

Resilience Diplomacy: Building Security Through Psychological and Cultural Strength

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Source: United Nations Initiative

Introduction

In a time of hybrid warfare, disinformation tactics, global pandemics, and ideological polarization, conventional security models that center military might and territorial integrity are increasingly inadequate. Often intangible, today's dangers target people's brains, identities, and morale rather than physical boundaries. From psychological warfare to cultural erasure, these more recent kinds of conflict need a modification of national defense plans. Resilience diplomacy, a strategy acknowledging the need of psychological and cultural strength as essential components of national and international security has emerged as a result. In 2023, WHO reported a 25% rise in global

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mental health disorders, linked to pandemic, war, and disinformation exposure. This commentary investigates how countries may use internal resilience not only to withstand shocks but also to influence and change the global security situation by means of diplomacy anchored in identity, mental strength, and cultural cohesiveness.

Defining Resilience Diplomacy: A New Frontier in Foreign Policy

Resilience diplomacy is a strategic tool wherein states stress internal strength psychological, cultural, and societal as means of external influence and security. Resilience-building should be included into diplomatic dialogue and action to send to both friends and enemies that a nation's cultural coherence, unity, and values are non-negotiable sources of power. Resilience diplomacy emphasizes soft power assets education, language, media, history, and collective memory while conventional diplomacy sometimes concentrates on talks, treaties, and military alliances.² States can prevent manipulation, oppose foreign intervention, and present stability on the international scene by encouraging psychological preparedness and a shared national identity. Resilience diplomacy becomes an essential pillar of statecraft when the line separating external from domestic dangers blurs gets blurry. The Biden Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance emphasized "values-based diplomacy" and cultural cohesion as strategic tools.

² Houck, Shannon C. "Building psychological resilience to defend sovereignty: theoretical insights for Mongolia." *Frontiers in Social Psychology* 2 (2024): 1409730.



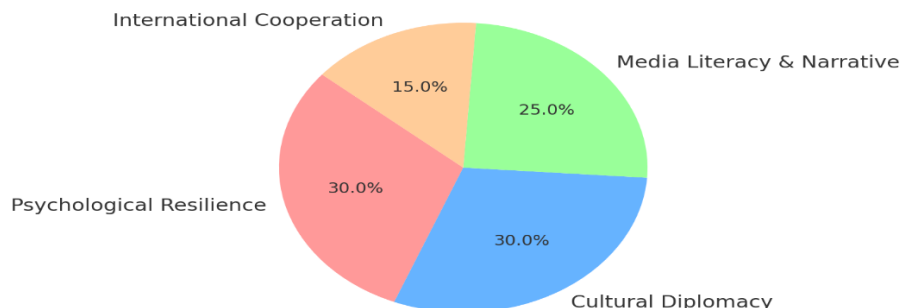
Source: LinkedIn

The Psychology of National Resilience: Building Mental Shields Against Crisis

Resilience diplomacy is mostly based on psychological well-being and mental toughness of citizens of a country. National resilience is the capacity of people to manage stress, adjust to change, and stick to shared values against hardship. Particularly in crisis—that is, during disinformation campaigns, foreign propaganda, or internal socio political upheavals—psychological endurance is absolutely vital. By means of trust-building, openness, participatory governance, and national narratives stressing agency, unity, and purpose, governments significantly contribute in fostering this.³ While promoting a common sense of identity and purpose, educational courses, media literacy initiatives, and governmental communication methods can assist inoculate the public against psychological manipulation. A mentally strong civilization is more equipped to withstand both obvious and subtle dangers and less prone to break under duress. In Bangladesh between 2021 and 2023, BRAC and the Ministry of Education implemented youth mental health programs in 300+ secondary schools.

³ Mai'a, K., and Teresa La Porte. "The European union and image resilience during times of crisis: the role of public diplomacy." *The Hague journal of diplomacy* 12, no. 4 (2017): 257-282.

Key Components of Resilience Diplomacy



Cultural Identity as Strategic Capital in Diplomatic Engagements

More than legacy, culture is a strategic tool for diplomacy. In international affairs, a nation's cultural identity when well defined and boldly presented can be both shield and sword. Particularly in a globalized world when homogeneity and ideological colonization offer existential hazards to smaller or developing nations, resilience diplomacy stresses the significance of preserving and advancing national culture.⁴ By means of cultural diplomacy—festivals, language promotion, historical preservation, and artistic expression—countries can inculcate pride, project influence, and oppose cultural servitude. Furthermore, in a time when global narratives are sometimes challenged, expressing one's cultural point of view might affect policies and world view. Since 2010, Japan's "Cool Japan" initiative has received over \$1.1 billion in funding to promote Japanese culture globally, including anime, cuisine, and traditional arts.

From 2015 to 2023, Rwanda implemented cultural programs like Ingando camps and Itorero ry'Igihugu, which significantly contributed to national reconciliation and reduced ethnic divisions. In 2023, India launched the "Vishwa Bandhu Bharat" initiative to expand Indian language

⁴ Pamment, James, Martina Smedberg, and Elsa Isaksson. "National security and public diplomacy." In *Handbook on Public Diplomacy*, pp. 449-461. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025.

promotion and heritage diplomacy across the Global South. A culturally confident country is less prone to subtle subjugation or erasure and demands greater respect. Therefore, cultural identity turns into a kind of power that strengthens internal unity and increases the diplomatic presence of a nation.

Case Studies: Global Lessons in Harnessing Soft Power for Security

Resilience diplomacy is not only theoretical; numerous nations who have used soft power instruments to protect their national security have found actual embodiment for this idea. For example, Finland's national defense plan includes psychological resilience. In 2022, Finland released a national guide to enhance public preparedness against hybrid threats, resulting in over 80% of citizens expressing trust in government resilience measures. By means of strong civic education, open governance, and a culture of preparedness, Finland has fostered public confidence and mental readiness to fight hybrid threats, especially from surrounding Russia.⁵

Strategic use of cultural diplomacy is best shown by Japan. Emphasizing peace, technology, and culture, Japan rebuilt itself internationally following World War II exporting animation, food, fashion, and philosophy. Even in diplomatic tense times, this cultural soft power has elevated its global profile.

Nation-building following genocide in Rwanda concentrated on rebuilding a common national identity. By means of memory politics, inclusive education, and cultural rebirth, the state restored psychological cohesiveness among its divided populace, therefore illustrating how soft power may heal and unite in the wake of war.

These examples show how effectively inclusive identity narratives, cultural promotion, and psychological readiness could create both internal security and global impact.

⁵ Cohrs, J. Christopher, Daniel J. Christie, Mathew P. White, and Chaitali Das. "Contributions of positive psychology to peace: Toward global well-being and resilience." *American Psychologist* 68, no. 7 (2013): 590.

The Role of Media and Narrative in Shaping National Resilience

The role of traditional and digital media plays a crucial role in determining how a society views its vulnerabilities, its collective destiny, and itself. Within the field of resilience diplomacy, narrative control is absolutely important. States that neglect to regulate their national narratives run the danger of allowing foreign actors, disinformation efforts, or internal radical voices to take front stage.⁶ South Korea's investment in cultural industries has led to a significant increase in cultural exports, reaching \$12.45 billion in 2021.

Good resilience-building calls for intentional story shaping. Civil society and governments have to cooperate to advance accurate but empowering narratives of history, national challenges, and values. Documentaries, public broadcasting, and social media campaigns among other platforms help to support stories of solidarity, tenacity, and shared responsibility. South Korea's cultural output, especially K-pop and K-dramas, has not only projected soft power but also strengthened its national brand of inventiveness, modernity, and communal identity.⁷ In 2022, UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Week included participation from over 70 countries, signaling global recognition of the role of narrative control in resilience.

Conversely, media manipulation especially with regard to disinformation has been used to undermine institutions, split societies, and propagate fear. Nations who make investments in public trust in journalism, fact-checking tools, and media literacy are more suited to oppose these psychological operations. Controlling the story is thus a kind of democratic resilience rather than propaganda.

Integrating Resilience Diplomacy in National Security Strategy

Resilience diplomacy cannot be successful without being institutionalized under the larger national security framework. This entails embedding psychological, cultural, and informational resilience within defense and foreign policy frameworks, hence transcending ad hoc measures.

⁶ Moise-Zanellato, Octavia. "A critical review of resilience in international relations." *Perspective Politice* 13 (2020): 21.

⁷ Rauscher, Natalie. "In the Face of Disaster—Narratives of Community Vulnerability and Resilience in Media Coverage of Natural Catastrophes in the USA." *Silvia Bonacchi (ed.)* (2024): 167.

Divisions in national security councils or ministries emphasizing social cohesion, mental health, cultural diplomacy, and counter-disinformation should Diplomatic training colleges have to equip foreign service officials in story framing, cultural intelligence, resilient communication, not only in geopolitics. Working across education, media, defense, and foreign affairs, the creation of a National Resilience Commission will help to coordinate cross-sectoral initiatives to develop internal strength.

Resilience diplomacy should also coincide with global cooperation. By use of worldwide organizations such as UNESCO, WHO (for mental health), and regional alliances, countries can exchange best practices and establish conventions on psychological and cultural security.⁸ Resilience should be formally foundation of national security so nations may negotiate crises with both dignity and agility.

Challenges and Critiques: Navigating the Limits of Soft Security Tools

Resilience diplomacy has many important difficulties even if it presents a strong substitute for conventional security strategies. As of 2024, only 12 countries worldwide had implemented formal national resilience indices, making global benchmarking difficult (OECD).

1. Hard to Measure

One cannot measure psychological resilience or cultural strength exactly.⁹ Unlike military expenditure or economic data, their results are intangible, which makes it challenging to evaluate influence or support for investment.

2. Hazard of Political Abuse

Resilience rhetoric can be used by governments to foster nationalism, quell criticism, or control the story. Resilience diplomacy compromises trust and inclusiveness when it starts as a tool for suppressing criticism or imposing conformity.

⁸ Pamment, James, Martina Smedberg, and Elsa Isaksson. "National security and public diplomacy." In *Handbook on Public Diplomacy*, pp. 449-461. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025.

⁹ Kuriakose, Bineeth, Raju Shrestha, and Frode Eika Sandnes. "Tools and technologies for blind and visually impaired navigation support: a review." *IETE Technical Review* 39, no. 1 (2022): 3-18.

3. unequal capability

Not every state has equal soft power. Particularly against prominent global voices, smaller or less developed nations may lack the institutional, media, or cultural tools necessary to properly promote their narratives.

4. Needs public confidence and involvement.

Civic engagement and shared identity define resilience. Efforts in polarized communities could be seen as propaganda if they are not inclusive or representative of many views.

5. Restricted Against Low Threats

Soft tools cannot replace military or cyber defense. They cannot stop or avoid urgent dangers like invasions or terrorist acts even as they develop long-term strength.

6. Extended Reward Payoff

Building resilience takes time, and slow outcomes of this process could discourage political funding. These kinds of policies might disappear off national agendas without long-term dedication.



Policy Recommendations: Building a Resilient State through Diplomacy

States have to use a multi-layered, cross-sectoral approach if they are to institutionalize resilience diplomacy as a strategic pillar of national security. First, realizing they are essential instruments to confront current challenges including disinformation, ideological extremism, and societal polarization, governments should include psychological and cultural resilience into national security policy.¹⁰ Resilience measurements must thus be included into policy development and assessment. In 2023, Bangladesh incorporated media literacy components into its secondary education curricula through partnerships with NGOs like BRAC

One absolutely necessary beginning point is reform of education. Curricula should encourage civic duty, critical thinking, and media literacy empowering next generations to oppose manipulation and embrace shared values. Mental health infrastructure also has to be reinforced so that communities might manage uncertainty, trauma, and stress.

With embassies serving not only as political outposts but also as cultural hubs advancing language, history, arts, and values, cultural diplomacy should be mainstreamed throughout foreign missions. Projecting a confident and coherent identity on the international scene depends on investments in national branding via media, public diplomacy, and narrative. In 2022, India's Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) operated cultural centers in over 90 countries, strengthening India's global cultural footprint.

Initially, countries should think about creating a National Resilience Council—assembling officials from defense, foreign policy, education, health, and media to coordinate projects. Moreover, alliances with foreign organizations like UNESCO or WHO can improve credibility, offer resources, and promote worldwide resilience-building cooperation.

¹⁰ Cooper, Andrew F., and Timothy M. Shaw. "The diplomacies of small states at the start of the twenty-first century: how vulnerable? How resilient?." *The diplomacies of small states: between vulnerability and resilience* (2009): 1-18.

Any resilience plan also has to be inclusive and democratic at last. Marginalised groups have to find themselves reflected in the national story. Without this, initiatives could backfire or widen socioeconomic gaps. Resilience diplomacy works only when it unites and uplifts—not when it dictates or excludes.

Conclusion:

The strongest countries are those with robust brains and cohesive cultures in a world when battles are sometimes waged without weapons and when insecurity permeates words, symbols, and anxieties. Resilience diplomacy shows a change in world perspective from border defense to inner fabric of society reinforcement. As fundamental pillars of national security and international impact, it increases mental power, cultural cohesiveness, and collective identity.

From cyberwarfare to ideological extremism, as traditional power wanes in addressing many of today's international concerns, the ability of a state to adapt, unite, and represent its principles becomes a new currency of power. Resilience is about suffering with dignity, impacting with principles, and ensuring peace by inner strength not only about surviving shocks.

Investing in its people, stories, and identity helps a country not only fortifies its defenses but also takes back its moral and cultural weight in world events. Resilience diplomacy in the twenty-first century promises and requires this as well as other things.