



The Role of Science Diplomacy in Russian-Georgian Relations



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Introduction

Diplomacy is the management of international relations by means of negotiations, dialogues, compromises, the methods by which these relations are adjusted and managed non-violently, whereas science Diplomacy is the process when the international relations are managed by means of knowledge acquisition in terms of science and technology. The states use the acquired knowledge to build the scientific collaborations and constructive, knowledge based international partnerships among them. Science, technology and international affairs affect one another, and these mutual influences can be used as one of the most powerful tool to ease tensions between countries (2019).

There are three dimensions of Science Diplomacy: diplomacy in Science, Science in diplomacy and Science for diplomacy. Science for diplomacy draws primarily on the “soft power” of science, its soft power implies in its ability to develop stronger links between countries where political environment is tense and official relationships are strained and constricted (The Royal Society. 2010)

This paper aims to define the role of “soft power” of science diplomacy between two countries Russia and Georgia, countries that have rather strained political relations, as a result of the full scale military aggression exercised by Russia against Georgia, occupation of the integral parts of Georgia, and ethnic cleansing provided on these territories and declaration of this region as an “independent Republic”. Georgia break off diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation On September 2, 2008 (MEA, Georgia, 2019). Explain the challenges of using the science diplomacy and if the possibilities of using the “soft power” of science diplomacy as the tool to regulate the existing relations.

In today’s Georgia, perhaps there is no such urgent and problematic issue as the Russian-Georgian relationship. All the problems Georgia faces regard the politics, economics, culture, science, to some extent is related to Russia-Georgia relations. Being for a long time in the Soviet Union,

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struggle for independence, then establishment as an independent state, the reassessment of national interests, has left a peculiar mark on the country from which we are still struggling to come out. Also, As Georgia is an independent country, it is difficult to maintain the normal relations with Russia. However, considering the geographical and economic dependencies of the countries, ways are to be paved for peaceful coexistence. Taking into consideration all the above mentioned, it is essential to find some kind of tool that helps us to regulate current tense relations, considering the armed conflict between them, that caused existence of two occupied territories in Georgia. The given paper analyses the possibility to collaborate through the science diplomacy and foster peace between Georgia and Russia.

Overview of Russian-Georgian Relations

Since the August 2008 War and the consequent recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia, the relations between Georgia and Russia have deteriorated significantly. In the absence of diplomatic relations, the consultations and peace-building talks in Geneva (mainly Abkhazia and South Ossetia related) remain the only format involving international actors and mediators. Indeed, more than 40 rounds of negotiations have produced no tangible progress on converging the visions between parties. Even bilateral talks, since 2012 have failed to contribute in the normalization of relations, particularly some progress in economic relations and humanitarian issues. With this lack of interaction between official structures, dialogue between Russia-Georgia experts and policy makers remains one of the most important instruments for solving the problems between Georgia and Russia (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. 2018).

Nearly 25 years ago, the Soviet Union was dissolved and 15 independent states rose out of the post-Soviet realm. The disintegration of the USSR resulted not only in the self-determination of its former parts, but also caused a split in the values, ideologies and foreign policy priorities as well as led to newly established actors. The motivation for Georgia to leave the Soviet Union and distance itself from Russia, among other factors, happened

because of deeply rooted differences in the attitudes and opinions for the reasons of almost 200 years of cohabitation (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. 2015).

The most significant issue between these two countries is the understanding of national interests. The nature of the relationships between different states is determined by the policies they pursue. Domestic and foreign policy are main factors for determining the national interests, particularly when there is mismatch between Georgia and Russia. The main national interest of Russia is the restoration of old glory and the return of the Prestige of the superpower. A clear example of this idea is of Eurasian Union, an alternative of the EU and that already functions as a Eurasian Customs Union (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. 2018).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as the Russian Empire under which Georgia was, it faced the political orientation issue. There are three alternatives of foreign policy orientation towards modern Georgia: the north, the west, and neutrality (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies. 2018). Georgia has Euro-Atlantic orientation; It was stated by the Georgian Prime Minister, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, in July 2016, at the meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry, in Tbilisi that Georgia's European orientation is irreversible. A National Democratic Institute survey conducted found strong support for Georgian government's Euro-Atlantic aspirations—68 per cent in support of NATO and 71 per cent for the European Union (NDI survey, 2016). This policy was also reflected in effective steps. Georgia has signed the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union. The Association Agreement aims to deepen political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia, also through the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). However, Georgia's European aspirations led to a military conflict with Russia and eventually its territories were occupied by Russian Government.

Scope of Cooperation

Agriculture

Georgia has two occupied territories Abkhazia and

the Tskhinvali region. It can be stated that in this occupied territory, there should be use of science diplomacy, to normalise the relations between the two countries. There are problems in these areas that require the involvement of both parties to deploy science and technology related applications, for ensuring the well being of the population in occupied and cross-border territories.

Zugdidi, the main town of Samegrelo region (Western Georgia) remains badly affected by the socio-economic consequences of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the 1992-93 conflict with Abkhazia (1992-93) which displaced 250'000 people. Today, Zugdidi is home to more than 90'000 IDPs, 35 per cent of whom still live in collective centres. Up to 40 per cent are unemployed and suffer from extreme poverty (ICRC.2007). In order to limit dependency on humanitarian assistance and promote economic self-sufficiency, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched a Micro-Economic Initiative (MEI) Programme for existing resident and IDP food beneficiaries. The aim was to enable them to start or resume a productive activity. From 2004 to 2006, 8'600 households (33'000 persons) received agricultural and productive items or cash grants. This was supported with training and technical advice to ensure they could generate a regular household income (ICRC. 2007). A lesson learnt from the MEIs implemented in Georgia is that to distribute inputs alone is not enough to reach economic security, nor does it restore the dignity of the victims. ICRC developed a "coaching" programme to further support the beneficiaries. During both training and the programme itself, interaction between beneficiaries was encouraged so best practices could be shared. (ICRC. 2007).

There are support of USAID through some projects particularly to create a stronger business environment in cross-border villages of one of occupied territory of Tskhinvali (USAID. 2019). Georgia Hazelnut Improvement Project (G-HIP) (USAID, 2019) will be implemented as a public-private Alliance between USAID, Ferrero and Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA), to leverage the technical and financial resources of each partner for sector development of the hazelnut. G-HIP will be co-created, co-developed and co-implemented by the Alliance. The G-HIP Alliance will utilise market-based approaches and solutions

to advance USAID's development priorities by increasing the quality and quantity of Georgian hazelnut production, improving processing capabilities and establishing market linkages that will allow smallholder growers to reach lucrative end markets (USAID 2019).

Also, the USAID Agriculture Program would accelerate growth of agricultural sub-sectors that show strong potential to create jobs and increase enterprises' revenues, including the production and processing of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other high-value horticultural products. The program will achieve these goals by increasing productivity and productive capacity; building capacity to add value through processing, storage, and other techniques to meet international standards and certifications; strengthening linkages within agricultural value chains as well as to new markets; strengthening the capacity of cooperatives, extension and other service providers, associations, and other relevant organizations (USAID, 2019).

The population actually needs this kind of technological and scientific support in producing and processing of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other high-value horticultural products. With these projects, it can be highlighted that it is possible that representatives of the scientific community will cooperate in the agricultural sector to introduce new technologies, which will promote the development of the occupied territories. But the point of departure, this paper intends to make is there are similar kind of technologies developed in Russia, which can be transferred to the annexed regions, for their economic and social development, particularly in Agriculture.

Architectural Restoration

The Russian aggression of 2008 and the subsequent occupation of Georgian regions (Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia) have endangered historic monuments located therein. It should be noted that the state of the monuments of Georgian cultural, historical and religious heritage located in the occupied regions needs to be restored. Some monuments are in urgent need of rehabilitation (OHCHR. 2016).

The Russian aggression of August 2008 caused an extensive damage to monuments located in

Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. All these historical monuments occupy a special place in the history of Georgian Christian architecture. Most of them require an immediate intervention and restoration. The painting of the XIV century is particularly affected because of the humidity. The roof and walls must be repaired as well. In 2012 a virtual map of cultural monuments was created by the occupation regime, in which 42 entries were marked. Apart from that, the so called “Parliament of South Ossetia” adopted three “laws” on preservation of cultural heritage of South Ossetia: the “Law on Import and Export of Units of Cultural Value”; the “Law on Cultural Heritage Units”; the “Law on Works of Art”, but without involvement of the representatives from Georgia (OHCHR. 2016). Representatives of the occupying regime presented a list of 10 monuments in urgent need of restoration. Among them are: Tsandripshi, Drandy, Mokvi, Bedia and Lashkindari temples, Bichvinta Cathedral, architectural compounds of Otkhara and Tsabelda, Sokhumi Fortress. It must be mentioned that the plan to carry out “restoration” works without the involvement of Georgian specialists (OHCHR. 2016). This is vitally an important issue which can be addressed through technological cooperation for restoration of existing architectural monuments. Technical expertise is to be deployed in borrowing examples from countries which are using advance technologies to restore their monuments. Such technologies include Reflectance Transformation Imaging; Photogrammetry and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging, to name a few.

Conclusion

Science Diplomacy can help to mobilize scientific networks and as the tool to solve problems faced by Russia and Georgia. Taking into account all above mentioned, science diplomacy remains the only way to normalize the situation. There is a need for dialogue between the scientists of the two countries, in order to share the latest technological advances in the aforementioned agriculture sector and establish these advances into the occupied and cross-border villages. Also it is important for the preservation of cultural heritage, the collaboration of restorers, archaeologists, and historians, by the use of advanced technologies in the restoration industry.

To conclude, scientific diplomacy can play a very important role in Russian-Georgian relations, even in the absence of any political, economic or diplomatic relations. It can be used as one of the means, to foster peace and mutual welfare. Through decisions made at the level of scientists and with the involvement of the international community, particularly the developing South, will be a turning point in Russian-Georgian relations with the background of confrontations undergone.

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Diplomatic Challenges in Climate Change Negotiations: A Case of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Region



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Introduction

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are the two measures agreed to at the COP 21 UN Climate Change negotiations to cap carbon emissions for limiting temperatures at 2 degrees celsius. The negotiations by developing countries for climate change with regard to adaptation under the financing clause with developed countries presents a diplomatic challenge to achieve political consensus under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This along with investment in greener technologies are the two outcomes of the Paris Agreement. This paper extrapolate this argument that the diplomatic challenge of climate change negotiations are fractured owin to the global dimensions of developed countries support for mitigation financing and developing countries negotiating for adaptation financing given that they are the net emitters in climate change, which transcends political borders. Secondly, the Paris Agreement has no enforceable mechanism under the UNFCCC nor COP 21 for developed countries to comply with the financing clause. Further, negotiations for climate financing is not formalised under the UNFCCC institutional framework for developing countries to fast track their *Nationally Determined Contributions* (NDCs) for implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The paper structures the argument along the fractured climate financing negotiations between the developed and developing counties using a case study of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region as vulnerable Small Island Developing Sates (SIDSs); and their negotiating challenge to implement the NDCs in climate change adaptation, and their comparative advantage as against developed countries mitigation measures in achieving a collective outcome of 2 degrees celsius, in implementing the Paris Agreement.

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