

Globalization and Science Diplomacy: Iran and Southeast Asian Countries

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Introduction

- ▶ The planet is facing a bevy of “wicked” problems, which threaten global destabilization. Issues such as climate change, food and water, biodiversity preservation, and pandemic disease cut across disciplines and borders and affect people at all levels of society.
- ▶ This new threat set requires cooperation between countries, but such challenges cannot be resolved by the same type of diplomacy that characterized the 20th century. During the Cold War international diplomacy focused on ideological competition and territorial ambition, on maintaining conventional peace and security. In contrast, today’s issues require diplomacy that is focused on human-centered security and development, something best achieved through dialogue, negotiation, and compromise. There are no military solutions to the complex problems of globalization. To find the answers, we need new knowledge and research

Introduction

- ▶ In the globalization era, the most profound challenges to human survival - climate change, public health, food insecurity, and resource scarcity, to name a few - are rooted in science and driven by technology. Moreover, underdevelopment and insecurity, far more than religious extremism or political violence, represent fundamental threats to world order. In that context, the capacity to generate, absorb and use S&T could play an important role in improving security and development prospects.

Three rival schools to globalization and the role of the sovereign state

- ▶ Hyperglobalism
- ▶ Realism
- ▶ Transformationalism

Hyperglobalism

- ▶ The hyperglobalists contend that the growing interconnectedness of states through globalization gradually negates the significance of territorial boundaries and paves the way for the decline of the sovereign nation-state.

Realism

- ▶ In contrast, the realists or skeptics basically believe that little has changed in the international arena. The skeptics argue that the impact of globalization on the sovereign state is much exaggerated. From this viewpoint, the state is not the victim of this process, but its main architect. On the other hand, the transformationalists reject the tendency of both the hyperglobalists and the skeptics to juxtapose state sovereignty and globalization.

Transformationalism

- ▶ For transformationalists, state sovereignty is a dynamic concept that is simply undergoing a new phase in its evolution as states respond to the costs and the benefits of the globalization process. This environment is not only widening the opportunities for many states to interact diplomatically, but is also obliging states to recognize that many diplomatic challenges they are now facing are complex and can only be resolved through multilateral or international action.
- ▶ In this era of globalization, the most profound challenges to human survival — climate change, diminishing bio-diversity, public health, food insecurity and resource scarcity, to name but a few — are rooted in science and driven by technology. Thus, according to the transformationalists, globalization is a ‘mega trend’ that is not only changing the nature of the sovereign state but is also providing the impetus for the rise of science diplomacy.

Science Diplomacy and International Relations (Track II Diplomacy)

- ▶ Growing interest in science diplomacy is, therefore, accompanying an evolution in international relations, and is in some ways a function of such global change.
- ▶ As a more disaggregated diplomatic system – consisting of dynamic networks of lawyers, scientific bodies, non-governmental organizations and the media – takes shape, ‘track II’ diplomacy involving scientists, science and technology based business groups, and scientific regulatory advisors is acquiring a heightened significance.
- ▶ While science has always transcended borders, the growing ease with which such ‘track II’ initiatives can be accomplished is in large part due to the unprecedented mobility of ideas, people and information that characterizes the globalization age

Position of Traditional Diplomacy in international relations during Globalization Era

- ▶ During the last decades, technological changes and globalization have altered international relations. Traditional diplomacy is no longer the main channel by which states project their image abroad. Just as the growth of telecommunication and transport technologies facilitated rapid dissemination of information and the global movement of people, traditional diplomacy has gradually been complemented with, and has been expanded to, other dimensions, where people-to-people contacts, networks and non-state actors play an influential role.

Soft Power and Science Diplomacy

- ▶ The term 'soft power' was created by US scholar Joseph Nye in 1990.
- ▶ He defined it as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments'.
- ▶ In his eyes, soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country as seen by those on the outside. He defined 'soft power' in contrast to the notion of 'hard power', which focusses on exerting direct pressure of a military or economic nature to achieve a certain desired outcome.
- ▶ Soft power also differs from quantifiable policies such as trade and development cooperation, which can also achieve a desired goal by indirect means.
- ▶ It relies on tools that can contribute to projecting a positive image of a certain country.
- ▶ According to Nye, culture is one of the three major sources of a country's soft power, along with its political values and foreign policies.
- ▶ Cultural diplomacy, along with scientific and educational diplomacy, plays an important role in the perceptions and soft power of a country abroad.

The concept of science diplomacy

- ▶ Science has a long history of catalyzing cooperation in international spaces and providing a tool for foreign policy to ease geopolitical tensions.
- ▶ Although there is no single definition of “science diplomacy”, it is generally understood to be the use of scientific cooperation to address common problems and build international partnerships.
- ▶ Science diplomacy is science cooperation among nations to tackle problems facing humanity in order to establish constructive partnership at the international level.

The History of Contribution of scientists to Diplomacy

- ▶ Scientists can contribute to this process in several ways.
- ▶ Science cooperation can lead to the improvement of relations between countries. This role refers to the use of science as an instrument to repair strained relations.
- ▶ Science cooperation agreements and joint commissions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union or China during the Cold War are examples of the role which the science and scientists can play to help diplomacy.
- ▶ The Cold War period was characterized by a paradigm of 'isolation and control' of information and innovation for national security and commercialization purposes. Now this paradigm has been replaced by one of 'partnerships and engagement'. But as we mentioned, even during the Cold War irrespective of political tensions between the two blocs, were full of historical examples of the link between science and diplomacy. Since a primary meaning of diplomacy is an instrument of governments, some understand science diplomacy as a way to pursue a national agenda, or otherwise stated, a component of 'soft power'.

Globalization, Actors and Public Diplomacy

- ▶ Most scholars of International Relations now agree that a revamp of the Westphalian model of sovereign states is long overdue.
- ▶ Globalization, based upon massive changes in transport and electronic communications, has created greater interdependence between states.
- ▶ Meanwhile ‘international relations’ and the diplomatic activities that go with it are no longer the preserve of sovereign states. Other actors, such as supranational regional organizations or subnational entities engage in diplomacy as well. The rise of so-called “Public Diplomacy” is another one of those changes. It is related to the growing importance of soft power and the need to gain public support for foreign policies.

- ▶ There has also been an evolving relationship between science and diplomacy.
- ▶ Rise of Science Diplomacy in principle they represent two distinct spheres of human activity that have little in common.
- ▶ science and diplomacy are not obvious bedfellows.
- ▶ Nevertheless scientific networks and evidence are playing an increasingly important role in diplomacy efforts initiated by both state and non-state actors. This practice can be termed as “Science Diplomacy”.

History of science diplomacy

- ▶ Though this is a new concept, it refers to an old practice as scientists always have been at the forefront of international collaboration.
- ▶ As early as 1723, the UK Royal Society instituted the post of Foreign Secretary.
- ▶ Today scientists all over the world are connected to each other through “invisible colleges” -that is networks organized around scientific disciplines or problems

Three dimensions of science diplomacy:

- ▶ - Informing foreign policy objectives with scientific advice (science *in* diplomacy);
- ▶ - Facilitating international science cooperation (diplomacy *for* science);
- ▶ - Using science cooperation to improve international relations between countries (science *for* diplomacy).

Science *in* diplomacy

- ▶ Science *in* diplomacy describes the role of science - and technology- in providing advice to inform and support foreign policy objectives. The function of science in diplomacy should be to ensure the effective uptake of high quality scientific advice by policymakers. Science in diplomacy, in other words, is about equipping international decision-makers with the scientific knowledge and understanding required to cope with the increasingly complex S&T-related demands of the 21st century

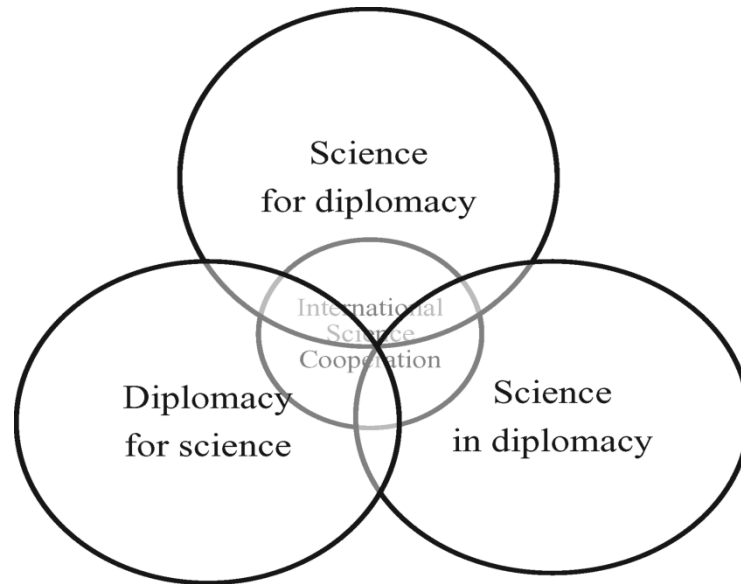
Diplomacy *for* science

- ▶ Diplomacy *for* science seeks to facilitate international cooperation, whether in pursuit of top-down strategic priorities for research or bottom-up collaboration between individual scientists typically researchers. While scientists and diplomats typically come from different backgrounds and experience very different training, there are many areas where their interaction is central to advancing the scientific enterprise

Science *for* diplomacy

- ▶ Science *for* diplomacy is the use of science to help build and improve international relations, especially where there may be strain or tension relationship. Science for diplomacy primarily draws on the “soft power” of science: its attractiveness and influence both as a national asset, and as a universal activity that transcends national or partisan interests. Science for diplomacy comes in many forms such as *science cooperation agreements, creation of new institutions, educational scholarships, science festivals and exhibitions.*

Three interconnected forms of science diplomacy, linked by international science cooperation. **Source:** (Harden and Handling, 2018:427)



History of Science diplomacy of Iran and Southeast Asia countries

- ▶ The history of Iran's relations with the Southeast Asian nations dates back to the pre-Islamic era and the time trade connected west of Asia to the east of this continent and this historical pattern of relations continued to exist and expand to the economic, cultural, political and social fields.
- ▶ One of these dimensions is science diplomacy that expanded in two recent decades.
- ▶ In this article I focus on third dimension of science diplomacy means Science *for* diplomacy in forms such as: science cooperation agreements, creation of new institutions, educational scholarship, science festivals and exhibitions.

Science diplomacy of Iran and Southeast Asia countries

- ▶ The study of scientific and academic activities of Iran with South-East Asia countries indicates the expansion of scientific, educational and academic cooperation in this section. Most important indicators include:
 1. *Signing 42 MOUs and scientific-academic cooperation agreements between Iran and the countries of Southeast Asia*
 2. *Change direction and bi-directional academic visits towards Iran*
 3. *Honoring some of the most prominent scholars and researchers in the countries of the Southeast Asia*
 4. *Launching a Persian Chair and Course at the University of Putra Malaysia*
 5. *Scientific diplomacy and efforts to attract students from region to study in Iran in the form of scholarships and freelances*
 6. *Giving over 1,000 volumes of exquisite Iranian books*

Signing MOUs and scientific-academic cooperation agreements between Iran and the countries of Southeast Asia

- ▶ According to information that provided by Iran's scientific advisory services to South East Asia, over the past five years, 42 MOUs and agreements on scientific and research cooperation between Iranian universities and universities of southeast Asia countries have been signed, notably Malaysia and Indonesia.
- ▶ These cooperation agreements provide a formal and legal framework for the beginning of a new era of scientific and research cooperation in the coming years in various fields, especially in that all of these MOUs, the main objective, the implementation of joint scientific projects and in the second is the exchange of professors, scholars and students.
- ▶ These MOUs, which are defined for a five-year period, cover a wide range of Iranian universities and research centers.
- ▶ Tehran, Al-Zahra, Sharif, Mazandaran, Amir Kabir Universities, Tehran Medical Sciences, AllamehTabatabaei, Payame Noor, Khaje Nasir-Al-Din-e Tusi, Shiraz, Kerman University of Medical Sciences and Islamic Azad University, are the universities on the side of these scientific agreements.
- ▶ Science and Technology Park of Yazd, the Iranian Association for Cultural and Communications Studies, and the Citation Center of the Islamic World Science, are among the other scientific and research centers of the Memorandum of Understanding with the universities of Southeast Asia.

MOUs of University of Tehran and Universities of South East Asia Countries

- ▶ Of these 42 MOUs, 18 MOUs have signed with the University of Tehran.
- ▶ 7 MOUs with Malaysian Universities (University of Malaya, University of Tun Abdul Razak, University of Putra, University Teknologi of Malaysia, University of Kebangsaan Malaysia, University of Pertanian Malaysia, University of Malaysia);
- ▶ 4 MOUs with Indonesian Universities (University of Indonesia, University of Sumatera Utara, University of Diponegoro, University of Bandung);
- ▶ 3 MOUs with Thailand Universities (King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Siam University, Chulalongkorn University);
- ▶ 2 MOUs with Vietnamese Universities (University of Social Sciences Humanities - VNU, Vietnam National University) and
- ▶ 2 MOUs with Philippine Universities (University of the Philippines, Angeles University).

Change direction and bi-directional academic visits towards Iran

- ▶ It is noteworthy that the major memoranda of understanding were signed with the presence of delegates and academic staff from the countries of this region in Iran, which indicates a shift in direction for the two-way cooperation and scientific visits and demand from these countries towards Iran.

According to the report, in 2016 alone, at least 20 academic staff from the universities of the Southeast Asia visited our country's science and technology parks, with visits by the Indonesian Minister of Science to Iran along with the top university heads of the country, University of U.P.M. (UPM), and USM (Malaysia), head of the International Institute of Advanced Studies in Malaysia (IAIS) and a number of other regional university officials are among these university visits.

Honoring some of the most prominent scholars and researchers in the countries of the Southeast Asia

- ▶ Honorary Membership of the Chair of the Academy of Sciences of Malaysia and the President of the University of U.S.M. at the Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences, as well as the Strategic Council of the Islamic World Citation Center (ISC) and the honorary membership of the University of UPM Malaysia as a faculty member of the University of Tehran, indicators of the strengthening of the presence of South East Asian academics in the scientific centers of Iran.
- ▶ The scientific, research and academic presence of the region's countries in scientific seminars and conferences in the country has also been gaining momentum over the past few years, including the participation of South East Asian science representatives at the Conferences on "Contemporary Issues and Challenges of the Islamic World" Hosted by the University of Al-Mustafa University, the conference "Media and Communication: Exchange of Experiences of Iran and Malaysia" hosted by the University of Tehran, the first international conference on "Media, Culture and Issues of the Islamic World" hosted by the University of Tehran's Cultural and Communication Studies Association, international conference on "Asian Dialogues" hosted by the University of Tehran, Mazandaran University and Ferdowsi University noted.

Launching a Persian Chair and Course at the University of Putra Malaysia

- ▶ Establishment of a post and then a Persian language course at two undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at Putra University of Malaysia is one of the most important academic and educational activities of Iran in the region of Southeast Asia.
- ▶ with the assistance of Iran's scholarly consultation in East Asia, Persian Speaker's Office was set up with the deployment of a professor of language from Iran and his establishment at the University of UPM in Malaysia.
- ▶ This action led to the teaching of Persian language alongside other commonly used languages in Malaysian universities.
Now, on average, more than 10 foreign languages are taught in each of Malaysia's major and public universities, and this can expand Persian as the language of the rich culture of Iranian civilization in the region.
- ▶ In February 2009, the Trusteeship Board of U.P.M. Malaysia agreed to offer graduate and Ph.D. courses in Persian as a two-discipline academic and academic degree, and based on planning, this course was completed in two master's and doctoral degrees from the semester. PUTRA University of Malaysia is in fact the first university in the region that is active in the master's degree and Ph.D. in Persian language and literature, and Persian language enthusiasts in the East Asian region can pursue this discipline academically. The Ministry of Science and Technology Research, as the main promoter of the development of Persian language abroad, now has 60 permanent Persian language courses in more than 35 countries.

Scientific diplomacy and efforts to attract students from region to study in Iran in the form of scholarships and freelances

- ▶ In the framework of the expansion of scientific cooperation between Iran and the countries of the region, as well as the recruitment of international students, 24 foreign students from the countries of Southeast Asia have been enrolled to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Persian Language , Engineering, Management and IT, as well as Medical fields have been attracted by scholarships from student organizations to study in Iranian universities.
- ▶ Aside from attracting foreign students, the increase in scientific outputs between Iran and other countries in the region, as another indicator of the development of scientific cooperation in Iran, is significant after all.
By the end of 2017, Iran and Malaysia recorded a total of over 5,596 joint scientific productions in the world.
- ▶ This trend was also on the rise with other countries in the region, with the most common scientific output of Iran after Malaysia with Thailand (823 joint scientific productions), Singapore (533 joint scientific productions), Vietnam (214 joint scientific production), Thailand Indonesia (134 generic scientific productions) and Philippine (100 joint scientific productions). The important thing is that in conducting joint research and dissemination of scientific products between Iran and the countries of the Southeast Asia, about 18,000 scholars / professors / students participated, of which 9336 persons from Iran and 8,664 persons from the countries of the Southeast Asia, mainly Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand

Giving over 1,000 volumes of exquisite Iranian books

- ▶ with the goal of strengthening scientific cooperation and familiarity with the ancient Iranian civilization and culture, 1,200 volumes of exquisite books from the country's literary writers, poets and literary figures were donated to universities and institutes of higher education and research centers in Southeast Asia (2017).
- ▶ Divan e Hafez, Bostan and Golestan Saadi, , Kimia Sa'adat (Ghazali) 1 and 2, Shahnameh Forsydi, Rostam and Sohrab, Pahlavan of the World (selected by Shahnameh Ferdowsi), Three hundred and sixty-five days (in Rumi's talk), Rubaiyat Hakim Omar Khayyam and several other titles, including the exquisite works of Iranian art and culture, located in the Library of Universities and Academic Centers of Southeast Asia.
These books were donated by the Islamic and Western Studies Institute and the Institute of Cultural and Social Studies of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology

Conclusion

- ▶ Given the potential of the scientific and cultural spheres in the relationship between Iran and the countries of South-East Asia, Iran must expand and strengthen its relations with the universities and scientific centers of the countries of the Southeast Asia in the fields of science, culture and technology.
- ▶ Establishment of South-East Asian studies course at the Department of regional studies, Faculty of Law and Political Science at University of Tehran in 2015, helps to better understand the realities of the region, and on the other hand, it can cultivate the experts who are attracted to the universities and political institutions and will be effective in developing and improving Iran's relations with South and South-East Asia.
- ▶ For expansion of Iran's relations with East Asia, especially the countries of Southeast Asia, It is necessary to distance itself from the security dimension of its foreign policy in order to strengthen its scientific, economic and cultural dimensions in order to increase the level of trade and economic cooperation and scientific and cultural cooperation and to take advantage of the opportunities ahead.