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Diplomatic Counterculture as a Tool of the Soviet Foreign Policy

1. Introduction

The novelty of the paper: it is a pioneering research devoted to the study of diplomatic counterculture the definition of which the author introduces in the scientific use.

The relevance affords ground to understand not only the ideology but also social psychology of the society – a lack of its adequate interpretation raises difficulties for objective assessment of the behavior of state leaders in specific situations – through analyzing published papers and archive materials.

The purpose of the research is to prove that political counterculture is one of the communicate factors in the system of international relations.

2. Ideological component of the Soviet protocol

The breach of protocol takes place either due to its ignorance, which is non-typical for professional politicians, or for a public demonstration of zero tolerance to particular political objectives.

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The author considers the diplomatic counterculture as an intended ignorance of common protocol norms, traditions, conventionalities and the rules of respect and politeness established in global practices and observed in diplomatic, official and interpersonal relations to influence the foreign policy decisions of participants in international dialogue by heads of state, government, foreign departments, public and political figures, diplomats and members of their families, employees of embassies and international organizations.

Being in Moscow after the October Coup of 1917, representative of foreign missions, primarily of European states, were quite explicit about new revolutionary ceremonials of the ancient capital. Thus, on November 7, 1922, the British arrived late for the military parade on purpose. They gave a shock due to a covering note of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) attached to the tickets which stated that the parade was dedicated to the 5th anniversary of the October Revolution. At the same time, French diplomats, given the traditional rivalry between France and Britain, "chuckled at the British hebetude". The French also informed NKID that the British representatives renewed their five o'clock-tea receptions where "they have a lot of fun and dance". Officials of the entire diplomatic corps, except the ambassador of Persia, were present at one of such receptions².

Despite the active efforts of the Protocol Department of NKID, it would be too bold to state that by the mid-1930s in the USSR, there was a tendency of consolidation of the norms of the diplomatic protocol, which referred both to greeting and seeing off ceremonies for foreign delegations and to the rules of conduct for the diplomatic staff accredited in Moscow.

In this context, the meeting of the Polish charge d'affaires with a representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) dated February 1, 1935 is of special interest. The latter demanded from the Polish diplomat to comment behavior of some members of the diplomatic corps, who didn't stand up when "signing our anthem"³.

² Archive of the Foreign Policy of the RF (AFP of the RF) (1922). F.057.D.2.Para.101.C.1.P.22.

³ AFP of the RF. F.057.D.15.Para.112.C.2.P.1.

In response, the diplomat said he believed that “it has been performed the party song not the anthem”. In his opinion, the words of the Internationale haven’t a character of the anthem but represent a song of revolutionary workers appealing to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Thus, he considered anthem as a musical performance and always got up on solemn occasions. In that situation, it concerned not the performance of the anthem under the appearance of Kalinin, as head of the state, but the signing of the Internationale in honor of Stalin as *vozhd* (leader) of the proletariat.

In response to the grounds of the Polish diplomat, the representative of NKID stated that his reasoning aggravated the existing situation. The representatives of the bourgeois states do not like the words of the Internationale, as well as some people in the USSR do not like the words of many national anthems, especially the monarchical ones. However, the compliance with the rules of international courtesy causes our representatives to stand up or uncover whenever anthems are performed. What would the Polish government say if our Soviet representative in Warsaw demonstratively sat, while singing the Polish anthem in honor of Piłsudski, based on the fact that Piłsudski is not an official head of the state?

Therefore, the Polish diplomat marked that in the USSR, there wasn’t a developed “protocol ceremonial”⁴ which would specify the cases when diplomats had to stand up; moreover, he listened to the singing of the Internationale abroad in different languages many times, and everyone understood that it was the revolutionary song.

The Soviet party continued to insist that such situations didn’t require any rules, as it is clear to everyone that one needs to stand up when performing an anthem.

Another NKID’s complaint against the diplomatic corps concerned the reluctance of diplomats to stand up for greeting the Soviet *vozhds*. In particular, at the opening of a congress, the audience was greeting K.E. Voroshilov in applause since many knew Voroshilov personally, but when the audience was welcoming unknown for them persons, including Stalin, they didn’t get on their foot.

⁴ *Ib.* P.2.

Following the outcome of the conversation, NKID decided not to carry out performances for some embassies (about a half of diplomats didn't stand up, including representatives of Germany and Japan, when singing the Internationale that was emphasized in the report) believing that they would realize their "misbehavior"⁵.

It is worth highlighting that from the perspective of diplomatic courtesy, diplomatic officials accredited in Moscow were not obliged to give attention to Stalin as he didn't hold, as the Iran Ambassador marked, "any official leadership post in the system of the Soviet state"⁶. For that reason, not getting any instructions from the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, he didn't wish Stalin happy 60th milestone birthday. For the same reason, namely that Stalin is not the official head of the state, the Danish and Norwegian envoys did not wish Stalin happy birthday. But even so, the latter said that "he is full of sincere feelings of respect and admiration for Mr Stalin"⁷.

The NKID staff had to solve the problems of different nature regarding the life of foreign diplomats in Moscow. In April 1938, Litvinov informed deputy head of the 2nd department of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) that diplomatic representatives in Moscow began to complain about "too intrusive forms of protection". Agents followed hard upon them, as well as their wives and family members; they together entered shops and recorded the conversations in front of the diplomats. Litvinov asked "to prevent such tricks" and guard inconspicuously.

In his letter, Litvinov, as a professional diplomat, avoided forceful wordings and called the explicit surveillance of the NKVD staff as "guard" of diplomatic workers.

On July 18, 1939, the presence of two officers of NKVD (they usually set towards the end of the row – at the doorway) sitting in the first row, reserved for ambassadors and envoys, at the Parade of Athletes sparked a backlash among the representative of the diplomatic corps⁸.

⁵ Ib. P.4.

⁶ AFP of the RF. F.057.D.19.Para.113.C.1.P.90

⁷ Ib.

⁸ Ib. P. 16.

All heads of diplomatic missions, *chargés d'affaires*, advisers, first secretaries of embassies, military attachés attended the parade. V. N. Barkov, Head of the Protocol Department, noted the absence of the Japanese ambassador as well as the early departure of the French and British ambassadors. He also paid attention to the fact that the Afghan ambassador “was very cheerful” when he saw that a boy, dressed in a Red Army uniform, was leading “three defeated Japanese”⁹.

Body language is of high priority in the ceremonial culture.

3. “The cult of personality” in the Soviet protocol

J.V. Stalin was one of the most sophisticated improvisers among Soviet politicians, professionally manipulating the norms of diplomatic protocol and etiquette.

In August 1939, after the negotiations with J. Ribbentrop, at supper-time he made a toast to Adolf Hitler as a man he revered; at the end of the reception, he allowed Fuhrer’s photographer to take a few photos (foreigners were prohibited to take photographs in the Kremlin) which captured Stalin and guests holding glasses of Crimean champagne in their hands.

In 1939, Ribbentrop talked about *vozhd* as a man with extraordinary power. Stalin managed to daze German Foreign Minister and, in August 1942, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom W. Churchill marked Stalin’s hospitality at a dinner in the Kremlin and offered to drink to his health. Towards the end of the reception after official farewell handshake with Stalin, Churchill made for the exit, but *vozhd* caught up with him and showed him to the front door where they again shook hands.

Stalin’s invitation to Churchill to visit his apartment in the Kremlin was beyond the official ceremonial norms as well.

The author believes Stalin misstep by not asking his daughter to table, as Churchill informed the American President Roosevelt¹⁰.

Stalin’s feasts are “men-only meetings”, but *vozhd* invited a gentleman to his house for whom the attitude towards a woman is a measure of the

⁹ *Ib.*

¹⁰ Churchill W. (1955). *World War II, M., Vol. IV.* .P. 496.

morality of a person. In that case, Stalin “failed” to fulfill a role of a strict, but loving “Father of Nations”.

A protocol is conservative. The protocol norm giving honors, which once has been applied to one person, cannot be omitted in relation to another. “Any precedent for a protocol is fraught with the fact that it must become the norm, and if the norms are abolished, then it is also a precedent which creates a new norm; this is the alphabet of every novice diplomat”¹¹.

The Internationale was the national anthem in the USSR until January 1, 1944; thus, when the first Soviet ambassador came to Finland, it was decided to cancel adopted in the ‘20s performance of the national anthem of the country of the arrived diplomat before the presentation of letters of credence forever.

There are cases when precedents didn’t become the norm. In April 1941, the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact was concluded in Moscow. J. V. Stalin personally arrived at the station to see the Japanese minister on his way. Such a practice did not become the norm in the Soviet protocol, but that fact was of great political significance.

Stalin paid tribute to the importance of the protocol in international relations, personally entering into all details of holding diplomatic events, including the preparation of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences.

4. Visit of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom H. Macmillan to the USSR (1959)

On the day before the visit of the British Prime Minister H. Macmillan, the program of a stay was balanced – it included negotiations, excursions, cultural and entertainment events by trains around the country. But due to the complicated negotiation process, the program began to change towards reducing its entertainment part and expanding the negotiation process. Hunting, which involved dressing the guest in a khaki fur coverall and high boots made of dog fur, was canceled first. A Tula gun with gold notches and nacreous inlays was prepared as a gift.

¹¹ Karyagin V.V. (1994). Diplomatic life behind the scenes and on stage. M., P.146.

Events which directly relate to the concept of “diplomatic counter-culture” were forthcoming.

Before starting a trip around the country, on February 24, at a reception at the British Embassy, N. S. Khrushchev said that he would go to Kiev together with the guest tomorrow. However, the next day, Macmillan, instead of Kiev, went to Khrushchev’s dacha (country house) in the company of Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd and Ambassador Sir Patrick Riley. There was (besides family members of the Soviet leader) A.I. Mikoyan, A.A. Gromyko and the Soviet Ambassador to London Ya. A. Malik. The next morning, the same company held a discussion in the Kremlin, after Macmillan drove to the airdrome where he learned that First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs V.V. Kuznetsov was an accompanying senior person.

The Prime Minister dawdled on boarding, constantly talking with his companions, but then the members of the delegation got on the plane.

“Everyone felt the awkwardness of the situation, and first of all Vasilii Vasilevich (V.V. Kuznetsov – author’s) who, I think, perfectly well realized that he was assigned the role of a protocol “thorn” and, with all his indisputable diplomatic authority, he could not hold the fort as head of the state would”¹², V.V. Karyagin called.

In Kiev, all members of the British delegation pretended that nothing happened. At an official dinner, Macmillan even exchanged “delicate compliments” with Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR N. T. Kalchenko and said in his toast that he was “flattered to be the guest of the Prime Minister, who had been a general during the war while he, Macmillan, had been promoted to the rank of captain, and that only in the First World War”. Kalchenko responded in no less elegant form by noting that it gave him pleasure “to entertain the former infantry captain, who became the captain of such a big ship”¹³.

The protocol “confusion” was smoothed out in Leningrad where Macmillan was met not by the chairman of the Leningrad City Executive Committee, as stated in the program, but by A.I. Mikoyan and A.A. Gromyko, who unexpectedly arrived in Leningrad to accompany the Prime Minister there.

¹² Ib. P. 47.

¹³ Ib. P. 48

Khrushchev's protocol demonstration was galling for Macmillan, and it is hard to suppose that he subsequently forgot about it.

On that trip, Macmillan wore a nice-looking light grey papakha ("As-trakhan cap"), which suited him very much. It was likely that Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, hereditary nobleman Ph. de Zaluetta, who had worked at the embassy in Moscow at his time, gave Macmillan a clue to wear that kind of a hat. To support the Prime Minister, he wore a "luxurious black kubanka (karakul hat) with a red top. In truth, he looked grotesque when contrasted with the imposing prime minister"¹⁴.

In his turn, General S. M. Shtemenko recalled that during a visit of the British Field Marshal Montgomery to Moscow, he was presented with a general's bekishe (a type of frock coat) made of squirrel fur and papakha. He did not take them off even at a dinner with Stalin in the Kremlin.

Despite the protocol mistake, Macmillan gratefully accepted the hand-made inlaid shotgun and promised to test it in his native Scotland in the process of partridge shooting.

A gift in return – antique renovated George III Style desktop which would be quite expensive at Sotheby's or Christie's – left Khrushchev unfazed. Did anyone of economic executives ask where to "settle" this "junk"?¹⁵

5. "Shoe diplomacy" at the UN (1960)

"Spontaneity" of N.S. Khrushchev is not the manifestation of counterculture but absolute confidence in his rightness under any circumstances. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is right always and about everything.

The events associated with the reconnaissance flight of the American aircraft "U-2", shot down in Sverdlovsk region on May 1960, decisively strained relations between the USA and the USSR.

In 1960, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev decided to head the Soviet delegation, which flew to New York to participate in the 15th session of the UN General Assembly, in person.

¹⁴ Ib.

¹⁵ Ib. P. 49-0.

Learnt about Khrushchev's trip, the leaders of the socialist countries also concluded to lead their delegations. In the early September, so-called "Peace Flight" started out from Kaliningrad. There was János Kádár, Todor Zhivkov, Antonín Novotný, Vladislav Gomul'kov together with Khrushchev abroad a motor vessel "Baltic".

The leaders of Ukraine and Belarus, Nikolay Podgorny and Kirill Mazurov, joined the same travel.

Arrived in New York, Khrushchev decided that, as well as at the Soviet party congresses, he should attend all meetings of the session. However, according to the established tradition, heads of state and government appear in the convention hall only on the day of their speech. Even the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.A. Gromyko couldn't change Khrushchev's mind. During the sessions, Khrushchev rushed to rostrum to "open everyone's eyes to the truth". Finally, he gave the floor – the speech of the Soviet leader lasted more than 2 hours. "All imperialists took a beating <...>, especially the American ones who were reminded all their wrongdoings, including "U-2". He made suggestions on the liquidation of colonialism, the establishment of "threesome" instead of the post of one UN Secretary General"¹⁶.

During the speech, Khrushchev took a glass of Borjomi – he was sipping of it and advising everyone to taste it. Almost all speakers, who gave the floor after Khrushchev, discussed initiatives of the USSR in the process of general debate. At the same time, many diplomats paid attention that, besides colonialism, there was another form of oppression, namely, the one imposed by the USSR on the countries of Eastern Europe. Khrushchev could hardly restrain his emotions which literally "burst out" after the words of one of the speakers about the "bloody actions of the Soviet Union" in Hungary in 1956. Khrushchev began to loudly object to the speakers from his seat. Microphones were not installed in front of the delegates at that time. Khrushchev was shouting, but simultaneous interpreters did not hear him.

When Khrushchev started crying something, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Macmillan stopped his speech and said: "Maybe some-

¹⁶ Sukhodrev V.M. (2008) *Yazyk moy – drug moy* [My Language – my friend]. M., p. 50.

one would translate his words for me..."¹⁷. But unlike the British Prime Minister, a representative of the Philippines, who spoke about the actions in Hungary, the annexation of the Baltic republics, tried to pay no regard to Khrushchev. Then the Soviet leader began pounding his fists on the table. There was no need to explain that such behavior is not accepted in the UN. The rules of procedure allow one, during a discussion, to take the floor to respond to a speaker's speech or a point of order if the speaker is off the subject or violates regulations. In such a case, the chairman interrupts the speaker and gives the floor for a procedural objection. "After a while, Gromyko managed to explain to Khrushchev that he could interrupt the speaker and take the floor on a point of order.

- Ah, I have the right to interrupt, after all? Very good! - Nikita Sergeevich was happy to hear and raised a tablet with the name of his country"¹⁸.

The Filipino, who cut his speech at the request of the chairman, stepped down from the rostrum. When it became clear that Khrushchev wasn't going to speak about the procedure of the meeting, the chairman of the session, the Irishman Frederick Boland, interrupted him. However, Khrushchev had time to express his opinion about American "puppets" in the Philippines and said about the speaker:

- I don't know, maybe he is a good man on his own, but it is evident that he is fulfilling the will of his overseas bosses¹⁹.

The next day, the representative of the Philippines asked at the meeting to exercise his right of reply and defended his honor and dignity. On the same day, at the UN session, there were statements which Khrushchev interpreted as attacks against communism, the Soviet Union and the socialist system as a whole. In protest, he continued to bang the table with his fists²⁰. But at some point, he took off his shoe and began to bang the desk with it. The famous Soviet interpreter V. M. Sukhodrev, who was present at the UN conference room that day, remembered that: "it wasn't a shoe, although all newspapers of the world called it so, but

¹⁷ *Ib.* P. 51.

¹⁸ *Ib.*

¹⁹ *Ib.*

²⁰ *Ib.*

rather something like a sandal, with several straps on the toe. Khrushchev liked to wear square-toed brown shoes in warm weather.

When he started banging his shoe on the table, I felt sick. I think not only I did”²¹. Viktor Mikhaylovich Sukhodrev was right – Khrushchev wrote in his memoirs that Nehru had disapproved that act. The Soviet leader justified his actions by the fact that there was a delegation of Francoist Spain in the hall. Before the departure from Moscow, the leader of the Spanish international movement Dolores Ibárruri, who lived in exile in the USSR, had asked him to “expose the Francoists”. Thus, after the speech of the Spanish Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he began to cry against Franco to fulfill the request and banged his boot on the table to make it more convincing.

But the apotheosis of the scandal of that day was Khrushchev’s speech when he shouted that “the time will come, and the people of Spain will rise and overthrow the bloody regime!”²²

According to the laws of the parliamentary system, the above statement was a clear offence. Franco was the head of the UN member state. The chairman of the session made unsuccessful attempts to cut Khrushchev short, but Khrushchev did not have headphones which render simultaneous translation, and thus, he did not understand Boland’s English speech.

V.M. Sukhodrev, who was present at the UN conference room that day, gave the following description of the subsequent events: “Realizing that the chairman was trying to reason with him, he (N.S. Khrushchev – author’s) turned to him and began to denounce Boland:

– So, that’s what you are up to?! And you, chairman, also support this vile toady of imperialism and fascism?! Well, I am telling you that the time will come, and the people of Ireland will rise up against their oppressors! The people of Ireland will overthrow such as you, servants of imperialism!

The Irish are emotional and hot. Boland, hearing the attacks against him, flushed with anger and shouted:

– You have already broken all the rules! I deprive you of the right to speak and conclude the meeting!”²³

²¹ Ib.

²² Ib. P. 52.

²³ Ib.

After those words, Boland hit a wooden stand with the chair's hammer hard. It cracked, and its head flew into the hall.

Khrushchev kept shouting, but nobody heard him as the microphone was turned off. When Boland left the hall, Khrushchev came back to his seat.

The hammerhead became a museum piece at the East River building. The Norwegians presented the chairman with a new hammer made of black wood and covered with the Viking age ornaments.

The protocol often demonstrates the nature of relations between states. V. V. Karyagin recalled that, being Deputy Head of the Protocol Department of MID of the USSR, in 1963 he was delegated to meet A. Harriman, who was Under Secretary of State at that time. During the war, Harriman was the U.S. ambassador to the USSR and carried out F. D. Roosevelt's responsible tasks around the world as ambassador-at-large. Harriman got due respect in Moscow and, apparently, for that reason he was entrusted with the mission to maintain negotiations on the south-eastern affairs. However, the Soviet party wasn't satisfied with the scenario. Perhaps, that was a primary cause of the protocol demonstration when Harriman was met by Deputy Head of the Protocol Department instead of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. On the day of arrival, the US Ambassador F. Kohler went aboard the plane and informed the guest about the current situation. "Harriman walked down the airstair with a smile and even invited me (V.V. Karyagin – author's), at the request of American reporters, to take a picture", – V.V. Karyagin recalled.

New York Times published a piece reporting that Deputy Head of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR met Undersecretary of the State although, "by rank", Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs or Head of the American Department was supposed to meet. The demonstration was noticed..."²⁴.

French diplomats often provide their international colleagues with the "lessons" of classical diplomatic protocol. Thus, in 1963 the national holiday of France – the 14th of July – took place on Sunday. The Soviet party proposed to reschedule the reception for another day of week to guarantee full Soviet delegation, since many invitees would be in the

²⁴ Karyagin V.V. (1994). Diplomatic life behind the scenes and on stage. M., P.144.

country. The French Ambassador to Moscow M. Dejean was categorical: "France celebrates its holiday on July 14, and it is not possible to postpone it to another day, but he will not be offended if any of the Soviet invitees is absent at the reception due to particular circumstances. The level of representation at the reception was high"²⁵.

Pope Paul VI was a man who boldly broke the habitual patterns. "His papacy was marked by the fact that he brought an end to the century-long seclusion of popes which had continued since 1870, visited many countries advocating for peace and peaceful existence". The story, which was told by the American diplomat J. Wood, highlighted the secular views of the Pope. During the visit of Jacqueline Kennedy to Vatican, the Papal Household was offered a choice of three options for addressing the President's wife: "Mrs. First Lady", "Mrs. Kennedy", or "Mrs". However, when Jacqueline Kennedy came to the audience, the Pope held out his hands to her and exclaimed: "Oh, Jacqueline!"²⁶. The violation of protocol norms was made not to offend the guest, but to emphasize his special treatment.

6. Conclusions

The ignorance of protocol rules by Soviet leaders, in most cases, undermined their reputation and, as a consequence, the image of the state.

The new Soviet elite were prepared for diplomatic communication with the use of generally accepted European norms of diplomatic etiquette neither psychologically nor practically.

"Hot rodding" of L.I. Brezhnev and his love of expensive cars surprised the world political elite but did not contribute to strengthening the authority of the leader of the USSR.

It is difficult to attribute the hugs and kisses of the Soviet leader with the heads of friendly states and governments to the diplomatic counterculture. The breach of etiquette enriched urban folklore and the genre of caricature. The above has nothing to do with the democratization of protocol norms.

²⁵ *Ib.* P. 179.

²⁶ *Ib.* P. 187.

During the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to St. Petersburg, the Russian party was informed that a visit to the exhibition dedicated to Emperor Nikolai Alexandrovich and Empress Alexandra Fedorovna had to be removed from the program. In due course of the visit to the Hermitage, the hosts invited the Queen to the exhibition. Her Majesty did not even cross the threshold of the hall. One of the reasons was England's responsibility for the murder of the royal family in July 1918.

The above example is one of the most remarkable confirmations that diplomatic protocol and state ceremony are a representation of the moral, political and cultural life of society.

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Summary

The article deals with the study of the issue of diplomatic counterculture the definition of which the author introduces into scientific use.

The breach of protocol takes place either due to its ignorance, which is non-typical for professional politicians, or for a public demonstration of zero tolerance to particular political objectives.

In this context, the meeting of the Polish charge d'affaires with a representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) in Moscow dated February 1, 1995 is of special interest. The latter demanded from the diplomat to comment behavior of some members of the diplomatic corps, who didn't stand up when signing the Internationale (anthem in that period) during one of the official events. Another NKID's complaint against the diplomatic corps concerned the reluctance of diplomats to stand up for greeting the Soviet vozhd

(leaders), including J.V. Stalin who didn't hold any official leadership post in the system of the Soviet state.

In the author's opinion, J.V. Stalin was one among Soviet politicians of the most sophisticated improvisers, professionally manipulating the norms of diplomatic protocol and etiquette.

In 1939, J. Ribbentrop had talked about *vozhd* as a man with extraordinary power. Stalin managed to daze Minister of Foreign Affairs of German and, in August 1942, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom W. Churchill marked Stalin's hospitality at a dinner in the Kremlin and offered to drink to his health.

It has been found that one of the blatant cases of diplomatic counterculture is the conduct of N.S. Khrushchev during the meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in 1960. "Shoe diplomacy" didn't raise the credibility of the Soviet leader in the minds of the global community. The ignorance of protocol rules may lead to the loss of the reputation of a government leader, and as a consequence, negatively affect the country's image, its attractiveness, which is a hallmark of the "soft power" of the state.

Keywords: international relations, state image, protocol, diplomatic etiquette, ceremonial