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Ecuador's Diplomatic Relations in the Post-Cold War Era – A Pillar of Strength or Maverick of the International Community?

Ecuador's foreign policy and diplomatic relations have been turbulent since the end of the Cold War. Having diplomatic relations and representation in almost 180 states worldwide, Ecuador at first glance appears to be a pillar of strength for the international community. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the country has been an integral part of the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of American States regarding the reconstruction of Haiti. Nonetheless, Ecuador is also seen as a renegade in international relations which is shown by the controversial grant of diplomatic asylum to Julien Assange at the Ecuadorian embassy in London for 7 years by the government of Rafael Correa. Lately however in April 2024, Ecuador has sparked outrage by sending its special forces to breach the premises of the Embassy of Mexico in Quito and take the former vice-president Jorge David Glas Espinel into custody. The move is a blatant violation of the law of diplomatic relations and is contrary to the previous stance of Ecuador regarding diplomatic asylum. It has drawn the condemnation of 68 states and international organizations to date and for which Mexico has turned to the International Court of Justice in order to seek affirmation of the breach of obligations. Therefore, we see a dichotomy in the diplomatic relations of the country: on the one hand it is promoting regional and global security and on the other, it is causing severe outcry by its actions causing some of its partners to question the reliability of the state. This lecture aims to solve this conundrum by analysing the rationale behind Ecuadorian diplomatic relations and to ascertain what kind of reverberations Ecuador's actions caused in the international community.

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