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HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTION OF SPECIAL MISSIONS

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Abstract. *This article examines the historical development of special missions from ancient ad hoc diplomatic practice to their codification as an autonomous institution of international law. The study employs a doctrinal-historical method based on materials of the International Law Commission, the 1961 and 1969 Conventions, and secondary literature on diplomatic law. The study is structured around three periods: ancient and medieval practice, the classical diplomatic system from the 15th to the 19th century, and the codification process of the 20th century. The evolution of ad hoc diplomacy demonstrates that special missions predated permanent diplomatic missions and can be traced back to the 4th millennium BC. The two institutions subsequently coexisted, rather than one replacing the other, after resident embassies emerged in the late 15th century. For most of their history, special missions were governed by customary international law and bilateral treaties, resulting in fragmented legal protections that became increasingly inadequate as ad hoc diplomatic contacts expanded after the two World Wars. The article concludes that the 1969 Convention represents the culmination of this process rather than the creation of a new institution, giving treaty-based expression to rules of customary international law while preserving the residual role of custom. Special missions remain a flexible instrument of diplomacy that complements permanent diplomatic representation.*

Keywords: *special missions, ad hoc diplomacy, 1969 Convention on Special Missions, diplomatic law, customary international law, codification, permanent diplomatic missions*

MAXSUS MISSIYALAR INSTITUTINING TARIXIY RIVOJLANISHI

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Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada maxsus missiyalar institutining tarixiy rivojlanishi tadqiq etiladi, uning qadimiy “ad hoc” diplomatik amaliyotdan xalqaro huquqning mustaqil instituti sifatida kodifikatsiya qilinishigacha bo‘lgan evolyutsiyasi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Xalqaro huquq komissiyasi materiallariga, 1961- va 1969-yillardagi konvensiyalarga, shuningdek, diplomatik huquqqa oid ikkilamchi adabiyotlarga asoslangan doktrinal-tarixiy metoddan foydalanib, tadqiqotda uchta davr izchil tahlil qilinadi: qadimgi va o‘rta asrlar amaliyoti, XV–XIX asrlar klassik diplomatik tizimi hamda XX asr kodifikatsiyasi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, maxsus missiyalar tarixan doimiy diplomatik vakolatxonalardan oldin, ya’ni miloddan avvalgi to‘rtinchi ming yillikdan buyon faoliyat yuritib kelgan. XV asr oxirida doimiy (rezident) elchixonalar paydo bo‘lganidan so‘ng ham ikkala institut bir-birini siqib chiqarmasdan, balki asrlar davomida yonma-yon mavjud bo‘lgan. Maxsus missiyalar faoliyati uzoq vaqt*

davomida xalqaro odat huquqi normalari va davlatlarning ikki tomonlama amaliyoti asosida tartibga solingan. Bu esa ularning huquqiy himoyasi parchalanib ketishiga olib kelgan. Bu holat ikki jahon urushidan keyin "ad hoc" diplomatik aloqalar kengayishi bilan tobora maqbul bo'lmay qolgan. Maqolada shunday xulosaga kelinadiki, 1969-yildagi Konvensiya yangi institutning yaratilishi emas, balki mazkur tarixiy jarayonning yakuniy natijasi bo'lib, u allaqachon shakllangan odat normalariga shartnoma-huquqiy shakl bergan. Shu bilan birga, u odat huquqining qoldiq rolini saqlab qolgan. Maxsus missiyalar diplomatiyaning moslashuvchan vositasi bo'lib qolmoqda va doimiy diplomatik vakillikni to'ldiruvchi ahamiyat kasb etmoqda.

***Kalit so'zlar**: maxsus missiyalar, "ad hoc" diplomatiya, 1969-yildagi Maxsus missiyalar to'g'risidagi konvensiya, diplomatik huquq, xalqaro odat huquqi, kodifikatsiya, doimiy diplomatik vakolatxonalar*

ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ИНСТИТУТА СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ МИССИЙ

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***Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается историческое развитие специальных миссий – от древней дипломатической практики ad hoc до их кодификации в качестве самостоятельного института международного права. В исследовании применяется доктринально-исторический метод, основанный на изучении материалов Комиссии международного права, конвенций 1961 и 1969 годов, а также вторичных источников по дипломатическому праву. Исследование охватывает три периода: практику Древнего мира и Средневековья, классическую дипломатическую систему XV–XIX веков и процесс кодификации XX века. Эволюция дипломатии ad hoc показывает, что специальные миссии предшествовали постоянным дипломатическим представительствам, а их истоки восходят к IV тысячелетию до н. э. После появления постоянных посольств в конце XV века оба института продолжили сосуществовать, и один не вытеснил другой. На протяжении большей части своей истории специальные миссии регулировались международным обычным правом и двусторонними договорами, что обусловило фрагментарность их правовой защиты, которая всё меньше соответствовала потребностям расширявшихся после двух мировых войн дипломатических контактов ad hoc. В статье сделан вывод о том, что Конвенция 1969 года стала итогом этого процесса, а не актом создания нового института: она закрепила в договорной форме нормы международного обычного права, сохранив при этом субсидиарную роль обычая. Специальные миссии остаются гибким инструментом дипломатии, дополняющим постоянные дипломатические представительства.*

***Ключевые слова:** специальные миссии, дипломатия ad hoc, Конвенция о специальных миссиях 1969 г., дипломатическое право, международное обычное право, кодификация, постоянные дипломатические представительства*

Introduction

This article addresses the following research question: how did the institution of special missions evolve from ancient ad hoc diplomatic practice into a codified institution of international law under the 1969 Convention on Special Missions, and what does this evolution reveal about the institution's present legal status?

Special missions are missions sent from one State to another for a limited period of time for special purposes. The institution of special missions has deep historical roots in the establishment of international relations and in the development of diplomatic law. Unlike permanent diplomatic missions, which developed primarily during the formation of modern international relations,

special missions were initially characterized by their temporary and purpose-specific nature. Special missions are mainly based on the rules of customary law and international practice. The flexible and effective nature of special missions contributed to the further development of this institution throughout different historical periods.

As discussed in the preceding paragraph, the institution of special missions represents one of the earliest forms of diplomatic relations between states. In its broad sense, diplomacy is a state-centric system that depends on legal tools to regulate relations between nations, notwithstanding its evolution and methodology (Kanel, 2021). According to the statement by Mercy Okoronkwo Ogaranya (2025), a special mission "is probably the oldest of all means by which the business of diplomatic relations may be and have been conducted". Moreover, he notes the relevance of special missions to diplomatic and consular relations. The institution of special missions experienced significant development during and after the Second World War, when it was widely used by states. This development was particularly related to the evolution of modern forms of communication, which contributed to a more comprehensive strengthening of international relations and the interdependence of national interests. The functional role of special missions developed significantly, as they started being used in the negotiation of important matters, in the conclusion of international treaties, and in official public ceremonies (Nikołajew, 2013). The importance of this institution is reflected in the significant number of diplomatic reports submitted by special missions. Thus, special missions are used as an effective institutional tool for the management of various international functions and tasks.

The historical evolution of special missions reflects their transformation from a practice-based diplomatic mechanism into an institution of international law with a specific legal framework. This process is closely connected with the progressive development and codification of diplomatic law undertaken within the framework of the United Nations. For a considerable period, this area remained unregulated, which significantly hindered the effective functioning of special missions. It was not until the 1960s that the process of codification was undertaken. Berridge (2015), in his book, also notes that customary international law had restricted the privileges and immunities of special missions and had not treated them as resident embassies. In addition, before the adoption of the 1969 Convention on Special Missions, the scope and extent of their immunities remained uncertain, even though special missions were usually sent to deal with matters of high political significance (Walton, 2024; Naskou-Perraki, 2025).

Consequently, the analysis of the historical development of special missions is indispensable for a comprehensive understanding of their present legal status in modern international law. This process is demonstrated by the continuous interaction between diplomatic practice and the formation of international norms, which is illustrated by the contribution of customary law and state practice to contemporary international law governing special missions.

Main part

As mentioned above, special missions have been one of the oldest forms of diplomatic relations for thousands of years (International Law Commission, 1967). They were engaged in the formation of treaties, especially bilateral and multilateral treaties. They have been among the most convenient forms of missions for managing international tasks (Nikołajew, 2013; Berridge, 2015). Although ancient and medieval missions cannot be regarded as modern special missions in the legal sense,

as the concept of a special mission emerged through the development and codification of international law in the 1960s, they already possessed the main fundamental characteristics that define the contemporary institution of special missions. These characteristics included a temporary nature, as they were sent for a specific task with specific functions. In addition, they were granted a specific mandate by the sending authority, as in modern diplomatic relations. Moreover, envoys had a representative character, expressing the official position of the sending side. Ancient and medieval missions were granted personal inviolability and protection while performing their tasks, similarly to the modern institution of immunities in international law.

In ancient and medieval international practice, the establishment of embassies was connected with specific political, military, and religious purposes. Once the task was completed, missions usually ceased to exist and lost their status. Accordingly, such diplomatic missions can be regarded as historical predecessors of contemporary special missions despite the absence of a legal framework and codification. As Ivor Roberts (2012) states, the origins of the practice of sending missions can be traced back to the Great Kings of the Ancient Near East, possibly as far as the late fourth millennium BC, and are closely associated with the cuneiform civilizations of Mesopotamia. For instance, some of the first diplomatic documents were found there, including documents sent by Ibubu or the King of the Kingdom of Ebla to an envoy of the Kingdom of Amazi. According to Berridge (2015), ancient missions enjoyed the standards of hospitality of that period, as diplomatic immunity had not yet been legally established in ancient documents. Such sophisticated diplomacy, familiar in some respects to modern standards, had developed by the time of the Greek city-states in the 4th and 5th centuries BC.

According to Ivor Roberts (2017), Greek diplomacy introduced one of the first diplomatic conferences in the 5th century BC to decide on the war between Sparta and Athens. He describes it as the first diplomatic conference. The author also states that delegates or missions from Athens enjoyed special rights that can be compared to modern diplomatic immunity. Alongside Greek diplomatic practice, Indian diplomatic experience concerning ad hoc diplomacy is also mentioned in relation to the 5th century (Cooper et al., 2013). For instance, Kautilya, who served as Prime Minister to the Indian Emperor Chandragupta Maurya and was the author of the Arthashastra, a treatise on governance, not only distinguished categories of diplomatic envoys according to the scope of their authority but also recognized their entitlement to immunity and protection. This means that ad hoc missions in ancient times also enjoyed diplomatic immunity.

Byzantine diplomatic practice marked a significant evolution in the institution of diplomatic envoys. A major development in Byzantine diplomacy was the evolution of the envoy's role. Rather than acting merely as a herald or public speaker, envoys increasingly assumed the responsibilities of professional diplomats charged with conducting negotiations and managing interstate relations (Roberts, 2017; Nicolson, 1963).

According to Ivor Roberts (2017), the transition to permanent diplomatic practice had not yet been completed during the medieval period, indicating the continued use of ad hoc diplomatic missions. In support of this view, Roberts emphasizes that it is impossible to identify the precise historical moment at which the shift to permanent diplomacy occurred. At the same time, he notes that by the medieval period, the reception of a diplomatic representative had become contingent upon the presentation of letters of credence confirming the

representative's official status, authority, and powers. The institution of resident embassies is generally considered to have developed only in the second half of the 15th century. In addition, Berridge (2015) states that the roots of resident diplomacy can be traced to the end of the 15th century. He emphasizes the role of special missions as a feature of diplomatic relations in breaking the ice between States.

One of the earliest and most significant examples of this development was the official accreditation of Nicodemo da Pontremoli by Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, as an 'orator' to the Florentine Republic. Following his formal accreditation as a permanent diplomatic representative, Nicodemo remained in this position for 17 years. Prior to his official appointment, however, he had served as Francesco Sforza's confidential agent. The temporary and purpose-specific nature of these earlier functions bears considerable resemblance to those performed by representatives of modern special missions. During the Italian Wars (1494–1559), the practice of permanent diplomacy spread throughout Europe. This development was driven by the need of European rulers to obtain timely information about the foreign policy intentions of other States. As a result, permanent diplomatic representatives became an important instrument of foreign policy and political intelligence (Frigo, 2000; Roberts, 2017). However, the establishment of permanent diplomatic representation did not bring an end to the use of temporary envoys and ad hoc missions. According to E. Denza (2016), one of "the earliest major works on diplomatic law" was written in the medieval period. This was De Legationibus Libri Tres (1585) (Three Books on Embassies) by Alberico Gentili. He examined, among other issues, the inviolability of ambassadors and the establishment and conduct of diplomatic missions.

The period from the 15th to the 19th century represents an important stage in the evolution of diplomatic law, marked by the emergence of the classical diplomatic system. The expansion of international relations and increasingly complex political interactions encouraged a gradual shift from temporary diplomatic contacts to permanent diplomatic representation. Nevertheless, the practice of sending special missions was not replaced by the establishment of resident diplomatic missions during this period. Instead, permanent diplomatic missions and ad hoc diplomatic missions began to coexist. Each type of diplomatic mission was used for different purposes.

Abraham de Wicquefort composed L'Ambassadeur et ses Fonctions while imprisoned. His work was first published in French in 1681. In his work, he defines the term 'resident ambassador' (Berridge et al., 2001). It is one of the first sources to draw a distinction between permanent and temporary missions in theory. The Westphalian period was characterized by the coexistence of permanent diplomatic missions and temporary missions, which Emmerich de Vattel regarded as essential to the functioning of the international community. He further noted that every nation possesses the right to negotiate and maintain relations with other States, together with the mutual obligation to facilitate such intercourse (Vattel & Chitty, 1844). It can be concluded that the practice of States during the 16th to 18th centuries demonstrates the widespread use of temporary envoys (Berridge, 2015). Such missions were entrusted with clearly defined mandates, limited both by the specific subject matter of their assignment and by the duration required to achieve their diplomatic objectives.

The convocation of major international conferences and congresses played a significant role in the development of the

institution of special missions. For example, the negotiations that resulted in the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, the Congress of Vienna of 1814–1815, and the Congress of Paris of 1856 were conducted with the participation of specially appointed representatives. They were granted full powers to negotiate and enter into international agreements on behalf of their governments. These delegations were established to participate in international conferences and ceased to exist upon the completion of their functions, which is consistent with the modern understanding of special missions (Nicolson, 1963). Although no uniform rules of international law governing special missions existed at that time, the diplomatic practice of the 15th to 19th centuries laid the foundation for the subsequent codification of diplomatic law. Initially, these rules developed as norms of customary international law and were later incorporated into multilateral treaties adopted during the 20th century (Denza, 2024).

The diplomatic practice of this period thus had a decisive influence on the formation of the contemporary international legal institution of special missions. This institution was subsequently recognized under customary international law and ultimately codified in the 1969 Convention on Special Missions. Furthermore, there is one important feature of the use of special missions in modern diplomatic practice: the absence of a permanent embassy of one State in another (Berridge, 2015). For example, according to Ivor Roberts (2017), smaller States maintained that special missions often represented their principal means of conducting diplomatic relations in countries where they did not have permanent embassies. Given the financial and administrative barriers that limited the establishment of permanent diplomatic missions, the institution of special missions served as an essential mechanism for ensuring their participation in international relations. Having stated the importance of the historical evolution of special missions, it should be noted that granting ad hoc representatives a legal status inferior to that enjoyed by members of permanent diplomatic missions would have undermined the principle of sovereign equality by creating unequal conditions for States with more limited diplomatic capacities.

The 20th century marked a turning point in the development of the institution of special missions. Whereas special missions had previously existed primarily as a matter of diplomatic custom, based on the consent of States and long-established international practice, during the 20th century they gradually evolved into an independent institution of international law with its own normative framework. This transformation was driven by the rapid development of international relations, the expansion of the subjects of international law, the intensification of interstate cooperation, and the growing need for a legal framework for temporary diplomatic contacts. The increasing number of ad hoc diplomatic envoys and the diversification of the functions of special missions demonstrated the need for subsequent codification under international law (International Law Commission, 1967).

One of the earliest factors contributing to the evolution of special missions was the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919. Although the Covenant of the League of Nations did not contain specific provisions governing the legal status of temporary diplomatic missions, the activities of the Organization contributed to the expansion of international relations and diplomatic interactions among States. Regular sessions of the Assembly, together with international conferences and negotiations concerning collective security, disarmament, the protection of minorities, and the settlement

of international disputes, necessitated the dispatch of temporary missions by States. During this period, special missions were increasingly used as an instrument through which States participated in multilateral relations.

Moreover, during the second half of the 20th century, the legal framework governing special missions, together with the privileges and immunities accorded to their members, was further clarified and strengthened through the adoption of the New York Convention. This instrument contributed to the codification and development of the rules applicable to temporary diplomatic missions. Nevertheless, its adoption raised concerns among a number of States, as customary international law had traditionally recognized only a limited range of privileges and immunities for special missions. In particular, customary law confined such protection to personal inviolability and immunity from criminal jurisdiction, without extending the broader privileges generally enjoyed by permanent diplomatic missions.

At the same time, the practice of the League of Nations revealed significant limitations in the international legal regulation of the status of special missions. The privileges and immunities accorded to such missions were governed by bilateral agreements and rules of customary international law. The absence of uniform international legal standards gave rise to legal uncertainty concerning the inviolability of representatives, their immunity from the jurisdiction of the receiving State, exemption from taxation, and other privileges and immunities necessary for the effective performance of temporary diplomatic functions.

At the end of the Second World War, the international system underwent significant transformations. The establishment of the United Nations, the emergence of numerous independent States as a result of decolonization, the development of universal international organizations, and the expansion of international cooperation led to an unprecedented increase in ad hoc diplomatic relations. It should be noted that special missions offered a number of advantages over permanent diplomatic missions. They were established exclusively for the performance of a specific task, were temporary in nature, could be dispatched even between States that did not maintain permanent diplomatic relations, and provided greater flexibility in the conduct of diplomatic relations. Consequently, during the second half of the 20th century, special missions became one of the most widely utilized instruments of modern diplomacy.

However, the rapid expansion of the practice of special missions was accompanied by the absence of a uniform international legal regime governing their status. Following the adoption of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, it became apparent that the Convention was primarily concerned with the regulation of permanent diplomatic missions. It did not provide a comprehensive legal framework for special missions. Despite certain similarities in the functions performed by permanent diplomatic missions and special missions, the temporary and task-specific nature of the latter necessitated the development of a distinct international legal regime. This regime would take into account the particularities of their establishment, functioning, and termination.

The need for the codification of the relevant rules was recognized by the United Nations. In 1960, the United Nations General Assembly requested the International Law Commission (ILC) to include the question of special missions in its programme of work, with a view to codifying the existing rules of customary international law and promoting the progressive development of international law in this field. Moreover, the ILC

emphasized the need to give special attention to ad hoc diplomatic missions following its preparatory work on diplomatic relations and immunities (United Nations, 1998). In addition, P. Naskou-Perraki (2025) notes the increasing number of attacks on diplomats and their families, which demonstrates the importance of giving special attention to special missions.

The Commission's work was based on an extensive examination of State practice, national legislation, international treaties, diplomatic correspondence, and relevant scholarly writings. Furthermore, many countries, prior to and during the adoption of the 1969 Convention on Special Missions (CSM), attempted to adopt legal instruments regulating special missions under domestic law. These practical actions by States once again underscored the need to adopt a legal instrument of universal application. For example, in 1967, Australia adopted the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act (DPI), implementing the provisions of the Vienna Convention adopted by the United Nations in 1961 (Anthony, 2021). Another example is Bangladesh. The Diplomatic Immunities (Commonwealth Countries Representatives) Act 1957 (DICCRA) was adopted before both the establishment of Bangladesh and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, showing that domestic laws may exist before a State joins an international treaty. However, since DICCRA applies only to diplomats from Commonwealth countries, the legal basis for granting diplomatic immunity to diplomats from non-Commonwealth States remains unclear (Haque & Bhuiyan, 2021). This issue demonstrates the need for a universal document regulating the immunities and privileges of missions. In the national practice of Uzbekistan, diplomatic missions, in order to perform their functions, are granted privileges and immunities determined in accordance with the VCDR and VCCR, international customs, legislation, and international treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Atadjanov, 2021). These national approaches also underscore the need for a multilateral framework. The 1969 CSM was designed to address such issues.

The United Nations International Law Commission and its work played an important role in the codification of the law of special missions. In 1963, Milan Bartoš was appointed Special Rapporteur on the subject and subsequently prepared a series of reports addressing the legal nature of special missions, their establishment and composition, as well as the privileges and immunities of their members. Between 1964 and 1967, the Commission progressively elaborated and considered draft articles on special missions with a view to systematizing existing international practice and establishing a uniform legal framework for temporary diplomatic contacts. In 1967, the Commission adopted the draft articles together with commentaries and recommended that the General Assembly take steps towards the conclusion of a corresponding international convention.

The codification process culminated in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, on 8 December 1969, of the Convention on Special Missions by Resolution 2530 (XXIV). The Convention defined a special mission as a temporary mission representing a State and sent by one State to another, with the consent of the latter, for the purpose of dealing with specific questions or performing a particular task. Its adoption played a significant role in the institutionalization of special missions in international law by codifying rules that had previously derived from diplomatic practice and customary international law. The scope and extent of the immunities and privileges of special missions remained uncertain under customary international law and, to a certain degree, remain open to interpretation under

the 1969 CSM itself (Walton, 2024). The 1969 Convention established an autonomous legal framework for the regulation of special missions while preserving the relevance of customary international law.

The legal effect of the 1969 Convention, however, depends on its ratification by States. A State becomes bound by the Convention only through ratification, accession, or another form of consent to be bound, and the Convention itself entered into force on 21 June 1985, following the deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification or accession. The comparatively limited number of States parties means that the Convention does not apply universally and that, in relations with non-parties, the status of special missions continues to be governed by customary international law. Ratification is therefore not a formality: it turns the codified rules from a general standard of conduct into legally binding obligations and removes uncertainty about the applicable regime that characterized earlier practice.

The regime of immunities is a central element of the Convention. It provides for the inviolability of the premises and archives of the special mission and of its members, immunity of the members from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State and, subject to specified exceptions, from its civil and administrative jurisdiction, as well as exemption from taxation and customs duties. These immunities are based on functional necessity: they are granted not for the personal benefit of individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the tasks of the mission, and they are limited in time to the duration of the mission. In this way, the Convention takes an intermediate position between the limited protection recognized by customary law and the full privileges enjoyed by permanent diplomatic missions under the 1961 Vienna Convention.

The practical implementation of the Convention depends to a large extent on domestic legal systems. For its rules to be effective, States must incorporate them into national legislation or provide for their direct application and ensure that the courts, law enforcement bodies, and foreign affairs authorities of the receiving State are aware of the status of special missions and their members. In practice, the sending State notifies the receiving State, through diplomatic channels and usually by an exchange of notes verbales, of the composition and purpose of the special mission, and the receiving State gives its consent so that the regime of immunities applies on this basis from the moment of entry until the departure of the mission.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented above, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the historical development and current legal status of special missions. These conclusions demonstrate the gradual evolution of special missions from a practice-based form of diplomacy into a legally recognized institution of international law.

Firstly, special missions predate permanent diplomacy as an institution. Special missions are historically older than permanent diplomatic missions. The practice of sending temporary envoys can be traced back to ancient civilizations, while resident embassies became an established form of diplomacy only in the second half of the 15th century. Ancient and medieval missions already possessed several characteristics associated with special missions, including a temporary nature, a specific mandate, representative functions, and immunities of envoys. The emergence of permanent diplomacy therefore did not replace special missions. Rather, both forms of diplomatic representation continued to coexist and serve different functions in international relations.

Secondly, their legal character developed through customary international practice

rather than treaty codification. For most of their historical development, special missions were regulated by customary international law and the practice of States rather than through a treaty framework. Their privileges, immunities, and inviolability were consequently based on customary rules, bilateral arrangements, and established diplomatic practice.

Thirdly, the 1969 Convention on Special Missions established special missions as an autonomous institution of international diplomatic law. The adoption of the 1969 CSM represented the culmination of a long process of legal development. Following the work of the ILC, including the preparation of draft articles between 1964 and 1967, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on 8 December 1969. The Convention provided treaty-based rules concerning the establishment, composition, functions, privileges, and immunities of special missions.

Fourthly, contemporary practice confirms their continued relevance as a flexible instrument of diplomacy. The historical development of special missions also demonstrates their continuing practical relevance in contemporary international relations. Their temporary and task-specific character enables States to conduct negotiations, conclude agreements, participate in international conferences, respond to international crises, and address economic, political, and humanitarian matters without establishing a permanent diplomatic mission. This flexibility is particularly important for States that may lack the financial or administrative capacity to maintain resident embassies or that do not have permanent diplomatic relations with another State. Special missions therefore continue to perform a complementary function alongside permanent diplomacy rather than constituting an obsolete form of diplomatic representation.

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