards. Although the military appearance of these compounds was later ameliorated, a pattern was thus established, and one not restricted to East Asia. Its echoes in the twenty-first century, for example in Baghdad, are only too audible.

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