

Foreword

The books we keep close at hand are the ones from which we draw inspiration, and, if you are in my business of journalism, from which we occasionally borrow ideas and aphorisms. For a decade, *The Diplomat's Dictionary* has had that special place at my writing desk, so that I can turn to its pages when I am stuck for a concept or a definition, or am just in need of a jolt of acidulous wisdom from the mind of Chas Freeman.

This compilation mirrors Freeman's own eclectic and wide-ranging interests. He has gathered quotations over the millennia from Chinese mandarins, Arab kings, French philosophes, and even a few American journalists. The dictionary distills the compiler's barbed and ironic sense of humor. Who but Freeman could find in the writings of Konrad Adenauer this definition of appeasement: "An infallible method of conciliating a tiger is to allow oneself to be swallowed?" Who else would offer this definition of foolproof: "Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool?"

The first requirement for a lexicographer is that he should not be afraid of words and ideas. And Freeman is that rare State Department officer who made a reputation not simply as a diplomat, but as a free-thinker and iconoclast. He joined the Foreign Service in 1965 after studies at Yale and Harvard Law School, and was assigned to the China desk. Such was his facility with languages that he served as President Nixon's interpreter during his 1972 visit to the People's Republic of China. Later he learned Arabic, and served as U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War.

The Diplomat's Dictionary can be read as a practitioner's guide. Freeman has gathered quotations from the statesmen he has studied over a lifetime of reading and from those with whom he has worked during his career. Here you will find Kissinger and Talleyrand, Sun Tzu and Mao Tse Tung, Demosthenes and Disraeli. Freeman is especially useful on the subject of negotiation—devoting nearly twenty pages to that subject in the original edition. And prospective emissaries abroad should consult the ten pages he devotes to ambassadors and their duties and foibles.

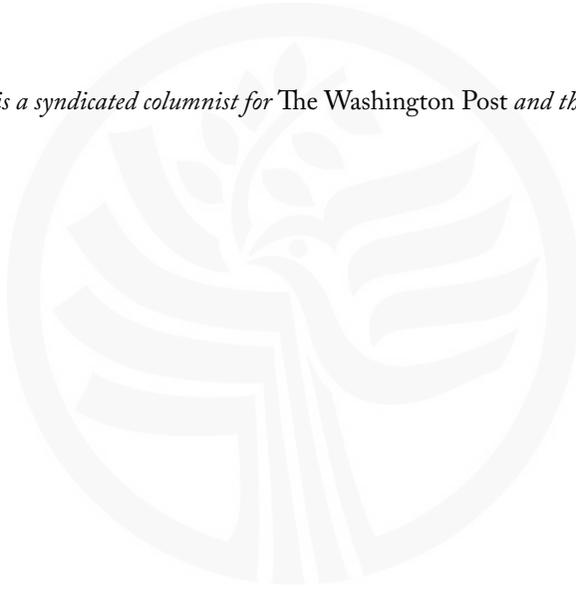
This new edition displays Freeman's customary erudition and also some dark new bits of humor that could have found their way into Ambrose Bierce's satirical work, *The Devil's Dictionary*. In this new edition, compiled in the shadow of Iraq and Afghanistan, Freeman wisely devotes space to war and related problems of strategy. He offers this rueful and apposite definition of disillusionment: "To be disillusioned, you must first allow yourself to develop illusions." And as a wry capstone for his endeavor he defines diplomats thusly in the new edition: "A diplomat is someone who, when he is run out of town, can make it look like he is leading a parade." Freeman, we can say, is the consummate diplomat.

The Diplomat's Dictionary can be read for pleasure, as well as practical advice, for these pages sparkle with intelligence and wit. I am certain of one thing: If this book comes into

more general use among our diplomatic corps, and students learn their Freeman, then the State Department's briefings and statements will be much more worth our reading and listening.

—*David Ignatius*

David Ignatius is a syndicated columnist for The Washington Post and the author of seven novels.



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Preface



I dedicate *The Diplomat's Dictionary* to my friend, the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

Without King Fahd's entirely inadvertent assistance this book of diplomatic lore would never have been compiled. I put together most of the initial draft in the anterooms of his palaces in Riyadh and Jeddah. There, as the American ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 1989 through 1992 (a busy three years that included a war to liberate Kuwait and defend Saudi Arabia from Iraq), I found myself spending many hours on many occasions, sipping the king's tea and waiting for him to receive me. His uniquely carefree approach to his schedule provided time I otherwise would not have had to read, meditate, and begin to record observations on the practice of diplomacy. I am grateful to him for this.

I began to compile these thoughts for use as footnotes in a book on the doctrine of statecraft and the practice of diplomacy that I eventually wrote called *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy*. To my surprise, the compilation grew into a book in its own right.

Like its companion volume, *The Diplomat's Dictionary* was originally directed at practitioners with the purpose of stimulating thought about how best to solve practical problems of statecraft. Much to my pleasure, the book—doubling as a dictionary of quips and quotations—has become popular among students, teachers, journalists, and generalists as well. I hope this revision adds to its utility as both resource and reference.

I have added quite a few definitions and maxims to those in previous editions and made a correction or two. As before, unattributed entries are either commonplaces or personal observations of varying degrees of originality. If an individual source must be cited for these, feel free to attribute them to me.

—Chas W. Freeman, Jr.
Ambassador (United States Foreign Service, Retired)
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