



The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in the New Islamic Civilization in International Arena;

With Special Reference to the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution

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Introduction

It would not be possible to talk about the new Islamic civilization without benefiting from the past experiences of Islamic civilization and culture. Therefore, the new Islamic civilization may be considered the revival and recon-

struction of Islamic civilization by benefiting of knowledge, wisdom, and religious beliefs resulting in all-round material and spiritual progress and at the same time meeting the natural and material needs of human beings and directing them towards perfection and

salvation. It is to be noted that culture and civilization are of transnational and universal essence and have always been considered as a bedrock for political and economic interactions between nations. The great Islamic civilization was able to facilitate the transfer and

exchange of knowledge between Islamic territories and other civilizations such as India, China, and Greece by launching a translation movement as well as holding scientific and cultural debates and discussions. And while introducing its cultural and spiritual achievements and values, it managed to provide the opportunity for the globalization of Islam and Islamic civilization to a great extent.

The transfer of scientific tradition by Iranians to different parts of the Islamic world and beyond, the translation of Greek sciences, the transfer of some branches of Indian sciences, especially medicine, astronomy, and natural history, which was completed during the Sassanid era, provided the Muslims with the opportunity lay the foundations of the great Islamic civilization by.

From this perspective, perhaps cultural diplomacy, which is an organized and systematic effort towards the exchange of ideas, perceptions, and values, can be considered to be the most important way to achieve the idea of civilization and provide and develop goals and the national interests of every country. Meanwhile, the elites who have a key role in increasing intellectual and cultural interaction can build appropriate capacities for paving the path for the new Islamic civilization through constructive and effective cultural and scientific exchanges and building trust establishing peaceful coexistence.

The Function of Cultural Diplomacy in the Globalization of Values and Norms

Civilizations are born of culture. Therefore, culture, which is one of the main factors of producing and/or strengthening civilizations, can provide opportunities by taking advantage of such capacities as commonalities between values, language, literature, art, ideals, and cultural and religious values, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation and while eliminating negative mentalities, providing better conditions for the construction of civilizations. Culture also plays an important role in providing opportunities for scientific exchanges and advanced technologies, empowering the capabilities of developing economic interactions with the world, by increasing the ability to shape and control public opinion, as well as influencing beliefs and attitudes and other essential contexts. Thus, the importance of using the component of cultural diplomacy in the formation, opening new horizons, and revival of Islamic civilization is such that by resorting to soft power, the Islamic Republic of Iran can have a constructive role in the new Islamic civilization, and its impact in international arenas.

In its broad sense, Islamic civilization is formed on the basis of epistemological foundations and the cultivation of human virtues and knowledge and considers the spiritual and scientific advancement of human beings as its main mission. The most important element of Islamic civilization is human salvation and growth of spiritual talents. The value system of this civilization, as in the past, can become universal when it is founded on the solid foundations of cul-

ture, religion, ethics, wisdom, and the unifying principles of the idea of the united Islamic Ummah. The horizon of the new Islamic civilization must be redefined within the context of the role of the modern Islamic civilization in international relations and the possibility of conceptual and practical reconstruction of its value system at the universal level. In this area, too, cultural diplomacy has a fundamental and important role to play, because cultural diplomacy, as an effective tool for exercising soft power, includes a set of ideals and values that can be effective by sharing them with others.

Some of the objectives and tasks of Islamic civilization include normativization, dispersion of common values in world culture, strengthening spirituality at the international level, and discourse-building through defining the universal ideas of Islam, which is the ultimate goal of modern Islamic civilization. This can be achieved through cultural interactions inside and outside the Islamic world and by developing an interactive atmosphere.

The application of cultural diplomacy has a central place in the revival of Islamic civilization. A step that, while accepting the existing cultural diversity within the Islamic world, gives importance to realizing the strategy of globalization of Islamic thought within the framework of new Islamic civilization and to establish a harmonious and coherent relationship between the elites of the Islamic world. Cultural diplomacy can align and activate the intellectual and cultural capabilities of the Is-

lamic world by strengthening scientific cooperation, and by adopting balanced policies in using the software movement and advancement of science to facilitate the perceptual-psychological environment in opening the horizon for the new Islamic civilization.

Cultural Diplomacy and Network and Dialogue-Oriented Interactions among Elites

Although the main themes of the emergence and development of Islamic civilization are based on authentic Islamic sources, however, in addition to the acceptance and emphasis on reason and science, Islam has always encouraged Muslims to benefit from the experience of human knowledge even in a distant land like China.

Hence, the early Muslims took advantage of the scientific resources of other civilizations. Another strong foundation of Islamic civilization is the formation of a scientific movement based on interactions between Muslims and others. A movement that benefited from the experiences of other nations in different science and expanded the range of knowledge of Muslims and the spread of Islamic civilization. In this scientific movement, which took place in a bilateral process, Muslims were able to have access to certain fields of science including intellectual sciences, and develop their scientific and educational centers and at the same time provide the world with the scientific progress they made in different areas.

In addition to the flourishing and advancement of Islamic civilization, the outcomes of this process

have led to many achievements for Muslims. The emergence of the greatest Islamic scientists and scholars, the scientific and cultural excellence of Muslims in different fields including mathematics, astronomy, physics and mechanics, medicine, chemistry, philosophy, logic, history, geography, and literature during this golden age of civilization. Other benefits of these multilateral scientific interactions included the formation of a dynamic educational system in the form of numerous Dar al-Elm (lit. house of knowledge), which were organized through wisdom applied by Iranians, and provided an opportunity for the growth of Islamic civilization.

As one of the ancient leaders in the area of human culture and knowledge, Islamic Iran can play an important role in transferring its scientific tradition to the Islamic world, increase its mediation share in the transfer of knowledge and sciences through scientific exchanges and take a step in the

direction of opening the horizon of the new Islamic civilization through conscious creative interaction with other cultural and civilizational communities. An important part of the realization of these capacities and opportunities of the new Islamic civilization is the responsibility of cultural diplomacy. This is because one of the main indicators of the success of countries in the expansion of their civilizational culture in the international arena is related to cultural diplomacy planning such as exchanges of students, scholarships, international educational projects, and other cultural and scientific activities to transmit cultural and civilizational values and principles.

Another important point is that civilization is the product of the genius of the elite and the creative and innovative minority; i.e., a privileged class in society whose innovative activities can result in the advancement of civilization. This requires the use of scientific and academic diplomacy, the establishment of a system of religious, cultural, and civilizational dialogues, as well as increasing the share of universities and scientific centers in international interactions. Therefore, cultural diplomacy can strengthen and launch elite network interactions, facilitate capacities related to scientific exchanges and also launch a two-way translation movement.

This can be achieved by facilitating and strengthening cooperation between academic, research, and cultural centers of Iran and other countries, paving the way for the

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continuation of cultural interactions among elites by establishing a permanent secretariat for scientific and intercultural dialogue, and creating convergence among thinkers and scholars and expanding intra-religious and interreligious dialogues, expanding coalitions and transnational and multilateral networks of elites, promoting the participation of reference institutions, especially academics, and encouraging them to participate in the development and expansion of international interactions.

Conclusion Remarks

Culture is considered as an intrinsic, sustainable feature and one of the strategic and influential advantages of new Islamic civiliza-

tion, and enjoying the advantage of culture in opening the horizons for modern Islamic civilization requires increasing the share and functions of cultural diplomacy in the international arena.

One of the basic prerequisites for the new Islamic civilization to have a role in the international system is the formation of convergence in the internal capacities and concern for cultural interactions within and outside the Islamic world. Therefore, opening the horizon for the new Islamic civilization must be redefined in the context of its role in international relations and the possibility of conceptual and practical reconstruction of its value system. Owing to its role, functions, and capabilities, cul-

tural diplomacy is considered to be the main and most effective instrument in creating this convergence and playing an important role in its realization.

Creating a platform for the formation of stable and constructive dialogues is another function of cultural diplomacy in opening the horizon of the new Islamic civilization. The reason is that elite dialogue is an interactive process and a cultural issue that is associated with the formation of an atmosphere of communication, mutual understanding, and cooperation and can provide a positive image or improve the level of cooperation and appropriate mechanisms to effectively open the new horizon for new Islamic civilization.