Relationship between geopacifics and tourism in cultural diplomacy of Iran

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Abstract

Geopacifics has been considered as the objective representation of nations' and governments' movement toward peace. Today, countries have tried to achieve it by means of different solution such as general, economic, sport and cultural diplomacies. Among them, one of the important methods is cultural diplomacy by which every country tries to communicate with others depending on its various cultural capabilities and cultural policies. In this regard, tourism is one of the most important cultural tools for better introduction of countries' cultural policies and expansion of geopacifics in regional and global levels. Present study addresses this topic by descriptive-analytical method and library study. The investigated point of this paper is that Iran has to properly use its cultural diplomacy to reach to a sustainable national security to provide geopacifics in the region. The geographical and geopolitical position of Iran and its various cultural and tourism attraction in addition to its rich ancient civilization are among the important topics in cultural diplomacy of Iran.

1. Introduction

In the era when only 5% of world's countries are involved in war and most of them have peaceful relationships with each other and also existence of 900 peace-supporting organizations and institutions it can be concluded that the world is moving toward peace. In this regard, one of the important issues is geopacifics which can result in extension of global peace and friendship among countries, ethnical groups, and races. At the age of globalization, one of the most important issues is the ability to establish relationship and create friendly and converging connection with neighboring countries and the rest of the world. Taking proper diplomacy is one of the ways for establishment of these relationships among which cultural diplomacy plays an important role in countries convergence. Tourism is one of the representations of cultural diplomacy of a country. Nowadays, tourism industry has been recognized as one of the major means of income and employment and mass production of capital in international level which is rapidly replacing the fossil resources and automobile and food industries and plays an important role in capital production, according to the statistics of United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), more than 1.198 billion people are involved in tourism-related cycles which has brought more than 1260 billion dollars financial benefits of the countries involved in this industry. Iran is among the ten richest counties in terms of cultural and historical attractions and its biodiversity has made it as one of the most distinguished countries in the world. Besides all these capacities and attractions, due to various reasons, Iran's position is very low among the world countries or the countries in the Middle East in terms of investment attraction in such a pioneering industry. On the other hand, regarding the geographical and geopolitical position of Iran in a region with military and political tensions, Iran is trying to use cultural diplomacy and tourism to promote peace and convergence with the regional countries and rest of the world. The presented study is based

on this hypothesis that Islamic republic of Iran can develop peaceful and stable relationships with the regional countries and rest of the world by taking proper cultural diplomacy due to its numerous tourism capabilities; in this regards, descriptive-analytical tools by use of library sources (books, papers and internet) are applied.

2. Methodology

Methodology of this study is descriptive- analytical and required information has been collected through library research. The information gathered from sources such as books, magazines, online articles, etc.

3. Fundamental concepts of the research

3.1 Peace and Geopacifics

Peace has been defined as:

1- State of having no war

2- Post-war treaties

3- State of coordination and congruence

4- State of tranquility and silence

Traditional approach of peace was focused on prevention from wars and as it neglected the continuous peace-breaking trends bases on social and economic inequalities, it has never succeeded. For the traditional peace, maintaining the current situation is enough and it is even its goal. Therefore, such an attitude is focused on maintaining the current unequal situation and fails to spread the peace (Botole 2009: 23). Nothing can be expected from the traditional peace except calming the tensed situation; despite being named by conceptual frameworks such as "Comprehensive Peace" it fails to establish a permanent situation although it is named "eternal peace" (Mahpishanian 2011, 22). From late 80s, UNESCO has taken interesting and

new measures with the aim of promoting the culture of peace. In an international congress held in July 1989 in Ivory Coast, UNESCO presented a new approach of positive peace which was based on promoting the peace culture in the mind and sprite of each individual. In the El Salvador conference in 1993, UNESCO declared the main axes of peace culture as:

1- Education of human right, peace, democracy, international understanding and tolerance

2- Enhancement of human right, democracy and fighting with discrimination

3- Cultural pluralism and dialogue

4- Prevention from conflicts and peace establishment after these conflicts

From UNESCO's point of view, realization of such project requires government and international organizations (including UN, inter-governmental organization) and intellectual community cooperation. After World War II, to maintain the international peace and security, development of friendly relationships and promotion of social advancements coded as the first article of UN prism, UN has bound international peace and security to resolving the international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems (Shirzad 2010 14 & 15). Some have tried to distinguish "pacific-ism" from pacifism, where pacific-ism is a commitment to peace and peacefulness that is not strictly opposed to war while pacifism is a more principled or absolute rejection of violence. But this distinction is not widely accepted (although Dower has employed it recently). William James used the term "pacific-ism" in 1910 to describe his rejection of militarism. The shorter term, "pacifism, " has become more common in English usage during the 20th Century to describe a variety of views that are critical of war (Fila 2016: 13). Finally, according to relation peace and pacifism with geography it can be said that, Geopacifics is an attempt to base the teachings of freedom and humanity upon real geographical deductions; in a sense, it is humanized geopolitics. It shows for instance, from a study of the World Plan, where the leading nations must arise; be it understood to lead not to conquer. It shows that we should study environmental control, to advance in harmony with our environment. It is a material philosophy, but not a complete one. Because it does not pretend to discuss those basic principles which properly belong to distinct ethical disciplines (Taylor. 1946: 362).

3.2 Cultural diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy is a field of diplomacy dealing with establishment, development and continuing relationship with foreign countries via culture, art and education. In this regard, it is an effective process presenting a nation to the world and promotes unique cultural

characteristics of a nation in in mutual and multi-aspect levels. Governments follow three main goals by cultural diplomacy: a) gaining international reputation among other nations and ethnic groups and affecting their behaviors; b) creating new scientific and cultural institution to establish permanent relationships and more sincerity between different nations; c) precise understanding on the principles of other nations' cultures and searching in cultural and social roots of other societies for creation of mutual understanding among the nations. In the other words, cultural diplomacy tries to use culture and its elements such as ideas, values, information, art, language and literature to influence the thoughts in other countries (Simbor, Moghimi 2015: 8). It can be said that cultural diplomacy finds its real meaning when a country, for conveying its cultural and civilization richness, uses the tools with the same

nature and tries to introduce its to other nations and considers that in its foreign policy (Hasan Khani 2005: 137).

4. Findings of the study

In I.R.Iran, the importance of cultural diplomacy development has been increasingly mentioned by policy makers, authorities, and academic communities. In this content, huge investment and activities have been conducted both theoretically via papers, books, conferences, meetings and practically through development of mechanisms inside and outside

the country, qualitative and quantitative expansion of media activities especially establishment of different radio and TV channels, admission of foreign students, exchange of university students and elites and so on. These is no precise and reliable assessment about the achievements of such attempts and investments; however, the audience of cultural diplomacy of IR. Iran can be classified into 4 groups:

a) Shia people of all around the world
b) Non-Shia Muslims of the world
c) Deprived nations in retarded and less –developed countries
d) Non-Muslim people of developed and developing countries

In this content, it can be said that the cultural diplomacy of IR. Iran was completely successful for the first group. It can be proved by unprecedented promotion of Shia-specific symbols and ceremonies

and reinforcement of religious solidarity among Shia people of the world regardless of nationality and language difference by leading of Iran, Arba'een Pilgrimage with several millions participants in spite of all risks, significant increase of pilgrims of Shia's holy shrines. However, as mentioned before, there is no precise and convincing assessment on success of Iran's cultural diplomacy in relation to the other three groups; therefore, it is required to conduct a fair and unbiased assessment in this filed to optimize the activities and investments (Hajiani, Iranshahi 2014: 5). Some of the most effective cultural indices and civilizational capabilities which can have positive impact on cultural diplomacy of Iran and enhance its soft strength are: 1- written culture (including books, journals, libraries, publish and education) 2- radio and TV, 3- cinema and photography, 4- theater, 5- music, 6- literature, 7- theology, 8- cultural inheritance, 9- sport, 10- tourism, 11- visual arts, 12- environment, 13 foreign cultural activities and 14- cultural budget.

From another point of view, the indices of IR Iran cultural diplomacy realization can be: 1- emphasis on common elements or cultural affinities (including civilizational fields, cultural geography on Norouz and Persian language which are some of examples of Iran's cultural linkage in the region, Islamic civilization filed, creation of justice-oriented and pacific dialogues especially after the revolution, development of constructive dialogue by the world's religions and thinking schools after the revolution.

2- attention to Iran's geography in the field of Ancient Iran civilization and programming for overcoming the cultural challenges of Arabism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Orthodox, Europe, Africa in regional and global levels.

3- Relying on internal cultural capacities of Iran (religion, philosophy and religion, Persian language, family, government, religious and non-religious intellectuals, independent and patriot people, global thoughts of Iranians, global and revolutionary ideology).

4-Application of technology and communication as an effective cultural weapon to cope with cultural challenges imposed by powerful countries (western cultural invasion) and

development of national Iranian culture throughout the region and world (Simbor, Moghimi 2015: 22, 23)

This research emphasizes on geographical nature of Iran's cultural diplomacy indices and examples. Among them tourism and its development in Iran can be mentioned. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran tourism has faced many ups and downs. Whenever, Iran was successful in general diplomacy and foreign policies, it acted successfully in cultural diplomacy as well. Therefore, tourism made some accomplishments. These examples can be mentioned: after the end of Iran-Iraq war and restoring relative calmness and also new insights in domestic policies based on multi-aspect reconstruction of Iran and resolving the war-related deprivation and retarding, tourism and its development gained some attentions and by approval of Iran-traveling and tourism in 1991, the programs for development of this capacity started. Decisions and consequences of Soviet Union dissolution and new arrangement of global system and its consequences on regional tourism and also Iran tourism caused that after the revolution, after about 17 years in 1995 the foreign currency receiving of from foreign tourism reached to 205 million dollars which is the received money in 1978. These ups and downs show that for 17 years the tourism of Iran was in silence (2009: 170). Taking tension-defusing policies and introduction of Dialogue Among Civilizations in 1997, naming 2001 by UN as the year of Dialogue Among Civilizations, choosing the slogan of "tourism as a tool for peace and dialogue" by UNETO changed the attitudes from Iran-phobia to getting to know Iran, from 1995 to 2004, for ten years the countries income from tourism increased multiple-folds and reached t 829 million dollars. The mean receiving of this period was more than two-times greater than the mean growth rates of the years from 1980 to 1995 (Taghavi 2009, 14). In 2013, political changes as the consequence of presidential election in Iran and establishment of new government have changed the foreign policy trend of Iran. Despite all the problems, the 11th government attempted to lift the sanctions by hard work and shifting the political negotiation approaches. This trend was started in 2006 and managed to change the negotiation situation from lose-lose to win-win by changing the political position and induction of diplomatic movements and enhancing the political bargaining capability in 2013 during 2 months. This process and foreign policies manifested its signs first in Geneva interim agreement

on Iranian nuclear program, and finally, in July 14 2015, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was reached in Vienna between Iran, European Union (EU) and 5+1. Tourism industry of Iran grew by mild slope of 2.7% in 2014 and 2015. Changes in foreign policies of IR Iran and also regional unrests in Iraq, Syria and Turkey along with emergence of terrorism and its movements development in western countries in the form of explosion in public places, shootings and armed actions in public places of touristic European cities have drastically reduced the traveling to these cities. Regarding what mentioned above and statistical investigation of the tourists attendance in 2014 and 2015 in Iran show that in spite of regional insecurities in neighboring of Iran and terroristic issues of Europe, relative stability and security of Iran resulted in entrance of European tourists, especially those who chose Turkey as their destination, in Iran and they replaced turkey with Iran.

5. Conclusions:

Regarding the bases of the research and what was mentioned in the findings section, regarding the geopolitical position of Iran, Iran has managed to be present in regional and global scenes and made numerous accomplishments in convergence and peace and stability.

Regarding the increasing growth of tourism industry throughout the world, Iran has to take required steps to develop its tourism industry by optimal application of its cultural, historic and geographical attractions. In this way, it can enhance its presence in the region and global scenes as these measures are along with the cultural diplomacy of Iran. According to the mentioned points, the research hypothesis expressing that IR Iran can develop peaceful and stable relationships with the regional countries and rest of the world by taking proper cultural diplomacy due to its numerous tourism capabilities, will be proven as well.

Acknowledgment

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