

A diplomat unifies the world by including other countries in their own dealings. So a US Hip Hop diplomat would be one who unifies the art form by working with foreign Hip Hop artists. Dipset/Rocafella Records did just that by recently signing London Hip Hop duo "Strictly About Stacking" or S.A.S. The group is made of brothers Mega and Meyham. I recently talked with the UK's new Hip Hop "Diplomats," and they told me about their history, as well as their future ambitions now that they are signed with Dipset/Rocafella.

Born to Nigerian parents, S.A.S. came to the States in 1998 when Mayhem (the older of the two) received a basketball scholarship. Like many unsigned artists in school, they faced the dilemma of balancing out academics with their aspiring dreams to be in the Hip Hop game. They made good grades, but just had a stronger passion for rhyming. As far as their music went, "Our mother didn't totally support us at first," Mega told me, "but once she heard our songs on the radio, She supported us more."

The road to getting signed was not an easy one. In a nutshell, they met Kanye West in 2002, which led to him introducing them to Juelz Santana in 2003, eventually leading to a phone conversation with Damon Dash, signing them to Dipset/Rocafella.

True Hip Hop fans, S.A.S. have been down with the art form since The Rocksteady Crew, and are influenced by Slick Rick. Their favorite time in Hip Hop was the Biggie "Ready to Die" era. They also said they were fascinated by the mainstream US Hip Hop battles, like the Dr. Dre/Easy-E beef. Missing the Hip Hop days of old, S.A.S. hopes to bring that sound back, saying the game is now "basically generic and unoriginal."

They've been rhyming for 7 years and formed a crew in the UK called "The Eurogang," who they still associate themselves with. They proudly shout out their crew in their song Still Free: "This is S.A.S., Dipset, Eurogang!" The Eurogang producer Rephan still makes beats for them, and all of the Eurogang are featured in a scene in the upcoming film State Property Two. "Damme fucks with all of Eurogang," Mayhem told me.

When asked if they had any advice for the youth they said, "have an independent mind state and don't conform." Although they are now mainstream they still take their own advice. One of the things they like about their contract is that it gives them total creative freedom. Mega said "We wanted to be signed as we were or not at all." They also emphasized the importance of

SAS From Roc-A-Fella

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hard work in reaching one's goals. They are no strangers to this because they are still grinding even though they are signed. They are featured on a Diplomats mixtape that will be dropping shortly. They also modeled for Rocawear's Spring/Summer 2004 campaign. Talking about their work ethic, Mayhem stated, "If we don't continue to get our name out there, our album won't sell, and we don't make money. We have to make money, as well as establish ourselves as credible artists."

As far as producers, Heatmakers, Swizz Beats, D.R. Period, and Kanye West to name a few, are doing tracks for their album. Their goal for their album is to "bridge the gap between London and N.Y. Hip Hop and bring a new sound to the game, at the same time start a movement that will open up doors for not only our homeland crew Eurogang, but also for the whole country." Looks like UK's Hip Hop "Diplomats" are on their way to doing that.

Be on the lookout for S.A.S. and the Dipset mixtape coming soon. State Property Two will be in theaters later this year. Please go to www.rocafella.com for more info on S.A.S.