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The Pivotal Role of Strategic Diplomacy and Statecraft in the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Analysis of Prantl and Goh's Theoretical Framework.

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Abstract: The research investigates the interaction between strategy and statecraft in the complex landscape of the 21st century, with a specific emphasis on the diplomatic framework presented by Jochen Prantl and Evelyn Goh. It seeks to explore whether the multifaceted and interconnected threats and risks of this era have rendered the development of effective strategies and statecraft challenging, drawing on the theoretical framework proposed by Prantl and Goh, among other sources. The theoretical framework posits that strategic diplomacy plays a critical role in addressing significant security challenges, including great power conflicts, economic interdependence, peacebuilding, climate change, and pandemics. Strategic diplomacy is defined as the process through which governmental and non-state actors shape their worldviews, set agendas, communicate, and negotiate conflicting interests, encompassing diagnostic and policy planning, boundary mapping, issue framing, building resilience, shaping policy environments, and reassessing diagnosis. The research concludes that strategic diplomacy is essential for the practice of statecraft, which is vital for the survival of states in an increasingly hostile global environment. It advocates for the integration of strategy into diplomatic processes to make informed policy decisions and analyse the impact of global issues on national security and sovereignty. The study employs realism (neo-realism) to comprehend major challenges and proposes strategic diplomacy as an effective approach. Through an analysis of Prantl and Goh, the research also underscores the importance of framing issues to address power dispersion, citing examples such as the US-China trade war and the involvement of Huawei in implementing 5G technology in Europe. The research urges the adoption of a strategic mindset in policy-making to advance national interests and navigate global complexities.

Keywords: Strategic Diplomacy, Statecraft, Climate Change, Issue Framing, International Relations, Diagnosis, Peacebuilding, Pandemics, Policy Planning, Interdependence, Great Power Conflicts, Trade War, Sovereignty, National Security, Global Environment.

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INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic global landscape of the 21st century, the role of strategic diplomacy and statecraft has become increasingly vital for nations to effectively manage intricate international relations and promote collaboration. This study seeks to comprehensively analyse the theoretical framework introduced by Prantl and Goh, with a specific focus on the importance of strategic diplomacy and statecraft in today's world. The research will utilize a combination of academic literature review, historical analysis, and practical case studies to assess the significance of strategic diplomacy and statecraft in the 21st century. The theoretical framework proposed by Prantl and Goh will form the basis of this analysis, supplemented by insights from other pertinent sources.

The primary objectives of the research are to explore the interplay between strategic diplomacy, statecraft, and related concepts such as grand strategy, power-sharing, and the role of the state in the global political landscape; to examine the concept of strategic diplomacy and statecraft in the context of the 21st century, investigating their relevance in shaping international relations and fostering cooperation among

nations; to analyze the theoretical framework presented by Prantl and Goh, identifying key aspects that contribute to the effectiveness of strategic diplomacy and statecraft in the modern global landscape; and to offer practical recommendations for the application of strategic diplomacy and statecraft in addressing contemporary global challenges, including climate change, terrorism, and cyber warfare. By gaining insights into the role of these tools in shaping international relations and promoting cooperation, this research aims to contribute to the development of more effective strategies for navigating the complexities of the modern global landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Freedman (2013), strategy is "the art of building power," whereas statecraft is "the skill of maintaining the life and expansion of a sovereign state." The complexity of the international system and politics, on the other hand, has spurred important debates, resulting in the formation of many international relations theories. Realism, liberalism, post-structuralism, social constructivism, and game theory are examples of these theories that seek to understand global concerns by providing answers to what happened, why it happened, and how to deal with the consequences of these events.

Jochen Prantl and Evelyn Goh have, thus, proposed a theory that characterizes global complexity and tactics to combat these complexities while acknowledging the relationship between statecraft and strategy as a means for governments to achieve national interests. According to these academics, current urgent security threats such as great power conflicts, economic interdependence, peacebuilding, climate change, and other non-traditional perils such as pandemics have garnered influence over global policy space and state interaction.

Prantl and Goh's proposal is mainly driven by the desire to address global threats as a consequence of 21st-century complexities such as hyper-connectivity, power dispersion, and radical technologies. Consequently, strategic diplomacy is seen by these academics as the most effective technique for dealing with the aforementioned threats. Strategic diplomacy is defined as "the process through which governments and non-state actors socially create and frame their perspective of the world, set agendas and communicate, dispute and negotiate conflicting primary interests and aims". It encompasses diagnostic and policy planning, which is reflected in boundary mapping, issue framing, building resilience, shaping policy environments, and reassessing diagnosis. Strategic diplomacy supports broad policy space, foreign policy objectives, engagement between states and non-state actors, and the difficult challenge of peacebuilding. This, according to Prantl and Goh, fosters statecraft.

The promotion of statecraft and the survival of states in the increasingly hostile environment is facilitated by the incorporation of strategy in diplomatic procedures. Strategy, according to Prantl and Goh, is derived from an intentionally holistic mentality, integrating long-term and understanding of the larger systems around particular challenges/threats. The goal of strategic diplomacy is to survive in a hostile environment by making defensible policy choices and by critically analysing how global issues affect national security and sovereignty. Prantl and Goh produced a solution for the interaction in a realist environment, using realism (neo-realism) as a unit of analysis to comprehend major challenges and offer an effective remedy in the form of strategic diplomacy. According to Waltz (2010) and Chomsky (2020), the ultimate goal of states in the international system is to survive, and strategic diplomacy provides survival options. Though the world has not been directly affected by wars and power competition as traditional realist purport, globalization and pandemics such as COVID-19 increased state interconnectedness which made borders imaginary and provides a pinch to state sovereignty. Therefore, in policy-making boardrooms, Prantl and Goh (2022) encouraged the adoption of a 'strategy' so as to achieve national interest and deal with global complexities.

In addition, strategic diplomacy envisions tackling the complexity of the twenty-first century by

framing problems/issues. In the international sphere, framing issues/problems is a measure that can be adopted to combat power dispersion. For instance, in 2019 during the COVID-19 outbreak, China was suspected by the US of developing the coronavirus as a bioweapon intended to shift international power from the United States. This has also further spread to the US-China trade war which has sparked debate over the involvement of the Chinese company Huawei in implementing fifth-generation wireless technology (5G) in Europe. This is a warning that the EU may become involved in the dispute between the two countries (Thompson, 2020). The United States has issued stern warnings that working with Huawei would increase the likelihood that sensitive data would be sent to China and make the European communications infrastructure more susceptible in the event of a global emergency. Chinese threats about the detrimental effects on European trade interests if Huawei is barred from this crucial sector have repeated these worries. Although the EU has approved a toolkit to handle 5G security challenges, each nation decides on deployment on its own. Together with Russia, China became the core of an anti-Western coalition that aimed to resist and reduce the West's regional and global influence.

On March 7, 2023, the White House backed legislation proposed by a group of twelve senators, aiming to grant the government the power to ban foreign-based technologies, such as the Chinese-owned video app TikTok, if they pose threats to national security. This move strengthens efforts to outlaw the popular app, which is used by over 100 million Americans and owned by the Chinese corporation Byte Dance. Democratic Senator Mark Warner, the leader of the Intelligence Committee, explained that the measure would empower the Commerce Department to impose restrictions, including a ban on TikTok and other technologies that endanger national security. The legislation would also apply to imported technology from countries like China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba, further emphasizing the shrinking distance on a larger scale due to hyper connectivity and globalization. This highlights the need for pragmatism, innovation, and an adaptive nature in a holistic view of the system context within which seemingly discreet issues are embedded.

Prantl and Goh (2022) suggested shifting from state-centric to plurilateral approaches to address the complexities posing threats to state security in the international system. The increasing state interdependence through trade, technology, and hyper connectivity challenges the realist state position in both domestic and foreign policy making, as multiple actors are now involved. However, the rise in state interconnectedness also showcases the role of the United States as a 'globalizer,' seeking to impose its cultures through foreign policies. This complex issue erodes state sovereignty and facilitates the submission of states to international sovereignty. In doing so, the policy space has become crowded with various actors, such as

powerful individuals like George Soros, multinational companies (MNCs), regional, and international organizations. Prantl and Goh (2022) proposed that the link between strategic diplomacy and statecraft in this matter encourages the adoption of a liberal perspective in policy-making, where states should listen to non-state actors, especially on issues beyond borders, such as pandemics. The interface of states and non-state actors reduces power competition between the two while exposing states to a global American order sponsored through aid, military expeditions, and coercive diplomacy. In this context, the issue of policy space is significant in addressing contemporary global problems due to the increase in state interconnectedness and the rise of non-state actors.

Furthermore, Prantl and Goh (2022) proposed the adoption of strategic diplomacy through 'strategic narratives and practices' to facilitate statecraft in the increasing anarchical world. Mearsheimer (2001:135) states that, "the international politics is dangerous and it is likely to remain that way, thus the tragedy of great power politics". The great power politics reflects offensive and defensive realism, whereby the world witnessing power shifts from Western to Eastern powers (Eastern Europe and Far East Asia) and diffuses from states to non-state actors (Mearsheimer 2001, Goh 2017, Amin 2011 and Prantl and Goh 2022). This invites a new thinking of strategic diplomacy for states to survive in such environment and Prantl and Goh (2022) proposed strategic framework stern of 'people's power'. This when a state developed a framework to convince both domestic and international audiences on foreign policy goals for relevance, recognition and legitimacy. The United States foreign policy premised on the 'democracy propaganda' which allowed her to attract audiences across the world to legitimize her actions.

According to Blair and Curtis (2009) after 9/11 attack, Bush administration launched various military campaigns in the name of 'war on terror, searching Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and democratizing the Middle East. The issue of 'war on terror' and 'democracy' came in picture as strategic narratives for the US to maintain hegemony on the increased multipolar global space. Zimbabwe used anti-sanction/anti-western rhetoric during Mugabe era to attract the Eastern relations as a defense mechanisms against the western objectives of unseating the revolutionary regime from power. For Prantl and Goh (2022), it might be difficult due to power diffusion from sovereignty states to non-state actors, however, this aided by neo-realist approach which argued that, non-state actors are an extension of state power. This evidenced by the role of Bretton woods institutions, NATO, International Criminal Court (ICC) and United Nations in peddling American interest in the international system which justified Harriet Carr view of non-state actors as purveyor of state interest (Blair and Curtis 2009). In analysis, the issue of strategic narrative is quite

important, especially in public diplomatic practices in dealing with global complexities. As suggested by Prantl and Goh (2022), strategists who want to exert power and influence should map borders in planning their operations. Vladimir Putin has used the mapping of borders to his advantage by acting according to dictates of geopolitics and the complexity of geo-security, the battle for space, economic and political power played, especially as seen in the current war in Ukraine.

Robert Kaplan argues that a state's strategy must consider the external environment it faces. Others concentrate on territorial strategies, reasoning for instance that China and India are likely to clash because the 'string of pearls' that is, a line of commercial and military facilities constructed by the Chinese along the shores of the Indian Ocean cuts through sea lines of communication in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Bengal that are vital for India. Fettweis (2015) critiques geopolitics, stating that 'everyone agrees that geography matters but determining exactly how the chessboard affects the game has proven elusive'. Thus, strategic diplomacy envisages dealing with this complex situation by mapping borders.

The issue of peacebuilding remained a complex issue in contemporary international affairs and Prantl and Goh (2022) proposed a holistic conflict and post-conflict reconstruction which helped in establishing sustainable peace. According to Boutros-Ghali (1992), peacebuilding is an 'action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict'. This view is influenced by the failure of foreign and international conflict resolution approaches, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. Prantl and Goh cite the failure of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan, which cost approximately US\$2 trillion and failed to promote peace. The United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM I and II) also failed to build lasting peace, leaving imprints of negative peace. Prantl and Goh (2017) argued that peace cannot be imposed, these foreign missions developed peace policies at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) without the involvement of the affected communities, therefore, the approach will be foreign and doomed to fail to contain conflicts. Galtung (1961) divided peace into two broad categories, negative and positive peace, whereby the former reflects the absence of war and the latter expresses the absence of war and development. Therefore, the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other states and non-state actors' agencies involved in peacekeeping, peace-making, and conflict resolution failed to transform conflicts in the contemporary world.

As part of strategic diplomacy and statecraft, Prantl and Goh (2022) presented a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding. The strategy was guided by Led Erach's (1995) conflict transformation theory, which emphasized the direct engagement of impacted parties

(victims and perpetrators) in peacebuilding. People must be at the centre of conflict transformation strategy development. Mhandara (2016) agrees that community methods create a solid basis for reconciliation in order to achieve permanent and sustainable peace. In this context, Prantl and Goh (2022) proposed that governments and non-state actors should collaborate with impacted communities in planning and executing peacebuilding methods in order to avert conflict recurrence. According to Ngwenya (2017), the state-sponsored amnesia to Gukurahundi massacres of 1983-87 in Matebeleland and Midlands are dictatorial and imposed method of conflict resolution with a possibility of relapse into conflict due to unhealed traumas. In this regard, the holistic approaches which are beyond liberal peacebuilding are regarded as the best strategic diplomatic initiative to make the world a safe place from protracted and structural conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion offers a comprehensive assessment and analysis of Prantl and Goh's (2022) strategic diplomacy as a means of addressing the multifaceted challenges of the twenty-first century. The proposal underscores the intricate interplay of globalization, rapid technological advancement, climate change, pandemics, and great power politics, emphasizing their impact on the national security and sovereignty of states within the international arena. Strategic diplomacy characterized by deliberate decision-making, stakeholder interaction in policy formulation, and extensive peacebuilding efforts, is presented as a mechanism for states to confront and navigate these global issues. However, the discussion also acknowledges the inherent difficulty and formidable obstacles that impede the complete success of strategic diplomacy, given the unpredictable nature of the world order and the international system.

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