Introduction

In today’s world of increasingly complex webs of linkage across a spectrum of business, government and economic issues, there is—at least in parts of the West—a growing emphasis on applying robust processes and technology to managing risk. While certain types of problems lend themselves more to being resolved or mitigated by such application, emerging markets pose human-centric and often politicized challenges to investors. Given the human-centric and politicized nature of business in emerging markets, business leaders have a unique literature and experience to draw from: diplomacy.

While diplomacy is a specific discipline replete with competing academic theories and different models of practice, for companies either looking to engage or already present in emerging markets, the world of diplomacy offers a rich set of lessons and insights into causes of success and failure in a human-centric environment. For the purposes of this paper, the authors will use the diplomatic discipline as a source for exploring potential tactics for business engagement with government in country and state emerging market contexts. Also of interest are lessons drawn from the functions of diplomacy as well as staffing and organizational issues facing diplomatic organizations. In addition, frontier markets are subject to complex political dynamics that highlight the potential business and human costs involved should market realities be treated lightly. Using lessons and select skills from the diplomatic world can create new, relationship-driven, risk mitigation and prospect maximizing opportunities for those businesses that wield them effectively.

Suggested points for consideration prior to working through the paper are:

- Frontier markets are fundamentally dependent upon the ebb and flow of human relations and actions, with particular emphasis on the interaction between business and the host country government.
- Business investment and operations in frontier markets are inherently political, and a lack of political awareness will cause sub-optimal performance and potentially asset loss and injury / death of staff.
- Frontier markets often have nascent, immature or ad hoc state institutions that increase the importance of relationships in shaping the business environment.
- Successful business executives in frontier markets honestly appraise their strengths and weaknesses, and do not assume prowess in technical areas translate into human-centric or relationship building skills.
- In certain cases businesses with sufficient scope and scale of resources develop state-like attributes across the spectrum of business – state and business – civil society engagements.
- Companies that invest into building processes and staffing structures that bring in substantive expertise on country-specific political, economic, socio-cultural and related issues will be better positioned to reduce business risk and identify then capture new opportunities.
Additional takeaways and lessons learned are given subsequently, but not all are fully explored in the short space of this paper. However, the authors hope that by raising them herein that CEME participants will engage in a deeper discussion and analysis.

**Approach**

This paper is not meant to be an exhaustive or deeply empirical comparative study of diplomatic practice and business engagements in frontier markets. Rather, it is meant to give some theoretical backdrop, then draw on real world experiences to illustrate how functions of and tactics used within the diplomatic world can be useful to commercial ventures in complex business environments. The core intent is to spark a discussion and debate among the CEME readers and students involved, with the discussion leading to new insights into what constitutes best practice.

Instead of including a separate section on case studies, experiences from the following four mini cases\(^1\) will be woven throughout the document.

**Case 1** – In this case a small-to-mid-size Western defense and security firm that was involved in Iraq saw significant market share drop due to increased competition and a failure to recognize market changes. This saw gross revenues drop from a country market in excess of 100 million in annual value to less than 30 million.

**Case 2** – In this case a small oil and gas start-up company won two concessions in Somaliland along its border with Puntland. The company, while using an external specialist to provide a detailed environmental and stakeholder assessment, failed to integrate key learning into its business approach. Little foresight was given to how best to manage start-up or early exploration activity. Of particular concern was the lack of substantive thought as to how clan dynamics would impact company interests.

**Case 3** – In this case a large UAE-based, Arab-owned and operated manufacturer of pipes and fittings was looking to expand operations into Thailand. Despite successes to date expanding in the Arab world, a mix of relationship and government barriers saw the venture eventually collapse with investment (equipment) loss and significant opportunity cost.

**Case 4** – In this case a group of diaspora Afghan businessmen develop an extensive telecommunications-related set of companies following the Taliban withdrawal from Kabul in 2001. While successful in building a dominant

\(^1\) These are more business examples drawn from real world cases.
position within the Afghan marketplace, the realities of doing business in a war-ravaged and weak state have presented unanticipated risk considerations.

Three of the mini-cases – Iraq, Somaliland and Afghanistan – are truly frontier, while the outlier, Thailand, reflects a complex yet more traditional notion of an emerging market. Due to confidentiality and security considerations, names of companies and business persons involved in these companies have been withheld. The cases were chosen for illustrative purposes only.

Why is Diplomacy Useful?

The diplomatic discipline is centered on the concept of the state as the key actor in the international system. A critical feature of diplomatic practice is that diplomacy is a bridge into a mix of political, economic, social and cultural dynamics wherein human engagement is the key to understanding potential pathways to successfully advance one or multiple states’ interests. The diplomat employs a variety of tactics – for example representation, communication, negotiation – as part of a diplomatic strategy aimed at achieving objectives. Key to all of these tactics is the role that state-to-state dialogue plays in building a foundation of understanding and trust between governments. Where dialogue withers or is conducted with little skill, diplomacy will at best reach a suboptimal result or fail outright.

Meanwhile, much of the anecdotes that surround the term “business diplomat” focus on the need for business executives to be diplomatic with respect to how they engage any number of potential actors. However, it is useful to be look at the specific need for executives to engage with host and home country governments as well as third party governments and international organizations such as the United Nations (UN). In an emerging market, this business-to-state relationship can play a critical if not central role. Such markets are often nascent, have limited legal and regulatory frameworks, yet have a set of government institutions that are trying to impose themselves upon the business landscape. As such it is the human relationships that must be built and relied upon to move business interests forward. Given the ambiguity inherent in human relations, constant and consist engagement by business executives with government counterparts is needed. Thus diplomacy, which deals with and often thrives upon ambiguity, is a useful source of learning for business leaders.

A key implication for businesses, as with the diplomatic world, is that emerging markets demand executives that are humble yet firm practitioners of the diplomatic art. A lasting lesson from diplomacy is the need for quality human material to be involved – at least on your side of the negotiating table. In post-2003 Iraq a key mistake made by many Western businesses is to treat engagement as if they were sitting in a boardroom in Chicago. This goes beyond the “cup of tea” metaphor that many put forward. Success in the Iraqi environment requires a mix of intellectual and practical flexibility, language skills, patience and a deep understanding of the various drivers motivating Iraqi stakeholders. The case example cited saw a previously successful security firm steadily lose market share and suffer reputational damage as the
market shifted yet the business mindset remained static. Specifically, the reliance on US military contracting models failed to see the increasing interest in and control over security-related operations by the nascent Iraqi government. The unwillingness by senior management to visit Baghdad and engage with Iraqi officials, and the relegation of such activity to low-level staff, was seen by the Iraqis as disrespectful and arrogant. Meanwhile, in the Afghan case the business persons involved quickly achieved business success but in so doing raised their profile within Afghanistan and became a group of interest to various insurgent, criminal and regional states. This was exacerbated by certain public commentary by the business executives that failed to fully appreciate the link between business and the political. Specifically, this saw a critique of certain government performance where that part of the government was led and staffed by individuals prone to using violence as a response to perceived threats.

Emerging Market Characteristics, Politics and Positioning

Socio-political cultures, culturally-influenced modes of organizational structure and communication styles, bureaucratic procedures and processes, relative size and value of resource endowments, perceived domestic and international interests, domestic constitutional and legal frameworks plus different types of international bilateral or multilateral frameworks all act to create a spectrum of diplomatic activities that are shaped by the states involved and issues concerned. Similarly, the type of business actor, sectoral focus, scale of investment, potential reward and assessed risk all shape how a business engages in a given market, flowing from the human-centric nature of emerging markets is that such markets are inherently political. Businesses may want to delude themselves that their operations are apolitical, but such delusions will lead to misunderstanding the realities of the local market as well as the vulnerabilities – and opportunities – facing the business. Emerging markets, whether in a conflict, post-conflict or steady state of marginal yet growing market performance are tied up with political competition, leader’s ambitions, and pressures from the international community. This does not mean that a business should look to engage in politics, but rather realize that business activity is a pawn and prize within the political battlefield. Not knowing the political environment will at best result in suboptimal performance, and at worst could lead to asset nationalization or loss, or life-threatening security situations. In diplomacy, politics act to create opportunity for diplomatic success in certain situations while constraining effective diplomatic action in other scenarios. Due to this ever-present condition, businesses in emerging markets should not find themselves in a position where they need to get smart fast on politics; a profound understanding of the politics that will shape the business in emerging markets will only come with a continuing commitment to staying abreast of issues and events. Moreover, the smart business leader will understand that their business influences the political space – it can even create political dynamics where they did not exist previously. Whether it is a large defense, telecommunications or extractive company engaged at the national as well as local level or smaller, more localized or niche interests engaging at a regional or provincial level, political economies created by business are a reality that cannot be ignored.
The Somaliland case saw a start-up oil exploration and production firm win rights to explore two blocks along Somaliland’s border with Puntland. Almost by definition, oil – like other extractive industries tied to the state – are inherently political at multiple levels. As part of the firm’s approach they contracted a specialist to provide a detailed risk assessment of the area’s political, socio-cultural, economic and security conditions. Yet at the same time business leaders within the company failed to impose a management approach that emphasized best practice with respect to local engagement. A dual national Somalilander was brought in to run the operation, and was soon caught up in local clan and family politics that caused reputational damage. While the venture subsequently collapsed due to financing issues, the example illustrated another faulty premise wherein a company “goes native” absent building the framework needed to mitigate pressures from country / case specific dynamics. This does not mean that using dual national staff or local personnel to run a business should be avoided in all cases. In many instances such staff are the critical component in shaping positive engagement. However, where the risks presented by conflict or post-conflict clan, tribe or family realities combine to create misalignment with business interests a different approach should be taken. In this instance a management team that saw more of a mix of non-African² expatriates with the dual national plus selected local staff might have worked better. The expatriates would be outside the clan dynamic, while the dual-national manager would be able to bridge the gap in cultural and business practice while being able to resist pressure by no longer being the sole decider of in country business decisions.

In the Afghan case the business persons involved failed to recognize early on that competing political-security interests in Afghanistan would see successful business ventures as an opportunity for predation and exploitation, or as a threat that may need to be addressed by violence. Thankfully the Afghan diaspora persons involved have realized their vulnerability and are taking actions to mitigate business and security risk, but they are finding obstacles that were created by the early discounting of post-2001 Afghanistan reality.

Another feature of diplomatic activity that is similarly affecting business is the increased number of actors within the diplomatic space upon which diplomatic activity both is impacted by and acts upon. States may no longer make up the sole set of actors within the diplomatic arena, but they have “a major impact on diplomatic method.”³ Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs), civil society and commercial entities have a greater presence within the diplomatic space, and in certain cases can be considered a diplomatic agency or drawn into diplomatic processes. Within a state, an increasing number of agencies and individuals are playing a role in diplomatic activity. This domestic overlapping can, at least in the US case, erode the primacy of the Ambassador’s office and create increased strain on efforts to coordinate and build a coherent policy approach.⁴

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² In this instance management drawn from at least East or South African countries may have raised different concerns and suspicions. Neighboring countries may have cross-border tribal links, while historical and economic animosities are of note.
⁴ Per discussions in January and February 2011 with retired US Ambassador Michael Gfoeller, the US Ambassador’s face an erosion of their authority and political mandate as well as linkage to domestic interests.
In an emerging market context, the multiplicity of actors poses internal and external communications and coordination challenges to business. Attention must be paid not only to the host country, but to the surrounding region and to relationships with neighbouring states given implications for transactional and operational concerns. Thus the interactions between states, or between commercial entities and the state, are an essential factor upon and function of diplomacy as well as of business engagement. Such challenges are exacerbated when a business has multiple points of engagement with an emerging market government that lacks capacity to manage multiple parallel discussions – both with the business entity involved and other non-governmental local or international groups – on contractual, procurement, process, regulatory or operational issues. A matrix approach to engagement in these situations can cause great strain on relations. Business engagement would benefit from having the same “face” or set of faces involved in engagement.

Meanwhile, NGOs and IOs can serve to raise awareness and build local as well as government capacity in various areas that can in turn draw in and support business investment. Yet at the same time, these organizations have a different set of interests, understandings and methods of engagement in emerging markets that can complicate or even undermine business activity even when desired outcomes are identical. As such efforts to engage NGOs and IOs within a framework of business – government engagement can help build alignment and set mutually supporting objectives and implementation efforts going forward.

Thus the focus of business executives should be on building and maintaining consistent, competent and locally attuned dialogue with the state on a macro-level as well as the micro-level. Within the concepts of network diplomacy as espoused by Jorge Heine, dialogue is a critical defining action of diplomats and diplomacy, as well as the host of technical specialists, special envoys and other actors that engage within the diplomatic space. And though the implication of network diplomacy for diplomats and businesses alike is a broader set of engagements outside normative patterns, this does not inherently mean that the need for state-focused dialogue will decrease. Such engagement may actually thicken as new dynamics within the international system require the network of states to engage together, and business to engage with the state in various ways to address changing realities.

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6 Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics, Ithaca: Cornell University press, 2004, pp. 21 – 27. In the ‘network model’ diplomats engage across a broader, more varied set of players in a given country context, to include those that would not have had access to the exclusive ‘club’ that previously framed diplomatic action.
Representation, Communication and Negotiation

The primary functions of diplomatic activity today are representation, communication and negotiation. Additional critical components suggested relate to information collection and field analysis plus the ability to monitor and evaluate context-specific situations and provide informed, nuanced advice to senior home country decision-makers.

Representation of one’s country, national interests, and the characteristics and ideals held by home country leadership is both a time-honored and central part of diplomatic activity. Communication flows from and into representation, and encompasses both external communication and internal reporting between embassies, home country Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and even executive leaders. Internal reporting is a subset of communication – this activity is critical and is essential for intelligence functions. Communication between the home country and an embassy can, despite the recent Wikileaks phenomenon, maintain a high level of secrecy and timeliness to ensure up to the minute assessments of breaking events or medium-to-long term analyses are shared with decision-makers. Insights gleaned from human engagement, observation and careful analysis are core intelligence activities. It is these insights that can, if communicated effectively, enable diplomatic success. Negotiation, as with representation and communication, is seen as a traditional feature of diplomatic activity. Indeed, diplomacy is often defined as the practice of conducting inter-state negotiations whether in a bilateral or multi-lateral manner.

The functions outlined above have direct corollaries with business activity, with some having greater importance in emerging markets. A business leader in an emerging market represents the interests of the company or venture. Representation in the business case sees business

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<th>Characteristics of Effective Business Leaders in Emerging Markets</th>
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<td>- Deep insight into business interests, technical details, and relevant processes and procedures – absent such a business grasp the business leader will have difficulty in building credibility locally, may misrepresent company capabilities, and miss opportunities in the local market</td>
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<td>- Understanding of how business fits into national and sub-national strategies, plans, and objectives</td>
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<td>- Honest appraisal of personal capacity to effectively understand and exploit local dynamics in support of business interests, and staff accordingly to fill knowledge / capability gaps</td>
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<td>- Excellent, nuanced communication skills, preferably with some ability to speak in the local language</td>
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<td>- Broad knowledge of international affairs, how different markets interact with the specific market of interest, and the nature of any internal – external dependencies</td>
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<td>- Ability to demonstrate empathy and find win – win solutions that support government, community and business interests</td>
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<td>- Strong negotiation skills that are attuned to local practices but maintain high standard of expected business results</td>
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<td>- Crisis management skills</td>
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<td>- Integrity, high sense of ethics, and great patience</td>
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<td>- Cross-cultural and team-leadership ability</td>
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leaders conducting a mix of activities, including engagement at business and social functions with government officials and mixing with networks of other business or civil society figures.

For business communication has both an internal and external function. Building communications strategies and processes for managing communications is a prime function for business leaders. A critical need is to ensure that official letters, documents and presentations to government officials are easily understood and relevant to that official’s role, needs and wants. In the early 1990s engagement by a leading Arab-owned pipeline manufacturer in the Arab world saw great success due to effective communications, but less so as a push to move operations into Southeast Asia and, at least initially, North America. In Southeast Asia the target country was Thailand. Instead of conducting in depth market studies and pushing to understand country specific issues, the company concerned assumed its business model would be easily acceptable. The Thai style of business practice, including a mix of corrupt practices not seen previously in the firm’s Arab world experience, combined with the emergent reality that the local market was small saw the business turn elsewhere. Thus, after spending in excess of USD 20 million the business was turned over to local partners at an opportunity cost of capital and management attention.

Negotiation is a seemingly daily necessity of business executives in emerging markets. Whether haggling over details of service support vendors or managing negotiations with a host government ministry, negotiating skills are in high demand. Yet, with the nature of US influence changing and Iraq rightfully exercising its sovereignty, the barriers to business expansion may be too difficult to overcome. Depending upon the nature of the business the senior country representative can have signature authority that is contractually binding, and that representative’s subordinates may also have a set level of spending or operational autonomy. At each level the executive has a mix of representational, communicating and negotiating roles. Here the Iraq case again deserves mentioning. A conscious decision by the company’s management to at once go through US government channels to pressure its Iraqi client and avoid direct engagement at senior levels in Baghdad resulted in a tactical gain but strategic loss. Iraq, set to experience billions of dollars being invested into infrastructure, is a potential step change in revenue generation for small-to-medium size firms. By showing an unwillingness to negotiate with an eye towards the strategic nature of the Iraqi market, the company lost significant growth potential and raised the time and financial costs of re-entry.

**Staffing and Organizing for Success**

Staffing and organizational frameworks impact how well diplomacy and business are run. In the diplomatic arena, the use of a spoils system wherein executive-level staffing is based on political criteria can result in greater political cohesion with senior political leadership but undermine diplomatic practice should political appointees be of lesser diplomatic aptitude. A Weberian model may increase the meritocratic nature and technical capacity of the institution, but the potential for misalignment with national political leadership is of concern. It can also
increase the likelihood that bureaucratic / organizational culture will shape foreign policy in a manner that does not reflect political interests.

In business, a corollary occurs when promotion to leadership roles in emerging markets are based on organizational culture absent an informed understanding of what constitute frontier business requirements. For instance, an engineering heavy organizational culture may hold out the engineer as the normative example of a successful leader. Yet the fluid reality in an emerging market does not always sit well with an engineering mindset. Also, the tendency of some engineers or technical staff to see the realm of politics, socio-cultural study, or anthropology as something that can be picked up as a side skill is both dangerous and self-defeating. The most successful diplomats are serious students of their trade, with regional specialization requiring years of academic study and in area experience. As stated previously the Somaliland case saw an approach wherein the business saw reliance on a dual national – that happened to be a petroleum engineer trained in Europe – as being the key to success. While certainly not the same everywhere, in this instance the dual national had never been far removed from local politics even when in Europe, thus upon re-entry became susceptible to egotistic assumptions of his own capabilities plus a host of extended family and clan pressures that gave rise to concerns over clientelistic and corrupt behavior. Even where no such issues were present, the mere perception of these practices undermined the business interest. In the Thai example a similar misstep occurred wherein management imported into Thailand were unable to come to grips with new socio-cultural and political realities. Assumptions that both technical know-how and an ability to thrive in the difficult Middle Eastern market would translate into success in Southeast Asia were, in the end, proven flawed.

A critical threat posed to foreign ministries is that of recruitment and retention of the best and brightest minds. While a mix of generalists and specialists are essential to any foreign ministry, competition from the private sector in terms of compensation and intellectual challenge is of concern. Also, the effect of poor leadership – in certain cases – increases staff turnover and leaves a cadre of lesser capable staff tasked with executing intellectually demanding diplomatic action. As with staffing, organizational structure has a direct link to positive results. In diplomacy, foreign affairs organizations may be organized according to functional (ex. political-military, arms control, human rights, terrorism) or geographical (ex. country, region). In some countries there is a mixing of the two, which can create strengths but increase coordination and cohesion challenges. Dispersed Embassies can also reflect one or both of these models, with challenges again to coordination and cohesion caused by the competing efforts to control substantive and administrative dynamics between the Ambassador and his team and functional / regional departments at headquarters.

Businesses are beset by similar challenges. As pointed out early on, frontier markets are human-centric. The demand for not only quality staff, but a staffing approach that draws in the best

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7 Per January and February 2011 discussions with retired US Ambassador Michael Gfoeller Russian and French diplomats are held as elite professionals, while the US system has lost much of this professional and highly valued reputation; he stated “US Embassies may reflect American demographics, but do not have the best minds.”
minds for the right job cannot be overstated. Meanwhile, as shown previously, modern organizational structures that are flat, or that leverage matrix approaches can run into trouble in an emerging market. Adaptive yet disciplined command and control that delineate easily recognizable lines of authority are likely best, as are the need to maintain a consistent hierarchy of external interfaces and internal management processes and practices that are attuned to local concepts of fair and just treatment. Both the Iraq and Somaliland cases demonstrate that the lack of appropriate engagement interfaces can create problems, whereas in the Thai case the organizational model never attempted to adapt to local requirements.

**Diplomacy, Business and Towards Best Practice**

The opportunities for businesses and businessmen and women in emerging markets are tremendous. Like any potential investment, emerging markets come with high-risk and the potential for high-reward. In today’s world of data overload, reduced decision cycles and increased consequence of diplomatic failure (ex. multiple forms of armed and commercial conflict, humanitarian disasters, technology failures), the need for high quality diplomats is of greater – not lesser – importance. Similarly, the interconnectedness of multiple markets demands a similar level of business leaders that draw on diplomatic as well as technical skills associated with a specific business type or focus.

Underscoring the human-centric approach to risk management is that, in certain instances such as Iraq, Somaliland, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other country markets, such traumatized states are complex environments, and pose a mix of challenges. While there is certainly potential for involvement in such an environment to offer significant returns on investment, an unwillingness to incorporate diplomatic tactics will exacerbate existing or create new tensions. Representation, communication, and negotiation – conducted by executives of requisite caliber – can significantly contribute to the bottom line. Given the dynamic nature of frontier markets, businesses need to be adaptive and look to understand and plan in ways that reflect both root causes and symptomatic effects of market realities.
Additional Points for Consideration (continued)

4. Investment in attracting personnel with profound understanding of local culture, language, and context is absolutely crucial, as it forms the bedrock of the human-centric component of business diplomacy in emerging markets. The most successful diplomats are serious students of their trade, with regional specialization requiring years of academic study and in area experience. Where a company lacks such skill sets, persons with this knowledge should be recruited and brought into the team and held as a valued asset. In certain cases such persons may better serve as the external lead.

5. Anticipating the often-competing motivations and incentives of the multiplicity of actors in an emerging market context will aid communication and internal coordination, as will a cohesive, forward-looking communications strategy.

6. Understanding who the counter-party is, and the challenges posed to the counter-party against a political, economic, and cultural backdrop, is important when finding contacts, resources, and assessing leadership gaps.

7. In the case of crises, long-established, lasting, and credible relationships are important to establishing a positive reputation of a firm who will be affected by a state failure or other type of event.

8. In addition to building and maintaining positive relations with a mix of governments and non-state organizations, effective business diplomats can assist senior management in anticipating future challenges and addressing unforeseen crises as well as opportunities. A well-trained, locally attuned yet domestically savvy businessperson – like a diplomat – can provide the critical insight needed by management to craft solutions that minimize risk. When backed by an effective, credible and professionally run external affairs team the positive effects of engagement are multiplied while the risks posed by poor performance are reduced.

9. A successful business diplomat is dedicated to sourcing raw, uncensored information, and using this knowledge base to make decisions that are informed but not driven by the political competition inherent in a frontier state.

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Theory and practice suggest general principles that any diplomat or business leader should consider. When a diplomat is of sufficient stature by reputation alone that diplomat can play a positive role in even the most difficult of situations by signifying international interest even when large financial or other assistance is not present or highly dependent on donor conditions. The significance of Brahimi to diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq underscore this last point. One role highlighted by Brahimi’s career is the capacity for diplomats to identify problem areas either caused by domestic or international action. Leaving state rebuilding to nationals alone can often see domestic players miss the “pitfalls which to others (ex. diplomats) might be obvious.”

In the context of business, long-established, lasting, and credible relationships are important to establishing a positive reputation of a firm entering, or expanding, in a market. Similarly, an external business may see opportunities that local government misses with respect to creating jobs, generating revenue, and creating a sustainable, profitable commercial space.

As with diplomacy, the business world has seen a multiplicity of actors emerge that successful

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businesses must engage and manage. Diplomats can contribute positively to creating mechanisms for conflict resolution and post-conflict political and economic development of frontier states. The corollary, of course, to the potential for positive action is the potential for harmful action. Whether due to deployment of low quality diplomatic personnel, false or inaccurate reporting, or by diplomatic overreach through hubris or sympathetic calculation, diplomacy can create a negative effects multiplier. In a frontier or emerging market, particularly where a new state or government within a state is emerging, engagement with government at the national, regional and provincial levels is essential. With governing systems where institutions, processes and practices may be nascent, relationships with key actors within government as well as those external actors that influence government are critical. Thus the role for a business diplomat, and those that inform the business diplomat’s thinking, is critical.

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